



# SUPPORTING STABILISATION AND PEACEBUILDING IN EASTERN CONGO

A project funded by the John Ellerman  
and Baring Foundations

FEBRUARY 2015



**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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## ACRONYMS

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<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CRC</b>	Centre Résolution Conflits
<b>DDR</b>	Disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>FARDC</b>	Forces Armées de la Republic Démocratique du Congo (DRC National Army)
<b>FRPI</b>	Front de Résistance Patriotique de l'Ituri
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>INGO</b>	International non-governmental organisation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OCHA</b>	Office of the Coordinator of Human Affairs (United Nations)
<b>PD</b>	Peace Direct
<b>RADHIT</b>	Réseau des Associations de Droits de l'Homme à Ituri
<b>RPP</b>	Reflecting on Peace Practice
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>XC</b>	Ex-combatants

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Prepared for **Peace Direct and Centre Résolution Conflits**. Prepared by **Eleanor Cozens, Consultant**. Supported by **Rosie Pinnington, Researcher**. Published by **Peace Direct**. All photos by **Eleanor Cozens**.

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**UK** Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4LT | **T** 020 7549 0285 | **E** info@peacedirect.org | **W** www.peacedirect.org  
Registered charity in England and Wales no 1123241

**USA** PO Box 33131, Washington, DC 20033 | **T** (301) 358-5086 | **E** contact@peacedirect.org | **W** www.peacedirect.org  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Centre Résolution Conflits (CRC) has been developing and implementing its grassroots disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) approach in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for over 10 years. With many larger-scale programmes focussing more on the disarmament and demobilisation aspects, CRC has been placing increasing emphasis on reintegration processes.

This project has been funded by the John Ellerman and Barings Foundations; it built on learning from previous projects, introduced a micro-finance pilot and extended the model to 38 communities in three territories in Ituri District. Its key aims were to reinforce stability by improving infrastructure and developing livelihoods, in order to encourage the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and to build capacity for conflict resolution.

The main aim of the evaluation was to assess the appropriateness of this approach and the CRC Theory of Change in relation to the needs of the communities: it gave priority to exploring the impact concerning the integration of ex-combatants, the micro-finance pilot and the Radio Clubs. The methodology included a range of different quantitative, qualitative and participatory approaches, with considerable preparation by the CRC team and a fieldwork trip by the evaluator.

CRC implemented the activities sequentially in one of the three project zones each year. Overall, the original output targets for the selection and reintegration of ex-combatants and the establishment of co-operatives, women's associations, Radio Clubs and Reconciliation Commissions were all met or exceeded. The micro-finance pilot targets were met, but the activity was transferred to communities near Beni to facilitate close monitoring and supervision.

The different structures were all considered very relevant and although the Radio Clubs and Reconciliation Commissions have overlapping mandates, they proved to have complementary and mutually reinforcing roles. Members of the different structures appreciated the sense of belonging and group identity that they gained, and recognised that this helped to bring about beneficial changes in attitudes and relationships within and beyond the group. They saw this as an important foundation that enabled and contributed to a range of connected individual and community-level initiatives and developments, both directly and indirectly.

Participants clearly valued both the social and the economic benefits of the project activities for their own well-being and stability, and that of the community. Overall, the social relations and security situation had considerably improved in virtually all the communities of the first two zones: however, they were difficult even to assess in the third zone due to ongoing security issues. The improvement in the situation was evident not only from the workshops, but is also supported by the data gathered at community level. Improvements in community economic circumstances were more variable, but there were no reports of deterioration. The extent to which CRC was perceived to have contributed to the stability and socio-economic changes varied: it was influenced by the size of the community, the extent to which other agencies were present and the different internal and external sources of pressure and conflict.

The particular features of CRC's approach that participants appreciated were the integration of peaceful cohabitation education components into all the activities, even where this was not the primary focus, and also CRC's emphasis on a series of trainings and supporting their translation into practice. In all the different group categories, however, a small minority of participants left early because their expectations of the rewards in return for their efforts had not been met. There was widespread consensus that even better results would have been achieved had there been better provision of materials for use post-training, better follow-up and more monitoring visits from CRC. There was some criticism of CRC making unfulfilled promises (for materials/loans) that CRC recognised had occurred and largely attributed to the under-resourcing and relocation of the micro-finance pilot.

In addition to the complex and at times insecure working environment, CRC faced a number of other challenges that impacted on their effectiveness. These included: inadequate budgeting and staffing given to the micro-finance pilot and quantitative data collection exercises; poor facilities for IT and communications; the distance of the Ituri communities from Beni; security issues; and serious internal management issues in the final year. Despite these, the CRC staff persevered and clearly remain highly committed to their work and its continuation; no exit planning took place partly because CRC is unused to withdrawing entirely from communities where it has worked.

A complex range of different drivers of conflict and instability were recognised, mostly related to herder/cultivator friction and land ownership issues, although there were also some concerns about the effects of the forthcoming electoral processes. Returning ex-combatants were seen as a potential source of instability if they were not properly reintegrated with means of earning a living. They were not seen as a primary instigators of conflict, but rather as potential recruits available for fuelling the conflicts of others if they were not reintegrated. The CRC strategy of working to reintegrate the less stable ex-combatants, with a strong focus on improving their income-earning abilities, was recognised as an entirely valid and worthwhile intervention.



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Likewise its strategy of providing skills and assistance for resolving land issues, usually at grassroots and individual level. These are, however, only a few strands of a much more complex series of dynamics; consequently, while the CRC Theory of Change focuses on a valid intervention strand, it greatly simplifies the picture and indicates a linear progression rather than the actual cyclical nature of recurring needs and problems.

CRC's grassroots approach has proved effective at that level, but is inevitably limited in relation to the scale of the needs and the ongoing population movements. The CRC strategies are clearly relevant, and with some evident pessimism over the future for peace and stability, it is to be hoped that means will be found for the continued provision of limited accompaniment to the structures in place. If the regional security situation starts to deteriorate, the presence of existing, trained grassroots structures in the first line of response has the potential to reduce any avoidable escalation and to facilitate recovery.

However, if there is to be a scaling up of momentum for peace and any effect on peace writ large in Ituri District, CRC needs to invest in more relationship-building and collaboration with other agencies and with the higher levels of local authorities and decision-makers. This will help raise its profile and address the current disconnect between its grassroots work and the international level advocacy supported by Peace Direct. CRC has already achieved a great deal with limited resources, but for increasing its influence, impact and the sustainability of its work in Ituri District, future project budgets should accommodate increased networking and advocacy components, as well as the resourcing of needs now evident for the increasingly important and sought-after livelihoods activities.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

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The Centre Résolution Conflits (CRC) has been working in eastern DRC for approximately 20 years. Over the last decade it has been progressively developing and refining a community-based approach to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. Unlike many other programmes, it has a strong focus on the reintegration process, since without this the wider DDR process is considered unlikely to succeed.

Funded by the John Ellerman and Baring Foundations, this three-year project (2011-2014) therefore built on the activities and learning gained from previous projects, also implemented with Peace Direct, with whom CRC has worked in partnership for 10 years. It sought to provide economic and social support to ex-combatants, returnees and women affected by conflict, using approaches that involved these groups working and interacting together and thus promoting peaceful cohabitation in practice.

Given the increasing stability of the context, the project design extended coverage of CRC's work to five districts: three in Ituri District of Orientale province and two in North Kivu province, including Beni District. It also placed increased emphasis on income-generating activities and included a pilot micro-finance component: a new area of activity for both CRC and Peace Direct.

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## 2. OBJECTIVES

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### Aims of the project

The main aim of the project was to increase the security of the communities and thereby to facilitate their development. CRC identified the sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants, seen as a root cause of continued instability, as a key requirement. The overall project objectives were to:

- Reinforce stability where it exists by improving infrastructure, developing livelihoods and encouraging the permanent return of IDPs;
- Continue to build capacity for conflict resolution through Task Forces and training at a community level, with a particular focus on land disputes of IDPs and re-integration of ex-combatants.

A parallel objective was to:

- Disarm, demobilise and reintegrate militia commanders, using a highly individualised approach, thus depriving lower level militia of their leaders.

(This was not a formal engagement, but was an ongoing activity of CRC with a limited budget-line.)

### Aims of the evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation consultancy was to investigate the appropriateness of the project approach to the needs of the beneficiaries, and to identify evidence that supports (or does not support) CRC's theory of change and demonstrates the change the project introduced in community members' lives. It was also tasked with considering the sustainability of the work

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and the impact on peace writ large, using the respected 'Reflecting on Peace Practice' framework of indicators.

With many different project components, the evaluator was asked to focus on:

- Support provided to ex-combatants, the sustainability of their integration and the effects on community stability;
- The management and outcomes of the micro-finance scheme, notably its scale, impact and effects on the women and their husbands;
- The effects of the Radio Clubs and their impact at community level.

In addition, if time allowed (but while recognising that not all aspects of the project could be explored):

- The benefits of the HIMO work to the wider community;
- The service provided by the Reconciliation Commissions and the effects on stability.

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### 3. METHOD

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The original intention was to use the results of a quantitative survey and also to gather end-line data from micro-finance participants using poverty-scorecards, prior to conducting the fieldwork involving participatory exercises with community groups and qualitative interviews with individual stakeholders.

A preparatory trip was made in October 2014 to review the quantitative survey situation, confirm final data gathering needs and establish a number of preliminary participatory analysis exercises for CRC. Last-minute security issues in Beni where CRC has its main office, together with internal management issues, meant that this trip was not as productive as hoped, and CRC subsequently went through a difficult internal management crisis.

In order to address the evident data-entry challenges, Peace Direct supported additional local capacity for data entry as well as the assistance of a UK researcher. The situation at the outset of the qualitative fieldwork phase (7-14 February 7-14), was that:

- Only the analysed profile data from the community based survey was available and the quality of the data was uncertain;
- Micro-finance group poverty-scorecard data had been collected and analysed by CRC, along with group discussions with members of three groups;
- Success criteria for the Radio Clubs had been identified by CRC and used to complete a mapping exercise;
- Community profile data had been collected by CRC for 35 of the 38 project communities, during 2014, using largely documented sources for the situation at the outset of the project, and in November 2014 it was awaiting analysis by the consultant.

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach involving the CRC project personnel in a team workshop, in the facilitation of group-work exercises in beneficiary workshops at community level, and in feedback sessions with the evaluator after each workshop. The evaluator interviewed external stakeholders without CRC accompaniment.

The following activities and sample were achieved during the February fieldwork trip:

- Review of workshop composition and arrangements for recruitment and logistics.
- Analysis of community profile data (while CRC Bunia staff on unpaid leave were fetched).
- One-day workshop with CRC project staff on project results and the workshop design, supplemented by CRC staff completing several evening 'homework' exercises.
- Four half-day community-level participatory workshops in four different project locations, all within an hour's drive of Bunia:
- Covering the three main project geographical zones and phases;
- Each with 30-40 participants drawn from Radio Clubs, Reconciliation Commissions, village leaders, ex-combatants (two areas) and women's associations (one area).

The participatory group-work exercises included two that collected stories of significant change in order to pilot this approach for future consideration. (See Annex D for further information on the different exercises conducted.)

- Interviews with external stakeholders: five NGOs based in Bunia and working in the same areas, and shorter conversations with three administrative/local authorities.

- Interviews with the representative of the CRC Board, two directors and the head of the Bunia sub-office.
- Interviews with four beneficiaries and related case studies developed by the UK researcher.

The detailed itinerary is in Annex A and the list of stakeholders consulted is in Annex B.

Annex C gives a detailed breakdown of the composition of the community workshops while Annex E provides a more detailed account of the quantitative survey, its challenges and the learning gained.

## Limitations and constraints

The evaluation work was conducted from Bunia, the administrative centre of Ituri District, where all the project communities were situated. CRC has a small sub-office in Bunia but its main office is in Beni: time constraints did not allow for a visit to Beni to get a greater understanding of the facilities and additional information held there.

Despite the efforts spent on the quantitative survey, a very limited amount of data was extracted in time. Meanwhile, after reviewing the community profile data analysed by the consultant, the CRC team expressed some reservations about its accuracy: the government sources were often not up-to-date and the village chiefs did not all have strong data on their community situations. They explained that it was also often necessary to dig deeper to understand the significance of data (for instance, an apparent drop in school enrolment was due to other schools opening up in less accessible villages nearby). Nevertheless some general patterns emerged and chime with those referred to in the workshops and stakeholder interviews and are therefore referred to in a general sense.

Despite the commitment of the former project staff, the short fieldwork time has meant that this evaluation has a lower amount of specific, in-depth information to draw on for triangulation purposes than usual; some additional findings were identified from conducting the evaluation exercise itself. Nevertheless the evaluator believes that the participatory approach adopted, which includes a review of this evaluation report by CRC, gives confidence in the findings.

*Photos of group-work during an evaluation community workshop in Marabo*



## 4. FINDINGS

The findings that follow draw on a mix of the information sources cited in the methodology section. The initial sections each cover a main strand of activity and its perceived impact; these are followed by sections discussing overall findings on efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Relevance is covered in the analysis of the validation of the theory of change and the effects on peace writ large.

### 4.1 CONTEXT

This section highlights key aspects and dynamics relevant to the project and its results.

The project was implemented in three geographic zones or axes, each in a different direction and accessed by a different route from Bunia, the capital of Ituri District in Orientale Province, Eastern DRC. The project areas thus adjoins North Kivu province, which includes the town of Beni where CRC's main office is situated.

The situation is now relatively calm overall in two of the three project axes, but there are still considerable security issues in the south of Irumu territory due to the FRPI armed group and its continuing clashes with the Congolese national army, FARDC. This is part of the project axis covered in the final year: it lies south of Bunia and towards Beni.

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Although two project axes generally have much improved stability and security, some of the communities still experience occasional militia attacks or raids made by their traditional neighbouring opponent tribes, despite FARDC being much more in evidence. In addition to this, the whole region still has major ongoing population movements, involving a mix of different dynamics:

- Temporary residents within communities returning to home communities now considered safe enough;
- IDPs returning from outside the area (tens of thousands said to be still anticipated);
- Returnees coming back from taking refuge in Uganda and Central African Republic (CAR);
- Large numbers of ex-combatants being encouraged to leave armed groups;
- Some ex-combatants moving on in search of better employment prospects;
- Members of new tribes (notably the Nande) from elsewhere buying land, settling and then encouraging extended family members to join them;
- Some communities still experiencing isolated attacks either from militia groups or from traditional opponent tribes, and being temporarily displaced;
- Refugees from CAR now starting to arrive in north Orientale Province.

Responding to this, many agencies are continuing to implementing humanitarian and rehabilitation activities in both Ituri District and North Kivu; there are very few development agencies and one reported that far from being in a post 'post conflict' development stage, they barely considered it to be post-conflict.

The external stakeholders interviewed all expressed concern that there are still unresolved issues as well as different underlying tensions and causes of conflicts that could, given the right catalyst, escalate into violence again. The most widespread of these relate to land and to the traditional friction between tribes that herd cattle and those that cultivate, often sparked by crop damage caused by wandering animals. Some concern was also expressed about the potential disruption that the forthcoming elections may cause. Although an EU-funded project is working to strengthen the justice system, the challenges are enormous and the general population does not have access to an operational justice system. Very recently the worrying phenomenon of popular justice has emerged; this was previously unknown, but by mid-February 2015 there had already been a few cases, including a youth being burnt alive during the evaluator's stay in Bunia. Considerable concern was expressed about the implications of such practices spreading.

## 4.2 PROJECT DESIGN AND EVOLUTION

This section considers the project design and how it has evolved during implementation.

Prior to designing the project, focus groups were conducted. The findings from these – together with collected profiles of ex-combatants and needs assessments of a sample of villages, plus CRC's knowledge of the area – informed the development of the project proposal and targeted responses. Thus some activities, such as the women's associations or the ex-combatant co-operatives, were not implemented in all of the project areas and alternatives were used where appropriate. This created a somewhat patchy design, although it was logical once explained.

Several adjustments were made when implementing the original design, to make the project more logistically feasible:

- Five geographic territories were originally included, three in Ituri District and two in North Kivu. However, it soon became apparent that this would be logistically challenging and that it would be more efficient to focus just on the three territories in Ituri District.
- The original task forces were superseded by the Reconciliation Commissions, which serve similar functions and were increased in number.
- Following the micro-finance training, it was realised that close monitoring and supervision would be required for the pilot. As a result, this was implemented separately in communities close to Beni.

In this respect, CRC consulted the community. Its presence at community level helps CRC to maintain close touch with community needs, and it strives to be responsive to them. However, the actual planning of the activities and decisions on what would be implemented where were not explicitly participatory, with the final selection of communities taking place after funding was confirmed. As with this initiative, CRC recognise that its projects are generally in need of further adaptation for meeting beneficiary needs. In the view of the consultant, this is partly an issue of the development process, which is affected by security and by capacity and time constraints at CRC and PD, and partly due to changing community circumstances.



The way in which activities were implemented took into account community views where possible, but there was no systematic participatory process for routinely consulting and involving them. While it is not essential to present an overview of the particular project to all participants, village leaders and authorities would be able to provide more informed feedback if they had a better overall understanding of the project as a whole.

### 4.3 THE REINTEGRATION OF EX-COMBATANTS

TARGETS		
	Objectives	Achieved
Road rehabilitation	40km	46km
Market reconstruction	6	5
Creation of eight new associations/co-operatives	8	8*
Ex-combatants and community co-operative members	400+160	311

\*(One of these has since ceased to function.)

Many ongoing programmes focus on the demobilisation and disarmament of ex-combatants, rather than their reintegration back into society. All three aspects have been central to the work of CRC for many years, and this project focussed on the reintegration aspect as a key element for promoting stability at community level. The bulk of the work with ex-combatants took place in Zone A, the Marabo axis, covered during the first year of the project, and to a much lesser extent in Zone B where it was considered that the circumstances made it less relevant. CRC's work with the leaders of armed groups and facilitating the demobilisation of members continued during the project and was recognised and supported with a budget line for transport/communication expenses, although no specific targets or activities for this were included.

To avoid working with ex-combatants already settled and reintegrated, CRC developed selection criteria for identifying and working with those considered the most disruptive in their communities; these included those most vulnerable, those most likely to cause trouble and those most at risk of returning to the bush and who had received no other support for reintegration.

To prepare them for membership of co-operatives alongside returning displaced people and community residents, the ex-combatants first participated in short projects rehabilitating community infrastructure: market structures and roads, enabling better connections with other communities. The dual purpose of this was to accustom them to working, give them some income and self-respect and, through the benefits of the work completed, to improve community attitudes towards them. Following this, skills training was given to mixed groups of ex-combatants and community youth: the training was combined with awareness-raising on peaceful cohabitation and psycho-social support where required. The individuals were then formed into co-operatives and associated together in sub-groups of five members who would work together with shared equipment provided by the project.

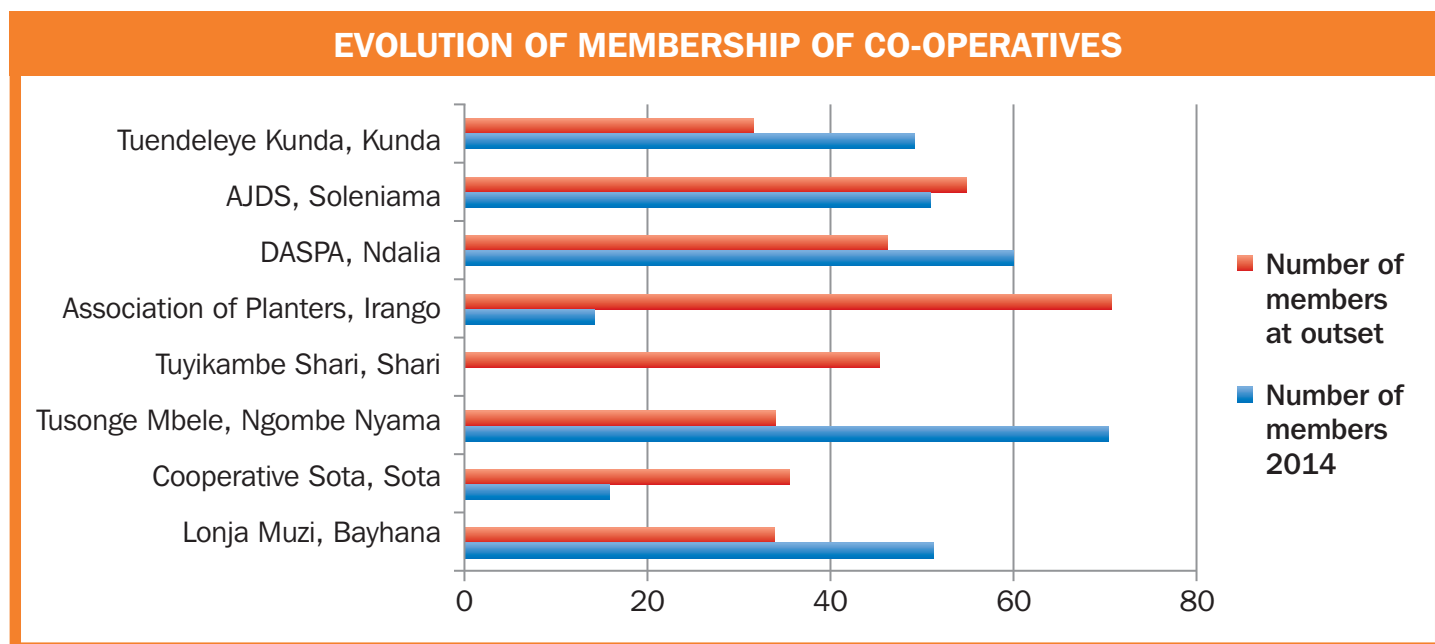
According to the ex-combatants, when they return to the community they are ignored because they came from the bush and they are restless because of their lack of work. One group mentioned that various organisations were not delivering on promises made to ex-combatants – possibly referring to recent changes in government strategy – and had abandoned them. The training provided by CRC helped them to get rid of their poor attitudes and frame of mind and helped to stabilise them; they particularly appreciated the way the training sessions made them feel on an equal footing with the community members. They cited the reopening of roads, their community field and the carpentry workshop as aspects that had worked well. However, for improving the results they were keen for more support and for participants to be given individual kits, as they had to wait to use the shared equipment currently allocated, which gets very worn quickly.

CRC recognised that its support to and monitoring of the co-operatives tended to be irregular and delayed and that this led to some problems that could have been avoided. One of the key challenges faced in this project component was not knowing how many ex-combatants would be successfully encouraged to come out of the bush: if there are delays in assisting them or if inadequate support is available, they risk returning. One suggestion made was for a greater proportion of funds to be allocated to the rehabilitation of grassroots structures.

Of eight co-operatives created, three have increased in size, two have remained a similar size, two have shown significant drops in membership and one has disappeared altogether. The figures provided indicate that at least 403 people became members, although the figure could be higher if there was an important turnover of members (no data was provided for this). The membership figures provided by CRC for 2014 show continuing membership of 311 co-operative members. All were involved in

agriculture, predominantly cultivating a range of different crops, and two were involved in animal husbandry. CRC's detailed case study of the goat-rearing co-operative showed that they managed to increase their number of goats from the 10 initially provided to 23, representing a substantial increase in capital value. It was recognised that good progress attracts and keeps members.

Table 1: Co-operative membership change 2012-2014



Shari co-operative members were reported to have gone to the gold mines in search of better money; together with the reduced membership of two co-operatives, this illustrates the challenges faced in stabilising ex-combatants, particularly as they tend to expect immediate results.

The ex-combatants who participated in the evaluation had by definition all remained; but one group said that they had come out of the bush with many others, some of whom had already returned because of lack of work. For them, receiving training in skills and equipment, and having activities to do, had kept them busy, occupied them and provided them with funds to rebuild their lives. They appreciated the small amount of money received for their income generating activity, but commented that they would have benefited from some training in how to manage this money, as well as some basic supplies for looking after the pigs they were given.

The combination of having a means to earn a living and the training they received in conflict management made them feel much more stable and peaceful. It had also ended any previous sense of frustration and tendencies to rape or steal (they noted that while they did do this a bit, they were always blamed for any such incidents but were not always responsible). The ex-combatants said they were better able to take control of their lives and cited being able to educate their children and feed their families as one outcome. Through better communication and cohabitation with villagers they also felt more integrated and reported that everyone now asks them to get involved and do things. In particular they mentioned their ability to facilitate relationships between the community and soldiers, since the soldiers are more likely to listen to them (as ex-militia). The community profile data shows the relevance of this, with over half the communities reporting the presence of FARDC troops nearby. A case study of the positive picture for those able to work is provided in Annex F; this, however, is not always the case. It was put into perspective by the case of one ex-combatant who is partially paralysed from his injuries: he was frustrated at not being able to work and said he would return to the bush were he not disabled.

Where obtaining the desired impact at community level and changes in attitude are concerned, those participating in the evaluation felt that they were now accepted and reintegrated. However, as ex-combatants are continuing to come out of the bush and the project design does not allow for working with all subsequent new arrivals, it is only in circumstances where the project has reintegrated every individual posing a problem that general attitudes are likely to change. One of the ex-combatant groups suggested that they would be able to support newly arriving ex-combatants, give them lessons based on their own learning and channel them into activities, but that they would definitely need teaching materials and other supplies in order to do this effectively; they did not think that providing advice alone would be enough.

## 4.4 THE MICRO-FINANCE PILOT

Peace Direct had previously resisted involvement with micro-finance activities, despite several partners, including CRC, having requested support for this for some time. This was because PD as an organisation had no previous experience or internal expertise in micro-finance as a tool for providing support – and it knew that micro-finance projects are complex, risky and require technical know-how. This was therefore a new departure and pilot for both PD and CRC, aimed at building their capacities and providing learning for both.

PD was keen to ensure good-quality support: the Uganda office of BRAC, the acknowledged experts in the field of micro-finance, provided the initial training for CRC in Uganda. This led CRC staff to realise that their plans and budgets for implementing this component were impractical:

- Existing staff already had substantial workloads;
- No budget had been allowed for associated implementation costs (staff, training materials, loan books, transport for monitoring visits etc), only the small capital sum;
- A close eye would be required, but the Ituri communities were some distance away and supervision would need to be more frequent than, at the very best, monthly visits.

It is a testament to CRC's commitment that, instead of deciding it could not be done, it recruited dedicated Credit Officers and funded the salaries by pooling and reducing the salaries of their existing staff. Likewise, it moved the pilot sites close to Beni to enable closer supervision and keep down transport costs. It was not apparent to the evaluator that the implications of these difficulties had been fully understood by Peace Direct.

In all there were 275 women, composed of a mix of wives of ex-combatants and women affected by conflict, placed into 11 solidarity groups of 25 members each; each group was divided into five sub-groups of five. After training members were able to apply for loans and once all subgroup members had repaid successfully, they could go on to take three more loans, each bigger than the previous one. The amounts envisaged for the first loans were \$20 (and \$30 for ex-combatants, had it expanded to them). However in DRC this was clearly insufficient, so it was increased to \$100 rising to a maximum of \$250 for the fourth loan.

The system of loan books and frequent visits worked well, with a good loan repayment rate of just over 80%, but there was a turnover in membership totalling 34% of women leaving their group. The large majority of these were replaced by new members; however they reported that they felt 'second-rate' compared to the original members. CRC registered a number of reasons for the departure of group members: difficulties repaying loans (sometimes because of security issues preventing movement); sickness or death; relocation; and insufficient capital for giving larger and prompt repeat loans.

Group members<sup>1</sup> liked being part of a group with regular meetings and the sense of social belonging and solidarity it gave them: they encouraged each other to keep up their repayments and helped sick members with repayments. While members appreciated the organisation, understanding and encouraging management style of CRC, they experienced particular problems with CRC's lack of promptness in providing repeat loans. While waiting, members tended to fund household expenses by using up profits saved from the previous loan, rather than investing it their businesses. Furthermore, the allocation of loans to some but not all of those ready and eligible proved a potential source of friction within the groups and led to feelings of isolation among those who were waiting. It had been hoped this pilot would be expanded beyond this initial sample but logistical challenges prevented this, most notably the insufficiency of the capital available for lending even for the initial group.

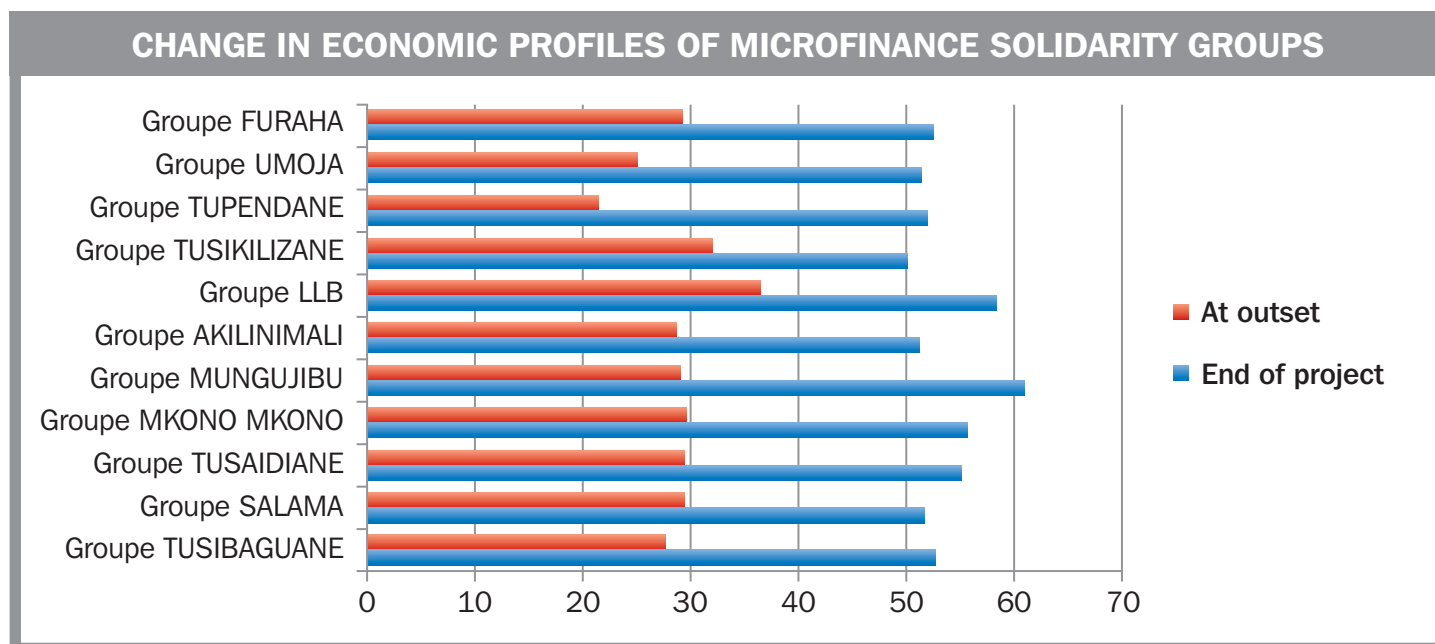
This latter was clearly a function of CRC's inexperience, but from this pilot they have identified a range of improvements spanning recruitment criteria, adjusted loan administration processes, improved training modules and additional activities for supporting members. They are keen to get advice from micro-finance experts in DRC who understand the working environment and they see the interest earned as a possible source of income-generation for CRC. The consultant would caution against this being a motive for CRC continuing to administer micro-finance schemes after project end, unless they are genuinely self-financing with a good profit after covering all the management time and administrative efforts of CRC, and can keep the personnel collecting loan repayments separate from those in other roles.

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<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from FGDs conducted by CRC when economic profile data was gathered.

Despite the scheme having a number of teething problems, participants' economic circumstances showed a marked improvement over the two years. CRC collected simple economic profile data, using a poverty score card methodology, from all group members when they were set up: this was repeated with group members in late 2014 using the same tool. The average baseline score across all the groups in 2012 was 28.9 out of a maximum of 107. By late 2014, this had risen to 54.5, an increase of 83%. Table 2 shows the individual scores for each of the 11 groups.

Table 2: Change in economic situation of microfinance groups 2012-2014



The women reported that the financial improvements had translated into a number of economic and social changes in their lives:

- Improved dignity and standing in their households and the community;
- Improved attitude and psychological wellbeing – feeling more stable;
- Helping them develop income-generating activities such as hairdressing, baking and raising goats;
- Ability to contribute to household costs including schooling, medical expenses, better diets and house improvements;
- Strengthened relationship with their husband and more participation in running the household.

The location of the women participants, combined with time and logistics pressures, meant that it was only possible to bring two of them to Bunia for the evaluation. One of these women, Therese, recounted that by managing to fund the building of their family home, she now has a bigger role in household decision-making and also feels respected by the community (see detailed case study in Annex G).

There were no indications given that the support to wives had led to any negative effects on their relationships with their husbands, either with the micro-finance solidarity groups or with the women's associations (see below). However, given the traditional social norms and current thinking on the need for the inclusion of some appropriate complementary activities with male decision-makers, it is suggested that in future there should also be some consultation of the beneficiaries' key male household members (if any) during monitoring and evaluation, if not already carried out during the planning stage.

## Women's associations

Women's associations were established in the geographic zone covered in the first year in response to greater issues affecting women, notably higher population movements and more sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and hostage taking; in the other project areas, CRC considered their role to be covered by the Radio Clubs. Like the micro-finance groups, the members were a mix of ex-combatant wives and those affected by conflict. However, instead of receiving loans they were given training in skills, notably basket weaving and baking, and were given some starter kits to help them get going. The training was accompanied by sensitisation sessions on the importance of peaceful cohabitation, and this was the first of the positive aspects to be mentioned by the group: others cited were the quality and motivation of the trainers. CRC explained how they



could work together and, without receiving any material inputs from CRC, a number of initiatives were reported including a group savings scheme.

The members' key suggestions for further improving the results obtained were the provision of better kits at the end of training and access to micro-credit. The provision of loans had originally been envisaged and was expressed by the group as an unfulfilled expectation. CRC also identified the need to improve the kits. In the view of the evaluator, the advantages of providing better individual kits must be weighed against the cost implications for the number of people that can be helped and also against the group dynamics promoted by some continued sharing of equipment.

The women's association members reported similar social and economic benefits to those mentioned by the micro-finance groups (see above and following page).

### BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS THEMSELVES

- No longer feeling helpless and wondering what to do with themselves.
- Ability to earn money for themselves.
- Strengthening of members' other income-generating activities.

### BENEFITS FOR THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- Food and related agricultural products are accessible within the community, both in terms of:
- Proximity (no travel needed);
  - Time (not just on market days).
- Products are at affordable prices.

## 4.5 THE RADIO CLUBS

TARGETS		
	Target	Achieved
Number of Radio Clubs	38	42
Provision of loans for community projects	£10,000	Not achieved

Radio Clubs are a widely accepted concept and implemented by several different agencies. CRC have been creating and supporting them since 2009 and their tally now exceeds 300, some of which are spontaneous spin-offs and not directly created by CRC. Learning gained from each set of clubs has informed the evolution of the approach adopted with subsequent Radio Clubs; over time, the emphasis has shifted progressively towards developing their role as mechanisms for community development and incorporating income-generating components to support sustainable functioning.

After CRC supplied training, a radio and reporting formats, the Radio Clubs' core activity has been listening in a group to radio programmes developed by CRC. Focusing on themes of peace and development, these programmes are broadcast on local radio at a regular time. After listening to the show, the group discusses the theme and then shares the information gained with wider members of the community. CRC combined the more practical household and development topics with training and programmes on peaceful cohabitation as well as the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The Radio Club members were also given advice on how to establish joint savings schemes and other community initiatives, but were deliberately not given immediate financial support. CRC helped the Radio Clubs to obtain a shared club field and provided some very basic equipment and seeds to get them started. The original plan was to wait until the second year – when they would be functioning well as groups and will have had time to assess the need for community initiatives – and then provide them with loans for community initiatives: however this plan had to be dropped when it became apparent that the micro-finance pilot needed to be situated near Beni.



The strengths of the Radio Clubs were perceived to be the training, learning from the programmes and the sense of group unity and belonging. It was also thought that the exchange meetings and the additional activities started by some of the Radio Clubs had worked well: the football team created by the Zumbe club was cited as an example.

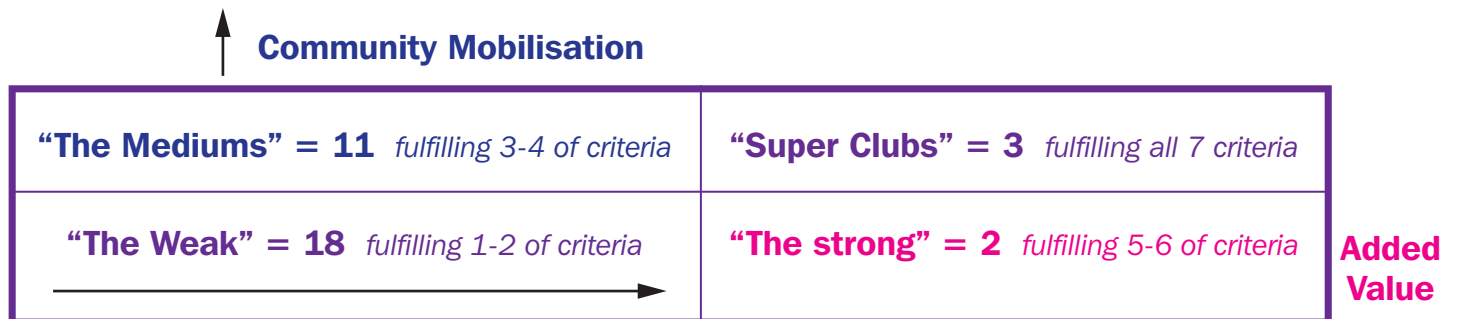
Areas of weaknesses that worked less well included:

- Irregularity or non-participation of some members in the income-generating farming activities, linked to lack of time, lack of instant material return for effort or unsuitable timing;
- Insufficient materials, which tended to damage the unity of the group and cause occasional friction between members.

The main criticisms reflected those of other groups and focussed on the need for more materials and more monitoring and follow up from CRC – in one instance, a request for seeds was not acted on until after the window of time for planting them was over.

In a bid to get a sense of the scale of the Radio Club successes, the evaluator and CRC agreed a preparatory mapping exercise that was conducted by CRC prior to the fieldwork. This places the Radio Clubs in relation to the extent of their mobilisation of the community and to the added value in terms of new initiatives.

Figure 1: Mapping of Radio Clubs and functioning end 2014



Note: In the absence of recent monitoring information from four of the Zone C clubs, established in the final year and now in areas of current conflict, these have been omitted.

The criteria identified by CRC that informed this mapping exercise were as follows:

1. Is a recognised community structure and reference point: has an active committee.
2. Has functioned continuously since being set up.
3. Mobilisation capacity for different local development initiatives: member numbers increasing, communal field and a savings scheme or account.
4. Frequency of listening to the radio and sharing information: meeting frequency and listening reports.
5. Individual impact for group members: construction of houses with corrugated iron roofing, large extent of field, other investments.
6. Results not expected by CRC: creation of other activities, monthly savings, purchase of equipment, construction (classroom, road, bridge, etc.).
7. Significant change perceived by other people in the community/stakeholders.

There was insufficient time for exploring the factors that influenced why some of these clubs had become ‘Super Clubs’, but the evaluator notes that two of the three Super Clubs are in relatively small communities situated on or very close to main roads. One of them is Kaya, where the market was rehabilitated: this was described as ‘the pride of our community’ and a place where members of ally and enemy tribes all come to trade and meet without incident. (See case study in Annex H.)

See Section 4.10 for analysis of the stories of change collected from Radio Club members.

### Kaya Peace Market



## 4.6 THE RECONCILIATION COMMISSIONS

TARGETS		
	Target	Achieved
Number of reconciliations to be set up	12	31
Approx. number of cases handled	200	400

CRC established many more than the 12 Reconciliation Commissions planned, since they assumed the role of the envisaged Task Forces. The Reconciliation Commissions are composed of varying numbers of people, generally 15-20 at the outset, with a total membership of 602 of which 326 were women. (It should be noted that at the evaluation workshops, more male than female commission members attended.) Their key functions are to:

- Promote peaceful cohabitation through awareness-raising and sensitisation;
- Identify and work to diffuse possible areas of friction;
- Provide a cost-free mechanism for reconciling parties in dispute and reaching agreement;
- Citizen education on human rights and civic duties – the need to respect human dignity;
- Refer and advocate to formal authorities on behalf of victims of injustice.

Of the 31 Reconciliation Commissions created, three are no longer effectively functioning and the others have varying levels of activity.

The members gave a clear understanding of their role as an accessible, cost-free mechanism for solving civil disputes without the parties involved risking any fines or penalties. The clear distinction made with the Baraza – traditional authority mechanism at community level – is that the Baraza can impose fines and penalties, and can refer cases to the police/criminal justice system. The justice system is dysfunctional and not always impartial: it can involve costs beyond the means of community members, especially returnees and ex-combatants.

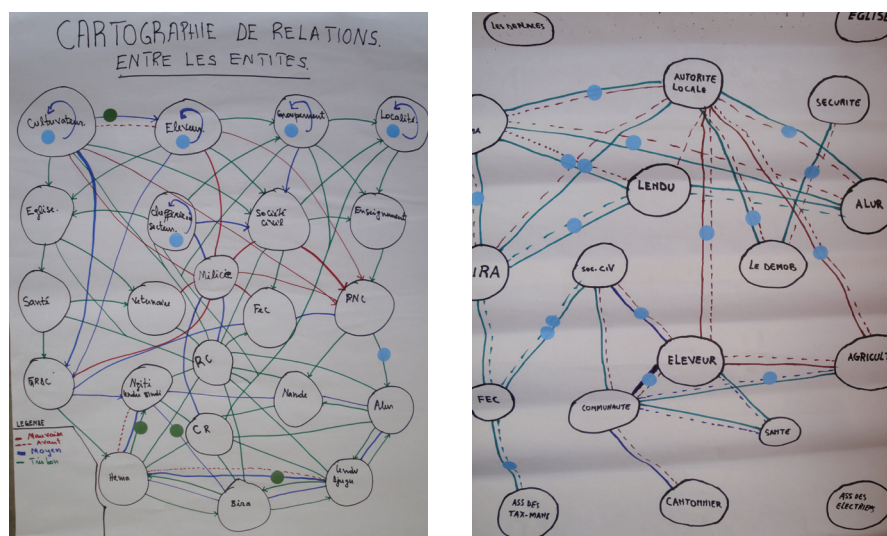
In Zone B, the Soleniama axis, the Reconciliation Commissions analysed the types of conflicts they encountered and said that the inter-ethnic conflicts and those relating to armed robberies (including involvement of IDPs and ex-combatants) were on the decrease. However, land related conflicts are still frequent and of most concern, and centre either on boundaries or the traditional herder/cultivator conflicts that arise from crop damage caused by wandering animals. Land issues were also perceived to underlie new conflicts emerging between communities and the Church; they may also contribute to conflicts now emerging in relation to divorce attempts.

The Reconciliation Commissions appreciated the training they were given, especially that in land law, and felt they were responding to a real community need; however they also suggested that they would have been more effective had they received:

- Some funds for communications and transport, so they could get to the sites of conflict promptly;
- Some form of identity badge or branding (item of equipment or clothes) to show they are genuine and to distinguish them from others falsely claiming to be peace-builders;
- Funds for celebrating reconciliations – this is the cultural norm;
- More regular CRC follow-up activities.

Figures 2 and 3 below were drawn by different Reconciliation Commission members to provide a picture of the various relationship dynamics within their communities and the changes that have occurred in quality of relationships since the project activities began: the dots give an understanding of where they have been active. The complexity of the web of different parties and relationships at community level are immediately evident.

Figures 2 and 3: Maps of changes in quality of community relationship and Reconciliation Commission roles



Some of the Reconciliation Commissions had clearly been more proactive than others: examples were given of helping to encourage militia to come out of the bush and raising or denouncing some issues (e.g. exorbitant administrative fines) with higher levels of authority. In some cases, where tricky community-level (rather than individual level) issues were being dealt with, CRC could be called on to assist, and they reported doing so in some instances, such as with the relocation of markets. There were two other particular strands of CRC activity that related to the Reconciliation Commissions and the prevention and resolution of conflicts: the holding of peace meetings and exchange meetings, which enable interface between different groups, and the negotiation on behalf 179 individuals, largely for land allocations, with village chiefs and local authorities. The former were recognised by the Reconciliation Commission and village leader groups, but the latter was not spontaneously mentioned.

The Reconciliation Commission members clearly thought that they had contributed to the peaceful cohabitation within the community and to the current ability of the different tribes to mix and move through each other's communities without fear. In the final workshop, it was notable that participants questioned the absence of representatives from a traditional 'enemy' Bira village nearby and said that they should be there too; CRC explained that they had not been selected as a project community. Subsequently it emerged that while the residents of Bogoro had mixed with Bira during the CRC trainings, these were not their immediate Bira neighbours; so while they got used to interacting with Bira, it was not specifically with the key Bira community nearby. This raises an interesting point regarding the project selection criteria and the need for the selection process to consider not just the individual communities, but also their interactions with neighbours and the grouping of the communities selected.

Although other agencies have also established a variety of peace-related structures and initiatives, the community groups gave no indication that there was an issue of duplication or competition. It was notable that in the final workshop for Zone C, where there are ongoing serious security issues, three members of local peace structure with no previous project involvement asked to come and join the workshop – and were included in the spirit of collaboration and learning. Although the Reconciliation Commissions were seen as a secondary focus for the evaluation, it was clear during the evaluation workshops that they continue to be relevant and have a potentially important contribution to make.



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## 4.7 RELEVANCE OF PROJECT AND ITS THEORY OF CHANGE

This section analyses the validity of the CRC/PD Theory of Change and the relevance of the project. Time constraints prevented this being done in a participative way with CRC but the evaluator's conclusions were shared briefly with them.

The CRC Theory of Change (ToC) expressed simply at the outset of the project was that:

1. The sustainable re-integration of ex-combatants will lead to fewer combatants and therefore a reduction in violence necessary for the re-integration of IDPs.
2. The re-integration of IDPs will lead to more stable and supportive communities, returning a sense of normalcy and fostering support for peace.
3. Community development projects will improve the quality of life of all community members, leading to sustainable re-integration of IDPs and ex-combatants and strengthening support for sustainable peace.”

A more detailed diagram developed by CRC is in Annex I.

Given the range of different sources of friction and conflict recognised in the context, this ToC is one of many strands in a much greater web of relationships and influences on peace and stability.

There was a widespread sense that the current period of calm may not last and that there is a real risk of further conflicts, so CRC already recognise that it would be more realistic to refer to stability rather than peace. In addition, several external stakeholders clearly did not consider ex-combatants as primary instigators of conflict within communities: they can be a source of unrest and instability if they are not settled and stable (for which employment is key), but more importantly they are drawn into the disputes of others and are used by parties in dispute to fuel and escalate their conflicts, often related to land issues.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in some of the project areas the project emphasis was less on ex-combatants and their reintegration and more on peaceful cohabitation in general.

The ToC also implies a linear progression, whereas in reality it is a cycle that keeps repeating itself with the continued numbers of armed groups and thousands of combatants yet to leave the bush, as well as tens of thousands of IDP movements still anticipated. There is therefore an ongoing need to repeat many of the project activities for training and sensitising new arrivals, educating them on peaceful cohabitation and providing assistance with resettling and income generating activities. The cyclical and reinforcing aspect of peaceful cohabitation and community development emerged specifically in some groups, where it was mentioned that the community development activities were possible because of the peaceful cohabitation and, in turn, contributed to and reinforced it.

All the project activities do address aspects of conflict, both prevention and resolution, although the latter largely within communities rather than resolving larger scale differences between communities; but not surprisingly, given the multiple sources of friction and conflict, the project does not tackle all varieties and does not work at all levels. Where there are larger-scale external forces – such as militias at work provoking conflict on a wider scale – the stability achieved is unlikely to be able to withstand this.

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<sup>2</sup> It was speculated that young ex-combatants were likely to have been involved in the demonstrations and popular justice incidents.

## 4.8 EFFECTIVENESS

This section takes an overall look at the programme level effectiveness and then considers the effectiveness of the project at the level of 'peace writ large', using the Reflecting on Peace Practice indicators.

At programme level, CRC attributed part of its effectiveness to its neutrality and its acceptance as such by communities; this is not always easy to maintain in such a complex environment and any perceptions of partiality would have undermined its credibility and effectiveness. Interestingly, this aspect was reflected in an evaluation workshop drawing: the group was asked to represent CRC as a plant or animal, and one of the two chosen was a hen since it is able to move around freely from side to side in a conflict without drawing attention (and it requires neighbours to communicate and collaborate when eggs are laid).

CRC's implementation strategy with the various structures created was to give them the training needed, a basic set of equipment and advice on how to proceed on their own, and then to see which ones were self-motivated and progressed. This strategy counters the ongoing humanitarian assistance strategies and, whilst it is challenging for communities more used to receiving hand-outs, it avoids committing too many resources until corresponding results look likely.

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In practice, both CRC and all the different structures created – micro-finance solidarity groups, Reconciliation Commissions, women’s associations, Radio Clubs and co-operatives – were pleased with the results. Nevertheless they were clear that with an increase in material inputs and closer follow-up from CRC, the activities would have been more visible and even better results would have been obtained.

This raises two related questions:

- ‘Would additional inputs have had correspondingly better results or not?’
- ‘Is it better for a smaller number of communities to benefit more from receiving concentrated support (thick blanket for the few) or for a larger number of communities to benefit but receiving fewer inputs and resources (thin blanket for the many)?’

There is no straightforward answer, but overall the evaluator considers that a slight increase in resources (or reduction in number of communities) would have produced a better return on investment: with more visible and faster results, levels of enthusiasm would have been greater and some participants may not have given up. Furthermore, CRC and PD both seem to be overly optimistic and attempt to do too much with too little, thereby spreading resources too thinly. This view is based on the following observations:

- CRC staff are very responsive to community needs: its programme of regular activities is not restricted to those in funded projects, as it continues to try to maintain contact with previous structures created, such as some of the 300-plus Radio Clubs already founded.
- Donor budgets obtained by PD tend to be short on the project administration costs necessary for functioning effectively in this difficult environment (this project allowed very little for capacity building beyond trainings: there was one £400 computer).
- CRC does not appear comfortable standing its ground with PD if the fit between activities and budgets does not look feasible.
- When CRC responds with figures/feedback it is often so close to deadlines that there is little time for reflection, explanations, discussion or negotiation.
- The working environment is unstable and contingencies are likely to need absorbing.

For a mix of both internal management issues, staff capacity, budgeting and external security issues, CRC was unable to make the regular follow-up monitoring and support visits needed, especially during the final year of the project. This was widely recognised, by both CRC and at all beneficiary workshops, to have reduced the effectiveness of the activities and the results obtained.

The stretched capacity of the CRC team appears also to have been a contributing factor to the lack of well-developed relationships with the higher-level administrative authorities in Ituri District. This surprised the evaluator, who understands that the CRC team is well-known and has closer relationships at all levels in Beni District. There has clearly been CRC interface in Ituri with the Chefferies (the level immediately above the village chiefs) and with some of the Collectivities immediately above them, but contact with the Territory and Ituri District levels above this appears to have been very occasional and ad hoc, rather than systematic.

Although CRC is an active member of RADHIT, the Ituri District human rights network registered with the relevant district authorities, and has an office coordinator in Bunia who attends OCHA coordination meetings, the CRC sub-office has few staff and no computers or functioning electricity supply; this hampers effective communications. Likewise decision-making takes place in Beni so the sub-office has limited ability for developing the role of CRC as an integral part of the civil society community in Bunia.

While CRC had a notable collaboration with Premier Alert, who cleared mines affecting project areas in the early days of the project, there seemed to be little constructive inter-action with other agencies active in Bunia and Ituri District. This is apparently due in part to the general working environment and attitudes of other agencies, but nevertheless active participation and collaboration with others is needed for spreading a good understanding of CRC’s model and its achievements. The external stakeholders encountered by the evaluator tended to have some awareness of a project activity – local authorities were typically involved in launching/participating in a training course, but were not kept updated and were unable to comment on CRC’s approach.

To conclude: it is clear that CRC has focused on building relationships at grassroots level and that this strategy has enabled it to implement its activities effectively, but it has not helped its profile or ability to influence or advocate for scaling up its approach.

## In relation to ‘peace writ large’

Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) recognises that most peace-building programmes focus on a small part of the overall picture and that with many actors working on different aspects at different levels, progress takes place in many small steps and it is difficult to assess individual contributions. In considering strategies for influencing ‘peace writ large’, Reflecting on Peace Practice developed the simple four-cell matrix on the right into which it believes encompasses all peace-building projects. It differentiates between approaches that aim to affect ‘more people’ and those that focus on ‘key people’ because of their power and influence. Likewise it recognises that programmes can work at either the individual or the socio-political level.

Figure 4: Reflecting on Peace Practice matrix

	More people	Key people
Individual/personal level		
Socio-political level		

RPP’s research found that if project activities are limited to one of the quadrants, it will not build effective momentum for change. For having impact on ‘peace writ large’, two kinds of linkages were found to be important for impact:

- linking individual/personal level change with action at the socio-political level;
- linking approaches aiming to reach more people with engaging with key people.

The CRC programme focused on more people at community level with the involvement of key people generally coming from within the community. Although CRC and its local focal points developed contacts with the Chefferies – the lowest level of government administration responsible for overseeing the village chiefs – there was only occasional work with key people at higher levels and no systematic linking with actions at the socio-political levels in Ituri District.

RPP EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA	RESPONSE OF PROJECT DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE
1. The effort contributes to stopping a key driving factor of the war or conflict.	The Reconciliation Commission focus on preventing disputes and resolving them at an early stage before they escalate into conflict includes the key driver of land issues (but not herder/cultivator issues); however, this is on a very small scale in relation to the size of the problem, and only at community level. It does not participate in conflict resolution with armed groups.
2. The effort contributes to a momentum for peace by causing participants and communities to develop their own peace initiatives in relation to critical elements of context analysis.	The project works at community level: but for sustainable peace, initiatives need to get momentum for change moving up beyond grassroots to higher levels that influence decision-makers.
3. The effort results in the creation or reform of political institutions to handle grievances in situations where such grievances do, genuinely, drive the conflict.	It has created structures that aim to address local grievances at grassroots level, but these do not constitute political institutions and do not influence higher level regional and national power dynamics that do drive the conflict. There is a disconnect between CRC activities and Peace Direct/CRC international advocacy efforts.
4. The effort prompts people increasingly to resist violence and provocations to violence.	Examples of denunciations were cited for community resistance. The heads of the Chefferies are seen as both a cause and a solution of conflicts, but there was no systematic analysis of key people to influence, nor any formal strategy of training in advocacy/ influencing for community structures.
5. The effort results in an increase in people’s security and their sense of security.	There has been an increase in security derived from a sense of getting on well with others and losing fear, but this is also derived from other non-project sources – notably the presence of FARDC.

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## 4.9 EFFICIENCY

This section explores whether the activities were implemented in a cost-efficient manner compared to alternatives: the translation of inputs received into project outputs.

The unstable context in Eastern DRC clearly presents some inherent challenges that need to be factored in when considering cost-efficiency: longer road routes sometimes have to be taken to avoid areas in conflict and activity timings or locations may have to change at the last minute.

It was evident that CRC pays close attention to minimising costs wherever possible and to avoiding wastage. However, the reduction of costs to a minimum can be at the expense of efficiency where speed and effort are concerned: the lack of power and computers in the Bunia office and limited power and IT facilities in the Beni office means that many internal reports are handwritten and more difficult to circulate; communications tend to be erratic.

In order to work efficiently/effectively, a minimum of necessary resources are required and CRC/PD seem to underestimate these, each for different reasons. With the underfunded micro-finance component, the CRC solution of pooling staff members' agreed salaries into a common basket to fund the credit officer salaries, thereby reducing all their salaries, is a remarkable testament to their commitment to the work, but is not a cost-efficiency that can be sustained or repeated.

CRC also experienced major internal management issues in 2014 with the unfortunate recruitment of a new coordinator who proved ill-equipped for the post and had a negative effect on the team, on their work and on internal and external communications. This clearly affected the efficiency of the organisation both at the time and following his departure, as CRC has since been struggling to reconstruct the threads of what happened.

Efficiency is not just an internal matter but depends on both CRC and PD working together efficiently. It was apparent that at times CRC had felt its ability to implement the activities efficiently had been undermined by some PD actions, notably:

- Late or incomplete transfers of funds, with insufficient explanation;
- Sending urgent requests that required ongoing activities to be dropped/changed.

The evaluator was not able to get to the bottom of these issues with either CRC or Peace Direct in the time available, nor to clarify the extent to which they were exacerbated by the recent management issues. However, communications appear to have posed an ongoing challenge and not just during this brief period, whether due to physical constraints (electricity/internet access), poor communications skills or time management. In the view of the evaluator, poor communications have contributed to some misunderstandings that now risk affecting the quality and effective working of the partnership if they are not addressed. Peace Direct have accepted this finding and intend to explore it further with CRC.

## 4.10 IMPACT

This section considers the contribution to overall impact at community level derived from the variety of approaches used.

The participants in the various activities and structures all described and attributed similar sets of changes resulting from the project at community level. An analysis of the stories of significant change, outlined in workshop group discussions, confirmed major changes in attitudes and relationships between different ethnic groups in the communities: they are, with only one or two exceptions, now living in unity and moving around freely. It was recognized that CRC's activities had made a valuable contribution to this, but also that the presence of the government FARDC and police had made a big contribution, since they were hardly seen prior to this. Other attitudinal and behavioural changes cited were:

- Women being more valued by husbands and sharing in household decision-making – because of their economic/social activities;
- Youth playing a larger role in the community;
- Ex-combatants behaving like everyone else;
- More girls going to school;
- Denunciation of conflicts and crimes, such as SGBV, as a result of Radio Club initiatives.

These changes, and particularly that of peaceful cohabitation, were in turn recognised to have enabled and contributed to a range of development initiatives, varying by community:

- Much more developed and improved agricultural activities;



- Construction – improvements of own houses and building of schools, health posts etc.;
- Arrival of other NGOs;
- Expansion of commerce – not just the markets constructed, but other boutiques.

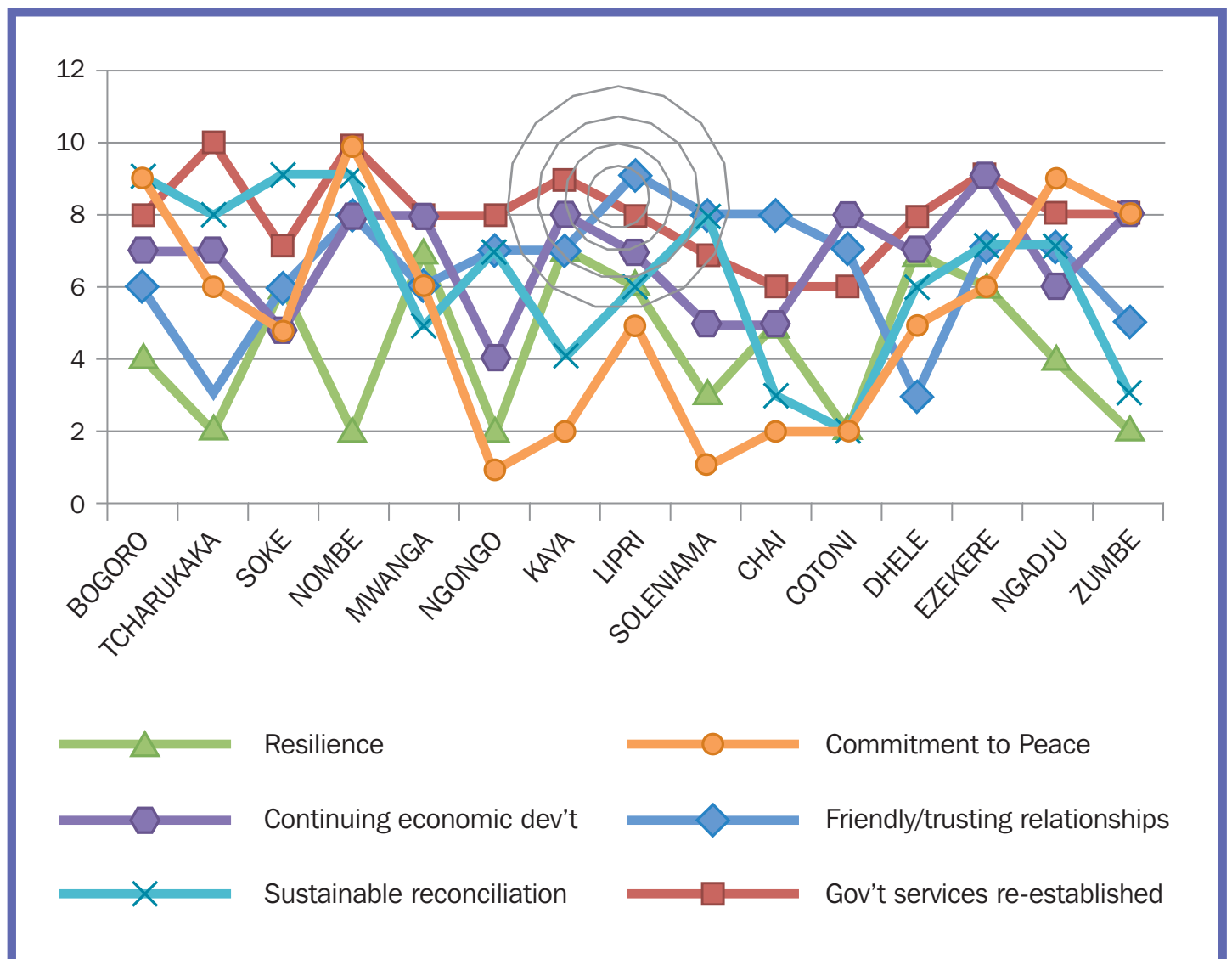
In order to put these impacts into perspective, the evaluation workshops included an initial exercise in which participants were grouped by community (usually 6-10 members) and asked to rate the current situation in their communities as a whole in relation to a series of statements. These are displayed on the following page and show that:

- There are big variations within and between communities;
- The workshop group’s observations of improvements in their circumstances are not community-wide.

When feeding back the results in the workshops, low and high scoring communities were asked to explain their ratings and these were very revealing. For instance, they were invited to rate the following statement: “Our village is now much better able to organise itself and to get back on its feet after an incident.” Dhele representatives rated it 2 out of 10, stating that they had received lots of assistance from many agencies, but the population do not lift a finger to help themselves. Meanwhile Lipri representatives gave it a rating of 9 as they had received no outside help (other than from CRC) and as a result had done a great deal to help themselves successfully.

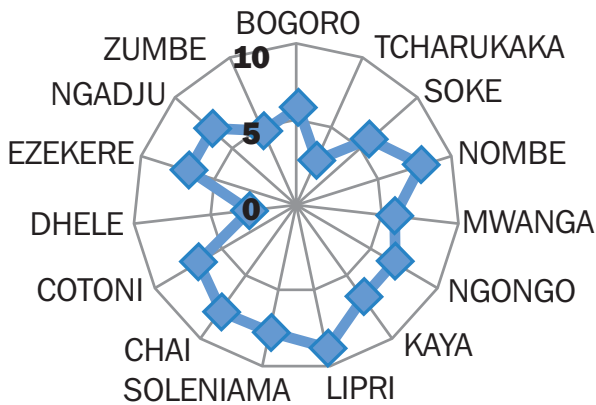
The very variable, sometimes confusing, picture overall is well illustrated by the Table 3 below, covering all the statements and communities.

Table 3: Communities’ scores for all the statements



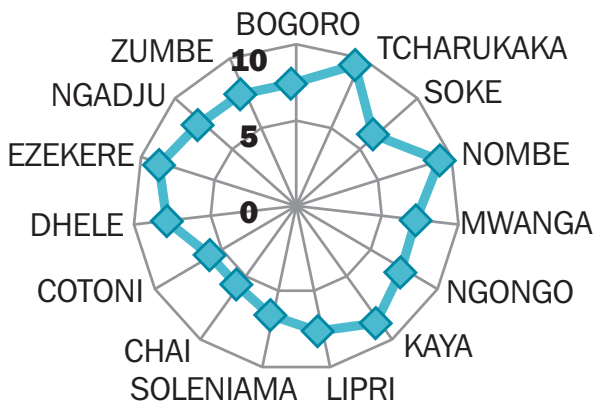
"Our village is now much better able to organise itself and recover after incidents"

### RESILIENCE



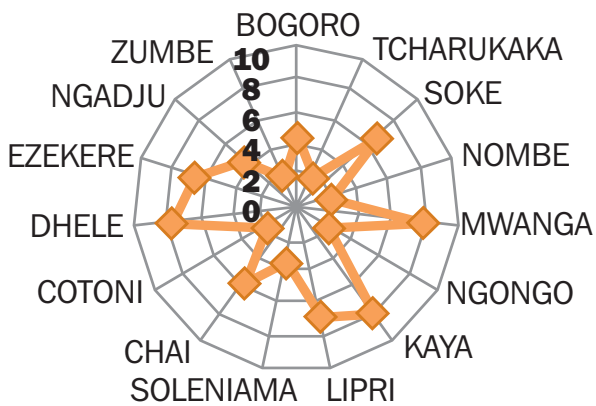
"We are noticing continued improvement in our economic circumstances."

### COMMITMENT TO PEACE



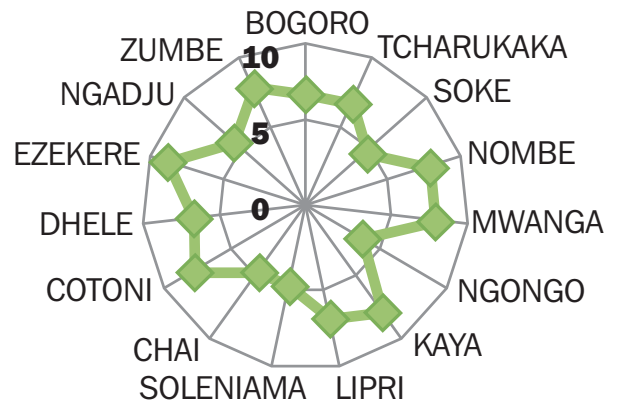
"Our reconciliation is sustainable"

### CONTINUING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



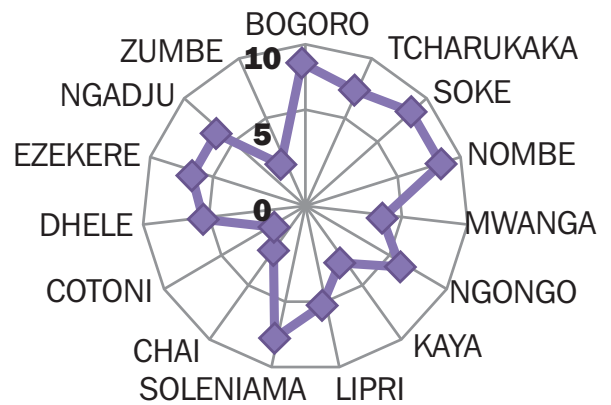
"Our village wants peace and we resist conflicts and violence"

### FRIENDLY/TRUSTING SOCIAL RELATIONS



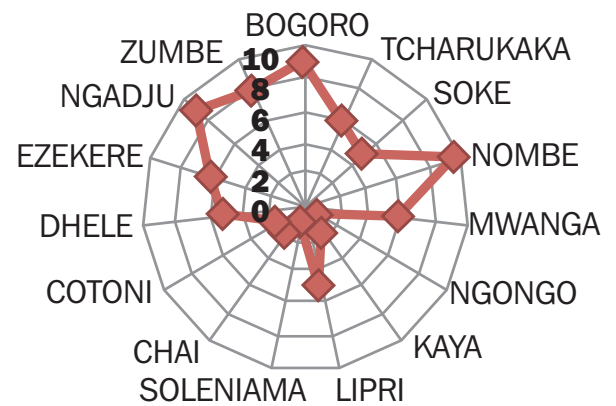
"The social relations between different groups in our village are very amicable, stable and mutually trusting"

### SUSTAINABLE RECONCILIATION



"Government services from before have now been re-established"

### GOV'T SERVICES RE-ESTABLISHED



This variable picture was also reflected in the community profiles where key demographic, social, security and economic information was gathered; this showed considerable variations and the need for additional conversations for an accurate interpretation. Looking generally at the community profiles for Zones A and B (where activities took place in years 1 and 2), the following dynamics were observed and confirm the qualitative workshop findings:

- Reductions in the incidence of crime and violence within communities and with trouble-maker ex-combatants within the communities;
- Greater presence of FARDC near communities;
- Schools and churches present before the war are virtually all functioning again.
- The economic infrastructure and activity has picked up in many but not all communities – some have not regained former markets/shops etc., and in only a few have they increased beyond previous levels;
- Social relations between ex-combatants, returnees and community residents, and between different tribal groups, are now good and stable in all but one or two exceptional cases.

The quantitative survey aimed to assess these dynamics from community member perspectives: the limited results that it was possible to extract in the time show similar patterns for both the general population (Table 4) and the ex-combatant sample (Table 5, not confined to project beneficiaries) with improvements continuing two years after the year of implementation in 2012.

Table 4

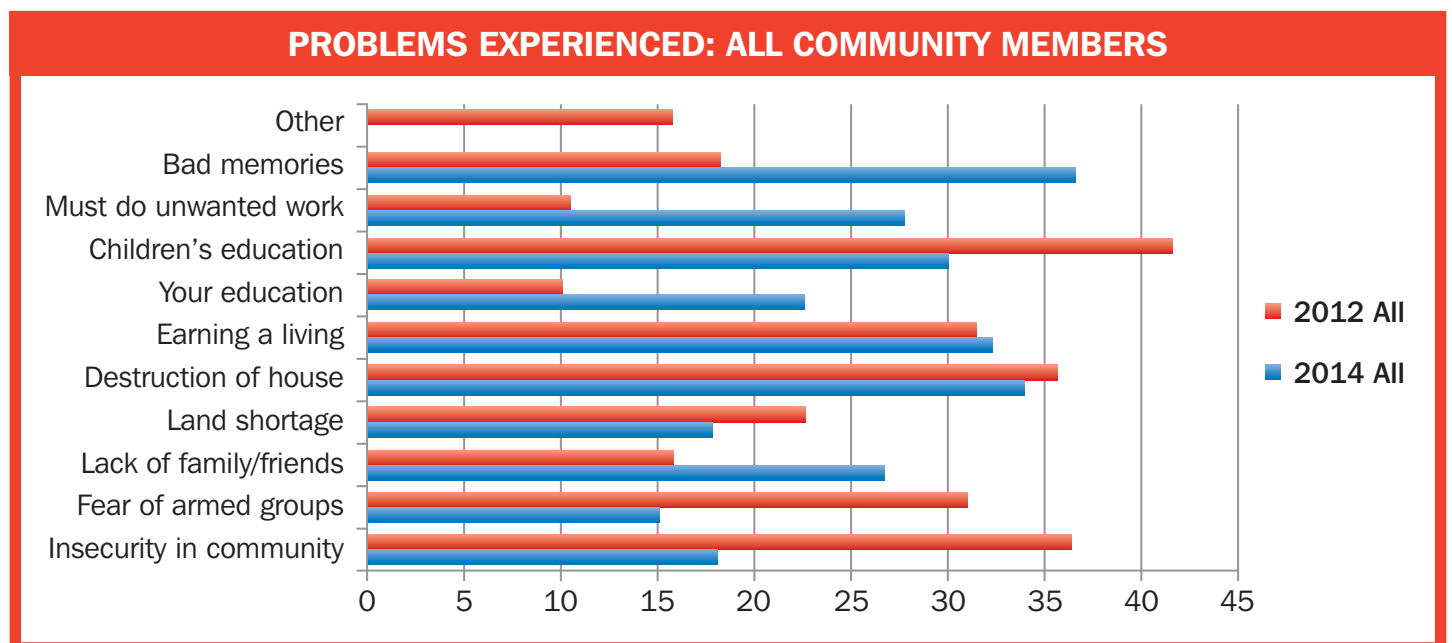
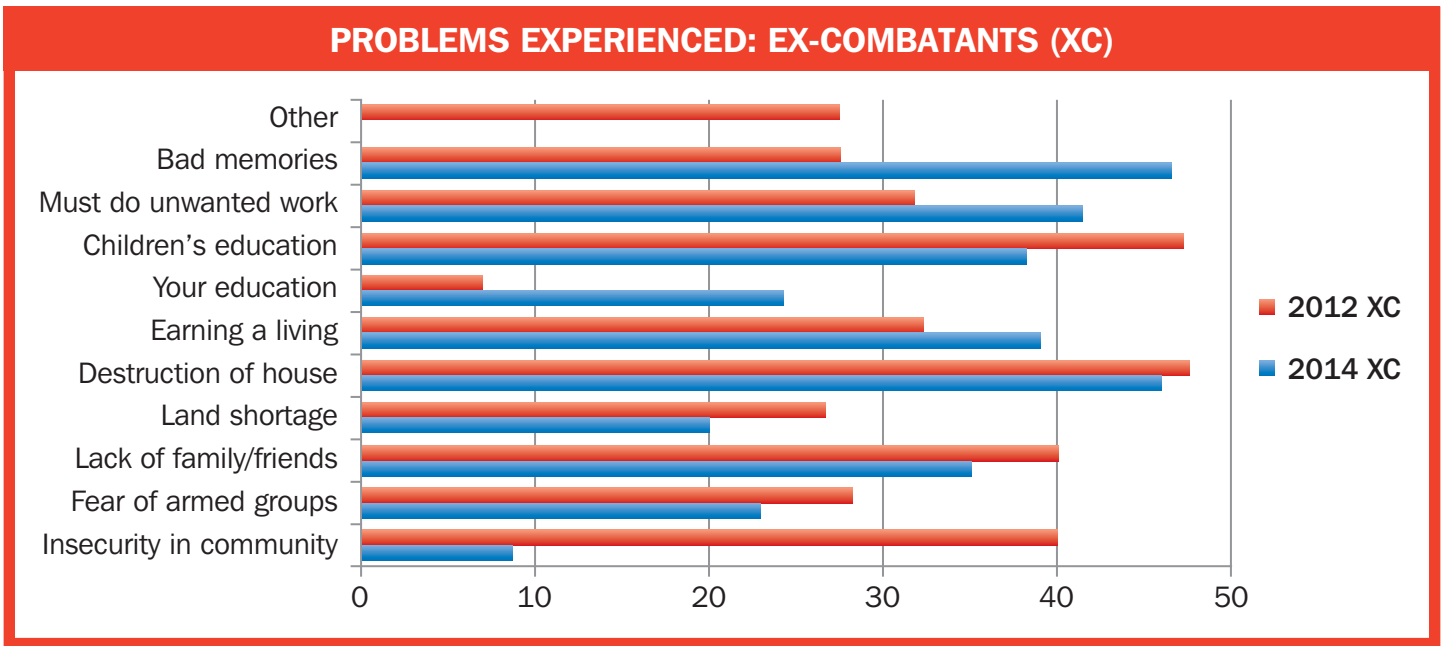


Table 5



Looking at the communities overall, those in Zone A and Zone B have benefited from more stable conditions in a variety of ways and no negative changes or impacts were mentioned.

The scale of the changes, and the level of the CRC project contribution to this, is difficult to generalise and clearly varies a great deal from community to community as a function of:

- Size of the community and thus proportion of members touched by the project;
- Numbers of other agencies also active in the community.

Thus in Kaya, with a population of 700, the effects are visible: the roadside ‘peace market’ draws passers-by and residents from nearby villages and has resulted in a number of other small shops starting up nearby. The Radio Club has expanded its communal field of manioc cultivation and the profits have funded corrugated iron roofing for members’ houses; it is also a key village structure and reference point for development related discussions (see case study in Annex H.) In contrast, Marabo has a population of approximately 50,000 and many other agencies working there, so the contribution of the CRC project cannot be expected to be so visible or easily attributable.

Obtaining external stakeholder views of the project’s impact was difficult as they had had little involvement and their knowledge was often limited: one stakeholder who had positive views on the work of the Radio Clubs was not aware of the Reconciliation Commissions.

In Zone C, clearly there is a different picture that was difficult to assess, with an external stakeholder citing a 300% increase in security incidents from 2012-2014.

In conclusion, the project has clearly had a noticeable and beneficial social and economic impact for the participants drawn from vulnerable, isolated and poorer community groups: ex-combatants, their wives and other women affected by conflict. From their perspective it has also made a clear contribution to the positive changes now evident at community level.

#### 4.11 SUSTAINABILITY

This section considers the sustainability of initiatives started by the project and of the results that they have achieved.

##### Sustainability of structures and activities

Firstly, with continuing arrivals of returnees and ex-combatants, and recognition that there may be further conflict, there is a clear need for the structures established to continue functioning: Radio Clubs and Reconciliation Commissions in particular. There may currently be a greater emphasis on their income generation and community mobilisation roles, but the need for the original functions of training and awareness-raising on peaceful cohabitation and conflict resolution remain and may yet increase again. The numbers and enthusiasm of members attending the evaluation workshops were testament to the



continued relevance and to their interest in and perceived need for CRC support. In emergency situations arising in times of conflict, it is vital to have grassroots capacity in place for first response: if still active, these structures are well positioned to work against rumours that escalate fear and conflict, in order to encourage more measured reactions and a return to peaceful cohabitation as soon as feasible.

No exit plans or strategies were developed during the closing months of the project and, following project completion, CRC are now talking of preparing them for the post-project phase. However, CRC's difficulty in maintaining regular follow-up visits and collecting their monthly reports during the project's final year may actually have helped to serve this purpose in practice.

The preparation of brief monthly reports for CRC has been a common feature across these different village-level initiatives and if this requirement ends, it can sometimes have a significant effect on group routines. One strategy is to look for local administrative structures or authorities who are interested and ready to receive them too, and who can continue to do so after the project ends.

CRC were thinking of merging the Radio Clubs and Reconciliation Commissions into local 'peace committees'. This approach is symptomatic of CRC's ongoing commitment to its work that persists beyond the boundaries of particular projects. Although these structures have overlapping memberships and roles, they are nevertheless different. The evaluator believes it may be better to keep them as separate but complementary groups that continue to reinforce and mutually support each other's work: as one prominent community leader member of a Radio Club put it, "the Radio Clubs teach it and the Reconciliation Commissions carry out the reconciliation work". In reality, the solution needs to be identified and agreed in participatory consultation and decision-making processes with the group participants.

## Sustainability of results

CRC calculates that there are over 300 Radio Clubs still functioning as a result of previous projects and spin-off Radio Clubs created by some of the clubs supported by CRC. Members continue listening to broadcasts of programmes for subsequent projects and occasionally send in feedback. Whenever possible, if CRC staff are passing they try to drop in to find out how they are doing.

The introduction of skills training for income-generating activities (IGA) by the Radio Clubs was clearly seen as an asset that has enabled some clubs to grow in their range and scale of activities and become a driving force for self-help initiatives and key participants in any external consultations on community development opportunities. However, although some are clearly very active, overall there was a sense that while they recognise the need to be independent, most have not yet quite reached this stage.

The geographic zones covered in Years 1 and 2 have benefitted from relatively stable environments and it was evident from the community representatives that many of the initiatives are still functioning, some more actively than others. The analysis of a few key items of survey data from Zone A outlined in Tables 6, 7 and 8 below, collected immediately after the end of the main CRC implementation period and again two years later, shows the sustainability of gains in relation to numbers of meals per day, animals owned and concerns in Zone A (year 1). This cannot be attributed solely to the impact of the project, but clearly the context is enabling gains to be maintained.

The evaluation workshop participants emphasised the sustained nature of individual changes of frame of mind and of peaceful cohabitation of the communities. It was not possible to visit the area with security issues in Zone C, but the impression gained

Table 6 and 7

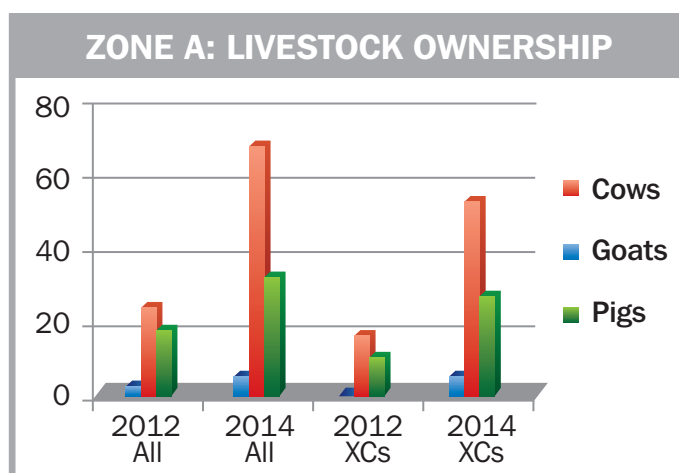
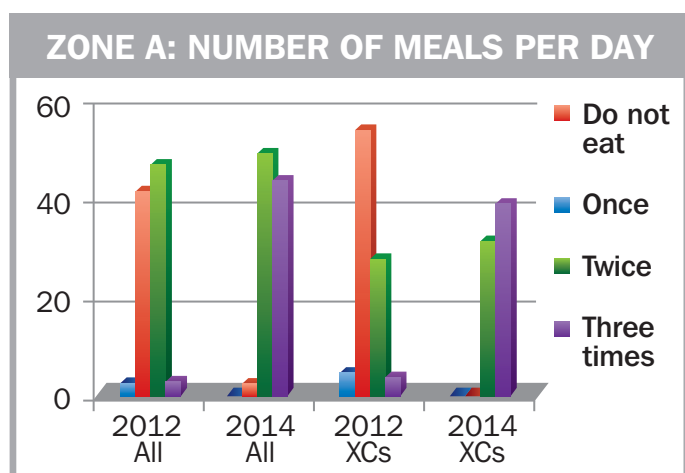
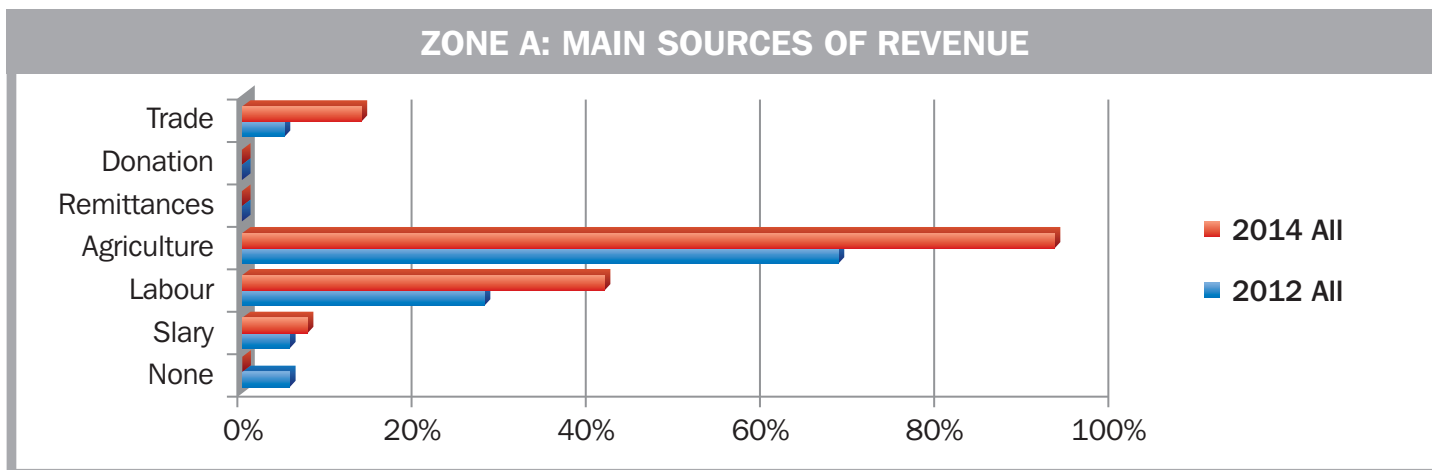


Table 8



was of militia attacks without open conflict between communities. It was anticipated that the combination in Year 3 of internal management issues and security issues experienced in Zone C (notably South Irumu) would translate into a lower prospects for sustainability, but this was hard to assess as it was not possible to visit or collect data.

For the promotion of sustainable results, there is no doubt that the CRC strategy of continuing to pay visits and show interest when they can is vitally important: a small amount of external accompaniment and encouragement can make all the difference. Even with this, it is inevitable that some of the structures will lose their momentum; but without it, the numbers that gradually become inactive are likely to increase. It must however be recognised that this is a drain on CRC’s energies and resources and only tends to be supported with external resources if new projects or follow-on activities can be identified in the same locations.

Table 9 below sets out the main factors identified that will affect the sustainability levels of the initiatives and their results in the different communities.

Table 9

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY	AGAINST SUSTAINABILITY
<p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing need for and relevance of the structures established.</li> <li>• Appreciation of the individual IGA benefits derived by members of the different structures.</li> <li>• Linkages between the different community-level structures: some overlapping members and mutually reinforcing activities.</li> <li>• (Introduction of new activities or initiatives in same location.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some communities habituated to receiving emergency relief with a tendency to wait for help rather than helping themselves.</li> <li>• Population mobility: continuing arrivals of IDPs, refugees and ex-combatants affecting community dynamics.</li> <li>• Current pragmatic peace without in-depth reconciliation process.</li> <li>• Continued militia activity in some areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRC commitment to continuing low-level support to communities/ structures set up in previous projects.</li> <li>• CRC concern to keep adapting approaches to accommodate changes in the context.</li> <li>• Inclusion of IGA components.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit strategy not developed or actioned prior to project end.</li> <li>• Materials provided insufficient to sustain income-generating activities.</li> <li>• Limited CRC ability to follow up progressively larger numbers of former structures/ communities.</li> </ul>

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## 4.12 INNOVATION AND LEARNING

This section highlights the perceived added value of CRC approaches and also the key learning gained from this project.

Two key differences were perceived in CRC's approach to implementing activities compared with those of other agencies:

- Accompaniment of all training activities, e.g. on IGA, with training modules on peaceful cohabitation and conflict resolution, and continued awareness-raising.
- Provision of multiple trainings on conflict resolution with follow-up, rather than the more usual approach of a meeting or workshop looking at problems, and identifying solutions and recommendations but with limited, if any, follow-up for translating into action.

These were clearly perceived to have increased the effectiveness of CRC's activities and its impact.

CRC gained important learning from this project in two key areas:

- The design, management and potential benefits of the micro-finance scheme both for beneficiaries and for their own IGA.
- The challenges of monitoring and evaluation, and the challenges and distraction of attempting to undertake a quantified survey that cannot be integrated into normal activities, requires additional resources and distracts from standard work.

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## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested for both Peace Direct and Centre Résolution Conflits, as their implementation in future projects will require the acceptance and collaboration of both partners.

- a. Conduct an in-depth analysis of CRC's capacity-building needs: this should include a review of communications as a priority area, covering both systems and skills (including time management) and also equipment/facilities (generator, budget for fuel, IT equipment and so on).
- b. Incorporate networking and advocacy components, as well as activities for both CRC and community structures, with a view to increasing grassroots empowerment and providing greater support to CRC interface with authorities in order to facilitate collaboration and scaling up.
- c. Review adherence of consultation and negotiation processes for project design and budgeting with Peace Direct's own Local First principles, to ensure CRC ownership and avoid CRC spreading itself too thinly and/or not having adequate resources for the work required.
- d. Allow adequate time and resources for more participatory planning events: this should include presentation and discussion with communities and local and district authorities at the launch and the preparation of exit plans. This would make it easier for CRC to manage participant expectations, to raise their organisational profile and to obtain informed feedback.
- e. Limit the collection of monitoring and evaluation data to requirements of the project and its budget provision; because of the logistic issues and expenses, collection should be integral to project management.
- f. Additional research needs for supporting advocacy should be funded and conducted separately by credible independent researchers who have the professional skills, credibility and independence necessary for producing results for high-level advocacy – but with the full involvement of CRC in the design and commissioning.
- g. PD and CRC should advocate for subsequent projects to contain a continuity component whereby CRC can continue to retain contact with structures already created. If CRC is not able to provide direct further support/new initiatives with former communities, but is working close to them geographically, this could include allowances for sharing meetings, extra places in trainings and 'twinning' so that former successful community structures can mentor new ones.
- h. Hold a 1-2 day workshop with PD and CRC staff to discuss the paper-based partnership review exercises already conducted as well as the interests and concerns of both parties. This should review:
  - Both parties' views on particular issues emerging during the evaluation – communications, budgeting/planning and mutual accountability;
  - The Peace Direct Local First principles and agree how these will be translated into practice in the DRC operating context.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://actlocalfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Local-First-In-Practice.pdf>

<http://www.actlocalfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Local-First-summary-pamphlet-for-release.pdf>

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# ANNEXES

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## ANNEX A

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### EVALUATION ITINERARY

Thursday 5 February	Departure LHR to Kampala
Friday 6	Transfer flight with Mission Aviation Fellowship to Bunia Briefing on progress/arrangements date
Saturday 7	Review of plan/arrangements for community workshops Preparation for workshops Analysis of community overview sheets
Sunday 8	Preparation for workshops Analysis of community overview sheets
Monday 9	Review of data/checking quality of survey questionnaires Completion of community overview analysis Interviews with two external stakeholders in Bunia Preparation for CRC workshop
Tuesday 10	Workshop with CRC project team Preparation for community workshops
Wednesday 11	Stakeholder workshop at Morabo plus interview with Assistant Administrator of Territory and Head of Planning Department, followed by team debriefing
Thursday 12	Stakeholder workshop at location Dhele and team debriefing afterwards
Friday 13	Stakeholder workshop at location Soleniama plus team debriefing afterwards
Saturday 14	Stakeholder workshop at Borgoro, including two short external conversations and team debriefing afterwards
Sunday 15	Analysis work at hotel and prep for different consultancy the following week
Monday 16	Continuation of external stakeholder interviews while starting to a different piece of work
Thursday 19	Presentation and discussion of topline findings with CRC team
Friday 20	Departure from Bunia and return to UK on Saturday 21 February

### LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED

#### External stakeholders

Roger Logo, Coordinator,	RADHIT
Aime Birido Tsatsi, National Coordinator	AJEDEC
Edouard Bamongo	Assistant Territorial Administrator for Irumu
Edouard Baraki	Planning Department of Irumu District
Eric Mongolo Molo, Coordinator	Reseau Haki Na Amani
Maitre Michael Nzani Logro, Coordinator	Action Justice Paix
Mme Ange Meralli Ballou, Chef des Projets	RCN Justice & Démocratie

#### CRC team

Kasoki Saburi	Head of CRC Bunia sub-office
Blaise Kasonao	DDR programme manager, CRC
Katho Mudhaki Florimond	Head of Peace and Development, CRC
Marconi Makala Unamosi	Head of Protection CRC
Bamhiga Tsudjo Iddi	Assistant Fieldworker, Bunia, CRC
Henri Bura Ladyi	Programme Director, CRC
Georges Dubatso	Finance Director, CRC
Joseph Afumba	Secretary, CRC Board of Trustees

CRC have detailed attendance lists of all the participants' names should these be required.



## ANNEX C

### BREAKDOWN OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES ATTENDING THE WORKSHOPS

#### BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS AT MARABO WORKSHOP

COMMUNITY NAME	Leaders	Reconciliation Commissions	Radio Clubs	Women's Associations	Ex-combatants	IDPs	Men	Women	Main tribe	Total
Sota	1	2	2	3	0	0	2	6	Hema	8
Marabo	1	2	2	3	8	0	10	6	Bira	16
Musezo	1	2	1	0	0	3	6	1	Bira	7
Boya II	1	2	2	0	0	0	3	2	Bira	5
Kaya	1	2	2	2	0	0	5	2	Bira	7
Bayhana	1	2	3	3	4	0	11	2	Bira	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3**</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>56</b>

#### PARTICIPANTS AT DHELE WORKSHOP

COMMUNITY NAME	Leaders	Reconciliation Commissions	Radio Clubs	Women's Associations	Ex-combatants	IDPs	Men	Women	Main tribe	Total
Dhele	1	0	2	2	0	3	2	6	Bira	8
Zumbe	1	0	4	2	0	0	2	5	Lendu	7
Ezekere	1	0	4	0	0	0	2	3	Lendu	5
Contoni	1	0	4	4	0	0	3	6	Lendu	9
Ngadjo	1	2	2	0	0	0	2	3	Bira	5
Chai	1	2	2	0	0	0	3	2	Bira	5
Lengabo	1	2	2	0	0	0	3	2	Bira	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>44</b>

#### PARTICIPANTS AT SOLENIAMA WORKSHOP

COMMUNITY NAME	Leaders	Reconciliation Commissions	Radio Clubs	Women's Associations	Ex-combatants	IDPs	Men	Women	Main tribe	Total
Soleniama	2	4	4	0	6	0	10	6	Bira	16
Miala	2	2	2	0	0	0	4	2	Bira	6
Kolomani	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	4	Bira	6
Lipri	2	3	2	0	0	0	5	2	Lendu	7
Mwanga	1	2	1	0	0	0	4	0	Bira	4
Ngongo	2	2	4	2	0	0	8	2	Bira	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0**</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>49</b>

#### PARTICIPANTS AT BOGORO WORKSHOP

COMMUNITY NAME	Leaders	Reconciliation Commissions	Radio Clubs	Women's Associations	Ex-combatants	IDPs	Men	Women	Main tribe	Total
Bogoro	4	3	3	0	0	2	12	0	Hema	12
Nombe	1	4	2	0	0	2	7	2	Ngity	9
Tcharukaka	1	4	2	0	0	2	6	3	Ngity	9
Kagaba	1	4	2	0	0	2	7	2	Ngity	9
Soke	1	4	2	0	0	2	6	3	Ngity	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10**</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>48</b>

\*\* Participants only attending as IDPs: many other IDPs in other categories as well

### LIST OF PARTICIPATORY EXERCISES CONDUCTED IN COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Each workshop began with a full introduction of the people there, with each person introducing themselves, and then covering a reminder of the project objectives, the purpose of the evaluation, the range of methodologies being used and stakeholders being consulted, and what will happen as a result.

Apart from the first workshop, participants were then divided into their village groups to discuss and decide on a rating for their community on the statements below.

Following this, they were separated into groups according to the categories featuring in Annex C; each group then undertook one exercise. The exercises were selected to reflect the evaluation objectives.

#### Marabo workshop

- Analysis of what worked well and less well, and improvements suggested x 2 groups;
- Exchange of stories of significant change;
- Changes noticed in community relations;
- Impact of activities on their lives.

#### Dhele workshop

- Ranking of different project components' contribution to promotion of stability;
- Drawings of typical community immediately after conflict and at end of project;
- Impact – changes in lives – compared with 2-3 years ago;
- What worked well, less well and impact.

#### Soleniama workshop

- Mapping of quality of relationships of different community groups before/after project and where Reconciliation Commissions have contributed;
- Analysis of types of conflict at community level and whether increasing/decreasing;
- Drawings of CRC as plant/animal;
- What worked well and less well;
- Drawing of journey of ex-combatants from bush to reintegration.

#### Bogoro workshop

- Mapping of quality of relationships of different community groups before/after project and those where Reconciliation Commissions have contributed;
- Problem and solution trees;
- Ranking of different project components contribution to meeting needs of communities;
- Exchange of stories of most significant change.

At the Dhele and Soleniama workshops, the analysed results of the initial statement ratings were shared, validated and discussed with participants; there was unfortunately no time to do this at Bogoro.

### ACCOUNT OF THE QUANTITATIVE COMMUNITY SURVEY AND LEARNING

In 2012, senior CRC staff spent five days in Uganda with the consultant for adjusting and training on a draft questionnaire and to agree the methodology for a quantitative survey that would be conducted at baseline and the end of the project. This was done within the framework of some general training on the principles of M&E.

The refining of the long draft questionnaire took time, as each question needed careful reviewing at two levels: its appropriateness in terms of meaning, content and phrasing, and its usefulness in terms of providing actionable information. CRC was keen to include as much as possible, so reducing it to a vaguely acceptable length took several versions. Trial interviews were conducted with team members taking the roles of interviewer and various interviewees. Lasting 45-60 minutes, it was still too long so it was agreed that on their return to DRC, CRC would:

- Try the questionnaire with colleagues, then conduct a small pilot at community-level;
- Report back to the consultant so that final adjustments could be agreed.

The consultant was concerned that the questionnaire would also need reformatting to fit with the analysis software to be used. However Peace Direct had decided to use the Access database for which this was not deemed necessary.

The provisional sample was agreed in Uganda but was to be reconfirmed after the pilot. Its

structure reflected Peace Direct's insistence on a control sample for assessing the difference between communities that had and had not been supported by the project. Because other communities were likely to have had other initiatives, a decision was taken to adopt the practical approach of using the baseline survey of zones that CRC had not yet worked in as the control sample for zones where work had just been completed. The draft sample design was thus:

	End of Year 1	End of Year 2	End of Year 3/Project
<b>Zone A</b>	216-270 questionnaires 12-15 interviews x 18 villages (end of activities)		
<b>Zone B</b>	195 questionnaires 15 interviews x 13 villages (start of activities)	150 questionnaires 15 interviews x 13 villages (end of activities)	
<b>Zone C</b>		189 questionnaires 21 interviews x 9 villages (start of activities)	150 questionnaires 21 interviews x 9 villages (end of activities)

It was intended to discuss the details of sampling methodology and quality supervision in light of their pilot experiences, and that local expertise might be found to assist with this.

After this, serious security issues affected Beni and, despite various email enquiries, nothing more was heard until Peace Direct learnt well after the event, that around 250 interviews had been completed in late 2012. Subsequently, CRC entered the data into the Access data-base set up by Peace Direct but found the uploading of this, record by record, a very laborious and time consuming process. Although some analysed data was extracted by Peace Direct for needs assessment purposes, no comprehensive analysis tables were produced.

Six months before the fieldwork scheduled for October 2014, PD and the consultant started to plan the evaluation, to try to establish what data had been collected by CRC and to design the evaluation methodology. No answers were forthcoming and it transpired that this was while the internal management crisis was developing. As a result, it was decided that the consultant should make a short preliminary visit to assess the situation, agree with the CRC team the further data that would be collected and possibly conduct some preliminary external stakeholder interviews. This visit did not go according to plan, partly due the ongoing management issues and partly due to security troubles in Beni that delayed the consultant's departure and the holding of the scheduled CRC board meeting. The result was that the consultant only had 3.5 days with the team and no information was available on the completed questionnaires (they were all in Beni and the breakdown of the sample achieved had not been counted). It was therefore not possible to review the quality of the interviewing already conducted, or to define the further quantitative sample to be achieved. The time was therefore put to good use by establishing:

- A series of questions that could be omitted;
- Some coded answers, based on qualitative answers already received, for most of the remaining open-ended questions;
- The key considerations relating to the sample;
- Other data that should be collected for the evaluation.

CRC was clearly not keen to do the data entry as it took up so much of its internal computer capacity and said that it did not have experience in producing analysis tables, contrary to the observations of Peace Direct. The consultant was concerned that, unless the questionnaires were shipped back to UK for data entry and analysis, the data would not be available for the evaluation. Peace Direct was, however, unwilling to invest in this given the unknown quality of the interviewing (which required both the questionnaires and the data analysis): it opted to fund this locally and send a UK researcher to DRC in advance of the consultant to assess the quality of the data and the data entry, and to assist with the production of analysed data.

CRC staff conducted a further 617 interviews in late 2014 and the final sample achieved was:

	End of Year 1	End of Year 2	End of Year 3/Project
<b>Zone A</b>	260 questionnaires		357 questionnaires
<b>Zone B &amp; C</b>			260 questionnaires

The key issue that emerged here was that the 'baseline' obtained in 2012 was entirely in Zone A where activities had just finished: no data was collected before implementation began.

The new data had been entered before the UK researcher's arrival, but unfortunately into 15 different databases. The first step was to check the quality of the data entry and correct any errors; these were fairly numerous, apparently largely due to the database construction in relation to the routing 'skips' in the questionnaire design and gaps in data entry, so the process took time. On arrival the consultant also reviewed a sample of 15 questionnaires, which were generally completed with few errors. However, there did appear to be a frequent error in the coding of the phase when interviewing was conducted.

The sample interviewed was produced by totalling the results from each of the databases, but this was so laborious that it was evident that the databases would have to be merged before any further data was produced. After this complex and time-consuming task was completed, tables were produced of the 2014 data to complement the analyses already completed for 2012. This was done shortly before the departure of the consultant.

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When working with the CRC team during the evaluation, the consultant was somewhat concerned to learn that:

- CRC had had to invest not only the time but also approximately \$3,000 in completing the 2014 round of interviews;
- The Beni office has only 2-3 hours electricity per day;
- There are only five CRC computers for 20 staff; several others use their own personal computers bringing the total to around 8-9 computers;
- The staff do not all have good levels of computer literacy and some need IT training.

## **Key learning and consultant's conclusions**

The above reveals serious capacity issues. The main issues raised were those of cost and interview length rather than staff capacity; in hindsight the consultant should have checked the assumptions about the user-friendliness of the Access database and CRC's IT capacities.

During the fieldwork conducted in February 2015, two further issues became apparent:

1. There were other agencies/actors working in some/all of the communities – this was assumed not to be the case when the sample was being discussed.
2. The communities are all very different and have very varying circumstances, with the result being that any sample of a manageable size has drawbacks:
  - Conducting a limited number of interviews across all of the villages masks the variations between them and the results cannot be analysed by village;
  - It would be virtually impossible to pick 2-3 villages that could be said to be representative and analyse by village.

Although the quantitative survey seemed an attractive concept, the scale of the exercise was disproportionate to the essential monitoring and evaluation needs of the project and clearly beyond the capacity and resources of CRC and this project. As long as the data limitations are understood and remembered, it may have some other uses, but for the project and its evaluation, it proved a very poor return on the investment made by CRC.

For advocacy purposes, especially at international level, separate research projects conducted by skilled and objective independent institutes will be much more credible and convincing.

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## **ANNEX F**

### **CASE STUDY OF JACQUES, PRESIDENT OF AN ASSOCIATION OF EX-COMBATANTS**

Jacques is President of one of the Ex-Combatant Associations. He came out of the bush in 2004, when he was 18. Today, he is father of four children, all boys, and has spent the last three years working as a teacher in a high school. Transitions of this type are often extremely challenging, both socially and economically.

Jacques entered the bush during a period of great insecurity. Week after week, he saw his family members and neighbours being killed and their houses being burnt down; no-one in his village was safe. At one point in 2001, Jacques could not watch any longer: he left his home and his family to join one of the armed groups. He went into the bush because he felt that he would “prefer to die fighting and trying to protect my family than hiding in my home”. Jacques spent three years as a militia in the forests around his home. He fought and he killed, and he attacked the villages of those who had attacked his. But after a while he grew tired the bush and began to dream of classrooms and schoolbooks. After three years of hiding in the forests, he sought out a local chief to help negotiate his return to the village.

At first, Jacques found it difficult to integrate into normal civilian life. The daily routine of attending school and forming friendships with his fellow students was not easy. In some instances, former-child soldiers like Jacques are deeply traumatised by their experience fighting with armed groups. When they return to their villages they are often not accepted by their former community, who are distrustful and suspicious of what they have done in the bush. To make things worse, they rarely have access to the kind of trauma counselling and psychosocial support that they need. For Jacques, however, integrating back into his village was fairly straightforward, largely because others accepted that he had joined the militia to protect his community, not harm them.



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Today, Jacques's group of ex-combatants meets every two weeks to discuss how they can improve their economic activities and to share the social challenges involved in life as an ex-combatant. CRC provided them with agricultural inputs and pigs but the pigs fell sick. Since the men were not trained in pig-rearing and did not have access to the right medicines, the pigs died before they generated any income; they are now raising goats instead. Many who find it very difficult to earn enough to feed themselves and their families are tempted to return to the bush. Others turn to crime. The group discuss these temptations together and Jacques's role as the leader is to reaffirm the dangers and insecurity of this kind of life.

CRC aims to help ex-combatants integrate back into the civilian life by helping them access economic opportunities and facilitating their relationships with other community members so that returning to the bush is a less attractive option. CRC provides Ex-Combatant Associations with trainings in conflict resolution, income-generating skills and trauma counselling, as well as material inputs such as livestock and agricultural tools. It is hoped that this, in turn, will lead to more secure and peaceful communities. Ex-combatants also counsel youths within their community who they see engaging in crime and violence. They alert them to the dangers and discourage them from becoming a threat to their communities. To the younger members of his village, Jacques is a role model. He dropped his gun and left the forest to return to school and attain a teaching qualification. Today, he is an ex-combatant, father, teacher and leader in his community.

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## ANNEX G

### CASE STUDY OF THERESE, A MICRO-FINANCE SOLIDARITY GROUP PARTICIPANT

Therese is married with six children: four girls and two boys. Originally from Bunia, she has spent the last 10 years in an IDP camp near Beni in North Kivu. Her children, aged between 11 and 20, are all in school; her husband is an ex-combatant. She was displaced in 2004 by the conflict in Ituri when 60,000 people were killed. Recently, her new home has also been affected by violence: armed groups began indiscriminately attacking men, women and children with machetes in late 2014. The situation has since calmed, but it is thought that over 300 people died and many more were displaced. The curfew in Beni has been lifted, but a strong sense of fear and insecurity remains and rumours of armed groups approaching from the bush are enough to vacate whole villages.

Therese plants vegetables and makes cassava bread which she sells in the market. She earns an average of \$10 per day and has used her loans to build her family a house. She has received three loans: \$100; \$100 and \$150. She expects her fourth loan soon, with which she plans to fit doors and windows into her new home.

Therese became involved in CRC's microfinance scheme when a credit officer came to her village in 2012. She was identified as a woman successfully generating income and was asked to form a group of 25 with other women. They meet on Thursdays with the credit officer when they are required to pay back a percentage of their loans. Therese said that all members generally pay back the earlier loans on time, but that the larger loans have posed challenges. This implies that the credit scheme may not have helped to increase in the incomes of these women over time. The current insecurity is a serious challenge for the ability of the women to repay their loans, especially for those reliant on forest resources for their incomes, such as wood for making charcoal or palm trees for palm oil.

According to Therese, CRC credit officers have been kind and sympathetic towards women unable to pay back their loans. However, all group members receive their loans at the same time and cannot receive new loans until the last one is repaid. If a woman delays, all the others members are affected.

Another problem may be that the loans have not been invested in their income generating activities: positive impacts were reported of extra money to pay school fees, feeding their families more regularly, and building their homes. But it is not yet clear if the scheme will contribute to longer-term income increases, or to resilience to the shocks and negative economic impacts caused by violence in the region.

The scheme also provides skills training and capacity development to group members in activities that include dress and bag making. However, at present Therese is not earning an income from these new skills. Diversifying income generating activities is one way to reduce reliance on forest resources, and therefore more economically resilient to insecurity.

Generally, Therese was highly positive about the impacts of the scheme on her life. She has been responsible for building her family a home and this has changed traditional gender roles; like the other women, she has become more respected within their communities and now has a bigger role in household decision-making.

### **CASE STUDY OF KAYA RADIO CLUB ‘MARCHÉ DE PAIX’**

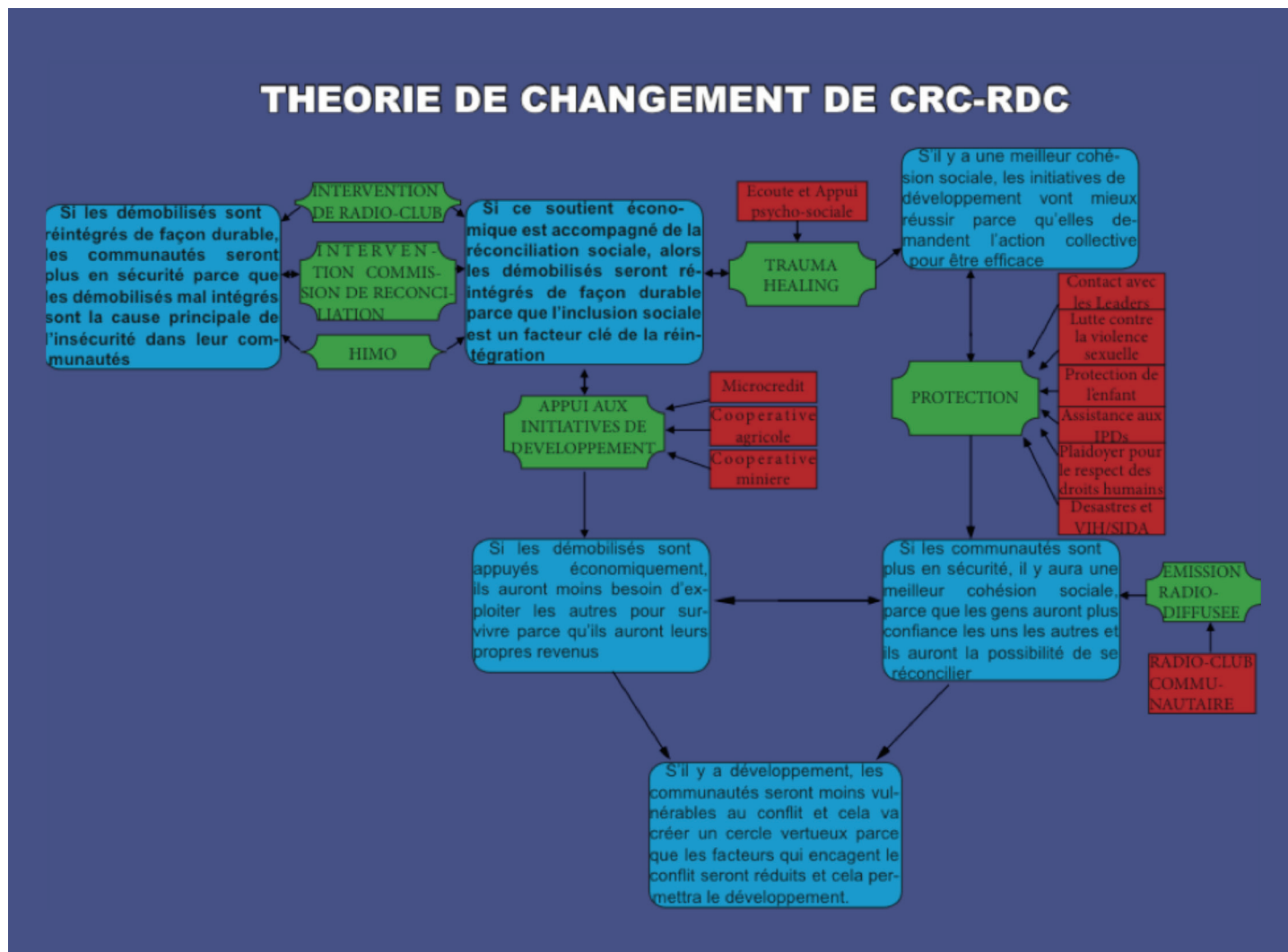
Radio Clubs are groups of conflict-affected women and men who come together on a weekly basis to listen to radio broadcasts on issues affecting their security and development. Some of the 38 clubs that CRC has created since it began the project in 2011 have their own radio transmitters, others come together to listen to the broadcasts of Radio Clubs in different villages. They were originally set up for communities to communicate and share information without having to meet face-to-face. This is particularly important for those who do not feel comfortable meeting openly because of inter-communal tensions. Radio Clubs have also come an important way for people to mobilise their communities in order to address particular development challenges. In some contexts, community development projects have led to better relations between groups that have long histories of bitter feuding and violence in the Ituri region.

In Kaya, a village outside Bunia Town, CRC has helped the Radio Club construct a ‘marché de paix’ (peace market) and helped the Radio Club to obtain a field in which to grow manioc: a root vegetable that is a staple food and used to make manioc flour. As you approach Kaya village, it is almost the first thing you see: buckets are stacked at the roadside on the way in and, under a sign reading ‘marché de paix’, more buckets are stacked full of manioc. Before the market was built, people from Kaya sold manioc outside their individual homes within the village. Now the presence of the roadside market has enabled them to access more customers and passing trade: this has not only benefitted the Radio Club, but the village as a whole – a pharmacy and several other small boutiques have been built next to the market to take advantage of more people passing through their village.

Each bucket of manioc is sold for \$6.5 and the Radio Club has managed to save \$2,000 through selling manioc. With this money, they have built houses for three of their members and have bought corrugated iron roofing for the 36 remaining members, 11 of whom are women. This success has prompted others nearby to set up their own Radio Clubs, without any input from CRC. Kaya Radio Club itself has become a reference point in the community and its members are called on to represent their village in development matters.

The market has also had other non-material impacts on the people of Kaya: it has improved relations with the Hema, a group with whom they have previously fought. The Hema are herders, not agriculturalists like the people of Kaya, and they have begun to come to Kaya’s market to exchange milk for manioc and vegetables. This trade of goods has brought the two groups together and created better relations between them. Conflict and tensions between herders and agriculturalists drive much of the violence and insecurity experienced in this region.

CRC REVISED THEORY OF CHANGE



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