



# IF WE DON'T DO IT, WHO WILL?

A study into the sustainability of  
Community Protection Structures  
supported by Oxfam in the  
Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
**Summary Report**



**OXFAM**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report summarises findings and recommendations from field research conducted in communities where Oxfam previously implemented a community protection programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

In early 2016, Oxfam carried out 198 interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with members of Community Protection Structures ('Protection Structures'), wider community members, and local authorities in 30 communities where the programme was implemented between 2009 and 2015. The duration of support provided to each community varied.

This report provides an overview of the community protection programme, before presenting a summary of the research results, key findings and recommendations for Oxfam, other NGOs using community-based approaches, and funders.

## WHAT IS PROTECTION?

The most commonly accepted definition of protection is that used by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which refers to all activities aimed at obtaining **full respect for the right of all individuals**, without discrimination, in accordance with the relevant bodies of law, in humanitarian situations (Oxfam 2016).

Populations may be put at risk in humanitarian situations due to threats from armed actors, government authorities or other civilians. The state has the legal responsibility to make sure that the people within its borders are safe; however, when it can't or won't fully fulfil these responsibilities then national and international humanitarian organisations can assist.

Community-based protection refers to **supporting individuals and groups within communities to take action to respond to different protection threats** without using harmful coping strategies (such as forced marriage). Within the DRC, protection abuses are perpetrated by non-state armed groups, state actors such as the army and police, and civilians themselves. Many of these abuses are directly related to ongoing insecurity in eastern provinces, such as forced labour during troop movement, or pillaging of crops. Others, such as arbitrary arrests and illegal taxes and barriers on roads, arise from structural problems, compounded by years of conflict. Many, such as denial of women's inheritance rights, girls' schooling, and different forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV), stem from discriminatory **attitudes and social norms**, but which may have also been influenced by the conflict.

## OXFAM'S PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN THE DRC

Oxfam has implemented a community protection programme in the DRC since 2009, with the aim of supporting communities to **identify, respond to and mitigate diverse protection risks and threats**. Each community is normally supported between one and three years, according to the project.

The basis of the programme is the establishment of Protection Structures and supporting these to develop Community Protection Plans (CPP), which outline key protection threats in that community. Protection Structures are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

### Community Protection Committees

(CPCs) six women and six men

**Women's Forum** fifteen women, two of whom are members of the CPC  
**Change Agents** ten women and ten men from surrounding villages.

The Protection Structures receive training on different protection topics, according to the threats identified, and on core skills, such as advocacy, and confidential referral. They are supported to engage with local administrative, civilian and military authorities<sup>2</sup> on the protection threats outlined in the CPP and actions that can be taken. This includes advocacy for authorities to make particular commitments, such as removing illegal barriers on roads, and a range of different awareness-raising actions to increase people's knowledge of the rights-based and legal framework surrounding different protection threats, and challenge discriminatory attitudes and social norms.

The core premise underpinning the programme that has been developed and tested is that:

'Communication between community members, and between them and local authorities, which is informed by a shared understanding of human rights, can contribute to the protection of displaced people, returnees and host communities from violence and abuse.'<sup>3</sup>

## A HISTORY OF OXFAM'S PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

**2006–2007** Oxfam GB makes the organisational decision that protection programming would be a dedicated focus area.

**2008** First Protection Assessment in North Kivu, South Kivu and Province Orientale.

**2009** In-depth research into community self-protection strategies in the DRC.

**2009** Development of standalone protection project in the DRC.

**AS OF 2016** Standalone programme active in 36 communities in North and South Kivu and supporting a pilot of the model as part of a global governance programme in Equateur.

Although in some specific circumstances the programme has been directly implemented by Oxfam, generally Oxfam has partnered with national NGOs<sup>4</sup> that have stronger knowledge of the context and access to local communities. In many circumstances, the programme has been implemented as a standalone protection project, and in others it has been integrated with Water and Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods (EFSL) and longer-term livelihoods activities.

### SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

The idea for this piece of research came about through internal discussions in 2014 and 2015 between Oxfam programme staff and partner organisations, which raised a number of questions concerning the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Given that the Protection Programme was first implemented in some areas in 2009, and the first exits from communities started in June 2011, it was seen as both feasible and opportune to revisit communities that had exited the programme and use the research findings to re-design the programme approach where needed.

The research was framed in terms of what Wessels (2009) defined as **'process' and 'outcome' sustainability**. Process sustainability considers the extent to which Protection Structures are still active, while outcome sustainability examines the longer-term changes that the programme has contributed to. 'Being active' was defined by the Protection Structures themselves, rather than Oxfam, according to what they viewed as continuing activities.

Specific research questions were defined as follows:

- 1** What evidence is there of continuing activities by Community Protection Structures after the initial project?
- 2** What are the (internal and external<sup>5</sup>) factors that supported continued activities?

**3** What are the factors (internal and external) that impeded/acted as barriers to continued activities?

**4** What evidence is there of longer-term (positive and negative, expected and unexpected) changes that the programme has contributed to in the selected areas?

Between January and March 2016, Oxfam undertook qualitative field research in a sample of 30 communities where the programme was previously implemented. In total, 198 interviews and FGDs were held with Protection Structures, a sample of community members, and local civilian, administrative and military authorities.

A full **list of research sites**, including project dates, can be found in Annex A.

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

#### To what extent are Protection Structures still active?

Results from FGDs with Protection Structure members in **30 communities show that in nearly all cases there is some level of activity amongst Protection Structures**; however, this varies both between communities and amongst structures in the same community.

Across communities, most often a **proportion of members of each Protection Structure are considered as still participating in activities**, whether through regular meetings and group activities, or individually. In Burungu, Masisi, for example, the CPC members stated that eight members (out of the original 12) participate in meetings held on Friday every other week, but only five people (one woman and four men, out of an original 12 members) participate regularly because the others are often travelling. In Sorodo, Irumu, Change Agents estimated that out of an original 24 members (two per neighbourhood), 11 are now active.

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In some communities, it was clear that nearly **all members were still active**, often through each individual personally confirming this during the FGD. This was often the case in South Lubero, where meetings are planned and each individual must explain and are held accountable for why they are unable to attend or carry out an activity.

In Dungu, **being an active member was conceived slightly differently for members of Women's Associations<sup>6</sup>** who were supported as part of a protection project with partner Conscience. They defined themselves as being an active member of the association itself, and the protection activities, when mentioned, were not separated from this.

Across all sites there is **relatively little regular or planned interaction between the different Protection Structures**, and they tend to operate as distinct structures.

In Gety, Irumu, for example, although the CPC noted that 'it's us who sleeps' (that the CPC is inactive/dormant), they described how the Change Agents still lead a large number of activities. In Burungu, Rugarama and Kitchanga, the Women's Forum was significantly more active than the CPC and Change Agents.<sup>7</sup> The results show that while one Protection Structure in a community may be particularly active, this does not necessarily relate to the level of activity of other Protection Structures in the same community.

'We're all active here, except for one member who is ill and doesn't meet us regularly. We all arrive at meetings, and if someone is prevented from attending they always tell us the reason for their absence and present themselves at the next meeting'  
Member of Women's Forum, Kikovu, South Lubero





The exception appears to be in South Lubero where, in a number of communities, it appears that there are regular meetings between structures. And in Kitsumbiro, for example, the Presidents of each of the Protection Structures sat down together at the end of the project to plan how they would take forward their activities. This may have been further supported by ongoing support visits (every six months) from CEPROSSAN Animators.<sup>8</sup>

In other communities in Irumu, such as Soke, CPC members note that they are still active and retain the identity of the CPC, but don't hold group meetings any longer. Instead they use the *Conseil des Acteurs de Developpement* (Development Advisory Group) meetings, which many CPC members belong to, to advance their protection objectives.

### What does being 'active' involve?

#### a) Referral to support services

In nearly all cases, individual Protection Structure members confirmed that they continued to refer individuals to different available support services when required. Even in cases where the Protection Structures did not appear to carry out any group activities, or faced de-motivation and challenges, FGD participants affirmed that they continued to refer cases when they were made aware of them. This includes members of Women's Associations and Relais Communautaire (community health workers) in Dungu, who were trained on referral.

During the programme, individual members of the Protection Structures

are identified and trained as Focal Points. This approach was developed so that individuals needing information would find it easier to identify from whom to access this. During the FGDs, however, no distinction was made between the Focal Points and other Protection Structure members, and it appears that **all individual members carry out referral**.

Although a large proportion of cases appear to involve sexual violence, referral is framed in terms of providing both male and female individuals with the information they need on locally available services in different situations. The research revealed that this holds true, and that Protection Structures provide information to individuals in different circumstances. This includes advice on **whether a case is civil or**

penal, and which authority should deal with it, and providing support to women in various situations, such as during pregnancy or childbirth.

In a number of FGDs, **follow-up of individual cases** was also mentioned. The programme discourages follow-up to avoid Protection Structure members becoming too involved in the management of a case for which they are not trained. A review of this in 2012<sup>9</sup> found that, in many cases, individuals become involved, for example, by accompanying someone to a Health Centre, or checking on them afterwards, either because they are asked to, or because they naturally want to be able to help them. The research found that this continued to be the case.

#### b) Mediation

Although the role of Protection Structures is not conceived as one of mediation, and the members are not trained on this, the research revealed a number of communities, particularly in Haut Uele and Irumu, where Protection Structures described the role they play in mediation of individual cases of conflict.

In some cases it appears that Protection Structure members may have become involved in trying to **calm or improve certain conflicts**. This, then, quickly became more of a routine activity, with people coming to them for help. In other cases, it appears they **reacted to a situation that they came across** where they felt they had to intervene (for example in the case of a pregnant girl being thrown out of home, where they persuaded her family to take her back).

Mediation was not just limited to the community as a whole; in some cases it was used to deal with conflict **within households** between couples. Some Protection Structures in Irumu and Haut Uele, and to a lesser extent in South Lubero, the Protection Structures seemed to conceive of their role in terms of **reconciling couples** and appeared to continue with mediation on a frequent basis.<sup>10</sup>

Often, it appears that the **distinction between protection monitoring** (the identification of incidents), **awareness raising, advocacy and mediation becomes blurred** for individual members. This appeared particularly to be the case in Rubaya and Masisi, where Protection Structure members not only carried out awareness-raising activities on early and forced marriage, but also monitored and intervened in cases when they heard it took place.

#### c) Awareness raising

Aside from referral, awareness raising or '*sensibilisation*' was mentioned by nearly all Protection Structures as an ongoing activity. This was the case even where no group activities were organised, as individuals appeared to do this either as a regular activity or when they saw a need, such as when the security situation changed or when particular protection incidents took place.

The FGD results revealed a **large range of awareness-raising activities** that the Protection Structures continue to undertake, on a large variety of protection topics. These range from birth and marriage registration, early and forced marriage, girls' schooling, women's inheritance and child labour in areas that are more stable, such as Rubaya and Bihambwe, and arbitrary arrests and forced work in areas with a high military presence, such as South Lubero, to sexual violence, the importance of not joining armed groups, and self-protection strategies in areas with a changing security situation (Irumu, Haut Uele and Kitchanga).

#### The location of awareness raising

reported during the FGDs varies, and Protection Structures take advantage of different daily spaces and activities to discuss protection messages, such as in the fields, at school, door to door, at the market, in different churches or even in parents' assemblies in schools.

'I have a friend and his son married at the age of 15. When I went to see him I discussed SOPROP (partner organisation) with him, we went to see the authorities and called the parents of the girl, and the authorities shared the law and advised the parents to separate the children so that they continue to study, and when they are 18 or 20 they can marry. The parents agreed.'

Male Change Agent,  
Rubaya, Masisi

'We carry on awareness raising activities...we are missing paper, pens, but we continue with our mouths and megaphones. We each contribute one hundred Congolese francs per month for batteries.'

Women's Forum member, Rugarmu, Masisi

#### d) Engagement with local authorities

The FGD results suggest that in a large proportion of communities, engagement with local authorities continues. However this is mainly through **specific advocacy actions, when a problem is identified**, rather than at regular meetings with local authorities such as through *Reunions Mixtes*.<sup>11</sup>

In communities where the Protection Structures hold weekly or monthly planning meetings, it appears that advocacy actions are often planned or discussed and Protection Structures plan which authorities to contact for which advocacy action. The advocacy actions are normally carried out in groups, whether through the Advocacy Focal Points or by groups of two to three members who they feel are best placed for the task. In addition to this planned advocacy, Protection Structures described **individual advocacy actions that they have taken based upon situations they encounter during daily activities**, such as attempted extortion of IDPs.

These ongoing advocacy actions frequently involve advocacy and **mediation of cases where an individual is arbitrarily arrested**, for example on behalf of a relative who has been accused of a crime, because they owe a debt, or without real motive, so the Police or military can extort money for their release. Although during the programme Protection Structures are discouraged from becoming involved in individual cases, across all research sites advocacy on arbitrary arrests appears to be a key activity that continues.

In several cases **Protection Structures also participate regularly in the Réunion de Sécurité**. These are regular, often weekly, meetings organised by local authorities, bringing together the FARDC, ANR, PNC, and administrative and customary authorities to speak about the security situation in the area. Protection Structures in Rubaya described how they use the meeting to speak about cases that have not yet been resolved, effectively going

above the head of individual authorities they had previously approached by speaking with their commanders.

#### e) Protection Monitoring

Protection monitoring involves the collection of information on protection incidents, trend monitoring and analysis.<sup>12</sup>

Although the use of mobile phones to alert partners of incidents did not continue, apart from certain communities in South Lubero that CEPROSSAN is still in contact with, **protection monitoring** carried out by individual Protection Structure members **appears to have continued in a majority of communities**.

The identification of protection incidents is closely tied to both advocacy and awareness-raising actions undertaken. The research revealed that this may involve, for example, Protection Structures undertaking immediate advocacy on an identified incident, or asking members to describe protection incidents they had noted in their neighbourhood during weekly or monthly meetings and planning advocacy and awareness-raising actions based upon the trends observed. However, a common challenge raised by Protection Structures was that they 'no longer had anyone to send their reports to', and confusion over what to do with some of the information collected.

#### f) Community development activities

In four FGDs, additional activities were mentioned by Protection Structures which were not planned or supported as part of the original project but which could be described as broader community development activities. For example, in Gety, Irumu, the Women's Forum visits the prison and sometimes brings the prisoners food or items of clothing. In Ozoba, the CPC described that they have created a 'construction group' to help repair the roofs of houses and a *Comite d'Aide* for the village, which supports community members who are in mourning or ill, emphasising the value of this group.<sup>13</sup>



## g) Income Generation Activities

As part of certain protection projects Protection Structure members were also supported with Income Generation Activities (IGAs), whether as part of parallel Oxfam livelihoods programmes, or with the specific purpose of supporting the continuation of protection activities. In several communities, Protection Structures also developed IGAs themselves.<sup>14</sup>

The research found several examples where, since project closure, Protection Structure members decided to each **contribute a small amount of money or materials in-kind (e.g. batteries) on a regular basis**, in order to cover basic materials.

In **some areas, it appears that IGAs supported during the programme continue to function**. For example, after the end of Oxfam's project in Dungu, SAIPED continued work in several communities where the protection programme had been implemented with funding from Conciliation Resources. This used the same model with the addition of agricultural activities to support the sustainability of CPCs, which the Protection Structures still refer to as ongoing. In South Lubero, partner CEPROSSAN described how a goat-rearing business that the Protection Structures run is still ongoing, and they think that this contributes towards the fact that the Protection Structures continue to meet.<sup>15</sup>

In **other areas, however, the IGAs failed** for different reasons. In Sorodo, Irumu, fields were assigned for cultivation by CPCs to support their costs; however, according to the programme coordinator<sup>16</sup> in 2013, during armed-group attacks there was widespread displacement and all of the IGAs failed. In Burungu and Rugarumu, Masisi, collective fields supported as part of a joint livelihoods and protection project were mentioned but this year there was no potato harvest due to rainfall levels.

## How are activities planned?

**Fifty-one Protection Structures in 23 communities state that they continue to hold weekly and/or monthly meetings**, with several other Protection Structures holding 'ad-hoc' meetings according to need. When meetings are held, they tend to be on the same day or date - for example on Sundays after Church. As mentioned in previous sections, during these meetings, according to the Protection Structure, members often share updates of the protection situation in their neighbourhood, choose themes for awareness-raising activities, and plan activities for the week or the month ahead. For some Protection Structures this also includes reviewing what has worked well and what hasn't, and taking this into account in their planning.

'One day I encountered people who had been displaced coming from Mbwavinywa stopped in the road at an illegal barrier by a military officer because they didn't have identity cards...I showed the military officer that it's difficult for a displaced person who flees without anything to remember where he left his identity card. We had a long discussion, but finally he understood and they were liberated. I didn't stop there, I informed my colleagues and we went to see the FARDC Commander to speak to him about this case. He gave orders to his unit to remove the barrier, and today the population passes by here without any harassment.'

Male Change Agent, Mighobwe, South Lubero

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Following the meetings, **some Protection Structures appear to organise awareness raising and advocacy on the same days each week.** For example, the Women's Forum in Bihmabwe, Masisi, carries out awareness raising at the market each Wednesday, whilst **for others it depends on the planning** decided upon in the meeting, and whether the awareness raising is individual, or in larger groups.

From the field research, **of the Protection Structures who meet regularly, 21 are Women's Forums, 20 are CPCs and there are 10 groups of Change Agents.** It is perhaps not surprising that fewer Change Agents meet, given that they are often spread

around different neighbouring villages, and in many projects their role was organised in terms of engagement with the CPC on protection issues, rather than acting as a group in themselves. In general **collaboration and regular meetings between different Protection Structures is limited** and they tend to operate as individual, separate groups. Where collaboration does exist, each Protection Structure tends to meet weekly, and there may be a monthly CPC meeting, which representatives of the Women's Forum and/or Change Agents attend.<sup>17</sup> Alternatively, the Protection Structures meet and carry out activities together **'according to need'** (for example to collaborate on specific awareness raising or advocacy actions).

### Perceptions of community members and local authorities

**Knowledge of Protection Structures was relatively high** amongst community members interviewed across all communities. Often, a direct link was made between perceptions of the positive role the Protection Structures have played, and the benefits the programme has brought to the community. There were several reports of negative feedback on the Protection Structures but this mostly appears to be in cases where there was resistance against the awareness-raising messages.



When asked about what the **role and responsibilities of the Protection Structures** were, most FGD participants said raising awareness and advocating for and protecting the community. Advocacy was often understood and explained in terms of carrying out follow-up on individual cases of apparent arbitrary arrest. However, reference was also made in a few cases to the fact that **an individual can bring a problem to them**, and they will then provide advocacy support. In some cases, direct reference was made to how they were recognised in the community, for example in reference to **'being leaders'**.

In cases where an individual encounters a problem, such as protection abuse, community members usually seek support from local leaders, such as the *Chef de Village*, *Chef de Localité*, or even religious leaders. The Protection Structures were, however, also mentioned a number of times, either in reference to **individuals seeking the Protection Structures to carry out advocacy on their behalf**, or to refer them to the appropriate authority.

### Perceptions of local authorities

**Approximately half of the authorities interviewed knew about the Protection Structures.** When authorities did know about the Protection Structures, there was the general recognition that in most cases they 'had weakened' since the end of the project, which may reflect the fact that awareness raising had become less visible, and *Reunion Mixtes* had stopped.

Knowledge was much higher amongst administrative authorities, such as the *Chef de Chefferie*, *Chef de Groupement*, and *Chef de Localite*, where rotation amongst communities is less frequent. In retrospect, impressions of the overall programme were very positive, with FGD and interview participants noting the importance of the project in improving knowledge of the law amongst the population, and increasing collaboration.

Frequent mention was made to the population's previous 'ignorance of the law' and the value that the authorities saw in making sure that the population could adhere to the law, which reflected, to a certain extent, the attitude that the population 'needs to be taught'.

Less frequently recognised was the value authorities placed on the training sessions that they participated in. In Rubaya, for example, the Secretary to the Governor showed the book containing legal texts that had been left by the project. He explained how he refers to the different laws related to different cases, and a poster on the wall explaining procedures for arrest.

In two communities, authorities participated in the programme in two different communities. In both cases it appears that their previous engagement with the programme facilitated their work with the Protection Structures in the new community, as they were aware of and supported their role, and had already participated in training on the different protection topics.

The extent to which Protection Structures collaborate and engage with different authorities appears to vary from village to village. In some communities, collaboration with administrative authorities, such as the *Chef de Localité*, appears strong, while there is limited engagement with authorities such as the ANR and FARDC. In others, such as Kitchanga in Masisi, engagement with the administrative authorities appears limited, with advocacy directed much more to the PNC. This probably depends upon the nature of the protection threats in the different areas (and associated different targets), the personalities of the authorities and the dynamics of each relationship, including between different authorities themselves.

'The project was finished, but the work isn't finished. We decided to continue because there are still some people who don't yet know their rights.'

Women's Forum member,  
South Lubero

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## Factors that have supported sustainability

The research reveals a number of key factors, both internal and external to the programme, which have impacted upon both process and outcome sustainability in research communities. These are outlined as follows:

### ► MOTIVATION

All participants expressed strong motivation for participating in the protection activities and this is the key reason that they remain active. Nearly all FGD participants reported joining because they were aware of the different problems and abuses in their community, and wanted to help in some way. Members reported deciding to continue for several key reasons:

- a) *feeling that they needed to share the knowledge gained from the training sessions;*
- b) *noting that there was an ongoing need and 'the protection abuses hadn't finished';*
- c) *having seen that change is possible through their activities;*
- d) *wanting to make sure the situation improved, and didn't go back to how it was before.*

In a handful of cases, IGAs were mentioned. The income generation component however was rarely mentioned as a motivation in itself.

### ► ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLEAR PLANNING SCHEDULE

The communities in which Protection Structures are most active appear to be those in which a clear, planned schedule of activities was established at the end of the project.

### ► ESTABLISHMENT OF REGULAR DIALOGUE WITH THE AUTHORITIES

The establishment of regular dialogue with the authorities, for example through participation in Réunion de Sécurité, does not appear to significantly impact upon the motivation of the Protection Structures to continue but appears to have an impact upon the effectiveness of their ongoing activities.

### ► LACK OF DISPLACEMENT

In communities where Protection Structures seem to be particularly active, the majority of individual members appear to remain the same, experiencing low levels of displacement or moving for other reasons, such as study.

### ► ACCESS TO BASIC MATERIALS

Although access to basic materials<sup>18</sup> doesn't appear to affect whether members are active or not, it does impact on both the activities they are able to carry out, and the effectiveness of these activities. For example, awareness raising may become individual, rather than targeting groups.

### ► LENGTH OF TIME SUPPORTED

In communities in South Lubero that have received between three and five years of support, programme outcomes appear to be more deeply embedded, including knowledge of the Protection Structures, the level of advocacy, and wider changes in attitude and behaviour.<sup>19</sup>

### ► ONGOING ACCOMPANIMENT

The Protection Structures appear stronger, more motivated, and their activities more effective in areas where there has been some ongoing support after project closure. This is the case in seven communities in South Lubero,<sup>20</sup> where monitoring visits to communities every six months after exiting were integrated into subsequent projects.

## Factors that have hindered sustainability

This section presents findings concerning:

- factors that made individual members stop participating in programme activities after project closure
- challenges that were raised by members and have impacted on their work, without necessarily stopping participation.

Through the field research, it was not possible to directly contact individuals who had stopped participating in Protection Structure activities. Members who attended the FGDs, however, shared their perceptions of why individuals had stopped.

Across all areas a small proportion of members stopped participating due to **lack of compensation**, or financial incentive, for their work. Often, remaining Protection Structure members were quite dismissive of this, saying that those who left weren't motivated by voluntary work, or didn't understand the voluntary nature of the activities. Similarly, **general de-motivation** was mentioned as a reason that certain individuals had stopped participating. This was often framed in terms of individuals 'becoming discouraged', with there being too many challenges.

A minority of individuals in different areas stopped for a range of practical reasons. These included **displacement**, or moving to a different area for study, **death or illness**, or other **time commitments** (e.g. someone was a Head Teacher, and another individual was a journalist).

In several communities, it appears that individuals stopped due to **fear or reprisals**, either directly from individual authorities, as they were seen as threatening their income source (through arguing against illegal taxes and arbitrary arrests), or from perpetrators released back into the community who come looking for them.

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During the FGDs, Protection Structures also raised a number of challenges they have encountered in their activities, outlined below. Although these may have impacted upon their work, to varying degrees, they were not framed in terms of stopping the Protection Structures from continuing activities.

## Challenges encountered by Protection Structures

### ► ROTATION OF AUTHORITIES

Nearly all Protection Structures mentioned the rotation of authorities as a key challenge.<sup>21</sup> New authorities did not know about the Protection Structures and treated them with suspicion (or as if they were 'a nuisance'). New authorities frequently had not been trained on protection and had a weak knowledge of the law, and lack of legal text,<sup>22</sup> which made collaboration with them difficult.

### ► INTIMIDATION BY AUTHORITIES AND FEAR OF REPRISALS

Reports of intimidation from local authorities were common and ranged from statements that 'the authorities hate us'<sup>23</sup> as the Protection Structures threatened their income source (e.g. through trying to prevent extortion from barriers or arbitrary arrest), to reports of hostility in the presence of the Protection Structures.

### ► IMPUNITY OF PERPETRATORS

In addition to verbal threats received from authorities during advocacy, a large number of Protection Structures reported fear of reprisals from perpetrators of abuses, either because the authorities or others in the community identified the Protection Structures as having reported them to the police, or because the authorities will use them to seek revenge.

Perpetrators are commonly released back into the community after arrest, due to impunity within the justice system. Protection Structures also reported how this impunity contributed to the large number of ongoing cases of forced marriage in communities.<sup>24</sup>

### ► LACK OF 'INCENTIVES' TO GIVE AUTHORITIES

In several cases in Masisi, the Protection Structures mentioned that their advocacy had been challenged as they had 'no incentive to give to authorities', meaning in Burungu, for example, that they had to stop holding the monthly *Reunion Mixtes* after the end of the project.

Security situation In several communities in Irumu, South Lubero and Mweso, changes in the security situation impacted upon the activities that Protection Structures were able to

undertake – for example in Irumu combat between the FRPI armed group and the FARDC in 2014 lead the FARDC to forbid community meetings. This meant that the Protection Structures had to stop group activities.

### ► LACK OF TRANSPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSES

As part of several protection projects, money or support through bicycles for transport were provided to survivors of violence to reach the closest health centre. In Niangara, Dungu, the bicycles are still in use, but in Irumu, IGAs had been used to provide the money for transport fees. As these IGAs have failed, the Protection Structures are no longer able to support this transport.

### ► LACK OF A MEETING SPACE

In Kitchanga and Burungu in Masisi the lack of a meeting space appeared to negatively impact on the Protection Structures to hold meetings; they meet outside.

### ► LACK OF MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS-RAISING (EG LEGAL TEXTS)

In many cases, legal texts provided are worn or destroyed, as they were just produced in paper form. In other cases the texts were only produced in French, making it difficult to understand for the majority of members. Delays in procurement during the project meant that, in some cases, the Protection Structures did not have access to these legal texts during the majority of project activities, which meant that they couldn't refer to different texts during meetings with local authorities.

### ► LACK OF ACCOMPANIMENT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

The lack of accompaniment from an Animator was mentioned quite frequently, often framed in terms of 'not having anyone to send reports to', and missing the encouragement the Animator would provide.

### ► LACK OF 'MEANS'

Frequently a 'lack of means' was cited by Protection Structure members. In some cases, the challenge was described as not having a financial motivation. In several cases, members described how they continued working on protection activities, but that they sometimes had to choose between protection and income-generating activities.

### ► LACK OF LEADERSHIP

In six communities, the death or inactivity of the President of a Protection Structure impacted significantly upon the functioning of the group, and at times the other structures, and their responsibilities such as calling meetings, were not taken up by another member. Lack of meetings In a number of communities, such as Soke, Gety and Sorodo in Irumu, it appears that meetings between the Protection Structures in each community have stopped. Since the Change Agents were conceived of a means to support coverage of the wider geographical area, with support in coordination and advocacy from the CPC, this appears to have impacted upon the effectiveness of the Change Agents' own activities.

### ► CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP

In Rubaya and Bihambwe, General Assemblies were held at the end of the project to re-elect and replace inactive members. New members did not receive any training or support, which has impacted upon the contribution they are able to make to activities.

### ► CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING AWARENESS RAISING

Across all communities different challenges related to awareness-raising activities were mentioned, most often concerning resistance encountered when trying to change people's behaviour, particularly related to women's and children's rights. Members did not appear too discouraged, accepting this resistance as part of the process.

### ► LACK OF RAIN COATS AND RAIN BOOTS

Very few Protection Structures appear to have received rain coats or boots, which makes travel to meetings and awareness raising difficult in the rainy season.

### ► LACK OF PEP KITS<sup>25</sup>

The research revealed that when the PEP kits are not re-stocked following advocacy by partner organisations, such as ACPD in Niangara, then it discourages survivors of violence from seeking any help.

### ► CONFUSION WITH OTHER GROUPS

In one community, there is another group that calls itself 'human rights defenders' and it charges community members for their advocacy 'services'. This has impacted upon the Protection Structures as they are confused by both community members and local authorities with this other group.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### **FINDING ONE** A large proportion of Protection Structure members in the majority of communities continue with activities in some form

In nearly all communities where the research was conducted, there was some level of activity reported amongst Protection Structures. However, the level varies amongst:

- **communities in the same geographical area that have participated in the same project but may have been differently affected by other factors** such as the departure of a Protection Structure President (e.g. the CPC Presidents in Ozoba and Gety, Irumu).
- **Protection Structures within the same community.** In most cases, the CPCs, Women's Forum and Change Agents seem to operate as distinct structures, and the fact that one Protection Structure in a community may be particularly active does not necessarily relate to the level of activity of other Protection Structures in the same community. This includes communities such as Gety and Irumu, where the CPC appears to be less active and has reduced or stopped meetings, but the Change Agents continue with a large number of activities. In some cases, however, where, during the project period, the role of the Women's Forum and Change Agents were conceived as requiring support from the CPC for advocacy, or was defined in sending information to the CPC for action, a reduction in the level of activity of the CPC has had some negative impact upon the Women's Forum and Change Agents.

**In the majority of communities, a proportion of members of each Protection Structure are considered as still participating in activities,** whether regular meetings and group activities (51 Protection Structures in 21 communities) or individually, ranging from as few as three members in, for example, Kaseghe, South Lubero,<sup>26</sup> to communities where all members report that they are still active.

Even when meetings of the Protection Structures stop for different reasons, **the majority of members continue to carry out individual activities.** It appears that nearly all FGD participants, for example, continue to be active in intervening and referring individuals to services when required, with a slightly lower proportion working on advocacy on a needs basis in smaller groups.

**The nature of the Protection Structure activities may shift over time.** As materials such as megaphones become broken, awareness-raising activities may move from 'mass' awareness raising to individual or small-group conversations, such as in Rubaya, Masisi. When no group meetings are held to plan awareness raising, and the Protection Structures are not active as groups, this may shift again to individuals responding to a changing security environment by sharing information on the importance of moving away from insecure areas early, or informing the authorities of different problems.

### **FINDING TWO** Members feel motivated by protection activities very quickly. For the majority of members, this motivation to help others keeps them active

Although motivation to join the Protection Structures and to continue participating after project support is finished is very personal, the results show **that active members were strongly motivated to help their community.** This was often framed in terms of 'advocating for' or 'defending' the population, with members of the Women's Forum in particular motivated to support other women, after having seen their suffering. Motivation to continue activities after project closure, although linked to this, also evolved to individuals:

- feeling that they needed to share the knowledge gained from the training sessions;
- noting that there was an ongoing need and 'the protection abuses hadn't finished';
- having seen that change is possible through their activities;

- wanting to make sure the situation improved, and didn't go back to how it was before.

In a large number of cases, individuals reported that they 'couldn't stop', often because the project had 'opened their eyes.' **This motivation appears to emerge very rapidly, and be closely tied to the training received.** Even after receiving only three months of support, Protection Structures in Rubaya and Bihambwe mirrored similar sentiments and appeared to be active, although the outcomes of the project in these areas may be less ingrained.

This motivation however is not sufficient to sustain the participation of all members, and does not necessarily impact upon the nature of activities undertaken, such as the continuity of group meetings. In a number of Protection Structures, a proportion of individual members became inactive for reasons such as displacement or time commitments, and lack of financial incentive from the project (e.g. transport fees paid to attend training sessions). Given the difficult nature of the work, they did not continue. In neighbourhoods in Dungu, where the programme trained representatives from Women's Associations and Community Health Workers, although some representatives continued with referral activities, evidence of the same motivation as Protection Structures in other areas was limited, and individuals spoke in terms of their role as Women's Associations or community health workers, rather than in terms of protection.

**FINDING THREE** The most 'active' Protection Structures are those that have established a regular pattern of activities over a longer period

The most-active Protection Structures are those in which a regular planning and meeting schedule was established during and at the end of the project in order to: monitor changes in the situation in different areas; plan awareness raising and advocacy activities accordingly; and evaluate the success of these activities. Amongst different Protection Structures, which continue to hold regular meetings, how the time was used, and how activities were planned, varied from simply giving reports to using the meetings as more of

a space for reflection. There is potential to strengthen support given to Protection Structures during the project period to increase the effectiveness of this planning, and increase the likelihood that it will continue after the project closes if the Protection Structures wish to continue their activities.

Second to this, a lack of or change in the leadership of Protection Structures appears to have the potential to significantly affect the type and level of organisation of the structures and remaining members. It does not appear in cases where the Presidents left or became less active that there was any contingency plan in place and, as a

result, meetings lessened or stopped. Including simple scenario planning in the project's exit planning may help to mitigate risks such as these.

Other factors, such as a change in the security situation (e.g. in Irumu, where community members were no longer permitted to meet in groups by the FARDC) or displacement had a significant impact, but are harder to mitigate. In such situations, it is important to recognise that individual Protection Structure members can play an important role, for example through supporting confidential referral and self-protection strategies, even if group activities do not continue.





**FINDING FOUR** What makes the programme sustainable in the long term is closely tied to what makes the programme of good quality and effective in the short term

This includes ensuring that Protection Structure members:

- have a good knowledge base on a range of different protection topics (which may take several years of project support to cover<sup>27</sup>)
- are confident in non-confrontational engagement with authorities
- establish a regular pattern of planning and activities following conducting a risk-analysis
- plan creative, awareness-raising activities that focus on positive engagement rather than denunciation.<sup>28</sup>

With a strong programme in place that supports the Protection Structures over a number of years, it appears that most Protection Structures are motivated enough to continue activities independently in the long term, if they decide to do so. Some basic material support, such as money for transport for awareness raising, paper, pens and batteries, may help strengthen the reach and quality of activities. Similarly, occasional support visits from the implementing partner after project closure may increase the effectiveness of activities by identifying actions that require advocacy support at a higher level, and by playing a problem-solving role, increasing the motivation of individual members in the face of challenging work.

**FINDING FIVE** There is no evidence that support with Income Generating Activities means that Protection Structures are more likely to continue with activities

In a number of areas, the IGAs that had been established and supported under the programme did continue to function. This includes collective fields that SAIPED supported Protection Structures to cultivate in Dungu, and some IGAs in

Irumu. In other cases the IGAs are no longer functional, including the failure of the potato harvest in one community in Masisi due to the lack of rainfall.

In Irumu, where IGAs appear to function, the money can provide a useful means to support victims of abuse to ensure that they access services in time. In Dungu, the collective fields have become a meeting place but the focus of the Protection Structures seems to have shifted from protection activities to cultivation of the collective fields, a view supported by community members and local authorities.

There is no evidence in any case that IGAs are required in order to give Protection Structures an incentive to continue meeting, or continuing with activities.

**FINDING SIX** Some support for other initiatives related to income generation, such as member contributions or revolving savings schemes, may be required in the long term

Although it doesn't appear that IGAs are required as an incentive for members to continue activities, some IGA support may be required in the long term to cover basic material needs if the Protection Structures wish to continue with activities. Actions can be taken during the project to minimise the need for longer-term financial support for material requirements – for example by providing rain jackets and boots, and by increasing training on awareness-raising techniques, such as through drama, that don't require the purchase of materials such as batteries for megaphones. Basic materials will always be needed, however, including pen and paper for recording awareness raising actions. Although this may not be a requirement for reporting to Oxfam, observations from Rubaya suggest that the fact this is recorded and members sign this may be a motivating factor. Other needs may include a small amount of phone credit to contact the implementing partner or a supportive local authority in case of a protection alert or request for advice.

There are several cases where Protection Structures have set up a system where each member contributes a small amount, such as 100FC, on a regular basis, to cover basic costs. For example in Ozoba, the Protection Structures themselves started a revolving savings fund, where each member regularly saves a small amount and they take turns to use the group's savings. In a context where an individual's income generation is often on a day-by-day basis, and where, as one Protection Structure member noted in Rubaya, sometimes he has to choose between protection activities and looking for a means to buy food, providing Protection Structures with support via a simple revolving savings scheme may be a realistic approach.

**FINDING SEVEN** Cooperation between the Protection Structures could be reinforced

Regular engagement between the different Protection Structures in each community is limited across all areas, with some specific exceptions. In communities where Protection Structures have chosen to continue after project closure, this may impact upon the effectiveness of the activities, as awareness raising and advocacy is not coordinated, and the different Protection Structures are not supporting each other to address the different challenges they face, or learn from each other's lessons. Simple strategies during the project period may help to increase this cooperation, including:

- mixing members from the different structures in training sessions;
- reinforcing a regular pattern of meetings between the Structures with a clear agenda and supporting individual members to lead these meetings;
- supporting coordination between representatives of each Protection Structure.<sup>29</sup>

A balance will need to be struck to ensure that it is not seen as overly prescriptive, or imposing too heavy a structure of meetings.

**FINDING EIGHT** Regular engagement with authorities could be reinforced

Regular meetings with local authorities decreased across even very active Protection Structures. In some cases this appears to be because the Protection Structures were not able to provide monetary incentives for authorities to attend monthly meetings (such as the transport money provided during the project), and others because of the rotation of authorities, and the challenges that Protection Structures face in facilitating monthly meetings with new authorities themselves. In some communities, engagement did continue, but often in the form of individual meetings to address specific protection threats or cases, or participation in the *Réunion de Sécurité*.

During the project there is potential to place increased emphasis on coaching for the different Protection Structure members (and not only advocacy focal points) on facilitating these meetings, and supporting these meetings to be held monthly, rather than every two or three months, to establish a strong meeting pattern. As part of exit planning, a meeting could also be held with local authorities and the Protection Structures to discuss and decide upon how they would like to continue their engagement and meetings.

**FINDING NINE** It seems inevitable that Protection Structures become involved to some extent in some individual cases

This has been a topic of discussion for the protection programme for a period of time. The research results suggest that individuals will inevitably approach Protection Structure members to some extent in order to ask them for information or advice on particular cases, or to accompany them to services, and Protection Structures may feel obliged to (e.g. to accompany a survivor of violence to the health centre, or to intervene in a case of early marriage).

In communities supported by SAIPED in Dungu, however, it appears that the role of Protection Structures was framed in terms of mediating between couples and 'resolving small disputes' in the household at some point in the project. This has had the potentially harmful consequence that Protection Structure members try to directly resolve cases of domestic violence and intra-marital problems, putting both themselves and others at risk.

This is an area where Oxfam could revise its training materials, to ensure that clear messaging and support is provided to Animators when carrying out training on the topic of Gender Based Violence to make sure that Protection Structures don't understand this as their role. In other areas, however, additional emphasis could be placed on conflict sensitivity and mitigation training,<sup>30</sup> focusing on risk analysis and role-plays to coach the Protection Structures in how they can react in different individual cases, setting appropriate boundaries.

Across all areas there is the ongoing challenge that Protection Structures intervene in cases of apparent arbitrary arrest, which could also place members at risk. Despite emphasising the need to raise this as a general issue during monthly meetings with local authorities during the project period (rather than specific cases), it is unlikely that Protection Structures will stop this involvement. Given that the question of arbitrary arrest is also linked to monetary incentives and the lack of regular pay for the Police and Army, a revised approach may be required (see finding ten).

**FINDING TEN** Whilst some challenges which Protection Structures raised can be addressed within the project, others require more creative approaches

A number of the challenges that Protection Structures raised, which impact upon their motivation and the effectiveness of their activities, can be addressed during the project period.

These include:

- routinely budgeting for and providing rain coats and boots;
- giving a printed copy of the module summaries to all Protection Structures whilst waiting for the plastic copies to be produced;
- placing an increased emphasis on training and awareness-raising methods, such as drama, or the provision of simple support tools, such as the protection playing cards, which can be left with the Protection Structures.

Rotation of authorities will continue to be a challenge. Advocating with local authorities to provide the Protection Structures with some form of recognised identification<sup>31</sup> may help in cases where new authorities refuse to engage with the Structures through lack of awareness. In order to address the issue of new authorities arriving who don't have knowledge of the law, and who haven't been trained on protection, a combination of different approaches is possible:

- request that PNC and FARDC Commanders leave a simple, written handover stating that they have worked with the Protection Structures and requesting their successor to continue this support. Protection Structures could also be encouraged to keep records of their agreements so that new local authorities can see what progress has been made.
- inform authorities at a higher level that summary modules have been distributed, leaving additional copies so that they can ensure new authorities receive copies,<sup>32</sup> or providing one copy to an individual authority and one copy for the office.
- engage with the authorities at the level of the commissariat and sous-commissariat (between the local and territorial level). This could include inviting these representatives to local authority training sessions, creating a committee across these different



authorities and supporting them to identify and undertake actions to share protection messages with their units, particularly upon arrival of new local Commanders.

Issues of impunity of perpetrators and arbitrary arrests were two other key areas identified as major challenges impacting upon the effectiveness of Protection Structure activities. Both these problems arise from a number of connected institutional factors. In the case of arbitrary arrests, this includes the lack of or irregular pay of the Police

and Army and accepted levels of corruption. In terms of impunity, this includes weak functioning of the justice system at different levels, widespread gender discrimination, corruption of individual authorities, and practical constraints, such as distance to the courts, which prevent victims from giving testimony.

It is not within the remit of Oxfam's protection programme to address these underlying problems. Oxfam has had some success, however, in advocacy in specific protection issues through

holding territorial round tables with territorial authorities. In addition to using this as a space to advocate for territorial support in addressing specific protection threats that can't be resolved at the local level, pilot round tables could be held to facilitate joint analysis of the problems underpinning the issues of impunity and arbitrary arrests, and identify areas where it is possible for Oxfam to support authorities to intervene. This could include, for example, facilitating a joint analysis of the reasons behind arbitrary arrests and identifying feasible steps to take.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall recommendations for Oxfam

- **Provide a minimum of two years' support to each community**  
Ideally three years but this may depend on the intensity of activities, and the fragility of the security situation. In some areas that experience regular displacement and security challenges, such as around Kitchanga in Masisi, then longer-term support may be appropriate. Providing two to three years of support seems likely to strengthen the extent to which Protection Structure activities are of good quality and embedded in communities, and give some more time for wider behaviour changes to take place (e.g. changes in early marriage).
- **Build visits to exit communities into new projects**  
Focus on working with partners to build up geographical coverage in particular areas and build support visits to exit communities into new project proposals for this area. Continuing implementation via partner organisations, rather than directly, will facilitate this longer-term approach. Even when budgets are tight, a support visit as little as twice a year could provide significant motivation to Protection Structure members. However, too-regular support visits risk not providing Protection Structures with sufficient space to define how they independently want to continue their future activities. Develop guidelines for what these support visits should cover, and clearly explain what the limits of the partner's and Oxfam's support is following project closure.

- **Start engaging with local authorities at the level of the *Commissariat* and *Sous-commissariat***

This includes training representatives on the same protection topics as local authorities, and piloting the establishment of committees of authorities who can undertake simple actions to support positive behaviour amongst their units and colleagues.

- **Carry out research into possibilities for supporting a simple revolving savings scheme for Protection Structures**

Investigate approaches used by other NGOs in the DRC,<sup>33</sup> and key lessons learnt, before integrating a pilot into a new or planned protection project. Any scheme should minimise the amount of external input, and not necessarily be introduced at the very start of the project, in order to not place too much emphasis on this activity. Across all communities, positive examples of members contributing a regular amount to support activities can be shared to motivate Protection Structures to reflect upon what they can do to support activities following project closure.

### Specific recommendations for Oxfam<sup>34</sup>

- **Revise the programme guide<sup>35</sup> to include the specific points mentioned below and develop and share with partners an 'Exit Checklist'** that outlines key points to consider and actions to take at different stages of a project. This includes, for example, supporting the Protection Structures to increasingly take the lead in facilitating *Reunions Mixtes* and other regular meetings, organising a meeting with Protection Structures before the end of the project to discuss whether and how they would like to continue after project closure, and what actions can be taken during the project to support their decision. This should also include a section on how to structure a support visit (e.g. a sample agenda). Regularly update this guide based on examples of good practices and challenges shared by partners during programme learning reviews.

### Support to Protection Structures

- Support monthly coordination meetings between representatives of each Protection Structure during the project period to facilitate coordination and exchange of challenges and learning.
- Routinely train all Protection Structure members, not just Focal Points, on confidential referral, as all individuals appear to carry out this activity.
- Ensure that re-election of Protection Structures is not carried out in the final General Assembly, but that individual members who have become inactive are replaced on an ongoing basis.
- Place emphasis on establishing a clear meeting and planning schedule, including coaching on how to facilitate effective meetings of the Protection Structures.
- As part of exit planning ensure different scenarios are discussed, such as the departure of one of the group leaders, and different actions the Protection Structures can take to minimise negative impact.
- Develop simple guidelines for Animators that can be integrated into current meetings and training sessions with Protection Structures on drawing boundaries for members involvement in individual cases, including the use of role-play.
- During exit planning, support Protection Structures to define clear objectives for information collection and sharing as part of the protection monitoring, early warning and wider reporting systems.

### Awareness raising

- Train Protection Structures on the use of theatre / drama as a routine activity, to support engaging awareness-raising approaches in the long term.
- Carry out a review of the use of protection playing cards in awareness raising<sup>36</sup> and consider other simple tools that can be left with the Protection Structures.<sup>37</sup>

### Cooperation between Protection Structures:

- Carry out training sessions with mixed groups of members of the CPC, Women's Forum and Change Agents in each community to support the development of these relationships.
- Support the Protection Structures to carry out a review of this co-operation as part of exit planning.

### Material support

- At the start of each project, print copies of the summary modules to give to the Protection Structures whilst waiting for the procurement of the plastic-covered copies.
- Routinely budget for and provide rain coats and boots.
- As part of exit planning, support the Protection Structures to identify a possible long-term meeting space. This may include using some of the frais de fonctionnement to construct a simple meeting room or developing signed agreements with a local school or health centre, ensuring that a risk analysis of different options is carried out

### Engagement with local authorities

- During monthly *Reunions Mixtes*, support the follow-up of actions and accountability by not only identifying which authority is responsible for an action, but which authority will monitor what happens.
- As part of exit planning, hold a meeting with the Protection Structures and local authorities to decide upon what types and spaces of engagement they would like to continue after project closure.
- Support the Protection Structures to advocate with local authorities to sign simple identity documents after a risk analysis has been carried out.
- As part of exit planning, encourage the local authorities to include, in handover documents, their cooperation with the Protection Structures.
- Ensure that suitable emphasis is placed upon training and coaching Protection Structures on meeting facilitation.

### Recommendations for funders and NGOs using community-based protection approaches

#### • Ensure that expectations of sustainability are realistic

Given the systematic problems underpinning protection threats in Eastern DRC, and ongoing insecurity, ensure that expectations of the sustainability of community group activities is realistic and that some form of longer-term support may be required, or that if the security situation deteriorates, renewed support to former communities may be needed.

#### • Ensure that definitions of sustainability don't focus on a narrow definition of activities

Recognise that sustainability does not only refer to the ongoing organisation of group activities, but also the wider knowledge, attitude and behaviour changes in a community, even if activities are not ongoing after project closure. When activities do continue, recognise that there may still be value in activities that are not carried out in groups, such as supporting self-protection strategies and confidential referral. It may not be useful for an organisation to define itself as sustainable, but to be open to how activities and groups evolve over time, and what they see as most relevant to their situation.

#### • Have realistic expectations of what changes are possible and how these can be reflected in M&E Frameworks

The nature of many protection threats is that they may return as the wider environment changes. Don't see this necessarily as a failure of a project, but recognise what incremental change is possible and realistic in this environment and then make sure that objectives, outcomes and indicators in log frames and M&E frameworks reflect this.

#### • Move beyond one-year funding time frames

Recognise that although changes can be achieved in one year, in the context of a chronic crisis in Eastern DRC, ideally a minimum of two years of support is required. Working within annual funding cycles to provide multi-year support to communities can be a significant resource drain on partners and teams.

#### • Ensure that the principle of voluntary participation is respected and that any remuneration is appropriate

Plan project activities to minimise the impact upon participants' normal activities and their ability to earn an income. Make sure remuneration provided is appropriate, and coordinate with other agencies where possible. This may include providing some form of compensation for time spent during training sessions, but ensure that this amount is not so large as to be perceived by other community members or local authorities as a 'salary'. Encourage remuneration 'in kind' by covering basic equipment, such as rain coats, boots, bicycles and T-Shirts.

#### • Budget for sufficient staff support

Recognise that, often, the support most valued by community members, and which can have the strongest impact upon both process and outcome sustainability, involves a large amount of staff time, but not necessarily high-activity costs. Support project teams to reflect these costs in budgets in ways that meet donor requirements but don't require cuts to these costs. Donors should encourage constructive dialogue on budgeting around 'projects that use a soft approach based on dedicating a lot of time in accompanying community structures.

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## ANNEX A: LIST OF RESEARCH SITES

Community	Project Dates	Partner Organisation
<b>North Kivu: Masisi</b>		
Rubaya	October–December 2015	SOPROP
Bihambwe		
Kitchanga	April 2013–May 2014 The Women's Forum received additional support between December 2014 and March 2015	Benefance then SOPROP
Burungu		
Rugarama		
<b>North Kivu: South Lubero</b>		
Alimbongo	May 2009–September 2012	CEPROSSAN
Kitsumbiro	May 2009–March 2014	
Mighobwe		
Kikovu		
Kanyabayonga		
<b>Ituri: Irumu</b>		
Sorodo	March 2011–March 2013	AJEDEC
Boga		
Bukiringi		
Ozoba		
Gety		
Soke		
<b>Haut Uele: Niangara</b>		
Ligunza	March 2011–March 2013	ACPD
Mangeka		
Nambia		
Zande		
<b>Haut Uele: Dungu [NB the majority of sites are neighborhoods of Dungu]</b>		
Ngilima	March 2011–March 2013	Conscience
Bamukandi		
Moussa		



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Feedback on report: Melanie Kesmaecker-Wissing, Richard Nunn, Rachel Hastie, Emma Fanning and Joanna Trevor.

Donors that have funded the standalone protection programme in the past (alphabetical order):

DFID  
ECHO  
European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)  
Individual European women's organisations  
IrishAid  
Music Circle  
Pooled Fund  
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)  
UNICEF

WE  
WON'T  
LIVE  
WITH  
POVERTY



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