

Increasing Security in DR Congo: Gender-Responsive Strategies for Combating Sexual Violence

Current efforts of the international community to combat rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo are often not responsive to the manner in which masculinity and femininity are performed in relation to sexual violence in the aftermath of armed conflict. This may put a strain on their effectiveness. Focusing on the phenomenon of sexual violence among civilians in a post-conflict environment this policy brief offers an analysis of how an intensified focus on the gender-dimensions of violence will improve programmatic effectiveness in the fight against sexual violence.

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International attention for the widespread sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is massive. In 2010 alone, the international donor community dedicated approximately 40 million USD to the explicit programmatic aim of combating rape in Eastern DRC.¹

In analyses linked to these internationally supported programs, sexual violence is repeatedly juxtaposed with the state's limited capacity to ensure a monopoly of violence, reform security forces, and enforce laws against sexual violence and gender inequality. Indeed, these are important aspects tied to the ongoing instability and violence against and among civilians in Eastern DRC. However, as more attention is paid to the issue of sexual violence in the post-war reality of large parts of the country, it is becoming increasingly clear that the problem requires an additional level of analysis.

Indeed, focusing on the phenomenon of sexual violence among civilians necessitates further understanding the social construction of gender in the region and how gender relations are currently being strained by efforts to aid women at the perceived expense of men. In providing this analysis, this policy brief aims to inform the donor community, as well as (international) non-governmental organizations (I-NGOs) on ways and means to strengthen programmatic responses to the issue of sexual violence in the DRC context.²

Unraveling International Approaches to Combating Sexual Violence

Programmatically, the responses of the international donor community to sexual violence are diverse and highly dependent on the political will and capacity of national actors. For example, strategies vary per bilateral donor or multilateral actor, per implementing partner, and sometimes even per province. There are, however, also overlapping aspects of these strategies.

At the start of 2011, there were already two overarching donor supported efforts with directives to address sexual violence in the DRC: the DRC Pooled Fund (DRC/PF) and the Stabilization and Recovery Funding Facility (SRFF). Together these funds

¹ See Annex 1: "International Funding Modalities for Combating Sexual Violence".

² This policy brief is based on a desk study and two field studies in the period June 2010 – February 2011. During the field studies 75 interviews were conducted with 16 Congolese NGOs, 4 International NGOs, 10 embassies, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in DRC and several UN agencies, and, in addition, multiple group discussions were held with program beneficiaries from communities in Eastern DRC. This brief is prepared in the context of the Netherlands Peace, Security and Development Network (PSDN). For a synthesis of research methodologies and all data collected by this network, please refer to the (forthcoming) reports on the website www.psdnetwork.nl.

accounted for over 15 million USD for sexual violence related interventions. These multi-donor financing mechanisms are complemented by ongoing bilateral donor strategies and funding modalities targeting different issues related to gender inequity, impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, and capacity building for the Congolese state and community at-large, as described in Annex 1.

A closer look at the strategies³ behind these financial streams highlights similarities among them at three levels. First, they prioritize targeted programs for women's physical, psychosocial and economical safety. Second, the strategies include impunity reduction efforts focusing on the security and justice sector. And finally, there is a focus on community sensitization, which includes training of local leaders and magistrates on the laws against sexual violence and gender inequality.

While these strategies signify an important step in restoring the social order of the region, a closer analysis of their responsiveness to gender raises critical questions about effectiveness and sustainability. Along these lines, it is important to note the following three shortcomings to the overall strategy for combating sexual violence in DRC: 1) the *narrative* explaining sexual violence ignores the local gender norms that relate to rape; 2) the *strategies* reinforce competition between men and women, while opportunities for transforming problematic gender norms and relations are not emphasized; and 3) *measuring the success* of programs is often solely in terms of quantitative results without accounting for the need for addressing qualitative changes.

The Dominant Narrative: Rape as a Weapon of War

Donors and Congolese alike have explicitly framed sexual violence in the context of war by (foreign) armed forces in DRC. Indeed, the continuation of sexual violence is considered an indication that peace is yet to materialize, while rape is seen as a "strategy for undermining efforts to achieve and maintain stability in areas torn by conflict but striving for peace".⁴ Although sexual violence against civilians intensified significantly during the concurrent wars, it is important to qualify this assumption by recognizing that rape is still being committed in post-war DRC, primarily by uniformed forces, but also by civilians and within marriages.⁵

First, the dominant narrative does not account for the occurrence of rape committed by both civilians and armed forces in relatively peaceful and stable communities. Reducing the phenomenon of sexual violence to a 'weapon of war' fails to address alternative explanations for sexual violence, which may be related to the broader gender dynamics within Congolese society.

Second, by solely framing sexual violence as a security problem, policy instruments for addressing the issue remain focused on humanitarian relief, security interventions, early recovery activities, and small-scale state-building efforts. This approach is underpinned by the assumption that restoring the authority of the state and bringing perpetrators to justice will decrease the phenomenon of sexual violence. These ideas are underscored by comments from Margot Wallström, special representative on sexual violence for the United Nations, who shared that, "If women continue to suffer sexual violence, it is not because the law is inadequate to protect them, but because it is inadequately enforced".⁶

Finally, the 'weapon of war narrative' fosters a geographic bias to war-affected areas, which influences where funds are targeted in the country. This results in a targeted focus, whereby the majority of internationally supported programs are in the East. Yet, a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of sexual violence in relation to the local gender norms indicates that the issue is widespread throughout the DRC and goes beyond the scope of the current strategies for combating this type of violence.

As a result of the heavy focus on the issue of sexual violence in relation to war, programmatic efforts may overlook opportunities to simultaneously and

3 The Humanitarian Action Plan, La Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre, the UN Comprehensive Strategy for Combating Sexual Violence, and additional bilateral programmatic strategies from a.o. USAID, The Netherlands, UK Department for International Development, Sweden, Canada and Belgium.

4 "Clinton on Allegations of Mass Rape in DRC", U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, August 25, 2010.

5 Peterman, A. & Palermo, T. (2011), 'Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 101, No. 6, pp 1060 – 1067.

6 "UN Official calls DR Congo 'rape capital of the world'", BBC, 28-04-2010.

constructively address the societal needs of men and women. Despite the fact that men also experience (sexual) violence, and that their vulnerabilities are linked to those of women, the pervading perspective is that “women are prioritized in our programming as they are the most affected by the violence afflicted upon them. There is no time to look into the needs of vulnerable men”.⁷ Focusing on women only as an approach begs asking how programmatic efforts can be expanded to address societal ideals of masculinity in relation to the violence in the DRC?

The Strategy: A Zero-Sum Game

While acknowledging the urgent need to provide assistance to survivors of violence, it appears that assistance is often solely focused on women, and punishment is frequently doled out exclusively to men. The outcome is a zero-sum approach to working with men and women, which reinforces perceptions that contribute to an ongoing competition within the society.

A Simplistic Understanding of Gender

Both Congolese and international actors tend to understand gender in relation to sexual violence in the context of women’s subordination to men. In programmatic strategies for combating sexual violence, this is most often translated into a women/victims vs. men/perpetrators dichotomy. In other words, the focus is organized around assisting and empowering vulnerable women, the victims of sexual violence, by way of multi-sectorial assistance. Conversely men, as (potential) perpetrators of violence, are sought to be contained and taught to accept gender equality through programs dedicated to justice, security sector reform, training, and sensitization.

Resulting from these tactics is a simplistic understanding of gender that is perpetuated within, for example, the UN Comprehensive Strategy for Combating Sexual Violence. Evidence of this is seen by recycling the idea that, “Although the beneficiaries of the strategy are supposed to be women, it does take into account the male side of the equation by having a strong focus on reforming the military and combating impunity”.⁸

As this understanding of gender is carried forward, most implementing agencies and (I-)NGOs now explain working on the gender dimensions of sexual violence as working with men to address the vulnerabilities women face at the hands of men in the society. For example, a representative of a health organiza-

tion in DRC states, “We understood that we could only be effective once we engaged men in the fight against sexual violence, as they are the ones raping the women. Our new strategy is to train the men in the communities on the laws of sexual violence. That is gender”.⁹ It is important to note these ideals are not only supported by Congolese organizations. Indeed, one representative from a large international legal organization claims, “To defend women’s rights means showing the law and this will have an impact on gender in the community. Men will see that it is wrong to rape women”.¹⁰

Leaving the Gendered Vulnerabilities of Men Aside

The downside to this simplification of gender is that programs neglect to address ideal types of manhood and womanhood in relation to male sexuality. While it is important to engage men in improving the situation of women and girls, the current approaches offer little evidence that men are co-empowered to also redress their own gendered vulnerabilities. This gap can contribute to men feeling accused, abandoned and more vulnerable. Left unattended, these feelings may impede the progress of combating sexual violence.

In addition, programmatic success is doubtful when women’s empowerment is promoted in a manner that outright challenges men’s authority. In doing so, these programs inadvertently maintain men’s perceptions that doing this work “empowers women, at the expense of men”¹¹ and fail to take account of the interlocking nature of womanhood and manhood. When aiming to combat sexual violence, it is not helpful to ignore these interdependencies, which are oppressive to both women and men. Therefore, programming for sexual security should seize every opportunity to promote a transformation of these societal gender norms.

Measuring Success: Bean Counting Beneficiaries

The victim-perpetrator dichotomy recycled throughout a majority of sexual violence programs

⁷ Interview with UN official, January 2011..

⁸ Interview with donor country representative, June 2010.

⁹ Representative from Congolese health organization, January 2011.

¹⁰ Interview with representatives from an international legal organization, January 2011.

¹¹ Group discussion with men from Kibumba village, North-Kivu, January 2011.

relates to how programs are monitored, evaluated, and valued. The current approach heavily emphasizes quantitative results as a measure for success while failing to include qualitative means for addressing gender-related causes of rape.

For now, programmatic success is tied to reaching specific numbers of those assisted and punished. This promotes a dependency on quantifiable efforts, such as tracking the number of rape victims receiving medical, psycho-social, legal, and economic assistance. Conversely, it also pushes for higher conviction rates for sexual assault offenders and monitoring the number of perpetrators incarcerated. Indeed, quantitative successes in this field are to be applauded as they demonstrate a capacity to provide services to rape victims and enforce the rule of law as regards sexual violence.

However, this perpetuates an instrumentalist approach, which asserts that by documenting these figures programs demonstrate their success not only in delivering aid, but also in *combating* sexual violence. By doing this, efforts create a quantitative preference in their methodology. When used out of context it can be interpreted as having a qualitative effect on societal gender norms.

This dependency on quantitative results has consequences. First, it means that the donor community will continue to predominantly support instrumentalist strategies for combating rape. Second, as a result there are fewer opportunities for recognizing strategies that also incorporate qualitative methods. Finally, this approach fuels a race among NGOs to prioritize counting the number of victims assisted and violators punished in an effort to accrue more recognition from the international donor community. In the end, this encourages a focus on women survivors of sexual violence rather than addressing the broader gender dynamics underlying violence against women and men in Congolese society.

Complementary Approaches for Combating Sexual Violence¹²

In the end, recognizing these gaps in relation to the narrative around rape, the strategies for combating sexual violence and the limitations of measuring success, shows where policies can be improved to better reflect the lived realities of people in Eastern DRC. What follows is an analysis of how current

strategies for combating sexual violence can be complemented with a gender-oriented approach.

The Alternative Narrative: Gender-Centered Explanations of Sexual Violence

In an effort to strengthen the current donor approaches for combating sexual violence it is important to have a complete understanding of the root causes triggering the problem. Examining sexual violence, as it pertains to state failure, the social position of women, and impunity are important aspects within the larger peace and security problem in DRC. Yet, it is vital to contextualize these problems with an analysis of the gendered dimensions of violence to enable policies and programs to address the root causes of sexual violence.

In this regard, local experiences and understandings of the gendered aspects of Congolese society are informative. This is seen especially in relation to norms, roles, and identities of men and women. Local perspectives suggest it is inadequate to conceive of “sexual violence as only linked to rebels and soldiers, instead of a problem for everybody that goes beyond the question of impunity, [as] this is an issue of gender”.¹³

Today, in the aftermath of war and in a context of extensive poverty and state fragility, Congolese gender roles have changed; however, not necessarily in tandem with perceived social expectations and identities of men and women. For example, this is conveyed among groups of Congolese men through an emerging discourse around male suffering and manhood-in-crisis. These ideas seek to contextualize the loss of male privilege, which are tied to their roles as protector and head-of-household.

Alongside these male-centered difficulties are the new divisions of labor born out of the conflict. Women are often more likely to be involved in small commercial activities, and this has been interpreted by men as breeding female emancipation at the expense of male authority.

In response to these perceived threats and emergent multi-dimensional male vulnerabilities, explicit

¹² The approaches discussed in this section have been identified with the help of the following partners: Pole Institute, Goma; CO-MEN, Goma; Lofepaco, Beni.

¹³ Interview with representative from Congolese research institute, January 2011.

displays of male aggression emerge in various forms of violence, which at times involves seeking access to sex. “As masculinity is strongly connected to a man’s sexuality, he is supposed to have a strong desire and be sexually active, even when he is not married. If he does not have money to pay for a woman, he has to take her with force”.¹⁴ Thus, such contexts, where male vulnerability is resolved through exerting force, underscore the challenges in addressing the issue of sexual violence.

Meanwhile, simultaneous to this ongoing process of sex-related masculinity, women’s experiences are also contributing to the context. It is important to investigate the social sphere of women. This can be done by understanding how women exist in relation to each other, to men, and especially, to male sexuality. The last point is critical, as it is vital to recognize how women live in “a culture of sexuality [that] creates a dependency of women’s femininity to men’s masculinity”.¹⁵ Essentially, the social expectations at play promote that women be seen as an (sexual) object.

There are consequences to these social dynamics, and these are made particularly clear when considering the impact of sexual violence. The ongoing presence of these social values maintains unrealistic expectations that men and women feel pressured to meet. With sexual violence, ideals of how to perform man-and-women-hood are disrupted. More explicitly, a raped woman loses her image of chastity and purity and therefore her means of performing idealized femininity. Conversely, a violated woman’s husband can be portrayed as weak for having failed to protect her, which jeopardizes his portrayal of idealized masculinity. In these instances, the pressure of social stigma often pushes men to abandon their wives and women into a situation where they are left alone with few, if any, community resources to survive.

Inspired by questions concerning the origins of violence and its connection to men and women’s (dis)-empowerment, alternatives to the ‘rape as a weapon of war’ narrative are emerging. This is increasing the recognition that, although sexual violence in the DRC is war-related, war is not the only cause.

This perception is crucial to the larger process of re-conceptualizing strategies for combating rape. Recognizing that men and women’s sense of power

is deeply connected to how gender is idealized, understood, and enacted helps to address the issue of sexual violence more directly. This can be done with women and men as they become ‘agents for change’, rather than only pursuing an emergency ‘victim vs. violator’ response.

Ultimately, by providing these spaces for men and women to incrementally transform core societal notions of how to ideally perform masculinity and femininity, these types of strategies create a win-win environment co-empowering men and women, both individually and collectively, in combating sexual violence.

The Strategy: A Win-Win Environment

Empowering Men in a Win-Win Environment

Currently the typical approach in community sensitization programs is to speak to people’s logic in an effort to reduce gender-related sexual violence. This approach emphasizes behavioral change methods focusing on awareness, education, and information exchanges on the laws for gender equality and against sexual violence. While these techniques bring attention to the problem of sexual violence and do reach women and men, the impact can stop when individuals put down the pamphlet, turn-off the radio program, or walk past the billboard.

What these methods lack is a deeper connection with men and women on a level that taps into societal norms and values. A win-win strategy should understand that men’s sense of vulnerability must surface constructively. It should build on that understanding by giving men opportunities to share what triggers the violence they direct at themselves, other men, women, and children. These strategies should also promote opportunities for men to express their sense of disempowerment in the context of poverty and war. It should allow them to express their fears of “the losing their advantages and privileges”¹⁶ as a perceived result of women’s empowerment through mainstream strategies to combat sexual violence.

Local community initiatives have shown that it is possible to redress what it means to be a man in relation to other men, as well as to women. For

¹⁴ Group discussion with Congolese men in Goma, North-Kivu, January 2011.

¹⁵ Interview with Congolese women’s network, Bukavu, South-Kivu, July 2010.

¹⁶ Group discussion with men from Kibumba village, North-

example, efforts can involve channeling feelings of failure into opportunities to construct a new identity that mirrors the changing norms and identities related to men and masculinity and the promotion of non-violence. This means supporting men to encourage each other to enact an ideal of manhood that is about “preventing gender-based violence, supporting pacification efforts, providing child-care, and working in partnership with their wives”.¹⁷

Additionally, it includes using constructive confidence measures that “show men less threatening ways of behaving and transforming themselves into ‘agents for change’ in a setting that is opposed to violence”.¹⁸ By putting the men in charge of their own processes of social reorientation, they feel empowered about changing the meaning and the manner of how they perform masculinity. They also build their self-confidence and leadership in the context of combating sexual violence. In these instances, men are engaged in providing opportunities to meet and discuss community-specific issues around gender, masculinities, femininities, and gender-based violence by working together with women and women’s organizations.

Overall, these strategies are based on the notion that men will positively change when working in collaboration with each other and with women. Ultimately, by accounting for these social nuances, programs for combating sexual violence can increase their capacity to counter and amend ongoing gender norms and values underpinning men and women’s roles.

Empowering Women in a Win-Win Environment

For women, a win-win environment should incorporate methods that take into consideration society’s expectations of women and the role of women in that society, while providing opportunities to achieve women’s empowerment and emancipation. When women can empower themselves in a way consistent with the context, they can engage men in the process of how women acquire more freedoms and independence. For example, when women provide opportunities for men to play an important socially expected role, women retain the possibility of achieving their own ambitions, such as access to training, education, and financial success.

Furthermore, if women are encouraged to devote more of their time to activities *outside* the home, effective strategies should understand that men, in turn, must be reoriented and empowered to devote more of their

time to activities *inside* the home. Ideally, this should be done in a way that does not jeopardize their masculinity. To do so effectively, approaches should support women who want to incorporate opportunities for men.

A local women’s leadership program in North-Kivu offers a good example of a win-win empowerment strategy for women. This program takes into account that inviting women to participate in a micro-finance project creates vulnerabilities for their husbands in relation to other men in the community: “He is left alone at home to care for the children, the land, and the animals. He will be perceived ‘the woman’ in the house”.¹⁹

In these types of programs, there have been instances of husbands eventually venting their frustration by sabotaging women-led development opportunities such as micro-finance projects. When the damage is rendered the family is left without the benefit of the project, such as chickens or goats, which are vital sources of food and income. To counter this destruction, the local program emphasizes the importance of symbolically having “husbands give permission to their wives, as well as wear colored fabric over the right shoulder to show their approval to other men. This creates positive change in the family and there is less conflict”.²⁰ These incremental tactics help maintain elements of how men and women socially engage one another, while advancing beyond competitive practices that historically create gender-related violence.

Essentially, by reducing tensions between men and women, a win-win environment explores how gender can be reoriented, simultaneously empowering women and men. Moreover, it underscores that while the war disrupted gender norms, gender-based-violence is not only war-inspired but also community-centered. Thus, efforts to combat rape in the DRC are likely to be more effective when they incorporate opportunities for men and women to resolve conflicts together.

¹⁷ Interview with coordinator of Congolese Men Alliance, January 2011.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Interview with coordinator of leadership organization, January 2011.

²⁰ Ibid.

Measurements with Meaning: A Qualitative Change

Ultimately, these win-win examples, based on experiences generated by grass-roots initiatives in Eastern DRC, illustrate differing methods of achieving behavioral change around sexual violence. It is important to note that improving the responsiveness of these efforts is not only about promoting strategies that reduce the incidents of violence. It should also include strategies that increase cooperation among men and women through creative partnerships. Therefore it is important to gather evidence on the effects of incorporating gender norms into program strategies. This knowledge could improve the impact of programmatic responsiveness and illustrate creative ways of measuring success.

Conclusions

Sexual violence in DRC is gendered. Not only is this violence gendered in how it is performed, but also in how it can be fought against. Prevailing over gender related violence means dismantling the ongoing tensions between men and women related to prescribed gender norms, roles, and identities. In doing so, it is possible to achieve a win-win environment. This means working towards methods that not only counter these tensions, but also support the development of beneficial gender norms, roles, and identities of men and women in a (post-)war DRC.

To improve effectiveness in combating rape, the international donor community should target gender-related root causes of sexual violence by taking account of the following observations:

- First, it is necessary to advance beyond the ‘rape as a weapon of war’ narrative and promote a more complex understanding of the gender-dimensions of sexual violence. Central to this is the notion that men and women’s sense of power is deeply connected to how gender is understood and enacted. As a result, the primary focus on assisting victims of sexual violence and punishing perpetrators should be complemented with a programmatic goal to transform gender norms through co-empowerment strategies.
- Programmatically, this will have implications for how medical and psycho-social support strategies are designed; how women and men’s empowerment efforts can be further developed; how justice sector reform can be linked to

gender-transformative actions on an individual and community level; and how security sector reform strategies can be made more effective in combating sexual violence. General policy directives regarding these programmatic pillars include:

- a) Complement psycho-social assistance for female victims of sexual violence by also offering assistance packages for men. This should include packages for men who have been afflicted by violence personally, as well as men who have been forced to observe violence perpetuated upon a family member, and/or experience cultural-social pressure to abandon a wife who has been violated.
- b) Women empowerment strategies must take into account the fact that inviting women to participate in empowerment projects – such as a micro-finance project, vocational training or literacy programs – may create gendered vulnerabilities for their husbands in relation to other men in the community. Effective women empowerment strategies should seek to co-empower husbands simultaneously, so as to generate gender-transformative change in the household and at the community level.
- c) The justice sector reform should expand by further linking justice to ongoing gender-related social services that connect directly to how men – both perpetrators, male victims and relatives of women who have been violated – conceive of violence and the impact it has on their manhood. This will increase the rehabilitative effect that justice potentially has on the social position of both the direct victim of violence and her/his relatives.
- d) Community sensitization programs can promote sustainable long-term social change by seeking joint empowerment of women and men. This implies addressing cultural-social pressures regarding how men achieve masculinity and women perform femininity, and the interdependencies between them. Moreover, it means finding ways to address the vulnerabilities men and women experience individually and collectively.
- e) In supporting security sector reform (SSR), it is important to recognize that rape committed by soldiers and police officers is influenced by the gender norms around sexuality in the broader society. Central to this is the development of a strategy that reorients how soldiers and police develop their masculinity and sexuality in rela-

tion to their profession. This could generate peer pressure through a critical mass of soldiers who reject using force, of any kind, to achieve masculinity.

- Additionally, adjusting the coordination mechanisms of the strategies and funds for combating sexual violence in the DRC is required. Currently, efforts to coordinate donor assistance are conceptually framed around emergency aid (DRC Pooled Fund) and stabilization and recovery (SRFF). Improvements should address coordination, harmonization, and alignment of stand-alone bilateral efforts focusing on gender-transformations. In turn, it is essential to simultaneously strengthen DRC policies regarding gender and gender mainstreaming in development strategies.
- Finally, international public and political awareness of the gendered dynamics around rape are limited. This obstructs the development of gender-responsive policymaking for combating sexual violence. In order to lay the groundwork for the activities mentioned above, it is critical to extend the current understanding of the complexities of violence to those in charge of decision-making at the capital level. This involves a combined communication effort of embassy staff, NGO workers, and media, both within and outside DRC.

Recommended Reading

Baaz, M.E. & Stern, M. (2010), *The Complexity of Violence: A Critical Analysis of Sexual Violence in the DRC*, Working Paper on Gender and Violence, No. SIDA61275en, Sida & Nordic Africa Institute.

Dolan, C. (2010), *War is not over yet – Community perceptions of sexual violence and its underpinnings in Eastern DRC*, International Alert.

Peterman, A. & Palermo, T. (2011), 'Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 101, No. 6, pp 1060 – 1067.

ABOUT ...

The Clingendael Conflict Research Unit

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' is a training and research organization on international affairs. The Conflict Research Unit (CRU) is a specialized team, focusing on conflict-related issues in developing countries.

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ANNEX 1: International Funding Modalities for Combating Sexual Violence²¹

Two major **multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs)** include directives to combat sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):

- The **DRC Pooled Fund (DRC/PF)** was established in 2006 to respond to the humanitarian impact of the issue of sexual violence. As such, it funds activities related to medical healthcare and psychosocial assistance for victims of sexual violence, but also legal assistance and social rehabilitation. The main implementers are UN agencies and (I-)NGOs. In 2010, approximately **2.2 million USD** was allocated on protection projects specifically targeting sexual and gender-based violence.
- The **Stabilization and Recovery Funding Facility (SRFF)** was established in 2009 as the financial instrument linked to the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), which supports the DRC government's reconstruction plan for war-affected areas, known as STAREC. Its sexual violence pillar was developed to coordinate all activities under the Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Violence. The main focus is on multi-sectoral responses, prevention & protection, fighting impunity, data collection and security sector reform. As of yet, Belgium, The Netherlands and Norway have directly funded the SRFF, which in 2010 encompassed **13 million USD**. Other bi- and multilateral donors such as USAID, Sweden and the European Union Delegation are strategically aligned around the sexual violence pillar of the ISSSS/STAREC strategy. Combined, their budget in 2010 was estimated **16 million USD**.

Besides these two MDTFs, all international donors use **bilateral modalities** – such as a gender fund, or a civil society fund – for supporting programs that address a wide-range of issues related to gender inequalities, impunity around sexual violence, capacity building of the Congolese government around gender and community sensitization. For example:

- Besides the programs that are coordinated with ISSSS/STAREC, the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** has launched a **10 million USD**, five-year program “Bienvenue aux Changements dans la Communauté” (BCC).

It is run by the International Medical Corps, which aims at assisting communities affected by gender-based violence in the East by sensitizing them on the law and by promoting community cohesion.

- The **Royal Netherlands Embassy** supports the **9 million USD**, three-year “Gender & Justice Program” that is implemented by Heal Africa and the American Bar Association in Maniema. This program aims to sensitize communities on gender-equality and laws about sexual violence, assist victims of gender-based violence medically, and psycho-socially and economically guarantee their access to the court system.
- The **UK Department for International Development (DFID)** supports the capacity building of the Congolese Ministry of Gender in a three-year, **1.3 million USD** program.

²¹ Please note that all donors indicate that it is extremely difficult to pull out all expenditures on sexual violence and gender, as it is often part of broader programs. This information was extracted from a variety of sources, such as 1) République Démocratique du Congo: Plan d'Action Humanitaire 2011, www.rdc-humanitaire.net; 2) Quarterly Report for October – December 2010 of the MONUSCO Sexual Violence Unit; 3) United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence, March 18, 2009; 4) additional figures provided by the Humanitarian Pooled Fund and the MONUSCO Sexual Violence in Conflict Unit in February 2011; 5) Estimations of strategically aligned funds are based on USAID's \$32,2 million, five-year programs “USHINDE” (IMC, ABA, COOPI) and “CASE” (IMA, Heal Africa, Panzi), the Swedish two-year, \$3,1 million “Access to Justice Program” (UNDP and the Belgian Technical Cooperation), the EU support to COOPI, Heal Africa, AMI and SCA (total amount of 5 million over 3 years), and 6) Information provided by bilateral donors on bilateral programs for sexual violence.