



📍 Democratic Republic of Congo

How to deal with constant transfers of local authorities

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The community protection programme in the DRC consists of three pillars: knowledge of the laws and rights that protect the populations, good collaboration between local authorities and community members, and self-referral by victims of abuse to the care services available in the communities.

The local authorities and the members of community protection structures (CPSs) must understand the project in the same way if we are to obtain the hoped-for results at the end of the project. The project invests in the authorities by strengthening their capacities in different areas of protection, by providing them with legal texts produced by Oxfam or the partner, etc. The authorities therefore have a good understanding of the approach and adequately support the CPS members in carrying out the project activities, particularly by committing to mitigate protection-related risks in the communities targeted by the project. However, they are often transferred to other localities that are not covered by the project. They leave and take the different legal texts with them, and they do not brief their replacements about the commitments made at the various information-sharing sessions between the authorities, the community leaders and the CPSs. The new authorities who arrive in the communities do not have any notion of the community protection approach and are not familiar with the project implemented in the communities. They have to be brought up to speed. CPS members find it difficult to carry out certain activities, such as advocacy with new authorities.

In order to tackle this challenge, a liaison committee consisting of two community leaders (one man and one woman) has been set up in each community. This committee acts as a bridge between the CPSs and the local authorities.

It is responsible for:

- Liaising between the CPSs and the authorities in the case of a change – i.e. bringing the local authority up to speed and keeping them up to date about the project and the commitments undertaken by their predecessor;
- Supporting the CPSs in carrying out advocacy and sensitisation actions, where necessary;
- Facilitating exchanges between authorities, leaders and CPS members.

With regard to the provision of legal texts to the different local authorities, they are responsible for:

- Contacting the public prosecutor at the court of first instance before providing legal texts to the local authorities;
- Carrying out a joint mission with the prosecutor to provide the local authorities with legal texts;
- Ensuring that the local authorities who receive legal texts sign a declaration of receipt.

In case of replacement, the liaison committee members bring the new authorities posted to the communities up to speed and introduce them to the CPS members and their activities. These authorities participate in the project activities, having a good understanding of the community approach and the project.

With regard to the legal texts, the local authorities who are transferred return them to the various state offices if the prosecutor was present when they were provided. They are included on lists of state property.