



Summative Evaluation Report

# A Multi-Year Thematic Evaluation of DFID's Multi-Year Humanitarian Funding Approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Front cover photographer: Basia Benda

## Disclaimer

The contents and conclusions of this evaluation report reflect strictly the opinion of the authors and in no way those of DFID or its partners.

## Executive summary

### Introduction

In early 2014 DFID commissioned Valid Evaluations (VE) to carry out a thematic evaluation of its Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing (MYHF, or MY) approach in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Pakistan. This forms a part of the Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) and is one of a number of studies into new or emerging humanitarian approaches. This report summarises the findings for the DRC and is one of four summative country reports. A final synthesis report draws together the overall findings of the evaluation.

The longitudinal study, with substantive research carried out between 2015 and 2017, set out to answer three questions focusing on resilience, early response and value for money in the context of multi-year funding.

The evaluation used exploratory research techniques, allowing an understanding of the factors that shaped how different people coped with shocks and stresses. An additional study looking at the cost of ill health was then commissioned.

Primary research took place in three districts of North and South Kivu (also referred to as 'the Kivus') respectively. The provinces were chosen because they were in receipt of DFID MYHF and have been amongst the worst hit of the DRC's conflict-affected provinces.

The evaluation conducted 431 individual interviews with 169 different households over the course of two years, and periodic focus group discussions in each of the 17 villages studied. During this time there was conflict in Masisi in North Kivu, which then led to a cholera outbreak amongst those displaced, and flooding and landslides in Kalehe, South Kivu that destroyed or damaged over 50 houses. A separate survey with a sample of 510 households was conducted to look at the cost to households of ill health.

### Findings

The population of the DRC, and that of the Kivus in particular, appear to survive in almost impossible circumstances given the conflict and state collapse that has afflicted the country for some two decades. This is testimony to their extraordinary ability to get by and make the best of the very meagre opportunities that present themselves. However, it is clear from the majority of interviews for this study that people are only just surviving, are vulnerable to the smallest shocks, and are gradually eroding what little natural asset base and protective environment that remains.

### Poverty and livelihoods

The evaluation found that almost half of those interviewed depended mostly, or wholly, on day labour, much of this agricultural. Wages are low, and work is not guaranteed. A plausible income is in the range of \$700–950 per annum for a household of six with two working adults. The second largest income group in this study relied on petty trade, also generating marginal incomes. Both day labourers and petty traders also rented small plots of land where they grew food crops – typically cassava and beans. Together these two groups constituted about three-quarters of those interviewed. Other income sources included farming, fishing, trading (at a larger level), and skilled trades.

The evaluation also found that, over time, people were continually being set back by small (and sometimes large) shocks. Even when people managed to save small amounts of money, or invest

them in productive assets or trading capital, they were just as likely to find themselves with unexpected medical costs, or worse, fleeing conflict or some other form of disaster. Literature on chronic poverty refers to the escape from and return to poverty as 'churn'. This is a constant narrative in the DRC but is not strictly churn since few actually ever escape poverty. Instead it might be thought of as small movements within the band of absolute poverty: sometimes doing a little better, sometimes a little worse.

### Land and marginalisation

The root of much of the structural poverty and associated conflict in the Kivus is the semi-feudal appropriation of land. Large plantation holders – for the most part absentee landlords well connected to political elites – control huge tracts of land. Access to land has become more challenging over time. A typical landholding in our evaluation was 0.25ha, reflecting the downward trend in landholding size from 1ha 30 years ago. This is no longer enough for subsistence farming, hence the necessity for the other livelihoods documented above.

With land scarce and much in demand there is appropriation at all levels, with widows and marginal groups particularly at risk of having their land stolen. We documented several cases of widows having had land taken away from them by family or neighbours, and constantly fending off predators. The Twa in particular have suffered historical land expropriation on a massive scale, with little assistance from the justice system to rectify the issue in, for example, Masisi.

### Shocks, insecurity and conflict

The main reason for the inability of much of the population to escape chronic poverty is undoubtedly the ongoing low-level conflict, insecurity and state collapse. All the villages studied for this evaluation had experienced conflict, and the looting and displacement that accompanied it, within the last decade. All the villages in North Kivu had experienced conflict in the last five years, and as this report was being drafted, another wave of violent conflict swept the regions studied. This makes the accumulation of capital almost impossible.

Conflict is not the only shock that people experience, however, or even, for the majority, the one that they rank as the most serious. Health shocks are consistently ranked in studies as the most frequent and having the greatest impact. In interviews for this evaluation, health was repeatedly cited as a major issue, prompting a separate quantitative study looking at the cumulative cost to the household of ill health. When lost income is factored in, the VE team estimated that ill health is costing typical households up to 40% of their potential earnings. There was also an extremely high morbidity rate, with some 86% of people reporting some incidence of ill health in the past year.

Alongside conflict and health issues, the Kivus have also been ravaged by crop disease over the past decade. This has led to the two dual-purpose (cash and staple) crops – cassava and banana – coming under attack. For many interviewed in this study the banana wilt disease has almost wiped out their plantations. This was an important source of income and there is now widespread loss. Only a very few report being able to grow bananas again. Whilst cassava mosaic disease has not decimated the crops in the same way – it instead lowers yields – this too has meaningfully impacted households' food supply and cash income and the margins they have for absorbing other types of shocks.

Other shocks include natural hazard disasters such as floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions as well as the general banditry and lawlessness that is a by-product of the conflict.

## Education

An issue that emerges strongly in interviews is that of education: it is seen universally as important, especially for boys, but parents struggle to pay school and college fees. This is a constant worry, a huge burden, and frequently causes families to fall into debt.

## Gender

Women are subject to a number of additional, gender-specific burdens. First, there is the well-reported extremely high rate of sexual violence. Amongst our interviews there are several stories of horrific rape ordeals endured during various waves of conflict. Second, there is widespread polygamy that is disadvantageous to women economically. Women in polygamous relationships rely mostly on their own income, with the husbands contributing to the household income sporadically at best. Third, women have limited land rights and are vulnerable to land appropriation on the death of husbands or divorce. Children are often abandoned or neglected in the turbulence of these unequal relationships (women can be practically forced to re-marry to safeguard land but then find children from first marriages pushed out). Lastly, in the artisanal mining sites there is considerable recourse to casual prostitution as a means to survive because there are no other economic options.

## Negative coping

The evaluation notes a variety of distress activities, with long-term negative consequences, which people are forced to adopt when they cannot cope with the unpredictability and insecurity of life. These distress or survival measures were a common theme, suggesting that a large percentage of the population is failing to cope at some point.

Reduction in the number and quality of meals was the most common negative coping method amongst the evaluation cohort. Many of those interviewed saw eating two meals a day as normal, and only considered it a sign of distress when they had to further reduce to one meal a day.

Another set of negative ways of coping is centred on the artisanal mining industry, especially in the Walungu district of South Kivu. This offers rewards which are uneven at best, and at a price which includes the risks of death and injury. Casual prostitution as a choice for the wife, or sexual entrapment as an activity undertaken by husband and wife, is widespread in these areas. Overexploitation of natural resources, including charcoal making, is already leading to problems from landslides.

## Characteristics of resilience

Although it is quite easy to see life in the DRC as hopeless, there is a vibrant and extraordinarily buoyant spirit in the face of adversity. There are two principal aspects to this: networks of support, or *social capital*; and a mindset of 'getting by' (*se débrouiller*) that has been elevated to something of a national motto (which we have called *adaptive capacity* in this report).

## Social capital

The state's abrogation of its responsibilities has led to a privatisation of all realms of public life in the DRC. This is not privatisation in terms of neo-liberal economics; rather an individualised organising of what in most other places are functions managed by the state. Even health and education, whilst ostensibly managed by the state, are in fact private enterprises with bureaucrats simply extracting rents for licensing. The proliferation of groups to repopulate this public sphere is a natural reaction to the need to organise.

The panel survey households (see Section 1.2) that are doing best have better support from family and friends. This means either having a family member who was more successful, usually based in

town, who can provide help; or families who support each other when needed, essential in an environment with no public safety net and few services to fall back on.

However, this is only part of the picture. The DRC also has a vibrant culture of small groups that take on this role – small-scale risk sharing and risk pooling. There are groups for all sorts of things in the DRC – groups that find and share work, groups that save money for special occasions ('meat' groups that save to buy meat for Christmas), groups that save money for investment in small-scale trading, groups that save money for hard times (such as health costs) and more. Some of these are formal – even linked to the state – some are church, some NGO and some simply small and informal. There are fishing associations, market porters' associations, market stallholder associations; in fact, there are associations seemingly for almost everything. In place of the formal institutions of state it seems as though there is a proliferation of less formal institutions, consisting of groups of people who feel the need to organise and share.

### Adaptive capacity

Alongside the vibrant culture of groups and associations is something both more visible and subtler. '*On se débrouille*' – we manage on our own – is commonly joked about as being the 15th and unwritten (but most important) article of the Congolese constitution. This has led to a quite distinct culture of make-do-and-mend in the DRC. People make use of everything and get by on the smallest of margins, in a survival 'gig economy'. Whilst this capacity for innovation and exploiting even the tiniest of opportunities (including illegal and long-term destructive ones) gets people so far, it is not enough to truly adapt positively. Many other elements critical for positive adaptation such as an asset base, knowledge and functioning institutions are absent. This leaves adaptations firmly in the survival category and often negative, such as growing short-term crops that are less easy to steal.

### Aid

Humanitarian assistance, and to a lesser extent development aid, is built into the fabric of life in the DRC. Even the most remote villages are able to recite the acronyms of organisations that have helped them over the years. These organisations are known by name, by their areas of specialism and many are able to offer quite sophisticated critiques of the work.

People are by and large grateful for the assistance they get. There are plenty of good examples of humanitarian assistance being provided in a timely way – the Johanniter response to the cholera outbreak in Masisi is one good example in the evaluation study area. When people talk about having been displaced, they almost always mention receiving aid – basic foodstuffs and shelter.

But there is an overwhelming sense from the stories told that the assistance is fleeting. Humanitarian assistance works in the moments of acute need. Apart from a few notable exceptions, health clinics come and go, bridges are repaired and then break again, school bills are paid, but for no great length of time. Critically, people's exposure and vulnerability is hardly reduced by either humanitarian or development assistance, and even aid *in extremis* is not guaranteed.

The one notable exception to this is the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-run hospital in Masisi, which by being permanent provides reliable health care to the surrounding population. It is still expensive for people to get there, and often they are still paying for drugs afterwards. And the hospital does not reduce the largest costs of ill health, which is loss of earnings. But it does mean that people with very severe medical problems can reliably find treatment and do not have to worry immediately about whether they can pay.

### Multi-year humanitarian financing

For various reasons there was only one DFID-funded multi-year humanitarian (MYH) programme observed in the Kivus in the course of this evaluation: the UNICEF Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis (ARCC II) programme. This distributed cash and vouchers to people returning from displacement and complemented another big UNICEF humanitarian programme, the Rapid Response to Population Movement (RRMP), that responds to displacement. The DFID-funded Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) programme closed prematurely, and DFID's support to Action Contre la Faim (ACF, Action Against Hunger) covered, potentially, but not specifically, North and South Kivu.

The ARCC II programme provided several insights into the potential offered by MYH funding. The grants were delivered to people in both North and South Kivu by NGO partners based there. An operational research programme was commissioned alongside the delivery to determine if there were better or worse ways of working, and to examine the costs of these alternatives.

One of the main findings was that people preferred one large payment over several small ones, as it gave them greater choice and flexibility. These findings are substantiated by the VE evaluation – several of the households followed used the funds to invest, several of them in land. This then allowed them to save and to invest again. Basically, the one-off, larger payment had the potential to enhance people's livelihoods in the medium term, for some significantly. UNICEF also developed robust value-for-money metrics through the research, with both findings leading to a redesign of the programme for later phases.

Beyond the UNICEF programme, projects that aimed to support groups and associations seemed most effective in the DRC context. The AVEC (Association Villageoise d'Épargne et Crédit) programme (a village savings and loan scheme) had a good success rate and showed up in a number of the communities studied. Many of the other groups that respondents talked about had their origins in an NGO or a UN programme, with several enduring long after the original input. With little in the way of functioning formal institutions, these informal groups offer potential to help people deal with shocks.

### Conclusion: research questions

There is – somewhat counterintuitively – a foundation for building resilience in the DRC. Decades of adversity have led to a highly adaptive population – a culture where getting by is a national skill. People are highly entrepreneurial and small investments can lead quickly to observable results.

There are two major caveats to this potential for resilience. The first is that it is all too easy to overlook destructive distress strategies. Many families go hungry as a matter of course when their ability to 'get by' breaks down. And this is compounded by regular ill health with its negative developmental consequences for children.

Second, and perhaps even more importantly, resilience is as much a system property as it is an individual one. The structural vulnerability observed in this evaluation is rooted in the depth of poverty, and also in inadequate services such as health. The underlying factors behind both of these include state failure and poor governance. This has led to conflict, which is both a shock for the minority of people in any one year, and the cause of a moribund economy for almost everyone all the time; it is also the cause of and a symptom of weak governance. Historically this is underpinned by a land grab by elites over time, one that no government since has had any interest in tackling.

Without the systems to enhance and support resilience, there is only so far that individual efforts can take people. Without even basic security, people are always vulnerable to losing everything in a

moment of extreme violence. Predatory politicians and gangster capitalists exploit this insecurity for economic gain, with the poor and landless the casual victims. But even without the insecurity, the lack of basic governance and services mean small shocks can assume disproportionate impact: denuded forests through charcoal making that erodes soil and leads to floods and landslides; crop disease that spreads and ravages harvests without any agricultural extension services; unregulated and profiteering health care that means people spend fortunes for marginal benefit.

This evaluation has found that multi-year humanitarian assistance has good potential in the DRC. Clearly it cannot solve everything, nor should it aim to. Wider political, economic and military factors will ultimately impact the lives of people more than aid ever can. But the smarter delivery of assistance can help people invest and organise themselves, giving them a much better chance of getting by than less well-formulated inputs.

The problems in the DRC will not be solved for decades. A multi-year framework allows programmes to invest in learning alongside their operations, which in turn gives the possibility for flexible programming, surely essential for interventions to be successful in challenging and rapidly changing contexts like eastern DRC. Multi-year provision of services, such as the MSF hospital in Masisi, also provides life-saving assistance more reliably than shorter-term projects.

Working multi-year in the DRC is also proven better value for money. UNICEF was able to document the different costs associated with different delivery modalities, and crucially to match both unit costs and the value to people. It helped that one-off transfers were both the cheapest option and the greatest perceived value for recipients, but this would not have been as clear without the opportunity for thoughtful evidence building afforded by MYHF.

There are other opportunities for building resilience and reinforcing the natural adaptive and creative spirit of people in the Kivus. Supporting the many groups that people rely on for everything from shared work to all forms of enterprise can both make the funds go further and build critical social capital, although this is tricky work as there is also the risk that they become distorted by aid. But these are core elements of resilience in the DRC, and absent movement on the wider system level may prove to be an effective way of supporting people's own efforts to cope with uncertainty and change.

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## Abbreviations

ACF	Action Contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger)
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo
ARCC	Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis
AVEC	Associations Villageoise d'Épargne et Crédit
CDF	Congolese Franc
CMV	Cassava Mosaic Virus
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple
DFID	Department for International Development
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandaises
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération de Rwanda
FFP	Food for Peace
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTS	Financial Tracking Service [OCHA]
HEA	Household Economy Analysis
HF	Humanitarian (Pooled) Fund
HIEP	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
M23	Mouvement du 23 Mars
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MFI	Micro-Finance Institutions
MONUSCO	United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of the Democratic Republic of Congo
MoH	Ministry of Health
MPR	Mouvement Populaire pour la Révolution
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MYHF	Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OFDA	Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
PUNC	Nutrition Emergency Pool
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RRMP	Rapid Response to Population Movement
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SLRCS	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
SNSAP	Surveillance Nutritionnelle, Sécurité alimentaire et Alerte Précoce
ULPGL	Université Libre des Pays des Grand Lacs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VE	Valid Evaluations
VFM	Value for Money
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	UN World Food Programme

## 1. Introduction

The thematic evaluation of DFID's Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing (MYHF, or MY) approach in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Sudan and Pakistan was commissioned in early 2014. It is part of DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP), seeking to broaden the evidence base and improve practice in humanitarian action.

The study has taken place over nearly four years (ending in August 2018). The purpose of the study was to generate learning and evidence on whether, and how, a MYHF approach has enabled DFID programmes in each country to:

- Ensure a timely and effective humanitarian response;
- Build disaster resilience; and
- Achieve better value for money (VFM).

The evaluation aims to provide evidence to contribute to the management of these programmes at country level, as well as informing DFID's humanitarian policy more broadly. The evaluation findings are also expected to contribute to: the global evidence base on good humanitarian practice; how to build resilience in the most fragile and conflict-affected states; and to the realisation of the resolutions made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

### 1.1 Context and background

The DRC is sub-Saharan Africa's largest country and its third most populous after Nigeria and Ethiopia. It is also one of its poorest, ranking 176 out of 188 in the UNDP Human Development Index (two below Ethiopia and 11 below Sudan).<sup>1</sup> And yet it is probably the continent's richest country in terms of natural resources, endowed with the second largest rainforest in the world, has the continent's second longest river (with a dam complex that has the potential, it is estimated, to provide hydroelectric power to most of southern Africa), and mineral wealth abounding in the provinces of Orientale, North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga and Kasai Oriental.

But most of this potential is lost in factionalist and corrupt politics, a decayed infrastructure creating regional 'principalities' (e.g. Mbuji Mayi, the diamond capital is remote from the capital, Kinshasa, and from the second city, Lubumbashi) and a vast territory, the cities of which are accessible only by air, appalling roads or, in a minority of cases, river navigation.

Conflict has dominated the political landscape of eastern DRC for many decades, exploding into vicious and continuing insurgencies since the genocide in, and refugee flight from, Rwanda in 1994. And with the semi-anarchy engendered, eastern DRC has been the repository into which internal conflict in neighbouring countries has (deliberately) spilled. Throughout, there has been little useful dialogue between the east of the country and the political capital in the west, and seemingly little interest in finding a mutually acceptable settlement to the intractable political problems of the provinces of Orientale and the Kivus.

More recently, traditional antagonism towards authority in Kinshasa, and dissatisfaction at the repeated postponement of presidential elections, has developed into a vicious conflict in Kasai Centrale province in the south, pitting local tribal militias against the national army and resulting in mass internal displacement, refugee flight and thousands of deaths.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2016) *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016\\_human\\_development\\_report.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2016_human_development_report.pdf)

## A brief history

The DRC's history is dark and troubled. King Leopold II of Belgium created and ran the Congo Free State as a ruthless personal fiefdom until international opinion forced him to hand it over to the Belgian State in 1908. The Belgian government itself ruled the colony (now the Belgian Congo) as a coalition of State, Church/missionaries and private enterprise (*la trinité coloniale*). This saw each of the three 'partners' act in their own selfish interest – the rule of law beneficial to the coloniser; profit; and religious conversion and (selective) education – all with the aim of reinforcing colonial authority and generating private and state wealth (government frequently intervened on private enterprise's part when Congolese resistance threatened to disrupt profitable operations).

White rule applied at every level, with the colony originally divided into six provinces embracing between 130 and 150 *territoires*, each managed by a territorial administrator and their assistants, and further divided into *chefferies* overseen by appointed 'traditional leaders'. While colonial law was supreme, the traditional chiefs were invested with limited powers through indigenous courts (*tribunaux indigènes*) but under the strict control of the authorities.

Whereas the Church was viewed as one of the foundations of the colony, it increasingly became its conscience, taking the part of the oppressed colonised and preaching the injustice of the system.<sup>2</sup>

The division of the Belgian Congo into quasi-autonomous polities under strict and uniform (white, at the time) rule and overseen from a remote capital, became the template for the future governance (or the lack of it) of the vast territory.<sup>3</sup>

The transition to independent rule, chaotic in the first five years of the 1960 constitution, and hijacked thereafter by Mobutu Sese Seko, saw the adoption of a system of rule mirroring, to a large degree, that of the Free State. Mobutu's Mouvement Populaire pour la Révolution (MPR) espoused the principle of centrist control, established a one-party system in the newly renamed Zaïre and decreed that the leader of the party became, automatically, the Head of State and commander of the armed forces.

This position was underpinned by the Political Directorate, populated by Mobutu's family and political allies, with a number of others co-opted to provide an illusion of evenly distributed power across the country, and constantly manipulated to ensure Mobutu's continuing control.

Thirty years of divisive and kleptocratic rule came to an end in 1997, a result of Mobutu's terminal illness and the civil war arising from the Rwandese refugee crisis in North and South Kivu. The insurgency, backed by neighbouring states to the east, saw the installation of Laurent-Desiré Kabila as president. Kabila was assassinated by a bodyguard in January 2001 and replaced by his son Joseph, who has held power ever since.

Eastern DRC, and the Kivus in particular, have endured conflicts of varying intensity since 1993. The democratisation process initiated by Mobutu in 1991 put nationality at the centre of the debate in the Kivus and provoked inter-ethnic violence between the autochthonous tribes and the Rwandese Hutu and Tutsi *transplantés* from the colonial era and since. This bloody dispute was amplified by the mass flight of Hutu refugees, including military and Interahamwe, from Rwanda following the

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<sup>2</sup> It was in part the Church's protestations at the inhumane treatment of the Congolese by the Free State that saw its transfer to Belgian colonial rule.

<sup>3</sup> While an obvious solution to the administration of provinces remote from Léopoldville (Kinshasa), the letting of control to selfish regional interests became the hallmark for post-colonial rule.

genocide in 1994, coupled with the recruitment of Tutsi Congolese to the victorious RPF (Rwanda Patriotic Front) in Rwanda.

At the heart of the 1993 conflict, and those that have raged since the violent dissolution of the refugee camps in North and South Kivu in 1996 and the (Rwanda- and Uganda-sponsored) overthrow of the Mobutu regime in 1997, has been the issue of land rights and, by association, access to the mineral resources held therein.<sup>4</sup>

While Kabila's war of 1997 (the First Congo War) was mostly about the overthrow of the Mobutu regime, that of 1998–2003 ('Africa's First World War') combined national political interest with local and regional disputes, and, in the East, the consolidation of regional interests, including the defeat of the rump of the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR)/Interahamwe.

The Kivu conflict of 2007, a reaction to the poorly implemented arrangements of the peace accord of 2002, pitted the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP), a Tutsi-led rebellion, against the Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération de Rwanda (FDLR), the Rwandese insurgent rump. Backed by Rwanda, with self-defence in mind, it was partly aimed at clearing the Kivus of the Hutu insurgent threat, partly at consolidating land rights for the ethnic Rwandese of North Kivu and partly at gaining access to the mineral wealth of the region. With their leader's arrest and arraignment at the International Criminal Court, the CNDP forces were assimilated into the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), while the FDLR threat remained.

When the AFDL [Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo] fighters came, they were asking where the *Katanyama* [Mobutu troops] were. They would round up people including old men, accusing them of 'hiding' the *Katanyama* in their homes and would spray them with bullets. They would die on the spot and be buried in a mass grave. My maternal auntie died during these killings. And if you were from Kanyarutchinya, Kibumba or Monigi, the Rwandan soldiers would accuse you of being Interahamwe [FDLR] militia or of hosting them in your home. This was a very hard time to live and up to now, there is no way to expose ourselves to the Rwandan troops. When it comes to running away [war], we do not take the direction of Rwanda. *Nyiragongo/Bugeregere 05R2*

The Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) rebellion of 2012–13, which, at one point, saw the capture of Goma (capital of North Kivu), was a further expression of Congolese Tutsi concerns (and those of the Rwandan government) over the activities of the Hutu insurgency. But its failure, again, to defeat the FDLR, and a flawed military integration process, left many parts of South Kivu, formerly controlled by the FARDC, prey to the FDLR. This in turn prompted the emergence of a multitude of armed groups encouraged by the success of the Raia Mutomboki ('outraged citizens') movement in Shabunda district of South Kivu.<sup>5</sup>

First appearing in 2004 in the mineral-rich forests of Shabunda, Raia Mutomboki made its real impact in 2011 with the encouragement of a local religious leader, and supported by customary leaders in the area. Raia Mutomboki chased the FDLR out of many of its long-established bases with the use of traditional weapons. But what were initially local defence committees have progressively transformed into militias consolidating local power bases through the imposition of taxes and the exertion of force.

While the insurgencies in the Kivus have largely originated over genuine issues of legitimacy and ownership, they have, in large part, also become the focus for the consolidation of power of elite

<sup>4</sup> Huggins, C. (2010) *Land, Power and Identity. Roots of Violent Conflict in Eastern DRC*, London: International Alert.

<sup>5</sup> Embracing many of the 'magical' beliefs of the Mai Mai, they complement the estimated six other Mai Mai forces active in the region.

leadership and business interests.<sup>6</sup> A consequence for the land-poor, or those with no security of tenure, is the expropriation of property by those same elites. And the predatory instincts of the national army tasked with keeping the peace, and the efforts at forced integration following the various peace accords have '...become, paradoxically, an important incentive for armed mobilization'.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the almost unrelenting insecurity, the past few years have seen an easing of the situation, assisted by the world's second-largest peacekeeping force, the United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO<sup>8</sup>), and has allowed for limited economic growth and some small renewal of basic infrastructure. In the east, the focus of much of the worst conflict and insecurity, it has permitted many of those displaced by conflict to return home.

Recent events have proven the fragility of the situation with renewed conflict in South Kivu breaking out in 2017 and continuing between local militias on the one side and the national army and the (state-sponsored) resurgent M23 militia on the other (the Eastern Congo Initiative estimates that there were 70 armed groups in the Kivus at the end of the M23 rebellion),<sup>9</sup> and inter-ethnic tensions erupting in North Kivu in early 2018 (Human Rights Watch suggests 100 existed at the time of their World Report, 2018).<sup>10</sup>

In North Kivu, the main antagonists in the conflict were the FARDC, FDLR (Interahamwe/FAR rump) and Nyatura, an offshoot of the FDLR and Mai Mai. In South Kivu they were the FARDC, FDLR, the Raia Mutumboki, Mai Mai Maheshe, and Mai Mai Ntarumanga.

### Economy and population

The DRC has enjoyed erratic economic growth since the most recent, and pronounced, trough of the mid-1990s, supported in part by its natural resource riches. There is little to suggest, however, that any significant benefit has accrued to the vast majority of the population, with per capita income lagging behind the national economy. And little, if any, benefit will have accrued to the people of the Kivus.

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<sup>6</sup> This was not the initial motivation of either the CNDP or the M23. Lyall, G. (2017) 'Rebellion and Conflict Minerals in North Kivu', *ACCORD Conflict Trends* 2017/1, 24 April, <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/rebellion-conflict-minerals-north-kivu/>

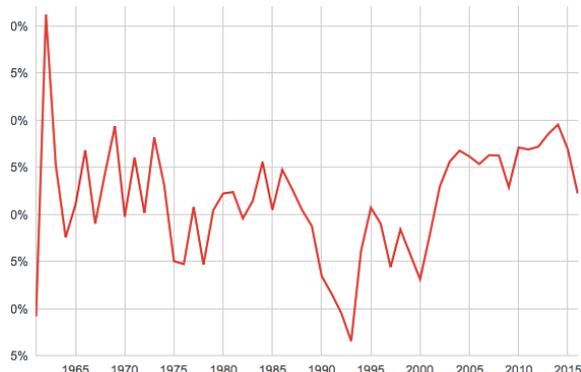
<sup>7</sup> Stearn, J. (2013) *The National Army and Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo. Untangling the Gordian Knot of Insecurity*, London: Rift Valley Institute Usalama Project.

<sup>8</sup> This stability is likely to be increasingly challenged, with MONUSCO now being drawn into the conflict in Kasai Centrale.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.easterncongo.org/about-drc/history-of-the-conflict> (accessed 24 March 2018).

<sup>10</sup> *Human Rights Watch World Report 2018*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018>

Figure 1: Percentage annual GDP growth



Source: World Bank data 2018.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 2: GDP per capita



Despite its resource riches, the economy consistently underperforms. Manufacturing and extractive industries constitute only 33% of GDP, with services taking the lion's share at 45.9%, and agriculture 21.1% (2017 estimate).<sup>12</sup> This represents a huge deficit in potential earnings. For example, land that is available for extensive agricultural production is estimated at 80m ha, with a further 4m ha of irrigated land, all accounting for 60% of new jobs.<sup>13</sup> And rivers and lakes abound, from which some glean a living.

Yet the DRC fails to satisfy its annual food needs, with farmers concentrating on the production of subsistence food crops such as cassava, sorghum, maize and tubers. In recognition of its underperformance, there is a drive to develop agro-industrial parks in different parts of the country to boost domestic production.

The DRC's population in 2017 was estimated at 78 million, of which about 40% was urban.<sup>14</sup> With a population density of 34.7/sq km, (15.3/sq km in 1990)<sup>15</sup> and a population growth rate of 3.2%, the DRC has little reason to worry about carrying capacity in the coming decades. However, population is unevenly distributed, such that, despite vast tracts of useable land, farmers in eastern Congo, for example, survive on less than 1ha, with many farming only 0.25ha.

Average per capita income nationally stands at \$406 per year. In 2012 it was estimated that 63% of the population lived below the poverty line.<sup>16</sup>

With tax revenue equivalent to 8% of GDP, there is little available to invest in services. Education expenditure commands about 16% of the government budget but only 2.25% of GDP. The overall school enrolment ratio is unknown (although the PAJM study<sup>17</sup> indicates a high secondary education attainment rate in the case of Goma). In 2014 there was one teacher for every 35 primary school children (or 28 teachers per 1,000).<sup>18</sup> Despite this, youth literacy is remarkably high at 85% and

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.google.co.uk/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9\\_&met\\_y=ny\\_gdp\\_mktp\\_kd\\_zg&hl=en&dl=en#lctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met\\_y=ny\\_gdp\\_pcap\\_kd&scale\\_y=lin&ind\\_y=false&rdim=country&idim=country:COD&ifdim=country:region:SSF&hl=en\\_US&dl=en&ind=false](https://www.google.co.uk/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9_&met_y=ny_gdp_mktp_kd_zg&hl=en&dl=en#lctype=l&strail=false&bcs=d&nselm=h&met_y=ny_gdp_pcap_kd&scale_y=lin&ind_y=false&rdim=country&idim=country:COD&ifdim=country:region:SSF&hl=en_US&dl=en&ind=false) (accessed 20 February 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Indexmundi.com, 2018; data source CIA *World Factbook*.

<sup>13</sup> But it is estimated that, due to conflict in particular, only 10% is currently exploited, <http://www.our-africa.org/democratic-republic-of-congo/climate-agriculture> (accessed 9 March 2018).

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF (2016) *State of the World's Children 2016: A Fair Chance for Every Child*, New York NY: UNICEF, [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF\\_SOWC\\_2016.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Ethiopia= 102/ha, Sudan 23/ha.

<sup>16</sup> CIA *World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html> (accessed 9 March 2018).

<sup>17</sup> Kabudi, A.M. (2015) 'Prevalence and Associated Factors of Partially/Non-Immunization of Under-Five in Goma City, Democratic Republic of Congo: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Survey', *Pan African Journal of Medicine* 20.38, published online 14 January, <http://www.panafrican-med-journal.com/content/article/20/38/full/>

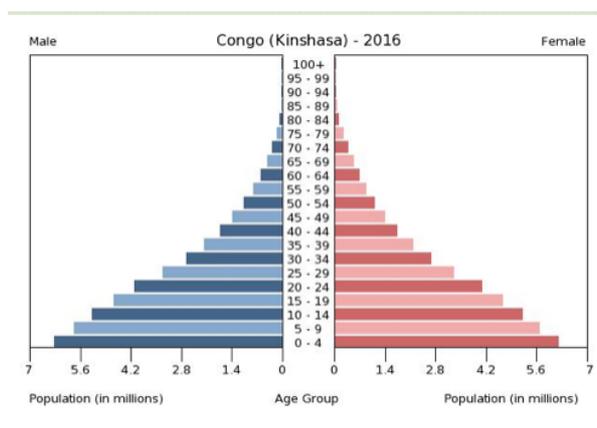
<sup>18</sup> [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo/Student\\_teacher\\_ratio\\_primary\\_school/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo/Student_teacher_ratio_primary_school/)

primary school completion stands at nearly 70%,<sup>19</sup> reflecting a historical pride in the household in educational attainment (and possibly the commitment of the churches). However, only 69% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are literate, compared to 88% for men.

Health expenditure has a 1.6% share of GDP and 11% of the national budget. With only 0.96 nurses and midwives per 1,000 population, and 0.09 physicians, immunisation rates amongst under-5s are surprisingly high (60% DPT3, 77% of surviving infants with measles immunity). However, there are inevitably variations by region. A recent survey showed under-5 immunisation coverage in Goma town to be 25.7%.<sup>20</sup> Child mortality stands at 94/1,000, down from 146/1,000 in 2012.<sup>21</sup>

Life expectancy hovers at around 50 years old, with women having a better survival rate than men.

Figure 3: Population pyramid



Source: Indexmundi.com (2018).

Despite the pride in educational attainment, there are few opportunities for off-farm employment. The underperforming industrial sector absorbs only about 21% of the workforce, compared to 35% in agriculture.<sup>22</sup> Eighty per cent of women work on the farm, compared to 60% of men. And with increasing male migration in search of paid work, the burden of assuring rural household food security will inevitably fall on women.

With a young population projected to grow by 106% by 2035,<sup>23</sup> off-farm employment opportunities will become a pressing issue in the absence of a better-performing primary sector.

### Trends in humanitarian assistance

The DRC saw a steady decline in humanitarian funding from its peak in 2009, largely attributable to the demands of the crisis in the Middle East. MONUSCO, however, continued to attract substantial support.<sup>24</sup> The downward funding trend was reversed in 2015 as tensions rose again in the east of the country. In 2017 a three-year humanitarian appeal was launched in line with the recommendations of the World Humanitarian Summit. With the further upsurge of violence in eastern DRC, and, in particular, Kasaï Centrale, the 2018 Humanitarian Appeal stands at \$1.68bn, an upward revision of 50% on the three-year projection. Despite the need, the appeal was only 33% funded by December 2017.

<sup>19</sup> All USAID data.

<sup>20</sup> Kabudi (2015), see footnote 17.

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF (2015) *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality*,

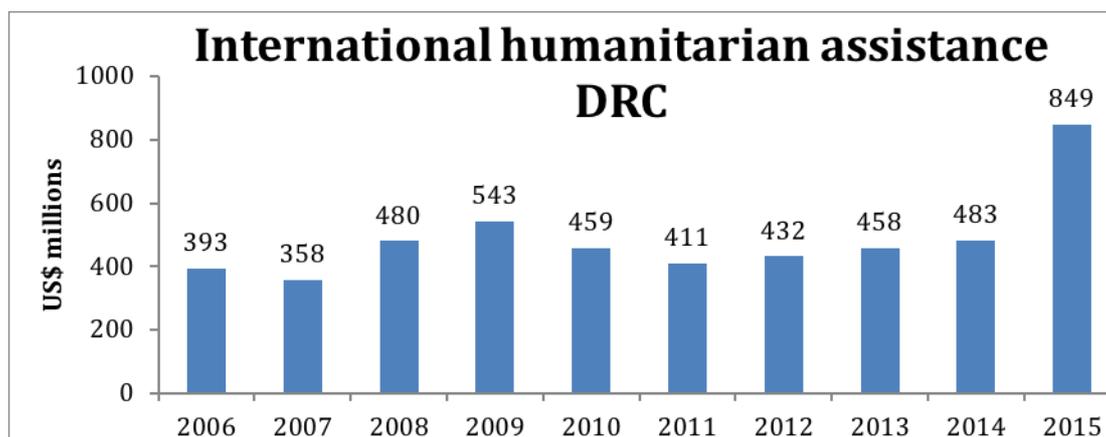
[https://www.unicef.org/media/files/IGME\\_report\\_2015\\_child\\_mortality\\_final.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/files/IGME_report_2015_child_mortality_final.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <https://globaledege.msu.edu/countries/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/economy>

<sup>23</sup> Human Capital Research Portal, <http://www.hcresearchportal.com/reports/drc>

<sup>24</sup> In 2013 support to MONUSCO amounted to \$461m, while total humanitarian assistance was \$449m.

Figure 4: International humanitarian assistance in the DRC



Source: Development Initiatives GHA based on OECD DAC and UN OCHA FTS data 2006–15.<sup>25</sup>

## 1.2 Methodology

As outlined in the introduction, the purpose of the evaluation was to generate evidence and learning on the use of MYHF in fragile and conflict-affected states. The evaluation had three main questions:

1. Are vulnerable individuals and households more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of the work of DFID-funded interventions?
2. Has the availability of contingency funding enabled DFID and its partners to respond more quickly and effectively when conditions deteriorate?
3. To what extent does DFID multi-year (MY) and pre-approved contingency funding provide better value for money than annual funding for DFID and partners?

Over the period of the evaluation, the policy and practice debate within DFID moved on, as the MY approach gained considerable traction. As a result, the research questions were adjusted to reflect the dynamic nature of the debate. The questions addressed in this summative report are, therefore:

1. Are vulnerable individuals and households more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of the work of DFID-funded (and other) interventions? What lessons can be learned about how to best enhance resilience in protracted crisis? How do investments in resilience contribute to or compromise delivery of humanitarian outcomes?
2. Has the availability of contingency funding enabled DFID and its partners to respond more quickly and effectively when conditions deteriorate?
3. To what extent does DFID MY and contingency funding provide better VFM than annual funding for DFID and partners?

The evaluation employed a range of methods to answer these questions, including a qualitative panel survey for Q1, and a review of available data and, where possible, key informant interviews, for Q3.

The research employed method mixed inductive and deductive processes. It was primarily inductive and iterative in nature to answer the resilience question. This was felt necessary both because of the contested and formative nature of resilience theories at the outset of the evaluation, and because MYHF was, at the time, a novel approach. However, there has also been a deductive element: the

<sup>25</sup> GHA's calculation of international humanitarian assistance from government donors.

VFM study drew on earlier work around the potential benefits of VFM in MY programming, which provided a framework that could be tested.

### Question one: resilience

In order to answer the question as to whether vulnerable individuals and households are more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of DFID interventions, it was necessary to consider each element in turn.

As a first step, the evaluation needed to understand the nature of the shocks and stresses that people experience in their different environments. Next, it needed to understand the degree to which people or households are resilient in the face of these shocks and stresses. Finally, the functioning of DFID-funded and other funded interventions needed to be understood.

These three elements together also helped to understand whether lessons can be learned about enhancing resilience, and whether the MY investments contribute to, or undermine, it.

DFID produced an Approach Paper on resilience in 2012.<sup>26</sup> Central to this was the idea of 'capacity to deal with disturbance', or whether – and how – people can cope with shocks. This idea is also central to the widely used Béné framework<sup>27</sup> with its three elements of 'coping capacity' – absorptive, adaptive and transformative.

The evaluation therefore took 'coping' as a starting point to understanding resilience. In brief, the evaluation looked at:

1. The types of shocks people and households experienced;
2. How they coped; and
3. The role that aid, in the broadest sense, played in their coping.

Initially the enquiry took a panel approach. This, it was felt, would help to document both shocks and coping in the DRC context, and whether and how people received assistance.

The panel survey was designed to be as open and wide-ranging as possible, over a period of 24 months,<sup>28</sup> allowing an understanding of shocks, and coping with shocks – whether covariate or idiosyncratic<sup>29</sup> – from the perspective of people experiencing them, over time and in real time. This approach was anticipated to allow the team to determine patterns of coping (who coped better, and why) and thus give some insight into resilience. If patterns were determined, or there were shocks that warranted further in-depth study, then the research could be pivoted towards this, theories formed and then further tested. This bottom-up, inductive approach was very open-ended, with the intention of narrowing the enquiry over time as patterns were detected, allowing conclusions to be reached about the nature of resilience, and the role that MYHF could play in enhancing it.

Concurrently, the evaluation wanted to understand, as thoroughly as was possible, the DFID-funded MYHF programmes and what they did. That is, by understanding the role aid played in helping people cope, and which aid was associated with DFID MYHF programmes, the evaluation would be able to draw some conclusions on research question one. This consisted primarily of a periodic

<sup>26</sup> DFID (2012) *Defining Disaster Resilience: A DFID Approach Paper*, London: UKAID.

<sup>27</sup> Béné, C. et al. (2012) *Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny?*, IDS Working Paper 405, Brighton: IDS.

<sup>28</sup> Four 'rounds' of the panel survey were envisaged at roughly six-monthly intervals over the two years that were available.

<sup>29</sup> Covariate: experienced by the many; idiosyncratic: experienced by the individual person or family unit.

review of partner documentation, and, when possible, key informant interviews with programme staff and leaders within the DFID partner agencies.

The enquiry attempted to capture the impact of the cyclical nature of the current conflicts in North and South Kivu, which had been in play since 1993. In the course of the research, the turbulence that had surrounded the subject households subsided for a period, only to resurge again in 2017.

#### Question two: Contingency funding

None of the three grants under the DFID business case for the DRC had contingency funds attached.

#### Question three: Value for money

As set out above, the approach to VFM was more *deductive* than *inductive*. An earlier DFID paper set out a theoretical framework.<sup>30</sup> That paper identified potential gains across three broad areas:

- a. Predictability of funding allows more strategic partnerships and better planning and can facilitate the choice of the most appropriate interventions as well as cost savings from making long-term investments, leverage of additional funds, pre-positioning of stocks and pooling orders.
- b. Flexibility for early response means agencies can react more appropriately and/or quickly to changing conditions, resulting in reduced caseloads, levels of need and loss of life.
- c. Lower operational costs of MY funding can result in decreased aid costs, for example procurement and staff costs, savings on proposal writing and reduced currency risk.

The evaluation set out to test this theory by gathering data from partners. The framework for the VFM component of the analysis sought to answer three questions:

1. *How far has MYHF actually operated as MY funding?* The degree to which MYHF actually functions as MYHF, especially within the recipient organisations' operational structures, and for downstream-funded partners.
2. *Are costs lower as a result of MYHF/contingency funding?* Savings in relation to both administrative costs (e.g. staff costs, proposal writing), and operational costs (procurement and pre-positioning).
3. *Are programmes more effective as a result of MYHF/contingency funding?* Whether partners are able to respond earlier, leading to interventions that are more effective, and whether they are able to design better projects through better analysis, more participatory approaches, and the ability to adapt over a longer time horizon.

An interim report was produced looking at the VFM of MYHF drawing primarily on data from Ethiopia and other examples.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Cabot Venton, C. (2013) *Value for Money of Multiyear Approaches to Humanitarian Funding*, London: DFID.

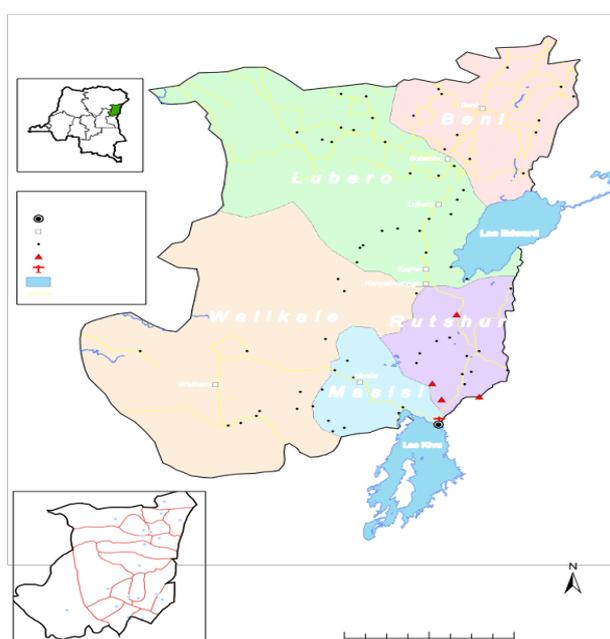
<sup>31</sup> Cabot Venton, C. and Sida, L. (2016) *The Value for Money of Multi-Year Humanitarian Financing: Emerging Findings*, Valid Evaluations.

### Substantive research areas

The evaluation selected three research districts in both North and South Kivu, and within them, three villages in each location except Walungu (which only had two). The choice of district was made in consultation with DFID DRC and the MYHF partners and represented the main locations for their assistance. The villages were selected randomly.

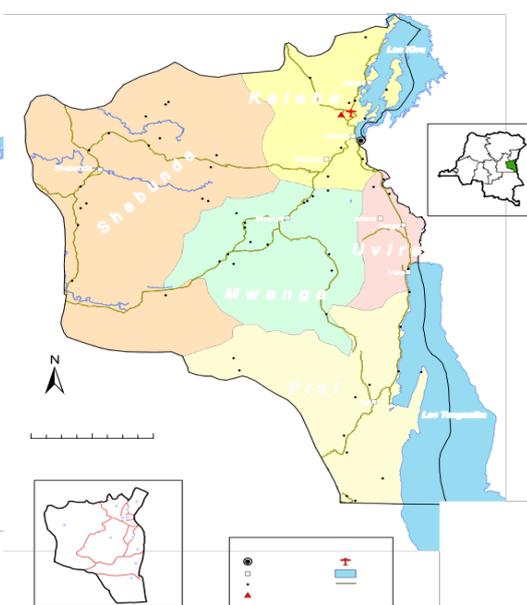
- **North Kivu Masisi:** Bweremana, Bulwa and Mafuo villages  
*Nyiragongo:* Bugeregere, Kanyati and Mutao villages  
*Rutshuru:* Buhuri, Kabasanza and Ntamugenga villages
- **South Kivu Kabare:** Kagabi, Kabare and Kamembe villages  
*Kalahe:* Bushusha, Kamabale and Chogero villages  
*Walungu:* Luntukulu and Mushangi villages

Figure 5: North Kivu



Source: IRIN.

Figure 6: South Kivu



Source: IRIN.

The villages of North Kivu had mixed populations of indigenous Hunde and mostly Rwandese Tutsis and Hutus and Bahima from South West Uganda. The villagers of South Kivu were almost entirely from local (Congolese) ethnic groups. All villages were recipients of DFID MY funding. Some villages in both provinces were host to families displaced by recurrent conflict.

The majority of the villages were surrounded by arable land, although those in Masisi were surrounded by both extensive livestock grazing and arable agriculture. Some had access to the lake for fishing. Of the six villages, only Luntukulu, in the highlands of South Kivu, was at a substantial distance from a major market.<sup>32</sup> All the districts except Rutshuru were served by roads that were of poor quality, or worse.

<sup>32</sup> Major markets in North Kivu were Masisi town, Rutshuru town and Goma (for Nyiragongo); in South Kivu they were Bukavu (for Kabare and Kalehe) and Walungu.

### Research team composition

A team of local researchers, recommended by the Université Libre des Pays des Grand Lacs (ULPGL) was engaged for each research location. Comprising seven men and three women each, all held a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a social science or humanities, and spoke French and the local languages.

While each team was location-specific, members rotated between locations to provide a different angle on interviewing techniques and to build capacity for future activities.

Senior international development specialists were engaged for specific tasks either in-country for field research or in the UK to advise on specific research tasks. In April 2016, the team leader and his deputy, along with representatives of the other three research countries, the core research team and senior specialists, attended a four-day stock-taking and experience-sharing workshop in Ethiopia.

The research effort benefited enormously from the support of UNICEF and Concern Worldwide in particular. The team held regular introductory and feedback sessions with all the MYHF partners and with DFID staff in Goma.

### Capture and analysis of the data

The panel survey interviews were grouped around four simple questions covering:

1. What shocks people had experienced, both historically and between interviews. This was sometimes framed as 'problems'.
2. How they had coped with the 'problems', sometimes framed as 'solutions'.
3. Whether they had received 'assistance' (including from family, friends, community, government, NGOs and so on).
4. Whether they recovered.

A test field exercise was carried out as part of the initial methodology training in both provinces. Experience from the Ethiopia pilots was fed into the DRC interview effort, in particular the addition of a retrospective element looking at past shocks suffered and recovery strategies deployed by the household subjects.

Basic demographic and household data was taken routinely, and, where possible, contact details recorded so that people could be revisited. All household interviews were accompanied by focus group discussions (FGDs) in each village visited, and key informant interviews held at local and provincial capital levels.

Where possible and appropriate, interviews were noted both manually and recorded verbatim on dictaphones, then translated and transcribed. These were then coded using the MAXQDA12 qualitative coding software.

The team held regular briefings with DFID staff at the provincial level. The team leader participated in, and presented at, a UN humanitarian country team retreat in 2015. Due to the distances and costs involved, the team met less frequently with DFID staff in Kinshasa than was hoped. Government at province level and below was consulted by the teams on an 'as needed' basis. The VE national coordinator maintained a regular dialogue with all concerned parties both during and between research rounds. The global research team monitored and incorporated the findings of other studies in areas of specific interest, both within the DRC and more widely.

Analysis has been carried out over time and for this summative report. The MAXQDA coding tree was established after the first round of interviews, and improved on subsequently. For this report, codes were shared between team members and the data extracted against them. This was then synthesised by each team member and the findings discussed (and shared) in regular subsequent analysis meetings.

### Limitations to the research methodology and implementation

It was originally planned to carry out four rounds of interviews each in North and South Kivu over the period 2015–17. Eventually, however, this target was revised to two full rounds in North and South Kivu together, and a third round in North Kivu alone. This was for four reasons:

- First, the *insecurity in the research areas* in the early months of the research period made timing of the interviews very difficult.
- Second, in common with all such endeavours, *the logistics of the research exercise were difficult and costly* and, at times, almost insurmountable (dilapidated roads and bridges, washouts, the after-effects of insecurity, etc.).
- Third, the *first two rounds of interviews were remarkably similar*, so much so that full third and fourth rounds were considered to be of marginal return in terms of useful additional data collected and the time and cost entailed in gathering it.
- Lastly, the evidence from the two full rounds showed that *greater value was to be gained from investing in a study on household health and the cost of health* than on a repeat panel effort (see below).

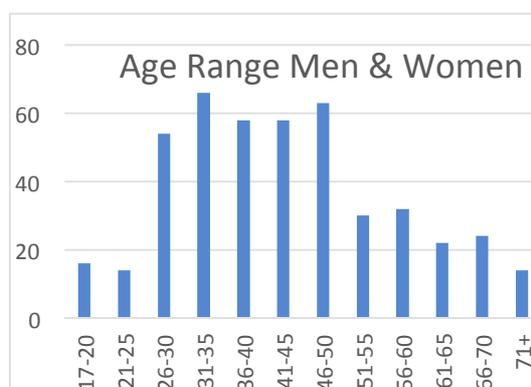
Retention of the research team staff over the period of the research was not a problem. As already noted in the country context above, educational attainment is remarkably high given the abnegation of responsibility by the government for all service provision. However, in common with all the countries researched, adoption and refinement of the interviewing skills required for the panel surveys took time and therefore detail was likely to have been lost.

**Table 1: Gender breakdown of the respondents**

Variables	North Kivu	South Kivu
Men	51%	52%
Women	49%	48%
<i>Age range</i>		
17–25	19%	27%
26–35	24%	30%
36–45	13%	21%
46–55	14%	14%
56–65	16%	5%
65+	14%	3%
<i>Household size</i>		
1–3	19%	4%
4–5	21%	15%
6–7	30%	31%
8–9	17%	11%
10+	13%	39%

The evaluation eventually conducted 431 individual household interviews for the panel survey, in the course of three rounds in North Kivu and two in South Kivu. Differences in numbers of household interviews conducted per round can be explained by displacement due to insurgent activity and for domestic reasons.

Figure 7: Age range for the respondents (%)



The interviews were undertaken at regular (approximately six-month) intervals. The third round in North Kivu was selective, concentrating on specific issues to inform a study on the cost of ill health, which accompanies this report.

Table 2: Interviews for the panel survey by location and round

Location	R1	R2	R3	Total
North Kivu	105	85	70	260
South Kivu	95	76		171
TOTAL				431

	North Kivu	South Kivu
Round 1	Jan 2015	July 2015
Round 2	Aug 2015	Feb 2016
Round 3	Aug 2016	

### 1.3 DFID portfolio

DFID had three main multi-year partners over the course of this evaluation. Table 3 shows the rough allocations and time frame.

Table 3: Partners, location and funding amounts for DFID projects

Partner	Programme area	Value	Time frame
NRC	IDPs	£6.10m	2013–17
ACF	Nutrition	£4.40m	2012–15
UNICEF	Cash	£5.98m	2014–16

Of the three partners, only two – UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) – implemented or funded work in North and South Kivu specifically, while Action Contre la Faim (ACF, Action Against Hunger) targeted its nutrition assistance on Maniema and Bas Congo Provinces. Being in support of the Nutrition Emergency Pool (PUNC) of the Ministry of Health (MoH), however, ACF was able to move to areas where the MoH identified nutrition emergencies. Although the NRC programme was scheduled for four years, it closed in 2016 (see below) having reported on activities completed at that point.

### ACF: Nutrition Emergency Pool (PUNC) in the DRC

The ACF package went to the support of the national Nutrition Emergency Pool, a function of the DRC MoH. The objective of the programme was to identify areas affected by nutritional crises but not receiving NGO support, and to provide immediate emergency assistance as a last resort. PUNC teams are deployed to confirm a nutrition emergency on an alert from the surveillance system of the MoH 'SNSAP',<sup>33</sup> local authorities, inter-agency missions, nutritional surveys or screenings. Within days of confirmation of an emergency, PUNC provides the technical and organisational skills to local health structures in the affected health zones, and the material support needed for the setting up and running of a nutrition programme. Continuous technical support is complemented with daily monitoring to ensure a quality service and adherence to national treatment protocols.

### NRC: Increasing Resilience of People Affected by Multiple Displacement

The NRC programme set out to bolster the resilience of communities (both displaced and host) to the constant upheavals brought about by the conflicts in North and South Kivu. Starting from a view that resilience was a nebulous concept for the humanitarian community in the two provinces, the project set out to define and reduce vulnerability and bolster resilience through: systems modelling; testing innovative programming approaches to build resilience; and advocating for improved response among the humanitarian and development communities. Using a 'longitudinal tracking' approach, the project aimed to:

- Analyse variables relating to vulnerability and resilience in repeated displacement over time;
- Build a measurable resilience index based on a common definition of resilience in the context of displacement;
- Apply this understanding to design pilot programmes intended to influence resilience of PAD (people affected by displacement) over time through directly engaging with resilience dynamics (but accepting that emergency response capacity had to be integrated into this approach); and
- Use evidence – both from research and from pilot project learning – to engage relevant stakeholders across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors to promote a structural shift in response.

This programme was to run alongside NRC's other core activities in the two provinces, namely education (both 'soft' and 'hard' inputs such as accelerated learning and schools construction), shelter and WASH, all within an overall protection framework.

The NRC programme was closed before completion. Although it did not reach its intended conclusion, great merit is to be accorded to DFID DRC for investment in an innovative approach which gathered large amounts of data and allowed the implementing partners to gain insights into the livelihoods of their intended beneficiaries. Key outputs were a short report on the findings of research into the constituent elements of resilience in displaced populations, providing pointers to the holistic nature of the concept.<sup>34</sup> A number of its insights are reflected in the VE panel interviews. A further output was a computer simulation package for projecting livelihood outcomes for multi-displaced populations until 2030.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> SNSAP: Surveillance Nutritionnelle, Sécurité alimentaire et Alerte Précoce (Nutrition, Food Security Monitoring and Early Warning). The SNSAP system is 100% managed by the MoH (Pronanut). It covered 119 health zones (ZS) in 2012.

<sup>34</sup> *Understanding Resilience: Lessons from a Causal Modeling Framework*. ClimateInteractive, January 2016, [www.cilimateinteractive.org](http://www.cilimateinteractive.org)

<sup>35</sup> The model was complex and ambitious and proved difficult to develop in the North Kivu context.

### UNICEF: Alternative Responses for Communities in Crisis (ARCC) II

The programme built on lessons learned from ARCC I (also DFID-supported), which aimed to promote innovative approaches to assisting conflict-affected communities. While ARCC I majored on the distribution of cash vouchers for use in NFI fairs,<sup>36</sup> promoting local trade and permitting beneficiaries the luxury of choice in what they received, ARCC II focused on: building an understanding of household resilience behaviour in crises; and the use of cash as a means to address needs, both in programme areas where cash has traditionally been used (e.g. NFIs) and in under-exploited sectors such as nutrition, education and protection.

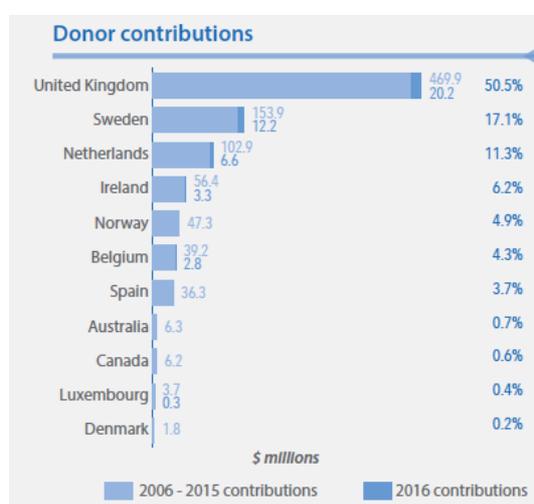
The programme was again implemented through partner NGOs, which included the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in South Kivu. The cash element was not implemented until October 2016, so might not appear in the panel interviews.<sup>37</sup> Experience from ARCC II was intended to inform the development of a social safety net in the DRC and support UNICEF's global objectives agreed with the Government of the DRC.<sup>38</sup>

### UN Humanitarian (Pooled) Fund (HF)

DFID has consistently been the largest contributor to the HF since its inception in 2006 (50.5% of the total, with Sweden a distant second at 17%). The contribution in 2015 was 52% (\$20.2m of \$40.8m total) and in 2016 was 44.5% (\$20.2m of \$45.4m total). Although UN OCHA is not strictly a multi-year partner, this grant is worth noting as it is such a large part of the humanitarian portfolio.

The HF financed a number of projects in North and South Kivu in 2015 and 2016, but very few in the areas in which the VE research took place. The majority of the projects covered immediate assistance to specific conflict-affected populations.

Figure 8: Donor contributions to UN Humanitarian Fund

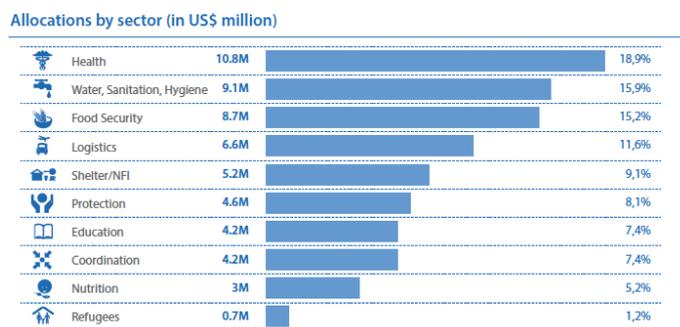


<sup>36</sup> Implemented by Concern Worldwide, AVSI and Solidarités Internationale.

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Congo\\_\(Democratic\\_Republic\\_of\\_the\)\\_2016\\_COAR.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Congo_(Democratic_Republic_of_the)_2016_COAR.pdf) (accessed 28 March 2017).

<sup>38</sup> ARCC III was initiated in 2016 and ran until 2017.

Figure 9: UN Humanitarian Fund allocation by sector



### Programmes funded by USAID and ECHO

As with many other humanitarian contexts, the two other major humanitarian donors in the DRC are USAID and ECHO.

**USAID** funded a number of NGO and UN humanitarian programmes during the research period (i.e. FY 2014/15 and FY 2015/16) through its three channels (OFDA, FFP and PRM) with some grants devoted to North Kivu only, some for both Kivu provinces and some covering the Kivus and other provinces. The majority of the grants covered: agriculture, food security and NFI; NFI, shelter and settlements; health and WASH.

Some were specific to a financial year and some embraced both financial years.<sup>39,40</sup> The detail in available summary sheets was at province level. Because of the distribution across years and at meta-level, it is difficult to be precise as to the dollar value *to the Kivus* of these grants, let alone to the areas subject to the VE panel survey. It is probable that these funded activities appear in the VE interviews, but they are not always attributed to a specific agency and rarely, if ever, to the donor.

**ECHO**<sup>41</sup> approved a total of 17 grants (specific to the Kivus or to these and neighbouring provinces) in 2015, and ten grants in 2016. A minority were assigned to 'eastern DRC'. Whereas in 2015 the grants covered a number of cluster activities (and included support for cash through IRC, AVSI and NRC), those for 2016 were more limited, with five out of ten being for health or WASH. The UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS) does not provide details, in most cases, as to the specific populations served by each grant.<sup>42</sup> It is difficult, therefore, as with the USAID allocations, to assign the value of the grants to the VE research areas.

As for the DFID and USAID contributions, the ECHO-funded activities are very probably referenced in the VE interviews but, again, as for DFID and USAID, are not always attributed to an organisation and rarely, if ever, to the donor.

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/drc\\_ce\\_fs04\\_07-21-2015.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/drc_ce_fs04_07-21-2015.pdf) and

[https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/drc\\_ce\\_fs01\\_02-03-2016.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/drc_ce_fs01_02-03-2016.pdf) (accessed 28 March 2018).

<sup>40</sup> Since the final round of interviews took place in October 2016, the start of USAID FY 2016/17, grants approved for that year are not included.

<sup>41</sup> Information from UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service.

<sup>42</sup> Those grants that clearly indicate a geographic limitation are excluded from this summary.

## 2. Findings

A resilient state at the household level depends upon a number of factors. In the DRC, these are:

- The willingness and ability to diversify and adapt;<sup>43</sup>
- Building, maintaining and accessing social capital;
- Building and nurturing family support; and
- Access to, and provision of, assistance.

Life for the average citizen of the Kivus is largely lived on the edge. Decades of misrule (or no rule) and co-optation of land, resources and populations for selfish exploitation and gain have left government and governance in tatters. The consequences of the Rwanda genocide, conflicts in the west of Uganda and in Burundi, and the downfall of Mobutu have seen almost constant civil conflict, insurgency and small- and large-scale displacement.

Added to the general dereliction of duty of government towards its people, there has been, and continues to be, manipulation of citizenship for political gain by both the DRC authorities and those of neighbouring countries. For the people of the Kivus, then, there is no guarantee of physical security and almost no security of land tenure. For some the assurance of nationality and citizenship is, to all intents and purposes, by *fiat*.

All of these challenges are accompanied by almost constant household food insecurity even when displacement is not a threat.<sup>44</sup> There are rudimentary communications; very poor access to social services such as health and education; an unstable currency and regular price inflation (averaging 26% since 1999, and standing at 58.1% in January 2018).<sup>45</sup> Major markets function well for those living nearby, but distant markets suffer from poor infrastructure and poor integration.

And all of these challenges are faced with the common understanding that, if you are to succeed, it will be by your own efforts (it is said the 15th Article of the 14-Article Constitution is '*débrouillez-vous*' – sort it out for yourself).

### 2.1 Livelihoods and poverty

Livelihoods in the two study areas of North and South Kivu are insecure and unpredictable. The study took part in a number of different 'livelihood zones'.<sup>46</sup> In North Kivu the three areas chosen were predominantly agricultural and peri-urban; in South Kivu there were also areas proximate to the lake that relied on fishing, and upland communities dependent on mining. However, almost all of the households in this study relied on multiple sources of income with unskilled labour as the main source of cash.

Nearly half of those interviewed (46%)<sup>47</sup> were dependent on daily labour, with most of this being farm labour. Rates varied a little across the region from 1,000 CDF to 2,000 CDF per day (roughly £1–2 per day). However, this labour was not reliable or secure, and it was not every day. Partly this

<sup>43</sup> Béné *et al.* (2014) placed adaptive capacity as one of the constituents of a resilient existence. Béné, Christophe; Newsham, Andrew; Davies, Mark; Ulrichs, Martina and Godfrey-Wood, Rachel (2014) 'Resilience, Poverty and Development', *Journal of International Development*, available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jid.2992>

<sup>44</sup> This is in contrast to the optimistic picture painted by FEWS. FEWS NET (2015) *Democratic Republic of the Congo: Staple Food Market Fundamentals October 2015*, available at: <http://fewsn.net/southern-africa/democratic-republic-congo/markets-trade/october-2015>

<sup>45</sup> <https://tradingeconomics.com/congo/inflation-cpi> (accessed 12 March 2018).

<sup>46</sup> Using the Household Economy Analysis definitions, the research took place in two zones: Mountain Agro-Pastoral and Midland Savannah Agriculture.

<sup>47</sup> This is 46% of those interviewed, rather than – by extrapolation – 46% of the population. As the study is qualitative rather than quantitative, such a claim would be statistically inaccurate. However, it is certainly a good approximation to think in terms of half or more of the population relying on daily labour.

was because those involved in daily farm labour were also cultivating their own plots and partly because there is always a glut of cheap labour and only a periodic need for workers. Typically, people reported working less than four times per week, and for the majority it was less.

**Table 4: Income-generating activities**

Labour	46%
Trade	27%
Employment	12%
Skilled	4%
Farming	10%

The second most frequently occurring income-generating activities were petty trade and cash crop production (27% of those interviewed). This overlaps with other forms of income generation – the other significant categories being farming, fishing, employment (almost exclusively teaching) and skilled labour (masons, carpenters and plumbers). For nearly all of those engaged in petty trade or cash crop production, volume was extremely low and the types of commodities extremely limited.

The single largest activity was the sale of cassava, either tubers or flour,<sup>48</sup> followed by a variety of foodstuffs in local markets, from vegetables to fish fry.<sup>49</sup> Some of this was actual trading – buying avocados from remote villages and taking them to market; some was selling own produce such as bananas; and much was a mix of the two. People sold their own produce and used the small profit to buy other small commodities, which they then sold in their village and so on. Making and selling beer (mostly *kisiki*, a local home brewed beer) was the other major activity in this category.

Much of the profit of petty trade is consumed instantly, meaning financial profits can be small or even non-existent. A number of those interviewed sell cassava flour.

**Table 5: Rates for daily labour (CDF)**

under 1,000	10%
1,000–2,000	56%
2,000–5,000	19%
5,000+	14%

Table 5 sets out a rough breakdown of the rates that interviewees for this study reported receiving for paid employment. Well-off farmers also gained income from the sale of their produce.

The 2017 Household Economy Analysis (HEA) baselines found that the very poorest earned between 600,000 CDF and 1m CDF (roughly \$600–1,000 per year), with the poor and middle groups earning over \$1,000 per year (see Table 6). This roughly corresponds with the findings from this evaluation's interviews, with 2,000 CDF per day roughly equating to \$600 per year. In terms of a working week this is roughly equivalent to \$5 per day, which for a family of more than five people (and nearly all are), this still puts this best-off group below the international poverty line.

<sup>48</sup> This is a very common form of petty trade for women, and the profit yielded is, typically, minimal; interviewees describe a few thousand francs worth depending on their available capital or credit, usually around 5,000 CDF (\$5.00). Each \$0.50 sale value yields a profit of \$0.10, making the profit from a day's trading equivalent to a day's labour. However, since a proportion of the flour goes in home consumption, a day's trading profit might yield only \$0.50 in cash.

<sup>49</sup> Whitebait.

Table 6: Annual income per household

Wealth group	Very poor	Poor	Middle	Better off
Annual income per household	600,000–1m CDF	900,000–1.5m CDF	3–8m CDF	7–11m CDF

In this pre-harvest time, I keep myself busy looking for casual jobs and working for others either digging pits, doing the porter jobs or working on the farms in order to survive. In this way, I get at least some 2,000 CDF to buy food. I work either one of the jobs once a week. For instance, lately I worked to clear a farm for one week and a half and was paid 9,000 CDF. *Masisi/Mafuo 08R2*

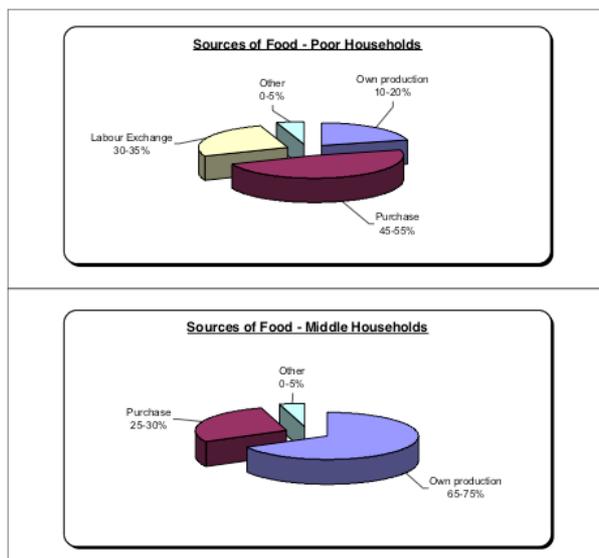
The best off, in terms of income, are teachers, especially those with an 'official number'.<sup>50</sup> This entitles them to a salary of 103,000 CDF or roughly \$100 per month. Most combine this with farming and petty trade. One or two traders also stand out as doing better than the rest; this relates to either holding capital or having some form of advantage – for instance a market stall, a preferential transportation arrangement, or knowledge of where to source a product. A couple of those interviewed had property in nearby towns or larger farms that they rented. Several of those in lakeside villages had small canoes that they either used for fishing or rented out; one interviewee ran a small team of fishermen.

Almost everyone interviewed grew produce of some sort for their own consumption, and many kept livestock too. Few of these grew enough to cover their food needs. Subsistence was, therefore a mix of infrequently earned income and unpredictable harvests from predominantly small plots. A typical story illustrates the point:

I have two fields in which I grow cassava, maize and beans. My two fields measure 50m by 50m each. I also have a garden next to my house where I grow amaranths and marrow [leaves]. For this growing season, I have produced five basins of beans [120kg]. I could harvest more but I ate some fresh. I have sold the balance for 40,000 CDF. With this I bought a loincloth for 12,000 CDF, one pair of shoes for 6,000 CDF, and I paid 4,000 CDF for the sewing of that loincloth, that altogether is 22,000 CDF. I helped a friend of mine from Minova [a neighbouring village] who organised her daughter's marriage with the 18,000 CDF that remained. Concerning cassavas, I have harvested eight baskets. And I harvested a 100kg bag of maize. I still have cassava and maize in the house. I am waiting [for] the rise in these produces' price on the market so that I sell them. *Masisi/Bweremana 06R3*

<sup>50</sup> This refers to teachers who have Ministry of Education teacher certification, and are officially on the payroll.

Figure 10: Sources of food for 'poor' and 'middle' households



The 2017 HEA analysis estimates that poor and very poor households gain most of their food needs from purchase, with their own production contributing less than 20% (see Figure 10). This appears to have declined slightly from the previous HEA in 2003. Then, poor households were purchasing about 50% of their food needs; now it is over 60% for very poor households. This corresponds closely with the findings from this evaluation, where typically the poorest households either had no land (apart from a kitchen garden) or leased very small plots (some only 15m by 20m).

Section 2.2 looks in some detail at so-called 'coping' strategies, but for this very poor and poor group it is routine to eat only one meal per day, two at the most. These meals are also nutritionally very poor – typically roots and tubers with cassava leaves.

Most of those interviewed had very few assets. All of those in our cohort had some form of housing, and with a few exceptions some land for cultivation (although, as noted above, often rented and very small) and of tenuous title. Roughly a third of households had livestock but not in great numbers: typically they had two or three sheep or goats; a few households kept chickens; one interviewee kept guinea pigs (for consumption, a common foodstuff); and several in South Kivu had pigs. Only one household interviewed had cattle.

Most of those involved in petty trading had capital that allowed them to trade but not to accumulate. This appears to be combined with credit lines from suppliers. The largest capital amount recorded in the interviews was \$1,400, with a more typical amount being \$100. The fishermen in Bushushu owned boats worth a few hundred dollars; one larger owner paid \$1,000 for a dugout that held 12 people and \$3,500 for his net (his neighbour had one that he valued at \$300). Lastly, the two families in Bushushu owned property in Buvaku, one of which they valued at \$13,000. This was the absolute exception, however.

## 2.2 Shocks

There are multiple shocks registered throughout the period under enquiry. They group into four categories: conflict, insecurity and theft; health and illness; crop disease; and natural hazard shocks.

Of the 17 villages studied over the two-year period, one had experienced major conflict, causing the villagers to displace, and a subsequent cholera outbreak on their return; one had experienced a

major flood and landslide with more than 50 houses destroyed; and one had experienced a major and ongoing IDP influx.

### Conflict and displacement

Conflict and insecurity are pervasive in the household interviews and FGDs for this evaluation. Conflict is the biggest challenge that people face and it shapes every aspect of their lives. It holds them back; stops them from investing; impoverishes entire communities; destroys physical and social infrastructure; forces people into destructive and unsustainable livelihoods; and corrupts all institutions.

We have a beautiful country, the Congo. Unfortunately, repetitive wars do not permit us to move forward. They lead us to absolute poverty. If we are granted peace, we will become bosses or managers, but during the war there is the presence of bandits who can come to loot your belongings or your money and you will automatically become poor because of the war. *North Kivu/Rutshuru Buhuri 04R2*

During the period of the evaluation, all of the villages in North Kivu had experienced conflict and displacement within the last five years, and in South Kivu within the last ten years. In North Kivu conflict and insecurity are ever present, with nearly all interviewees expressing this as one of their biggest fears. There were armed groups in the proximity to all of the communities interviewed, and the presence of the national army ebbed and flowed (sometimes with a positive outcome, sometimes less so). When fighting erupts in the village people are forced to flee instantly, losing property and family members. Looting is widespread, but so is arbitrary violence and murder as well as sexual violence:

However, any attempt to carry loads on my back triggers pains because of the sexual violence of the past. My husband has never said a word about that. When it happened, he started going to look for other women and was insulting me. But as time went by, he came back home to me. My neighbours were also gossiping about it but don't say anything about it now. Each time I pass by the place I was raped by that soldier, I get scared. And when I run into a soldier, I [am] paralysed by fear. *North Kivu/Nyarigongo Bugeregere 03R2*

From 167 households interviewed, of which 49% were women, there were five *explicit* cases of rape, one of multiple members of the family; but reference to rape and the enduring fear of sexual violence appears in many of the interviews in both North and South Kivu. As rape has a degree of stigma attached to it, and the interviews did not ask this question specifically, the explicit cases are almost certainly unrepresentative of the actual situation, both past and present.<sup>51</sup>

During the period of study there was localised conflict in Masisi, North Kivu, between Hunde and Hutu.

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<sup>51</sup> Perversely, men interviewed in a North Kivu FGD also talked of being violated by their wives; their reasoning was that, by dressing in 'provocative' clothing, they cause their husbands to have sexual thoughts.

### **Bulwa, the Nyaturas conflict**

In early 2016, the village of Bulwa was attacked by the Nyatura group as part of a wider pattern of conflict between the Hunde and Hutu ethnic groups who are living in Masisi. The Nyatura move through the forest and loot villages periodically.

Some of the villagers in Bulwa displaced to Masisi town, fearing a wider resumption of conflict, and the stories of the seriousness of the raid vary (from a few houses looted to five people dead). While the villagers' displacement did not endure, Bulwa was also host to a number of displaced people from nearby communities who appear to have been responsible for a cholera outbreak, and possibly measles too. The NGO Johanniter responded by supplying drugs to the Bulwa clinic.

There are varying reports of how the conflict started, with one interview suggesting an argument in a local market got out of control, quickly becoming an armed confrontation. In the end there was a resolution of sorts, involving leaders from the two communities, although this has not resolved underlying tensions.

In Walungu, in South Kivu, the conflict involving the Raia Mutumboki and the various Mai Mai militias has led to widespread displacement into Luntukulu village, a last outpost of security and guarded by the national army. The majority of those interviewed in Luntukulu were displaced from villages deeper into Walungu district.

Displacement almost inevitably meant loss of all household assets of any value. The fighting forces looted everything as they passed through villages, including any crops that could be harvested. Houses were ransacked and roofing materials stolen before the dwellings were (often) burned.

Life in displacement is extremely uncertain, with livelihoods being even more difficult and aid a vital but often unreliable lifeline.

The main problem for him was that the crops were left on the farm when they were displaced; they had no supplies to take with them and when the village was looted, his goats and a pig which had just farrowed were taken away. Unfortunately, his 62-year-old mother was killed by the Nyatura rebels since she was too sick to run and escape.

My children were affected by these events because they had lost all their personal effects and possessions of value: clothes, class notebooks... The sudden separation from friends, the fire shots ringing into their ears, the fear that seized them, the three-day walk without food to escape the area of conflict had traumatised them.

Even our village neighbours were also affected because all of them had left their farms behind looking like the destitute, as if we have never worked and produced anything in our lives. Some, on their return, found that their houses had been set on fire.

During the war, we had left to Masisi and we were displaced, settled in a school. Some of us were registered and the others not. Personally, I had not been identified and I had received nothing. I don't know what that discrimination was based on.

The war-damaging effects in my family was the flight; the neighbours were dead, but for me all my family come back well. We had only spent one month in Masisi: there we lived in filth and we had illnesses because of the oppressive heat – that's why we came back quickly.

*North Kivu/Masisi Bulwa 09R1*

The constant insecurity and conflict also has a more insidious effect on the villages. When the rich and more capable relocate permanently to the towns, this is effectively a brain drain – taking out a whole group of people who might otherwise contribute to the development and wellbeing of the community.

Rich people have left because of the lootings. Those who stay behind are the poor. Those who fled went to Rubare, Rutshuru and Goma. They fled because of the war and lootings... most wars come from the hills above the road. Three wars have already raged [in] their village. There is the first war of liberation in 1996 with Kabila the Father and the AFDL; the second war with CNDP; and the third war with the M23. All these wars pass through their village because they are on the outer edge of the neighbouring countries.

*Rutshuru/Buhuri 05R2*

And, even when displacement is not an immediate threat, the knock-on effects of violence and insurrection are manifested in high prices, dysfunctional local markets and poor access to the larger marketplace.

The positive result of being back to peacetime is that this has an effect on the trade of manufactured products. Let's mention the salt price as an example: the price of a packet [500g] has just decreased from 500 CDF to 250 CDF. *Masisi/Bulwa FGD 01R3*

The constant threat of violence, looting and displacement influences the livelihood choices that a family will make. The biggest fear, other than loss of life, is the loss or theft of productive assets (land, or, in the case of fishermen, their *pirogue* or their nets).

Our land can produce all kinds of crops, but the spaces that we grew were invaded and others were sold by the chiefs. *Kalehe/Bushushu 05R1*

And displacement often puts paid to any hope of achieving food security through own production. In Walungu district, in particular, interviewees' lives were dominated by the constant violence of the years prior to and during the research:

I'm a resident here. We live *hekaheka*, that is to say that we can have two to three months of calm, tranquillity and four months to five months of difficulties. We are surrounded by two 'negative forces' and the government forces. Sometimes you learn that the government forces chase after a negative force. If the negative force repels the government force, we get in trouble. And where they are found people come into difficulty. So it happens that we start on to flee. We may be displaced for one month. Then they tell us to go back to the village.

*Walungu/Luntukulu 12R1*

## Health<sup>52</sup>

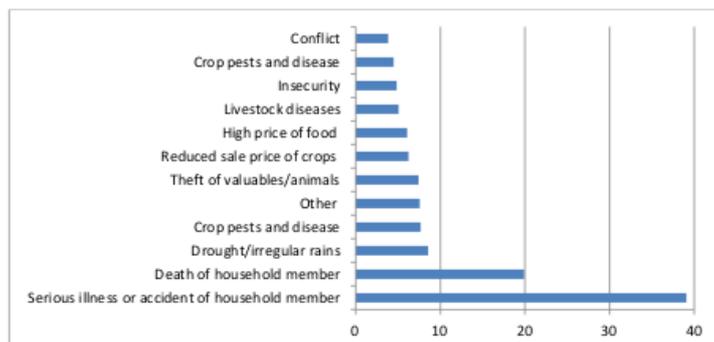
Ill health was the prevalent idiosyncratic, and the second most-mentioned covariate shock (conflict being the most-mentioned).<sup>53</sup> A 2014 nationwide survey by the World Food Programme (WFP) looking at food security and vulnerability asked people to list the most common 'difficulties' over the past 12 months (Figure 11). Illness and death of family member far outstrips the rest.

<sup>52</sup> Subsequent to this study there has been a serious outbreak of Ebola in North Kivu. The centre for this outbreak is north of the study areas, and prior to the study Ebola outbreaks had been confined to the west of the country (in fact the disease is named after the Ebola river where it was first observed). Consequently, whilst this health section does not deal with Ebola, the general breakdown in public provision documented here is an underlying exacerbating factor.

<sup>53</sup> In some studies ill health, and the negative consequences of the patchy and expensive health-care system, rank as more of a concern for the population than conflict and insecurity.

A 2011 study by Malteser International in Province Orientale found that health expenditure absorbed 25.4% of the household budget, second only to food at 58% and well ahead of education at 9.4%, with the poorest citing an income of \$5.00 or less per week.<sup>54</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2010 found that, whilst health expenditure nationally per capita was (in that year) \$27, the government contribution was \$6.70.<sup>55</sup>

Figure 11: Most common 'difficultites' in the DRC



This evaluation's research (both qualitative and quantitative) found that 68% of respondents had been sick at least twice in the previous six months<sup>56</sup> with only 10% having had no episode of sickness. Excluding chronic sickness and episodes that had begun in 2016, respondents had an average of almost four bouts of sickness a year. This finding was so stark that it merited a separate quantitative exercise to determine the cost of ill health to households.

The consequences of ill health are often that people can no longer work effectively, seriously impacting all aspects of their, and their families' lives. Only one study could be found which quantified health-care spending in North Kivu,<sup>57</sup> but that, being on a national scale, provided no data below provincial level. Furthermore, it looked at the cost of *treatment*, not the *total cost to the household*<sup>58</sup> of a health episode.

The 2017 Valid Evaluations investigation into the cost of ill health in North Kivu, which complements this summative report, found that the costs of health care were even greater than the Malteser study figures – perhaps as much as 40% of *potential* household income – when the effect on earnings was also factored in (see Annex 1 for a summary).

### Good health requires choices

The cost of health can be debilitating, forcing a choice between the health of the household and the education of its children.

The children had fallen sick. The wife was hospitalised in the Ntamugenga health centre three times. The first time she was suffering from typhoid fever, she had spent four days and had paid 10,000 CDF.<sup>59</sup> The second time she had spent two days there and she had paid 8,000 CDF. The third time she had spent five days there and she had paid 12,000 CDF. She

<sup>54</sup> Gerstl, S. et al. (2014) 'Who Can Afford Health Care? Evaluating the Socio-Economic Conditions and the Ability to Contribute to Health Care in a Post-Conflict Area in DR Congo', *PLOS ONE*, www.plosone.net

<sup>55</sup> World Health Organization (2010) *The World Health Report – Health Systems Financing: The Path to Universal Coverage*, Geneva: WHO.

<sup>56</sup> No definition of sickness was offered to respondents, and so prevalence figures relate to their own definition of themselves or other household members as being sick.

<sup>57</sup> Ministère du Plan et Suivi de la Mise en Oeuvre de la Révolution de la Modernité (MPSMRM), Ministère de la Santé Publique (MSP) et ICDF International, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> That is, the cost of obtaining health care, the opportunity cost of labour lost as a result of ill health, etc.

<sup>59</sup> \$1.00 = 900 CDF (approximate 2015/16 rate), thus about \$33 for all episodes.

was on drips that were mixed with other medicines. It is at that time when I sold the goats; a goat for \$40, another one for \$30 and three kids for \$60 (at the rate of \$20 each). I had not any other choice; I spent all that money on medical care. The children were also sick. I didn't sell the goats at once. I sold them progressively on each case of illness in the family.

*Rutshuru/Buhuri R3*

If the distress sale of livestock seems excessive, the income from that sale has to cover: the cost of treatment and medicines; the income lost for productive labour (reported at an average of seven full weeks); transport for the patient and supporter(s); food and (potentially) accommodation and all the daily household costs, including school fees.

To the cost of illness could be added the personal and financial cost of poor health education or possibly the cost of poor or biased health-enhancing advice. The health institutions being very often church-financed, health advice and health-enhancing behaviour might well be guided by doctrine.

I had my first child when I was 13 years old. [In our culture] we give birth while we are still very young. They don't teach us family planning at the hospital since I go there for the prenatal consultation (PNC). They teach us hygiene and how to look after the children but not how to plan births. I gave birth to this child at the health centre. I don't like the way which I space out my children's birth, but it is out of ignorance because I am not sure how to proceed and in addition to that I have a difficult life; I have nothing to buy food for them. But I give birth to one after another and I am not happy with that. If I had some food to give them that could change my opinion and I would be ready to give birth every year, but that is not possible with the life that I have; I have those children by accident.

*Walungu/Luntukulu 08R2*

### Crop disease and soil infertility

The Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRCS) found a slightly different balance in their panel survey in South Kivu, with crop disease featuring more substantially than ill health (although as can be seen from Figure 12, they break health-related shocks down into three categories), and, if aggregated, health as a whole might rank higher.

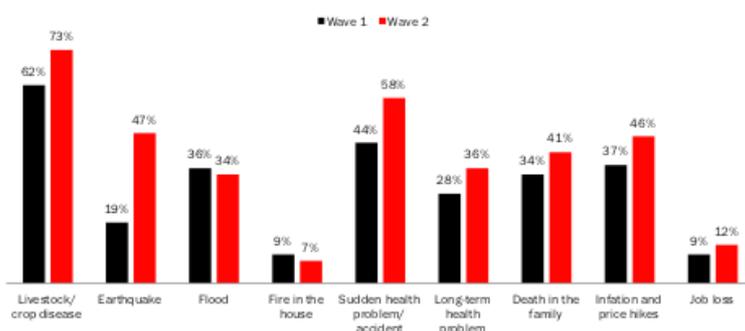
Two diseases feature in our interviews: banana wilt and cassava mosaic disease. Both cassava and banana are hugely significant to the subsistence farmers of the Kivus, with cassava being the main staple.

Both diseases have caused serious damage to farmers across East Africa. Banana wilt originated in Uganda, and at its height in the mid-2000s had wiped out between a third and a half of all plantations.<sup>60</sup> Whilst this has decreased somewhat as a result of careful management, there is, as yet, no known cure.

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<sup>60</sup> Karamura, E.; *et al.* (2010) 'Assessing the Impacts of Banana Bacterial Wilt Disease on Banana (*Musa spp.*) Productivity and Livelihoods of Ugandan Farm Households', *Acta Horticulturae* 879: 749–55.

Figure 12: SLRC most common 'difficulties' in the DRC



Whilst cassava mosaic virus (CMV) is much older, a virulent new and resistant strain broke out in the 1980s and 1990s and has proven difficult to combat. Unlike banana wilt, which destroys the whole crop, CMV reduces the yield, as the diseased tubers will still grow, but not well. Whilst both diseases are being managed to an extent in Uganda and Rwanda, and are the subject of study, this is not the case in the DRC, where farmers are more or less left to get on with it. Neither the cause of, nor the treatment regime for either disease were well known. Many of those experiencing reduced cassava harvest put it down to soil infertility (which may also be the case). And none talked about managing the disease. For bananas, there was some knowledge of the need to prevent cross-infection and to destroy infected plants, but this was patchy and late.

Over half the respondents in the evaluation reported some form of crop disease, with the majority talking about bananas being 'wiped out'. This has led to a serious reduction in income for many. Again, a rough estimate of cassava productivity suggests yields in some places of half that experienced in better years. The impact of the reduced yields of, arguably, the two most important crops in the Kivus, is simply greater hardship. People have one less source of income and food security, and one less way of coping with general adversity. The cumulative effect is devastating.

As you can see, all this forest contained plenty of banana trees, but various poisonous diseases have destroyed them by drying them to the roots causing the trees to fall. Not even birds would eat the bananas and eventually the bunch would fall to rot away and turn into water. When I had banana plantations, I was living the life of a king. I would manufacture, three times a month, ten ten-litre cans of banana juice. Unfortunately, I have lost many plantations... For me, to have meals has become an issue. Getting to eat twice in a day is a divine favour. There is nobody I am envious of in this area because everybody is at the mercy of hunger, sickness.... *Nyiragongo/Bugeregere 05R2*

The banana is what raised the children and even maintained adults. We could go in our banana plantation like today Wednesday and pluck five or ten bunches of bananas; on Friday, two days later, we could still pluck five or ten more bunches of bananas, and so on. The banana was very important. Now, everything was consumed by the disease. Ultimately, these bananas will disappear. It was very late when we remembered we were told that we had to cut at the foot of banana affected by this disease to avoid contagion of other banana. Bananas were then already decimated... These are the banana trees that dried because of the disease. In the past, around 2013, 2012, it was uncommon to pass here while seeing the houses. The banana trees covered all things. It is in 2014 and 2015 that all banana trees are decimated. They turn yellow and dry as something they had poured hot water on. You find the bananas that seem ripe whereas the plant hasn't been normally ripened yet. This disease came like a war, a sanction that God has inflicted since 2013, 2014 and 2015.... *Kalehe/Chofi 01R1*

### Natural hazards

Natural hazards are not as frequent as conflict, as debilitating as untreated illness or as costly as crop disease, but they are yet another major setback in the lives of those affected, and include floods, landslide, volcanic eruption (Goma 2003) and earthquake (Bukavu 2010).

As with all of the shocks covered in this evaluation, the issue is not so much the hazard itself but the exposure and the vulnerability of the population to it. With no form of prevention, emergency services, insurance or government to help, the consequences of quite small events can be disproportionate.

Bushushu, one of the better-performing villages studied in the evaluation, suffered a serious flood between the first and second interview rounds. They do not appear to have received any assistance following the flood apart from some money, apparently donated by the provincial government of South Kivu, that is alleged to have gone missing.

If we compare Bushushu today to how it was the past six months, there are certainly enormous changes because we can count more than 50 houses that were swept away by the rainwater, but also lately the famine became more pronounced. *Kalehe/Bushushu FGD 01R2*

We intended to rehabilitate those water taps stands, but we are not able to so any more due to that disaster, because... everything that could bring... means was swept away by the rainwater: our livestock, our boutiques. In brief, we can say that everything that could bring in something to us has gone. We lack means to do any activity. We have noticed that this erosion has been caused by the fact that people cut trees in the high plateau and do not do reforestation. When it rains and the rainwater is not canalised this always cause damage. Those people who cut trees cannot also give up since they live on that producing charcoals, and timbers for construction. They can die of hunger if they stop this activity. Everybody works for food. *Kalehe/Bushushu FGD 02R2*

I don't have anything as good, I have a mattress that I had been given when I was in Goma because it is from there where I heard about that disaster and I had been given a mattress and two pieces of loincloths from there. When I arrived here in Bushushu, the neighbours and acquaintances gave me some pans and dishes. We rent this house for \$7 per month as we are disaster victim people. *Kalehe/Bushushu 10R2*

### 2.3 Coping

The degree to which people cope with the shocks detailed above is highly contentious. An attempt to detail excess mortality as a result of the conflicts of the 1990s and early 2000s was hotly disputed.<sup>61</sup> Data gathering in the context of insecurity and inaccessibility is extremely challenging and always carries caveats (see 'Limitations to the research methodology and implementation' in Section 1.2). So 'coping' can often be a qualitative estimate in the absence of reliable data.

Distress activities were common, and harmful to differing degrees. These were relatively short-term coping strategies and longer-term adaptations to an increasingly difficult environment. Within this range people either cope or they don't, depending on weather, security, luck and other, mostly random, factors.

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<sup>61</sup> Coghlan, B. et al. (2007) *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, International Rescue Committee (IRC).

### Livelihoods adaptation

Day labour and petty trade were common, relatively harmless, if hardly profitable and increasingly embraced as more traditional livelihood options decrease. Other livelihood adaptations include charcoal production (widespread), portering in nearby markets (also widespread) and foraging for wild foods.

### Conflict cropping

Lecoutere, Vlassenroot and Reaymakers<sup>62</sup> and others have demonstrated that adaptation to conflict agriculture has taken place in the Kivus over the long years of insecurity. Farmers tend to concentrate on outputs that have least potential theft value.<sup>63</sup>

Thus households plant fast-maturing and annual crops (cassava in particular, but also beans and maize) and less perennials (such as coffee) as there is less chance of losing everything in the case of displacement. Taro is consumed for the same reason and because it can also be harvested wild.

Kibriya *et al.*<sup>64</sup> suggest that, for example, the choice of millet over maize is entirely rational as millet is an uncommon staple crop in the diet of the region, so unfamiliarity with cooking and preparing the grain could be an additional impediment to its theft. Considering these agronomic and cultural factors, a shift away from easily prepared and readily consumed crops such as maize makes sense. Interviews for this evaluation confirm that planting 'conflict crops' is a conscious strategy for many; the same is true of the reduction in livestock since people fear their theft.

### Loans and debt

A coping strategy of sorts, perhaps better thought of as informal insurance and explored in greater depth below, is the use of savings and loans groups, or *mutuelles*. Whilst these take several forms (as in many places), they are an accessible source of loans in emergencies (typically health emergencies but also many other unexpected events). Neighbours and family are another major source of help in hard times, again explored below.

People also borrow to get by, or run up debts faced with shocks (typically for health, but also for all sorts of day-to-day needs). This is not especially damaging – whilst there are plenty of interviews that talk about paying debts off, punitive interest rates and other forms of financial exploitation seem not to feature significantly.

### Meal reductions

Whilst people hardly eat any meat on a day-to-day basis, and cassava is the staple food, the diet appears to be quite balanced in the main. Even the poorest households will eat cassava leaves with their cassava, and most will eat beans to some degree. With the addition of some other forms of vegetables and the occasional fried fish, the main dietary groups are being accessed, albeit in very small quantities.

There is one significant caveat to this observation, however. Probably the biggest reported coping strategy – or rather 'not-coping' strategy – is meal reduction. A large proportion of interviewees have resorted to meal reduction. In fact, eating three times a day could be seen as an indicator of doing well, even being well off in the interview cohort. A more relevant indicator for a family

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<sup>62</sup> Lecoutere, E.; Vlassenroot, K. and Reaymakers, T. (2009) 'Conflict, Institutional Changes and Food Insecurity in Eastern D.R. Congo', *Afrika Focus* 22.2.

<sup>63</sup> Kibriya, S. *et al.* (2016) 'The Role of Conflict in Farmers' Crop Choices in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo', *International Food and Agribusiness Review* 19.3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

struggling to cope would be a reduction from two meals a day to one, of which there were numerous examples.

These days, the question which keeps popping up into me is 'how do I go about getting food?'. In this regard, some friend loaned in March me some 50kg of cassava flour that I am selling. I pay back little by little, i.e. 1,000 CDF at each week end. I cannot assess how much interest is paid and since this is the only source of income, I do my best not to drop below the 50kg, though we use daily two measures out of it for home use [fufu to eat with small fish]. We have meals only once a day in the evenings, and that's the way the ball bounces in our lives. *Kabare/Kigabi 09R1*

There are times when my neighbour, Mangaiooko, invites me at table to eat together with him some evenings. I have meals twice a day when there is enough food, and once when there is not enough to eat. *Masisi/Bweremana 05R2*

'Meat savings groups' are amongst the most widespread of the many *mutuelles*, and are a means for people to save up enough to buy meat, beer or foods for special occasions such as Christmas.

### Negative and destructive coping strategies

Diversification into negative or destructive livelihoods is common. Participation in the mining industry in South Kivu is the most obvious in interviews for this study, and is extremely damaging for many of those involved. For the lucky few there is good money to be made, and for one or two of those interviewed there can be good rewards from finding a good quantity of cassiterite, for example (in Walungu). But for many, the rewards are scant and the risks extremely high. There appear to be many unrecorded deaths and most participants simply do not find much ore and work in dreadful conditions. For their families, the knock-on effect seems to be that many women resort to casual prostitution just to feed themselves and their children (see Section 2.4 on gender).

Whilst it is hardly reported in our interviews, enrolment in militias is a further strategy. Only one of the interviews explicitly mentions a connection to militias (and the interviewee, his wife, only talks about it in the context of him having to flee to avoid the military), but this is obviously an option when all others have been exhausted. Quite what the drivers and dynamics are is beyond the scope of this report.

Further discussion can be found in Section 4.1.

## 2.4 Gender

Women and girls are disadvantaged in the Kivus in several ways. In a situation where there are very few guaranteed rights for anyone, women and girls have even less than the rest, if that is possible. This evaluation notes several additional, gender-specific burdens, namely:

- Gender-based violence (rape, associated with conflict, largely);
- Polygamy, leading to economic vulnerability;
- Non-existing or precarious land rights, meaning widows are subject to land grabbing;
- Casual prostitution as the sole livelihood option in some areas; and
- Reduced education opportunities for girls.

Amongst our interviews there are several stories of horrific rape ordeals endured during various waves of conflict. This is well documented elsewhere, as is the high prevalence of, and the limited

support available to, victims of rape.<sup>65</sup> In small communities where everybody knows what has happened, there is a stigma to be born while still having to make the living that brings opprobrium on them.

Polygamy is widespread, is less systematic than in many societies, but evident in our cohort. Women in polygamous marriages in the DRC do not live together, but as separate units who are visited by the husband. There appears to be some form of economic advantage for the man involved as he can profit from extra free labour working different plots of land. Life for the women involved, however, is uncertain and precarious. The wives appear to compete for the attention of the husband and any financial support seems ad hoc.

Women also have very limited land rights. As soon as the husband dies, relatives and neighbours line up to claim the land; there are multiple interviews carried out as part of this evaluation with widows who have had all or part of their land appropriated. Even when this does not take place they have to be on the guard constantly against potential land grabbing.

A particularly pernicious form of exploitation appears to take place in the artisanal mining sites where there is recourse to casual prostitution as a means to survive because there are no other economic options.

Regarding the prostitution in the quarries, I have to run that risk because we don't have any other choice. I can prostitute myself there and my husband won't know anything. It is only if we are caught having sex that even my husband will be informed about that. We are always tempted there in the quarry, because sometimes it can happen that from the morning till 15.00 you don't have any parcel to carry, and then there a gentleman suggests you to sleep with him. Personally, if I find that that is my last chance and that I didn't leave anything at home, and if my husband is away, I cannot refuse such a proposition, therefore I sleep with the gentleman and nobody will know anything about that. What I need is just to be able to feed my family.... *Walungu/Luntukulu 08R2*

Currently in Kalehe, there is also women trade. A man arranges with his wife to swindle other men. The man arranges with his wife to trap a man that is known to have some money, [she]... [p]retends to have been raped and when it turns to a [legal] case, the victim will cede [title to] his land as compensation. Even if he did not do anything with the wife, he has to pay 1,500 CDF under the pressure of the police. But there are true and false accusations, but most of them are lies. *Kalehe/Bushushu 01R1*

While males outnumber females in the under-24 national population by about 500,000,<sup>66</sup> the imbalance in numbers of boys and girls attending school, especially in rural areas of North and South Kivu, is heavily influenced by the fact that boys' education is seen to be of greater future economic benefit to the household than girls (who, when betrothed, will become an economic asset in her husband's family).

Me, I take care of only one son's education because I don't have enough money to pay school fees for all my children. That is the reason why I had chosen this boy because he will remain here and will help me when he becomes a big person. The girls will leave and will go to help their husbands' families. *Nyiragongo/Kanyati 03R3*

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<sup>65</sup> The interviewers did not specifically ask about sexual violence, so the recorded cases are only those where people volunteered this information. After they have suffered these horrific events, the women then have to live with uncertainty as to whether husbands will support them – and the subsequent economic jeopardy if they do not.

<sup>66</sup> CIA *World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html#2010>

## 2.5 Education

*The basic problem is that the central piece of the education system is abandoned by the Congolese state. I mean by that the teacher is not in a condition that enables him to work easily and to look after children, therefore the quality of education is threatened because the teacher is not motivated. He works in bad conditions. Some have no proper housing. Some don't have a table to work. They sleep with difficulty, eat with difficulty. How do you want a teacher in those conditions to do proper work? That's the first difficulty. This difficulty then impacts the rest of the work.<sup>67</sup>*

Education has historically suffered massive government underinvestment.<sup>68</sup> It commands only 2.25% of GDP (16% of the national budget). According to Ponabana, a UNICEF DRC blog,<sup>69</sup> parents contribute 75% of all education costs. As a consequence, the sector faces major infrastructure and staffing issues, with government failing to adequately underwrite teacher salaries. For this reason, parents are expected to pay an 'incentive' to the teachers for them to bother to teach.

Of the 1,773,340 students enrolled in primary and secondary education at independence, only 68,729 (4%) were catered for by state-run institutions.<sup>70,71</sup> Nationalised in the mid-1970s, schools were returned to the responsibility of the churches not long thereafter.

Education featured strongly in the panel interviews in both North and South Kivu. Aside from the constant threat of insecurity and displacement, the main reason given for either not putting a child in school, or withdrawing them at short notice, was lack of available funds. But most of all, parents worried about the cost of education and the debts that they incurred when they could not pay school fees. This was a consistent theme across the interviews and often led to people forgoing meals to pay outstanding fees.

The cost of education varies across the study areas, but is in the realm of 20,000 CDF (\$20) per year per child for primary education and (for the lucky few who go) 60,000 CDF (\$60) per child per year for secondary education. Tertiary education (there are universities in both Goma and Bukavu) is out of reach for all but a few. From a limited interview sample it appears to cost a few hundred dollars a year.

The average family size of our interview cohort was 6.7, meaning that families often had four or five children of school age. This can easily mean \$100 in school fees before any other expenses associated with school (uniforms, books, etc.) are considered.

*There are two of my children who go to school but they were sent back because of money. There are others who have reached the school age but I don't dare send them to school because I don't have money to take care of their education. Walungu/Luntukulu 08R2*

The Global Partnership for Education and the Government of the DRC report that completion rates for primary school had increased from 29% in 2002 to 70% in 2014. According to the CfBT Education Trust (2014), the out-of-school children percentage in the Kivus in 2012 was roughly the same as in other parts of the country, with South Kivu at just below 30%, lower than the national average of

<sup>67</sup> Dryden-Petersen, S. (2009) *Barriers to Accessing Primary Education in Conflict-Affected Fragile States*, London: Save the Children.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> <http://ponabana.com/en/20-key-figures-drc-education/>

<sup>70</sup> de Maere d'Aertrycke, A.; Schorochoff, A.; Vercauteren, P. and Vleurinck, A. (2011) *Le Congo au temps des Belges*, Bruxelles: Masoin.

<sup>71</sup> However, colonial policy had discouraged university education; at independence there were only 19 Congolese graduates in the country <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1842&dat=19610428&id=9JctAAAIBAJ&sjid=zMYEAAAIBAJ&pg=1227,6181859&hl=en>

33% for rural areas, and North Kivu, at 44%, above.<sup>72</sup> The SLRCS found that enrolment in schools was approximately 75%,<sup>73</sup> and that the dropout rate was about 50%.

This evaluation has found that even these figures may be optimistic. Parents consistently struggle to pay fees and resort to many interesting and innovative ways to pay them. But poverty means that children are continually being turned away from school, meaning their education is disrupted at best. And lack of resources means that class sizes dwindle as the year progresses.

The school director has granted me a 'chate' in order to reduce the school fees when I farm for him. He owns farms that he loans to the parents who do not have resources to pay for the children schooling, or even teachers who own farms can do so. Parents would go to work on these farms and the principals would reduce the school fees. I pay \$10 per child and per quarter, which tally at least \$35 for the whole year. I and my wife can finish in four days hoeing the 25sq metre farm. In this way, the children will not be barred from attending school. *Rutshuru/Buhuri 07R1*

Despite this, people generally believe in education as a route either to a better life or to their own wellbeing in old age.

A parent can be saved if only he sends his child to school. After completion of his education he will not tend to a field but will concentrate on his job. *Masisi/Bulwa 06R2*

I would like, by all means, to complete her studies in order to find employment. In this way she will be respected in the family. *Masisi/Bweremana 02R1*

My children would like to become agronomist and I do respect their choice because they would like also to be looking after the plants. May God help me so that these children evolve well and that one day they are also called engineers! *Masisi/Bweremana 07R2*

## 2.6 Governance

*Officially, there is recognition of the governance crisis, of unchecked military exactions against civilians, and the culture of impunity. Unofficially, there is greater interest in keeping local police and judiciary weak and ineffective. 'Too many high-level people are involved in resource extraction,' a Congolese researcher in Goma explained. 'They realise that mafia rackets are far more lucrative than effective bureaucracy could ever be.'*<sup>74</sup>

In the chaotic environment of the Kivus, the attitude today towards the state and its institutions is strangely schizophrenic. Ordinary people still cling to the vague hope of, or belief in, legitimacy and even-handedness on the part of the institutions despite years of evidence to the contrary. Health and education services are viewed as state functions provided by the state, although run by the church or private enterprise,<sup>75</sup> and are widely used. And, despite their known corruption, the police and the courts are still resorted to, often at great expense, to achieve justice.

The Constitution of 1988 confirmed the President's power to replace officials at all administrative levels. The customary leadership at *chefferie* and below was manipulated by patronage or by local

<sup>72</sup> Jones, A. and Naylor, R. (2014) *The Quantitative Impact of Armed Conflict on Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Counting the Human and Financial Costs*: CfBT Education Trust.

<sup>73</sup> Ferf, A.J.E. et al. (2016) *Tracking Change in Livelihoods, Service Delivery and Governance: Evidence from a 2012–2015 Panel Survey in South Kivu*, Working Paper 51, The Netherlands: University of Wageningen.

<sup>74</sup> In Rackley, Edward B. (2005) *Democratic Republic of the Congo: Undoing Government by Predation*, London: ODI.

<sup>75</sup> SLRC (2016) *Tracking Change in Livelihoods, Service Delivery and Governance: Evidence from a 2012–2015 Panel Survey in South Kivu, DRC*, London: ODI.

coups with *Mwamis*<sup>76</sup> wielding power either by popular consent or by *fiat*. Mobutu set the standard of craft and graft. Theft, chicanery and material gain became the vehicle by which all political and social transactions were settled at every level.

The role of the statutory authorities is rarely mentioned in the panel interviews. While they clearly play a role in, for example, approving the activities of humanitarian organisations in the Kivus, they appear to have little or no role in the settlement of population displaced by conflict and banditry. This is governed by the customary authorities which are also – as outlined in Section 2.7 – often big landowners.

IRC came and distributed them sheeting. After that, they cut small trees to build small houses with. They then built small houses with sheeting. '*Ni bushanganya ya Mwami.*' Meaning this is the land of the king... [t]hey first see the mother-chief who submits the report on displaced people to the *Mwami*... [who] grants those places where to build. She tells them [the displaced] that even if they build, the land belongs to the *Mwami*... Everyone builds where the *Mwami* has authorised him.... *Walungu/Luntukulu 12R2*

At all levels, the role of both statutory and customary authorities appears to be at best feudal and at worst exploitative. The *chef de colline* (*Mushamuka*) are accused by some of being in the pay of regional interests and beyond in the early stages of the conflict, and benefiting from the exploitation of minerals in their locality; and there are widespread complaints about corruption and impunity.<sup>77</sup>

It would be better that you be here because people here, like the chieftain who welcomed you, take big advantage of the donations that are given to people. If there has been donation, the big part is taken by the chieftain and people around him, we just receive crumbs. *Older Man, Kabare/Cidjo1 05R1*

Concerning the failure of the local authorities to bring water in their area, she insinuates that there is no village headman in their home place in Mutaho; she says that their chiefs look for their self-interest and don't worry about people, and that they look to fill their belly. Where can people lodge a complaint? *Nyiragongo/Mutaho 06R3*

In the absence of a functioning legal framework (or, alternatively, one that operates when convenient) the *chef de colline* has an important role to play. In an economy that barely rewards hard work, it is probably unreasonable to expect someone to work in an unremunerated capacity.

Yes, I am chief of the sub village, but this work is not paid; I get nothing... so my job is to advocate for villagers who can be prosecuted by state agents. But I get no compensation. I can reconcile villagers among them if they are in conflict. *Kalehe/Bushushu 05R1*

The role of the *chef de colline* and the *Mwami* in maintaining communal order in the absence of a reliable police force and judicial system is obvious. If they are subverted by a desire for personal gain, they are only following an example and, sadly, a tradition. So civilian protection is far less about what justice offers and much more about what money can buy.

And finally, the courts themselves have more of an obstructive than a facilitatory role, which acts to the benefit of the defendant and against the interest of the appellant.

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<sup>76</sup> *Mushamuka* (singular) is the lowest level of traditional leader, responsible for a hill, above whom is the *Murwhali*, responsible for a region, and the *Mwami* (king).

<sup>77</sup> Jackson, S. (2001) 'Nos richesses sont pillées', *Politique africaine* 84, December.

At first, the pygmies (*BaTwa*) started legal proceedings against Chief Mushesha. However, since the Chief acknowledged that the fields were pygmies' property but that he was not able to return them to them, the pygmies went, thereafter, to bring the case to the level of the Masisi territory as well as the chieftaincy of Nyabiondo and then Goma but so far, to no avail. The respondent thinks that the court case is deadlocked because the pygmies do not have the money to make the case move forward fast enough. *Masisi/Mafuho 01R1*

## 2.7 Land

*In the DRC, political representation at the local level is linked directly to 'ethnic territories'. There is therefore a structural link between claims to land ownership by ethnic communities, and claims to political autonomy and power. Communities that have lacked local representation have long made claims to land ownership in order to have their own chiefs, and these claims have often been resisted by neighbouring communities. The result in many areas, particularly the east, has been violence.*<sup>78</sup>

A pre-colonial system of land distribution that sustained a client–patron social hierarchy was disrupted first by colonial plantations and then by post-colonial land grabs by the new elites. Conflict and demographic pressure then weakened land access and the size and viability of plots still further. In 1959 the average peasant farmer in the Kivus could farm 1.2ha and feed themselves and their family. By the mid-2000s many were lucky to have 0.3ha and were dependent on day labour.<sup>79</sup>

The interviews for this evaluation confirm the long-term trend away from predominantly agricultural livelihoods to a mix of day labour, petty trade and migration (often into extremely perilous artisanal mining or similar). A number of quotes serve to illustrate the overlapping and complex nature of land ownership, regulation and appropriation.

This parcel I live in belongs to someone; we had got it thanks to the '*Mutambo*', the village headman, but these village headmen are part of those who had confiscated our fields. *Nyiragongo/Mutao 01R3*

To manage the problem, I started a legal action and the case has been before the high court of Goma for 16 years and several times I was the winner. But for the court to reinstate me on the farm, they are hindered by the Hutu coalition who has joined forces to fight against the judicial authorities with their machetes. Following the many redeployments of judges and prosecutors in our province, North Kivu, every time the case moved forward, it came back to square one with the new teams being appointed. *Masisi/Bulwa 10R1*

No. We don't rely on the Land Registry office. We are a population relying on '*Bashamukas*'.<sup>80</sup> We are the King (*Mwami*)'s people. If for example I go the Land Registry office to ask their people to come to measure my field and that they require me to pay \$500,<sup>81</sup> what can I do? *Kalehe/Chogero 02R2*

One more thing I would like to add is that the land all around us belongs to our ancestors, but today we do not have even a little access to the fields just because, before now, the land was considered a property of the white man. When they departed, they left the land within the hands of the *Mwami*. It's a pity! *Masisi/Bulwa 04R1*

<sup>78</sup> Huggins, C. (2010) *Land, Power and Identity. Roots of Violent Conflict in Eastern DRC*, London: International Alert.

<sup>79</sup> Vlassenroet, K. and Huggins, C. (2005) *Land, Migration and Conflict in Eastern DRC in from the Ground Up: Land Rights, Conflict and Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

<sup>80</sup> See footnote 74.

<sup>81</sup> The average rate in Masisi, and up to \$1,000 in other parts of North Kivu (Huggins 2010, see footnote 78).

The majority of those interviewed were renting – land ownership of any size is rare. A plot of 0.25ha seems to be the average, with quite a few respondents farming much smaller plots. Some still have larger holdings, typically in the range 0.5–1.00ha; only four out of 169 households interviewed claimed plot sizes larger than this.

Regardless of land size, nearly all of those rented their plots, either from the local *Mwami* on a long-term basis (the more traditional way), or more often from the plantations.

The short-term nature of both land ownership and security may also be a factor in soil infertility – it has certainly contributed to soil erosion in South Kivu, although the landslides there can often be attributed to deforestation for charcoal production.

Land insecurity is at the root of the general impoverishment of the population, as is the feudal nature of economic relations in rural areas. Even over the relatively short time frame of this evaluation, decline is noticeable. The added problems of crop disease and the under-productivity of the soil seem to be intensifying the competition for land and driving those without access to land into other activities.

A '*chapa*' is a 20m by 10m plot, and it is \$30 to let out. It is someone who has the means who rent fields. The rented-out fields belong to the population, anyone can rent out his field, the same for the local chiefs. Today to rent a hectare is \$100 while before it was \$80, and yet the fields are not fertile anymore. We only grow beans and maize.

*Masisi/Bulwa FGD 01R2*

It will never change. To me it is something inherited from the Belgian colonists. For instance, on Chief Gasama's plantation, the mother is the manager, the boss. Everybody always calls her '*Maman*' on the plantation and even when she walks around the neighbourhoods. Those who meet with her stand up still to salute her. On the plantation, we stand still or bend the knee to salute her with respect when she does her rounds. If you dare to call her by her name, you run the risk of being fined a goat or a case of beer.

*Rutshuru/Kabanza FGD 01R2*

There are two kinds of field renting: the renting of a field that is in a plantation and renting of fields that are in the villages. Actually, there are not enough fields for everyone. There are people who don't have their own field, but who live on the fields in the plantations... There are some of those plantations that belong to the Pharmakina, to Muyeye and to Lukwebo [Current National Minister of the Economy]. The plantations belong to the 'most senior people' [rich people] staying in Kinshasa. Those plantations are not in Chogero. They are located at a distance of 7km far from Chogero. And it is there where people go to cultivate.

*Kalehe/Chogero FGD 01R2*

Beyond general insecurity of land tenure and the exploitation of small-scale subsistence farmers, two groups stand out as doing particularly badly; the BaTwa, and widows.

As noted above, the BaTwa are subject to land seizures with little recourse through the courts (they have too few allies). However, reparations can be received if the *Mwami* exerts his influence: during the research period a BaTwa was attacked by a drunk villager who accused him of stealing banana beer (wrongly) and cut off his arm. A compensation deal was brokered by the chief after the BaTwa threatened to retaliate.

Widows are most at risk of land seizure after their husbands die (see Section 2.4 on gender). In North Kivu, land seizures are also a product of armed conflict and the movement of different ethnic groups (with 'Rwandans' held responsible), or the activities of well-connected individuals or groups such as the MAGRIVI<sup>82</sup> of Masisi, or later on, smaller groups who have settled after the various waves of conflict.

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<sup>82</sup> Mutuelle des Agriculteurs du Virunga.

### 3. The characteristics of resilience

Most households in our cohort know what constitutes for them, and in relative terms, a predictable and secure existence: access to, and secure tenure, of land; a house with assured title; livestock, large and small, as assets and a source of cash in time of need (or, in the case of fishermen, nets and a boat); availability of off-farm paid employment; and access to health care for the family and education for the young.

And most households are prepared to invest in trusted financial or social arrangements to secure that access: *tontines* (see Section 3.2); mutual funds; revolving livestock loan schemes; village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) or AVEC (Associations Villageoise d'Épargne et Crédit); communal labour-sharing arrangements; good relations with, and an established position in, the community; a client or collegial relationship with the local leadership; and, above all, peace and security.

A resilient state at the household level depends upon a number of factors. In the DRC, these can be summed up as:

- The willingness and ability to diversify and adapt;<sup>83</sup>
- Building, maintaining and accessing social capital;
- Building and nurturing family support; and
- Access to, and provision of, assistance.

#### 3.1 Adaptive capacity

In a society as historically unstable and ungoverned as the DRC, the *ability* to adapt to and innovate within a changing economic and social environment has become second nature, and the *need* a matter of survival. And in a largely unregulated, *rentier* environment, where 'sort it out yourself' (*débrouillez-vous*) is almost a national motto, the line between honest endeavour and dishonest gain has inevitably blurred. People take advantage of what they can, when they can.

I studied joinery for one year with an organisation called BVC [BVES] that takes care of child soldiers. I was not a child soldier; I just managed to receive the training.  
*Kalehe/Bushushu 12R2*

And whereas in a society that functions by established norms and predictable governance, the need to innovate and adapt might only entail one or two changes of approach or direction in a working life, in the DRC a household's tool-bag is, by necessity, packed with marketable skills or physical assets, and a seemingly bottomless well of optimism and entrepreneurial endeavour.

After I have left my parents' house I became a miner and the first time I got \$150 that allowed me to buy a parcel [of land], then I bought a fishing net, and finally I bought two more parcels. It's when I wanted to build a house in that parcel that I was poisoned so I was forced to resell two of my parcels. This house I live in was built when we received money for coffee beans. *Kalehe/Bushushu 12R2*

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<sup>83</sup> Bénédicte *et al.* (2014, see footnote 43) placed adaptive capacity as one of the constituents of a resilient existence.

Jones *et al.*'s (2010) five elements (or essentials) of household adaptation, although developed for climate issues, are as appropriate to the chaotic, ungoverned socioeconomic environment of the DRC. They are:

- The available asset base;
- Knowledge and information;
- Innovation;
- Flexible and forward-looking decision-making; and
- Institutions and entitlements.<sup>84</sup>

Only one of these conditions, the ability to innovate, can be said to be met in the Kivus, although this could also be termed the ability to be constantly flexible. There are plenty of examples throughout the interviews where people are trying different options, changing livelihoods, seizing small opportunities and planning for the time when they might have resources.

But this is undermined by the absence, or near absence, of the other four properties. As already outlined in some detail in Section 2, there is an extremely limited asset base. And the little that people do manage to accumulate is usually stolen, lost in flight or capitalised to pay for an unexpected shock. Institutions and entitlements are similarly absent, and access to knowledge and information is also extremely limited. Whilst people do definitely make plans and try to be forward looking, the future is generally so uncertain that these are usually undone.

Adaptations that do take place, as noted elsewhere, tend to be largely to ensure survival; for example, opting to grow fast-maturing annual crops that meet a household's minimum nutritional requirements whilst discouraging theft by aggressors and insuring against long-term loss.

Adaptation is not necessarily a case of doing something new, or differently, in your own community. Migration is seen as an obvious – and for many, desirable – means to change one's life prospects, as is a quality education.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the interviewees' adaptability is that despite very limited options to adapt, ingenuity steps in (although possibly to exploit negative or even illegal opportunities). Just as noticeable is how short lived such innovations tend to be once proven successful.

Before, I was making banana alcohol. I realised that that drink was no longer appreciated because it didn't make people drunk (people from here like a drink that makes them quickly and excessively drunk). So after fermentation I add a little hemp [marijuana]. I buy that on the sly from soldiers. At the beginning I made a lot of money thanks to this drink. But nowadays, I have given up making that drink and have come back to selling a bag of sugar. The soldiers came to bother me. Sometimes they arrested me and some other times they arrested my wife. Every time when they arrested me, accusing me of intoxicating people, I had to pay them. Both men and women were taking that drink. I have given up making that drink and come back to making the banana alcohol because of the soldiers.

*Kabare/Cidjo1 06R2*

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<sup>84</sup> Jones, L.; Ludi, E. and Levine, S. (2010) *Towards a Characterisation of Adaptive Capacity: A Framework for Analysing Adaptive Capacity at the Local Level*, London: ODI.

### 3.2 Social capital

Despite the breakdown (or complete suspension) of governance at the higher levels, social ties remain strong, and community groups proliferate. These seem to be the bedrock of social and community organisation, alongside the state–village administrative structure and hierarchy.

There were groups in every village in the evaluation, with most villages having several. These ranged from small informal groups of farmers who shared work to unions of porters on the beach front in Bukavu.

The groups broadly split into two types, quite similar in nature. There are work groups and savings and loans groups; additionally, there are church groups that are often also savings and loans *mutuelles*.

Of these, the savings and loans-type groups are by far the most prevalent. Often called *tontines*, they are in fact more like the classic VSLAs. The *tontine* contribution is financed by income from daily labour or from sales of farm produce or other items.

Some people organise a *tontine* system. She [my wife] is member of that organisation made up of seven people. The sum she contributes comes from the ploughing [hoeing] activities. Of 1,000 CDF she earns [per day], 500 CDF are allocated to the association/*tontine* and other 500 CDF to food. When it's her turn to receive money, she can get from 5,000 to 10,000 CDF that she can allocate to the purchase of sugar cane that she will be able to sell in Bagira or Bukavu. *Kabare/Kagabi 01R1*

VSLAs or AVEC have been initiated, or boosted by NGOs (and are one of the elements of the ARCC II programme) but many are also community-inspired. In interviews, people often aspire to be part of these groups, joining when they have a steady enough income to make the contributions and then having to drop out if that is no longer the case.

As already noted in this report, the groups are also widely used for loans in the case of an unexpected cost or emergency. These are typically fairly modest and if expenditures run beyond the amount 'banked' with the group then it is unlikely further credit will be extended.

### 3.3 Family and community

Families are, by and large, strong and supportive. Children receive gifts of land on marriage where there is land in the family. There is a strong dowry tradition in many villages (see Section 2.4 on gender for more on this). Older parents receive support from their children in the form of cash or food, most typically, or help with medical bills. Older parents with resources pay for the education of their grandchildren or look after them if parents are working.

Brothers and sisters help each other financially if needed. This is not universal, but as with most families, depends on the state of family relations (we heard as many complaints about brothers not helping as we did of their generous help). Where families have businesses, however tiny, the family tends to get involved (from sharing market stalls to children hawking sugar cane). There are some rare stories of overseas remittances from family members who have successfully migrated.

While humanitarian assistance undoubtedly plays a role in addressing the needs of populations under constant threat of conflict, displacement and endemic poverty, it cannot address every need in every community: the role of community and family support should not be underestimated.

There are many examples in the panel interviews of assistance with health issues by family members and communities.

The sickness of my wife is the problem that affected me since she was operated upon twice for pregnancy complications. This was a big ordeal for me. To overcome the problem, I borrowed from neighbours. My wife was transferred to the hospital called CBCA/Virunga in Goma. I paid \$250 for the first curative treatment and \$120 for the second one. I really spent a lot of money and energy since I work on other people's farms for a fee of 1,500 CDF per day. *Nyiragongo/Mutao 03R1*

There were instances of neighbours or family helping with school fees; the chief of the village intervening to solve a legal dispute; ceding the use of a plot of land to help a person in trouble; sending remittances or providing finance for family celebrations.

Some of the Kabasanza villagers are in Kinshasa. Sometimes we call them to announce to them a death, a marriage... They also lobby about the 'Social Funds' for the Bweza institute building projects in Kabasanza from Goma and Kinshasa. There are some children here in the village whose school fees are paid by some national deputies through people from this village living in Kinshasa. Sometimes those who are here in Binza come back to cultivate their fields that are here, to greet their families' members, or when there is marriage... The latter can bring local drinks, salt, rice.... *Rutshuru/Kabasanza/FDG 01R3*

And while support from neighbours is definitely a major source of help, it is not necessarily unconditional.

Yes, the past six months I have helped someone, one of our friends who was a disaster victim (the river has swept away their houses). I helped him in rebuilding the damaged houses or in moving those who liked to go elsewhere and to build there. I did it for free. I helped the others giving them advice and for some others, as there are credit systems that are established... there is someone to whom I lent \$50 and who is going to repay me with 10% interest, therefore \$55. If he manages to pay me, it means that I would have helped him because he would have solved a problem. *Kalehe/Bushushu 12R2*

And there are those who usurp community good will for their own ends (and this goes on at every level).

Yes, at the time of the earthquake [2015] an NGO [World Vision], political parties and Catholic nuns from Bukavu came to help. There was confusion between the crisis management committee, the earthquake victims and the local authorities. The real victims did not receive the aid that they were reserved, because the crisis management committee and the authorities diverted the great part of the aid. \$7,000 had been collected by the members of parliament of Bukavu in the South Kivu province in favour of the victims. The administrator of the territory took the money under the pretext that he was going to keep it safe until the population had a place to buy. Now that the population has identified the land to buy, the administrator has run away.... *Kalehe/Bushushu 07R1*

### 3.4 Assistance

The villages studied were chosen because they were, or were likely to be, recipients of DFID MYHF, and not surprisingly this showed up consistently in the interviews. The UNICEF ARCC II programme (implemented by Mercy Corps, Concern, and Solidarités in North Kivu and Solidarités, AVSI and IRC in South Kivu) featured strongly in both North and South Kivu (see Annex 2).

Assistance took a number of forms over the *territoires* studied. NGOs had been active in all of the villages, providing free health care, education, rehabilitating infrastructure, providing agricultural inputs, supporting savings and loans schemes, responding to epidemics, and of course providing humanitarian assistance.

Concern donated cash in instalments to the amount of \$250. She used this money to buy her plot of land in that place where she lived for long without owning anything like that. So when Concern gave her the money, she went straight to buy the plot of land. This was sufficient enough assistance: they can have food and eat often beans, rice, beef and cush-cush [colocase]. *Masisi/Bulwa 07R1*

If I had to look like someone in Bushushu who has a good life, I would like to resemble the wives whose husbands work for international NGOs. The latter have good living conditions, all their children go to school, and their wives are very well clothed and eat very well....  
*Kalehe/Bushushu 08R2*

The view of the assisting agencies is largely positive; and they are now part of the landscape. People by and large know the names of the NGOs, and for the most part know what they do. Most are grateful for what they get, while a handful are critical of the NGOs' lack of impact. And there is a clear concern when their activities cease: War Child's withdrawal from Walungu meant that children dropped out of school again; people died following the closure of the IRC clinic in Rutshuru because they could no longer afford health care. When the services stop, *débrouillez-vous* once more becomes the motto.

By and large the humanitarian assistance appears well targeted and well appreciated. In a context of extreme violence and regular displacement, agencies attempted to provide aid that was both flexible and relevant, something they achieved to a large degree.

### Food aid

Although food aid was not a significant feature in the interviews, it nevertheless played an important role in the overall relief effort in times of great insecurity and instability, and not simply as a distributed item. Five out of 12 references to the WFP in South Kivu highlight its importance as a source of employment.

In North Kivu food aid is seen either as an element of the cash or voucher distribution,<sup>85</sup> or a function of family or community assistance (which implies that the majority of the USAID food and NFI grants were destined for communities outside the VE research area).

The church donated a pair of trousers. At least eight times the neighbours gave him food. The most important assistance of all is the one from the neighbours because he needed food much more than the trousers. He would like to receive assistance in the form of livestock because with these he would not want. Once he feels hungry, he would sell one of them and use the money for buying food. *Nyiragongo/Kanyati 02R1*

The same appears to be the case in South Kivu. Whereas communities received food assistance in 2013, by the time of the VE research the household ration appeared to be predominantly purchased

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<sup>85</sup> In her evaluation of an ECHO-funded cash programme implemented by IRC, NRC and AVSI in North Kivu, Sarah Bailey states that the expectation was that the cash effort would be complemented by a food distribution programme which, in the event, did not happen. Bailey, S. (2014) *Evaluation of ECHO-Funded Cash and Voucher Food Assistance in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, [www.cashlearning.org/downloads/drc-cv-eval.pdf](http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/drc-cv-eval.pdf) (accessed 30 March 2018).

with the proceeds of sales of goods or, presumably, with distributed cash. Communities hosting the displaced appeared to benefit through the purchase of rations marketed by the intended beneficiaries at a reduced price.

In 2012 and 2013, we welcomed the displaced from Ziralo. Their settling in our village was a great advantage because World Vision brought food stock for them and they sold us the food that they were given. At that time we could buy a cup of vegetable oil for 50 or 100 CDF instead of 200 CDF, flour decreased in price and anything else that they received... When NGOs stopped assisting the displaced, they were obliged to live like the local population, so this caused us some difficulty. A digging task that was paid for 1,000 CDF decreased to 500 CDF.... *Kalehe/Bushushu 05R1*

Much store was set by VSLAs and *mutuelles*, and communal annuity schemes (*tontines*) in both research areas. Material support for livelihood activities featured strongly in the panel discussions and this was appreciated for its relevance. Access to productive assets is a major consideration.

The assistance received from Concern was the most important: it helped me a lot. My creditor friends will pay me in June and I will have the money to buy another pig. Other forms of assistance were also important although the one from LWF [Lutheran World Federation] did not help me because the rain had destroyed everything. I would go for the cash assistance because I can buy seed, breed-stock for a livestock business, food, clothing and repay loans.  
*Masisi/Mafuo 04R1*

And assistance that restores the household to the most basic level is hugely appreciated. But in a society that has had constantly to pull itself up by the bootstraps, there is always a recognition that a family's or community's own initiative is every bit as important as outside aid, and bears fruit in difficult times.

Two years ago, we received assistance from the CCBN, a grass-root community cell where we have membership, consisting of useful ploughing tools [hoes], machetes and watering cans. As members of the association, we make the obligatory contribution in the amount of 200 CDF per week. I do not receive any assistance from my family members because I am the one who is living a better life than any other person in the family. *Kabare/Kagabi 05R1*

But, with the country's legacy of division, co-option and theft, there are always those who are either missed, or possibly deliberately excluded, from assistance despite the best efforts and intentions of the humanitarian community.

I don't know why I received nothing; but the other inhabitants received what was brought. We cannot receive anything if we don't have a token. It will be similar with the mosquito nets. The chiefs are the ones who carry out the distribution of the tokens. I won't receive anything as I don't have a token... because they don't like me. *Kabare/Cidjo1 01R2*

### 3.5 What resilience looks like (or doesn't)

The unpredictability of life in the Kivus, and the number of variables that can upset the best laid plans, makes reaching conclusions about the individual properties of resilience difficult at best.

Improvements can be temporary except for the better off:

**Case Study A:** Mrs X is 38 years old and lives in a remote village in Masisi, North Kivu. When first visited in February 2015 life was satisfactory: her husband was a salaried teacher and they had a substantial (in local terms) plot to cultivate. All nine children were in education and she was chairwoman of a local association. By August 2015 her husband was head teacher of the school and she had acquired three goats. Her status in the village was high due to her position of chair in a government-linked society. However, by 2016, they were displaced to Masisi because of local ethnic conflict, she had suffered a miscarriage, lost two of her three goats and had resigned her position in the association.

**Case Study B:** Mrs Z is 50 years old. She is a widow and a market trader. When first interviewed in February 2015 she was recovering from the M23 conflict. She traded at an NRC livelihoods fair, but her stock was looted, as was one of her farms. Luckily for her, the businesswomen's collective loaned her \$600 on easy terms to restart her business. By August 2015 she had completed her recovery, had a trading capital of \$1,400 and was a member of several credit and loans groups. She also cultivated several fields rented from the *Mwami* (with whom she had good relations). Her sister in Goma was also doing well in trade there. By August 2016 (when she was away on a family visit) her elder daughter, also a trader in Masisi market at a stall secured by her mother, was trading cloth imported from Goma, was a member of a number of associations, and her aunt in Canada sent her \$100 for school fees.

Mrs Z (or rather, her extended household) was clearly above a resilience threshold (at that point). But for the majority, life changed little over the study period, and was always precarious.

Since the last time you were here, life is still desperate. Hunger doesn't stop shaking us. We're so hungry, I have to go to the forests to pick some plants to eat, just to keep us alive. Sometimes we pass the night without having eaten all day, we are suffering so much.  
*Older person, Nyarigongo/Bugeregere 03R3*

By contrast, a resilient community might be the exception to prove a rule. The village of Bushushu is situated by the lake on the main road, roughly halfway between Goma and Bukavu. Despite a severe and destructive flood and landslide during the period between the first and second round of interviews, most households seemed to be doing quite well. This is for a number of reasons:

- *Security.* Whilst Bushushu was hit by conflict in 2013, it was relatively stable both before and after that.
- *Geographical location* and access to resources. Bushushu is within a day's travel of both the major markets of Goma and Bukavu, on the main road and boat routes, with access to fishing from the lake, relatively fertile land and trade links with the interior.
- *A sense of solidarity* within the community. They had hosted multiple waves of IDPs, which brought some benefits, such as cheap relief rations sold by the IDPs, who also provide cheaper labour. The village supported several groups and associations and the local administration functioned reasonably efficiently, perhaps explained by education levels in the leadership, coupled with good external connections.

The ability to organise and govern at the local level generates significant social capital at the higher level, which itself brings benefits, and thereby greater resilience, to the whole community.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Whilst this is true for the medium term, in the longer term their ability to cope is diminished by their extensive use of charcoal production in the forests above their fields. This was the primary cause of the landslides and flooding.

## 4. Research questions

### 4.1 Research question one: Resilience

Resilience is largely a system property, taken for granted in a functioning modern state – a social contract that includes a degree of service provision and equitable governance; and an economy that has a minimum of basic rules. In the DRC these elements are largely missing. In the absence of these basics, individuals are highly exposed: subject to forces beyond their control and left to cope the best they can. Whilst this can be branded resilience, it is a tenuous concept.

On an individual level the household interviews, FGDs and other secondary literature reviewed for this evaluation show that people are *remarkably* resilient: they chop and change income opportunities as they arise or as the situation changes; they borrow small amounts of money to trade, they call on their social capital – '*on se débrouille*'. But this is hardly resilient behaviour, can be positively harmful in the medium-to-long term, and does little for the *agency* of the household or the community.<sup>87</sup>

If this seems obvious – that the collapse of state legitimacy and functionality has eroded the potential for resilience in the conflict-ravaged east – it is nevertheless worth re-stating. For households and communities to be in a position to withstand shocks, there is also a need for working social-political systems by which people can collectively organise, set and enforce rules and work together for the common good.

Health care (or the lack of a health service) provides another example. The VE study showed that people may be spending 40% of their available income on health care (in a context where the majority struggle to secure three square meals a day). Even a free hospital does not ease the burden massively because primary health care is non-existent, and the harsh lives and poor diet combine to deliver an exceptionally high burden of disease and long-term ill health. And whereas the majority interviewed would prefer 'western' health care, their poverty forces them to resort to traditional remedies.

#### Aid and resilience

The evaluation highlights several ways in which assistance can be effective in terms of reinforcing people's individual resilience – the most effective, from our interviews, being a single large cash transfer (consistent with UNICEF's ARCC II research). Many used the transfer to secure land, mostly through a long lease, and, when the cash amount was less, it went on household items – of utility but not those likely to generate substantial economic gains.

Savings and loans groups are similarly popular. The degree to which people use such groups, and the widespread uptake and (relative) success of AVEC, suggest these can be a major source of informal insurance (and therefore resilience) for people, and of investment capital in what is, out of necessity, a highly enterprising society.

And, as mentioned elsewhere, free, good quality health care, such as that provided by the MSF hospital in Masisi, is hugely important where the cost of ill health is debilitatingly high and the state system hardly functions, if at all.

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<sup>87</sup> The Bushushu situation is illustrative. A combination of the threat of conflict, crop disease and limited alternative income opportunities resulted in a general resort to charcoal production, denuding the hillside and making the community vulnerable to floods and landslides. A functioning state might have helped prevent this on a number of levels, from a working agricultural extension service to an implemented regulatory framework for forest management to a strategy for the development of the local economy.

There are several examples in this report of health services that were provided by NGOs and then withdrawn.<sup>88</sup> Clearly, the provision of health and education is a state function. Equally clearly, the state is in no position to provide such services, and has made little effort to do so historically (see Section 1.1). The majority of interviewees spent all of their 'disposable' income on health and education, sacrificing meals to pay school or hospital fees. The design of a scheme to provide affordable and accessible services that are not subject to changing donor and aid agency priorities and the indifference of central government must be high on the list for the humanitarian and development communities.<sup>89</sup>

#### 4.2 Research question two: Contingency and early action

Contingency funds were not included in the multi-year portfolio in the DRC.

#### 4.3 Research question three: Value for money

A consistent theme in partner feedback has been that MYHF allows them to design more effective programmes that can learn, evolve and adapt over time to maximise efficiency and effectiveness gains, through:

- Better analysis, with more time to study the context more carefully and use this in programming;
- Development of longer-term relationships with the same population groups, leading to more participatory approaches; and
- Project learning to evolve or adapt over a longer time horizon, prompting more effective strategies.

UNICEF DRC has taken advantage of MYHF to test different modalities and approaches to cash delivery, designing a MY learning programme to generate evidence for better programming. MYHF allowed the UNICEF team to work with implementing partners to design several phases to the programme, and to gather evidence at the end of each phase to inform the design of its successor. This had two outcomes.

- First, the team was able to gather and assess detailed data on the relative costs of different transfer modalities (see Table 7) and use this data to maximise efficiency.
- Second, the team worked with local communities to identify the transfer plan that worked best for them. One phase of the project was used to examine several options, including:
  - One large lump sum transfer, and
  - Transfer of the same amount in regular tranches.

It became clear that the recipients preferred one larger transfer, using the lump sum for bigger investments. Being able to implement the cash transfer programme under a MY umbrella allowed the team to both reduce costs through less transfers and maximise the benefit of the transfer to the recipients.

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<sup>88</sup> For example, the IRC service in Rutshuru made a major difference both to people's health status and their expenditure burden. Once it had gone people died because they could not afford basic treatment.

<sup>89</sup> The ASRAMES initiative in North Kivu is important in this regard, providing an affordable revolving drug fund which helps to sustain the state service at a, albeit low, level of reliability: <https://asrames.org/en/> (accessed 18 December 2018).

Table 7: Cost of different transfer modalities, UNICEF DRC cash programme

Type of transfer	Cost of transfer
Direct cash	0.33%
Open market or fair	1.8–2%
Micro-finance	1.9–2.8%
Cash through local traders	5.2%
E-voucher fair	6%

Mercy Corps, a core UNICEF partner, carried out its own evaluation of the programme.<sup>90</sup> It used the first year of DFID MY funding to test three different transfer mechanisms – electronic vouchers (e-vouchers), mobile money, and physical cash. By examining cost-efficiency and user experience, they were able both to provide a direct comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of each transfer type, and conduct a cost-efficiency analysis of response modalities. Instalments varied from one large transfer of \$120 to two or three smaller transfers.

Their evaluation found that, by all cost-efficiency measures, e-vouchers are the most expensive way to deliver assistance (\$222 per transfer). Mobile money is the next most expensive (\$106 per transfer), and cash is the least expensive (\$77 per transfer) when measured by cost per transfer and when transfer values are standardised. Further to this, disbursement was the most expensive activity in the project, accounting for 33% of all administrative costs.

The evaluation also found that, contrary to evidence from other countries, mobile money is the slowest mechanism to establish and is not well suited to humanitarian cash transfer programmes in the DRC, whereas e-vouchers and cash were quick to deploy. Further, the evaluation gave Mercy Corps important information on the type of transfer that worked best for recipients.

During consultations, the team reinforced UNICEF's finding that recipients preferred one large transfer to multiple small transfers, and that this could result in substantial cost savings, with the consequence that:

- The cash programme would be more cost efficient as a result of the comparison of transfer modalities; and
- The programme was redesigned to a single transfer model, which at \$27 per transfer to 3,355 households, amounted to a total saving of \$181,170.<sup>91</sup> This clearly has significant implications for the implementation of a cash transfer programme at scale.

<sup>90</sup> Murray, S. and Hove, F. (2014) *Cheaper, Faster, Better? A Case Study of New Technologies in Cash Transfers from the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Portland OR: Mercy Corps.

<sup>91</sup> \$54 per household.

## 5. Conclusions

The MYHF portfolio in the DRC was limited over the period of this evaluation. In essence, it consisted of one UNICEF programme (ARCC II) that was implemented by four international NGOs. The UNICEF programme commissioned operational research to inform its MY programme, providing one of the few rigorous studies across the four-country portfolio undertaken by partners and used in shaping their programme. The approach demonstrates one clear benefit of MY over annualised or shorter humanitarian financing being the time it allows to research the outcomes of the programme to adjust accordingly and, potentially, make significant cost savings.

The panel research for this evaluation both confirmed and deepened the understanding of the depth of poverty in North and South Kivu. The connection between people's poverty and the shocks they experience is significant. But it is their exposure to shocks brought about by the derogation by the state of its responsibilities that is the determining factor – people could possibly cope quite easily with the shocks they experience if the structural impediments that also determine their poverty (recurrent conflict, the cost to the household of ill health, access to productive assets, in particular land, and technical know-how to maximise their benefits) did not exist.

Aid plays a major role in helping people get by, as does their inventiveness (adaptive capacity), family networks (social capital) and a substantial network of small community groups. Humanitarian aid often intervenes to save lives in communicable disease outbreaks and displacement. But the stop-start nature of much of the aid-funded service provision is less helpful.

There are many good examples of the interventions that might combine to alleviate the plethora of problems faced by the communities studied in North and South Kivu and to support their efforts to overcome them. MYHF, with the certainty it provides to the grant recipient, and the longer-term planning it permits, is an important contribution to, and potential facilitator of, those resilience-building efforts in a very difficult environment.

## Annex 1 – The cost of ill health

A household of six typically spent \$20–40 in Masisi and \$250–300 in Nyiragongo for direct expenditure on health care. The costs of *accessing treatment* were usually higher in Masisi than the *costs of treatment* itself. Transport and food for a patient and carer typically cost \$40–70 in Masisi and \$70–110 in Nyiragongo. When the lost income due to sickness was added in, the total cost of ill health was typically around \$200–250 in Masisi (35–40% of potential income) and \$350–400 in Nyiragongo (40–45% of potential income).

Morbidity rates were very high across all the villages. A median household of two adults and four children would face an average of six episodes of adult sickness and 11 episodes of child sickness over a 12-month period. Most sickness required treatment, presumably because this was an implicit part of the understanding of sickness by respondents. In 86% of cases this involved western medicine, either self-medication with purchased drugs, or a visit to a clinic. A typical (median) household made seven or eight trips a year outside the village for western health care.

Free treatment was available to 47% of patients in Masisi and 28% in Nyiragongo. Different treatments of the data were used to draw a picture of what a household could expect to spend on health care, excluding cases of serious sickness involving unusually high costs.

Most people preferred 'western' medicine, with 86% either visiting a clinic or buying medicine from a pharmacy, compared to 18% who sought indigenous medicine, although men were more likely to visit the latter. The cost of treatment seems to have been a significant factor in the choice of service, with some facilities charging for their service and some providing it free. But, significantly, the study found that the average household made an average of 7.4 trips annually outside the village for health care (3.4 trips for adults and four trips for children).

## Annex 2 – ARCC II

An evaluation of the ARCC II programme,<sup>92</sup> which built on lessons from ARCC I, and majored on cash rather than voucher schemes (68.5% received cash only, 23.5% received a mix of cash and vouchers, and 8% received vouchers only) found that the cash approach was particularly popular, allowing the recipients to make their own choice as to what was most useful for them.

It also found that the range of expenditure choices was far greater for cash than for voucher recipients, with almost nothing being spent on 'antisocial' items such as alcohol.

The evaluation found that all measures of wellbeing changed for the better; that there was little animosity in communities between those who received a transfer and those who did not (although there were complaints from those who were not on the list); that it made very little difference whether the transfer went to the male or female head of household or even to another household nominee; and that household consumption behaviour was equally indifferent to a one-off payment or payments by instalment. Lastly, the cash transfer had a largely positive impact on the community, as there were more resources in circulation, and reduced demands for help from the community.

A 2014 study carried out by Mercy Corps,<sup>93</sup> one of the three implementing partners, found that while physical cash was the fastest, cheapest and simplest to deliver, it was not universally available for security reasons. E-vouchers proved a suitable alternative, with costs likely to reduce as time passed and scale increased (see Section 4.3 on value for money). Mobile money was not recommended in the DRC since the delivery infrastructure is still only rudimentary. Interestingly, however, both programme staff and beneficiaries saw the future potential for mobile money, including the use of the mobile account as a repository for savings.

The findings of both studies are supported by the panel interviews for this evaluation. What is particularly interesting – and corresponds with a quantitative study for ARCC II, is that when cash or cash-like assets are provided, they are spent on perceived essentials and, when given in large enough amounts (one-off payments rather than several) are seen as an investment opportunity (again, see Section 4.3).

Last year, we got cash assistance in the amount of \$65 from AVSI. They organise fairs where traders bring along their items for us to buy; often these items are essentials, the things we need straight away. Myself I bought corn flour, beans, salt, soap, cooking oil because they made it an obligation to spend all the money in the fair. In April 2015, AVSI yet again donated cash assistance in the amount of \$75 and organised another fair where I bought clothes, shoes and a mattress for myself and for my children. Before that, ASOP [South Kivu NGO funded by Women for Women] in cooperation with OXFAM had given me one three-prong fork and one hoe, tools which are very useful to me when I farm on that mountain full of pebbles. *Walungu/Mushangi 05R1*

All the aids received were profitable, but if I have to rank them, AVSI [cash assistance and education] would come first and ASOP second. I will have to seek from AVSI one more thing; that if they come again with assistance, let there be goats that we may raise and see whether the manure can contribute to raising the fertility of the soil.  
*Walungu/Mushangi 05R1*

<sup>92</sup> Bonilla, J. et al. (2017) *Humanitarian Cash Transfers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Evidence from UNICEF's ARCC II Programme*, Washington DC: AIR.

<sup>93</sup> Murray, S. and Hove, F. (2014) *Cheaper, Faster, Better? A Case Study of New Technologies in Cash Transfers from the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Portland OR: Mercy Corps.