



Literature review of Gender and Power Analyses in the Provinces of North and South Kivu Kivu, DRC

Commissioned by CARE DRC

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1 Introduction

The present literature review of gender and power analyses in the provinces of North and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is commissioned by **CARE DRC**. CARE DRC aligns with the CARE 2020 Program Strategy¹, which emphasizes that ‘at its root, poverty is caused by unequal power relations that result in the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities between women and men, between power-holders and marginalized communities, and between countries. CARE believes that poverty cannot be overcome without addressing those underlying power imbalances’.²

Incorporating a **gender and power analysis**³ to inform programming is the first commitment of CARE International Gender Equality Policy⁴. CARE DRC’s Strategic Plan⁵ highlights its experience in programming for gender justice and reducing GBV as a strength. Therefore this contextual analysis of gender and power relations in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu aims to ‘provide elements to update the problems, the underlying causes, aspirations and specific potentials for women and men, girls and boys, male and female youth in these two provinces’ so that CARE DRC programs, especially the future GEWEP III and MAWE TATU II programs (see brief description in Box 1) as well as any new proposals, will in the future be more transformative. (see ToR)

Box 1: Programmes GEWEP and Mawe Tatu in brief

✚ **Gender Equality Women Empowerment Programme (GEWEP)** aims at women and girls living in North and South Kivu benefitting from transformation and gender justice exercise their socio-economic, civil, and political rights. Following the WEP and GEWEP I, GEWEP II is being implemented since March 2016 in partnership with ETN, DFJ and PARDE. GEWEP III is currently at design stage to begin in 2020 in five territories in North Kivu: Rutshuru, Lubero, Beni, Masisi, and Nyiragongo, including the towns of Goma, Beni and Butembo.

✚ **Mawe Tatu II** aims to improve the socio-economic status and resilience of women and youth and to assure that they can influence decisions that concern their enterprise, household and community. Following Mawe Tatu I implemented since December 2015 and in partnership with ADJ, COMEN and Swiss TPH, Mawe Tatu II is currently at design stage to begin after May 2019 in the following health zones: Goma, Karisimbi, Nyiragongo and Rutshuru in North Kivu; Ibanda, Kadutu, Bagira, Walungu and Lemera in South Kivu. The main interventions will be around women and youth entrepreneurship and addressing harmful social gender norms.

¹ [https://www.care-international.org/files/files/CARE_2020_Program_Strategy-English\(1\).pdf](https://www.care-international.org/files/files/CARE_2020_Program_Strategy-English(1).pdf), pg. 2

² [https://www.care-international.org/files/files/CARE_2020_Program_Strategy-English\(1\).pdf](https://www.care-international.org/files/files/CARE_2020_Program_Strategy-English(1).pdf)

³ There are a variety of tools that can be used to do [gender and power analysis](#); they are not necessarily separate processes, however any situational analysis must include an analysis of gender and power. In humanitarian settings a [rapid gender analysis](#) is required.

⁴ <https://www.care-international.org/files/files/publications/Final%20CI%20Gender%20Equality%20Policy%202018.pdf>

⁵ CARE DRC Strategic Plan Draft: Strengthening our Foundations: Building our Programme- CARE DRC.



The analysis was conducted during 20 days between February and March 2019 by an external consultant. It consists of an internal and external **literature review** of previous gender analysis, assessments and country profiles focusing on the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls, their participation and voice (see Annex for consulted bibliography).

There has been a **large amount of analyses** conducted over the years in the DRC, but those analyses are not always widely shared nor used as secondary data for new analyses. Therefore each organization for each program conducts its own analysis almost from scratch. Recent gender analysis have pointed at participants' fatigue as a challenge to effective data collection. OXFAM's 2017 Gender Assessment in the Kasai stated: 'It is also worth mentioning that a number of FGD participants requested that some sort of compensation be provided for their participation, and some expressed disappointment at the fact that they had been asked questions many times before, with no concrete aid resulting from their answers.'⁶

Thus it is hoped that the results of this analysis will be sufficient to inform CARE's programmes and adapt them to better promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The results should also be **shared with CARE partners** and other organizations in the Kivus as appropriate. Since gender by definition is a social construct, it is important that this type of exercise is seen as a working document, updated regularly with new developments, findings and trends in the changing context of North and South Kivu.

The report starts with a brief description of the country profile and gender inequality, then the report looks at the following: gender norms, attitudes toward gender equality and cultural practices related to gender; governance and power structures; women and youth's socio-economic situation; and political participation and peace process. The report finishes with some key recommendations.

⁶ <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/kasai-the-forgotten-province-of-drc-gender-assessment-620410>, p.15



2 Gender and Power analysis

2.1 Democratic Republic of Congo: country profile and gender inequality

It is not possible to talk about the DRC without referring to ‘the lengthy and seemingly-intractable **humanitarian crisis**, (which) has a long history and is intertwined with prolonged and still-simmering internal and regional geopolitical conflicts (...) Development progress has been held back—and often rolled back—by these conditions. The country (which ranks 176 out of 189 on the Human Development Index⁷) finds itself in a situation of great need, with the majority of the population (63%) under the national poverty line (see further details below) and over 13.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance⁸ (see Box 2 for more details on recent demographic information).⁹

Box 2: Demographic information

- **9.9 million** people in need in terms of food security
- Over **4 million** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) - over half are women
- DRC ranks **152th** (out of 160 countries) on gender inequality index
- **56.6%** of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence
- DRC ranks **156th** (out of 176 countries) on corruption
- High and increasing percentage of youth (**63%** of population under 24)
- Trends toward urbanization at **40%**

Bailey et al (2011) found women and children face particular **vulnerabilities**: ‘Women and girls are consistently and uniformly disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, income, health and vulnerability to violence (...) Vulnerability is defined as the likelihood of being negatively affected by shocks or stresses. It occurs when individuals or households lack the capacity to prevent, mitigate or cope with such events. Income poverty emerged as the key factor triggering vulnerability. Poverty is also the consequence of many other risk factors, such as low earnings, unemployment, limited capacity to produce on agricultural land and spending household income on accessing basic services, among others. There are also gender differences as to how vulnerability is perceived: male-headed households identified rising prices, lack of agricultural extension services and low pay as the greatest economic vulnerabilities; female-headed households identified lack of decision making over the use of productive assets and income and lack of access to land. Health-related expenses resulting from injury or prolonged illness were also identified as a critical source of vulnerability by both male- and female-headed households, in both rural and urban areas.¹⁰

One example of the high vulnerability of women and girls in DRC is the impact of the current **outbreak of Ebola** in North Kivu (predominantly in Beni territory and its surroundings):

⁷ Latest figures for the Humanitarian Development Index (HDI), available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update>.

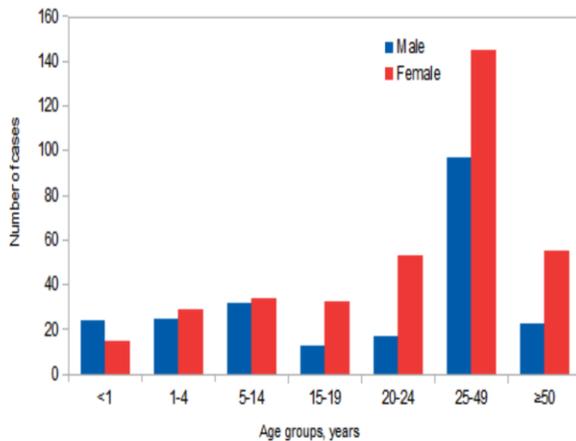
⁸ UNOCHA (Dec 2017) *DR Congo: 2017-2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (2018 update)*, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MAJ_DRC_HRP_2017_En.pdf.

N.B.: “People in need” includes: IDPs, refugees, returnees, host families, and repatriates.

⁹ CARE DRC Strategic Plan Draft: Strengthening our Foundations: Building our Programme- CARE DRC.

¹⁰ GSDRC (2012), *Poverty and Vulnerability in DRC*, p. 5, <http://gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq809.pdf>

Figure 3: Ebola virus disease cases by age groups in Northern Kivu and Ituri, Democratic Republic of the Congo, data as of 2 January 2019



‘Given the characteristics of the victims of this outbreak, who are predominantly women, this disease compounds the feminization of the vulnerability of individuals living in North Kivu’.¹¹ The latest data from WHO¹² shows that ‘amongst confirmed and probable cases, the case load has been highest in females aged 15-49 who are eligible for vaccination (i.e. non-pregnant), and also females aged 50 years and older (Figure 3). Amongst confirmed and probable cases, 61% (374/609) were female (median age=28) and were predominantly older than male cases (median age=25.5). There were 29 cases among pregnant women. Fifteen of the 29 cases were breastfeeding women’.

It is against this background of great need, poverty and vulnerabilities that **gender relations** unfold. The DRC Gender Profile commissioned by the Swedish Embassy in 2014 stated: ‘The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast and highly diverse country. Its range of ethnicities, religious and cultural traditions affect gender relations. So too do differences between the poor and rich, urban and rural, the leaders and the led, as well as varying levels of education and economic activities. Security varies across the country. Difficult communications also contribute to a complex society governed by multiple state and social/cultural institutions. Each of these aspects – and others – affects the gender relations in the DRC.’¹³

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in their October 2017 report, ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations’, observed: ‘The DRC is among the **lowest-scoring countries globally in terms of gender equality** (see Box 3)¹⁴, with widespread discriminatory social norms and institutions; limited political and economic participation by women; very high maternal mortality; and widespread sexual and gender based violence. Discriminatory social norms include women’s unequal status with respect to inheritance

Box 3: Gender Inequality Index: The DRC has a GII value of 0.652, ranking it 152 out of 160 countries in the 2017 index. 8.2 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 36.7 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 65.8 percent of their male counterparts. For every 100,000 live births, 693 women die from pregnancy related causes; and the adolescent birth rate is 124.2 births per 1,000 women of ages 15-19. Female participation in the labour market is 71.4 percent compared to 73.5 for men.

¹¹ http://afrique.lepoint.fr/actualites/rd-congo-le-nord-kivu-sous-la-menace-d-ebola-20-08-2018-2244560_2365.php

¹² <https://www.who.int/csr/don/04-january-2019-ebola-drc/en/>

¹³ Swedish government et al (2014) DRC Gender Profile <https://www.lauradavis.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Gender-Country-Profile-DRC-2014.pdf>

¹⁴ Added text. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/COD.pdf



of, or access to, land and other resources; reduced possibilities for girls to gain a secondary education; and prevailing permissive attitudes to violence against women and girls, especially domestic violence’.

Although conflict is a motor of GBV, the underlying causes are related to the inequalities described above and the social norms that discriminate against women and girls. ‘The case of the DRC underscores in multiple ways – and at various levels – how **conflict, gender and fragility** are interlinked. Due to prevalent social norms, widows, female-headed households and sexual and gender minorities are often in a position of heightened vulnerability. Arguably, the best researched example of links between conflict and gender relations in the country is conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in the east.’¹⁵

OXFAM’s 2017 Gender Assessment describes how despite progress in **public policy making**, gender inequalities persist in various aspects of life in the DRC: ‘The country’s 2006 constitution upholds the principle of equality between men and women and states that discrimination against women should be addressed in civil, political, economic, social and cultural domains (Article 14). Women’s access to property and land rights is often inhibited by local customs of patrilineal inheritance, as well as by a lack of legislation that would guarantee their right to own and inherit property. As a result, women are often unable to secure inheritance rights or even take part in negotiations about inheritance. Women are also socially vulnerable due to the absence of good governance and the weak rule of law. The DRC was ranked 46th out of 54 countries in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) in 2017. Women’s representation in positions of leadership and decision-making is very low, with women holding only 8.9% of parliamentary seats in 2016.’¹⁶

There are a number of issues that undermine **legal and practical protection for women** in the DRC according to a report (last edited 27 November 2017) by the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER):

- ‘Laws that subordinate women and do not allow them to have control over their sexual and reproductive health. This includes Article 444 of the Family Code that defines the man as the head of the household’ (although the modifications added in 2016 include that the spouses owe each other mutual protection instead of the wife being obliged to obey the husband as previously stated)¹⁷.
- Forced marriage and sexual slavery.
- Child marriage and early child bearing.
- Limited access and resources for maternal health and family planning services.
- Limited trust in the Congolese judicial system to bring forth cases of violations and fear of reprisals against women when cases of sexual violence are brought forward.

¹⁵ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations_b75a1229-en#page1

¹⁶ OXFAM, Kasai: The Forgotten Province of DRC, Gender Assessment 2017, p. 10.

¹⁷ Loi n° 16/008 du 15 juillet 2016 modifiant et completant la Loi n°87-010 du 1^{er} Aout 1987 portant Code de la Famille



- Large scale impunity for rebels and soldiers who perpetrate sexual violence and the low number of women judges and prosecutors specialized in sexual violence.
- The non-payment of compensation and limited enforcement of court sentences for acts of sexual violence by state agents.¹⁸

¹⁸ GFME and R, Sexual and Reproductive Rights – DRC, – last edited 27 September 2017 [url](#)



2.2 Gender Norms, Attitudes Toward Gender Equality and Cultural Practices Related to Gender

The Swedish Embassy Gender Country Profile describes the lack of common understanding around what gender means by International organisations and agencies, bilateral organisations and NGOs at field level: ‘**Gender**’ is often taken to mean measuring the numbers of women/girls participating in or benefitting from programmes or activities rather than attempting to monitor change in women’s and girls’ power, access to services, socio-economic condition and so on. ‘Gender’ has also become conflated in the minds and words of many with ‘sexual violence,’ a trend that can only undermine efforts to end sexual violence and further gender equality. Finally, ‘gender’ is business: including the buzzwords, or even the intention to work on gender programming, is a way for donors and other international agencies, national governments and ministries and the NGO sector to raise money and attention, without necessarily having the necessary competences or capacities. This is exacerbated by a lack of follow up or monitoring of what ‘gender’ policies or programmes achieve beyond numerical data, which as we shall see throughout this report, are highly problematic when it comes to understanding gender equality.¹⁹

Men and women in DRC also have different **understandings and attitudes** toward gender equality and cultural practices related to gender. According to the IMAGES survey in 2014²⁰, ‘men are generally sceptical about gender equality, and women have internalized many of the norms that sustain their subordinate position relative to men. Most men interviewed see gender equality as a “theoretical” or external concept that is not relevant to Congolese culture, or as an idea or concept that creates problems between men and women. (...). In qualitative interviews, men and women often saw gender equality as meaning that women would become the “new bosses.” Indeed, the interviews suggest the difficulty for women and men in a context of ongoing conflict and domination by some groups over others to imagine gender equality as attainable, or to believe that equality of any kind is possible’.

Both men and women strongly adhere to **unequal gender norms**, which hold that women are primarily responsible for the care of the home and children, as well as for preventing pregnancy and keeping the family together, and that men have the final say in the home and are hyper-sexual (see table below). Interestingly, on many of the questions men show more equitable attitudes than women do. A note of clarification though points out at the fact that women’s responses to the questions seem to reflect their lived experiences rather than what they truly believe, so acceptance of inequitable gender practices and relations should be seen as a survival strategy: ‘Within the context of extreme poverty and war, herself and her children are often found in a partnered relationship, even if that

¹⁹ Ibid, p.13.

²⁰ Sleggh, H., Barker, G. and Levtov, R. *Gender Relations, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and the Effects of Washington, DC, and Capetown, South Africa*: Promundo-US and Sonke Gender Justice. May 2014.



relationship is violent or inequitable’

TABLE 5

**Items Included in the GEM Scale
(Percent Agree or Partially Agree)**

	MEN	WOMEN
	%	%
HOUSEHOLD ROLES		
A woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and cook	74.2	86.2
Changing diapers, giving kids a bath and feeding kids are the mother’s responsibility	78.5	87.5
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home	75.1	86.7
MASCULINITIES & VIOLENCE		
A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together	65.0	77.5
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	61.9	47.6
If someone insults me, I will defend my reputation, with force if I have to	55.3	51.1
I would never have a gay friend	65.5	50.9
MASCULINITIES & SEXUALITY		
Men need sex more than women do	70.5	89.6
Men don’t talk about sex, they just do it	73.6	84.5
Men are always ready to have sex	65.3	89.0
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH		
It is a woman’s responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	61.0	62.1
I would be outraged if my spouse asked me to use a condom	66.1	52.0
A man and a woman should decide together what type of contraceptive to use	53.7	45.6

In the areas of intervention of development projects aiming at social transformation, like CARE’s project Mwanamke, Amani na Usalama (MANU) in Ruthsuru, some discriminatory practices are being **partially transformed**, including the following: further acceptance of women involved in managing the family resources, less taboos when discussing GBV, understanding of community members who defend gender equality not as alienated but ‘normal’ people fighting for social justice, and particularly women working for women’s rights not as ‘difficult women’, more common for men to do household



tasks traditionally relegated to women, higher rates of schooling for girls as for boys etc.²¹

As part of CARE's Great Lakes GBV Strategy, one key component is the **engagement of men and boys** as part of a process of changing behaviour, as well as transforming the norms and values that legitimise inequality. This theme brings together specific policy changes that potentially affect and shape negative masculinities, as well as wider social mobilisation tactics or campaigns that engage men as both decision makers and allies. Both are critical to transforming social norms. GEWEP II Annual report 2017 reported '9,667 directly engaged men (including 115 male role models) are grouped in 80 focus and reflection groups, promote the fight against SGBV, the protection of women rights, girls and children by actions illustrating their enhanced capacity in gender, diversity, equality, mediation, parenthood or positive masculinity and advocacy for the reduction of violence'. The effectiveness of men and young people's engagement is also illustrated by the increase in the proportion of men whose positive attitudes towards socio-economic security and women's participation are 63.4% and 75.1% respectively.²²

Several authors, including Desiree Lwambo, have pointed at how humanitarian interventions that confuse 'gender issues' with 'women's issues' ignore the complex nature of gender and its potential as a tool for social change'. On her article 'Before the war I was a man. Men and masculinities in Eastern DRC' she reflects on this issue, in the context of an analysis of the relationship between sexual and gender-based violence and **hegemonic masculinities** in the conflict zone of North Kivu province in the Eastern DRC.(...). As men try to enact masculine ideals of breadwinner and family head, the current political and economic context puts them under increasing pressure. Respondents drew a direct connection between the resulting sense of failure and unhealthy outlets for asserting masculinity, lack of productivity, and violence. They were critical of the fact that most programmes dealing with sexual and gender- based violence focus exclusively on supporting women'²³.

²¹ Rapport d'analyse du niveau de transformation des normes discriminatoires identifiées par l'approche ASA au debut du programme « MANU » en chefferie de Bwisha en territoire de Rutshuru, CARE 2018.

²² GEWEP II Annual Survey Report, 2017, pp.21,22

²³ Desiree Lwambo (2013): 'Before the war, I was a man': men and masculinities in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Gender & Development, 21:1, 47-66 : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2013.769771>



2.3 Governance and power structures

Gender relations are also shaped by the way Congolese govern each other: ‘the Congolese govern each other through a complex set of power relations that may operate through the state institutions, in the absence of institutions, or counter to them. These **patrimonial** (or neo- patrimonial) systems are generally believed to exclude women. But state institutions clearly wield power as women interviewed for this study were, on the whole, keen to acquire power within them, men appear generally reluctant to relinquish it. (...) Access to power is shaped by factors that affect women and men such as identity, wealth, education and personal connections. These factors are considered obstacles to female participation in general (It should be noted that they also exclude many men).’²⁴

In North Kivu, the **representation of women** is predominantly in the agriculture sector (more than 80%); while only 60.8% are part of farming organizations and 44.4% hold decision making positions. 44.2% of women are part of CSOs but only around 20% hold senior positions. These figures are comparable in the health sector (54.7%), with 22% of women in management positions. In prevention, management and resolution local organizations women represent 49.1%. The sectors where women’s participation is weaker is in the education sector (19.8% in superior education and 21.9% in primary and secondary education), provincial government bodies (5.6%); justice (8.9%); media (22.1%); decentralized territorial entities (10%); security/police (13.7%) and political parties (less than 20% and none of them are president of a political party).²⁵

Civil society organisations can play an important role in furthering women’s participation in public life: ‘CSOs can provide a direct route for women (and men) into state institutions at national and provincial levels, as is the case in South Kivu, for example. This ‘revolving door’ between civil society and state institutions has, over the years, weakened civil society. Civil society influences policy-making more through advocacy than through consultation as national authorities and international actors rarely consult civil society. (...) Women’s participation in civil society at national and provincial levels is largely through women’s associations. This has, without doubt, been necessary for the emergence of women activists, and has helped women improve their living conditions in many parts of the country through direct assistance and support.

South Kivu in particular, and to a lesser degree North Kivu, has a vibrant civil society working on ‘gender issues’, ranging from economic empowerment of women and female leadership, sexual violence and gender-based violence, and women’s rights more broadly. Gender issues, however, are not only the concern of civil society. In reality, the distinction between civil society, the state, politics and international organisations is often blurred, as these organisations often work together on campaigns or projects for women.

²⁴ Ibid, p.24

²⁵ Analysis of Parity Situation in North Kivu, OPRDC.



A 2014 analysis of the women’s civil society in South Kivu²⁶ describes it ‘many small initiatives and relatively small projects. Nonetheless, they add up to the women’s movement whose agenda – promoting women’s representation and women’s rights – has been adopted by politicians and government, and are well known among other sectors of civil society and to some extent the population at large. In addition, we find many NGOs that do not have an explicit gender profile to have women’s divisions or gender programmes. Many of these have originated in a programme responding to sexual violence and have evolved into a broader programme aimed at strengthening women’s associations, or incorporating women in general programmes. On the other hand, there are also many NGOs that work in a specific domain such as agricultural or credit associations that have not explicitly adopted a gender approach. Gender often seems to be treated as a separate sector and mainstreaming of gender has not systematically been done. (...) In recent years the attention to violence has broadened to all kinds of gender-based violence, including for example inheritance issues, and to promoting women’s leadership and political representation’.

²⁶ Dorothea Hilhorst et al (2014) The Women’s Movement in South Kivu, DRC: A civil society analysis



2.4 Women and youth's socio-economic situation

Such a stressed socio-political and cultural environment affects men and women differently, and these differences are based on old social hierarchies that give men far greater value and access to rights and privileges, which directly impacts the opportunities for women to have access to decent livelihoods and **economic opportunities**. In 2015, CARE's baseline study for GEWEP II confirms that 'while women work continuously to support their households, they have little control over their own income. As such, communities also risk not reaching their full capacity to effectively manage crises—including conflict, natural disasters, and pandemics—with 78% of women resorting to selling assets in an attempt to cope with such shocks'. These figures are currently being updated with the final evaluation of GEWEP II.

The literature reviewed has consistently identified women's economic activities and economic rights as key priorities for women. The **most common problems** and discrimination reported are in owning property, opening bank accounts and accessing land and credit. For widows an added problem is that even if by law wives who have a legally registered marriage (and many do not due to official and unofficial costs and other reasons) are entitled to inherit, by tradition men will inherit. **Youth**²⁷ also have a strong need for economic activities. According to the Youthmap from 2013 'young people's skills do not meet employers' demands, and young people find few opportunities to earn a decent wage. At 32.2%, the official youth unemployment rate nearly doubles the national average of 17.8% in the formal economy. However, the actual scale of underemployment and unemployment among youth is unknown, with some estimates ranging above 70%. Youth shared that the current education system does not provide practical skills necessary for them to break into the labour market. Additionally, many young people do not have or recognize the value of so skills. Other employment-related obstacles include limited access to professional mentoring and lack of access to credit for young entrepreneurs'²⁸.

The national Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2013–14 found that 72% of women nationwide had been paid for work done in the 12 months prior to the study, compared with 81% of men. Women's economic participation is mostly in the agricultural and informal sectors, and women earn less on average than men: in 2011, women had an estimated gross annual income of US\$599 compared with US\$761 for men. Women are therefore more affected by **poverty**, with an estimated 61.2% of female-headed households living under the poverty line compared with 54.3% for male-headed households²⁹.

Since the **agricultural sector** is one of the main sectors of activity for women, here are some findings of the socio-economic situation of **women farmers** in North Kivu in 2010 by a GENCAP advisor to

²⁷ <https://www.unfpa.org/data/adolescent-youth/CD>

²⁸ Youthmap DRC, ebruary 2013 YouthMap Assessment Report

²⁹ OXFAM Ibid, p.10



the Food Security Cluster³⁰:

Land	Even if the land is cultivated by both spouses, the men have systematic and exclusive possession. It's the same for the house.
Resources	Both spouses use the different assets available to the household. However, the use and control by women of the household's resources is lower if the higher the value of the asset, be it social (prestige) or economic. Thus, the bicycle, the machete, the radio, the telephone are above all used by men and exclusively owned by them. Women are the owners of objects of lesser value, in connection with their domestic responsibilities. The higher the value of livestock, the more it belongs to the husband. More unexpectedly, the small livestock, ensured by the women, is also the possession of the husband
Finances	Access to the benefits of agricultural production is unequal. Money and savings, accessible to both household members with a marked advantage for the husband, are essentially controlled by him, including when profits are derived from women's production. Women have almost no access to credit.
Time	Women and men have distinct activities in agriculture. Men perform physical work (often over a defined period) while women perform repetitive and time-consuming tasks. This is part of the strong imbalance between the workloads of women and men, whatever the season. Women, the main agricultural producers and responsible for household chores, work on average 17 hours a day against 7 hours for men. As a result, women have less time off and less access to leisure and decision-making forums.
Training	Men benefit from privileged access to training. In any case, they remain the only decision-makers on the possibility that other family members have access to it.
Decisions	In the household, decisions about what will be produced, sold or consumed, if they involve both spouses, are mostly taken by the husband. Men have exclusive access to public meetings and make decisions that affect the community.

The situation in South Kivu is not much different. A gender analysis on coffee production by CRS in South Kivu in 2014 explicitly noted that ‘in general in the Kalehe and Kabare territories, female family members on male owned farms do most of the coffee production work, yet receive little of the income from crop sales and have little to say in how that income is spent. (...)While some men and women said they share this responsibility, the majority of women only groups noted that their husbands do not share household proceeds (or only share a small portion with them). Household income is used to pay for children’s school costs and supplies, health and medicine, input supplies and men’s leisure. Farming of other crops (cassava, banana, corn etc.) is usually for family’s subsistence and income generation. Women’s additional income is sometimes invested in complementary activities like small animal husbandry, and selling cassava flour or banana juice in local markets. All married women interviewed stated that they had no control over their husband’s money usage (personal expenses)³¹.

The other main sector of economic activity for women is **trade**, women often working informally as petty vendors in North and South Kivu and across the borders with Rwanda and Burundi. The sector is not regulated and they have no legal protection, social security or any other benefits. They are also subjected to a high level of official and unofficial taxation. According to an International Alert study³²

³⁰ Delphine Brun, 2010 GENCAP Gender socio-economic analysis North Kivu for Food Security Cluster

³¹ CRS (2014) Final Gender Analysis Report, p.12

³² International Alert (2010) Walking in the Dark: Informal Cross-border Trade in the Great Lakes Region , p.21

‘trade flows are higher from Cyangugu to Bukavu in terms both of trader numbers and product value: 31,460 traders crossed the border from Cyangugu to Bukavu over a period of two weeks, trading 24 significant products (fish, corn, eggs, meat, etc.) with a total value of USD 1,134,837 per month. The second largest trade flow is from Bujumbura to Uvira. (...) Across all sites there is a significant difference between male and female traders in terms of the type of products being sold. Women sell mainly food produce such as manioc flour, tomatoes, corn, onions, fish and so on, as well as a few other specific products (e.g. body wraps, firewood and palm oil), while men sell a wider variety of products and often with a higher value (e.g. used clothing, beer, plantains, forage, soap, etc.). This is related to the value of the different goods sold by the two sexes: men do not generally trade in foodstuffs as the returns are too low. While it is rare for men to engage in cross-border trade in food produce, it is not unusual for women to export or import manufactured goods if they have sufficient capital’.

Artisanal mining is a key source of livelihood in South Kivu. It has generally been treated as a male affair but this overlooks the fact that artisanal mining sites are key to the livelihoods of many women. ‘Some of these women are engaged directly in mining activities (e.g. through panning, gridding, crushing or trading, or through owning a pit or a processing place). Others are indirectly involved in the mining industry (e.g. through restaurantering, selling diverse goods, administration, agriculture or prostitution)’³³. The literature has focused on women in mines ‘as victims of sexual violence and slave labour’³⁴, with tendency to promote women’s departure from the mining sector as the best strategy to protect them. Others, like Rose Bashwira, see women not only as victims and recognise ‘there is variation among the women living in the mining communities and working in mineral exploitation: Some of these women are able to occupy positions of power, whereas others are exploited. Women actively make their livelihoods in the mines, seeking to expand their room for manoeuvre to forge a better living. These women’s situation is very dynamic, as they may change their position over time’³⁵. She argues that given the lack of viable alternative livelihoods in eastern DRC, policymakers should invest more time, energy and resources in trying to understand and to strengthen women’s positions in the mining sector itself.

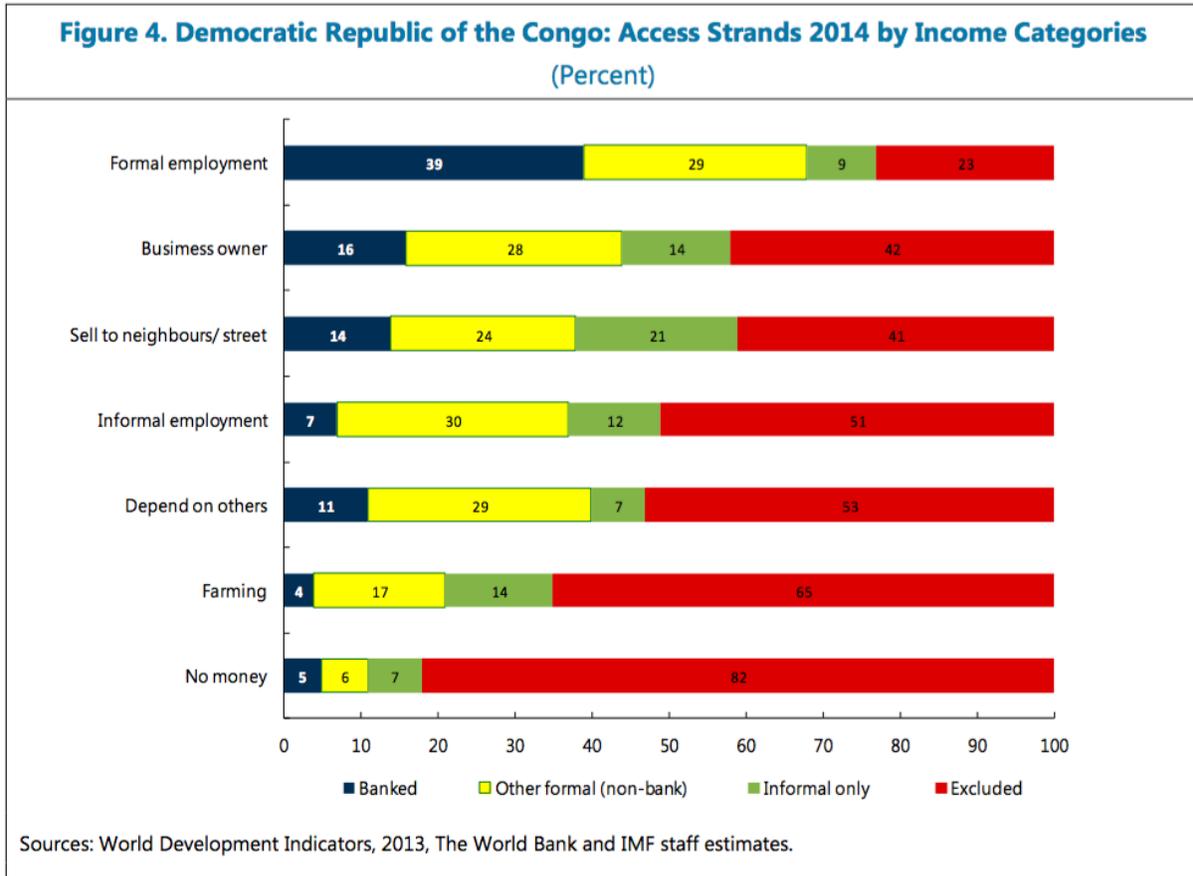
The socio-economic situation of women and men is worsened by a general lack of access to **financial services**: which impedes the improvement of living conditions among the population and partly explains the poor level of income from microbusinesses and the high level of poverty of rural and periurban communities. This is mainly due to the lack of capacities of microfinance institutions (MFIs) to propose adapted financial services, which has been aggravated by the bankruptcy of several MFIs since 2015, the lack of structuration of the sector and weak political and regulatory framework. According to IMF ‘financial inclusion is more limited among the most vulnerable segments of the

³³ Bashwira, Marie Rose (2017), Navigating obstacles, opportunities and reforms: Women’s lives and livelihoods in artisanal mining communities in eastern DRC.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

population. Individuals at the bottom of the income distribution are the most financially excluded (see Figure 4), in particular people making a living in farming activities. There is also a small gender gap: 56 percent of women are excluded compared to 48 percent of men’.

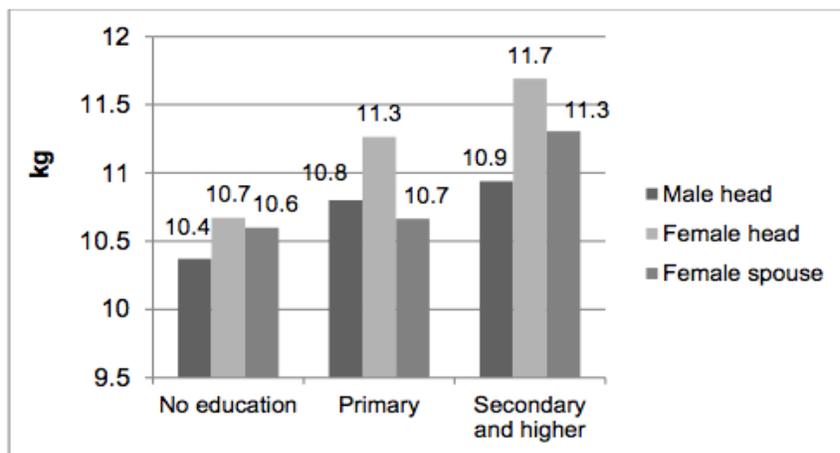


Other factors to highlight impeding the improvement of living conditions include the lack of education and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Regarding the former, ‘the rate of **illiteracy** for women is 50% higher than for men, especially in rural areas. **Schooling rates** are very low for all children but especially so for girls, with nine girls in primary, six girls in secondary and four girls in tertiary education for every 10 boys. While primary education should be free according to Congolese law, parents generally have to pay to send their children to school; fees vary depending on the school and province, and there is no clear average’³⁶. The link between education and **malnutrition and food insecurity** in DRC has been researched by many, including IFPRI’s discussion Paper from 2012: ‘Across all provinces, higher education and literacy levels of both mothers and fathers are strongly and positively correlated with the average weight of children (0–5 years old) in the household

³⁶ Ibid

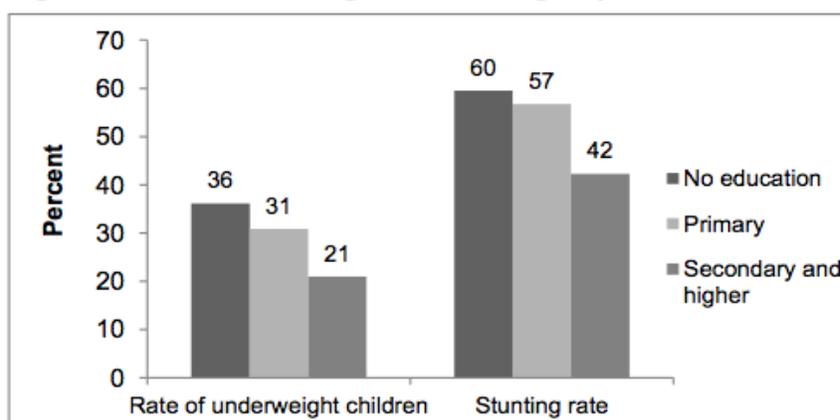
(Figure 3.1). However, the average weight of children (0–5 years old) in households with male heads only slightly increases with their education level. In contrast, the average weight of children (0–5 years old) in households with female spouses with secondary or higher education is significantly higher than in households with female spouses with only primary education. The average weight of children (0–5 years old) in households with female heads significantly increases with education level. There is a lower proportion of stunted, wasted, and underweight children (0–5 years old) in households with mothers or female spouses with at least secondary education than in households with mothers or female spouses with no education (Figure 3.2).'

Figure 3.1—Average weight of children (0–5 years old) in household by education level of male and female head and female spouse



Source: DHS (2007).

Figure 3.2—Rate of stunting and underweight by education level of mother in household



Source: DHS (2007).



When it comes to **health and reproductive rights**, in 2015 only 20% of married women aged between 15 and 49 used a contraceptive method (modern or non-modern), and the maternal mortality rate in the country is 48% higher than the average for sub-Saharan Africa.³⁷

³⁷ Ibid



2.5 Political participation and women and youth's role in peace processes

Women's political participation in DRC is generally agreed to be weak, both in terms of women voting or standing as candidates in elections. (...)The reasons given for low female political participation include traditional and cultural norms and beliefs, lack of education and financial resources, and supporting power structures. If we compare the 2006 **general elections** –the first to take place in the country in over 30 years- with the December 2018 elections we see little improvement: 8 percent got elected at the National Assembly³⁸ in 2006 and 9 percent in 2018.

A recent study on **barriers to female political participation** in DRC, notably in electoral period³⁹, describes a correlation between educational attainment and active political participation in politically engaged women: 'the rate of engagement in politics, which is almost non-existent (1.4%) among the least educated women in the sample, shows a peak in the group of women with a university degree (25.7%). A second variable that seems to influence women's political participation is age. The rate of engagement, which is limited to 7% among women under 30 years of age, is increasing linearly to the highest rate (31%) among women aged 60 and over. This result could reflect either a generational change or a prioritization of the private sphere in young women because of the traditional attitudes of society'. As for the barriers identified the study mentions the following:

- Presence and role of women in political parties: Even when women represent an important number inside a political, especially during major public events, it does not signify an effective involvement in the activities carried out by these structures. Few women are in decision-making positions.
- Criteria for advancement within parties: In addition to nancial contributions, the "dedication" that promotes internal progression is characterized by regular attendance at meetings and activities of the political party. Generally, women in political parties participate in public demonstrations of parties and associations, but not always in meetings, which are often held in the evening or at times inconsistent with the household responsibilities.
- Recruitment and selection of candidates: Too often, the designation of women is linked to personal ties with party leaders, or the concern to comply with legal provisions on parity, but rarely with a strategy to promote women within the party.
- The replacement of vacant posts in the event of a woman being removed from the electoral list: Generally it is the party leadership that meets to decide. However, it is rare for women who withdraw to be replaced by other women

³⁸ International Alert 2012, Women's political participation and economic empowerment in post-conflict countries Lessons from the Great Lakes region in Africa

³⁹ Observatorio di Pavia (2017), p. 26 Freins à la participation politique des Congolaises, notamment en période électorale

- The distribution of resources in political parties: Women politicians do not benefit from sufficient financial and material support to progress in their political career, according to many focus group participants.
- Women's leagues in political parties: Many parties have instituted them but critics say it's insufficient, they are not a priority for the majority of the parties, they have no autonomy and they are often used by political leaders to animate public events.
- Coaching and training: Political parties are more efficient when they take charge of the training of women activists (organization of symposia and workshops for women on different themes) but few women declare having received this kind of support.
- Taking into account the female electorate in party electoral strategies: The responses analysed for this study are not evenly divided on this question. A first half of the women surveyed believe that women are not considered as important targets by the communication and the political action of the parties in the electoral campaign. Another half of the sample believes that political parties have electoral communication strategies targeting women. It should be noted that a fraction (4%) of the sample believes that the only "gender" strategy adopted by political parties is limited to distributing small donations to women (cloth, salt, sugar or other gifts) to women in proximity to elections.
- Electoral strategies developed by women candidates are considered too weak and limited, too often reduced to limited targets such as tribe, region, personal relationships. They are, therefore, considered unconvincing in the eyes of the electorate. According to the women interviewed in the survey, the activity of women candidates is, at best, visible in the mobilization of grassroots women's organizations and in field visits. Candidates make little use of traditional and new media.
- The support of associations to women politicians: local and international NGOs provide support to women politicians like training on electoral strategies but financial support is limited.
- Several youth and women's associations condition their support to candidates to certain criteria not formally established. Membership in the association is not a sufficient condition for granting support. The central criterion is the social commitment of the candidate and the role she plays in the community.
- Political women's difficult relations with the media: which partly reflects cultural obstacles: a reluctance among Congolese women to be held in public, the fact that the participation of women in political institutions is sometimes considered as an expression of a lightness of behavior. However, some focus group participants insist instead on the fact that women politicians can usually participate in political debates only with the approval of the hierarchy. There is also a great inequality in the access to the resources of the party which leads this same hierarchy to favor the access to the media by male candidates.
- Cultural and social norms and discrimination in education etc are also included as key factors.



In its analysis of **women voters**, the Swedish embassy Country profile highlights four main factors emerge as key determinants of candidate's choice: the imperative to accommodate with husband's choices, material incentives, perceived candidates' capabilities (perhaps more in urban than rural areas, and more amongst educated women) and identification with candidates. Cultural barriers persist, with respondents describing women politicians as not being 'feminine' anymore, having become 'half-men' or 'loose women.' Respondents expect women to show a natural solidarity with each other and are disappointed when they don't. When it comes to the voting process the difficulties around it tend to further discriminate against women voters. In the recent elections, Justine Masika as founder of Synergie des Femmes, describes how 'the Electoral Commission ignored the fact that many people in the DRC – women in particular – are illiterate and had no idea how to use the electronic voting machines that were shipped in for the event. Electoral lists also posed a problem on voting day. Even some of those who could read were not able to find their names, which were sometimes categorized in a confusing way – and regularly included people from the wrong constituencies, so some voters simply did not know where to go. Delays in opening certain polling stations affected things too. In a handful of areas it was not possible to vote at all. Voter turnout was directly affected by this and many chose to stay at home, after hearing about the challenges. From what I have seen, once again, this disproportionately affected women'.⁴⁰

When it comes to **women's participation in the peace process**, despite DRC's accession in 2002 to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (and its National Action Plan -NAP 18/22-, see box) and large evidence that men and women bring different issues to the table, a gender audit of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) by the same author to this report⁴¹ reveals a lack of a gender perspective in the content of the framework itself. It should be noted also that the process that led to the signing of the PSCF lacked any formal representation of women.

'The six engagements for DRC comprise the suite of activities that the Congolese state should already be implementing to achieve an accountable, effective and responsible state and to address the root causes of persistent high levels of insecurity (namely in the eastern parts of the country). However, without participation of civil society and women's organisations, analysis of the root causes will fail to take into account the link between gender inequality and conflict. (...)

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The implementation of NAP 1 has identified a number of lessons. These include:

- The low awareness of the NAP by the public;
- The meager results gathered in the participation of women in negotiating tables and decision-making bodies following cultural burdens;
- The persistence of sexual violence and other violations of women's rights;
- The very low presence of women in posts of command in the Army and Police as well as in other security services;
- The lack of ownership of the NAP by the Government;
- Low support from partners for NAP implementation.
- The non-involvement and integration of young women and women living with disabilities in the implementation of the NAP.

⁴⁰ <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/02/drcs-first-peaceful-transition-power-expense-women/>

⁴¹ International Alert, PSCF Gender Audit



Congolese women and men participating in women's groups and civil society organisations have worked to broker peace and to enhance the resilience of communities during continuing armed conflict; however, this involvement did not result in an invitation to the PSCF signing in Addis Ababa in 2013'. Women's role has been one of consultation rather than meaningful participation at the decision-making level. Beyond the predominantly male political and military elite which controls track-one processes, there needs to be acknowledgement of local-level or track-two mediation efforts where women play a major role every day in DRC as part of the peace process. This needs to happen not only at programmatic level through small grants, but also at the political level'.

As an example from a project, MAnU's mid-term evaluation highlights how 'women are contributing to peace in their intervention sites as they are more accepted by belligerents because of their generally accommodating characters, mediators and educators in society'.

Youth are the ones with a more vested interest in peace, since conflict has curtailed their rights and opportunities to lead a dignified life. According to Youthmap, they take advantage of governmental and civil society as avenues for expression and participation. Proud as they are to be Congolese, they feel disengaged, disempowered, and discouraged. With a strong sense of citizenship and responsibility, the majority of YouthMap participants reported engagement in community volunteer and religious activities. Young Congolese also expressed interest in the electoral process; however, they have limited influence on decision making. They are often victims of political and ethnic manipulation.

3 Recommendations

The following general recommendations suggest ways in which an organization like CARE, and its partners, can design, implement and monitor their interventions in ways that are more gender transformative.

- ✚ Use this literature review as a base for a **critical self-assessment** of each of the organisations' programmes : Are they intended to help improve gender equality, or are they intended to improve the lot of women and girls within the status quo? Do they focus on women and girls by default or are they informed by a gender analysis? How are they looking at the role of men and boys and positively engaging them?
- ✚ For every province/area of intervention, conduct **smart mapping exercises** of actors that include a qualitative assessment of the actors objectives and results, in line with the self-assessment described above.
- ✚ Engage communities in long-term, **proactive dialogue** in co-operation with local male and female leaders and youth representatives, to (re)shape their own, positive models of gender equality for their current context.
- ✚ Ensure **men's agency** is addressed in all programmes with a gender focus, from SRSH education for girls and boys to cooperation of husbands in women's socio-economic initiatives
- ✚ For programs with a focus on gender equality, ensure monitoring and evaluation systems include nuanced indicators that attempt to **measure change**, not numbers.



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