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Humanitarian Emergency Fund

Democratic Republic of Congo

Case Studies:

- **Christian Aid**
- **SCI AF**
- **Tearfund**

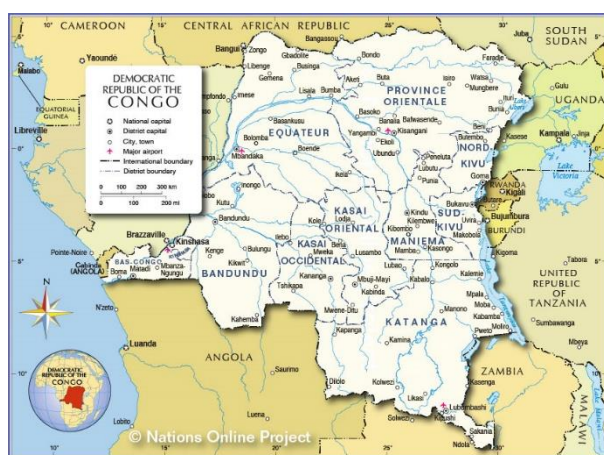


The Humanitarian Emergency Fund: Response in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Central Africa is the continent's second largest country in terms of size and is ranked nineteenth in the world in terms of population. Around sixty per cent of its 84 million people live in rural areas. Its immense economic resources include 80 million hectares of arable land and more than one thousand minerals and precious metals, giving the DRC the potential to become one of the richest countries in Africa.

But the DRC faces many complex political and economic crises. National elections have been repeatedly delayed and protests have been violently repressed by security forces while the country's natural resources are plundered. Many parts of the DRC continue to experience prolonged conflict and widespread poverty, contributing to population displacement, chronic food insecurity and restricted livelihood activities. Almost fifty million people lack basic water supplies and sanitation facilities. People, in both rural and urban settings, obtain their water from unsafe sources such as rivers, unprotected wells or springs, or collect rainwater in unclean containers.

The humanitarian situation in the DRC significantly worsened in 2017. With a sudden escalation in violence, the number of IDPs and those in need of emergency assistance rose dramatically, adding to an already complex and dangerous situation. 'Alongside the 4.3 million people now displaced from their homes, and 9.9 million considered food insecure, outbreaks of communicable diseases including cholera have spread rapidly across the country affecting many thousands, whilst gender-based violence against women and children is all too common place. Children are recruited as child soldiers for armed militia and rebel groups, and girls risk being separated from their families and abused as concubines by military leaders.



http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/dr_congo_map2.htm

The Kasai region, located at the centre of this vast African country, witnessed the greatest increase in violence and resulting humanitarian need as tribal conflict and clashes between armed groups and security forces rage on incessantly.

In the Eastern provinces of Tanganyika and South Kivu, an upsurge in civil unrest and subsequent military action led to further displacement of people, with close to 1 million thought to have left their homes, and many thousands seeking refuge in neighbouring countries including Zambia and Uganda.

In Maniema Province, where at least eighty per cent of people cannot access safe drinking water, cholera is endemic and the demand for potable water is set to increase. Conflict in Kabambare Territory in eastern Maniema, where armed groups are attacking UN forces as well as civilians, is forcing more and more families to flee further west, causing further stress on already unsafe water sources.

There are multiple reasons why the DRC is a difficult place in which to deliver humanitarian support, most notably security and access, yet each of the eight HEF Panel members have a presence in various locations across the country. The Scottish Government approved the recommendation from the Panel members that the HEF should support this severely underfunded and largely overlooked crisis and the year's final tranche of funds (£293,762) was made available to Christian Aid, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) and Tearfund to undertake life-saving interventions.

Christian Aid's work funded by the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Emergency Fund



In the Kasai Region, a previously stable but impoverished part of the country, conflict has caused a humanitarian crisis for almost two million people. In some of the worst affected zones, up to ninety per cent of the population was assessed as in urgent need of food, essential household items, shelter, livelihood and psychosocial assistance.

As violence decreased and the security situation stabilised over the past few months, the humanitarian context has been characterised by the return of previously displaced people. More than 700,000 people have returned to Kasai, almost half of the displaced population. But they have returned to find their houses burned down or destroyed, their possessions looted.

Forced to stay with host families in already overcrowded circumstances, they continue to face risks of insecurity, malnutrition and other health problems, struggling with yet another humanitarian crisis.

Project Impact

With £97,920 funding from the Humanitarian Emergency Fund, Christian Aid and its partner, HelpAge¹, supported 630 of the most vulnerable families in the villages of Masungu Anayi and Nzambi Wabalekela in the Kamonia Territory of Kasai Province, helping to restore a sense of safety and dignity. To start re-building their lives, the families were provided with basic household items - cooking equipment, bedding and clothing - with additional personal hygiene kits given to girls and mothers.

For some of the families, particularly those of children living alone, mothers about to give birth, and elderly people, further support was critical to reduce the proximity of people living so closely to each other. Almost one hundred people, including community leaders and local authority staff, undertook the Building Back Safer training programme to build shelters.



Using locally available material, they built two hundred shelters (150 shelters in Masungu Anayi, and a further fifty shelters in Nzambi Wabalekela) to accommodate these families, approximately one thousand people in total.

In addition to these, a further fifty shelters were built independently, based on the training conducted within the communities.

¹ Five organisations in Canada, Colombia, Kenya, India and the UK (Help the Aged) set up HelpAge International in 1983 to provide a strong network to support older people worldwide.

Maria belongs to an ethnic minority but has been accepted by the community and included as a beneficiary due to Christian Aid's advocacy and social cohesion component within the project.



Maria is thankful for the assistance which brought her hope.

Here she stands with a neighbour next to her newly built home.

On the wall, a thank you note to HelpAge DRC (implementing partner) and Christian Aid.

A family stands proudly before their newly built home.

Pastor Paul, the head of household was kidnapped by militia and tortured for several days at the peak of the conflict.

This shelter represents the first step in his long walk to recovery.





All Photo Credits: Christian Aid DRC/Esperant Mulumba

Young men were particularly at risk during the Kasai conflict as they were often perceived as enemy fighters or forcibly recruited into armed groups.

Samuel is happy to have had a chance to rebuild his family home which was destroyed at the peak of the crisis.

He sees this as a real opportunity to restart stronger and more determined as he rebuilds his life.

SCIAF's work funded by the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Emergency Fund

SCIAF's emergency interventions, located within the Territory of Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu, aimed to address the non-food and food requirements of 444 households for three months; enable 1,200 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence to access essential services; and to engage one thousand individuals in peace-building and conflict resolution activities to reduce tension between refugees, internally displaced people and host communities. The four localities targeted in this intervention - Sange, Bwala, Kasakwa, and Katanga – had received no previous humanitarian support.

Project Impact

The provision of food baskets² for three months met the minimum food requirements of 444 of the most vulnerable families. The living conditions of these households were also improved through the provision of non-food item kits³ (for cooking, sleeping and basic hygiene) and agricultural inputs (seeds and tools), including training, to increase their capacity to produce their own food.

The access to essential services planned for 1,200 survivors of violence was more than achieved in most respects. At least 2,476 women and men, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, accessed psychosocial services and, of these, more than one thousand individuals received legal advice from the 48 trained psychosocial assistants and paralegal team. Of this number more than one hundred individuals also received medical care at one of the health centres equipped by the project for cases that included post-rape care, sexually transmitted infections as well as wider health issues.

Mr Amas Abedi Mawalango's story

Armed clashes in areas of South Kivu have forced many families to flee. Mr Amas Abedi Mawalango, 55, and twelve members of his household had little choice but to escape from their village of Mukera as the Mai-Mai destroyed their home and looted their possessions. It is still not safe for them to return.



They arrived in the village of Nalubwe on the Kasakwa – Bwala road with nothing, no food, no basic essentials, and no means of making a living. Without the generosity of a host family who gave them food, Mr Amas Abedi and his family would have struggled to survive.

Prior to the project, internally displaced people (IDPs) on the Kasakwa-Bwala road had received no assistance. With little work available, many had to beg for food.

² Food baskets: 40kg of corn meal, 15kg of beans, 3l of vegetable oil, 3kg of salt and 15kg of firewood. Corn Soya Blend nutritional biscuits, and sugar, is also being provided to meet the needs of particularly vulnerable households.

³ NFI kits: cooking 6 cups, 6 plates, 1 20l can, 3 pans, 12 spoons, 1 ladle, 1 container and knives, hygiene 5 bars of soap, 5 of bars of laundry soap, 1 container, 2 ladies' cloth wraps (pagnes), 4 clothes for children, 2 trousers for men, 3 blankets, and 3 mats.

When the team from Popoli Fratelli, SCIAF's local partner, undertook the humanitarian post-evaluation survey, Mr Amas told them:

"I am the father of a household of twelve people. It is exorbitant, especially when we cannot afford to take charge. We left everything during the flight. It was an abrupt war, wild... We sleep in bad conditions for lack of blankets and mats. We begged for food. I tried to get by, but it does not always work... The capita (village chief) took pity on me and offered me a field. However, I missed even the inputs to cultivate."

Mr Amas declared:



The food baskets, seeds and tools, and basic household and hygiene items that the project provided supports families while they work to get back on their feet

"My household has benefited from the food assistance and farming tools and agricultural inputs we received. From then on, the members of my household start to find food easily. These simultaneous activities allowed me to easily cultivate the field offered to me by the village chief. In a few weeks, I will have the first harvest. My family will continue to get food, despite the end of the project. In addition, the health of my children has been saved. The latter were already suffering from skin diseases due to lack of hygiene items. The clothes, houseware and soap we received quickly improved my children's condition."

Mr Amas said that 'thank you' is too small to express his gratitude to the project, and he added:

"My contribution, too, is my commitment to perpetuate the achievements of the project for the well-being of my household."

Mrs Riziki Owana Euphrasie Francine's story

In the village of Bwala, another displaced family had been struggling

Riziki Owana Euphrasie Francine, 35, is the head of her household, taking the responsibility for nine family members, even though she herself is pregnant. Mrs. Riziki Owana told the team from Popoli Fratelli that she felt overburdened by her many responsibilities, with no strength left to look after herself.



Having received support from the project, she said:

"I lived in pain. I did not know how to carry the burden of my household. Fortunately, the project has come. I received three food assistance. Also, other support was offered to me. I feel really relieved by this consistent help for the survival of my household."

Peace-building and conflict resolution

The response from SCIAF's partners did not focus solely on addressing the essentials that a family require on a day-to-day basis. With the sudden, and continuing, influx of so many people to the area, there is much potential for tensions between IDPs and the local communities.

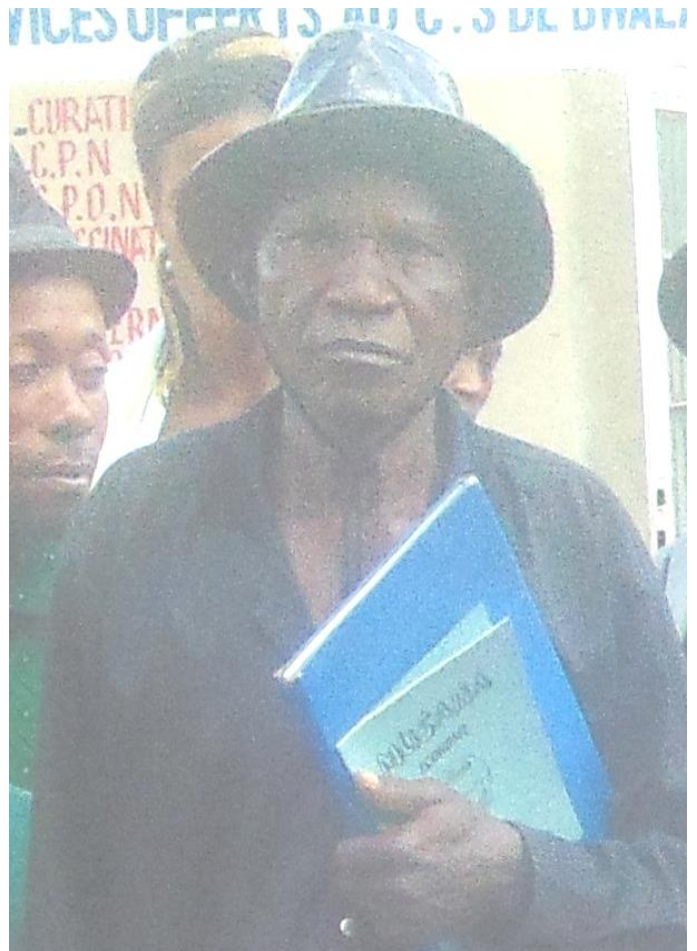
Mr. Mulenge Tchilunda, 58, who is the Kasakwa Village Chief, has witnessed tensions between the local people and those who arrive from other areas. Before the project, as the local leader, he would resolve disputes as best he could.

Keen to become involved in this dimension of the project, he participated in the conflict-resolution sessions, learning techniques for peaceful conflict transformation, non-violence and social cohesion. Since then, he has achieved two successful mediations between the two groups.

In his own words, Mr. Mulenge Tchilunda stated:

"I thought about the merits of applying real techniques of peaceful conflict transformation to arbitration. As a result, I pledged to start using these techniques that consolidate peaceful cohabitation instead of using arbitration that is conflicting."

Photo credits: Popoli Fratelli



Tearfund's work funded by the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Emergency Fund

In Maniema Province, where at least eighty per cent of people cannot access safe drinking water, cholera is endemic and the demand for potable water is set to increase. Conflict in Kabambare Territory in eastern Maniema, where armed groups are attacking UN forces as well as civilians, is forcing more and more families to flee further west, causing further stress on already unsafe water sources.



With £97,920 funding from the Humanitarian Emergency Fund, almost fifty thousand people in Maniema Province can now drink safe clean water. The overall health and wellbeing in these communities have also improved, especially for girls and women. The time taken to collect and carry water from distant wells and springs has been greatly reduced and, so far this year, no cases of cholera have been reported.

To achieve this, springs that are the main sources of water were protected and rehabilitated, water-user committees were formed and trained to manage and maintain each of the springs. To meet the gap in water-service provision, more than four thousand families were given Aquatabs⁴ and almost three thousand families received packets of PUR powder⁵ to treat water until the work on the water points were completed.

To illustrate the difference that these funds have made, the story of Sarah Amisi tells how important Tearfund's intervention means to the people in the project area.

“My greatest joy” Sarah Amisi’s story.

Sarah Amisi lives with her husband and six children in the Basoko neighbourhood of Kindu, the provincial capital of Maniema. With very little infrastructure, even in the urban areas, Sarah’s family, like so many others, had no option but to collect water from unsafe sources. This lack of safe potable water often made her children ill with diarrhea and intestinal worms. Together with the shortage of sanitation facilities, outbreaks of cholera were common.

As Mama Sarah explains:

“There were no protected wells or springs [in our community]; my family and I would drink water from unprotected springs. Fetching water required queuing for a long period of time to fill our 20-litre jerry can.”

⁴ Water purification tablets which kill micro-organisms in water to prevent cholera and other water borne diseases.

⁵ A powdered mixture that removes pathogenic microorganisms and suspended matter, rendering previously contaminated water safe to drink. PUR contains calcium hypochlorite for killing bacteria (including those that cause cholera) and ferric sulfate for removing suspended matter, protozoa, and viruses.



The lack of potable water not only affected her family's physical health, it also affected Sarah's own psychological well-being.

Sarah recalls how she used to feel:

"I felt as an abandoned woman, neglected by society and let down by life. On the one hand my husband was jobless, and so was I...and add to this having no access to water. I lived in sadness and despair."

An example of an unsafe water-source in Maniema Province
Photo credits: Tearfund

Despite these feelings, Mama Sarah was very active in her community. A member of a women's group advocating for the rights of survivors of sexual violence, she has also petitioned local authorities to make potable water available in the neighbourhood. However, to Mama Sarah, they have not been responding to her demands quickly enough. She says it has been Tearfund's intervention in Basoko, with funds from the Scottish Government that has been, in her opinion, both life-saving and life-altering for her and her family.

She sums up the access to safe water as currently being her "greatest joy," and something she had hoped for her children:



Sarah Amisi at the protected spring funded by the Scottish Government

"My children are no longer suffering from waterborne diseases and I no longer have to spend as much money on medical bills for the children. I want to see my children go to school, have sufficient food, drink clean water, have nice clothes and live in security".

Mama Sarah has experienced improvements within her household and she wants more families, like hers, to be given access to safe water in Kindu.

Sarah expressed her thanks by saying:

"My entire family is continuously grateful to God to have thought of them by building a water point in our community."
