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# Kasais Rapid Education Risk Analysis Report

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Version 2

Accès, Lecture, Redevabilité et Rétention ! (ACCELERE!) Activity I

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS ..... 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 1
Education in Context..... 1
Key Findings and Recommendations ..... 2
Recommendations ..... 3
ACCELERE! OVERVIEW ..... 6
RERA PURPOSE ..... 7
METHODOLOGY ..... 7
Research Questions ..... 7
Team Composition ..... 8
Sample Selection Criteria and Selection..... 9
Data Collection, Tools, and Enumerator Training ..... 9
Focus Group Discussion Protocol..... 13
Limitations ..... 13
COUNTRY CONTEXT ..... 13
FINDINGS..... 17
Research Question 1: How does the education sector in the Kasais relate to and interact with the broader political, economic, social, and security environment in the province?..... 17
Research Question 2: What are the resilience factors that positively influence access to safe and quality education?..... 23
RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 25
Research Question 3: How can our program strengthen these factors for an immediate impact? ..... 25
ANNEX I – ADDITIONAL COUNTRY AND ACTIVITY CONTEXT ..... 28
A/I in the Kasais..... 28

## Acronyms

ACCELERE !1	Accès, Lecture, Redevabilité et Rétention! Activity 1 (A!1)
AVEC	<i>Associations villageoises d'épargne et de crédit</i> (Village Savings and Loans Associations)
CAP	<i>Centre d'Apprentissage Professionnel</i>
CE	Cambridge Education
COPA	<i>Comité de Parents</i>
CRS	<i>Centre de Rattrapage Scolaire</i>
CSA	Conflict Sensitivity Analysis
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FY	Fiscal year
GDRC	Government of the DRC
IGA	Income generating activities
ML	<i>Mobilisateur de la Lecture</i>
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo
PIE	<i>Plan Intérimaire de l'éducation</i>
RERA	Rapid Education Risk Assessment ( <i>Analyse Rapide des Risques pour l'Education</i> )
SAF	Strategic Activities Fund
SEA	Senior Education Advisor
SRGBV	School-related gender-based violence
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

ACCELERE!1 (A!1) has one-third of its target schools in Kasai Central. At the outset of the A!1 program in 2015, the Kasai provinces had no political unrest. By the second and third project years, militia activity was at its peak and the project struggled to respond appropriately. To better understand how A!1 could use limited resources to improve education in the Kasais during the conflict, the project conducted a Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA).

The RERA is a fast and ‘good-enough’ situation analysis of the interaction between education and the conflict that has recently arisen in the provinces of Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental in the DRC. The Kasais RERA provides the USAID funded ACCELERE!1 (A!1) project with data to improve and sustain activities in the two Kasai provinces. The Kasai RERA is a qualitative situational analysis, using secondary data review, a previous Conflict Sensitivity Analysis study, and key information/focus group discussions. The analysis focuses on areas of resilience within the conflict-affected school communities and answers the following research questions:

1. *How does the national social and security environment relate to and interact with the education system in Kasai province?*
2. *What are the resilience factors that positively influence access to safe and quality education?*
3. *How can A!1 strengthen these factors for an immediate impact?*

Data was collected from eight conflict affected school communities in Kasai Central and eight conflict affected school communities in Kasai Oriental from May 21<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Twelve of the schools have a high degree of damage and four have a medium degree of damage. Schools without damage were not included in the sample. A total of 507 respondents participated in the focus group discussions of those 40% were women.

## Education in Context

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has had a variety of local, provincial and international conflicts for over 20 years resulting in the death of over 5.4 million people and

the displacement of over 2 million people. It is the deadliest conflict since the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> The majority of the deaths are due to secondary effects of the conflict, such as preventable diseases, and malnutrition. DRC is currently ranked 176 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, classifying it in the “low human development” category.<sup>2</sup> An estimated 13.1 million people, including 6.8 million women and girls and 7.9 million children, will need protection and humanitarian assistance in 2018, an increase of 50 percent as compared with 2017.<sup>3</sup>

In the Kasais, repeated cycles of pillaging have left fields empty, farmers without seed, women unwilling to tend the fields for fear of rape, and transportation routes disrupted have deteriorated the already dire levels of poverty. Adding to the existing agricultural disasters, the constant movement of people from home to bush, from village to village, from town to city deteriorates the social bonds of a community. In 2015, the government of the DRC began to create new provinces, the *découpage* process, as it is called resulted in the new Kasai Central province<sup>4</sup>. This process cut off the areas of Kasai Central from the former area of Kasai Occidental which were more lucrative economically, resulting in a new province that has no industry and with a large population dependent on civil servant salaries for survival.

Total government spending on education increased from 9% of the national budget in 2010 to 16% in 2013,<sup>5</sup> demonstrating the increasing importance the national government is placing on education. However, the majority of costs for schooling in the form of prohibitively high school fees rests with the families, despite the September 2010 national policy of Free Primary Education (FPE) school fees. Violence on the way to school and in school remains a key concern for students and families. Girls are often raped. Few resources or knowledge around the effects of trauma exist within the communities.

## **Key Findings and Recommendations**

Addressing these changing circumstances, the RERA confirmed that the A!1 activities that were part of the original project design and are currently being implemented continue to be appropriate and on-course to assist school communities in the Kasai. This study was meant to provide information to better inform implementation of the A!1 project and as such does not attribute causality or impact.

The findings presented are not generalizable to the DRC education system. The findings are specific to the sixteen communities (6 schools and 2 CRS per province) sampled and can be generally applied to the Kasais region.

## **Violence**

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<sup>1</sup> International Rescue Committee and the Burnet Institute (2007). Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Ongoing Crisis.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2015). “Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development.”

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. January 5, 2018.

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1746531.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> USAID (n.d) “Country Specific Information: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Multi-Year Development FOOD Assistance Projects, Fiscal Years 2016-2020

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Education Data.

- Violence permeated the discussion groups. The fabric of society, families, work, and schooling have been torn by the persistent conflict and the resulting rape and pillaging. Scarcity of food resources is the result of armed combatants stealing food from the fields, raping the women working in the fields, and keeping markets closed from fear of violence.
- Families have been torn apart as men and children watch their mothers being raped. After the rape, women are expelled from their homes, leaving the children without a mother and the family is considered to be ‘divorced’ thereafter.
- Violence within the schools, from teachers beating all children as punishment, children imitating combatants on the playground, and male teachers raping female students at will, mark the schools as unsafe environments. Walking to and from school in their school uniforms can leave the girls and boys as easy targets.

### **Trauma**

- Although Respondents were able to describe and point to behaviors that are the result of trauma, the concept of trauma required explanation. Respondents expressed great concern for some of the children and their unhealthy behaviors of becoming violent and in one instance threatening death.

### **Schooling**

- Despite the severe destruction to the schools, most schools are still operating.
- Schools need a two-fold reparation- improvements to the physical structure and to internal furnishings such as desks and benches, and support teachers with good training and a close relationship with parents.
- The most cited reason for non-attendance was lack of school fees.

### **Leadership**

- Traditional leadership within the Kasaï is failing. The church helps through the collection of funds to pay off the militia and for funerals. Community leaders struggle to maintain their positions within the rapidly changing environment. No one source has the authority to lead.
- Giving circles and other informal networks can be considered as a source of community resilience.

## **Recommendations**

The following key recommendations are offered to Accelere1!, USAID, and the donor community. Additional recommendations are in the Recommendations section.

### **Recommendations for ACCERLER!**

#### **1. Address trauma through violence prevention and psych-social supports:**

1. A!1 should continue its psycho-social referral support activities which include working with the SRGBV monitoring committees (*comités de genre et de surveillance des violences*) to identify and ensure community members are aware of the referral services available in their community for victims of violence. A!1 should also continue its planned work with ministry counterparts (MINAS and MEPSP) to build the capacity of teachers and educators to recognize and support learners dealing with psychosocial issues.

2. A1! Should also continue to train on and apply USAID's Doorways Safe-Schools Curriculum, specifically the modules dealing with Violence and School-Related Gender-Based Violence, Positive Discipline, and Code of Conduct. This, coupled with the *comités de genre* that A1! has begun to facilitate the establishment thereof is an important contribution.
  3. USAID, UKAID, UNICEF and other donors should support programming and interventions in Social Emotional Learning and other psychosocial support strategies. Funders should also identify and strengthen local CSOs and church networks to support these much-needed interventions.
- 2. Schools:**
4. **Continue to tackle school fees.** Though a modest contribution, A1! should continue to support school fees through its direct subsidization of targeted vulnerable children through its Grants program in selected formal and non-formal schools. A1!'s Governance component should continue its planned community-based work in increasing transparency and accountability around how school fees are established and applied. A12 Should continue its larger policy work in this arena.
- 3. Resilience:**
5. **Build upon existing resources.** A1! should continue to support community savings plans, agricultural fields, and small livestock generating activities thru the A1! grants component.

#### **Recommendations for USAID, UKAID, and Other Donors**

1. **Address trauma through psycho-social support.** Psychosocial trauma within the Kasaï's population is significant and yet there is very little support. Even though the militia related violence seems to be subsiding the affected communities remain deeply traumatized by recent violence inflicted upon them and the local populations. USAID, UKAID, UNICEF and other donors should support programming and interventions in Social Emotional Learning and other psychosocial support strategies. Funders should also identify and strengthen local CSOs and church networks to support these much-needed interventions.
2. **Support rapid funding for school construction and rehabilitation efforts.** Funders should put in place rapid funding and construction mechanisms to quickly rebuild schools and/or rehabilitate existing ones. Rehabilitation efforts should also include school fences and latrines for girls. When requesting community support in the rehabilitation of schools, funders and implementing partners should ensure a 'do no harm' approach is applied given some indirect evidence on the use of child labor to re-construct schools.
3. **Advocate strategically and continually at the highest level of government to promote the respect of free primary education and the payment of teachers.** Donors should continue to advocate for a higher level of government support to promote a living wage for teachers.
4. **Strengthen local leaders and civil society organizations for greater ownership.**
  - CSO and school management committees (COPAS/COGES) have an important role to play in leading the community to return to normalcy. Empowering local CSOs and school management committees to apply for and utilize small grants can enable communities to see these bodies as leading reconstruction and a path toward lessening the violence in everyday life for the communities. A1!'s School Improvement Plans support schools in this regard.
  - Future funding should consider enhancing local knowledge-base and experience on how to a) help leaders understand the extent and implications of wide-spread trauma, including their own; b) provide mechanisms through which the religious networks and

the government can be seen as contributing to community stabilization; and c) strengthen the rule of law within the local community.

# Detailed report

## ACCELERE! Overview

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with Department for International Development (DFID), has committed to implementing a primary education initiative to improve equitable access to education and learning outcomes for girls and boys in the DRC. This collective initiative, entitled ACCELERE! (*Accès, Lecture, Retention et Redevabilité* or access, reading, retention, and accountability), aims to support the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (GDRC) commitment to free universal basic education and improved learning outcomes as articulated in the GDRC's Interim Education Plan (*Plan Intérimaire de l'éducation, PIE*), the Education Sector Strategy, and other reform efforts in the sector.

As one component of this joint program, Activity 1 of ACCELERE! (A1) is led by Chemonics International under the Improving Reading, Equity, and Accountability in the DRC contract with USAID (AID-660-C-15-00001) awarded with a period of performance of May 2015 to May 2020 and a total estimated cost of \$133.9 million. The consortium's institutional partners include FHI 360, Cambridge Education (CE) and School-to-School International (STS). In addition, the project has established a relationship SIL-LEAD for targeted activities in local language material development.

The purpose of ACCELERE!1 is to improve educational outcomes for boys and girls in select education provinces in the DRC. To contribute to achieving this overarching purpose, A1 supports education service delivery in public primary schools (including *écoles conventionnées* run by religious networks) in 26 education sub-divisions across six provinces: Haut-Katanga, Lualaba, Kasai-Central, Kasai-Oriental, Equateur, and Sud-Ubangi. In addition, Activity 1 will support non-formal alternative/accelerated learning programs (ALPs), including *centres de rattrapage scolaire* (CRSs) in these 26 sub-divisions as well as in targeted areas of Nord- and Sud-Kivu provinces, and in vocational training centers (*centres d'apprentissage professionnel*, CAPs) in target areas of the Kivus and conflict-affected zones in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba. A1 also works to ensure that girls and boys benefit equally from project activities and that all assistance is conflict sensitive and disability inclusive.

ACCELERE!1 will help strengthen partnerships between government at the national and decentralized levels, between communities and schools, and between the public and private sectors.

## RERA Purpose

One-third of ACCELERE!1's (A!1) target schools are located in the Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental provinces. At the outset of the A!1 program in 2015, the Kasai province had no political unrest. By the second and third project years, militia activity was at its peak and the project struggled to respond appropriately. To better understand how A!1 could use limited resources to improve education in the Kasais during the conflict, the project conducted a Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA). A RERA is a situational conflict analysis that integrates a rapid education sector assessment with elements of conflict analysis, disaster risk assessment, and resilience analysis. The A!1 RERA provides USAID, DFID, and the A!1 Program with a fast and "good enough" situation analysis of the education system in the Kasai provinces and how it interacts with multiple risks surrounding the ongoing and increasingly threatening conflict situation that has emerged in the province.

Because this is a mid-program RERA, conducted in response to unforeseen impacts of conflict in the Kasais on educational programming, ACCELERE!1 is not proposing to use the findings of this RERA to add significant new interventions, but instead to adjust activities to better respond to the security needs of students, teachers, families, and school communities affected by the Kasais crisis at this moment.

## Methodology

This study is a qualitative study using focus group discussion and key informant interviews in twelve schools within Kasai Oriental and Kasai Central and four CRSs. The purpose is to understand respondent's experiences of the conflict in affected schools and communities and to identify opportunities for support through the A!1 project. The RERA was tailored to the unique context of the two targeted Kasai provinces to pursue more primary data collection and focused on multiple risk categories— violence, Gender Based Violence (GBV), displacement, trauma, and lack of community-based leadership —and their interaction with the education sector, including schools, education staff, learners, families, and the school communities.

The RERA in the Kasais (*Analyse rapide des risques pour l'éducation*) consisted of a desk review of secondary data followed by data collection. Data collection was a mixture of focus group discussions and key informant interviews at the school community level (USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) Participant Manual, 2017). Grounded theory was used as the method of analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The RERA sought to enhance existing knowledge about the education system in the Kasais and how it interacts with the ongoing conflict, civil unrest, trends of violence, gender and sexual-based violence, trauma, and displacement. It was carried out based on the conviction that in order to understand the how an educational system is functioning, the entire fluid risk environment must be examined.

## Research Questions

1. *How does the national social and security environment relate to and interact with the education system in the two targeted Kasai provinces?*
2. *What are the resilience factors that positively influence access to safe and quality education?*
3. *How can A!1 strengthen these factors for an immediate impact?*

Sub-questions further focused the RERA as follows:

- Understand in which ways the resilience already within the community can be strengthened.
- Understand where the areas of community cohesiveness are and how to strengthen them
- Understand how displacement is affecting education.
- Understand the safety risks around and in schools.
- Understand the feasibility and usefulness of teacher training in psychosocial adaptive education.

As the RERA for the two Kasai provinces looks at ways in which the community can be strengthened with donor led support, the RERA Team adopted the USAID definition of Resilience:

USAID defines resilience as the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. (USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) Participant Manual, 2017)

The team also used this definition of resilience:

Resilience is an integrating concept that allows multiple risks, shocks and stresses and their impacts on ecosystems and vulnerable people to be considered together in the context of development programming. Resilience also highlights slow drivers of change that influence systems and the potential for non-linearity and transformation processes. It focuses attention on a set of institutional, community and individual capacities and particularly on learning, innovation and adaptation. Strengthening resilience can be associated with windows of opportunities for change, often opening after a disturbance (Mitchell, 2012)

As there are few external studies on resilience that strictly focus on the Kasais, the research for the literature review comes mostly from the Conflict Sensitivity Analysis (CSA) report 2017. The CSA study provides multiple recommendations to consider. Some of the recommendations stem from areas already strong. For example, the CSA FY 2017 study reports that there is a range of teacher training manuals already approved by the Ministry of Education including Peace Education, Psychosocial Support, and Healing Classrooms. The report states that in focus groups with teachers in Haut-Katanga province who welcomed conflict-affected-internally-displaced children into their classrooms, revealed that they did not understand that conflict-affected children could have additional needs, aside from their increased economic vulnerability. The act of welcoming children in the conflict-affected area and the idea that there are already approved materials, is a type of resilience that could be built upon (see recommendations below).

### **Team Composition**

The RERA team consisted of an intentional mixture of A!1 program technical staff, A!1 home-office-based senior management, RERA-trained Chemonics staff, USAID senior RERA advisors, and carefully selected enumerators from within our local team to represent those most closely attuned to the community-level context. This mixture of staff was intended to provide the team with senior-level research and education expertise, RERA specific expertise, and staff intimately familiar with the situation in the Kasais. The 2018 ACCELERE!! RERA Team included:

- RERA Advisor – Ms. Nina Weisenhorn
- Education and Risk/Conflict Team Lead – Dr. Jordene Hale

- Education Advisor and Trainer – Ms. Sonia Arias
- Field Research Coordinator and Lead Trainer – Mr. Freddy Kabala
- Kasaï Education and CRS Specialists – Ms. Kabibi Dioma Akonga and Cherif Sango (Provincial Team Leads)
- RERA Advisor and Trainer – Ms. Madeleine Dale
- Desk Research and Data Analysts – Ms. Laura Harrington; Ms. Nadine Hejazin
- Gender and Social Inclusion Expert – Ms. Madho Lwango
- Enumerators –
  - Kasaï Oriental:
    - Alain Kasanda Yoka
    - Didier Dilenga Dilenga
    - Jules Badibanga Nsambuka
    - Emery Ngandu Kalengayi
  - Kasaï Central:
    - Patrice Bijimine Badibake
    - Louis Kande Lukengu
    - André Kabasubabo Kazadi
    - Pierre Tshibuabua Kamuena
- Security Expert – T. Paul McHaffey

### **Sample Selection Criteria and Selection**

As a rapid “good enough” tool the RERA does not require a representative sample (USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) Participant Manual, 2017) but instead uses purposive sampling that relies on the expert judgement of the research team to a) select locations that have a variety of characteristics (rural/urban; strongly affected/moderately affected for example); and b) a wide selection of informants that have diverse perspectives. Purposive sampling does not allow for generalizability of the entire population; rather, it provides a useful picture of a range of perspectives within a given context to understand general trends. Because of the inherent risk of the Kasaïs, the team used convenience sampling that allows for the safety of the enumerators. Safety was the primary consideration for school site selection. Secondly, the team selected schools based on the following criteria:

- Directly affected (physical violence to the school building, teachers, or students)
- IDP population – high displacement and low displacement
- School closed
- Urban/rural %
- CRS (non-formal schools) – 10%-20% as is represented in the A1! schools
- Variety of tribal affinities

To determine the safety of the sites selected the team relied on A1! Security Director. In total 14 schools were selected, but due to timing and logistical limitations only 6 in Kasaï Central (4 formal schools and 2 CRS), 6 in Kasaï Oriental (4 formal schools and 2 CRS) for a total of 12 were sampled.

### **Data Collection, Tools, and Enumerator Training**

A team of home office staff and USAID staff used the baseline questions from the RERA Toolkit and revised them to answer the specific research questions for the Kasaïs RERA. The tools were sent to the field office for translation into French and Ciluba. During the enumerator training, the enumerators further refined the questions to suit the context.

The tools for each focus group discussion had two parts. The top part had pre-coded quantitative slots for possible responses to a question. For example, a question about safety around the school might have ‘bathrooms’, ‘school yard’, ‘classroom’ as possible codes. For many of the questions we did not differentiate between rape and physical violence. The tick for rape is subsumed under the physical violence category. Rape was listed as a code for questions that specifically addressed women’s safety; physical violence was used in all other questions. Eight data enumerators (four from each Kasaï province) were drawn from the A!1 “Reading Mobilisers” (i.e., MLs, who are project school support staff and data collectors) following the guidelines provided in the RERA Toolkit (USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) Participant Manual, 2017). All selected enumerators had experience with data collection for qualitative and quantitative studies, familiarity with the project, and deep familiarity with the target schools for data collection. The MLs received an intensive five-day training on the RERA, qualitative data collection concepts, best practices, and coding. Freddy Kabala, Access Team Leader, Sonia Arias, Director of A!1, and Madeline Dale, RERA trained evaluator conducted the training.

The objectives of the training were for all participants to be able to:

- Explain the RERA.
- Demonstrate the importance of the RERA in the context of the Kasaï conflict and the A!1 program.
- Review and use all RERA tools.
- Use the appropriate methodology to administer the interview questions to different target groups using the tips for qualitative data collection included in the training.
- Apply the appropriate coding system to the RERA study data.

The first two days of the RERA training consisted of an overview of the RERA and its objectives; a deep dive into the application of the RERA within the scope and context of the Kasaï conflict and the A!1 project specifically; a session on the RERA methodology, and an introduction of the tools the RERA team created and tailored for the DRC and the dictophones.

The third day was dedicated to vetting and deeply contextualizing the research questions and further refining answer codes together with the enumerators. During this session, each interview question was further revised so as to specifically target the unknown variables in the communities in which we were to collect data, drawing on our enumerators' deep knowledge of existing risk dynamics, threats, and trends. Enumerators also reviewed phrasing and framing of the interview questions for each target group in a locally contextualized way so as to ensure understanding of the respondents. The final two days of training were spent focusing on qualitative data collection methods and best practices, note-taking, coding, knowing when a question had reached a point of saturation.

Piloting was conducted in one formal government school, MIKETA in Kasaï Oriental. MIKETA primary school is 12 km from Miabi and was destroyed by the Kamuena NSAPU militia and thus represented an accessible school with comparable impacts to schools that were part of the A!1 RERA sample. During the pilot enumerators were able to interview all target groups: students, teachers, parents, community leaders and out-of-school children.

Data collection took place during one week in each Kasaï province (Oriental and Central). Four teams of two enumerators each (two teams per province) collected data. Each team of two visited one school per day. Daily, after the data collection was complete, the enumerator

team met to discuss the findings and finalize and clean up notes. When communications made it possible the DC team joined the field team for debriefing.

CHART OF SCHOOLS VISITED													
PROVINCE	Name of school	Level of damage (medium or High)	Date of data collection	Authorities		Parents		Teachers		Students		Out-of-School	
				# male	# female	# male	# female	# male	# female	# male	# female	# male	# female
KASAÏ ORIENTRAL	EP. CIJIBA CENTRAL	MEDIUM	MAY 21. 2018	7		3	5	4		4	4		
	EP. BENA CIMUNGU	HIGH	MAY 21. 2018	8	1	5	5	6		4	5	4	4
	EP BAKWA MPUNGA	HIGH	MAY 22 2018	6		3	5	6		4	4	4	4
	EP MASANKA	MEDIUM	MAY 22 2018	4		3	5	3	1	2	3	4	4
	CRS MIABI	HIGH	MAY 23 2018	7		1	5	3	3	3	5		
	CRS R BANNIERE	HIGH	MAY 23 2018	3			8	2	1	4	4	2	6
	EP LUSE KATANDA	HIGH	MAY 24 2018	1		6		7	1				
EP LUTULU	MEDIUM	MAY 24 2018	2		5	3	3	3					
KASAÏ CENTRAL	EP NGALABETU	HIGH	MAY 28 2018	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	9	5
	EP BIKUKU	HIGH	MAY 28 2018	5	1	0	7	1	4	3	5	5	1
	EP MUKOLESHI	MEDIUM	MAY 29 2018	2	3	2	2	2	4	4	5	3	3
	EP Mgr SHUNGU	HIGH	MAY 29 2018	7		3	3	6		4	5	5	5
	EP KAMULUMBA	HIGH	MAY 30 2018	6	2	7	1	9	1	4	4	4	4
	EP TSHUILA	HIGH	MAY 30 2018	4		4	2	4	1	4	4	4	4
	CRS DISANKA 1	HIGH	MAY 31 2018	5		2	5	8	1	6	2	3	2
	CRS DINANGA	HIGH	MAY 31 2018	4		5	5	5	1	4	4	2	6
Total				73	11	53	65	73	23	54	58	49	48

## **Focus Group Discussion Protocol**

The RERA Team adhered to the following principles when facilitating the Focus Group Discussions and the Key Informant Interviews:

1. Participation was voluntary. If any participant felt uncomfortable during the meeting, he or she had the right to leave or to pass on any question. There was no consequence for leaving or for passing on a question.
2. To protect participants, the facilitator stressed that the meeting objective was to solicit representative input, rather than personal input.
3. A consensus was not an objective of the discussions. When disagreement or divergence emerged, it was simply noted.
4. The identity of the attendees was treated as confidential, and anything said remained confidential.
5. Every response was respected, and no comment nor judgment were made. There were no right or wrong answers.
6. Non-verbal cues or gestures were captured by enumerators
7. One person spoke at a time.
8. Everyone had the right to talk. The facilitator may ask someone who was talking a lot to step back and give others a chance to talk and likewise may ask a person who wasn't talking if he or she had anything to share.
9. Breaks were allowed as required.
10. Before closing, ample time was offered for questions. (USAID ECCN, 2016)

To further protect the anonymity of the participants, ML's did not note any names.

## **Limitations**

This study, as with all RERAs, sacrifices thoroughness for a short turn-around time. The following limitations were identified:

- Limited sample size: As with all RERA's the sample size is limited to enable a more rapid analysis. Due to ongoing conflict and limited available transportation given the short time period, not all proposed sites could be reached.
- Enumerators: Reliance on project staff rather than independent enumerators had positives and negatives. Positively, the project staff knew the schools and the communities well. Negatively, the enumerators spent significant time explaining to participants that they would not be receiving direct in-kind contributions after the interviews (other projects had seemingly set this precedent). Additionally, all enumerators were male, possibly silencing some of the female FGD. Although some of the enumerators were well versed in data collection for others it was a second or third time thus some enumerators relied on declaring many answers as having been saturated by the fourth day of interviews.
- Cross-Atlantic teaming: Because of the poor communications, the DC and FO teams were not able to debrief every evening. Also, because not all of the analysts spoke Ciluba, enumerators wrote their notes in French and may have missed some of the nuance of Ciluba.

## **Country Context**

This section provides a short overview of the country context first, followed by a more in-depth contextual overview of the Kasaï. For a more detailed assessment, please refer to the project Conflict Sensitivity Analysis (CSA).

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has had a variety of local, provincial and international conflicts for over 20 years resulting in the death of over 5.4 million people and the displacement of over 2 million people. It is the deadliest conflict since the Second World War.<sup>6</sup> The majority of the deaths are due to secondary effects of the conflict, such as preventable diseases, and malnutrition. DRC is currently ranked 176 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, classifying in the “low human development” category.<sup>7</sup>

The country is rich in natural resources. Over 1,100 minerals and precious metals have been identified including coltan, copper, and diamonds, yet it remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with approximately 63% of its population living below the poverty line. The per capita income as of 2014 was US\$380 a year, which is roughly equivalent to the annual cost of sending two children to school for a year.<sup>8</sup>

The DRC is currently suffering a profound humanitarian crisis. National elections that should have been held in November 2016 have been delayed. Protests against an extension of the current president have been repressed by security forces, who have fired tear gas and live bullets at peaceful protesters and arrested and prevented opposition leaders from moving freely or re-entering the country. The United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) reports that as recently as January 21, 2018, national security forces violently dispersed anti-government demonstrations in Kinshasa using live ammunition and tear gas resulting in at six deaths, 49 people wounded and over 94 arrests<sup>9</sup>. Across the country, deep divisions between political and civil society actors continue to characterize the political climate, while the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. As Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said in his remarks to the media in Kinshasa, DRC, on March 13, 2018:

*The crisis has its origins in politics and economics. Tensions created by the jostling for positions ahead of the political transition which must be completed by the end of the year and economic stress, including spiraling inflation and the budget deficit, which are inflicting great hardship on people all over the country.*

*Humanitarian needs have doubled since last year, 13.1 million people need humanitarian assistance. Four and a half million people have been forced to flee their homes because of fighting across the whole country. More than 4.6 million Congolese children are acutely malnourished, including 2.2 million cases of severe acute malnutrition. We've seen mushrooming epidemics including the worst outbreak of cholera in 15 years.*

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<sup>6</sup> International Rescue Committee and the Burnet Institute (2007). Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Ongoing Crisis.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2015). “Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development.”

<sup>8</sup> World Bank. Democratic Republic of Congo Overview (08 April 2016) and World Bank Development Indicators (2012).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dw.com/en/anti-joseph-kabila-protests-turn-deadly-in-democratic-republic-of-congo/a-42243325>; <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1746531.pdf>

An estimated 13.1 million people, including 6.8 million women and girls and 7.9 million children, will need protection and humanitarian assistance in 2018, an increase of 50 percent as compared with 2017.<sup>10</sup>

### **Education**

Total government spending on education increased from 9% of the national budget in 2010 to 16% in 2013,<sup>11</sup> demonstrating the increasing importance the national government is placing on education. In September 2010, the national government (GDRC) launched the policy of Free Primary Education (FPE) which this 2017-2018 school year continues to apply to grades one through five, eliminating official central government fees related to primary school enrollment and attendance for those grades. Despite the institution of this policy, school fees remain prohibitively high as the central government only has authority over one fee, the *minerval*, and other fees are established by the Ministry of Education (MOE) at the decentralized levels.<sup>12</sup> In addition, individual schools institute fees to help cover the cost of materials, operation, and payment of teachers who are not paid by the government. These fees are highly formalized and are not illegal, despite the proposed policy on free education. Currently, the education sector depends on these fees to function and pay their staff; so careful planning is necessary to mitigate funding deficits and other risks.

### **Non-Formal Education**

Once children in the DRC reach 9 to 10 years of age<sup>13</sup>, they are considered over-age and are ineligible to start primary school. The accelerated and additional learning opportunities available in the remedial learning centers (CRS – *Centres de Rattrapage Scolaire*) and the professional learning centers (CAP – *Centre d'Apprentissage Professionnel*) face the same challenges as the primary schools in terms of payment of teachers and fee structures. Therefore, access to these learning opportunities is also limited to those who can afford the school fees. Although enrollment in primary education has increased in recent years, the result of the large number of children who have been unable to access education and the large number of children who have dropped out, results in a large population of youth who lack basic reading, writing and vocational skills that would improve their opportunity to make a living and provide for their families.

### **Gender**

There remains a gender imbalance in access to education in DRC. In much of the country, when a family is unable to afford to send all their children to school, preference is given to educating boys. There is a wide range of factors that play into this including early marriage for girls, the use of girls to watch over their younger siblings when their parents are working and/or are in the field, and the perception that a boy's education will have a bigger impact on the family. Although this preference may be changing in some areas, completion rates show that only 57.1% of girls who begin primary school successfully pass the exit exam, in comparison to 63.8% of boys.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. January 5, 2018.

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1746531.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> World Bank Education Data.

<sup>12</sup> See The School Fees Landscape in the DRC Report prepared by ACCELERE Activity 2 for a complete description of the school fee structure and issues surrounding the move towards the free education policy.

<sup>13</sup> In some areas of intervention, including Kasai Central, this age is as low as 8 years old.

<sup>14</sup> DRC Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education. "Mise en Oeuvre du Plan Intermediaire de l'Education – Rapport de Suivi N1." August 2014.

In addition to the gender imbalance in access to education noted above, there is also widespread gender-based violence throughout the country. In conflict-affected areas, there are documented cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by both the FARDC and armed groups (334 cases in 2014; 332 girls, 2 boys).<sup>15</sup> In 2015, 254 child victims of sexual violence were verified by the United Nations, with armed groups responsible for the majority of the incidents.<sup>16</sup> However, gender-based violence is not only perpetrated by armed men in DRC; it is commonplace in communities across the country, including in schools. There is a common practice of sexual abuse and “sexually transmitted grades” recorded throughout DR Congo, including in Equateur, Kasai Central, North Kivu and South Kivu.<sup>17</sup> Typically when this practice occurs, a female student must grant sexual favors to her male teacher to receive a good grade or to pass an exam.

### **Violent Conflict**

Violent conflict, particularly but not exclusively in eastern DRC, has been characterized by attacks against schools and the recruitment and abduction of children to become child soldiers, laborers, and sexual slaves. This situation most specifically affects the provinces of Haut-Katanga, North Kivu and South Kivu, and pockets of Kasai Central. In 2015, twenty-two school attacks and twelve schools used for military purposes by both *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) and armed groups were confirmed by the United Nations (UN), affecting the education of over 31,000 children. However, these incidents are typically underreported and therefore one can assume that the actual number of schools attacked is higher than these statistics. Attacks include complete destruction of schools, looting, and burning of school materials. The UN also reported 488 new documented cases of recruitment of children (462 boys, 26 girls) by armed groups, of which 89% of these cases occurred in North Kivu;<sup>18</sup> more than twice the number of documented cases in 2014 (241 cases).<sup>19</sup> The abduction of 195 children, an 80% increase from 2014, was reported with 68 of these cases being verified, and 40% of the children still missing. Additionally, there is documentation of 80 children killed and 56 children maimed during violent attacks in 2015.<sup>20</sup>

### **Vulnerability**

People in need of humanitarian assistance increased in the number, as well as an extension across provinces. As the maps below show, the Eastern province of DRC continues to be the most vulnerable area of the country, including the targeted North Kivu, South Kivu, and Haut-Katanga provinces. However, it is important to note that there has been a significant increase in vulnerability across many provinces, including Kasai Central and Kasai Occidental.

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<sup>15</sup> United Nations. “Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General.” A/69/926–S/2015/409. 5 June 2015.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations. “Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General.” A/70/836-S/2016/360. 20 April 2016.

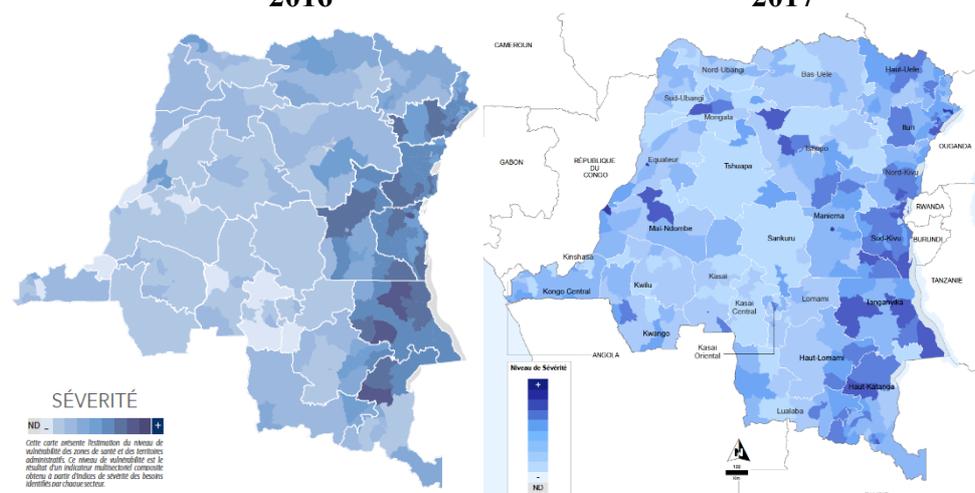
<sup>17</sup> Search for Common Ground (2012). “Education and Conflict.”, also mentioned by interviewees.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations. “Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General.” A/70/836-S/2016/360. 20 April 2016.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations. “Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General.” A/69/926–S/2015/409. 5 June 2015.

<sup>20</sup> United Nations. “Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General.” A/70/836-S/2016/360. 20 April 2016.

**Figure 1: Severity of Need in the DRC, 2016, 2017**



*This map presents an estimation of the level of vulnerability of health zones and administrative territories. The level of vulnerability is the result of a multisectoral composite indicator obtained from the severity index of needs identified by each sector. Source: OCHA.<sup>21</sup>*

## Findings

The following section presents a combined summary of the most salient quantitative and qualitative findings and is organized according to our three main research questions.

In analyzing the data, we did not find a significant difference between the two Kasais and between formal and non-formals schools (CRS).

Each larger research question is divided into topics (codes from the Grounded Theory method (Charmaz, 2006)). Under each heading is the relevant background/desk review, followed by statements taken from the focus group discussions and finally a summary of the conclusions. The findings are referenced by the name of the school in which the focus group discussion was held. For example: (Bikuku, 2018) refers to a comment or quote made by a participant in a FGD conducted in the Bikuku school. When the finding is not attributed to a single source it is because it was a common finding shared by several focus groups.

### **Research Question 1: How does the education sector in the Kasais relate to and interact with the broader political, economic, social, and security environment in the province?**

In 2017, CARE estimated that 1.2 million people in the Kasai Provinces are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, 2.8 million people do not have enough food to eat. People are being displaced at a rate never seen in DRC history, with 1.4 million people displaced at the height of the Kasai conflict, including 800,000 women<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> OCHA. Aperçu des besoins humanitaires 2017. 07 November 2016.

<sup>22</sup> CARE International. Crisis In Kasai Democratic Republic of Congo Fact Sheet. November 2017. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DRCKasaiFactsheetFINAL30NOV2017.pdf>

The conflict in the neighboring province of Kasai Central impacts the security situation in Kasai Oriental. Although much of the violent conflict remains in the Kasai Central province, spillover into Kasai Oriental has resulted in displacement and death. The UN discovered several of the mass grave sites in the first half of 2017 in Kasai Oriental. In addition, the population fled certain areas, while at the same time the province receives IDPs from neighboring provinces.

Most recent A11 report on security in the Kasais indicate that the overall security situation has calmed somewhat since October 2017 in the Kasais, with the return home of many IDPs and 40,000 refugees from Angola. It is forecast that given the high degree of vulnerability of IDPs and refugees we are likely to see an increase in reported crimes against the person in the short term. Overall this is symptomatic of a normalization of the province.

The UN (OCHA) has highlighted an inter-ethnic conflict in Kakenge, Territoire Mweka, Kasai as the cause of the uptick in reported violence throughout February 2018. This conflict is attributed to a power struggle between local tribal leaders and has led to 89% of the population displaced internally (166,000 of 187,000 population). UN has recognized significant gaps in protection and education in the area.

Part of the causal explanation for the conflict lies in the restructuring of provinces.<sup>23</sup> The *découpage* process which resulted in the new Kasai Central province cut off the areas of Kasai Central from the former area of Kasai Occidental which were more lucrative economically, resulting in a new province that has no industry and with a large population dependent on civil servant salaries for survival. Many of the people in the province feel like they have been left with very little to survive. Additionally, teachers originally from Kasai Central who were working in the other areas of the former province have been chased back to Kasai Central, as the locations where they used to be working now prefer to hire those native to the area. Some people are not pleased with the way the *découpage* process established the borders of Kasai Oriental. There is a group of people in Lomami that has signed a petition to rejoin Kasai Oriental, and others in Sankuru would also like to rejoin Kasai Oriental.<sup>24</sup>

Education is unquestionably under attack in the Kasais. Despite DRC signing the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) last year, the Kasais has an estimated 850,000 children going without access to essential services including basic education and healthcare, 639 primary and secondary schools have been damaged or destroyed in attacks or ongoing conflict, and more than 150,000 primary school children are out of school<sup>25</sup>. UNICEF estimates that in the five provinces hit hardest by the crisis – Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Sankuru, and Lomami – 440,000 children were prevented from finishing the school year because of insecurity, or 1 in every 10 primary school children in the province have had their education interrupted<sup>26</sup>. Some schools have remained closed for over 100 days, and the fear of violence means that even if schools are open and operable, parents are reluctant to send their children

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<sup>23</sup> USAID (n.d) “Country Specific Information: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Multi-Year Development FOOD Assistance Projects, Fiscal Years 2016-2020

<sup>24</sup> Key Informant Interviews

<sup>25</sup> UNICEF Press Release. “DR Congo: Children's access to education under threat from the ongoing violence in Kasai province”. September 15, 2017. [https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_100838.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_100838.html)

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF Press Release. “DR Congo: Children's access to education under threat from the ongoing violence in Kasai province”. September 15, 2017. [https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_100838.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_100838.html)

to school<sup>27</sup>. Schools in Greater Kasai province have been occupied by military forces or are being used as emergency shelters for displaced families. Even in schools that have not been directly affected, many children and teachers are unwilling to attend classes because of the fear of violence or attacks<sup>28</sup>.

### Violence in and Out of Schools

It is a common occurrence in Kasai Central for schools to be burned to the ground. They are not targeted specifically, but when conflict results in a village being burned down, the village school is burned down along with the village. In May 2016, seven schools (including 4 primary schools) were either entirely burned down or destroyed in Dibaya. A school was burned around the Demba 1 education sub-division. As of June 2017, 639 schools in the Kasai Central province had been destroyed by attacks and 150,000 children of primary school age have been denied access to education.<sup>29</sup> In FY18, 94 schools in Kasai Central and 4 schools for the Kasai Oriental province were directly affected by the violence (defined as burnt, destroyed, or attacked).

Child protection continues to be an issue, with MONUSCO reporting a 34% increase in grave violations against children, including widespread child soldier recruitment in the Kasais province (339 reported cases by the Kamuina Nsapu); at least 650 children, including 177 girls, escaping or separating from armed groups between September and November along; and the killing and maiming of 97 children in the Kasais and Kivus alone, more than half of which were perpetrated by State agents<sup>30</sup>.

Focus group discussion findings indicated that violence permeates all focus group discussions. and rape is the most commonly ticked specific code. Violence whether rape, sexual harassment, or corporal punishment is a constant fear in day-to-day life in the Kasais. The fear of rape keeps women and girls out of the fields and out of the markets which in turn reinforces food insecurity, famine, and illness. Families are torn apart because of the stigma of rape committed by the government soldiers and the militias. The secondary effects of violence, trauma and the effect it has on children's ability to learn and the teachers' difficulty in teaching feature prominently in focus group discussion.

- Militia and soldiers target school children in uniform.
- Because of the danger, parents, students, and community leaders suggest that students travel to and from school in groups, but many acknowledge that the best they can do for their children is to pray.
- Teachers openly question whether corporal punishment is considered violence.
- Quantitatively, when asked about the major problems faced by the community, the majority responses from parents are physical violence; however, none of the teacher or

“The military raped lots of women in the open and their children saw. Now there are divorces in the communities.” (Lutulu, 2018)

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Children Fund. “DR Congo: Children’s Access to Education Under Threat from Ongoing Violence in Kasais Province.” September 15, 2017. <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/dr-congo-children-s-access-education-under-threat-ongoing-violence>

<sup>28</sup> Watt, Evan. Theirworld. Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack. “150,000 children out of school as violence rocks DR Congo province.” June 12, 2017. <http://theirworld.org/news/150k-children-out-of-school-in-kasai-drc>.

<sup>29</sup> OCHA, Complex Emergency in the Kasai Province, DR Congo, Situation Report No.8, June 22, 2017.

authorities' groups mention physical violence as a concern (in the focus group discussions).

- *"The teachers hit the kids and give them the homework as a type of punishment."* (Tshulia K. C., 2018)
- The community requested teachers to avoid beating children (Tshulia K. C., 2018)
- *"The soldiers started many cases of violence. Following this, the children became very violent."* (Masanka K. O., 2018). Several informants discuss how violent the children themselves have become stating that even the games the children create are violently imitating the violence of the militia and military.
- When asked what the response would be if an act of violence was committed against their child or a child in general, most quantitative responses are worried and unhappy. Very few responded with 'anger.'

In questions that asked to describe types of violence in and around schools and how to improve security around schools, students' quantitative answers listed forced labor as the second highest cause of violence after corporal punishment. Some authorities, when discussing violence, pointed out that children should not be working, i.e., should not be doing forced labor.

- *"Parents should rebuild schools instead of children (building the schools)."* (Kamalumba K. C., 2018)
- *"Do not kick students out of school during school hours; parents or community members should work in the fields, not the children."* (Kamalumba K. C., 2018)

### **Gender-Based Violence**

It is common in some rural areas for teachers to demand that students do manual work in their homes or fields, with some days reserved for female students. This is usually when teachers rape students. Parents in Kasaï Central said they do not usually have proof of it happening until a girl becomes pregnant, but they suspect that when girls are in the homes of male teachers without other adults around that sexual abuse happens. This practice creates conflict between female students and their male teachers, and between students' parents and school directors. This practice also sometimes prevents girls from wanting to go to school, as they are afraid of what will happen to them. Although systems are in place to fire teachers who commit this type of abuse, it is not unusual for a teacher to be relocated instead of being removed from service as is required by the Ministry of Education.

From September to November 2017, there were 254 documented victims of conflict-related sexual violence between September and November alone, including 149 women and 66 children. Over 18% of these attacks occurred in the Kasaïs, where armed groups like the Bana Mura militia were responsible for 75 percent of incidents, and state agents like The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) responsible for the remaining 25 percent. Holistic service provision for sexual violence survivors is still incredibly limited and inaccessible<sup>31</sup>.

One of the RERA team's questions for the RERA was, "Tell me about the special risks for girls (in and around school)." The Kasaï team rejected the question as unnecessary as when

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<sup>31</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. January 5, 2018.

they speak about risk in and around school for children it is culturally assumed that risks for girls are always higher than for boys. With this as a baseline, knowing that the risk for women and girls is much higher, it is important to consider the specific ways in which women and girls are targeted. In the previous section, we mentioned that girls are targeted in the markets, in schools, and traveling to the field, school, and town. Focus group discussion findings indicated:

- When asked who they would talk to if an instance of violence occurred on the way to school, many students suggest that they would talk to their fathers because their mothers are still in the fields. Women remain in the fields where it is perceived to be safer.
- Several respondents discuss early marriage. Early marriage is either a parental imperative (i.e. girls are forced to marry) or as forced (through rape and capture) by the militia and military.
- When asked how the conflict has exacerbated violence against girls in schools, all the student groups and most of the other groups cite rape.
- Rape of students by teachers within the school is the most common answer to the question, “In which ways are the education system making the conflict worse?” by parents, students, and authorities. Teachers do not cite rape as a safety issue.
- Because of cultural taboos, women and girls who are raped are often ostracized by their families leaving them with no home.

A group of bandits in the bush continue to assault girls and mothers sexually. The group blocks the routes and violates all the young girls. (*Lutulu, 2018*)

**Food Insecurity**

The role of the conflict on food insecurity cannot be minimized. An additional 7.7 million people, including 2 million children, facing famine or risk of critical food security<sup>32</sup>a 30% increase from the year before<sup>33</sup>. An estimated 400,000 children in Greater Kasaï are at risk of severe acute malnutrition, medical care has become increasingly hard to find in large areas of the Kasaï provinces and living conditions have deteriorated dramatically. On 1 of August 2017, UNICEF Executive Director declared the Kasaï Crisis as a Level 3 Corporate Emergency<sup>34</sup>.

Focus group discussions revealed that women are not going to the fields to plant because of safety issues. Militia has stolen farming tools and eaten the available foods. Women are not going to the market to sell what little is available because of the risk of violence. These finding concur with a recent report from USDA predicts that the DRC will see no improvement in food security with “Over 75% of their populations still food insecure in 2018” (Cornish, 2018).

**Trauma**

The concept of trauma requires some translation across cultures. Most of the respondents were unfamiliar with the idea of ‘trauma’ but once the enumerators explained the concept, they were able to identify behaviors.

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- Parents report that some children no longer speak, others cry for no apparent reason, children are afraid to go to school, and others isolate themselves and do not play with others. Teachers report that children have difficulty paying attention and have become more violent.
- Questions regarding trauma were difficult to convey during FGD. When asked how trauma was being treated all types of respondents reply that nothing was done or that they pray for the children. Some groups, particularly authorities acknowledge the need for psychotherapy.

One teacher reports that a student said, "If you punish me, I will kill you."  
(Mokulishi, 2018)

### **School Fees and Endemic Poverty**

For questions asking what the barriers to education were, respondents uniformly replied, "School fees!" They did not answer conflict, militias or violence as might have been expected. Instead, respondents consistently pointed to the inability to pay school fees and poverty. School fees are a major impediment to education in many parts of the world and all over the DRC, however the poverty of the Kasai province has been greatly exacerbated by the conflict.

- Most of the focus group discussions when asked about barriers to education including focus groups for out-of-school children cited school fees as the top barrier to children attending school.
- Poverty was often cited as a barrier to access as well:
  - Parents cannot afford to educate all their children. So, in families where there are many children the poverty forces access issues.
  - The increased rate of poverty and the death of other parents. For example, one of the authorities' brother died and the brother's children no longer go to school (Cijiba K. C., 2018).
- Many reasons, like . . . lack of uniform (Mokulishi, 2018)
- "*Hunger, a child who has not eaten cannot run long distances to study.*" (Nagalabetu, 2018)

## **Research Question 2: What are the resilience factors that positively influence access to safe and quality education?**

The RERA reveals areas of resilience that All may use to build future programming. The RERA team views resilience, in its simplest terms, as the areas of strength that the community has maintained despite the conflict. In the section above, looking at areas in which the conflict in the Kasai province creates specific difficulty, the difficulties of living in conflict are detailed. This section looks at areas within the conflict in two Kasais province that have withstood the difficulties.

### **Schooling**

Despite the horrific violence, teachers are still teaching, children are still going to school, and parents are still allowing their children to leave the compound. Schooling is a normalizing activity that centers a community. The commitment to continuing schooling is a powerful reminder of the central force that schools and the act of schooling have in daily community building (Anderson-Levitt, 2003)

- One woman in a parent's focus group discussion mentioned that she has noticed how much schools have helped with the reunification of people in their village and those in Nganga (Bikuku, 2018).
- Although many of the interviewees were reluctant to discuss access to education for IDPs or outside ethnic groups, some schools are reluctant or are denying access to education for 'outsiders.' What is significant is that not all schools are denying access. One authority said, "We accepted the displaced children because they are Congolese in their national territory" (Bakwa-Mpunga, 2018). A teacher, themselves an IDP stated that the displaced children were integrated into the school without a problem of participation (Cijiba K. C., 2018).

### **School Conditions**

Although many schools have been severely damaged, respondents focus on available solutions. By focusing on available solutions, the FG discussants demonstrate their resilience. They do not ask for or expect an overhaul of the educational system but instead express that fences, good benches, latrines and teaching and learning materials would transform a 'bad school' into a 'good school.' For some of the authorities, perhaps because they know they were talking to a potential donor, no schools are in good condition.

- As specific points of resilience, despite the constant references to teachers raping students, many respondents do see a good school as one in which the teachers collaborate with parents (Monseigneur-Shungu K., 2018).
- Perhaps because FGD are held inside the school it is not surprising that all the out-of-school children responded that they would like to return to school.

### **Leadership**

Several questions indirectly ask about leadership in the community. Respondents report that the church does not take an active part aside from a collection of money and that it is difficult for the administrative authorities to maintain their positions as leaders within the conflict environment. Many of the discussants suggest the roles and responsibilities of leaders but leaders themselves complain about the lack of infrastructure and resources to do their work and/or address the problems created by the militia violence. This was further corroborated in an interview with the *Bureau Gestionnaire* of Kasai central. No single group or role was seen as the 'place to go' for advice or assistance.

- Authorities said the movement of people is their biggest difficulty.

- Caritas and other NGOs are named as providing help and hope. One respondent cited NGOs as responsible for calling people to come out of the bush (Masanka K. O., 2018) but other discussants deny NGOs any role in aiding or leadership.
- The church collects money to pay off the militia and mobilize funds for burials.
- When asked who they would tell of an incident on the way to school students responded that they would talk to their parents. Parents, students, and teachers also suggest that village head/chief, neighbors, president of the COPA, and the school directors. Teachers put the responsibility onto the school director.
- When Authorities were asked about additional steps the community might take to increase the security of the schools, most of the authorities pushed the responsibility onto others- parents, teachers, school director. In one instance, the authorities suggested that the school should simply close to ensure the safety of the children (Cijiba K. C., 2018).
- Parents, on the other hand, cite that the state needs to take care of the teachers and to construct good buildings (Monseigneur-Shungu K. , 2018).

### Support Within the Community

Many respondents cite ‘giving circles’ (*ristourines*) and community savings groups (*épargnes communes/caisses d’épargne/AVECs*) intended for a specific person or cause as a community strength. Respondents also made additional suggestions on how the community could better support itself, thereby indicating areas of potential resilience.

- “The teachers have an organization where at the end of each month, they put money together to give to one person and this helps establish order.” (Cijiba K. C., 2018)
- The church is seen as a source of fundraising for those in need. The church gathers funds for burials and other emergencies but is not seen as a place to run to or an organization of significant leadership. One of the churches has been active in gathering money to prevent harassment from the military (Bakwa-Mpunga, 2018).
- While the physical church does not serve a place of leadership, the church and religious beliefs do give the community a spiritual solace. Mass continues to be a place of “alliance” (Lutulu, 2018). One of the top codes for the question, “How do you protect your children on their way to school” is “prayer.”
- Many cited the radio as a source of optimism (Tshulia K. C., 2018). NGOs are responsible for the radio programming.
- Non-formal groups set up for specific purposes are often mentioned. Some of the groups include:
  - Parent committees set up to keep track of the safety of a group of school children (Nagalabetu).
  - A group of parents worked together to construct each other’s homes and houses for those in need (Cijiba K. C., 2018).
- Meetings called by the village chief are cited by authorities (Kamalumba K. C., 2018) and the village market is also cited as a place that contributes to communal cohesion and resilience.
- When asked, “what are the sources for community cohesion” the majority of quantitative codes are community fields.
- Respondents suggested roles for specific leaders such as having the community and religious leaders hold dialogues on the goal of

For some, all the schools are good because they are there to teach their children, whereas those who say that most schools are good are still focusing on these considerations: good buildings, good benches, good teachers, and good trainings. (Bikuku, 2018)

The church manages the community fields. In case of problems – like a death – they mobilize, pool money and contribute. (Bakwa-Mpunga, 2018)

reconstructing peace in the village (Cijiba K. C., 2018). Other suggested having community leaders mobilize the villagers to start going back to the market (Kamalumba K. C., 2018).

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the above findings and seek to answer the third research question:

### **Research Question 3: How can our program strengthen these factors for an immediate impact?**

Recommendations are presented in terms of those that can be implemented by A!1, i.e., to inform its FY19 Work Plan, and in terms of future recommendations to inform USAID, UKAID and other donors on future funding and priorities.

#### **Recommendations for A!1**

- 1. Address trauma through violence prevention and psycho-social support.** The trauma that the conflict has inflicted upon communities in the Kasaï is cannot be underestimated, be it through violence against women and girls in the form of rape or children having to witness the murder of their parents and family members first-hand. It is well documented that children's ability to learn and concentrate is greatly hampered if the child has experienced trauma (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). The communities in the Kasaï are not familiar with the concept of trauma as one needing particular help. In the comments, they describe trauma but do not isolate trauma. A!1 should continue its psycho-social referral support activities and further focus them on the Kasaï. A!1 Should also continue to train on and apply USAID's Doorways Safe-Schools Curriculum, specifically the modules dealing with Violence and School-Related Gender-Based Violence, Positive Discipline, and Code of Conduct. This coupled with the *comités de genre* that A!1 has begun to facilitate the establishment thereof is an important contribution also.
- 2. Continue to tackle school fees.** School fees, in addition to the conflict in the Kasaï, are in fact a significant barrier for children. A!1 should continue to support school fees through its direct subsidization of targeted vulnerable children through its Grants program in formal and non-formal schools. A!1's Governance component should continue its community-based work in increasing transparency and accountability around how school fees are established and applied.
- 3. Build upon existing resilience.** A!1 should support existing community savings plans (*épargnes communes/caisses d'épargne/AVECs*) to strengthen agricultural (joint community agricultural fields) and small livestock income generating activities (IGA) through existing A!1 Grants component. Community savings plans already exist and are viewed favorably by the community. A!1 Grants component has already started to successfully support AVECs and IGAs through local Civil Society Organizations (CSO). The RERA further corroborates the need to continue with these
- 4. Continue to apply Conflict Sensitivity Analysis recommendations.**  
Other CSA recommendations to continue to apply include:

- **Favoritism:** Some teachers indicated that school directors were favoring some teachers over others when selecting to participate in A!1 workshop, thereby causing friction within the school community. A!1 should revisit CSA recommendations and establish mechanisms to eliminate favoritism in the teacher selection process.
- **Equitable access.** Train education personnel on increasing the protection of learners and education personnel in and out of school. Train peer educators to raise awareness and teach their peers regarding peaceful cohabitation, children’s rights, child protection, exploitation and abuse, etc.
- **Community engagement.** Raise awareness of parents and communities on increasing the protection of learners in and out of school. Raise awareness in communities on the role of the COPA and its responsibilities. Raise awareness in communities on the importance of COPA members being representative of their communities.
- **External threats.** Advocate strategically and continually at the highest level of government to promote the respect of free primary education and the payment of teachers.
- **Internal threats.** Develop risk reduction plans with community engagement in each of the targeted schools to mitigate both external and internal risks to child protection. Institute a complaint mechanism to allow parents and communities to alert the project of misuse of funds, fraud, etc. Build capacities of COPAs and *conseils de gestion d’école* (school management committee or COGES) on their role, financial management and conflict resolution.

#### **Recommendation for USAID, UKAID, and Other Donors**

1. **Address trauma through psycho-social support.** As stated above, psychosocial trauma within the Kasaï’s population is significant and yet there is very little support. Even though the militia related violence seems to be subsiding the affected communities remain deeply traumatized by recent violence inflicted upon them and the local populations. USAID, UKAID, UNICEF and other donors should support programming and interventions in Social Emotional Learning and other psychosocial support strategies. Funders should also identify and strengthen local CSOs and church networks to support these much-needed interventions.
2. **Support rapid funding for school construction and rehabilitation efforts.** Militia activity in the Kasaï’s has led to significant school destruction. Rapid funding and construction mechanisms should be put in place to quickly rebuild schools. Rehabilitation efforts should also include school fences and latrines for girls. When requesting community support, funders and implementing partners should ensure that a ‘do no harm’ approach is applied given some indirect evidence of the use of child labor to re-construct schools.
3. **Advocate strategically and continually at the highest level of government to promote the respect of free primary education and the payment of teachers.** One of the clearest findings was the communities respect and desire for education. As donor organizations and leaders within civil society, we should continue to advocate for a higher level of government support to promote a living wage for teachers.
4. **Strengthen local leaders and civil society organizations for greater ownership.** The RERA findings suggest that local civic leaders and religious leaders have failed to

unify their communities. Certainly, they have done all that they are able to do and wish to do more. Enhancing their knowledge-base and experience on how to a) help leaders understand the extent and implications of wide-spread trauma, including their own b) provide mechanisms through which the religious networks and the government can be seen as contributing to the community stabilization and c) strengthen the rule of law within the local community. In addition to the religious leaders and government employees, CSO and school management committees (COPAS/COGES) have an important role to play in leading the community to return to normalcy. Empowering local CSOs and school management committees to apply for and utilize small grants can enable to communities to see these bodies as leading reconstruction and a path toward lessening the violence in everyday life for the communities.

## ANNEX I – Additional Country and Activity Context

### A!1 in the Kasais

The ongoing conflict decreases access to primary education and threatens the quality of education as millions of people have been displaced, basic social services have been disrupted, and people in the Kasais are living in fear. The consequences of the conflict that have directly affected A!1 programming include:

- Death of members of the education community, including but not limited to teachers and pupils.
- Destruction of several schools in conflict zones.
- Occupation of schools by either the militia or security forces.
- Mass displacement of populations.
- Increased vulnerability of parents becoming increasingly unable to take care of their children.

A!1 is currently implementing in 11 educational sub-divisions in the Kasais. Specifically, the sub-divisions targeted through A!1 are Kasai Central: Kananga 1, Kananga 2, Demba 1, Dimbelenge 2, Dibaya 1, and Kazumba Sud Kasai Oriental: Mbuji-Mayi 1, Mbuji-Mayi 2, Mbuji-Mayi 3, Katanda, and Miabi. With respect to the number of schools, teachers, and students, A!1 targets the following schools in the Kasais:

		Kasai Oriental	Kasai Central	Total Kasais	Total A!1 Target
<b>Schools</b>	At start of Y3 work plan	313	1,081	1,394	3,075
	<b>As of June 30, 2018</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,315</b>	<b>2,718</b>
	% of Total A!1 Target	10%	35%	45%	45%
	<b>% of Total A!1 Target as of June 30, 2018</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	At start of Y3 work plan	1,915	4,346	6,261	16,883
	<b>As of June 30, 2018</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>5,601</b>	<b>7,363</b>	<b>16,305</b>
	% of Total A!1 Target	11%	26%	37%	37%
	<b>% of Total A!1 Target as of June 30, 2018</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Students</b>	At start of Y3 work plan	159,100	221,100	380,200	863,200
	<b>As of June 30, 2018</b>	<b>109,712</b>	<b>257,238</b>	<b>366,950</b>	<b>785,563</b>
	% of Total A!1 Target	18%	26%	44%	44%
	<b>% of Total A!1 Target as of June 30, 2018</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>