



PROJECT PAPER

Increasing resilience of people affected by multiple displacement: innovation to inform new practice

A three-year project to improve responses to displacement in eastern DRC

17 JULY 2014

Quick facts

Title: Increasing resilience of people affected by multiple displacement

Aim: To reach a common understanding of vulnerability, and to identify approaches that strengthen the resilience of people affected by repeated displacement in eastern DRC

Geographical focus: Masisi and Rutshuru in North Kivu; Kalehe, Mwenga, Fizi and Uvira in South Kivu

Duration: April 2014 to March 2017

Consortium members: The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), International Alert and Climate Interactive

Funded by: The Department for International Development (DFID)

Armed violence and instability have displaced millions of people in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) over the last two decades (OCHA, [May 2014](#)). Many internally displaced people (IDPs) in the region have been living in protracted displacement for many years, and many have been forced to flee their homes more than once – the result of clashes between armed groups and the security forces, fighting between the armed groups themselves as alliances shift, and human rights violations associated with the conflict ([University of Berkeley](#), August 2008; OCHA, [March 2014](#)).

Displacement reduces IDPs' resilience by forcing them to flee their homes and land, and to seek refuge with host communities, or in official camps or informal sites and settlements. They lose material assets and livelihood opportunities, education is interrupted, they suffer psychological trauma and sometimes physical injury, social cohesion breaks down and tensions between communities increase. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the passage of time and each new displacement alters the coping mechanisms of both IDPs and their hosts.

In the context of a permanent crisis, in which the state has proved unwilling or unable to protect and assist its population,

humanitarian intervention to support people affected by displacement has become the norm in eastern DRC. Standard humanitarian responses are inadequate, however, when crisis and emergency are constant. They may even contribute to the breakdown of existing coping mechanisms. As such, they need to be adapted to help people cope with their reality.

Preliminary research suggests that humanitarians' lack of understanding of vulnerabilities during a permanent crisis has led to a response which has failed to maintain, let alone strengthen the resilience of people living in protracted and repeated displacement (IDMC interviews, July 2013). Data and analysis gaps mean, however, that there is little insight in terms of how better to measure and build resilience. The current response is based more on sectorial structures, agency mandates and funding streams than on a common understanding of the conflict and displacement context in which the permanent crisis in eastern DRC has unfolded. This means that the work of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors is not properly coordinated, and as a result interventions tend not to improve people's capacity to withstand future shocks and crises.

The project's goal

The project is a three-year undertaking by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Climate Interactive and International Alert, with the financial support from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). Its goal is to reach a common understanding of vulnerability in the context of protracted and multiple displacement in eastern DRC, and inform humanitarian practice and programming to strengthen the resilience of people affected.

The project's approach

The project's first phase, which will last for a year, will focus on theory building about the dynamics of repeated displacement. The project will use system dynamics modelling¹ for the first time in a context of displacement induced by conflict. The methodology integrates knowledge and data from many stakeholders and will help to build a better understanding of displacement dynamics over time, rather than of the static characteristics of a situation at a certain point. The analysis of variables relating to vulnerability over time will lead to the

development of a model of measurable indicators based on a common definition of resilience in the context of protracted and repeated displacement.

In the project's second phase, which will run over two years, the partners will apply their new understanding in the design and implementation of pilot projects. The projects will aim to strengthen the long-term resilience of people affected by displacement by addressing the dynamics identified during the modelling directly.

Evidence and learning, from both the research and pilot projects, will be used to engage stakeholders in promoting a shift towards a response that supports the resilience strategies of targeted populations more effectively.

Opportunities to engage and contribute

Throughout the process, the consortium will ask partners and stakeholders at the international, national and local level for their insights in terms of how displacement affects families and resilience dynamics in eastern DRC. Particular attention will be paid to the inputs of local populations and people who have been beneficiaries of humanitarian interventions. Information from consultative meetings, interviews and workshops will feed the model as it develops, ensuring that it remains relevant as the project progresses.

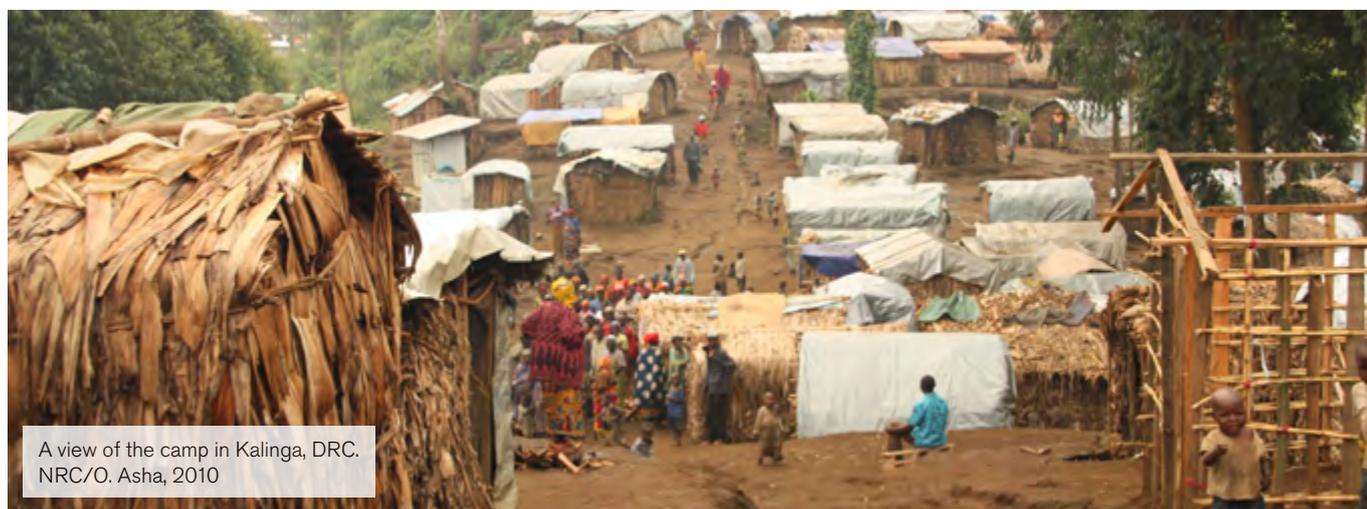
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A view of the camp in Kalinga, DRC.
NRC/O. Asha, 2010

¹ For more information on system dynamics modelling see <http://www.systemdynamics.org/what-is-s/>