

## A.4 DRC, Goma - 2009 - Conflict displaced

### Case study: Urban host families, vouchers

Full case study

#### Country:

Democratic Republic of Congo

#### Disaster:

Ongoing armed conflict

#### Disaster date:

1994 - Conflict in eastern DRC  
2008 - Offensive towards Goma

#### Number of houses damaged:

Unknown

#### Number of people displaced:

&gt;100,000 for this phase of the conflict. Millions cumulatively over the previous 16 years.

#### Project target population:

250 'solidarity' families

#### Occupancy rate on handover:

100% on project completion.

#### Shelter size:

11.5m<sup>2</sup> extension to existing houses.  
Increase from 1.5m<sup>2</sup> per person to 2.25m<sup>2</sup> per person.

#### Materials Cost per shelter:

680 USD for shelters, latrines and labour.

#### Project cost per shelter:

250 USD per person, inclusive of operational / support costs.



#### Project timeline

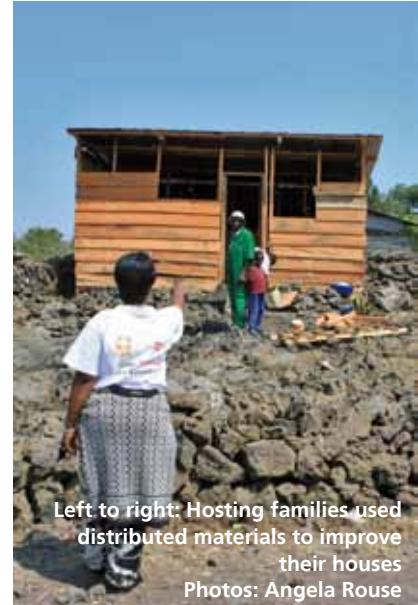


#### Summary

Multi-sectoral support to 'Umoja' (solidarity) hosting and hosted families following an influx of displaced people into Goma. Families were provided with materials for either repair or additions / extensions to existing housing, as well as key household items using a voucher system.

#### Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ An alternative to camps was found, and at a lower cost.
- ✓ Both hosting and hosted families were given a large degree of control
- ✓ The communities themselves, as well as the authorities and local groups and churches were very involved in the project design and its implementation.
- ✓ A significant number of the families hosted total strangers. In some cases the hosting family was from a different ethnic or linguistic background than the hosted family. This showed the spirit of Umoja.
- ✓ Livelihoods of the displaced families were supported through the provision of more secure shelter closer to areas of high economic activity.
- ✓ Families were able to get the supplier to substitute some materials for a better quality at the same price.
- ✓ Tensions between host and displaced communities were reduced.
- ✗ Initially, many vendors dropped out, making prices for food and shelter items difficult to control. This was later resolved.
- ✗ As this was a pilot project, high levels of monitoring and involvement by senior management staff were required.
- ✗ High levels of sensitization and monitoring were required
- ✗ The project was not supported by pooled funding as it did not fall into pre-defined categories such as Camp Management or Early Recovery.
- Existing houses were smaller than 3.5m<sup>2</sup> per person. The shelters built by the project respected this to reduce the risk of tensions arising.
- This project was not linked to any formal urban or regional planning.



Left to right: Hosting families used distributed materials to improve their houses  
Photos: Angela Rouse

### Before the displacement

There have been multiple large-scale forced displacements of population in Goma since the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. There was also large-scale displacement following the volcanic eruption in 2002.

Prior to the conflicts, the population of Goma had been estimated at less than 50,000 people, but by 2008 the population estimates had reached more than 800,000. For the two neighbourhoods in Goma chosen for the project, both were within the city limits. One, Kasika, had been created in a planned manner, whilst the other, Ndosho, was less planned. Both areas had suffered stresses on infrastructure and water resources before the disaster.

### After the displacement

Since 1994, population displacement through conflict has been pendular, with families often moving relatively short distances from their homes, and then returning again, once the levels of insecurity had fallen. However, the approach of the rebels between October and November 2008, and the subsequent fighting in other close-by areas in early 2009 meant that many families would not be able to return home rapidly, and that they would need support for a longer period of time.

The humanitarian community, with the United Nations and the government, were able to provide spaces inside planned camps for 69,000 people. This was not sufficient for the entire displaced population. It also required much funding and resources. The camp locations, outside the city, meant that the displaced families had less access to livelihoods, and less likelihood of achieving any economic independence.

Of those who did not reside in the camps, but who looked for shelter in the city, almost all found shelter with host families. This was arranged through relatives, through introductions, through church associations and through other mechanisms. Some families were hosted for free, whilst others paid rent. In the majority of cases, indoor space for the hosting and the hosted families was greatly reduced, and strains increased as time went on.

### Implementation

A multi-sectoral approach was chosen, to support the 'Umoja' or 'solidarity' of the families who were hosting or hosted. As a pilot project, two neighbourhoods were selected, where a large number of displaced people were living with host families. Key needs, including those of shelter and non food items, were identified through consultation with affected communities.

It was decided to give as much choice as possible to enable the families to choose items that they needed. As a result a voucher scheme was implemented.

### Selection of beneficiaries

The organisation worked with a committee that included members of both the hosting and the hosted families. These committees created a list of vulnerabilities, and prioritised or weighted each different category in the list.

The Chef de Quartier provided a list of solidarity families, which were then visited and weighted against various vulnerability indicators. The most vulnerable families were then retained as beneficiaries. Lists were displayed to allow the community to pick out any fraudsters. The committee was very involved in the whole process.

### Technical solutions

Standard designs were created before the bill of quantities was finalised. These designs were created through the community consultation process, and then shown to the selected families before construction.

However, as houses had different designs, and plots varied, families were given flexibility in the design that they built. Some families used the materials to repair houses, whilst others used them to build extensions.

For the distribution of household items and food, a voucher scheme was used, in co-operation with a number of selected local merchants. The merchants then returned the vouchers to the organisation for payment. Certain items, such as alcohol, could not be purchased using the vouchers, but otherwise a wide range of items, including mattresses and cooking utensils, was made available to the beneficiaries.

At first, many of the merchants were hesitant about the scheme, but were finally won over. However, at the same time, there were accusations that some of the merchants were over-charging, above the fixed prices that had been agreed with the organisation.

A team consisting of committee members and staff from the organisation monitored the use of vouchers. Families were encour-



aged to barter or leave the shop if prices were too high.

**Logistics and materials**

The food and shelter items were identified as being a priority during the community consultation process. Vouchers were then issued for redemption at approved and selected local merchants. A previous market analysis conducted by the organisation ensured that the local markets would be able to provide all the items. The logistics for the household items was entirely undertaken by the merchants themselves.

The method of distribution of the shelter construction materials was the subject of much discussion with those receiving them. Initially many did not want distribution directly to their homes, as this might incite jealousy from the neighbours. Additionally, the informal layout of the neighbourhoods, and the rough lava-rock surfaces made it difficult for trucks to access all of the target areas.

In the end, two distribution points (one in each of the two communities) were selected for the construction materials. Most of the materials were sourced locally, with an acknowledgement that sourcing timber from sustainable resources is particularly challenging in DRC.

**Materials list**

Material	Quantity
Wooden Plank	42 pieces
2" x 2" wood beam	32 pieces
CGI sheet BG 32	8pcs
Cement 50Kg	3 sacks
Sand	1.09m <sup>3</sup>
Rough sand	0.55m <sup>3</sup>
Roofing nails	1kg
10 cm nails	5kg
8 cm nails	6kg
6 cm nails	6kg
4 cm nails	0.5kg
Door with accessories 80/180cm	1
Window with accessories 60/40 cm	2
Wooden plank 2" x 4" (50mm x 100mm)	6 pieces
Plastic sheet	1 pieces
Wood preservative oil	5litres



“When they came with the vouchers, we bought a mattress and sheets, and this pot. We never had a mattress before!

Now we have building material... We have knocked the old house down, and are using the old and the new material to build a bigger house.”



The chef de quartier had put us on a list, and after some months the organisation came with many questions. In April we got vouchers to buy food, and for mattresses, blankets and pots. We now cook in our own house. We got more food vouchers in May, and last month we got building material to build an annex to the house. This is very nice and gives us our own space. We built it together in three days, but we still have to put the floor in.



**Materials distribution and construction for the host family support programme in urban environments in Goma**  
 Bottom: The building on the right is the extension built during the programme.  
 Photos: Angela Rouse