

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**MINISTRY OF PLANNING**

*Steering Committee for the Process of Development and Implementation  
of the Poverty Reduction Strategy*

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# **PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS OF POVERTY IN THE DRC**

**NATIONAL REPORT**

**Kinshasa, March 2006.**



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## PRINCIPAL ACRONYMS

AFDL	=	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire
IGA	=	Income-Generating Activities
NPO	=	Non-Profit Organization
CNECI	=	Caisse Nationale d'Épargne et de Crédit Immobilier
PPA	=	Participatory Poverty Analysis
ARV	=	Anti-Retroviral drugs
PRSD	=	Poverty Reduction Strategy Document
FAO	=	Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARDC	=	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo
STI	=	Sexually Transmitted Infection
APRM	=	Accelerated Participatory Research Method
MICS 2	=	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2001) or survey by clusters with multiple indicators (conducted in 2001)
MDG	=	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	=	Non-Governmental Organization
ONL	=	National Housing Office
SMEs	=	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
UNDP	=	United Nations Development Programme
VP	=	Vulnerable Person
PLWHA	=	People Living With HIV/AIDS
RCD	=	Congolese Alliance for Democracy
DRC	=	Democratic Republic of Congo
RTNC	=	Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise
SENAREC	=	Secrétariat National de Renforcement de Capacités
PM&E	=	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
AIDS	=	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
SNCC	=	Société Nationale de Chemin de Fer du Congo
SNEL	=	Service National d'Electricité
SOPPPOC	=	Public Opinion Survey on the Perception of Poverty by the Congolese

## PREAMBLE

*In North Kivu province, one man gave this description of poverty: he shares with the children and animals and eats alone.*

*In the territory of Kabare in South Kivu, the people declared: "poverty is rooted in the inability to go to the doctor, to sleeping in houses full of old bed linens and to difficulties eating, usually only once a day and very late at night."*

*In the Yolo district in Kinshasa, one participant told us the following: "I have 5 children. There are only two who attend school because with my little bit of poultry farming, I am unable to send all of my children to school." Another person added: Out of the three children that I have, there is only one who goes to school and it is very difficult to manage that. Another went further, saying: "I have 5 children. They are all at home. They do not attend school because we do not have the means to send them."*



*In*  
*were 57 km from his village, his sick wife died on the way to the hospital.*

*A resident of Bukavu reported: "Our district, especially the street where the land bank is (Keredi), is poorly lit and it is very unsafe. Armed men, sometimes in uniform, disturb the people at night (extortion, theft from houses targeted in advance, murders...)."*

*Entire populations live in isolation compared to the rest of the country because the area where they live is inaccessible due to the advanced state of deterioration of the roads and the absence of mass media, as the people of Kimvula in Bas-Congo emphasized. This situation keeps these populations in a state of poverty, preventing them from exporting or importing products.*

*Public servants are bribed and incarcerated for complaining to the administrative authorities of injustices subjected to and verdicts rendered by incompetent judges.*

## **Executive Summary**

A Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) was launched in 2004 as part of the Democratic Republic of Congo's efforts to create a national 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper' (PRSP). Because the PPA's coverage was one of the DRC's most extensive survey efforts---including all eleven provinces, 94 of its 95 territories, 470 local sites, and involving more than 35,750 people and groups in a participatory analysis of poverty---the PPA information is now an important national resource.

Designed for policy and program use, this PPA Report ensures that the government can effectively hear and act on the voices of the Congo people. If local communities, NGO's and different groupings of civil society see that their assessments, as discussed in this Participatory Poverty Assessment, are actually reflected in the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, it will generate much needed legitimacy and social enforcement for peace stabilization and the national poverty program initiatives.

This PPA Report is divided into three parts. Part one presents the information and analysis about poverty that the Congolese people shared and defined for themselves during the participatory consultations. This includes the problems created by poverty but also includes identification of how people use their capacities and organizations to cope and sometimes prevail. Part two uses the information and analysis presented by the PPA participants to develop a national analysis of poverty. Part three identifies key priorities and strategies, based on the analysis, for national and local poverty reduction.

Four key analyses explaining poverty in the DRC are presented and discussed in this PPA report.

1. The characteristics of poverty in the DRC---tangible and intangible---are defined by people across the country, and placed in useful typologies.
2. Based on the above PPA participant analysis, the size and scale of poverty in the DRC is preliminarily defined, with different sub-groups effectively distinguished within the larger group of poor people. This allows definition of a flexible and dynamic poverty line.
3. Eleven priority problems of poverty are identified and analyzed by people and groups across the country. These eleven problems, like the characteristics of poverty, feature both tangible and intangible factors that are extremely inter-connected.
4. Based on the PPA participant analysis of the priority problems, three dynamics that drive the process of impoverishment in the Congo are identified, and six patterns of poverty are defined. Analysis of these dynamics and pattern allows definition of strategic priorities that address more than one problem at once.

Results of the PPA analysis indicate that poverty in the Congo is multi-dimensional, complex, and to an interesting extent, the formulation of poverty is unique to the DRC as a country. So, how do households in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) respond when confronted with war, collapse of work and productivity, and difficulty in meeting basic life needs? What is the reality behind national statistics that tell us ten years after this multiple crisis began, 73% to 90% of the population are now classified as poor in a materially rich country? And strategically speaking, where should the re-building begin?

The PPA study begins with definitions and characteristics of poverty. According to PPA participants, these center around four themes: (i) basic life needs not met; (ii) collapse of productivity and work; (iii) lack of peace and security; and (iv) a culture of impunity leading to corruption, injustice, and exclusion. Participants then identified how these multi-dimensional factors of poverty effect different groups---urban/rural, women and children, the vulnerable and excluded, intact and functioning households---differently and with differing levels of impact.

For the people of Congo, poverty is much more than a lack of income, it is a multi-faceted and complicated process that has become a major part of everyone's life---poor and non-poor alike. The *tangible* aspects such as income and basic infrastructure are powerful and well-known drivers of poverty. But equally if not more important are the *intangible* factors that contribute to insecurity, marginalization or exclusion, and a culture of impunity.

PPA participant emphasis on both the tangible and intangible aspects of poverty, allowed the PPA analysis to make critical distinctions between the sub-groups of poor within the larger group, and then test these distinctions with existing quantitative surveys. Loss of parental authority, family structure, and personal dignity were the intangible factors that allowed distinction between the "fragile households" and the "poor but stable households" defined below. Thus, understanding the differences among 'who is poor' should help ensure effective poverty reduction strategies for the different groups involved.

The PPA national poverty analysis results which provide better insight into the size and scale of poverty in the Congo are as follows.

- The **3% 'very poor'** are described as clearly *destitute*, and includes many of the population classified as vulnerable.
- The **57% 'poor'** are described as *poor and fragile households* that have entered into a process of progressive deterioration, and will include some of the population classified as vulnerable.
- The **30% 'middle poor'** are described as *poor but stable households* and includes those who are struggling but remain productive
- The **10% 'non-poor'** can be described as *productive households* and includes those households that are wealthy.



With the question of ‘who is poor?’ answered, the PPA participants moved on to the questions of ‘why are they poor?’ A total of 55 problems that contributed to poverty were first identified across the country. Using frequency analysis, a total of eleven priority problems for the nation were identified.

These problems, listed from *tangible* to *intangible*, are as follows: (1) access to basic quality infrastructure and social services; (2) access to transport and communication; (3) food insecurity; (4) insufficient agricultural production; (5) low household income; (6) unemployment; (7) erosion and desertification; (8) insecurity of people and property; (9) rights of women violated; (10) exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups; and (11) poor governance.

Analysis of these problems indicates that there are three critical dynamics that fuel and drive impoverishment in the DRC. They are: (i) rapid and harsh changes in social structure; (ii) strengthening of abuse of power processes; and (iii) inter-connectedness of key poverty patterns. The fact that it is these types of power dynamics that drive poverty in the country, and not simply the economic scarcity dynamics of embedded and chronic poverty found in so many other African countries, makes the Democratic Republic of Congo a fairly unique situation. More importantly, it indicates that the country will be almost impervious to normal poverty reduction initiatives.

These three driving dynamics create discernible poverty patterns across the country. Listed in order of sensitivity to a government sponsored national poverty reduction program, the six patterns include: (i) poor governance; (ii) unfavorable terms accorded to community economies; (iii) inattention to basic needs; (iv) feminization of poverty; (v) insecurity of people and goods; and (vi) marginalization and exclusion. These patterns are found to be extremely inter-connected in the DRC situation, and it is the intangible factors that create inter-connectedness. Together, identification of the driving dynamics and the resulting poverty patterns illustrates how poverty works in the Congo.

In Part III of the PPA Report, these four analyses provide the baseline to define ‘principles of poverty reduction prioritization’. These principles will allow the people’s perspectives on poverty to become central to, and a driving force behind PRSP and other poverty reducing strategies. Key to these strategic initiatives is the people’s own capacities, organizations, and institutions, as discussed in Part one, which people across the country use to cope and survive, and upon which a number poverty reduction strategies can be based. Together, these provide the legitimacy necessary to build and implement successful poverty eradication strategies.

Based on the PPA analysis, effective poverty reduction strategies should focus on the building of local communities, local economies, local infrastructure, and good governance that is accountable and transparent. The building of local economies in particular will require that the national government is pro-active in establishing pro-poor policies that will allow these local economies to grow and thrive. For this strategic local focus to work, there will have to be appropriate program action at every level---national, provincial, and community.

The local focus on community building will need to be strongly supported with actions to specifically address problems of poor governance, gender difficulties, and marginalization or exclusion. Appropriate actions can only be defined if participatory planning and implementation at community, territory, and provincial levels are initiated for the long-term. Programs *and* policies to reduce poverty will need to be supported by participatory monitoring and evaluation from the village level up that includes both women and men. To be effective participatory monitoring and evaluation cannot simply be administered in an ad-hoc fashion, but must be systematically required by the prevailing rules and regulations, and inter-connected with the more standard periodic quantitative evaluations

Considering the risk and opportunity for the actors involved---government, local families and their communities, NGOs, and international organizations---it is considerable. To seize the opportunity, the actors together will need to place the PPA analysis at the center of poverty reduction activities. The risk is that the PPA analysis will be used only marginally or not at all, allowing ‘business as usual’ to continue, to which the DRC mode of poverty is impervious.

Weighing the pros and cons of this opportunity/risk situation---and given DRC’s human potential along with its natural material riches---the actors should collaboratively seize this opportunity. With sustained but realistic work invested over the next ten years, peace can be stabilized and poverty can be substantially decreased. If on the other hand, the actors each decide to conduct their own version of business as usual, then all bets are off.

## INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), since 1999, has initiated a profound process of political, economic, and social reforms. Within this framework, the Congolese State has committed itself to the making of the peace, initiating free and democratic elections, and implementing a forceful country wide effort to substantially reduce poverty. In these purposes, the DRC government has the support of both its national and international partners.

One of the government's most telling and critical decisions was to launch, in 2004, a nationwide *Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA)*. Breaking with the old methods of dictatorial and top-down bureaucratic planning, representatives of local communities, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector across the country were consulted and asked to contribute their own ideas and analysis regarding what poverty is in the DRC, and how conditions can be changed for the better.

The PPA's first objective is to contribute to the DRC's *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)* which is a national planning document required by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and international donors for both lending and debt relief to move forward. The country's selection of '*community dynamics*' as one of the three PRSP pillars, provides a unique and ideal base for a participatory approach to poverty reduction and shared growth.

This more sophisticated approach to poverty reduction also requires a more sophisticated use of the PPA results. First generation PPAs undertaken in a variety of countries had the objective of simply incorporating participatory findings in the national poverty analysis with the hopes that the multi-dimensional nature of poverty would be recognized. The second generation of PPAs went further as it was recognized that the design national policies needed to take the multi-dimensionality of poverty into account if they were to have success.

The DRC has commendably selected to undertake a third generation of PPA's that links *policy formulation* to *policy implementation* for highest impact. This linkage between policy formulation and implementation, due to the DRC circumstances, is certainly required. Poverty levels are so high in the DRC and the long-term suffering so intense, that anything less would be an abandonment of responsibility. And from a more specific perspective, the linkage is also required if the *community dynamics* pillar is to take shape and become a successful strategy over the longer term.

To open this initiative beyond the normal lines of government business, the *Participatory Poverty Assessment* was designed for extensive coverage. The PPA covered all eleven provinces, 94 of its 95 territories, 470 local sites, and consulted more than 35,750 people and groups. Because of this extensive coverage in a country that has little in the way of economic and social surveys, the PPA data and analysis of poverty problems and potential solutions can be counted as an important national resource.

However, for the Democratic Republic of Congo, the PPA is much more than a data gathering instrument, or even a simple instrument to reduce poverty. It is a peace building tool and one that contributes to democratization. It does so through initiating a long-denied dialogue between the state and its citizens. As such it sets an important precedent, and provides an initial building block for the development of a social compact between the government and its people. One of the key components of this social compact will be the development of institutionalized participatory policy making and planning practices for the future.

## 0.1. PPA Objectives and Methodologies

The aim of any PPA is to provide a detailed understanding of what poverty is, and how the dynamics of poverty work---from the perspective of the people themselves---so that peace and prosperity can be achieved. This desire for a good quality of life is universal and is now recognized by organizations and individuals alike.

“Across continents....a good quality of life includes material well being....bodily well being....social well being, including caring for and settling children; having self respect, peace and good relations in the family and community; having security, including civil peace, a safe and secure environment, personal physical security and confidence in the future; and having freedom of choice and action, including being able help other people in the community.” (World Bank, D. Narayan, 2000, p.21)

While the aim for a good quality of life is similar across continents, *how* to achieve that goal will be different for every country if success is to be gained. For that, inclusive and participatory methodologies are required. To do so effectively requires ongoing dialogue, collective analysis, action, and monitoring for feedback and learning. By using such a methodology, participation provides:

“...new ways to enable those who are poor , marginalized, illiterate, and excluded to analyze their realities and express their priorities; that the realities they express of conditions, problems, livelihood strategies and priorities often differ from what development professionals have believed; and that new experiences can policy makers in closer touch with those realities...the poor themselves are active analysts.” (R. Chambers in Holland, 1998, p. xv)

A participatory poverty assessment has several strict methodological requirements. Most important, a PPA is carried out with the communities and people of a country in their *local language*---and specifically includes poor people and their views about poverty. It fully involves poor communities in describing the nature of their poverty, the problems that contribute to their poverty, and the differences they see in their livelihoods and status, in comparison to others in the community. Unlike more structured quantitative surveys, information is obtained from open-ended discussions with the poor and other community members, and documents the poor’s perceptions of poverty as they see it.

PPA methods also encourage the people to undertake their own analysis of why poverty exists and what solutions will significantly contribute to its reduction. As such, it provides a detailed, in-depth and disaggregated assessment of poverty and hardship from the ground up. Given the great distances between national and local government in the DRC, this is an invaluable tool for dialogue, communication, and viable assessment of the existing problems.

Finally, the PPA methodology substantively contributes to a ‘common platform’ from which to launch a national peace stabilizing and poverty reduction program. Given the great differences in both geographical topography and cultures within one political state, the PPA’s ability to define the similarities and differences across the country, and then meld them into a national consensus is invaluable to the leaders and to the people themselves.

The PPA used the *Methodes Accelerees de Recherche Participative (MARP)* to gather people’s inputs for its data base. MARP is well-known throughout francophone Africa and has been used for the past 30 years at the program and project level. It was originally developed in Burkina Faso by Bernard Ouedrago, a renowned participation practitioner. This time, however, it was necessary to redesign MARP so results could be used at the policy level. However, the participation basics remain the same. In particular, the necessity for *representation* was strongly adhered to. In this case ‘representation’ means making sure that all of the diverse groups that make up a community, territory, or province are represented so that all problems are documented.

To ensure that similar participatory analysis processes were used by all the involved groups at the community, territory, and provincial levels, five specific research methods were provided. Eight research themes relating to the various aspects of poverty were defined as guides to the participatory research. In addition, a statistician accompanied each of the PPA teams and administered a brief quantitative household survey at each of the sites. Each of these processes and guides were utilized in the 470 local communities and 94 territories participating in the PPA.

Once this first phase was completed in early 2005, a seven day Participatory Analysis Workshop was held in June, 2005 with five representatives from each province in attendance. To effectively complete the required *collective analysis*, this diverse group of 55 people, plus a dozen nationally involved colleagues, kept a steady focus and reliance on the participatory nature of the data of more than 100 report volumes.

To do so, workshop participants used analytical methods that incorporate rigor without distorting the data, which were introduced and used at the Workshop. These included: (i) frequency tabulation of participating village and territorial inputs responding to five poverty questions (who is poor; what is poverty, where is poverty found in your area, how does poverty manifest itself; and why does poverty exist in your area); (ii) analysis of case studies to understand everyday realities; (iii) situation analysis to establish existing sector patterns, and compare them to existing livelihood patterns; (iv) identification of dynamics and patterns of poverty; and (v) use of quantitative data to gain further insight.

The results of the Workshop participatory analysis identifies the similarities and dissimilarities of what poverty is, poverty's dynamics and how they work, and the approximate size and scale of poverty. The Participatory Poverty Analysis Workshop participants importantly define a clear and concise selection of the most important problems---from the people's perspectives---to be considered by the country's policy makers and leaders, and provides people's pragmatic solutions to move from this era of suffering to a better future.

This PPA analysis was completed in March, 2006, by a core team working under the direction of a Ministry of Plan's agency—*Unite de Pilotage du Proccessus d'Elaboration et de mise en oeuvre de la Strategie pour la Reduction de la Pauvrete (UPPE)*---expressly created to develop DRC's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). These PPA results presented here provide the people's poverty analysis. It then offers strategies, based on this analysis, to effectively move forward on the key issues of peace and poverty reduction.

## 0.2. Legitimacy is Key

If local communities, NGOs, and different groupings of civil society see that their assessments, as outlined here in this Participatory Poverty Assessment, are actually reflected in the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) it can generate much needed ownership and legitimacy.

This intangible but real force is one around which social institutions, economic policy, governance, and participation, interact. New laws, rules, regulations, programs, etc won't have the hoped for impact *unless civil society has decided that this particular new compact embodies their own societal perspectives and values*. When this does happen, civil society places their considerable power behind socially enforcing this new compact. (World Bank, P. Donnelly-Roark, 2002, pp.5-6. emphasis included)

Thus, a poverty strategy that is developed at only the national level with no participation, despite its good intentions will be perceived as imposed and therefore has little chance of success. On the other hand, the PPA definition and prioritization of a poverty strategy by local and provincial communities, if adopted and utilized by the government signifies a partnership or compact between the people and the government. This gives legitimacy to the poverty program which is essential to success.

But legitimacy and success of the poverty program is only one aspect of PPA importance. As noted earlier, the PPA has initiated a long denied dialogue between the state and citizens, which certainly serves the needs of the people. But the PPA also serves the needs of a democratic national state.

Agreements, compacts, and partnership, when forged between the government and the people, also help guarantee the national government's goals of greater peace, stability, and economic growth. Given RDC's difficult history, these elements will not emerge immediately. Adoption of the PPA does, however, create momentum for these goals.

### **0.3. Participation of the People**

Development of a participatory PRSP has been welcomed by all groups. For the most part, it is the first time that ordinary people have had the opportunity to express their expectations with regard to development priorities from top to bottom. From this point of view, the participatory consultations have been a time of listening to the people talk about their vision for facing the future. To overcome major challenges, the participation of the people in the administration of the country, governance and decentralization will be key.

This time of listening has also been a time of expression by various social groups on their perception of poverty and the manner in which they envision appropriate solutions to the problems with which they are confronted in their daily lives. These consultations also suggest a participatory framework through which the broad support and ownership of national policies by the people can be formulated. The approach includes the following points:

- The people have participated by giving their perceptions of poverty and its causes
- The people have also identified its potential in the poverty reduction actions;
- By integrating the concerns and perspectives of the poor and community dynamics with the interests of the public and private sectors, the process has engendered the legitimacy necessary for the participatory implementation of the policies;
- Finally, they expect to be involved in the local, territorial, provincial and national plans for implementation and monitoring.

### **0.4. The PPA Helps Focus on a New Future**

In the DRC, poverty has reached an unacceptable and extreme stage. It can be seen on the tired faces of the people that it has starved, weakened and belittled. The backcountry no longer attracts anyone and the residents of that part of the Republic feel abandoned and left behind.

The dysfunction of the country's institutions is a serious handicap for the poverty reduction strategy and the monitoring mechanisms of the consultations; the people are desperately searching for institutions that work and guarantee their physical, food, health and social security; the participating parties complain that the country is not administered in an effective manner;

The blatant lack of basic infrastructures (roads, hospitals, schools, transportation, housing, markets, etc.) and the methods of communication even within the provinces increase the feelings of abandonment and the difficult living conditions of the people.

Under these circumstances:

- The information and local studies resulting from the PPA represent an important national resource. The profile and determining factors of poverty are identified at the local, territorial, provincial and national levels. Today, thanks to the participatory poverty analysis, the country can access data assessing the situation of almost any territory or urban center as well as on all of the provinces. This data has been taken from the real life experience of the inhabitants. It is therefore a portrait of a society in all its aspects;
- The PPA was an exercise to gather qualitative data involving communities by districts or villages. It has provided an important complement to the individual and quantitative perception of poverty gathered from the households. It has also allowed us to strengthen the documentary analysis drawn up in the provincial position papers describing the context of each provincial entity. This triangulation of sources and data was therefore necessary in order to ensure that the options to take as well as the strategies to implement correspond to the needs that are actually felt by the population.
- All of the social strata, including women, youth, and vulnerable groups, have brought their perception of poverty to the global analysis;
- The mechanisms of participatory monitoring and evaluation are proposed by the grassroots to operate at the national, provincial and territorial levels.

## 0.5. Summary of Chapters

**Part One** presents the information and analysis that the participants shared and defined for themselves during the consultations.

- Chapter one describes people's definitions, perceptions, and profiles of poverty as they see it. Two typologies illustrating these distinctions are presented.
- Chapter two presents eleven national problems identified by the PPA participants as the most critical to solve if poverty is to be effectively reduced.
- Chapter three identifies the enduring strengths and capacities that the people themselves identify.

**Part Two** uses the information and analysis presented by the PPA participants in Part one to develop a national analysis of poverty.

- Chapter four estimates the size and scale of poverty in the Congo. A flexible and dynamic measure is developed using PPA participant profiles of poverty.
- Chapter five analyzes key poverty patterns and their dynamics.



**Part Three** identifies key priorities and strategies for national and local poverty reduction and eradication.

- Chapter six defines five basic principles that will ensure incorporation of PPA priorities, outlines key PPA actions for successful poverty reduction, and describes the components that are critical for effective participatory monitoring and evaluation.

**PART I**  
**POVERTY IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

## CHAPTER ONE

### HOW PEOPLE DEFINE POVERTY

Through participatory poverty assessments conducted across the country, the Congolese people have given a variety of definitions on the concept of “poverty” according to their own way of experiencing it. This chapter presents the most relevant, expressive and representative definitions which agree with, resemble, or differ from one another according to the environment and social group.

#### 1.1. Poverty Themes

The findings of the Participatory Poverty Assessment illustrate that poor people are a mixed and varied group of people, and because of these differences they may experience poverty differently. This is particularly true for Democratic Republic of Congo. Here, due to multiple crises in the past 50 years, a majority of people, rather than a minority, are poor.

Despite the diversity of experience, poverty in everyday life can be grouped into four key themes. They are: 1) basic life needs not met; 2) collapse of productive work; 3) lack of peace and security; and 4) a culture of impunity which strengthens corruption, injustice, and exclusion. Each one of the examples given typifies similar stories repeated across the country. The emphasis in this chapter is how poverty personally affects individuals and families.

**Basic life needs not met** is the first set of experiences that people identify and discuss when they talk about poverty. Having enough to eat, adequate clothing, housing, and the ability to see a doctor when sick are basic to existence. Inability to achieve these basic needs are in some instances related to insufficient income or assets, in other instances related to lack of access to the infrastructures that provide these basic services.

**The inability to eat adequately** is expressed by the fact of eating small quantities very little of which is nutritious. One resident of Gemena testifies:

“In Bokude, where I live, we eat once a day. Our meal is composed essentially of manioc leaves and chikwangue (a starchy side dish made of manioc tubers) or corn meal. I spend 200 FC a day and there are 12 of us.”

This incapacity to feed oneself and one’s family is found across the country in both urban and rural settings and exists because of lack of income to buy food in the urban areas, or lack of sufficient assets to grow foodstuffs in the rural areas. In particular, it is of great concern in Bandundu, Katanga, North and South Kivu, Maniema and

Kinshasa. This life need constitutes a priority for the men, women and youth as well as other vulnerable groups. It is interesting to note that the SOPPPOC Survey on the

perception of poverty, which accompanied the PPA confirms this need with 79% of the population who have declared that their food consumption does not satisfy them.

**The inability to have decent and healthy housing, to have decent clothes** and take care of oneself and one's family is at the root of poverty in the DRC. And it links to the problem related to difficulty accessing basic social infrastructure and quality services identified by the population. It is interesting to note, that the problem of inadequate housing is strongly felt both in rural areas and in urban areas and by different social groups.

*In the territory of Kabare in South Kivu, the people declare: "poverty is rooted in the inability to go to the doctor, to sleeping in houses redolent with old bedclothes and to difficulties in getting enough eating, usually once a day and very late at night."*

*"The man in Bukama in Katanga has no bed, sleeps on the ground on a mat or animal skin and covers himself with a cloth, which the woman wears during the day and at night becomes a sheet commonly called a "kwembe" cloth or a mat cloth."*

**The inability to go to the doctor** or the inability to take care of oneself is also a

serious problem. A participant from Bumba in the province of Equateur reports: "sometimes women give birth at home without any assistance". Also, as a result of poverty, there is a predominance of self-medication and uncontrolled use of traditional medicine. The survey on the perception of poverty found that 82% of the population stated that they were dissatisfied with their healthcare.

**The inability to clothe oneself decently** is described as serious problem. "We wear whatever is available", says a woman in the Musangu quarter in the Township of Mont-Ngafula in Kinshasa. Indeed, there are numerous families both in the city and in the country who resort to second-hand clothes imported from Europe and put up for resale at the marketplace in order to clothe babies, children and adults. In addition, in certain locations, 'cloths', serve a double purpose: during the day, they serve as clothing, and at night, they serve as sheets. More serious and rare are those communities in the war ravaged areas of the country where villages have been destroyed leaving people with only scraps of clothing. The survey on the perception of poverty confirms this with 84% of the population that is dissatisfied with their clothing.

From the point of view of PPA participants there are several "markers" of poverty stricken families. Most of these indicate families that cannot pay for infrastructure or social services that serve basic human needs. In some cases, the marker may indicate a family that does not live close enough to have access. Three markers in particular---lack of education, lack of water, and no access to electricity--- were mentioned across the country.

**Inability to educate children is a mark of poverty.** Sacrifices are made by both parents and children in order to attend school. Mme K., a farmer in Katanga agrees to cultivate 20/25 meters of the teacher's fields each trimester to teach his 3<sup>rd</sup> grade child at a cost of 500 FC (\$1) per trimester. //But some parents residing in war-ravaged provinces report that they are simply unable to pay the cost of schooling for their children because of the war. Others households throughout the country send only one or two of their children to school---usually the boys. Many are obliged to send their

children relatively far distances if they want to continue their education. In Province Orientale, for example, parents in one community send their children over 15 km to school. Others, may choose not to send children to a school in their community because of schools being understaffed, teachers not properly trained, or the school itself may not be adequately maintained.

**The lack of access to water** indicates poverty for both the family and the territory. A community in Bandundu reports: “We travel 6 km to draw water and it is not drinkable because it is not protected.” Another PPA participant from North Kivu reports: “The signs that show that the territory of Nyiragongo is poor are that there is no hospital, no water source . The people consume stagnant rainwater. This water is untreated.”

**The lack of access to electricity** is also viewed as a marker of poverty. In Katanga, because of the irregular electricity supply, the people use lanterns (koloboyi or katoritori) to light their homes. It is the same in Bumba in the province of Equateur. Instead of electricity, the people used manufactured lanterns. Given that electricity is seen as a marker of poverty in both urban and rural areas it is interesting to note that the SOPPOC survey found only 19% of the population has access to electricity.

**Collapse of Productivity and Work** is the second poverty theme that is particular to the DRC. The dissolution of national economy in 1995 was the final point of collapse, but the ‘real economy’ had suffered for decades under the brutal management of Mobutu and group. The actual collapse has basically put a stop to the cash flow that facilitates work, productivity, and employment. Many different groups of people use the particulars of this collapse to define the poverty that they are experiencing.

- **“Poverty is the situation of low production, lack of buyers and difficult transportation to market.”** Mr. L. farmer and animal breeder from Hehu (Territory of Nyirongongo in North Kivu) emphasizes : "Before the war of 1996, I produced 45 tons of potatoes. Now, after the war, I can only produce 4 tons. I am therefore obligated to buy the stock that I am lacking from other farmers to go sell it in Goma.”
- **“Poverty is the lack of jobs and entrepreneurial spirit.”** There are no companies to provide work for the people or, if they exist, they are insufficient and are only able to hire a very small portion of the available workforce . One youth bears witness: “I am unemployed. I spend my time on the street corner discussing music, soccer and if you have any luck, a friend may give you 50 FC to get something to eat that night.”
- **Poverty is the lack of capital**, or the absence of credit to launch a productive activity. The lack of capital itself results in low earnings. One man from Kinshasa said: “I am a graduate in agronomy, but I do not work. To survive, I get along by growing food although the lack of capital does not allow me to develop this

activity further . So I think up projects for others. I have people make cement blocks for me, which I sell and I put together with building plans, doing all of the construction myself.”

**Lack of Peace and the Presence of Violence** is widespread and the third poverty theme identified by PPA participants. In any country, most poor people suffer from a lack of security simply because of the nature of poverty itself. In the DRC however, insecurity evolved into violence as war which was begun in 1994 on the eastern borders of the country. Since then, lack of security has spread well beyond the borders of the physical war, and peace is still not yet fully established . Two definitions of poverty, given particularly in the provinces of the East, revolve around the theme of insecurity and violence.

“Poverty is the lack of peace and security.” The situation of conflict that DRC has been engulfed in for the past decade has had a negative impact on the well-being of the population, notably at the psychological level. The residents of Karangara in North Kivu declared : “Before 1994 (the Rwandan genocide), life was easy. Beginning in 1994, with the entry of the Rwandan refugees, insecurity came to the village with several consequences. With the war known as the war of liberation, the situation deteriorated. The people fled the village; in 2000, when the people returned to the village, they had nothing.”

Some of the worst examples of how violence creates trauma and insecurity are sadly not that rare in the war ravaged zones of the East. In Katanga, M. N. explains that one member of his family was assassinated in the middle of the village in broad daylight. “The people show bitterness in their faces but are powerless. Because of this, the people move frequently---armed with machetes---to counter a possible attack”.

Women in particular suffer in these insecure environments. Cases of rape with no access to justice abound in the East. One woman reports: “In 1996, the AFDL war began, my husband fled and the rebels arrested me. I was raped in the presence of my children. My granddaughters were also raped in my presence and finally, they robbed us of everything. To survive, we became involved in a church in Kinshasa where I sought refuge with my children.”

A participant from Province Orientale tells us: “In the absence of her parents who had gone into mourning, a 15-year-old girl was surprised and arrested by members of the militia and their commander. The latter decided to take her as his wife and she was transported to the camp where she spent the night in the commander’s house and it was there that the crime took place.” Some PPA participants also believe that this violent orientation has been spread by rogue police, and cite similar instances across the country.

**“Poverty is continually having to relocate after wars.** When war breaks out, to protect themselves the people relocate, sometimes not taking anything with them. Those who have relocated become destitute and each time they must move, they find themselves dispossessed once again.

For example, in the village of Kitshanga in the Masisi, they complain: “the people are always moving, unable to return to the village because of the insecurity. As a consequence, the women have become agricultural workers in order to earn 150 FC/day or around \$0.33/day. To survive, the men of this village have become baggage porters between the population centers and the surrounding markets.”

**A Culture of Impunity** is the fourth theme that PPA participants use to characterize their poverty. This culture of impunity is seen to foster the corruption, injustice, and exclusion/marginalization within which they live, and is viewed as a major factor in the suffering endured by the poverty stricken population. PPA participants tell their stories.

"At Dimbelenge, one storekeeper declared that illegal taxes are created to extort money from storekeepers. The storekeepers are never informed of the categories of the taxes, which are hidden by the tax collectors in order to tax in an abusive and illegal manner.

“In Kamina, located in the province of Katanga, because of extreme influence peddling, the tribunal is called: "the tribunal of misfortune and not of peace". Within this Tribunal, the greatest corruption which could exist, flourishes. People are arrested arbitrarily and convicted with no logic or reason.

In Kinshasa, a gentleman reports: “The police officers go from house to house and arbitrarily arrest our innocent children. In addition, delinquency reigns in the quarter (the bana bolafa phenomenon). Another person reports, “the situation in our neighborhood has always been an insecure environment .Nicknamed Chad, we are all too familiar with murder, rape, and crime.

“In Bandundu, it is reported that the women are not well dressed and lack soap and suitable lotions. In short, “we women are considered as animals because we are exploited to the point of causing anxiety every day. The burden of the poverty leads the husband to excessive control---going as far as counting the morsels of meat in the pot.”

## 1.2. The Impact of Poverty on Vulnerable Groups

Certain groups are particularly vulnerable to the ravages of poverty. Women are vulnerable simply because of their second class status in Congolese society. Orphans are particularly vulnerable, as are widows and women alone, along with people that have contracted HIV/AIDS.

Poverty is a fact of life for women. Women, although they do the majority of work in society, do not control any resources, and they cannot be landowners. “For example the women of Village N. are all farmers. However, they report that during harvest time their husbands take all of the money gained by selling the agriculture produce, and go to town and spend it. If one of the wives claims the money is needed for household costs, the husband will slap his wife”.

In addition all of the extra work that is created because of poor infrastructure---e.g. no electricity, no nearby water---is given to women. Thus, women do the majority of work, but with no control of resources or input into decisions. One PPA participant observed that then when her husband dies, his family will come and takes the land, house, and household goods, leaving the woman with nothing.

One woman from Kinshasa explains: “Poor people don’t have anyone to help or support them. Since my husband’s death, I’m sad because there is no-one that will help me. Everything is difficult for me---clothing, eating, educating the children,---I can’t even think about it”.

**For children, poverty is not having parents** whether it due to the death of the parents or following divorce. Whatever the case, the family separates and the parents may head in other directions than those of the children. Thus, the children are abandoned to their sad fate, and if they are lucky, are taken in by other family members who are already struggling meet their current needs. One young girl explains "I was still a child when my father died. We are alive because of our mother. In fact, she farms a field in Bas-Congo. There she helps grow manioc. She sells the manioc leaves from the field. We live off of that. In addition, to add to our mother’s earning, my little sisters braid hair and give the money that they earn to our mother.

Even more difficult for a child is to be abandoned by the family and called a ‘child-witch’. One group explains: “In the K. quarter of Kinshasa, it is known that all of the children called “child-witches” have been abandoned by their parents."

**For people living with HIV/AIDS, poverty means being rejected by society.** Sick, unable to work, they are regarded as a burden and often find themselves abandoned by society. People report: “Socially, they are given no consideration. They are exposed to various forms of attacks or exploitation with no means of aid or protection. They are stressed, disabled, often sick, very weak, very dirty, very thin and have no access to healthcare”.

Many have lived through a long period of war which has taken their parents, husbands or legal guardians. They have suffered a volcanic eruption, poor governance, insecurity, fear of persecution, lack of tolerance and immorality. They are characterized by the uncertainty of access to resources for survival. They live under the care of third parties who are often frustrated, or from jobs considered subservient (farming for others, transporting baggage at low cost ...). Finally, most of them are exposed to the worst of living conditions.

### **1.3. Differences in the perception of poverty.**

After have described the different perceptions and definitions of poverty in the previous paragraphs, this section presents differences and peculiarities related to gender, rural/urban environments, and provincial environments as well. In order to do this, the tabulation data gathered at the time of the Kisantu Workshop in June 2005 have been used.



**According to living environment.** In the rural environment, poverty is explained specifically as being the incapacity to access material and production tools, agricultural inputs and technical support. These elements represent constraints in the productive activities of the people who live there and prevent them from living up to their productive potential.

In the urban environment, emphasis is placed on the lack of jobs, drinking water, transportation, and electricity. Jobs are practically non-existent in the larger cities and towns, especially for young men and women. Having the resources to conduct 'petty commerce' is regarded as a significant and stable step from the majority of those seeking some type of employment. If employment is found, transportation is not easily obtainable, and many walk several hours back and forth from their living quarters to their place of employment. At home, water and electricity is never consistent, and sometimes just not available due to infrastructure deterioration.

According to the province where there was conflict (South Kivu, North Kivu, Maniema), poverty is primarily perceived as the absence of peace and the insecurity that forces people to move regularly from their living environments, subjects them to robbery and rape, as well as loss of employment, livestock, and crops. They also noted the difficulties of accessing basic services, the inability to have decent housing, the absence, insufficiency or dilapidation of educational and healthcare infrastructure...Finally, the poor distribution of justice and the reality of being deprived of one's rights are also cited as the principal themes of poverty.

In Bas-Congo, the people have specifically raised the issues of the lack of children, instruction and entrepreneurial spirit.

In the Kasai, the people specifically raise the issues of the lack of a sufficient and balanced diet, the lack of a means of transport as well as the fact of living under the permanent threat of erosion.

In Equateur, the population associated poverty with:

- the inability to have production materials, agricultural consumables and technical support;
- the insufficiency and/or the lack of drinking water;
- the state of isolation, absence of roads;
- low agricultural production;
- the lack of buyers;
- the difficult transport to market of agricultural production;
- administrative hassles and police harassment;
- Failure of marriage, polygamy;
- the overburdening of women (housework, work in the fields...).

In Bundundu, poverty is associated with the lack of a sufficient and balanced diet, low agricultural production, difficult transport to market of agricultural products.

In Katanga, poverty is associated with administrative hassles and police harassment, isolation of the villages (absence of roads), the absence, dilapidation and insufficiency of educational infrastructure as well as land and power struggles. □

In Orientale Province, the population has associated poverty with a deteriorated socio-economic infrastructure.

In Kinshasa, poverty is associated with the lack of jobs and entrepreneurial spirit, the lack of a sufficient and balanced diet, as well as the lack of capital to carry out productive activity.

**According to groups.** The men as well as the youth spoke specifically about the lack of jobs, entrepreneurial spirit and access to credit, whereas the women emphasized the lack of a means of transport and the lack of a husband for moral and material support. Vulnerable people emphasized the conflicts that force the people to move. For the children, poverty is the absence of parents to supervise them. (One child from Yolo South III, in Kalamu declared: poverty is lacking your parents)

#### 1.4. Differences in the definition of the concept ‘poor’ □

**According to living environment.** In the rural environment, the poor villages are those where there is no school, where access to drinking water is difficult and where people live in perpetual fear of war. According to PPA participants, the poor are diseased people, who dress in tattered clothing, and who lack tools for work and agricultural consumables.

In the urban environment, the poor quarters are those where access to running water and electricity is difficult, and those where there is no easy transport. Poor households are large, have no personal means of transport and live in precarious housing (at the edge of rivers, next to erosion...).

**According to the province.** Different geographical areas experience poverty differently, and therefore emphasize different situations. The topics, however, remain the same.

1. In Maniema and South Kivu, the poor have no livestock, land, cultivation; also the poor transport goods on their heads over long distances. In South Kivu, the poor live and get married in the house of their parents.
2. In North Kivu, the poor are the refugees of war (homeless), as well as victims of rape, pillaging and injustice. The poor are also those who wear tattered clothing.
3. In Bas-Congo, families with no children, as well as widows and single women are considered poor. Illiterate people are also considered poor.
4. In Kasai, the poor are those who have no personal means of transport (bike, motorcycle, vehicle) as well as those who wear tattered clothing.

5. In Equateur, the poor are widows, single women and polygamists who are unable to ensure the survival of their offspring.
6. In Bandundu, the poor are orphaned children, the elderly with no support, as well as large families.
7. In Katanga, the poor are those with no access to basic services (drinking water, electricity, education, healthcare) as well as those lacking food.
8. In Orientale Province, poor families are numerous and/or divided and often with an alcoholic father. The poor live far from the centers where they mine for precious materials.
9. In Kinshasa, the poor are those who live together in large numbers without being related, and those who lack food. The very poor are orphaned children and elderly with no support.

**According to group.** For men, the poor are people who are heavily in debt and insolvent, those that have no access to basic social services and those that have no means of personal transport.

Women think that parents who are unable to ensure the schooling of their children are poor; widows and single women are also poor as well as women dressed in tattered clothing and those that have no access to drinking water.

The youth also spoke specifically about the lack of jobs, lack of entrepreneurial spirit and access to credit, whereas the women emphasized the lack of a means of transport.

### **1.5. Typology established by the population**

Two complementary typologies are presented below beginning with the perception of poverty by the rural and urban populations. For these typologies, three levels of poverty have been used: Very poor, poor, fairly poor. These typologies assist decision-makers for poverty reduction better understand the distinctions among these groups. If not understood, poverty programs too often aid the more powerful at the local level, and those with lesser voice continue to do without.

Table no. 1.1 Typology in urban areas:

		Level of poverty	Very poor	Poor	Fairly poor
	Criteria				
1.	Family circumstances		Little or no family or community support. On their own, as elderly, widows, women with children. If they remain a family unit, no familial authority as daily food cannot be guaranteed Daily effort to have enough cash to live and eat Excluded from society	Family is in process of destabilization, and becoming more fragile. Barely able to maintain immediate family structure. Low income household. Can't find enough work all the time. Household is losing its support network. Noticeable diminishment of social standing	Struggling but stable. Maintains an immediate family structure and an extended familial support network. Willing to assist elderly of family. Maintains family social standing and contributes to community. May consider oneself to be struggling but not poor
2.	Source of income		Unemployed or a public servant, with no income or having a modest or irregular salary.	Practicing a small income-generating activity working as a day laborer in the private sector.	Low ranking worker in private companies, banks, international organizations and Government cabinets.
3.	Food		Eats randomly (once a day or practically not at all). "we practice fasting"]]"	Eats regularly but only once a day.	Eats more than once
4.	Surroundings (Habitat and environment)		The walls of the house are made of adobe brick, covered with tarpaulins, plastic bags or sheet metal. The houses have $\pm$ 2 rooms. Often share house with several other groups. No furniture in the house; inhabitants sleep on mats.	The walls of the house are made of adobe brick or of durable metal sheet material. They have beds of bamboo or iron with a straw mattress inside, but more than normal number will sleep in one room	A house made of durable materials Has a foam mattress with furniture in the house
5.	Drinking water		Uses well water .	Uses water from the REGIDESO drawn from neighbors.	Has faucets from the REGIDESO on the plot of land
6.	Healthcare		Because of the lack of money, plants and leaves are used in case of illness and women give birth at home.	Resort to traditional practitioners and self-medication and, in serious cases, go to the hospital but are unable to pay the fees.	Know to seek care in the hospital if they are ill. Are obliged to seek credit from family/friends to do so.
7.	Education		The children are not educated.	Intelligent boys have priority access to education. The less intelligent and the girls stay at home.	Educate the children but are often expelled because the fees have not been paid.
8.	Security		No security whatsoever. Turned away by the family, no network for assistance. Ignored or preyed upon by state officials	Worries about vanishing security. Forced to work in insecure circumstances. Children are expected to contribute to welfare	Minimal security is secured.
9.	Quality of life and expectations		Suffers complete social and economic exclusion. Extremely low quality of life, often depressed and afraid for the future.	Suffers from closing of social networks and increasing exclusion. Slowly giving up hope for future Losing battle to maintain effective family unit .	Suffers from insecurity but hope remains for the future. Quality of life is acceptable as long as family remains healthy

Table no. 1.2: **Rural typology**

	Level of poverty Criteria	Very poor	Poor	Fairly poor
1.	Family circumstances	Little or no family or community support. Often on their own, elderly, widows, women with children. Loss of familial authority as parents cannot guarantee food every day. Daily effort to have enough cash to live and eat. Excluded from society.	Family is more fragile, but is still able to maintain immediate family structure. Can't find enough work all the time. Household is losing its support network. Diminishment of social standing.	Struggling but stable. Maintain a familial and support network. Willing to assist elderly of family. Maintains family social standing and contributes to community. May consider oneself to be struggling but not poor.
2.	Source of income	Being unemployed, have no source of income and do not participate in any income-generating activity. Live from begging.	Salary earned by working for others, looking after and sowing their fields, taking care of their livestock.	Have their own fields and livestock and sell the products harvested from them.
3.	Food	No regular daily meal. Eat whenever possible. Their meals are made up of vegetables with no salt or oil.	The people see themselves as participating in a forced daily fasting. They eat karibu na kesho (very late in the day) in order to be able to work the next morning.	Eat at least 2 meals per day.
4.	Surroundings (Habitat and environment)	Very poor, homeless, otherwise their homes are made of rammed mud and grass, with a thatched roof and a door made of reeds. No furniture, no bed, no table, no chairs. Sleeping on the ground, on mats or on boxes.	In a house of rammed mud and grass, wattle and daub with a thatched roof. Has a bed made of bamboo "muengele"	A house of adobe brick with sheet metal. Has a radio, a mattress and a battery.
5.	Potable water	No well has been installed. Water is drawn more or less 5 km from the village.	Water source uncontrolled. Water is drawn approx. 5 km away.	Source uncontrolled, People travel less than 5 km for water.
76.	Healthcare	Care for themselves with traditional plants. Women give birth at home or in the bush/forest.	Consult medical centers with no ability to pay.	Consult medical centers and pay.
7.	Education	Not educated due to inability to pay the school fees, in whatever manner.	Education is in the hands of the children themselves who sell small things in order to pay for their studies.	Education is accorded primarily to boys and not to girls.
8.	Security	No security whatsoever. Turned away by the family, no network for assistance. Ignored or preyed upon by state officials	Worries about vanishing security. Forced to work in insecure circumstances. Children are expected to contribute to welfare	Minimal security is obtained
9.	Expectations and Quality of Life	Suffers complete social and economic exclusion. Extremely low quality of life, often depressed and afraid for the future.	Suffers from closing of networks and increasing exclusion. Slowly giving up hope for future Losing battle to maintain effective family unit.	Suffers from some insecurity but hope remains for the future. Quality of life is acceptable as long as family remains healthy

## 1.6. Summary

Through the Participatory Poverty Assessment the people of DRC tell us that poverty is a much more than a simple lack of income. It is a multi-faceted and complex factor that is a major part of their lives. The tangible aspects such as income and basic infrastructure and services are powerful and well-known drivers of poverty.

However, equally if not more important, are the *intangible* factors that contribute to insecurity, violence, and abuse of power. In this chapter, each of the subjects considered---definitions of poverty, impact on the vulnerable, differences among groups, and the typologies based on this information---feature these tangible and intangible factors.

## CHAPTER TWO

### NATIONAL PRIORITY POVERTY PROBLEMS

The PPA consultations held across the country did not stop with simply defining poverty. Each community group then went on to discuss *why* so many people were poor, and *how* poverty manifested itself in their community and province. To accomplish this effectively, the groups were shown participatory analysis techniques they could use to further analyze their specific situations. These discussions were then amplified at representative territory and provincial meetings.

The five representatives invited from each of the eleven provinces to attend to the Participatory Analysis Workshop held in Kisantu in June, 2005, all arrived with the complete PPA data from their own province. The combined number of data reports totaled over 150 reports and documents. In the main resource document there are more than 300 cases documented

The Participatory Analysis Workshop group proceeded to first identify a total of 55 poverty problems that were discussed and analyzed during the previous consultations. A problem had to be shared by at least three provinces for it to be classified as a national problem. From this, a total of **eleven priority poverty problems** for the nation were identified.

This chapter presents these eleven problems from the perspective of the people themselves in the communities and provinces. It describes what the problem is, and how it manifests itself in the different communities across the country. The patterns and dynamics underlying these problems are analyzed in Part two of this document.

#### 2.1. Priority Problems According to the Congolese People

The eleven problems identified are listed, as follows, from the tangible to the intangible:

- *Access to basic quality infrastructure and social services*
- *Access to transport and communication*
- *Food insecurity*
- *Insufficient agricultural production*
- *Low household income*
- *Unemployment*
- *Erosion and desertification*
- *Insecurity of people and property*
- *Rights of women violated*
- *Exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups*
- *Poor governance*

## **Problem 1: Access to basic quality infrastructure and social services**

The lack of infrastructure services is one of the main concerns expressed by the local population throughout the country, especially in rural areas. Infrastructure and basic social services are linked notably:

- To the drinking water supply;
- To the power supply (electricity);
- To sanitation services and infrastructure;
- To educational services and infrastructure;
- To decent housing;
- To roads
- To markets (place of business).

### **Illustrations of the Problem**

Throughout the country, the participants in the PPA constantly focus on the capacity to have access to quality infrastructure and have it available to them.

Communities in different provinces express preferences for different services. In the province of Katanga, for example, 43% of the PPA infrastructure cases expressed a preference for improved educational services. Among others, for example in the case of North Kivu Province, people expressed a strong preference for improved drinking water services, Bandundu Province expressed a strong interest in better housing while Orientale Province was interested in improvements in education, electricity, health and housing.

- **Education.** The desire for accessible quality primary education is a theme expressed throughout the country. Monetary accessibility is the main problem expressed, with physical access coming closely in second place. One farmer, a father of children in the primary and secondary schools in the province of Katanga reported that he is not able to pay for the education of his children because of the war. In Kinshasa, one mother reports that she only sends one or two of her children to school because she is not able to pay tuition for all of them, while another mother explains that she was forced to take her children out of school so that they could work .

*Physical accessibility* is also a major problem for communities sending their children to faraway schools. In one community of Bas-Congo, there are classrooms for first and second grade students in the village, but the older student must walk 7 km round trip.

The lack of education for girls --- due to the culture rather than the distance --- was also corroborated by different groups throughout the country. In the Bas-Congo, one person observed that priority was given to boys because of the assumed inferiority of women, and also because of the remarkable difficulty that women face finding a suitable partner for marriage if they have attended school.



Another aspect of this problem was discovered in the province of Kasai Occidental, where one teacher reported that out of 316 schools in one territory, only one woman was a School Principal.

In North Kivu, participants in the town of Goma said that the high levels of illiteracy among women in their region could be attributed to two elements: (i) the financial preference accorded by certain parents to the education of their boys; and (ii) the social customs that marginalize young girls in terms of inheritance, and sometimes push them into marriage at around age 10 or into prostitution.

Finally, quality of education becomes a major problem once the children actually go to school. Two different communities in the Katanga province note that different classes are held in the same room and are taught by poorly trained teachers. In the Equateur province, one community observed that the teachers in the primary school are poorly trained, and that the children have no textbooks. And in Kinshasa province, one community explains that very few children go to school because the classrooms are dirty and poorly maintained.

In summary, education is a highly prized service throughout the country which is either unavailable or poorly delivered to the majority of households.

- **Healthcare.** Monetary access and the problem of healthcare pose obstacles.. Similar distinctions regarding ability to pay are made across the majority of the provinces. The rich can see a doctor when they are sick, have their illnesses diagnosed and then buy the correct prescriptions to treat the illness. The middle income group is able to visit the doctor but may have difficulty paying without obtaining credit. The poor, on the other hand, are force to diagnose their own illnesses and sell possessions to buy medicine without consulting a doctor.

For example, one woman in Kinshasa reported that she was forced several times to sell some of her personal effects in order to obtain medicine. A second option for the poor is to consult a traditional healer. The result of this option, according to one participant in North Kivu province was that "the poor would continually suffer from their poor health".

Maternal healthcare throughout the country is beyond the means of many households. One community in the province of North Kivu reports that because the families do not have the \$5.00 expected for maternity hospital care, the women are forced to give birth in their homes. In Equateur, one husband explained that: "since I do not have enough money, my wife gave birth several times in our home without a qualified person to help her".

Physical access is also a key healthcare problem, especially in rural areas. In the Kasai Occidental province, one community reported that when someone falls ill for minor reasons, they must travel 22 km to the territory administrative center or, for a more serious illness, go 62 km to the provincial administrative center. Another community in the same province explains that even if they do not have a medical center closer to them, there is no trained medical practitioner available. □

- **Drinking water.** Physical access to drinking water is identified as a problem throughout the country. Untreated and unsanitary water is clearly used by most communities and households, potable sources if they are to be found at all, are usually only found at a certain distance. Many households reported that in order to produce potable water, they must travel long distances. The amount of water during the dry season is also a problem for certain communities. The residents of North Kivu, as noted above, expressed a fervent wish for improving drinking water sources. The needs are immense.

In one community in North Kivu, one woman considers her territory poor “because there is neither a hospital nor a protected water source”. Even so communities in the lake region have problems procuring drinking water. One community living near Lake Kivu reports that they are forced to fetch water from the lake although this is “unfortunately untreated”.

In the Bandundu province, one resident explains that she walks 6 km to fetch water originating from an unprotected source. At least one community in Equateur province has to get their water from several sources, all of which are unprotected. One woman in Bukavu in South Kivu speaks of the lack of sanitation that usually accompanies a lack of water. She explains: “I live in an environment that has no maintained roads and where fecal matter flows openly in the gutters”.

Another woman in South Kivu province reports that she walks three hours a day to provide her family water on a regular basis. Some people in other communities have other options – particularly if they have discretionary income. For example, in several communities in Katanga, people can buy water at 20 FC for 20 liters. The people in one community in South Kivu can buy water from neighbors who have their own source for 10 FC. There is one community in Kasai Oriental province that has organized itself in order to manage a drinking water source near their village.

- **Lodging.** For many people, their house and the conditions that it imposes upon them, defines whether they live in state of poverty or not. Housing quality is therefore a major factor in poverty suffering, and a major indicator of status. In this category, space and the type of house construction seem to define the concepts of quality more specifically.

A priest from Bas-Congo reports: “*We live in inhuman conditions. Our houses are boxes---like kennels.*” Space to sleep is a determining factor. One family in South Kivu province reported: “We spend the night on mats instead of bed and we use cloths worn by our wives and daughters during the day to cover ourselves at night”.

In Katanga province, the wives of soldiers tell of using cardboard boxes and mats and sharing the same housing with the civilian population. One man in Katanga relates that, due to a lack of space, his family was forced to sleep outside on mats and he uses the cloth of his wife to cover himself. He explains: “*the cloth that a*

woman wears during the day and that becomes a cover at night is called a 'kwembe cloth' or a night cloth”.

- **Energy/Electricity.** The story around electricity is all about lack of access. Only one case out of twelve identified irregularity of service as the problem, and no groups mentioned cost. The remaining eleven made it clear that their entire community had no access to electricity, although some had had service in earlier times. The result is that all had to use other methods to light their homes and cook their meals. Methods for house lighting ranged from petrol lamps in South Kivu, to banana skins in North Kivu, to traditional torches fueled by palm oil in Katanga.

Although no specific mention is made, given complaints about poor maintenance and poor management heard at the provincial levels concerning all types of infrastructure, it can be assumed that electricity service has suffered greatly from deterioration brought about by poor maintenance. However, one group in Katanga had a different explanation. They explained that staff of the electricity station itself actually stole the electricity generator. These agents were able to do so by telling people that they were taking the generator for repair.

- **Markets.** Few participants mention lack of markets as a cause for concern. Those that did, however, had striking points to make. A farmer in Katanga observes, for example, that poverty in their region is accentuated by the fact that there is no market through which they may sell their agricultural produce.

This observation serves as a reminder that the *need* for markets, according to a significant number of PPA participants commenting on poor governance and insecurity, has diminished considerably over the past ten years. However, one community in North Kivu reports, for that they transport their agricultural produce on their backs for 12 km to the only available market. Others in the same community are obligated to walk 42 to 60 km in order to find an outlet for their agricultural produce.

This diminishing use and demand for markets is due, according to these participants, to two factors: (i) the physical insecurity of travel; and (ii) police harassment in levying illegal produce taxes as farmers brought their produce to market.

**In summary**, lack of social services and infrastructure has clear negative impacts. According to the observation of many PPA participants, the impact of poor and often times no infrastructure creates and increases poverty. Diminishing expectations abound.

According to one participant in Bandundu Province, “*Fifteen years ago a person of normal means could expect to build a house with several rooms, have a relatively close water supply that was protected, and be able to educate their children. Now, the best many can hope for is to have a house with one, and perhaps two rooms, use unprotected water supply, and educate one or two of their children at best*”.

## Problem 2: Access to transport and communication

The methods and means of communication in the DRC are outdated and impractical according to PPA participants. This problem has been evaluated from several angles:

- By land;
- By air;
- By water;
- Means of communication.
- 

With 2,345,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast, semi-isolated country that has consistently attempted to provide transport since colonial times. Its installed system goes back to colonial times, and consists of 16,238 km of waterways on the Congo River and its tributaries and on lakes; 5,033 km of train tracks; 145,000 km of arterial and local roads; 7,400 km of urban public roads; and airport hubs, 22 of which have paved runways and are international class.

### Illustrations of the Problem.

If it is necessary to consider the problem of methods and means of communication at the national level, it is also appropriate to say that that transport problems are perceived quite differently, depending upon geographical location. In addition, it must be noted that the situation is more striking in rural areas. Particular emphasis can be placed on Maniema and Equateur provinces which are almost totally isolated with no suitable roads.

- **By land.** Roads are in an advanced state of deterioration throughout the Republic. This state causes certain roads to disappear and condemns the provinces, towns and village to live in isolation from other parts of the country. It is what the population of Kimvula in Bas Congo or that of Mahanga in North Kivu is lamenting when they say: *"...the assistance of the NGOs, churches and the government is not able to reach Mahanga because they stop at Kaancha (approximately 10 km away) because of the poor condition of the road"*.

The poorly maintained roads are reduced to paths especially in regions where erosion is occurring. In the case of Equateur Province, where the Eyala, Bolenge and Cargo avenues and the Bolenge road are in the process of disappearing, the roads are consistently threatened by further erosion.

The literal impassability of many roads causes several corners of the country to lack motorized transport. Trucks do not travel that way. The people get around on foot, motorcycle or bicycle.

Due to the lack of transportation, young people between the ages of 25 and 40, in the territory of Dimbelenge in Kasai Occidental, transport merchandise weighing 200 to 250 kg and bring it to the markets which are also far from the villages.

The deterioration of the roads limits exchanges between villages, towns and even between provinces. This lack of exchange makes it difficult to move agricultural products from rural areas to urban areas.

In this vein, the territory of Lusambo in Kasai- Oriental declares "alas, the lack of road structures, the absence of local markets, and the slow flow of money constrains any operation so that it is centered on home consumption. So, the only product which the territory can still boast of is palm oil. This is transported by the men on motorcycle as well as on the backs and heads of the women"

- **Railroad lines.** The Congolese government owns many kilometers of railroad lines constructed since colonial times and since they have had little or no maintenance up to now, the tracks have deteriorated as much or more than the roads. The trains going from one point to another often experience derailments and the people travel in such bad conditions that the people of Kabongo in Katanga province said: "*We often travel perched on top of the cars once we have our tickets.*"

Despite the existence of trains, the provinces do not always manage to ship agricultural products. This is because of the rarity of actual train arrival---perhaps once or twice a month for certain districts. Also, the people complain about the contamination of agricultural products in the warehouses of the SNCC (Societe Nationale des Chemins de Fer du Congo).

- **By air.** The DRC is a country that is often only accessible by air. This access is facilitated by the presence of large airports in large population center, as well as airfields in towns that are otherwise rural in nature. However, these airports and the airfields are poorly maintained to the point where they may be overrun by grass.

It must also be noted that the Congolese skies are traveled by aircraft both large and small. However, the latter are not always checked by reliable technology before being placed in circulation, which results in more than occasional accidents. But the Congolese government, although aware of this situation, takes no measures to secure this means of transport and save human lives. Thus, all kinds of unreliable airplanes continue to transport people and goods, especially in the eastern territories and the small commercial mining centers).

Nevertheless, suffice it to say that travel by airplane is considered a sign of wealth.

- **By waterways.** Waterways include lakes, rivers and sea. For the DRC, riverways are the most used. The Congo River flows through nine of the Republic's provinces. The non-navigable parts of the river are connected by rail.

Lake routes are used especially in the provinces of North and South Kivu, Maniema and Katanga, which border Lake Tanganyika. However, waterways are the most poorly maintained. In fact, the navigational marking (hydrographical) service no longer exists or is no longer operational.

Waterways in rural areas especially are used the most to go from one village to another. However, the people complain about the lack of ferries and the deterioration of the bridges. In terms of bridges, Orientale Province notes the presence of bridges made of scraps of wood and lianas. For example this is the case of the bridge connecting the villages of Dila and Dembu which was carried away by the Arebi River. This situation in Orientale Province is emblematic of similar situations in all the provinces. It is interesting to note that that this kind of bridge exists even in Kinshasa, the nation's capital.

- **Means of communication.** The means of communication also encompasses access to information. Communication is easy in urban areas where people have access to the RTNC, the national network. For whatever little information there is, there are also many telephone networks. However, this situation becomes a problem in rural areas. Many rural territories do not have access to television or even radio. Many are without any means of communication, while a few of the wealthier villages are sometimes connected by radio-telegraph.

.Implication of this lack of communication for the country is illustrated by the stories of several PPA participants. For example, in Katanga Province Mr. K., a local chief complains about the lack of information does to his community: “the people do not know the president of the Republic, have never heard his voice on the radio or television. Others in Maniema have a similar message: Access to the media (newspapers and radio) is almost non-existent. Nevertheless, there is a radio station 'Maria' that only covers an area of 10 km and only provides information for the Catholic Christian population.”

In sum, the problem of the deteriorating modes and means of communication is a national problem and reaches every corner of the country. It is so huge and extensive, that as long as it is not tackled, DRC will be far from speaking of sustainable development.

### Problem 3: Food insecurity

For almost four decades, food insecurity continues to increase among the Congolese population, both in urban and in rural areas. In March 2003, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) made the observation that the Democratic Republic of Congo appears among the 25 African countries faced with a serious food deficit. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of undernourished people more than doubled, increasing from 15 to 32 million.<sup>1</sup>

The participatory assessment of data from the consultations confirmed the above by including Congolese food insecurity as one of the problems of poverty. And the conclusions reached by the PPA report, supported by the research uncovered by the index of case studies conducted in the month of August 2005 contained in the index of cases shows that the food insecurity of the population is characterized by several aspects linked to three fundamental questions:

- Is the Congolese diet varied?
- Is the Congolese diet sufficient in quantity?
- Is the Congolese diet sufficient in terms of quality?

### Illustrations of the Problem

Throughout the participatory consultations, the Congolese showed different manifestations of the food insecurity which they suffer. These manifestations are grouped according to the three questions identified above.

- **The dietary monotony** of the large majority of Congolese population was the subject of condemnation by the populations consulted. In fact, for the great majority of the Congolese population, eating is more of a luxury than an entitlement. Consequently, what is consumed relieves the monotony. Several of the communities consulted in a good number of the provinces (Bandundu, Kasai, Equateur, Kinshasa,...), both in urban as well as semi-rural areas, have said that they often eat imported scad (fish) commonly called grilled "tomson" with a measure of "fufu" (yams). While in rural areas, the people said they often eat that which is produced from their work in the fields. A plate of manioc leaves, "pondu", or sweet potato leaves, "matembele", with a measure of fufu or rice.

These two trends characterize the monotony of the diet of the Congolese population although, inside the latter, some resulting disparities are evoked from the food cultures from one population to another.

- As for the quantity of food consumed, it has been verified that it is insufficient. Also, the average number of meals per day consumed by most people is only one.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, Rapport National, 2003.

Access to food, whether monotonous and/or insufficient, results in daily stress and sacrifice. Also, goods and services are often exchanged to access food. Sometimes women are induced to deprive themselves of their dignity so that their families may survive.

The majority of people consulted have stated that they often eat only once per day. In Luilu in the town of Kolwezi (province of Katanga), the people state: "To do a forced fast daily; you eat a meal called "karibu na kesho » (close to tomorrow) to be even able to work tomorrow morning ». Farther away, in the province of Bandundu, the report from the town of Kikwit tells of a population that "drums in unison", in other words, goes to sleep hungry as a family. The restriction of the diet, explaining the extreme poverty, gives rise to expressions which have been incorporated into the daily language.

- Finally, the people expressed themselves on **the quality of the food** they consume. For the most part, they spoke of unbalanced meals. The daily calories intake is very low -- according to the people, a situation due in large part to low household incomes, the poor flow of manufactured products in rural areas, the collapse of the agricultural sector.

Throughout the country, the situation of many people is similar to that of the Bokude population in Gemena (Equateur Province), which suffers from malnutrition. They say they "eat once a day, a meal composed essentially of manioc leaves with chikwangué or fufu on a base of corn meal". Elsewhere, the people of the village of Kwango in the territory of Inongo define malnutrition as being "the eating of one unbalanced meal a day". (PPA Report, Inongo territory, village of Kwango, page 6, Bandundu province).

All of these assessments related to the quality, quantity and the variety of the diet discussed by the Congolese people themselves at the time of the participatory assessments. The conditions they describe allow a glimpse of daily life with regard to food insecurity.



#### **Problem 4: The agriculture sector of cash crops has collapsed.**

The agriculture sector is very important for the DRC because 80% of its population is rural and lives off agriculture. This population practices subsistence agriculture on small plots; others do not even have access to arable land.

With the liberation of the mining sector, the government, since it is the primary property owner, proceeds to sell concessions to expatriates for use of the minerals. The people are driven away and deprived of their land.

#### **Illustrations of the Problem**

This problem presents the following aspects:

- the indifference of the people to farming activities;
- the drop in agricultural production;
- the consumption of imported products

**The indifference of the people to farming activities:** The law on the liberalization of the mining sector is a factor which has dragged down the agricultural sector, because the government is presently proceeding with the sale of concessions for the extraction of minerals. The new owners drive the people away, thus depriving them of arable land. In addition, the people prefer to dig for minerals, to the detriment of agriculture.

Some people own arable land but lack financial means. They prefer to work in the fields of others: Mme J.K., a cultivator in the village Mukwemba, territory of Lubudi, province of Katanga states that she: “works a plot of 20 x 20 m in the fields of others for a bowl of manioc.”

This indifference induces the population of Lukangaba in the territory of Sakania, province of Katanga to rent out their surrounding arable land for agriculture to Zambians for as much as 30,000 Zambian kwacha [Translator’s Note: Conversion?]].

**Decrease in agricultural production:** The people’s indifference to farming activities has resulted in lower agricultural production and subsistence agriculture. Consequently, the price of agricultural products has increased. In Lusambo, for example, in the province of Kasai-Oriental, someone declared: “but alas, the circumstances, the absence of local markets, the slow flow of money causes any exploitation to be centered on self consumption.” This drop in agricultural production makes it so that the people are poorly fed and, consequently, food insecurity [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: mistake in original?]] takes hold: having only one meal per day. As the people in the Luilu district, town of Kolwezi in the province of Katanga describe it “a forced daily fast”: “We eat a meal called “karibu na kesho” (close to tomorrow) in order to be able to work tomorrow morning.”

**Consumption of imported products:** The Democratic Republic of Congo which should be a bread basket of Africa today finds itself importing food from outside. 80% of Congolese foodstuffs presently consist of imported products, which raise the price of food products and makes it difficult for the most destitute people to access food. The few farmers who exist in the country are not protected because there is a predilection for imported products to the detriment of internal products.

## Problem 5: Low household income

Low household income is cited among the priority problems of poverty in the DRC. Through the participatory consultations the people across the country observed that many manifestations of poverty are linked to low household income.

### Illustrations of the Problem.

Among the most salient characteristics, the following were retained:

- the inability to satisfy basic needs
- the bulk of the burden falling on women
- the development of child labor
- the loss of marital and parental authority
- prostitution (especially in urban and semi-rural areas.)
- begging
- falling back on social nets
- multiples jobs

- **The inability to satisfy basic needs** comes back to lack of sufficient income to secure essential needs. These ‘essential necessities’ allows a family or individual to lead a decent life in society. This situation of poverty translates into a state of shortfalls/deficiencies in many areas, notably healthcare, education, food, housing, society,

Without distinction between the geographic areas, rural or urban, the people’s voices have spoken together to deplore their inability to cope with fundamental needs, which must be faced each day.

The story of a child in Kimbangu III district in the town of Kalamu in Kinshasa is eloquent on this subject. He says: *“Papa is a mechanic. He leaves in the morning at 6:00 and comes home late at 10:00 PM. Unfortunately he does not have sufficient money, and they send me home from school because he has not paid the tuition. But hHe forces me to go there everyday, and they always send me home. So I’m looking for any source of assistance.”*

- **The overworking of women** has been identified by the population as one of the key manifestations of low household incomes. The report shows that the communities which have taken part in the participatory assessments humorously evoke the idea of “the woman with a thousand arms”. It is the robotic profile of the woman who devotes herself to multiple occupations to try to compensate for the paucity of the household income.

Throughout the country, the participatory assessments have shown that women are more overloaded than men, both in urban as well as rural areas---although the tendency is greater in rural areas. The connection between a man’s use of time and a woman’s across the profile of daily activities shows for the village Ndedu that the woman has many more responsibilities than the man. She gets up an hour and

a half before the man. and has less time to rest than the man. (APP Report, Territory of Dungu, Pages 54-57, Province Orientale.)

Whatever the environment, in addition to the production activities meant to be assumed by families, the domestic burdens associated with the absence of equipment and basic infrastructure must be added. In rural areas, the tasks of fetching water or firewood and various household task forms an important part of the daily work of women. In town, the working woman must still carry out her household tasks. In order to do this, she gets up at 5:00 AM.

In urban areas, women devote themselves to certain lines of work in order to make up for the low household income. This is despite the multiple domestic tasks that they are called upon to accomplish each day.

In Kinshasa and in the province of Bandundu, for example, the “Kipupula” mothers (in other words those who live from gleaning), place themselves at the service of others who collectively purchase a bag of manioc to share. In return, they have the right to gather the grain and leaves that fall to the ground are normally left behind. Thus they say “the women who perform the sharing between the buyers of manioc, corn, and peanuts are themselves paid with whatever has fallen on the ground”.

In Katanga, the “Salize or Nkwanda” women are women paid by merchants of precious stones. These women transport around 100 kg of "heterogenite" products to sift through and clean at the water source. (Report of the town of Kolwezi, Page 58, province de Katanga)

- **The development of child labor.** The participatory poverty assessment participants report that the development of child labor is now standard throughout the country to make up for low household incomes. Children are more and more substnatial contributors to household budgets.

For example, the low household income situation has been brought about a series of jobs carried out by children. A community in the territory of Kiri in the Bandundu province reported that the Bantu and pygmy students make adobe bricks to sell to builders. In addition, in the Plateau district in the town of Mont Ngafula in Kinshasa, one child declared: *“To survive, I do odd jobs, I chop firewood, I work as a porter, I wash laundry for the students.”*

In the town of Kolwezi in the province of Katanga, the people report households that survive based on the contribution of all members. After school, the children must spread out to fend for themselves so that in the evening they can have a reasonable amount to eat.

The people consulted told of some lines of work created by children. They evoked the following examples. “Kolo-kolo” or the “kingolo-ngolo”: is a form of low-paying, temporary work that allows the worker to support themselves on a daily basis. This category includes: selling water, transporting baggage... (town of Kikwit/ province of Bandundu). Another form of the children’s work that was

cited consisted of “doing odd jobs” that is to say looking after the students by doing their laundry, their dishes...

- **Prostitution as a result of low household income.** The Participatory Poverty Assessment report shows that prostitution is growing in urban and semi-rural areas. This tends to become an activity that generates income from which households supplement their budgets. In the Matonge II district in the town of Kalamu in Kinshasa, for example, one girl in the street declared: "*Our parents send us into the street to look for money to supplement our family income*".

Farther away, in Kasai Oriental province in the territories that experienced the war, the people have found the presence of military associated with the parties in the armed conflict to be beneficial. The PPA report shows that some families in the district, having learned that the military associated with the warring parties during the war were paid in foreign currency, decided to use their daughters as sources of income through prostitution. (PPA Report, Ntsinga district, Kasai Oriental province)

- **Begging and falling back on social nets** were also cited by the people as manifestations of low household income. Some communities in Orientale Province said that they live from *begging and offerings.*, because of their low household income. (APP Report, town of Kisangani, Page 50). In another town in the south of the country (Matadi in the province of Bas-Congo), the people---especially the retirees and senior citizens--- say they have not received their allowances in years although it only represents \$6 every 3 months. (PPA Report, town of Matadi, Page 34).

Besides begging, the people in some territories reported resorting to social nets as a palliative measure to the low income of Congolese households. They organize themselves into associations and are members of charitable movements. For example, the testimony was made by several communities---notably that of Kolwezi in the province of Katanga---that those who live from begging have now organized themselves and formed an association (PPA Report, town of Kolwezi, province of Katanga, Page 53).

- **Multiple jobs.** When the husband is a civil servant, in view of his low or sometimes totally absent income, he tends to fall back on agriculture so his family can live. Generally, however, it is the wife who is in charge of the plot. In Bandundu, for example, the teachers practice agriculture in order to supplement their income but the assessment reveals that it is the women who are the workforce. For example, Mr. T.M, a teacher says he is a farmer. To supplement his meager income, he goes to the field in the afternoon after school, weekends and holidays. However, it is primarily his wife who works on the family “plot”.

The situation becomes clear if we refer to the case of Mr. K. M., a teacher in a grammar school. He teaches morning and evening, 12 hours a day. In view of the meager income his work as a teacher provides, he has a farming plot on which he produces corn, manioc and sweet potatoes. This farming completely meets their needs for manioc even if they must occasional buy corn during pre-harvest times.

In light of the 12 hours that he spends at school, it is his wife in particular who does the work. He said the income earned from teaching can serve another purpose.

## Problem 6 : Unemployment

The participants in the participatory consultations noted that unemployment is one of the major problems of poverty in the DRC. They observed several manifestations of and causes related to this situation.

### Illustrations of the Problem.

The results reached by the PPA show that unemployment is characterized by:

- Low number of job vacancies
  - Underemployment
  - Underqualification
  - Idleness
  - Hidden unemployment
  - The loss or lack of means of livelihood
  - Entrepreneurial spirit
- **Low number of job vacancies.** The low number of job offerings was listed among the manifestations of unemployment in the DRC by the individuals and community groups that took part in the participatory consultations. The situation of economic crisis spreading across the DRC and the post-conflict situation in which the country finds itself has placed it in conditions where the economic operators find it difficult to operate and invest.

The people deplore the very low presence of companies in the country. Companies are rare and the few that do exist do not respond to the demand formulated by the large majority of the active population. For example, in the town of Lubumbashi in Katanga, the small mining companies who have recently evolved prefer to hire day workers for US\$ 2 than full-time regular workers on salary. (PPA Report, town of Lubumbashi, Page 20, province de Katanga)

- **Underemployment:** Due to the evident scarcity in job opportunities, a good number of the active Congolese population is under-employed. A large number of people have said that they do work other than that for which they were trained.

For the majority of cases, the formal training curricula given in schools, do not serve well in practical life. Throughout the country, numerous illustrations have been given. One case in Kinshasa is illustrative. A resident in the Pinzi district in the township of Kalamu is similar to that of many others. He says he has now become a photographer. His original training however, was to be a customs officer. (PPA Report, Pinzi district, Page 20, town of Kalamu, Kinshasa).

- **Under-qualification.** *Some people devote themselves to work for which they have not been trained.* Several communities that took part in the participatory consultations evoked many cases related to under-qualification. Due to the low

number of job opportunities and the qualifications required, there is no correspondence between the training curriculum followed and the job profile that is available. Many illustrations of this have been cited, especially in rural areas where there is a clear shortfall in terms of human resources.

*The public administration that employs the majority of the population remains the typical model where the expression of under-qualification is only too obvious, according to the people who took part in the participatory consultations. Many communities have cited this situation both in urban as well as rural areas. However, the trend is more apparent in rural areas.*

The educational requirements are exempted in the absence of competent available resources. For example, within the country, recent graduates in the humanities (level D6), regardless of the discipline followed, become teachers, whether in the same schools where they completed their studies or elsewhere. According to these new teachers, it is an everyday occurrence to find themselves teaching lessons even where there are evident gaps in their knowledge. .

- **Idleness.** The unemployment that affects a large part of the active population forces it into idleness. This state of idleness has been described in terms of a lack of paying jobs during the day. A good deal of the active population, especially in urban areas, devotes itself to card games, women, dice. For entire days, the active population, particularly the youth, spend time in unimaginative discussions of music, politics and sports.
- **Hidden unemployment.** Work is an occupation that allows a man or woman to use their faculties (aptitudes and abilities), then pays them and confers respect within society upon them. However, in several cases cited by the people, the working conditions leave a great deal to be desired. For most of the workers in the case of civil servants, the PPA report shows that many live on hidden unemployment. **They have 8 hours of work but not 8 hours working.**

This situation has been brought about as a result of the low level and irregularity of the salaries. The civil servants find other jobs to supplement their principal work. Even in the case where they remain at service, they twiddle their thumbs during working hours; others however spend less time than planned at work, a situation that lowers their output even further.

For example, in the province of Bandundu, the teachers divide the day's working hours between chalk and hoe. There are many teachers who practice agriculture in order to supplement their income. Mr. T.M., who is a teacher, says he also works as a farmer in order to supplement his low income.

In Kasai Occidental in the territory of Dibaya, the civil servants said that they turned to agriculture following a delay in payment, which is besides paltry (6,000 FC, around US \$13). (APP Report, Territory of Dibaya, Page 45, Province of Kasai Occidental)



- **The loss or lack of means of livelihood.** The DRC is a country that finds itself in a post armed conflict phase. In such an environment, some companies have paid the warring factions and continue to operate. But other informed investors have reservations of becoming involved in an environment where the climate for business is disreputable. The people are the first victim of this situation. The internal displacements and extortion of men in uniform to which the people were subjected has made them lose or lack their means of livelihood.

Many farmers said they have lost their ability to produce. One livestock breeder and farmer from the village Hehu in the province of North Kivu declared: "Before the war of 1996, I produced 45 tons of potatoes. Now (after the war) I am only able to produce 4 tons, which forces me to buy the stock that I am lacking from other farmers to sell in Goma."

Other similar cases were also evoked by the people. They concern notably the lack of means of livelihood. In the territory of Moanda in the province of Bas-Congo, the people report of families of 7 who are sometimes living on 350 FC (less than \$1) a day. (PPA Report, territory of Moanda, page 19, province of Bas-Congo.)

The loss or lack of means of livelihood as an expression of unemployment in the population has led to the development of several expressions in the daily language. In Kinshasa and beyond, the expression "to make the 11 line" means to go a long distance on foot because of a lack of money.

In Bandundu Province, a much used acronym---"SOPEKA"---means in lingala: "Sombela ngaĭ, Pesa ngaĭ, Kabelā ngaĭ". This translates to : "Buy me, give me, offer me" and refers to a person with little money who begs for everything. (PPA Report, territory of Inongo, page 6, province of Bandundu).

## **Problem 7 : Erosion and desertification**

The problem of erosion is phenomenon that affects a good number of people in the provinces as well as in the cities and towns of the DRC.

The erosion is most pronounced in the towns and provinces whose geotechnical morphology of the soil is argilo-sandy with a predominance of sand, erodible soil in the proportions of 65 to 85. Because of these parameters, erosion is observed more in the following provinces: City of Kinshasa, and the provinces of Kasai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Bandundu, South Kivu, Equateur, and Orientale.

### **Illustrations of the Problem**

Most of these towns are characterized by two types of districts. The first is people of high standing and wealth, with a lower population density and endowed with infrastructure and well-suited assets. These districts are often located in areas where the phenomenon of erosion is less. Its population is composed of people with a consistent income.

The second type of district are those with a high demographic concentration which are poorly urbanized and have no basic infrastructure and assets. They are located in non accessible zones, or hilly, high-risk and steep-sloped areas. This population has a low income and is confronted with the problem of erosion, causing property and bodily damage.

For example, in the Lombo district in Opala in Orientale province, people worry about the proximity to the river during flood season because certain houses collapse easily with the rising waters.

In Kinshasa, on resident reports: "I live along the Makelele River. We live in a very dirty place with no toilet. Since we were experiencing desertification at the time of the overflowing of the Makelele River, we have never been relocated to another site".



## Problem 8: Insecurity of people and property

The problem of insecurity of people and property is increasing all across the Republic and plunges the people into poverty and uncertainty. This problem has become national but is experienced differently from one area to another. Insecurity has settled into Maniema province, North and South Kivu, Equateur, and part of Katanga as a result of long-term armed conflict. But the other provinces are not excluded as the entire country suffers from bureaucracy, crime and murders caused by poor governance.

### Illustrations of the Problem.

The aspects of the insecurity that are raised by the people are:

- Bureaucracy
- Crime
- Sexual violence
- Displacement of the people
- Loss of property

The insecurity that has taken over the country has affected many people. Also, it must be noted that the most insidious aspect of this situation touches the human rights that are not respected---people are killed, raped and even reduced to slavery---but at minimum losing their home and sometimes their families.

- **Bureaucracy:** The militia and Government officials place barriers on the roads, while multiplying taxes and thus extorting the people. The soldiers not only extort money and property but they also inflict forced work on the people. For example, the insecurity created by the militia living in the airfield in Lukenu with their imposed work of transporting heavy packages forces the people to live every day in the bush, only able to return to their respective homes at night". (Kasaï Orientale).

In the case of a dispute, the judiciary process is not taken into consideration. There is no longer a summons or order to offender, the people are immediately handcuffed and taken to the jail. Before having a chance to speak for himself, the accused pays a fine of 1500 FC, commonly called "ya makolo" or "for the feet", in other words paying the police for their trouble to come and put the person in jail.

It must also be noted that the Government believed they had made the people safe by employing many police officers. However, since these police were poorly paid, they themselves became harassers. So, there are complaints throughout the Republic that the police arrest the people late at night and rob them. .

- **Crime:** The more the level of poverty increases, the more crime and murders increase. Armed groups (military and civilian) form militias and terrorize the

people. Many community members lose their lives. Bandits force themselves into people's homes, kill them and steal their property. For example, one widow and mother of 5 children reports: "with the insecurity in the village, my husband has been killed---and they cut off his tongue and his penis". (MOBA Territory, Katanga Province).

- **Sexual violence:** One of the salient effects of the insecurity in Congo is the sexual violence inflicted---especially on women. It promotes the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and the spread of HIV/AIDs---and even imports diseases that did not previously exist in the country. The case of the "cornflower" disease, a STD which pierces the sexual organs of men and women called "MANTEKA", introduced by the Rwandan soldiers. The number cases of raped women (girls and nuns) with HIV/ AIDS leads one to hypothesize that this disease is often spread through rape. For example, screening of nuns raped in Kananga revealed high numbers of positive HIV tests. (Kasaï Occidental).

This violence is sometimes carried out without even the most elementary notion of modesty. One woman from Kinshasa lamented the fact that she was raped in the presence of her children:

- **Displaced populations:** The people find that the war has worsened or even increased the level of poverty because houses have been burned, ports have been destroyed and people have been massacred and relocated. Many people find themselves with no housing or still in refugee camps.
- **Loss of property:** This population---which leads a forced nomadic life---finds itself deprived of everything and has lost its riches, because it is difficult to flee with all of one's belongings. Even those of the wealthiest status are not immune. The soldiers from all sides loot everywhere. Mme Y.O., a storeowner in the territory of OPALA in the province Orientale, says: "Before the war, I sold cooking salt and textiles in Kisangani and returned with white rice or the paddy rice of Opala. With the AFDL and DRC wars and the drop in business, I became a pharmacist so that my family could survive. But tThe DRC soldiers looted my cars and devastated my hotel".

This situation is similar in all of the territories that have been touched by the war. But in the urban areas and areas unaffected by the war---more specifically in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi---theft is usually carried out by young people who steal people's property. Here is what one woman from Kinshasa had to say on the subject: "I was a victim of violence on the part of the "bana mbwengi", and this was in the presence of police officers. The men stole my jewelry and my cell phone. They pushed the women in the market and pulled off their wigs".



## Problem 9: Rights of women violated

The violence inflicted upon women is one of the 11 problems cited by the population consulted. Some PPA participants observed that women are victims to various degrees throughout their entire lives. In many respects, this violence constitutes both a flagrant violation of the rights and freedoms of the people and an obstacle to equality, justice and peace -- all of which are conditions for sustainable development.

### Illustrations of the Problem

Women experience this violence in different ways and it is manifested differently according to the following characteristics: marital status, access to resources, decision-making power, violence, inheritance, income-generating activities, aspirations of the woman themselves

- **Marital Status** situates a woman in a particular network of social relations, thereby determining the status of a particular woman. This status is defined by the following:
  - i. Choice of husband
  - ii. Forced marriage
  - iii. Polygamous marriage
  - iv. Monogamous marriage

Early marriage: Custom requires the young girl to marry fairly early, sometimes at age 14, usually under the influence of the parents or some other person, such as the religious leader, who chooses the spouse. The girl is not free to express her opinion. She submits to pressures that define the value of the woman by her role as homemaker and procreator. Early marriage is also a way for the parents to provide for their needs and this perpetuates itself in the in-law's family which judges the girl according to her ability to carry out domestic tasks that, in the majority of cases, will fall upon her.

*"At Kolwezi in Katanga, one prefect from the Kimbanguiste Institute finds that the education of girls is a problem: The marriage of a young girl constitutes a relief for the family overburdened by the number of children. The girls are married immediately, even if they are in their final year of school".*

Forced marriage is often manifested by retro cultural customs. It is a sham form of marriage where the young girl is officially the wife of her grandfather who can thus give her away to one of his nephews, whether already married or not. *This practice ignores the consent of the girl and is particularly common in Bandundu province, also called KITWIL primarily among the YANSI.*

Polygamous marriage comes from the custom which institutes the husband as the head of the household, with a strong domination over the woman. He will get involved in any marital relationship that increases his power and wealth, thereby weakening the position of the woman in such a relationship. Women remain subjected to the effects of these customs that organizes this type of marriage with woman as commodity. In these situations, with regard to inheritance, the woman nothing after

the death of her husband, and is denied in many other aspects of family and marital life.

For example, in Orientale province, PPA participants observed that the women in the polygamous household are a source of labor and wealth, and are the most active producers in the household. They have the tendency to be exploited by the husband who steals the goods produced and the money to use as he wishes, even if it is to take another wife. As another example, an electrician in the D.D. district in Kinsenso in Kinshasa reports: "I have many wives to satisfy my sexual and other needs."

Monogamous marriage is the most widespread and is preferred over the other forms of marriage for most women. This is despite the fact that married women are often victims of marginalization and social exclusion. It is interesting to note differences between Pygmy and Bantu women. The married pygmy wife bears the weight of poverty as much as the Bantu woman. She takes on the same domestic burdens but, at the same time, she can speak up to her husband, and if she so wishes may drive away him away from the marital home.

- **Access to resources.**

Land.

Women are not landowners. They make use of the land, which is the property of her husband's tribe or the private property of her husband. Women sometimes travel long distances to use a small portion of land that they rent because of a lack of arable land around their villages available to them. For the most part, the land belongs to the tribe. So, it is rare to see one tribe invade the land of another tribe without fear of setting off an inter-tribal war. Women may possess certain goods, which are--as a matter of priority---fields, livestock, money, houses and sometimes a means of transportation for the women in urban areas.

*In Karangara in North Kivu, it is reported that "women may not own land or livestock. Men are the heads of households. They are the owners of the family property (land, animals...)."*

Division of labor This is one of the factors at the root of the destruction of the social relationship between the two sexes in the household and in the community, depending on whether they live in a rural or urban area. It is however, most pronounced in rural areas.

Women establish a difference between the activities they undertake during the rainy season and the dry season. Women in rural areas travel long distances to draw water and gather firewood in the dry season. In certain areas, they stock wood during this season to be spared the task during the rainy season when the fieldwork is very intense.

Women devote 15 to 18 hours a day beginning at 5:00 AM until 10:00 PM keeping house, preparing meals, working in the fields with their babies on their backs, foraging, harvesting, fishing, making baskets and pottery, and of course caring for the children.



Table 2.1 Daily rural activities, Kasai Occidental, PPA.

		<b>Man Civil servant and unemployed</b>	<b>Rural woman and resourceful</b>	<b>Young girl and young boy</b>
<b>Time/work</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sweep the plot;</li> <li>- Bathe, prepare documents and go to work</li> <li>- Leave (go to town).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4:00AM, get up, pray and go draw water in Tshwenge, bathe and at 6:00AM, get ready to go the field.</li> <li>- 5:00AM, get up, pray, go look for water, wash dishes, sweep the house and go look for produce (I have a restaurant).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6:30AM get up, brush teeth, wash dishes, wash off and at 7:00AM go to school;</li> <li>- 6:00AM get up, brush teeth, have tea and go for a walk.</li> </ul>
	<b>Midday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At work;</li> <li>- In town.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the field</li> <li>- Prepare to food to sell, serve the children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12:00PM return home to rest, go to the market and do homework/chores;</li> <li>- Play soccer.</li> </ul>
	<b>Evening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return home, wash up, eat and make love to the wife</li> <li>- Go to services (religious), sleep and entertain the wife.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6:00PM return home, make dinner, serve the father and children, go to prayer, 22:00PM sleep.</li> <li>- 6:00PM wash, 8:00PM serve the father, 10:00 PM go to sleep and if possible, make love.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5:00PM rest, eat, draw water and sleep.</li> <li>- 5:00PM rest, eat, draw water and sleep.</li> </ul>

In urban areas, women work less than 15 hours a day because they do not have the same daily workload as women in rural areas.

Table 2.2 Daily urban activities, Kinshasa / PPA / Town of Lemba.

		MORNING	MIDDAY	EVENING
<b>WOMEN</b>	<b>Household help</b>	6h00' : - Wash dishes - Prepare tea - Get the children ready	Years old occupation]]]	18h00' : - Bathe the children - Wait for papa - Go to the market - Get ready to eat 17h00' – 18 h00' - Serve the food and eat; - Go to bed.
	<b>HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD</b>	- Take care of the children - Clean the house	- Go to the market - Cook	- Check the children's homework - Pray together - Make the bed
	<b>WORKING WOMAN</b>	- Bathe - Break bread - Spread out the bread - Prepare tea - Go to work - Pray	14h00' : - Return to the house - Cook - Wash the laundry	Go to bed
	<b>MERCHANT AT THE PORT</b>	- Pray - Wash dishes - Leave tea money	Send money for food.	Eat and sleep
<b>MEN</b>	<b>HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD</b>	6h00' : - Wake the children - Bathe - Serve the tea - Send the children to school 7 :00AM: Leave the house for the office	- Go to town - Return to the office - Leave the office to stroll around the district.	Check the communication notebooks - Monitor studies at the children's home. - Go to bed

*Income.* This situation concerns women who have a paid job outside of the household. The most impressive fact to come out of the participatory consultations is the extremely low income of the majority of women questioned. Most of them earn so little that they can not make ends meet. In these conditions, they remain very dependent on the income of their husbands. This dependence is often at the root of the violence described earlier, such as beatings and injuries, abusive remarks, or the prostitution of young girls. However, the female heads of households seem to have somewhat better incomes because they are spared the violence and have no husbands who can control their income.

*In Orientale province, in the territory of Dungen, participants reported, "Women have the same level of access as men to the economic sector, but they do not succeed like the men, especially because they under-estimate themselves. If a woman is married, she may actively pursue income-generating activities but the man has the last word."*

Employment. The point was raised that custom authorizes the woman to have paid employment when it is accompanied by the express consent of the husband for the married woman. Part of this agreement means that the husband manages the money that the woman earns while working. This money management is usually handled by the man alone, or sometimes the woman is given a small amount for herself. Working conditions for women are not regulated according to established rules. Rather than the eight hours per day, women may work more than 15 to 18 hours per day. Regarding work at night, women make no distinction regarding their age and abilities. Work forbidden to women includes regular manual transport of dangerous and unsanitary cargo such as the underground work of mines and quarries, of factories of explosive substances, etc...

Women often suffer sexual harassment at the work place. Some examples: "In the Kimbondo district in Montngafula in Kinshasa M. reports: "I was the object of sexual harassment and I had to quit". In the Kikimi district in Kimbaseke in Kinshasa, W. states: "I was contacted by a man from the PPRD (a political party) who wanted to recruit me into the party but before being accepted, I had to have sex with him.

And finally, women are also the victims of salary discrimination. In Dibaya, Kasai Occidental, PPA participants observe: "In the city of Tshimbuu, women are hired by boutiques and Ngo's but are payed less well and are expected to also informally act as cleaners and janitors.

- **Lack of Decision- Making Power.** The impact of cultural and traditional practices on women is very strong. This begins from birth and continues in the life of the little girl who grows up with the idea of being inferior to boys. Some of these attitudes and practices that debase women are highlighted below:
  - The birth of a son is a joyful occasion while that of the girl passes unnoticed and even with spite if there has been a series of girls. This is due to the fact that the boy will be able to help the parents later on and the woman will marry. They do not have the opportunity to continue their studies.
  - Women are sometimes prohibited from doing certain things because they are not equal to men. Women cannot share the same meal with their husband or other men at the table and sometimes they do not have the right to their husbands' leftovers. Often they lower themselves by consuming the leftovers from the table or the bottom of the pot.

In some villages, the girls or the women offer hospitality to an influential man traveling through who the village chief has ordered to spend the night with them.

- **Sexual Abuse and Violence.** The war has caused much damage through rape, aggression, carnage and massacre of women. Because of their motherhood role in society this aggression has made the country itself more fragile. But it has also further weakened the already secondary position of women in society and culture. As a result, now several forms of traditionally sanctioned violence against women interact with outgrowths from the violence of war.

*“Lévirat”* : A form of violence that authorizes a man to inherit the wife of his deceased brother and to raise his children. It does not give the wife any freedom of choice and also likens her to the property left by the deceased. It is a practice that also promotes the spread of HIV/AIDS. Because the woman has been obliged to accept this custom out of fear of death as well as belief in the custom itself, women are only now beginning to speak out.

*“Sororat”*: A form of violence that authorizes a widowed man to inherit the sister of his deceased wife in accordance with custom without her consent. This practice promotes the spread of HIV/AIDS.

*Gang Banditry*: Expanding numbers of ‘gangs’ have developed as an outgrowth of war and are at the root of many of the most devastating forms of violence toward women. These are the hardcore groups who will rape women in front in the presence of their children, and encourage widespread looting and destruction.

- **Inheritance.** After the deaths of their husbands, widows involved as PPA participants said they were deprived of all of their belongings at the time of arrival by the family of the deceased. In certain cases, the orphans are treated in a similar fashion.

One widow, whose father was an important chief, declared: “The custom is degrading with regard to our daughters because they do not have any right to their father’s inheritance. They also do not have the right to succeed him.”

- **Income-generating activities.** Women in rural areas work in the agriculture sector growing food crops. They are also responsible for selling and trading these harvested agricultural crops and food products. They sometimes sell straight from the fields, or they transport them to the town center. However, most of the products (oil, fish, corn, manioc, rice, beans are generally sold at a paltry price.

In urban areas, women undertake various trade and service activities. For example, the following activities are popular: lunch counters to provide meals to travelers, dress shops and hair salons, candy shops, bakeries and even carpenters’ workshops.

- **Women’s Aspirations.** Women clearly aspire to have the right to manage resources and to participate in political decision-making. But cultural, institutional, and legal barriers are so numerous in the DRC that the power-holding members of the community continue to doubt the capacities of emerging female leaders.

Control of resources. Women carry out activities that produce resources for them and do not have the ability to control their use because, since they are dependent on their husbands, they must make proposals for the allocation and control of his]]] resources. The husband has the last word in the decisions on the farming income, the husband's salary, sometimes the woman's and the name to give children, especially the first three born. For example, in Dilolo in Katanga, someone reported: "Women may not have monetary or non-monetary resources. She produces, the man keeps and enjoys the fruits the woman's labor. He manages everything."

Political power. Women are subjected to the attitude that they are not able to manage anything public. This attitude is sometimes fed and perpetuated by the woman herself. The lack of solidarity between women in elected positions where a lack on confidence in women by women has been noted. The fact of requiring women to obtain express authorization from their husbands before applying for a paying job limits their position and forces them to resign themselves.

Finally, women suffer from ignorance of their own rights and the low level of education that would allow them to access resources and positions of responsibility.

## **Problem 10: Exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups**

PPA participants understand through experience concepts of exclusion, marginalization, and vulnerability. One group gave the following definition: "vulnerability is the state of a person who needs help from outside in order to live. It is the state of all people who lead a life of dependency after having been victims of a trauma from an illness, a random accident, a drug overdose or a natural disaster."

The degree of sensitivity to the effects of trauma depends on the individual or family's capacity to avoid or minimize the consequences. The poor and extremely poor are particularly vulnerable because they have few means to manage these risks. These same people are also most exposed to risks due to natural phenomena (volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts, etc...) or to those caused by man (war and violence). In addition, deterioration in their living conditions, even if minimal, can be catastrophic.

### **Illustrations of the Problem**

PPA participants explained how vulnerability manifests itself, and how trauma and shock of unanticipated events is further intensified through marginalization and exclusion.

- **Children in difficult family situations.** Children experiencing a breakup of the family are sometimes voluntarily abandoned to live in the streets of the larger cities and towns, or they are left with families who cannot provide for their most basic needs. A young child from Lubumbashi tell us: "My father made my mother leave our house, and his second wife came to live with us. My step-mother never liked us or loved us. She would tie us to chairs and not feed us. We escaped from our house and went to a religious center. Now we are safe, but we don't want to return to our father's house."
- **Children soldiers.** Scores of children have been forced to associate themselves with armed forces and militia groups. Most were recruited against their will. Some have lost lives in combat, and all who are with us now have had the experience of watching their compatriots die. This experience of killing and murder has robbed each of their childhood. At this moment they have no security, education, nor family to return to.
- **Children suffering the violent by-products of war.** Children born as a result of rape, often to child-mothers whose fathers are unknown, have no financial or social support for themselves and their babies. Children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS---and disabled children as well---are left to fend for themselves. Many of these children become heads of household responsible for younger brothers and sisters for whom they cannot provide sufficiently. Almost all of these children are malnourished and some begin to use drugs. Others break the law and are put into prison where they are deprived of their freedom without any access to legal or familial aid.

- **Orphan children.** Children who have lost or been abandoned by both of their parents and even their extended family are labeled *witches* by the surrounding society. For example, in Lumbashi, PPA participants heard about Marc and his younger brothers. Because their mother died they were “abandoned to the streets by their own father” , and then treated as ‘witches’ by the community.

If a surviving parent petitions, basic social services can be accessed. Otherwise, if the extended family is not able, it is often the churches and the non-governmental organizations that take these children into their care. But these church and ngo resources are not sufficient.

Thus the large majority of orphan children are excluded from society. They are, according to PPA participants, “generally unkempt with few clothes except rags, and live in unfinished houses, markets, stadiums, and abandoned car wreckages. They have no access to adequate shelter, food, education, health-care, or even shoes. They either beg or work as child porters transporting baggage and merchandise---the weight of which exceeds usually exceeds their own weight---to obtain a small income. In Kinshasa, one orphan stated, “I am an orphan. My family is scattered. I live among the porters.”

- **Child mothers.** Young girls under 18 years of age who become pregnant face an unsure future. Some become pregnant with their boyfriends of the same age; others are raped and sometimes infected with HIV/AIDS. Others are forced by their families to have relations with a selected partner, or become pregnant as a result of family incest. Some prostitute themselves for survival; sometimes even at school young girls are required to acquiesce to the teacher.

When the baby arrives the child mothers are often totally abandoned by their family and they are forced to take on a life of prostitution to survive. But others stay within the family household---but at some price to themselves and the family. With their babies comes an additional burden for the household, reinforcing the state of poverty in which the family lives. The young mothers also incur the debt of taking care of the parents in case they become ill. The young girl and her child, depending upon circumstances, are also often treated as second class citizens within the family, having less to eat and gaining less support from other family members.

- **Child workers.** In order to survive, children younger than 18 years old will work as unpaid labor for another family by cooking, shopping, cleaning, doing laundry, gathering water or taking care of their children.

Others work in petty trade to support themselves and their families. One 15-year-old boy reported: “I am sometimes forced to sell sachets to pay for my studies. One day my sister fell ill and I had to use my savings to take care of her. Sometimes, I wait for the djema (cooperation) or I transport packages to earn a little money to support my family”.

- **Refugee children and adolescents.** Children, younger than 18 years of age who have been separated from their region or even country for many reasons---notably natural catastrophes and war---are at strong risk. They find themselves in a country of asylum without adequate food, medical care and essential support to survive. They are often unaccompanied, and in the care of other responsible children, serving that responsibility themselves. They have no access to school or to vocational training, and not even any possibility of paid employment to facilitate their reinsertion.

Because of their marginalization, they are often victims of sexual violence, and exploitation. Their vulnerability to this abuse and danger is often dependent upon their age and size. These are the children who are also often the victims of arbitrary arrests and murders. Because they are forage for food in the more rural areas for younger sisters and brothers they are also often the victims of landmines.

They are, in addition, easier victims of HIV/AIDS. Some are recruited into armed forces and militia groups without their consent. Finally, they have no access to assistance for repatriation. In other words, they are not protected by any form of security.<sup>2</sup>

- **Refugees.** These groups are often rescued at the borders of neighboring countries (for example, Rwanda or Central African Republic) after being separated from their country because of war or other disasters. Because of their vulnerability they are often victims of epidemics, HIV/AIDS and sexual harassment. They have no access to healthcare or quality food. They are in search of voluntary repatriation, which is generally impossible, and in need other lasting solutions such as local integration and reinstallation in the country of asylum.<sup>3</sup>
- **Displaced.** These are internally displaced people who have fled war or other natural disasters, who are seeking refuge in calm regions. As a result, they often seek refuge in host cities which do not have infrastructures enabling the city to cope with this new situation.

According to PPA participants that had suffered displacement, “they live in hangars covered with tarpaulins, either of used sheet metal or banana leaves and have no plots of land of their own. They no longer benefit from the protection of their place of origin and are forced to live together in larger groups that provide them no privacy, thus they are miserable. They have a look of worry and despair.”

- **Disaster victims.** Deprived of property and lodging following a natural catastrophe, such as a flood or the volcanic eruption of Goma, disaster victims often live in host families. Their children, however, are not go to school.

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<sup>2</sup> Because some of these situations were discussed by PPA participants, the ‘résumé de la stratégie et des activités du HCR concernant les enfants et adolescents réfugiés / Bureau du Coordonation principal pour les enfants réfugiés, was included, September 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Idem



- **Unemployed.** Older people with no jobs and no salary or income spend their day playing “draughts” and “mangola”. They take responsibility for protecting the children when the women are searching for food, and therefore attempt to serve their community.
- **Widows.** They are responsible for the household and live from begging or work as porters. They are incapable, given their circumstances, of providing for the needs of their children. In Kinshasa, for example, in the town of Selembao, one widow expressed herself with the following: *“A poor person is someone who is lacking assistance; since the death of my husband, I am sad because there is no one who supports me. Everything is difficult for me: dressing myself, eating, teaching the children. I can't even think about it”...*
- **Single Women.** Women without husbands find themselves in difficult situations. Those that are not married and live alone as chief of household are counted and assimilated as widows within the community. For those who have who have been abandoned and have children less than 18 years of age, they are often forced to become ‘sexual slaves’.
- **Elderly.** Many senior citizens live with no support, especially those who are totally estranged from their families. Displaced and unaccompanied, these retirees are often accused of being witches. They are forced to depend on third parties, are diseased and usually wear very dirty clothes.

These elderly complain that their children who live in the city do not help them, that there is no leader in the family and they live in fear because security is fragile. In Mbanza Ngungu in Bas-Congo, for example, senior citizens complained about the fact that the child take better care of their mothers and let their fathers fend for themselves.

Across the country, the elderly expressed more confidence in Kinshasa authorities than those in the provinces or territories. For example, the retirees in Bas-Congo revealed that they have not been paid for years although their salary only represents \$6 every 3 months.

While many PPA participants and elderly spoke of the witch phenomenon---where every elderly person is considered a witch----other PPA participants worried that their communities were not doing enough. In Kolwezi, Katanga, for example, the youth of the district have complained for five years about the absence of social structures for senior citizens

**Pygmies.** Ethnic minorities were consulted during PPA consultations, particularly the Pygmies. This minority group has lived in isolation in forests since the time of their mbote (pygmy) ancestors. They live by hunting, subsistence agriculture, and harvesting wild fruits, and will sometimes work for a Bantu farmer as a farm worker. But they do not choose to live within Bantu communities.

Pygmies are victims of all types of discrimination. For example, the ‘chikwangues’ (a food made from the root of manioc) and prepared by the

Pygmies, is never bought by the Bantus. The Bantu consider the Pygmies dirty, giving off a nauseating odor, and having tails like monkeys. They are also victims of ill treatment, harassment by the police and unjustified fines. “The Bantu are always right, even if they are wrong”. The Pygmies also complain that the Bantu confiscated their arable land.

The Bantu may live in common-law marriage with Pygmy women and sometimes have children with them, but these children are never recognized by their Bantu fathers. The Bantu do not allow their daughters to live with Pygmy boys, who risk death if caught living with a Bantu girl.

- **Physically and mentally disabled persons.** People with sensory-motor disabilities are considered vulnerable, often begging and dependent on third parties, with no personal housing, no work or means of working and no easy access to basic social services. As a result of their disabled state, they are often subject to rejection. One man testified: *“People with disabilities who live in Simana Center, (a rehabilitation organization) are forced to live from begging and offerings from the town of Kisangani in the Orientale province”*.
- **People living with HIV/AIDS** and their descendents have no appropriate access to healthcare, notably antiretroviral drugs (ARV). In addition, they are marginalized and excluded from the everyday life of the community. *“People living with HIV/AIDS in Mbanza Ngungu in Bas-Congo say that they are unable to work. The psychological effects and rejection by society make them vulnerable.”*
- **Prisoners.** Prisoners throughout the country live in extremely difficult conditions and can therefore be considered vulnerable. *“Prisoners say they suffer as a result of the poor conditions of detention in Bas-Congo in Mbanza Ngungu and in the Orientale province.”*

## Problem 11: Poor governance

Poor governance is a well-known fact of life in Congo and the participants in the participatory consultations clearly paint an image of an ineffectual public administration. But more than that, the people describe a public administration that has been so eroded by violations against the fundamental rights of citizens that efforts toward social and economic development are seriously compromised from within.

The five characteristics of poor governance identified by communities throughout the country are, in order of priority, the following:

- Ineffective, unresponsive or corrupt public administration
- Harassment by the police and military
- Ineffective or non-existent judicial system
- Abuse of political power and lack of transparency in the management of the public administration
- Conflicts between the public administration and traditional institutions

In addition, three regionally specific problems were identified. They include: massive violations of human rights; the proliferation of arms; and the absence of the authority of the Government.

At the same time, community groups expressed their skepticism concerning the capacity of the government to change, despite current PRSP efforts. One village in Katanga Province, after having taken part in the PPA, put it this way: *Ngitabija mpela, tubatana nkuvu uja luja mote, lelo wadi uja mutotole'nye, wadi ujla mukibabamba'mwa?* Translated this means: *The tortoise is dancing now, but can he continue? And is he willing to take off his shell to do so?* The province of Katanga stated in its PPA report that this village expressed the doubts of the province itself. Given the similarities of description across the country concerning poor governance, it is safe to say that this doubt exists across the country. In other words there is little confidence but, never-the-less, hope remains.

### Illustrations of the Problem.

Communities approached the problem of poor governance differently. Some of them, such as Bandundu Province, were circumspect. They simply indicated that the governance needed to be 'cleaned up'. In one village in Katanga province, the people were afraid to express themselves on the question of governance, fearing retaliation after the PPA team's departure.

In North Kivu, strong emphasis was placed on the competence and attitude of the authorities. Here, the most salient cases of poor governance include: 1) poor practices in the recruitment of governors; 2) incompetence and impunity of governors; and 3) the arrogance of the governmental administrations.

In Katanga, because of weak national inputs, provincial authorities believe it is impossible to for the DRC to be labeled a 'modern state'. Instead, they have coined

the phrase *Entités Chaotique Ingouvernable (ECI) or* Ungovernable Chaotic Entity (UCE). In this situation, everyone tends to "arm themselves without government control and, at the same time, security agencies have such broad powers that they suppress every aspect of ordinary human life".

At the community level, there are 47 specific cases that illustrate the five manifestations of poor governance enumerated below. Inefficient, non-responsive, or corrupt public administration has the highest number of cases.

- **An ineffective and corrupt public administration.** In one community of the Bas-Congo, one woman explained that the oil and gas plant PERENCO-REP operates day and night, causing enormous air pollution, making the soil less fertile, diminishing agricultural production, and placing their lives in danger. Even though the communities surrounding the petroleum plant have brought many complaints to the authorities, no action has been taken by the authorities. In another part of the country, in Katanga Province, public servants in an Agricultural Program, with the cooperation of some citizens, rent out the surrounding arable land to Zambians for agriculture averaging 30,000 kwacha, or \$62.50 for their own pocket books

In South Kivu, one officially appointed local authority confirmed that she and others had paid for nominations. To be appointed Group Head, the cost is between \$500 and \$1000, while the nomination for a head of a locality requires a payment of \$50 to \$300. After the nomination has been granted, the indigenous people claim that their new legal representatives cruelly recover their payment from the local population.

It was noted that public administrators throughout the country impose taxes for which there is no explanation or bookkeeping. In Kasai Occidental, one businessman observed that new illegal taxes are imposed and deducted without letting businessmen know their nomenclature. For example, they are currently forced to pay 2500 FC for land survey services, 1500 FC for cultural and artistic services, and 1500 FC for environmental services---all of which they consider to be illegal..

In South Kivu, one peasant explained that the people must pay taxes (a maximum of \$10 to \$20) for the agricultural products that they take to the market. Another peasant in Equateur Province observes that while a wide variety of taxes are imposed, few if any of them actually reach the Government's treasury.

Women are often more severely affected by the imposition of illegal taxes than men. One businesswoman in Orientale Province estimates that 75% of her earnings is taken either by taxes, or by the intimidation of soldiers. One NGO worker observed that illiterate women pay maximum amounts because they often do not know how to read or calculate the amount of the taxes due, and are more vulnerable to threats of intimidation.

Finally, in Kinshasa, there are cases where conservation areas have been illegally parceled out to private companies; unsurveyed land (upon which nothing can be

built) have been sold; non-maintenance of routes that have been charged for maintenance; selling off of public property to fictional enterprises in the interests of politicians, etc. .

- **Police and military harassment** is commonplace throughout the country. In Orientale Province, one community told us with humor that in their village, the best known infractions are committed by hens, goats and pigs. This is because these animals are so often ‘arrested’ and taken away by the police. Others told the same story but with less humor. An elderly man in North Kivu reported that his harvest of bananas is regularly stolen by soldiers. Another village in the same province told a story of continual suffering. Even now that the war is over, there is no security and they continue to live with all sorts of harassment, including regular looting by "armed men". In another part of the country, the communities of Bas-Congo reported a growth in general harassment and violence against women by police, although they are far from scenes of war. Several communities in Equateur Province reported that the residents can not travel alone but must always be in groups. Generally, the police and soldiers are considered throughout the country to be acting with “impunity”.
- **Ineffective or non-existent judicial system.** These illustrations of poor judicial governance are found across the country according to PPA community and provincial reports. For example, in a common practice across the country people are obliged to pay the police and the local tribunal “fees” if they wish to make any kind of complaint within the court system.

The majority of more specific complaints, however, came from Katanga and Orientale provinces. One person in Orientale province observed that while judicial institutions technically exist in his territory, there are no magistrates or judges. Another person from the same province said that in their region no judicial system is able to exist. In another territory in Katanga province, the participants in the PPA concluded: *“competent judicial systems are non-existent here, with decisions regarding justice made by traditional authorities, police, soldiers, politically designated civil administrators...if there are complaints against the authorities, they use extortion against us and imprison us”*. Also in Katanga, one man observed that "the Tribunal of Peace" is known as "the Tribunal of Misfortune". He indicated that the tribunal tolerates influence peddling and that because of this “it is totally corrupt, allowing arbitrary arrests to go unchallenged, and rendering subjective, unsupported judgments”.

- **Abuse of political power and lack of transparency in the management of the public administration.** This abuse is observed in all parts of the country. Many communities reported that the absence of official documents establishing tax rates--- and whether or not they had been paid---has created a lack of transparency that has allowed the public administration to continually withhold illegal taxes. One peasant observed that the method of taxation constitutes “a robbery by the State”. In addition, due to the lack of transparency, at least one territory had not received any financial assistance from the province’s treasury for the past three years and has had to survive using only the local levies

Specific incidents also confirm that abuse of power and lack of transparency are considered business as usual. In Bas Congo, the same community that complained about officials' lack of responsiveness to their complaints on the subject of air pollution by the petroleum industry (PERENCOREP) also observed other problems. It was pointed out that the petroleum companies abuse their employees. Also, since the departure of Chevron, many private sector Congolese have been licensed by the State without following the established legal procedures, which are well known to everyone. On the other side of the country, in a large town in Katanga province, the SNEL agents organized themselves to steal a transformer from the town, explaining its disappearance under the pretext that it was in the process of being repaired. Many have remarked that the corruption and daily increases in intimidation has touched off a pervasive fear, allowing abuses of power to occur within full view and with full knowledge of everyone.

- **Conflicts between the public administration and traditional institutions.** Conflicts between these two entities are found across the country. One type of problem found is illustrated in Katanga Province, where there is conflict in at least one territory between the police chief and the traditional chief (coutumier) concerning who has the right to decide conflicts. Another type of problem is the absolute power that traditional institutions sometimes claim. For example, in one territory in South Kivu, the people said that the village chief often makes all decisions in a dictatorial manner, without consulting the people themselves or the other leaders. In one territory in Kasai Occidental, the people find themselves caught between administrations in conflict for the local royalties on the one hand, and the territorial administration on the other.

In summary, the actual practice---and even the *idea* of good governance---is still such that the PPA report from Equateur province calls it "something to explore for the future".

## CHAPTER THREE

### LIVING AND SURVIVING

Confronted with an acute crisis, the Congolese have proven to be energetic in getting involved in many creative activities, and these can be regarded as a long-term foundation for a real economy. These activities have benefitted from putting together various means of subsistence into a systemized dynamic. This dynamism translates into growth in the development of infrastructures, agricultural development, development of local institutions and associations, nature conservation and the local heritage.

For the most part, these strategies increase human and social capital on which a foundation may be laid to build a solid partnership. This chapter examines how the people have developed an effective dynamic capable of being channeled into the development program and projects.

#### 3. 1. Individual initiatives

The long economic crisis coupled with the detrimental effects of the war has had a strong influence on the daily lives of the Congolese. Despite these crises they continue to survive due to their ingenuity. This ingenuity and flexibility has allowed them to create multiple survival initiatives in order to adapt to the new conditions imposed by fast-moving multi-dimensional poverty. In other words, despite poverty, the Congolese "have refused to disappear". which translates an expression dear to the Kinosis: "Mobola têtù" .

- **Creative individual initiatives help others in a community** to survive and adapt to difficult conditions. For example, Mr. T. B. is involved in founding a community association of the youth in Kabwela in Kasai Oriental province. He is unemployed, but is the secretary for a youth group in his village, created by the youth themselves. During the past two years, they have begun the practice of fish breeding, creating 47 fishponds. This initiative keeps the local youth busy, drawing them out of idleness and making fish available throughout the region. As a result of this initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit has taken over several vital sectors. People have taken the first steps to cope with the multiple dimensions of poverty.

- **Hard-working individuals help themselves and their families.** For the majority of people, the means of existence in grassroots communities comes from day jobs, assistance from family or friends and handicraft activities. Thus, for example, faced with the lack or insufficiency of income, we have practices such as small business, selling chikwangue, braiding hair, exchange dealing, etc. The pygmies go as far as working in the fields of the Bantu to earning a living.

“There is no job hopping, there are only hopping people”, we say.

**In Bumba** in Equateur province:

“To survive, we participate in many activities such as:

- Djema (system practiced by a group of people who act as an intermediary between storeowners/salespersons and buyers. They live from the commissions deducted from the products sold)
- Handicrafts/carpentry
- Rearing small livestock and fish
- Transporting medicine
- Collecting caterpillars...etc.”

Men who have lost their salaried employment, or who are seriously underpaid, seek other methods to make ends meet. In Kasai Occidental, one man declared: *As a result of the delay in payment of their salary, which is paltry (6,000 FC or \$12), the public servants in Dibays rely on agriculture.* Another man in Kinshasa said: *faced with an insufficient salary, I threw myself into market gardening, growing pondu (manioc leaves).*

Women also have their individual initiatives, and willingly deprive themselves so that their families may survive. For example,

In Kinshasa, when the husband is unemployed, the woman guarantees the family is provided for, as one participant confirmed who said, *“My husband has been unemployed for 5 years. I am supporting the family through the hair braiding I do”.*

Mr. Y. in Kinshasa confirmed: *“I am living thanks to money from rents and creative activities of my wife who makes bread, perfume and wine after having participated in training in the parish.*

In Kasai Oriental, women sell pondu (manioc leaves) at the Lusambo market, which is located 10 km from their village.

- **Children contribute to help themselves and their families.** Children who are obliged to work are a sure sign of significant poverty, and at one level is not to be encouraged. On the other hand, children finding ways to help their families and themselves is a sign of creativity and the will to survive. In Kinshasa, two different people tell their stories.

One child attested: *“I must work to carve this stone because my parents are no longer able to send us to school because they are paid so little, or sometimes not paid at all.”* (Makelele District, Bandalungwa, Kinshasa);



One woman said: “During their vacation and free time, I use my children as workers in the fields. The income earned from these activities allows me to pay for the children’s schooling.” (Dingi-Dingi N’sese, Kinshasa).

- **Individuals resort to positive and negative initiatives.** The consultations have also demonstrated that people have succeeded in their own ways in solving the problems of access to energy, healthcare, modes of transportation, etc. To do so, they have developed a variety of practices---some legal and some illegal. To have access to electricity, for example, many households fraudulently hook into existing electricity lines. For healthcare, many visit traditional healers or buy medicine from hawkers on the sidewalk, with all the risks implied. To transport themselves from the suburbs to the center of Kinshasa many youth jump rides illegally on buses or trains. In rural areas, everyone is obliged to walk long distances, or if they are lucky, ride a velo. To obtain potable water, many households now buy small amounts in plastic bags from those that have access. Selling water, for those that have access, has become a new commercial occupation.

Across the country, numerous self-help initiatives have evolved over this long period of crisis. They include the following:

- Self-help and group work;
- Fishing and working in group fields;
- Use of the bike and the motorcycle for selling agricultural products;
- Organization of collective self-defense;
- Management of community wells that demand a toll from users to ensure their maintenance;
- Creation of village associations for assisted childbirth;
- Creation of structures for organizing communities of farmers and fishermen;
- Creation of many churches and sects, cooperatives, unions and NGOs. : (Katanga, Final Report).

A mixture of creativity and patience defines how many basic needs are met. For example, the lack of access to electricity particularly affects women who are charged with cooking the food. In North Kivu, they do not use firewood for the cooking, but instead use shoes, tires, "biritiri" (old ears of corn) or banana leaves.

Access to water is also very difficult. The people who live near water sources, such as Kasai Orientale, they will fetch water from the river itself. In Equateur, the people have access to water from wells, but they are poorly protected sources. In Bas Congo, the people use rainwater and water from rivers and ponds. In North Kivu, people get their water---always untreated---directly from Green Lake and Lake Kivu. . However, “those who are in the territory of Nyiragongo (volcanic area) have no access to any source of water. Thus the people are forced to consume stagnant untreated rainwater”.

The unavailability of water particularly affects women who are responsible for meeting the family's water needs. In the localities where there are formally managed watering points, they are usually insufficient in number. For

1. One woman in the village Mutaho said she travels 22 km to stock up on water. In these areas, they only bathe once a week.
2. In Katanga, water is sold at 20 FC for a 20-liter can at watering places where there are drilled wells.

For example, in Butembo town center there is only one managed source of water for 23,753 residents which subjects women to long waits. Many women are forced to travel many kilometers on foot to reach a reliable watering point. As a result, women may carry the water on their backs or head for 3, 4, 6 km---sometimes farther.

Resourcefulness in healthcare is a double edged sword. Lack of access to healthcare services results in the practice of self-medication. The poor people buy drugs on the market without consulting the doctor. In Kinshasa, PPA surveys indicate for households with some income, a sick person may go to the hospital and take all of the required tests, but the person herself, and not the doctor, decides what prescriptions to buy---if any---in terms of what the person can afford and how they are feeling.

**Mutual Assistance.** There are numerous cases that illustrate how survival or well-being depends on others.

In Kinshasa, the citizens of the town of Nsele said: "The parents with children, brothers or sisters in Europe, America, Angola or South Africa receive small money transfers from time to time that, for some families, represent a reliable source of income that strengthens the capital of their resourceful activities".

A woman farmer explains: "I am able to live thanks to agriculture (pondu, matembele); I also grow amaranth which makes money for me: one part is for my own consumption and the other is to sell. Before the harvest, however, I survive only thanks to the various assistance that my colleagues and friends give me".

A young girl testifies: "I was still a child when my father died. We are still living thanks to our mother. In fact, she bought a field in Bas-Congo. There she grows manioc. She sells the manioc leaves from her field. We live off of that. In addition, to add to our mother's income, my little sisters braid hair and give the money that they earn to our mother. (Kinshasa, Luyi Ngaba District)

A fisherman observes: If I catch something, I give it to my wife, so that she can invest the profit in her peanut selling business on the corner of our street (Kinshasa, Yolo South District, Kalamu).

### 3.2. Cooperative Strategies

PPA data from across the country highlights that in order to resolve the problems of access to education, access to viable employment and income, etc., people have put in place common strategies in the form of cooperatives and partnerships. These strategies combine the individual and family initiatives already discussed with the social energy of local institutions and organizations.

For example: confronted with the problems of education, many communities have taken charge of building classrooms and equipping them. In Katanga Province, women of Kibwe describe the results of their efforts: "The people built a school with one classroom for 2 primary grades (3rd and 4th), the church room also has 2 grades (1st and 2nd), while the courthouse serves as the room for the other 2 grades (5th and 6th); these grades study together during the same hours. In total, 3 rooms with 3 teachers for 6 primary classes" have been equipped. Another case in South Kivu observed, "The parents built the school, not the government. They provide the bricks (probably concrete blocks and a plank) that serve as desks".

From the same perspective, facing the multiple problems posed by lack or disrepair of basic infrastructure, the people have organized themselves. They have created organizations and associations to maintain roads, sources of drinking water, creation of savings cooperatives, etc. The following cases illustrate these cooperative strategies:

"In North Kivu", one woman reports, "the community dynamic is strong." The construction of social infrastructures (school, churches, health center and surroundings) is carried out by the people themselves. The teachers are grouped into associations for mutual assistance with the work in the fields. Grassroots committees participate in the work on water conveyance.

In South Kivu, PPA participants told of women and youth, faced with a serious income crisis, devote themselves to work as porters at the border with Rwanda (Ruzizi I and II), Nyalukemba District. .

In Kinshasa, to supplement low incomes, people have developed a system of local savings commonly called "bwakisa carte", which literally means "to throw in one's card", or place small amounts of saving in a communal system that is then periodically divided. A bread seller explained: "Part of my profits go to the card system. .This enables me to create another activity".

Others use communal strategies to meet many of their basic needs in terms of healthcare, education for the children, food, etc. At the same time, thanks to this system, they manage to improve their finances. Thus, for example, they reported "the storeowners and members of peasant associations have developed canteens and village savings banks to strengthen economic activities or support certain social causes" (North Kivu, R. Rutshuri). Vulnerable groups in North Kivu, Lubero territory also practice the canteen system and mutual assistance to fight poverty

In addition to these informal strategies that promote solidarity and mutual aid, there are several types of institutions---particularly some NGOs and churches---that assist communities to strengthen their survival mechanisms to fight poverty. Micro-credit is particularly popular with communities.

Finally, PPA consultations across the country high lighted three positive factors that will serve the nation well in its rebuilding. First, people in diverse areas expressed concern that community solidarity was diminishing, and that they were not doing enough within their own communities to care for the vulnerable---elderly people, widows, and orphans. Second, despite strong criticism aimed at police and soldiers for their harassment, and public servants for their corruption, there was also an element of understanding. For example, several PPA participants mentioned the necessity that these groups be paid a living wage so that they could act correctly. Finally, despite the large geographic distances, and cultural differences, there remained an understanding that they were “Congolais” and wished to remain so.

### **.3.3. Partnership**

Partnership assumes that an exchange takes place between equals who are working toward a common objective. As used in this context, it does not relate to form, structure or function, but rather to the terms of the balance of power. It implies the sharing of fundamental values and mutual respect. Given that partnerships are built on previous experiences, it implies/assumes reciprocal responsibility as well as the sharing of risks. It is more than a short-lived exchange. As a result, this type of involvement requires commitment and perseverance; however, when it succeeds, it produces optimal results. To get good results, honesty and self-examination are needed at the individual, group and institutional levels. Agreements of this type constitute jointly negotiated instruments of partnership, such as memoranda of understanding, business contracts, treaties or statutes.

An example of these formalized links of association was identified in Kahemba, Bandundu Province where independent bee-keepers, herdsman, and agriculturists operate cooperatively. Together, they have formed farming communes, cooperatives, associations, and NGOs for development.

This chapter has attempted to present local realities, and how the people themselves organize to fight poverty. It is important to emphasize that this description allows us to identify the different elements of human and social capital that incorporate grassroots communities and that need to be strengthened to contribute to the revival of the economy.

On this subject, the people of Bandundu, Balobo territory explain their dynamism in the following way: “Since the Government has washed it hands of us, and is now denounced on all sides, only community activism---principally through NGO and churches---can actively serve and effectively provide social services to the people.

In conclusion, these local initiatives developed by the people as survival strategies are capable of serving as a foundation for a more formal strategy to fight poverty. As Mbaya Kankwenda et al note: “while the steps required to reduce poverty are better grasped today, if there is no political will, no action can be accomplished in a sustainable manner”. Individuals and groups can do a great deal to combat poverty, but the effectiveness of their action depends on the environment created by national and local governments. Therefore, the government has a very essential role to play in the fight against poverty, by its own activity and by the influence that it has on other components of society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Mbaya Kankwenda et al. ; La lutte contre la pauvreté en Afrique Subsaharienne, et economica, Paris, 1999, 207.

**PART II**

**A POVERTY ANALYSIS**

**BASED ON THE PEOPLE'S ASSESSMENT**



## CHAPTER FOUR

### SIZE AND SCALE OF POVERTY IN THE DRC

. People's perceptions and definitions of poverty, discussed in chapter one, clearly illustrate the complexity of defining poverty and hardship. It is not just measured by income/money, or defined simply in terms of jobs and employment, and access to services. It also relates to a number of intangible factors and practices including discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion that makes some people even more vulnerable than others.

As a result of the qualitative PPA data, we now know, for example, that lack of basic infrastructure *and* lack of justice are both key aspects of poverty in the RDC. In other words, the less tangible definitions of poverty are found to be as significant as definitions based on physical /material needs.

This adds to, and complements, the knowledge from the quantitative data perspective, where poverty lines estimate that between 73% and 90% of the Congolese population are poor.(1). However, this very large *scale* of DRC poverty requires further estimation to identify poverty subgroups and the particular factors that create poverty for each of these groups

**This capacity to distinguish among sub-groups of poverty within a larger group of poor people is an important factor in the definition of an effective poverty reduction strategy.** This chapter therefore combines the qualitative PPA data with relevant quantitative data to develop effective working estimates of existing poverty sub-groups in the DRC.

#### 4.1. Key Results.

This initial section summarizes the results of efforts to estimate the size of the poverty sub-groups in the DRC. Key qualitative data was combined with existing quantitative studies to estimate poverty subgroups in the DRC, using three different methods to quantify the results. This section outlines the key results, while the remaining sections discuss the qualitative/quantitative base for all of the measurements and then give greater detail about each of the methods used to quantify results.

Initial analysis of PPA *qualitative* data made clear and interesting distinctions between types of households and level of poverty. According to PPA data, one household category is definitively poor and struggling by any standard. But these same households have a level of resilience that also makes them relatively stable. Thus, this group of households was labeled **poor but stable**

(1) There are several quantitative studies that have been undertaken in the past five years to measure poverty. They include:



A second group of households, while they remain in a familial structure, according to PPA data, are apparently suffering from a process of progressive deterioration. Their worsening circumstances were indicated in interviews and community meetings when certain families clearly detailed more fear and distress, continuing loss of social networks and personal dignity, insecurity, struggle to provide for a deteriorating family unit, and remorse that they were unable to do so, particularly in terms of providing sufficient food and education for their children. This group of households was therefore labeled **poor and fragile**.

These two sets of households fit the distinctions that PPA participants themselves had already made between the *middle poor* and *poor*. This fit of categories allowed PPA researchers to further define the people's typology found in Chapter one. The qualitative factors that described these categories were then matched with measurable quantitative factors--- such as meals per day, education of children, and overcrowding of domiciles--- that illustrated the identified qualitative differences

Three types of measurement, detailed in the following sections, were undertaken. The most useful results were found through a binary combination of the qualitative and quantitative, using 'meals per day' factors as illustrated in Table 4.1. This measurement is further detailed in the section titled '*a qualitative/quantitative measure*'. Two other measures---sectoral and multi-dimensional---are also discussed.

Table 4.1. presents the best estimate of size of poverty sub-groups in the DRC. To do so, it utilizes the definition of differing household groups as defined by the PPA data set, and compares it with a selected quantitative measure of 'meals per day' as measured by the MICS2 (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of 2001). The same measurement of poverty sub-groups should be able to be measured more precisely if the PPA definition of households is combined with the results of the forthcoming national household survey.

Knowing the size of poverty sub-groups in the DRC is particularly important for effective and successful poverty eradication strategies. As will be illustrated in the following chapters, poverty in the DRC is fairly unique and will not respond well to only a simple sectoral approach. Instead, it will demand a multiple and interactive initiative that responds to the particular needs of each poverty sub-group. The four groups of poverty sub-groups outlined here provide a base for that strategy.

**Table 4.1. Estimated Size of Poverty Subgroups in the DRC**

Population Households	Urban Percentage	Rural Percentage
<p><b>QL. The clearly <i>destitute</i></b> survive day-to-day. It includes many belonging to vulnerable groups who have been abandoned.</p> <p><b>QN. Less than one reliable meal per day</b></p>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<p>The <i>poor and fragile households</i> have entered into a process of progressive deterioration. This group will often include households who have suffered abrupt descents into poverty due to the economic crisis and war.</p> <p><b>QN. One reliable meal per day</b></p>	<b>38%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<p><b>The <i>poor but stable households</i></b> who have access to sufficient physical resources and social networks to remain productive but struggle daily to remain so,</p> <p><b>QN. Two meals per day</b></p>	<b>53%</b>	<b>62%</b>
<p><b>The ‘non-poor’</b> households can be described as those who have <i>access to financial and social resources</i> of sufficient depth that it cushions shock and provides an element of ease in daily life</p>	<b>8%</b>	<b>14%</b>

**Source:** PPA qualitative data, 2006, and MICS 2, 2001, quantitative data

With this summary in hand, the following sections describe the methods by which the four poverty sub-group size was estimated. First, the following section establishes the qualitative/quantitative base that was used for each of the measurements. Then the succeeding sections discuss in greater detail the method used, and the results. Although only the ‘quantitative/qualitative measure’ was used to actually estimate the

size of the poverty sub-groups, each of the methods add a certain level of detail that will be helpful for implementation.

In terms of specifically determining the people requiring assistance, the “extremely poor” can benefit from specific guarantees and direct assistance. By contrast, the “poor but stable” households can benefit from initiatives such as the improvement of basic infrastructures and improvements in education and health services. However, for the “poor and fragile” households, the process of deterioration must be stopped in such a manner that enables them to catch up with the poor but stable households so that the group of can more easily benefit from development activities in support of the poor. If not, these households can easily slip further into poverty.

## 4.2. Qualitative and Quantitative Data Sets

To provide a *measure* of observed poverty categories, as well as an *explanation* of these categories, both quantitative and qualitative data sets were defined and then combined in various types of measurement. First, the poverty sub-categories were established by qualitatively defining the multidimensional poverty factors at play for the different groups found in the DRC. These factors include both tangible and intangible aspects. Then quantitative and statistical measurements that match this qualitative description were used to measure or estimate the qualitatively defined categories.

**The qualitative APP data set.** During the participatory consultations, the local population analyzed their own living conditions, family situations, and what it means to be poor. This has allowed the PPA analysis to move beyond tangible aspects, to analyze the dynamics of poverty itself and to identify the households that are on the brink of certain destruction. Intangible factors that distinguish between poor but stable households and fragile households include the following:

- Loss of stability as a family unit and decreasing family authority;
- The growing decline in the social and economic quality of life for themselves and their children/
- The increasing loss of dignity and self-esteem.
- Fear of increasing insecurity

Likewise, in the PPA study, six associated tangible factors have been identified with households that are found in this deterioration process creating the household fragility. They are:

- Households capable of providing only one suitable meal a day;
- Households unable to provide primary education for their children;
- Households where the lodgings do not allow all members to sleep inside;
- Households that can only earn a minimum, but relatively consistent, income;
- Households that have no literate members; and
- Households that have no reliable access to more than one basic infrastructure service (water and electricity).

. The PPA analysis suggests that the first four tangible factors are strongly associated with the fragility in comparison to the last two, which seem to be more indirect and are rather accompanying factors.

**The quantitative household data set.** The next step was to quantify the four groups established by the APP data. They are:

- Non-Poor households;
- Poor but stable households;
- Poor and fragile households,
- Extremely poor or destitute people and households.

The statistical data set which served to quantify these factors has been taken from the MICS2 (2001)<sup>5</sup> survey. Using the quantitative data available, *sizes* of four sub-groups defined by the PPA data were estimated through use of various techniques.

The sectoral criteria in the MICS2 study that could contribute to the definition of the qualitative poverty categories are summarized and briefly described in Table no. below:

Table no. 4.2: Sectoral criteria for evaluating household poverty

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Differentiation threshold</i>	
		<i>Urban areas</i>	<i>Rural areas</i>
Food	• Number of meals per day	1 meal	1 meal
Drinking water	• Amount of time required to go to a source of drinking water	30-60 min	30-60 min
Education	• Literacy of household members	No	No
	• Children attending school	No	No
Housing	• Number of rooms	≤ 1 bedroom	≤ 1 bedroom

**Food:** The number of meals per day is an indicator of food intake. Based on the APP results, the foundation of the household becomes fragile when the function of providing meals for the family is no longer assured. In particular, inability to provide at least *one reliable meal* per day is the key differentiation between ‘poor but stable’ and ‘poor and fragile’ households. The MICS2 provides statistical measurement for the number of households able to provide one meal, two meals, and three meals per day, per family.

<sup>5</sup> The « FINDIVIDU\_MISC2 », organised by household, and while not national in scope, but covering a fairly wide region of the country, helped in calculating the indicators in this section.

**Drinking water:** An individual or household is considered to have easy access to good quality drinking water when he has on-site access to potable water or when he can access it within 15 minutes, which means that the site is less than 100 meters from their house. The threshold of 30 minutes to 1 hour characterizes difficult access to quality drinking water. According to current measurements, only 22% of the population has easy access to quality drinking water. While this criteria was used as a marker to describe overall poverty by PPA participants, it was not used to distinguish among levels of existing poverty.

**Housing:** Sleeping space in housing was a criteria used by PPA participants to distinguish types of poverty, particularly in urban areas. In the MICS2 quantitative survey, the number of bedrooms in housing reveals some differences among sub-groups. A total of 41% of the households live in one-bedroom houses. Nearly 15% of the more well-to-do households occupy houses of 4-rooms or more, versus only 2% of the poorest households. Throughout the country, households have an average of two bedrooms. If households that live in one bedroom houses are considered poor 41.4% of households (or 3460 households) would fall into this poverty category. However, while this criteria of housing and bedrooms available is one of interest to the PPA analysis---especially in urban areas---distinctions between differing household categories are not sufficiently precise to utilize it as a measure

**Education:** All of the studies that forge the link between literacy and education on the one hand and standard of living on the other hand, focus their analyses on the generalized characterization that the people referred to as poor, marginalized or vulnerable are those that have low school grade levels, low levels of education and high levels of illiteracy. But in the context of the PPA, it is the act of sending or not sending children to school that constitutes the difference between ‘poor but stable’ and ‘poor and fragile’ households. In the context of the MICS2 survey, out of 19,982 children between 5 and 17 years, 47% (or 9,386) did not attend school. Considered in their households, we found that 4,754 households (or 55.3%) have not been able to send their children to school between the ages of 5 and 17. However, it was difficult to distinguish which families sent *all* of their children to school, *some* of them, or *none* of them

After analysis, the quantitative indicator of “meals per day” was judged to be the most useful to combine with the PPA data to measure the approximate size of the poverty sub-groups. As a result the ‘qualitative/quantitative measure’ which uses only this quantitative indicator, gives the best measure of poverty sub-groups as summarized in the introduction to this chapter. However the ‘sectorial measure’, as well as the ‘multi-dimensional measure’, both give information useful for implementation. Therefore, the details of all three measures are presented.

### **4.3. A Qualitative/Quantitative Measure/**

The most useful measurement of poverty combined the most important qualitative criteria with matching quantitative measurement concerning that criteria. For APP purposes, participants clearly associated the intangible factors associated with ‘poor

and fragile' households---decreasing family unit stability decreasing quality of life, and loss of dignity and self-esteem----with their inability to provide reliable meals in the household.

This association of factors is supported by observations of other communities suffering from hunger. In several villages in Niger, for example, communities and families were seen to be experiencing increasing amounts of familial disorder as their capacity to feed their children decreased. It is hypothesized that as long the family can *reliably* provide one and sometimes two meals per day, the children remain within the family unit. But once a family can no longer provide this basic need in a reliable fashion, parental authority diminishes and family, and subsequently community, disorder rapidly expands. (See CDD Social Analysis, Niger, World Bank, 2001).

Here in the DRC the threshold of one meal per day characterizes inadequate food intake both in urban areas as well as rural areas. With this criteria: (i) productive and non-poor households are able to assure 3 meals a day to their members; (ii) poor but stable households are only able to assure 2 meals a day for their members; (iii) poor and fragile households barely manage to assure one meal a day to its members, (iv) and extremely poor (or fragmented) households have less than one meal a day.

As Table 4.3.below illustrates, the majority of households, or 88%, eats less than three meals a day. 12% of households consume 3 meals per day (especially in rural areas), 59% of households consume 2 meals per day, 27% of households consume only one meal per day and 2.4%, or 206 households consume less than one meal per day.

Table n° 4.3. Breakdown of households according to the number of daily meals

Number of meals	meal		1 meal		2 meals		3 meals		Number of households
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
Urban areas	1.7	44	38	980	52.5	1353	7.8	201	2578
Rural areas	2.7	163	22	1325	61.5	3703	13.8	831	6022
Together	2.4	207	26.8	2305	58.8	5056	12	1032	8600

Source: From Table 2.17 of the Mics2 analysis report.

With this information it is possible, as illustrated in Table 4.1, and again here in Table 4.4., to effectively estimate the proportion of population in each of the poverty sub-groups. The numbers make sense when compared to what has been observed. Quantitatively, poverty lines range, as note earlier, between 73% and 90%. This PPA uni-dimensional measurement gives a range from 86% to 92%. Qualitatively, the higher numbers of urban households in the 'poor but stable' and 'fragile' categories also is consistent with observed urban and rural realities. The relatively small population percentages in complete destitution needs further exploration, but the fact that the higher number is in the rural areas as opposed to the urban, is also consistent with observations, as well as PPA definitions and discussions.

Table 4.4 A Combined Measure of PPA Poverty Groups

Population Households	Urban %	Rural %
Productive/ not poor to wealthy Three meals per day	8%	14%
Poor but Stable/ Two meals per day	53%	62%
Poor and Fragile/ One reliable meal per day	38%	22%
Very Poor & Destitute/ less than one reliable meal per day	2%	3%

*Source: PPA qualitative data, 2006, and MICS 2, 2001, quantitative data*

#### 4.4. A Sectoral Measure

A second and useful assessment is to use the qualitative APP criteria to select those statistical measures that the people tell us are the most important and constitute poverty. Table 4.5 below defines the five sector criteria that define poverty, judged to be the most important by APP participants.

Table no. 4.5: Definition of sub-groups of poor households.

Sub-group	Definition of sub-groups
K <sub>1</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the number of meals per day
K <sub>2</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the literacy of members of the household
K <sub>21</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the children between 5 and 17 years old who do not attend school
K <sub>3</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the number of rooms
K <sub>4</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the amount of time required to reach a source of drinking water
K <sub>41</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the distance between the home and the source of drinking water

Next, Table 4.6 defines poverty levels if each one is used as a separate measurement. As a first analysis, these results emphasize that the criteria related to housing is the one that reflects the most significant poverty dimension in urban areas with 43% of households living in one-room houses. The highest rate according to these criteria is found in Kasai Oriental province with 63% of poor households.

In rural areas, access to drinking water is the criteria that reflects the most significant poverty dimension, with 66% of households traveling more than half an hour on foot

to access drinking water. <sup>6</sup> Kasai Occidental province presents the most significant proportion of poor households (86%) while Equateur province presents the lowest proportion (59%).

Table no. 4. 6. Sectoral poverty rates

<i>Sub-group</i>	<i>Definition of sub-groups</i>	<b>Poverty rate</b>		
		<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>TOGETHER</b>
K <sub>1</sub>	Sub-groups of poor households according to the number of meals per day	38%	22%	27%
K <sub>21</sub>	Sub-groups of poor households according to the literacy of members of the household	14%	40%	32%
K <sub>22</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the children between 5 and 17 years old who do not attend school	32%	56%	48.5%
K <sub>3</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the number of bedrooms	43%	40.6%	41%
K <sub>4</sub>	Sub-group of poor households according to the amount of time required to reach a source of drinking water	26.40%	66%	51.4%

This type of poverty measurement does not give us the most useful assessment of poverty sub-group size, but it is useful to understand basic needs and sector deficits. And it can assist in setting forth achievable objectives to modify these deficits. This is particularly helpful at this point, because as noted earlier, the needs identified by PPA participants, are fairly congruent with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sector measurements such as these, however, do not allow the estimation of the real size and scale of poverty. Nor does it allow definition of different poverty sub-groups size---an essential factor for strategic planning

#### **4.6. A Multi-dimensional Measure**

A third measure of poverty is to take more than one qualitative criteria identified by APP, and combine them to take a ‘multi-dimensional’ or intersectional measurement. This measure gives interesting detail but clearly does not measure existing poverty subgroups

As noted above, inability to effectively presently provide adequate nourishment for the family and household is one of the most dominant themes. Another theme was quality of life and capacity to provide for the future. Here inability to provide schooling for children was the element most often mentioned, along with worries of security.

<sup>6</sup> The more time you spend in order to reach the source of drinking water, the less of it you are able to get and the less you meet your drinking water needs (20 liters per person per day).



Consistent with the PPA analysis, we have considered the combination K1 and K21 which associate the food intake criteria (number of meals consumed) and that of education (schooling of children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old) for both rural and urban areas. For urban areas, we have also considered the housing criteria (number of bedrooms in the household).

As Table no. 4.6 below shows, out of the 8600 households surveyed all across the country, 5056 are poor but stable based on the fact that they offer only 2 meals per day on average to their members. By combining this criteria with that of education, we found that 2,335 households (or 46% of the 5056 poor but stable households) manage to send their children to school. 54% of poor but stable households are unable to send their children between the ages of 5 and 17 to school. Of the 8600 households surveyed, there are therefore 31.6% of poor but stable households when the two dimensions are combined.

In the same manner, 2305 households are poor and fragile based on the fact that they only offer one meal per day on average to their members. Of these households, 921 households manage to send their children to school compared to 1384 households (or 60%) who are unable to do so. By combining the two criteria, there are 16% of poor and fragile households when the two dimensions are combined.

There are 207 extremely poor (fragmented) households based on the fact that no meal is certain. Of these households, 132 households (or 40%) are also unable to send their children to school. By combining the two criteria, there are 1.53% extremely poor households.

The analysis according to living environment shows that by combining the food intake and education criteria, there are more stable poor in rural areas (34%) than in urban areas (26%). However, there are more fragile poor in urban areas (21.4%) than in rural areas (14%). The proportion of extremely poor households is not noticeably different between the two environments.

Table No.4.8. below associates three dimensions of poverty for urban areas: food, education and housing. Out of 2578 urban households surveyed, 1353 are poor but stable based on the fact that they only provide 2 meals per day on average to their members. By combining this criteria with that of education, we found that 670 households (or half of the 2578 poor but stable households) manage to send their children to school. The other half is unable to send their children to school between the ages of 5 and 17. By combining the third criteria, 301 of the 670 household live in houses with less than one bedroom. Of the 2578 urban households surveyed, 12% are poor but stable households when the three dimensions are combined.

In the same manner, 980 households are poor and fragile based on the fact that they only offer one meal per day on average to their members. Of these households, 552 are unable to send their children to school. By combining the third criteria, we found that out of the 552 of the abovementioned households, 216 live in houses with less than one bedroom. This results in 8.4% poor and fragile households when the three dimensions are combined. Finally, we hardly found any extremely poor households in urban areas when the three dimensions are combined. Thus, while details are of

interest, the multi-dimensional measure does not effectively estimate size of poverty subgroups.

**Table 4.6 ENTIRE COUNTRY**

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS	FOOD		EDUCATION		PROPORTION OF CATEGORIES in %
	Criteria	%	Criteria	%	
Stable and productive	At least 3 meals per day	29%	Households	517	6,01
Poor but stable	2 meals per day	59%	unable	2721	31,64
Poor and fragile	1 meal per day	27%	to send their children to school	1384	16,09
Extremely poor (broken)	less than one meal per day	3%		132	1,53
Total households: 8600	<b>100%</b> (no's rounded)				

**Table 4.7. RURAL AREAS**

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS	FOOD		EDUCATION		PROPORTION OF POOR in %
	Criteria	Number of Households	Criteria	Number of Households	
Stable and productive	At least 3 meals per day	831	Households	459	7,62
Poor but stable	2 meals per day	3703	unable	2051	34,06
Poor and fragile	1 meal per day	1325	to send their children to school	832	13,82
Extremely poor (broken)	less than one meal per day	163		106	1,76
Total households	<b>6022</b>				

**Table 4.8 URBAN AREAS**

CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS	FOOD		EDUCATION		PROPORTION OF POOR	HOUSING		PROPORTION OF POOR
	Criteria	Number of Households	Criteria	Number of Households	in %	Criteria	Number of Households	in %
Stable and productive	At least 3 meals per day	201	Households unable to send their children to school	58	<b>2,25</b>	Households living in 1-bedroom houses	27	<b>1,05</b>
Poor but stable	2 meals per day	1353		670	<b>25,99</b>		301	<b>11,68</b>
Poor and fragile	1 meal per day	980		552	<b>21,41</b>		216	<b>8,38</b>
Extremely poor (broken)	less than one meal per day	44		26	<b>1,01</b>		7	<b>0,27</b>
Total households	<b>2578</b>							

**Other multidimensional indicators of poverty.** One study conducted in 2004 used the same methodology to calculate multidimensional indicators of poverty from the MICS2<sup>7</sup> community data. **It involved 365 villages and districts surveyed in 2001 on the conditions of access to basic socio-economic services.**

Table no. ]]] : Sectoral criteria for evaluating community poverty

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Difference threshold</i>
Food	Proportion of children suffering from weight deficiency	20
Healthcare	Access to the health center in the community or at a distance of $\leq 5$ km	Yes= 1
Education	Children who have never attended school	40
Drinking water	Population with access to drinking water	47
Housing	Proportion of permanent houses	33.3

Table no. 4.9: Indicators of community poverty

Provinces	UNI-DIMENSIONAL INDICATORS					MULTI-DIMENSIONAL INDICATORS				
	Education (S <sub>1</sub> )	Healthcare (S <sub>2</sub> )	Drinking water (S <sub>3</sub> )	Food (S <sub>4</sub> )	Housing (S <sub>5</sub> )	(S <sub>1</sub> ∩ S <sub>2</sub> )	(S <sub>1</sub> ∩ S <sub>3</sub> )	(S <sub>1</sub> ∩ S <sub>4</sub> ∩ S <sub>5</sub> )	(S <sub>1</sub> US <sub>2</sub> U S <sub>3</sub> U S <sub>4</sub> US <sub>5</sub> )	(S <sub>1</sub> ∩ S <sub>2</sub> ∩ S <sub>3</sub> ∩ S <sub>4</sub> ∩ S <sub>5</sub> )
<b>Kinshasa</b>	1.5	0	14.3	14.3	5.7	0	8.8	2.9	38.2	0
<b>Bas Congo</b>	36.8	0	45.7	13.9	21	0	25	12.5	62.5	0
<b>Bandundu</b>	21	9.5	73.7	30	63.2	0	10.5	5.3	94.7	5.3
<b>Equateur</b>	59.4	34.4	78.1	21.4	71.9	14.3	42.9	50	100	6.3
<b>Orientale</b>	59.4	28.1	59.4	17.8	71.9	15.6	46.9	3.4	96.9	0
<b>North Kivu</b>	87	31.6	52.2	10	82.9	44.4	44.4	33.3	100	10
<b>South Kivu</b>	80	36.8	50	11.1	80	15	5	5	90	11.1
<b>Maniema</b>	57.1	55.6	61.8	22.2	75	33.3	22.2	11.1	100	0
<b>Katanga</b>	65.8	10.1	45.9	16.7	52.2	38.9	34.3	54.3	80	0
<b>Kasaï-Or</b>	67.7	17.1	44.8	25	31	7.1	21.4	3.6	82.1	0
<b>Kasaï-Occ</b>	50	41.7	64	9.1	70.8	28.2	50	9	83.3	0
<b>Together</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>

41. All together, 76.9% of the communities are poor according to at least one of the uni-dimensional criteria maintained. By contrast, 3.4% of the communities are poor when considering all of the uni-dimensional criteria together. Seventeen percent (17%) of the households showed deficiencies in terms of education and healthcare while 30% of the communities are considered poor when education and access to drinking water are taken into consideration at the same time. Fourteen percent (14%) of the communities are poor

<sup>7</sup> Etude sur la réduction de la pauvreté dans les communautés de base, Ministère du Plan/SENAREC/UPPE-SRP, October 2004.

when simultaneously taking into consideration the three dimensions, namely education, food and housing.

#### **4.6. Conclusions Concerning Size and Scale**

The key results, reported in Table 4.1., provide useful estimates of the size, type, and scale of poverty subgroups in the DRC. This definition of poverty sub-groups will promote more effective poverty strategies.

The distinction between ‘poor but stable’ and poor and fragile provides important information for designing poverty strategies that work. Households that are in the poor but stable category, for example, will most likely be able to take immediate advantage of strategies designed to promote ‘poverty reducing growth’ such as better micro-credit. The poor and fragile household group will, however, probably need extra support in the form of some well designed subsidies over the short or medium term such public work programs if they are to take advantage of the poverty reducing growth strategies. If these distinctions are not noted from the beginning, there is a real danger that well-intentioned poverty reducing growth initiatives could create greater inequality and tension instead of the necessary equitable growth

Differentiation between rural and urban levels of poverty also provides useful insights. It is interesting to note, for example, that there are substantially more ‘poor and fragile’ households in urban settings, particularly in provincial towns and cities, than in rural settings. This distinction supports and illustrates the effects of rapid and harsh changes in societal structure discussed in the next chapter.

Some form of safety net will need to be devised by the nation and communities for the destitute. In this instance, it is useful to have estimates that this group is most likely under five percent of the total population.

In sum, this analysis provides useful definitions and descriptions of the poverty subgroups found in the DRC. It also provides useful benchmark estimates of the size and scale for each of these poverty subgroups. Together, with the quantitative poverty line, they provide a base for development of effective poverty strategies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DYNAMICS AND PATTERNS OF POVERTY

A successful Participatory Poverty Analysis uses its data to explain the multi-dimensional realities of poverty. It therefore explains what poverty is, the different levels that exist, and how poverty displays itself. It also explains poverty dynamics---or how poverty works in terms of force, energy and motion---and the resulting patterns of poverty created by these same dynamics.

This type of analysis is particularly pertinent when the *poverty line*, usually defined by quantitative expenditure data, delineates a large majority of the population as poor, as is the case in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The poverty line, while offering necessary information, is essentially static. This is acceptable when small poverty groups are found in large stable populations because the potential for rapid change in poverty patterns is low. Thus, relatively static analysis measures serve well. But large populations of poor people in unstable conditions create the potential for ongoing and sometimes rapid motion and change in poverty patterns, so an emphasis on analysis that tracks poverty dynamics is necessary in these situations.

Poverty dynamics analysis is also particularly important for countries that are in crisis that has been brought on by conflict or collapse of the economy, as in the case of the DRC. In these cases poverty dynamics create patterns that are usually extremely inter-dependent and inter-connected with each other and the prevailing poverty problems. These patterns tend to each strengthen the other, which in turn, often creates a marked downward spiral.

To intervene successfully in these types of situations, the poverty context must be first analyzed and understood from a dynamic perspective. From this analytical base, multi-dimensional strategies can be designed to match and counter-act multiple patterns and problems. It is this capacity to address both the dynamics and the resulting patterns of poverty at the same time which makes multi-dimensional strategies most effective.

In this chapter we therefore first consider the critical dynamics that are driving poverty in the DRC. With this knowledge in hand, /// the resulting patterns that continue to expand and deepen the poverty experience across the Congo are discussed. Analysis of these dynamics and patterns are primarily based on the information provided in chapters one and two---people's perceptions and typologies of poverty, and their definitions and analysis of eleven key national poverty problems.

## 5.1. Discerning the Dynamics of Poverty

There are three basic dynamics of energy, force, and motion that underlie and fuel poverty, suffering, and hardship across the Congo. These dynamics give DRC poverty a somewhat unique structure, and one that is essentially impervious to well-accepted linear poverty programs. // The driving dynamics of poverty are as follows:

- Rapid and harsh changes in societal structure.
- Strengthening of the abuse of power dynamic
- Inter-connectedness of key poverty patterns.

**Rapid and harsh changes in Congo's societal structure** have taken place in the last 15 years. As poverty deepened and spread due to war and the collapse of the economy, the societal structure also changed. Before these two crises appeared, the Democratic Republic of Congo certainly suffered from poverty even though it was a materially rich country. But it was a less substantial poverty, and contained in economic and social structures that most economists and poverty specialists would recognize. Those at the upper end of the scale were well-educated with professional jobs while those people at the very bottom of the scale and who were destitute, were jobless and suffered from chronic poverty for their entire lifetime. This type of chronic and destitute poverty is also often multi-generational.

This structure of poverty no longer exists in the Congo. Currently, there is a very different situation. A new category of 'poor and fragile households' situated just above those who are destitute now includes a whole class of well-educated people who have previously held good jobs. If the jobs were in the public sector, the people were either teachers or mid-level bureaucrats who have lost those jobs; or they continue to hold the position, but have lost the salary that normally would accompany such a position. If they were in the private sector, they often worked for companies in the mining industry or others that have closed their doors. Due to the cataclysmic events of the past 15 years, they have all rapidly descended into unexpected levels of poverty.

This rapid and harsh transition from a middle-class citizen and family with a fair level of economic resources to a fragile household on the cusp of further deterioration, with no salary and no resources, is certainly difficult for the families involved. And it was eloquently described by a number of PPA participants who now found themselves among the poorest in the country

But this rapid and brutal transition also has a sharp and negative impact on the society, economy, and culture as well. Economically, the consumer half of the market quickly disappeared. Politically, the citizens with some voice and possibly some clout were no longer there. And culturally, critical social enforcement of societal norms rapidly diminished. So, all of this increased poverty for the individual households



involved, but it also changed the previous fairly static poverty situation. Also, these rapid changes in societal structure have created a harsh downward spiral that synergizes a number of negative forces and gives them greater impact.

**An underlying *abuse of power* dynamic was strengthened** during this time of crisis also. As we will see in the coming discussion of patterns this abuse of power dynamic is something that has existed in the nation and in the culture for a substantial amount of time. But the combination of war and economic collapse with the subsequent changes in social structure has destroyed the structures and institutions that kept this negative dynamic somewhat in check.

The rapid and destructive changes in social structure brought about by the new poverty dynamic allowed abuse of power dynamics to strengthen. These changes in social structure had the effect of simultaneously lessening the strength of what political voice existed in the country, and at the same time lessening the strength of necessary and ongoing social enforcement of the society's principles and beliefs. By leaving the abuse of power dynamic unchecked by either cultural and societal principles or political voice--sotto as it may have been----the situation has worsened.

**The inter-connectedness of key poverty problems** has created destructive synergies that cause further difficulties and create a spiral of increasing of increasing poverty. For instance in many of the rural areas, lack of personal security makes people afraid to go to their fields and farm which means less produce to sell and less food for the household. For children this means fewer meals, lost schooling now, and less chance for employment in the future. For adults it means lost work, lost income, and more limited cash. For the family and community it means the closing of markets, increasing isolation, and fewer services.

This inter-connectedness of poverty problems as experienced by the people, paired with the two preceding poverty dynamics just discussed, leads people to place more emphasis on the intangible factors of poverty---and verbalize better their importance. They understand, for example, that lack of work and money, inability to send children to school, and lack of access to health and other services, is not just a resource based disadvantage, but goes back to the lack of security *in* their lives, and the lack of control *over* their lives. Thus, comprehending the dynamics of inter-connectedness is a key to finding transformative solutions.

## 5.2. Defining Patterns of Poverty

During PPA consultations, participants identified and discussed key poverty issues that operate in their communities, territories, and provinces. From this, eleven national poverty problems, presented here in chapter two, were identified during the national Participatory Analysis Workshop held at Kisantu in June, 2005. (See Table 2.1 for list of problems)

Based on an analysis of these national problems, five inter-connected patterns are found that support the expansion and deepening of poverty across the Congo. They are:

- Poor governance
- Unfavorable terms accorded to community economies
- Insecurity of people and goods
- Inattention to basic needs
- Marginalization and exclusion
- Feminization of poverty

**Poor Governance** is identified as a fundamental pattern that underlies the majority of the identified poverty problems. Table 5.1 below illustrates its potent impact. It was found to be a direct cause for six of the eleven national poverty problems, and was also an indirect support to the other five. It is particularly fueled by the strengthened *abuse of power* dynamic. It also demonstrates how key poverty patterns become ever more tightly inter-connected.

**Table 5.1. Patterns of Poor Governance**

National problem	Fundamental cause cited as being poor governance	Other fundamental causes linked to the abuse of power
The people have difficulty accessing basic quality social services and infrastructure	X	
The methods of communication are outdated and not very practical	X	
The people live in a state of food insecurity.		The inconsistency of agricultural policy and rural development
People and property are extremely insecure.		The weakness of the State
Unemployment has a lasting impact on the active population	X	
Poor governance characterizes the country	X	Absence of a condition of rule of law
Women's rights are violated		Predominance of tribal customs over the law
The cash crops agriculture sector has collapsed	X	
Pygmies and vulnerable groups are marginalized		Absence of a coherent social policy and reliance on outdated customs and traditions
Low household income		Inadequate development policy
Erosion and desertification of populated areas	X	

*Source. PPA data. 2006*

The negative impact of bad governance is huge and multi-dimensional. In the cases that the people have presented, six specific but inter-active patterns and impacts were identified. They are:

- Mistrust and fear of the state
- De-motivation at all levels
- Deterioration of social services
- Deterioration of physical infrastructure
- Decrease in agricultural production
- Pillage of country's environmental resources

Mistrust of the state is endemic across the country. Illegal taxation and an incompetent judiciary that is not accountable, according to PPA participants, are the primary contributors. This state of affairs is deepened to fear by ongoing police harassment and continuing, if more sporadic, use of violence by the military and militias.

This situation has created a de-motivation at all levels. There is no expectation on the part of local people that the government is there to serve them. Instead, government is described as acting with impunity against the people themselves. This creates a state of affairs where there is no expectation of services to be rendered to local people by state agencies. As a result, social services and functioning physical infrastructure have deteriorated to almost nothing.

This combination has, in turn, decreased agricultural production. PPA participants noted that they have turned away from cash cropping and even decreased food crops because of physical insecurity, illegal taxation, poor roads, and increasing time necessary to secure the basic necessities of life (water, food preparation, etc). This state of affairs has finally, created an environment that accepts and even encourages pillaging of the nation's national resource heritage. There is no expectation of rule of law across the country, according to PPA participants.

In addition, the report by the United Nations Panel of Experts released in October 2003 on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other treasures of the DRC identified three distinct groups called "networks of elites" operating activities in three different zones (the government, zone occupied by Rwanda, zone occupied by Uganda).<sup>(1)</sup> However, even with debut of the Transition period which features the establishment of a government which includes political groups and the military, the situation has not notably changed for the better.

.Finally, people's focus is further narrowed by the increasing difficulty they experience in providing even the subsistence necessities of life. Operating within such a survival context that expects no accountability, has no established rule of law, and where whatever vestiges that exist are consistently violated---sets the stage for further and greater collusion and corruption. Public officials and private entrepreneurs are able to pillage without constraint the enormously valuable natural resources heritage of the country. In sum, poor governance is an able abettor of poverty.

**The unfavorable terms accorded to local community economies** directly contributes to the strengthening of poverty dynamics and its downward spiral. These problems include:

- poor infrastructure

- food insecurity
- unemployment
- women are marginalized
- destruction of the agricultural sector
- low household revenue

Inattention to community economies is not a pattern of development unique to the Congo, but the consequent exclusion of a large majority of the population from *any* meaningful economy is. The Congo, like many governments in Africa, had placed its faith in the national or formal economy. Unlike many other African countries however, this national economy was never opened up in any fashion to the majority of the population. Instead, it was, and still is, tightly held by a closely knit group of elites which continue to follow basic patterns created by the colonial economy.

Because there was so much natural resource wealth in the country, *community economies* (often referred to as the informal sector), primarily concerned with the buying and selling of agricultural produce, as a base for further economic development, were ignored. National or provincial policies to facilitate the growth, expansion, and linkage of these community based economies did not exist. Nor was there planning, policies, and programs to provide the necessary amount of needed infrastructure to facilitate the growth of these community economies and meet the basic needs of the people.

The inattention to community economies and the lack of unaccountable government created a situation where basic infrastructure---water points, schools, health centers, roads, and markets---was not provided in any meaningful or consistent sense by the provincial governments. Because of the highly centralized nature of political power, there was also no expectation of accountability on the part of the people. Thus, lack of basic infrastructure further hindered development of community economies.

The abandonment of agriculture and the total collapse of the agricultural economy was further weakened by the secondary status of women who were the primary cultivators in the rural areas. The durable inequalities suffered by women---no control over land, the revenue of its produce, nor a role in decision-making---signals a form of *social exclusion* suffered by women that was culturally as well as politically condoned.

Certainly, the unfavorable terms under which community economies existed were due to the grievous inattention of national governments, as well as international financial and development agencies. However, the culturally and politically sanctioned exclusion of women from the community economy as independent producers with a voice to be heard was also a major factor. Using women only as unskilled labor deployed in difficult and harsh working conditions and denying them full participation, was a definitive factor contributing to economic collapse.

Because of women's economic and decision-making exclusion, the community economy had a decidedly muted voice in making its needs known. So, roads did not get repaired, harmful import policies were established, and needed technical inputs were not

considered. As a result, there was no local economy to partially sustain the national economy as it collapsed. // Now, a large majority of the population remains excluded from participation in any economy.

**The insecurity of people and goods** permeates every aspect of Congolese life. Violence and the insecurity of war have taken a major toll on the Congolese people. In the war areas and the region surrounding it, there are a number of cases citing the massacre of villages and/or the burning of the villages. Women and girls have been raped, people's arms and legs amputated due to injury, and there is a massive increase in the number of widows and orphans. The regular police and military---frustrated and angry because of no pay---have done their share to also traumatize the local populations. And a greater propensity for violence has spread throughout the country.

The insecurity has significantly diminished agricultural production. Several communities that took part in PPA consultation were very frank and open about their fear of bandits and violators who attack them on the paths to their fields. In turn, the insecurity leading to decreased agricultural production discourages merchants, and a number have closed their shops.

Decreasing agricultural production has increased unemployment and productive work thereby increasing household insecurity---not enough money to procure necessary food and services such as health, and adequate housing. All of this increases people's insecurity,

Over crowded housing was also mentioned as a cause for insecurity, particularly in the urban areas. Overcrowding is defined as having to sleep more than four people in a bedroom, but many complain about having to sleep in the living room, and/or standing up--- called the 'debout congolais'. Interestingly enough, this *over-crowding* theme was heard across the country. At first glance, it is easy to interpret this as a situation that has more to do with personal discomfort rather than personal security.

However, it can be hypothesized---and should be further explored---that this indicator has much to do with inequities within the family structure that are exacerbated as resources decrease. If the scarcity of space is considered to be an indicator of decreasing resources and inability to care for the entire family unit, then those family members that are the weakest or have the least value correctly fear separation from the family unit.

For example, while *street orphans* may certainly be children of rape, they are also likely to be voluntarily abandoned by their parents because of increasing scarcity of household resources. As noted in an earlier chapter, these children who suffer from the worst of personal and economic insecurity, also suffer from the worst societal exclusion. With no parents to support them they are labeled as *child witches* by their community.

This particularly abusive form of discrimination can, at one level, be understood as a poverty coping mechanism---the social exclusion mechanism allows the community to ignore the children's misery and their own shame. But these types of human rights

violations, when socially tolerated long enough, often energizes another round of abuse of power and negative synergies which create further calamity for the community and society itself. In all, insecurity demands a terrible price.

**A pattern of inattention to basic needs and infrastructure** is found across the country. Local people have reported, again and again throughout the PPA consultations, how lack of infrastructure affects their families and their communities in three critical ways.

The first is that it decreases quality of life to a minimum. Whether it is the rural family that cannot provide a basic education for their children because the school is seven km away in another village, or it is the Kinshasa woman who sells her personal belongings to buy medicine without having seen a doctor---the people describe a quality of life that is minimal, with hope for a better future that is receding.

The impact of poor and often times no infrastructure at all also has a highly negative impact by diminishing economic production. In rural provinces, local people report that cash crop production has dwindled to almost nothing, and food crop production has diminished considerably.

Physical infrastructure no longer provides a base for the local economy. Women, as the major producer of agricultural crops, must spend time walking long hours to procure water for their families. Once crops are produced, there is no electricity---nor non-electrical labor-saving devices---to minimize the excessive time and drudgery currently needed for basic grain and food preparation that can be used in the household or produced to sell as cash products.

Once harvested or prepared, there are few markets within which to sell produce. As local people have observed, this situation is evidently highly interactive with other enumerated problems of physical insecurity, police harassment, and a public administration that is incompetent and often corrupt.

According to the observation of many PPA participants, the impact of poor and often times no infrastructure creates and increases poverty. Diminishing expectations abound. According to one participant in Bandundu Province, 15 years ago a person of normal means could expect to build a house with several rooms, have a relatively close water supply that was protected, and be able to educate their children. Now, the best many can hope for is to have a house with one, and perhaps two rooms, use unprotected water supply, and educate one or two of their children at most.

In sum, government at all levels failed to put forth any sustained efforts to provide infrastructure to its people. However, the situation for the future is more complex. It was interesting to note that remarks on the lack of electricity, and its impact, were made across the country in both urban and rural venues despite the fact that this is usually an urban issue. One province analyst in Katanga observed however, that this concern reflects how Congolese ideas about modern society have been shaped by the large, primarily

extractive industries, whom at one time provided such services with no inputs from the people themselves.

Thus a certain perspective remains that some of these services should be provided---by the government, by the city---with no discussion as to alternatives in terms of price, maintenance, and level of service. So, the pattern of inattention on the part of the government has been most damaging. For the future, however, people's inattention---due to misplaced expectations----will also need to be addressed.

**Marginalization and exclusion** operates visibly and brutally across the country. While these actions are certainly to the detriment of its victims, they also act to the detriment of the society and nation as a whole. In this section, the patterns that illustrate marginalization and exclusion most concretely are *violation of women's rights* and *marginalization of vulnerable groups*. Both sets of these exclusionary practices are well documented in the PPA data.

This documentation also indicates, however, that these practices of exclusion are based on longstanding traditionally and culturally ratified practices of *discrimination and domination* at the societal level. To effectively address these issues, there is need for further exploration, analysis, and dialogue. But the PPA data outlines the syndrome.

A number of PPA participants pointed out their concerns about the increasing lack of care and concern for the vulnerable among them, as well as the women and children stricken and harmed by the by-products of conflict and violence. Several pointed out that these events are directly contrary to their own African principles that the community will care for everyone. Given this situation, first efforts to explain current levels of marginalization and exclusion will usually look to the recent events of war and collapse of the economy.

But just as 'poor governance' has its roots in long-standing abuse of power, so do the patterns of marginalization and exclusion. As indicated in the women's rights data and vulnerable groups data, these patterns begin with customs, cultural beliefs, and practices--including customary law and legal frameworks---which are discriminatory in nature.

They work in such a way that consign some people, particularly women and children, to a lower status as second or even third class citizen. This initial assignment then defines what roles, behaviors, jobs, or even opportunities are suitable or not. The situation thus created acts to control and usually limit the thoughts, behavior, choices, participation, ability to make decisions, and access to goods and services.

Changing this pattern requires substantial effort, but it will be key to effective poverty reduction. In a recent study entitled *Social Exclusion: concepts, findings, and implications for the MDG's* (Millennium Development Goals), the author suggests that the value of a social exclusion perspective is that it draws attention to the overlap---where it exists---between *economic deprivation* and *cultural devaluation*. It is interesting to note that both of the groups discussed here suffer from such an overlap. The author

further suggests that this dual overlap represents a “*durable inequality*” which “tends to persist over time and in the face of considerable socio-economic change”. (Kabeer, 2005; PP6-16)

Given this situation, inquiries into the nature of *exclusion* and *marginalization* in the DRC cannot be superficially limited to its obvious victims, but utilized to identify inequality and discrimination in all of its manifestations. If not pursued in this manner, the poverty analysis of *how disadvantage operates* will not be complete and these ‘durable inequalities’ will continue to operate despite other more superficial successes.///

*Violation of women’s rights*, according to PPA participants is primarily due to strong preferences and attachments for several sets of retrograde traditional customs that remain accepted and therefore powerful in the nation today. These retrograde customs established and seek to maintain divisive and unfair power relations between men and women. Over the decades these unfair customs have become systemized into operating institutions, rules of existing organizations, and controllers of the everyday activity of both men and women. Today, many of these activities are utilized without either conscious acceptance or rejection by both men and women.

PPA participants mentioned a number of indicators that attest to this current state of affairs. It is of use here in describing patterns of poverty to divide these indicators into the two inter-locking categories mentioned earlier---economic deprivation and cultural devaluation.

In terms of *economic deprivation* PPA participants point out that women have the primary responsibility for farming and food production. Despite these responsibilities, women have no control over household budgets; they do not have the right to own land; and women lack any control over distribution of food production or profit from items sold at market. Provincial and national analysts add that because of this lack of resource control and land ownership, *women’s work* and *contributions* to the family, community, and nation are essentially invisible.

In terms of *cultural devaluation*, PPA participants placed strong emphasis on the superiority complex of men, which in turn, places women and girls in an unhealthy dependence on men as husbands, fathers, and brothers. As visible indicators of this ongoing discrimination they first point to discriminatory customs that keep young girls school attendance at extremely low levels, and secondly to the low quality of education and weak instruction afforded young girls and women when they do attend. At the other end of a women’s life the traditional custom of expropriating a recent widow to become a wife of the husband’s brother so that her economic value to the family would continue was also noted. Finally, various PPA participants emphasized the very low representation of women in the institutions of strategic decision-making, including schools, local government, and national government.

The continuing primacy of these retrograde sets of behavior, according to PPA analysis has supported continuing violation of women’s rights. As a result, several consequences



were noted: (i) high numbers of illiterate women; (ii) fast increase of the HIV transmission chains; (iii) and harm and destruction to the social relationship between men and women at family, community, and state levels.

In sum, women's current status in DRC is a result of two inequalities---economic deprivation and cultural devaluation---interacting together. To change this situation and break this pattern of poverty, initiatives will need to focus simultaneously on both aspects of the identified pattern.

**Marginalization of vulnerable groups.** The DRC has many vulnerable groups for whom some form of social protection is indispensable. These vulnerable groups include: street orphans, those displaced by war and armed conflicts, children born of rape, child-mothers with no support, senior citizens, widows and orphans, people living with HIV/AIDS, single women (head of household), child soldiers and disabled persons. Minority groups such as the Pygmies are in a separate category where the protection needs may be different---for example, guarantee of civil rights and economic access. Their marginalization and vulnerability still require, however, considerable attention.

The number of vulnerable groups in DRC is particularly high at this moment for five reasons: (i) continuation of retrograde customs which are discriminatory; (ii) weak mechanisms of social integration; (iii) degradation of the socio-economic situation due to war and economic crisis; (iv) no coherent social policy; and (v) low capacity of the State to create and maintain a social protection system.

Despite the increased pressure placed on DRC and the increased numbers of people in various vulnerable groups, their situation is not solely caused by inability to provide some level of economic well-being for themselves, or the inability of government strapped for economic resources. These people are also excluded and vulnerable because of *who* they are---the sick suffering from a fearful disease; young girls who have become pregnant---sometimes through violence---and who therefore decide to ignore the rules of society; unwanted children who then band together; the old who can no longer contribute to the household and require increasing care; or the young ex-soldiers who inspire fear with their combative manners and habits.

For these vulnerable groups, the same patterns of *durable inequalities* exist---economic deprivation as well as cultural devaluation. The details may be different for each group but the results are similar. In some instances, vulnerable people may have extended families or community organizations that ensure the vulnerable person's well being and care to the best of the family and/or collective capacities. But in many instances vulnerable people are not so lucky. Many therefore become members of the poorest of the poor---the destitute.

This type of poverty pattern will not improve with relatively simple strategies or linear measures intended to address economic deprivation. As with the situation of women, both types of *durable inequalities* will need to be addressed simultaneously. To accomplish this effectively will demand the family, community, and state working

together to re-establish community standards and capacity for care. These groups that hold the responsibility must also re-enforce capacities of prevention, needs assessment, and planning that favor vulnerable groups.

The phrase, *feminization of poverty* describes the structure of poverty that has emerged over the past fifteen years in the RDC. Within each of the eleven national problems identified earlier---whether it is access to basic infrastructure, insecurity, low household income, or one of the others---women are involved in two specific ways. First, it is their responsibility to either solve or get around the problem, and second, they are often characterized as the victims of the problem's negative effects.

The impact of poverty on women is complicated by many factors, namely:

- Very little data broken down by sex;
- Poverty weighs more on women and children than on men;
- Inequality persists between men and women in terms of division of resources (human capital, productive resources and social capital).
- The increase in the number of women operating in the informal sector with little support in terms of infrastructure and no access to credit;
- The unemployment rate among women is greater than among men, with women having no access to or control over economic structures;
- Lack of matching of practices between paid work and unpaid work and in terms of equity between men and women;
- Because of hard labor, women age and die prematurely.

Congolese women, however, have not acquiesced to the expected role of victim. Instead they have taken levels of control---economic, social, and political---within the family and the community not seen in easier times. Power relations between women and men are on the table for discussion and change---even within the national Constitution.

However, the fact remains that in reality women do currently have less status and power at every level---social, economic, political, and institutional. Thus, the problems of poverty are transferred to them in unequal portions. So, the feminization of poverty does indeed describe the current structure of poverty in the DRC. However, it may also indicate the way forward---breaking those patterns of 'enduring inequalities---and adding women's force in full measure, along with men's, to the eradication of poverty in the DRC.

### **5.3. Conclusion: How Poverty Works**

Identification of the dynamics and patterns of poverty illustrates how poverty works in patterns unique to Democratic Republic of Congo. The harsh and brutal changes in social structure suffered in the DRC have created a downward spiral of events experienced by everyone. But it has had particular impact for two poverty subgroup. These include the 'fragile households' group which now includes many former members of the civil service such teachers and lower level bureaucrats. Also included in this

downward spiral are the ‘destitute’. While a much smaller group, they are evidently increasing in numbers as more of the vulnerable are left alone to fend for themselves. Also, inordinately high numbers of women are found in each of these groups.

This downward spiral is also closely related to the inter-connectedness of poverty problems, creating a proverbial vicious cycle. As a result, there is a grave danger that unless these dynamics and patterns are recognized, that many of the persons and families suffering from these more recent and brutal levels of poverty, will remain and become entrenched at these levels.

A number of multi-dimensional factors---both tangible and intangible---have clustered together to destitute already vulnerable people, and create increasing fragility in large numbers of households. These clustered patterns of poverty are made stronger and more destructive by an *abuse of power dynamic* that has been strengthened not only by the exigencies of war, but also by the relatively recent changes in social structure which leaves a social vacuum within which abuse of power has further expanded.

Longstanding cultural tolerance for unequal power relations and resulting discrimination also contributes to the maintenance and expansion of this abuse of power. This more insidious aspect of power abuse is not always recognized for what it is. However, it hinders many Congolese women and other groups that suffer from discrimination in their efforts to realize their full economic, social, and political potential. Enhanced sensitivity to the variety of power abuses at all levels will therefore be necessary to first bring it in check, and then, to dismantle it. Finally, PPA definitions, dynamics, and patterns of poverty clearly demonstrate that the “*durable inequalities of economic deprivation and cultural devaluation*” that create social exclusion and marginalization---for success---must be recognized and tackled simultaneously.

Given this poverty reality in the DRC, simple linear initiatives such as reconstruction of basic infrastructure and social services coupled with macro economic reform will not, by themselves, be sufficient for successful poverty reduction. Despite the fact that these types of poverty reduction initiatives have been implemented successfully in other countries, they are simply insufficient for success in the DRC. Poverty will remain impervious to any strategy that does not include a full and conscious addressing of the intangible abuse of power deficits side by side with the more obvious tangible technical and economic deficits.

**PART III**  
**POVERTY ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS**

## CHAPTER SIX

### Key Priorities and Strategies for Effective Poverty Reduction

The aim of this final chapter is to give the reader the tools to apply the preceding analyses. It is only through this consistent application that the Congolese people's views about their poverty problems can be at the center of national, provincial, and local initiatives to reduce and eradicate poverty. Each of the PRSP pillars must be involved in the implementation of these PPA priorities and strategies if there is to be success. They are:

- Pillar 1: Government reform;
- Pillar 2: Improvement in economic and social governance;
- Pillar 3: Macro-economic guidelines;
- Pillar 4: Emphasis on the fight against HIV/AIDS;
- Pillar 5: Community dynamics.

While the **Community Dynamics** Pillar can take responsibility for much of the coordination of PPA priorities and strategies at the decentralized level, it will be imperative that each of the government agencies responsible for pillar initiatives adopt key aspects of responsibility for implementing PPA strategies also. For example, many of the strategic and enforcement aspects concerning the abuse of power issues of poor governance and lack of security will need to be undertaken under Pillars one and two. And the strategy to successfully develop local economies, and ensure that women are included as producers should be an explicit responsibility of Pillar three.

In this chapter, five sections explain how priorities, strategies, and implementation can be established and maintained. The sections are:

- PPA analysis summary
- PPA principles to prioritize poverty reduction strategies;
- Design and implementation of PPA identified priorities;
- Participatory M&E for downward accountability
- PPA risks and opportunities.

#### 6.1. Summary of Analysis Points

Five key analyses have been presented in the previous chapters. They are briefly summarized here.

- The PPA study begins with definitions and characteristics of poverty. According to PPA participants, these center around four themes: (i) basic life needs not met;

- (ii) collapse of productivity and work; (iii) lack of peace and security; and (iv) a culture of impunity leading to corruption, injustice, and exclusion.
- Poverty subgroups were defined and described using PPA qualitative data. These subgroups were then quantitatively estimated by matching qualitative description with a relevant quantitative measurement. The subgroups are:
    1. The **3% rural and 2% urban classified as ‘very poor’** are described as clearly *destitute*, and includes many of the vulnerable population who have been abandoned.
    2. The **22% rural and 38% urban classified as poor’** are described as *poor and fragile households* that have entered into a process of progressive deterioration.
    3. The **62% rural and 53 % urban classified as middle poor’** are described as *poor but stable households* that have sufficient economic and social networks to remain productive, but struggle daily to remain so.
    4. The **14% rural and 8% urban classified as ‘non-poor’** can be described as those that who have *access to economic and social resources* of sufficient depth that it cushions unexpected shock and provides an element of ease in daily life. This group also includes those who are wealthy
  - Using frequency analysis, a total of eleven priority problems for the nation were identified from the more than fifty concerns listed by PPA participants. From *tangible* to *intangible*, they are as follows: 1) the methods of communication are outdated and not very practical; 2) the people have difficulty accessing basic quality social services and infrastructure; 3) the people live in a state of food insecurity; 4) low household income; 5) unemployment has a lasting impact on the active population; 6) the cash crops agriculture sector has collapsed; 7) erosion and desertification in populated areas; 8) people and property are extremely insecure; 9) women’s rights are violated; 10) vulnerable people are marginalized; 11) the country is characterized by poor governance.
  - Analysis of these problems indicates that there are three critical dynamics that fuel and drive impoverishment in the DRC. They are: (i) rapid and harsh changes in social structure; (ii) strengthening of abuse of power processes; and (iii) inter-connectedness of key poverty patterns. The fact that it is these types of power dynamics that drive poverty in the country and not simply the economic scarcity dynamics of embedded and chronic poverty found in so many other African countries, makes DRC poverty a fairly unique situation. More importantly, it indicates that the country will be almost impervious to normal poverty reduction initiatives.
  - These three driving dynamics create discernible poverty patterns across the country. Listed in order of sensitivity to a government sponsored national poverty reduction program, the six patterns include: (i) poor governance; (ii) unfavorable terms accorded to community economies; (iii) inattention to basic needs; (iv)

feminization of poverty; (v) insecurity of people and goods; and (vi) marginalization and exclusion. These patterns are found to be extremely interconnected in the DRC situation, and it is the intangible factors that create interconnectedness. Together, identification of the driving dynamics and the resulting poverty patterns illustrates how poverty works in the Congo.

## 6.2. Principles of prioritization

The principles of prioritization, based on the preceding analysis, should determine the main selection criteria for identifying and selecting the program that will most benefit the poor. These principles provide an essential guide for policy makers and program designers to follow to ensure that PPA priorities are included and attended to in the PRSP.

**Principles of prioritization for selecting programs.** The PPA analysis indicates that simple one-track sector projects will not have the desired positive impact on poverty reduction. On the contrary, the design and execution of the program/project must include a certain number of elements in order for them to succeed. According to the PPA analysis, we should give priority mainly to programs that include the five following elements:

**Criteria 1:** *Program focus on building local communities, local economies, local infrastructure, and good governance.*

**Criteria 2:** *Program interdependence with actions to specifically address governance, gender, marginalization.*

**Criteria 3:** *Program linkage all levels (national, province, community) to address identified abuse of power issues*

**Criteria 4:** *Program participatory planning and implementation at community, territory, and provincial levels*

**Criteria 5:** *Program learning and adjustment through participatory monitoring and evaluation.*

Before trying to apply these criteria, it is useful to understand how these five principles represent the discoveries of the PPA analysis.

**A. The criteria of 'local focus'** is based on community, territorial and provincial preferences. It is also an element that is clearly tangible to all. Throughout the country, the PPA participants clearly expressed themselves in saying that their communities are destroyed, that the local infrastructure is either non-existent or no longer works, that eating three meals a day is a rare event, and

that access to "cash" income has posed a great problem, even for those who find themselves at the highest rung on the economic ladder. In spite of this impoverishing status quo, the local populations were also clear in stating that the solution to these problems was not simply improvement of these tangible factors. For PPA participants, reduction of poverty necessitates better and more accountable governance. This means ending the petty corruption of favors or bribes and initiating systems of downward accountability at all levels, improving justice rendered from the courts, and stopping the harassment of citizens as they go about their daily business

**B. The criteria of “interdependence”** is based on the people’s preference to combine the tangibles and intangibles of poverty. The most crucial problem is the "abuse of power" as discussed in the PPA analysis. Unless ‘abuse of power’ and ‘corruption’ are explicitly addressed, provision of better infrastructure by itself cannot make a real and sustained difference. Therefore, it is the interdependence of the most visible (tangible) factors of poverty with the intangible factor that creates success.

**C. The criteria of ‘linking’ different levels of government** is essential if several high level profile problems are going to be resolved. For example, a large majority of the participants in the PPA considered that the levying of State taxes going to the national level (many of which are levied illegally) is the only recognized relationship that they have with their government. In addition, a level of sympathy persists between PPA participants as local citizens and the unpaid or poorly paid public servants, teachers, police officers and soldiers. Together, they all consider themselves “Congolese” and therefore desire justice from the State. Finally, PPA participants believe that the abusive and top-down nature of governance itself must be reined in, and their community perspectives concerning more equitable redistribution of resources needs to clearly and consistently inform the macro decisions making. Programs and projects that promote linkage are first steps in solving major problems.

**D. The criteria for participatory planning and execution** is strongly indicated in the PPA results. The provinces, territories and communities consider that the State, as it currently exists, is too centralized. Local men and women themselves have much expertise to give. Strengthening state/citizen dialogue obviously benefits the citizens, but it also benefits the state. Through institutionalizing participatory dialogue for partnership, the State reaps the substantial benefits of generating enhanced *public legitimacy* and enhanced *social enforcement* for the policies and programs under discussion. Without this enhanced public legitimacy and social enforcement, peaceful economic and social development is incapable of succeeding.

**E. A criteria ensuring participatory monitoring and evaluation** is crucial if programs are to be successful and good governance is to be established and continued. For a healthy relationship of checks and balances between the citizens



and state, institutionalized---not ad hoc---mechanisms for sharing of information will need to be established. First, access to national and province budget information from each of the key agencies specifying planned annual budget allocations and their rationale is essential. Second, access to annual performance audits (required by law) of every agency involved in development and poverty reduction will allow citizen groups to assess performance. With this information civil society groups can give real-time feedback to the Government about proposed and ongoing programs, as well as inform themselves about government actions and formulate their own responses and suggestions. In sum, these mechanisms of downward accountability allow women and men to claim their rights as citizens and create a working and useful partnership with government.

### 6.3. Program Implementation Following PPA Priorities

Once the Prioritization Principles establish the overall focus of poverty programs, particular strategies for the different subgroups of the poverty population will need to be defined and applied. The quantitative measures that current define from 73% to 90% of the Congolese population as being poor, and the estimations of crucially vulnerable individuals are not sufficient for designing a well targeted poverty reduction program.

In order to successfully intervene, the situation of the poverty must be analyzed and understood from a more dynamic perspective. The quantitative/qualitative approach, developed in Chapter 4, identifies and describes the poverty sub-groups. The descriptions for each of these of these subgroups allow more specific and strategic planning to effectively meet the needs of each group. For example, as noted earlier the ‘poor but stable’ subgroup will be able to take immediate advantage of strategies and programs that promote pro-poor growth. The ‘poor and fragile’ households will, however, require more assistance in order to take effective advantage of these programs. And of course, the ‘destitute’ will require their own set of strategies interwoven into a safety net jointly maintained by the State and communities.

It is, however, difficult to prioritize programs and projects when poverty is at such a grand scale as we find in the Congo, primarily because there are so many competing needs. But applying the ‘PPA Principles’ to each of the poverty subgroups involved gives a basic and useful starting point for an initial **five year** design and implementation period.

For greatest success, it is recommended that proposed program and policies incorporate a specific *transformative action* as an integral part of its objective. With the PPA analysis of poverty we know quite a bit about how poverty works in the Congo. Attempting to solve this multi-faceted and multi-dimensional poverty---where the intangible factors are often more important than the tangible ones---with linear solutions that attack the identified problems one by one is not an option.

Transformative actions, on the other hand, are primarily designed to counteract---with one to four well chosen initiatives---an entire multiplicity of poverty patterns and problems. In other words, //they are designed to match the dynamics and patterns of poverty identified and discussed in chapter five. Their key element is that they combine technical, cultural, and social factors in one action to counteract the dynamics and patterns of poverty outlined in chapter five.

These transformative actions are easy to talk about but more difficult to implement in everyday life. The following five steps can create success.

**Budget for Key Sectors.** Operating budgets for key sectors should be established at the national level, but decisions concerning which sectors will be emphasized should rest with the province and its territories. For example, it makes sense to emphasize those sectors for the first five year implementation period identified by PPA participants that can have the most immediate effect. This would include: health, education, water, local economy and agricultural development on the tangible problem side.

On the intangible problem side prioritization for the most immediate effect would place the emphasis on good governance, security, and gender. It is interesting to note here how this selection would follow the patterns of poverty, as discussed in chapter five. They include (i) poor governance; (ii) unfavorable terms accorded to community economies; (iii) insecurity of people and goods; (iv) in-attention to basic needs and infrastructure; (v) marginalization and exclusion; and (vi) feminization of poverty

Provinces need to be able to select the order of emphasis for the tangible problem side. For example, North Kivu might select water as its first priority, and health as its second. On the other hand, Bandundu might decide to select education as its first priority, and local economy/agricultural development as its second. Whatever tangible problem is identified as a problem, however, would include an automatic emphasis on the intangible side of governance, security, and gender.

**Develop Multi-Dimensional Strategies.** We already recognize that poverty in the DRC is characterized by its multi-faceted complexity. The profile of poverty is heterogeneous, and the identified national problems are multi-dimensional and inter-connected. This situation demands a multi-dimensional poverty response. For example, if the government decided to move forward with a program to expand primary education of all children, refurbishing dilapidated schools, building new schools, and increased training of teachers would all be obvious components of the project. But in addition to focusing on basic needs and infrastructure, the project would also need to select several other patterns that are inter-connected to this objective if they want success that has impact and is long-lasting.

In this case, the two patterns that have frustrated education success in the past are a history of no accountability to parents and community, and lack of budget transparency for all actors including the parents---in other words poor governance. In, addition, girls are not enrolled in anywhere near the same proportion as boys-- -a form of marginalization and exclusion. So in this case, the project would select transformative actions to counteract these patterns of poverty.

There are many transformative actions in the governance area. The project might consider several actions from the the following general list.

- 1. Disseminate the Republic's draft constitution in the national languages for the emergence and consolidation of the rule of law.
- 2. Grant the resources and powers to the anti-corruption committees to intervene effectively on the ground at all levels: national, provincial and territorial.
- 4. Recycle and motivate the personnel of the judicial body by favoring the local level.
- 5. Provide the system of free legal assistance with the material resources and funds which will enable vulnerable individuals to have access to equal justice.
- 6. Strengthen the control of the staff in the administration in order to equip and pay decent and regular salaries to the public administration personnel based on merit.
- 7. Apply the law on decentralization in order to bring those governing closer to those being governed.

Given the primary focus of the primary school project, designers of project will probably want to consider transformative actions 1, 2, and 6. Implementing action #1 would allow local communities to better understand that they have the right to expect accountability and transparency from their government officials. Implementing action #2 would institutionalize at all levels the processes of accountability and transparency. And implementing action #6 by paying teachers a livable salary would do much to ensure quality of education.

There are also a number of transformative actions that can counteract marginalization and exclusion. One that could be considered here is a national law declaring that primary education is free and *all* children within that age group are obliged to attend primary school. A second that can be incorporated immediately is funding for different territory or provincial organizations (churches, universities, NGOs) to design and implement with local communities programs that will allow discussion and action concerning the cultural (and

economic) barriers to sending young girls to school. Music, theater, and dance are all important aspects of this kind of initiative.

In sum, these types of programming design and implementation actions for education projects take into account the complex reality of poverty and its multi-dimensional nature. It also illustrates the necessity for each of the levels---national, province and territory, and local communities---to be involved. In effect, working with multi-dimensional strategies and transformative action requires the collaboration among groups.

**Recognize the Macro-Participation Cycle.** Supporting citizen participation so that two-way flows of information support debate of public issues, and recognizing their responsibility to provide downward accountability to their citizens is something fairly new for governments to initiate, and international development agencies to support. Because it is new, activities often tends to precipitously diminish after the first year. This happens for a series of reasons. First, a number of policy makers, elected officials, and senior decision-makers in international development agencies will sincerely believe and state that ‘democracy and elections’ are sufficient to establish the two-way debate on public issues, and maintain the necessary downward accountability.

However, the institutions that support these necessary debate and accountability between and State and citizen are not yet in place. And it usually takes five to ten years to institutionalize these mechanisms. For example, South Africa took approximately five years to pass and initiate a law that requires all public agencies to publicly file their annual performance objectives and their subsequent annual performance audits. It has taken Uganda and several other African countries more than a decade to set up inclusive and open budgeting processes based on Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF).

In the DRC situation, where these types of institutions are just beginning to be considered as necessary, recognition of the *macro-participation cycle* is extremely helpful. Macro participation is defined as an active and iterative *learning cycle*. This learning cycle relies on a four-point participatory approach —*dialogue, collaborative analysis, action, and monitoring for feedback and learning*---repeating itself in established cycles. This four-point cycle specifically emphasizes and provides for public debate and downward accountability through its collaborative analysis and monitoring for feedback components.

Consciously and openly implementing this macro-participation four-point cycle over the next 15-25 years across the country from the community to the national state is an important institutional building block. By formally using the macro-participation cycle, the country can create and develop the learning assessments necessary for the DRC to establish a culturally and politically congruent set of institutions where democratic freedom and equitable prosperity can thrive and grow.

**Focus on Poverty Sub-Groups.** The poverty sub-groups defined in chapter four, are an important base for the national poverty strategy, and emphasizes the need for multi-targeted poverty responses. Many countries tend to target the very poor and destitute at one end of the spectrum, and the better off poor at the other end of the spectrum. Both of these will be important for DRC. However the third category identified---poor and fragile households---is also critically important.

Actions for the very poor, destitute group can to some extent follow targeting procedures already developed in other countries. Also, some of the pro-poor growth strategies can be effectively used for the better off poor but stable group. Both of these should, of course, pay close attention to the differences between rural and urban groups as signaled by the typologies.

The ‘poor and fragile households’ sub-group will, however, demand special attention. This sub-group has (which constitutes 38% of the Congolese population in the urban areas and 22% in the rural areas) because of poverty, entered into a process of progressive deterioration. This sub-group also includes some of the population classified as vulnerable who have managed to hold on to some of their familial and societal networks. But it also includes former public servants who have suffered due to DRC’s intensive crisis. Successfully targeting and working with this group will mean that both the *tangible* and *intangible* dimensions of poverty will need to be carefully considered and carefully combined.

**Expand and build on community capacities and institutions.** Successful poverty eradication must be based on the existing capacities and institutions of local people in each of the provinces for long term sustainability. The Democratic Republic of Congo’s PRSP, which identifies *dynamique communautaire* as one of its pillars of emphasis, provides a unique platform for action in this regard.

In Part I of this report the coping and survival strategies devised by local individuals, families, and communities were outlined and discussed. That brief assessment illustrated the innovation and creativity of the Congolese people under even the most difficult of circumstances. So, the intent of ‘dynamique communautaire’ will be to assist local communities repair as rapidly as possible the damage visited on local households and communities, and move quickly into a sustainable peace and prosperity.

To do so, effective and enduring local institutions will be built upon, and individual capacities will be expanded---not just for more effective programs, but also more effective governance and macro-economic growth. It should be noted here that some of these local institutions incorporate the discriminatory and exclusionary practices identified earlier that contribute to poverty. However, documentation illustrates that other African countries, such as Burkina Faso, have updated their locally preferred institutions to actively reflect overall African

principles of inclusion and equality, thereby diminishing retrograde discriminatory practices and increasing pro-poor growth. Similar initiatives would need to be initiated within the Dynamique Communautaire process.

Five strategic initiatives will be supported to complement a variety of projects and programs. They are:

- Identify and build upon existing local level institutions that are often disregarded at the village and territory level
- Optimal inclusion of men & women, and use of local physical resources
- Re-enforcement of inclusion and partnership through networks and alliances among groups and communities.
- Establishment of transparency and elimination of administrative dysfunctionality at provincial and territorial levels
- Expansion of local capacity in technical, management, and organizational fields.

With this type of support to local individuals and local communities, it will be possible for them to undertake fair and equitable partnerships with government, private sector, and NGOs. Together these diverse but allied groups will be able to implement a poverty eradication strategy that will firmly steer the country on a course leading to peace, democratization, and prosperity.

#### **6.4. Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation for Downward Accountability**

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) is a critical part of the four point participatory process---*dialogue, collective analysis, action, and monitoring for feedback and learning*---which the PPA has begun with its national dialogue and participatory analysis. Once the 'actions' are begun, implementation of the fourth monitoring mechanism for feedback and learning is essential for downward accountability. Without this fourth feedback and learning mechanism the PPA and the PRSP become simple one-time consultation mechanisms or initiatives that have a limited value. But with this fourth PME mechanism in place, necessary feedback and change processes are institutionalized that can make adjustments and changes that will make broad differences over time.

The adoption of a national poverty reduction plan (PRSP) based on participatory dialogue and collective analysis creates an internal *contract* between government and local communities to mutually work together to reduce poverty. To ensure that this contract remains in place and is satisfactory to all parties, Government is beginning to see the value of tracking budget expenditures and assessing sector performance so that these can be shared and reviewed with communities and civil society.

These types of activities create greater trust between government and the people, and enhance cooperation among different groups. Starting these processes, NGOs are beginning to devise a number of ways to ensure enhanced levels of accountability. PPA participants are strong in their consensus that greater transparency and accountability be built into all poverty reduction activities. And donor support and interest expands activity and initiatives on all sides.

PME is not, however, just a simple technical implementation by the government. It also requires development of a ***culture of accountability*** within society that currently does not exist in the DRC. What is needed is not a simple vertical exchange of information policy and programming information downward, in exchange for monitoring of local programming moving upward. Expectations of *horizontal accountability* will need to be developed and acted upon among groups of citizens. Currently, informal social rules of respect for leaders or those of higher status tend to limit development of a society and culture built on accountability.

In this situation, expected and even demanded changes at the *political* level for greater vertical accountability, must be accompanied by similar changes at the *social* level for greater horizontal accountability and openness at the community and territorial levels. Initiatives such as these can and should be expected from community and social groups at the local and provincial levels. Consistent use of the four point participatory process will facilitate community learning as to how to initiate practices that support and expand horizontal accountability. The six following steps begin to develop an effective participatory monitoring system both technically and culturally.

**Ensure that communities and civil society play an advisory role in public expenditure.** A basic objective of systemized participatory monitoring and evaluation is to provide greater transparency, accountability, and development effectiveness. But if civil society is to be effective, it will require access to two types of information from the government. First, the essential base is systematic access to national budget information specifying national budget allocations and rationale. Second, access to annual performance audits for all agencies involved in development and poverty reduction allows assessment of performance. With this information, civil society can perform two important functions.

- Give feedback to the Government about efficacy of proposed and ongoing strategies based on budget allocated and dispensed.
- Inform themselves about government actions and formulate their own responses.

These M&E systems work best when Government has developed an appropriate set of policies and systems to enhance budget accountability and transparency. These include: (i) public expenditure reviews that are participatory; (ii) medium term expenditure reviews (MTEF) that encourage public involvement; (iii) and decentralization of program budgeting to provincial and territorial venues. Experience shows that where these efforts

to strengthen have been tried (South Africa, Uganda) it has helped create effective discussion if not always consensus on difficult issues. However, it is also helpful to note that preliminary fears of confrontation have *decreased* as participatory practice has *increased*.

**Ensure effective information sharing policies.** Ability to monitor effectively is dependent upon *right of access* to public information. *DRC*, like many countries, has no history of assuring such rights to its people. Therefore, this right must be affirmed at the political level before it can be assumed to exist at the technical level.

But simple political affirmation, while critical, is not sufficient. At the same time, technical offices should be given the specific responsibility and budget necessary for establishing proper and ongoing communication strategies that will inform all citizens across the country. This will entail use of a variety of media and diverse local languages, and should involve use of music and theater. .

Once politically and technically ensured, it must also be offered in such a way that it is culturally viable. For example, Western democracies effectively use such techniques as ‘notice and comment’ or ‘public hearings’. In these societies everyone assumes that they have a *right* to such information, whether it has been offered to them or not.

But the *DRC* situation is different. Historically and culturally, it values a consensus approach. Therefore, most people may not assume they have the right to information that is not specifically offered to them. In this situation, effective information policies on the part of the Government will require a more **inclusive approach**. Guaranteeing that necessary information, such as budget information and agency annual performance is shared at every level in very public places will be critical for success. That is why Uganda’s use of budget information posters on every school door is so powerful.

**Ensure that communities and civil society play a partner role in monitoring *dynamique communautaire* and sector activities in their communities.** For public expenditure at the national level civil society necessarily plays an advisory role. At the community level, however, their preferred mode is that of partner. Establishment of community, territory, and provincial **PME Committees** is critical for effective involvement. The PME Committee should definitively include an equal number of women and men to effectively represent their community. For effective establishment at the community level between village and local government at the Territory, it should be understood that there are constellations or sets of endogenous and indigenous institutions which, while rarely recognized, surround, connect, and contribute to the management of individual communities.

Once strategies, programs, and committees have been decided upon, collection of baseline data will be essential to establish progress in selected programs. Communities, with some training, can participate in this collection. With the baseline established and mechanisms/timing decided upon, monitoring of the program---again undertaken by the community---can move forward.



The monitoring information collected through this process can be used in several different ways. The community and territory committees will use it to verify program progress. But more important, these local committees will use the monitoring information to solve emerging problems by changing the existing program as needed. This feedback and problem-solving capacity will become a key factor in the success of not only *dynamique communautaire*, but all of the pillars, including governance and pro-poor growth.

Provincial and national PME committees will have different objectives, and therefore use the monitoring data in different ways. It is at this juncture that the participatory monitoring and evaluation can interact most effectively with the larger monitoring and evaluation establishment. The participatory monitoring data provided by the community and territory can be collected and used in their efforts to monitor activities and impact.

Monitoring impact of the intangible but important problems such as governance, security, and gender will demand different types of monitoring activity. An excellent method to monitor changes in intangible problems over the short-term is to employ communication studies that track changes in perception among selected populations. For example, a selected group of people can respond to the same five questions on governance and security every year for the next three years. With comparison to the -baseline, short-term changes in people's opinions can be ascertained.

**Ensure involvement of national and local NGOs.** For civil society to play an effective advisory role in public expenditure management NGOs must be strongly involved at all three levels---national, provincial, and territory. In particular, they can assist local communities to organize themselves around particular interests: (i) monitoring of education or health; (ii) establishing anti-corruption committees at the community level; (iii) designing and implementing information, education, and communication campaigns; and (iv) establishing particular programs to procure national or provincial information and communicate it to interested but isolated villages and territories.

**Ensure institutionalization and housing.** Participatory M&E must be institutionalized in the same way as the more traditional monitoring and evaluation if its success is to be assured. In other words, to be effective it cannot be ad hoc. It must therefore have institutional housing and agreed-to procedures at the national, provincial, and territorial level. These institutional and housing arrangements should complement and be similar to the arrangements made for the quantitative M&E initiatives

**Ensure ongoing 'Information, Education, and Communication (IEC).** Participatory monitoring and evaluation will depend upon a good IEC program, and there will be many benefits to those involved. Participatory monitoring and evaluation promotes development for and by the communities; it provides information about national budgeting, and provides access for community voices to be heard.

But IEC programs have an even larger venue and perspective, and one that complements participatory monitoring and the development of downward accountability. Using the resources available to an IEC program to support a national dialogue on the *culture of accountability* goes well beyond participatory monitoring for PRSP. IEC can promote discussion through dialogue, music, and theatre. These IEC initiatives can be heard in primary schools, in offices and in communities. As a result, a national reflection of what cultural accountability and other issues mean to the Congolese society can take place, and IEC can help establish, in fact, the type of society that Congolese wish to live within.

In sum, the development of a successful participatory monitoring and evaluation system is critical for three reasons: (i) PME is the key building block for the creation of a accountability framework between the state and its citizens; (ii) Through feedback monitoring PME provides essential learning on what program actions are working and which are not and therefore need to be changed; and finally (iii) PME's requirement for ongoing information, education, and communication (IEC) sets the stage for national reflection and positive social, political, and economic change.

#### **6.4. Risks and Opportunities**

This Participatory Poverty Assessment was carried out by and with the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It reflects their views and analyses about their problems--and it is a complicated reality. For the actors involved in the DRC's poverty reduction strategy---government, local communities and their families, NGO's, and international organizations----there is a huge opportunity, but also a big risk.

If the actors choose to seize this opportunity and place the PPA at the center of their efforts in the PRSP, they will have to move away from *business as usual* and utilize the principles and criteria outlined above as their guide in *every* initiative. The good news here is that the government, with its *dynamique communautaire* pillar already in place provides a central platform for the implementation of the people's strategy. The risk is that the PPA analysis will be used only superficially as words but not implemented, or it will be applied only partially to 'dynamique communautaire' types of efforts.

However, new infrastructure projects without an accompanying emphasis on accountability, transparent budgeting, and good governance cannot and will not provide the necessary infrastructure in a sustainable and useful fashion. Nor will new macro economic policies for pro-poor growth that do not place an emphasis on the sustainable creation of a local community economy---with the role of women as free and independent market members ----be regarded as sufficient.

Weighing the pros and cons of this opportunity/risk situation---and given DRC's human potential along with its considerable natural material riches---the actors should seize this opportunity. With sustained but realistic work invested over the next ten years, new visions of peace and prosperity can emerge as achievable realities in the following decades.

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