



Assessing Conflict, Gender and Protection for Youth Development in North Kivu and Kinshasa, DRC.

Youth Excel: Our Knowledge, Leading Change

North Kivu (Goma - Karisimbi and Sake) and Kinshasa

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1. Executive Summary

Project Background

Search for Common Ground (Search), in consortium with the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) and in partnership with the *Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-corruption* (CERC) and Africa Youth Mouvement/BIM Sarl, along with financial support from USAID, is implementing the *Youth Excel: Our Knowledge Leading Change* program in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from May 2021 to August 2022 in North Kivu and Kinshasa. The program aims to provide support to youth leaders, youth-led organizations, and youth-serving organizations to form an issue-based collaborative youth network (ICON) to conduct research on the following question: **“How might we strengthen the inclusion of under-represented and marginalized youth in education and workforce development programs?”** The purpose of this research is to generate actionable information and recommendations on the integration of inclusive youth workforce development and participation in DRC.

Research Process

Early into implementation, Search facilitated youth-led research consisting of a Conflict Analysis, an Intersectional Gender Analysis, and a Protection Analysis. The youth-led research approach engaged a total of 12 young researchers from marginalized and underrepresented socio-economic groups to participate in the research. Data collection took place in ten communes of Kinshasa (Selembao, Bumbu, Makala, Kinseso, Ngaba, Kimbaseke, Masina, Maluku, N'sele, and Ndjili) and in North Kivu (Goma, Karisimbi, and Sake). The research took into account insights from relevant past research, including findings captured as part of a literature review and from youth-led research conducted by Search in Eastern DRC in 2019. Such insights complement the findings of this most recent study. Search prepared the initial report in French, so some phrasing and wording in this English translation of the report may have retained a Francophone nature.

The results of this research are significant in contributing to a deeper understanding of conflicts and their impact on youth. The study also sheds light on gender and inclusion dynamics related to the different needs and capacities of women, men, boys, girls and LGBTQI+ people in terms of education, employment, and their overall opportunities for development. The findings help Youth Excel to identify potential risks that could emerge during project implementation. While some of these findings have been highlighted in previous research and studies, the youth researchers felt it was important to highlight them again as they considered such issues have not been adequately addressed, especially when it comes to the main challenges affecting marginalized and vulnerable youth.

Through this research, a total of 202 youth (between the ages of 18 and 35) were consulted through focus groups, including 54% of young men and 46% of young females. Although gender representation was almost equal, the slight overrepresentation of young men is due to the fact that they make up the majority of leaders in youth organizations. More specifically, 14% of young women and 34% of young men were youth leaders from youth organizations (non-marginalized groups), 10% of youth came from dedicated LGBTQI+ groups, and 42% from marginalized groups (homeless youth, sex workers, ethnic minorities, etc.). Key individuals including representatives of the Workforce Development Authority (INPP), the Provincial Ministry of Youth, provincial Members of Parliament (MPs), the Private Sector Federation (FEC), provincial start-ups incubators, and other institutions relevant for youth programs were also consulted during this research through 17 key informant interviews.

Key Findings

#1 Key Findings from our Conflict Analysis: *Many conflicts punctuate the daily lives of young people, varying by location.*

- In North Kivu, youth report **conflicts related to insecurity** (armed conflicts, urban banditry) and **access to economic resources** (access to land, forestry resources, water resources, mining resources); while youth in Kinshasa refer more often to **conflicts with the police** and **inter-generational conflicts**.
- Conflict dynamics involving youth continue to **affect their economic stability**. This is further reinforced by stereotypes related to the role youth can play in decision-making processes that affect them and the opportunities available to them. For example, stereotypes of women, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups (e.g. street children, sex workers, and certain ethnic groups) further impede access to education and employment.

#2 Key Findings from our Cross-Sectional Gender Analysis: *Youth faced many cross-sectional gender and inclusion challenges that affect their access to resources and participation.*

- **LGBTQI+ youth** are victims of anti-LGBTQI+ violence and discrimination perpetrated by close relatives, clerics, doctors, judges and other youth. 100% of the LGBTQI+ youth surveyed report that they are in conflict with their families and 85% that they are threatened to be kicked out of their own home by their families. Some legal provisions, such as Article 178 of the penal code, which prohibits the public practice of “improper moral activities” (interpreted as homosexuality) are often abused by law enforcement and the general public to repress LGBTQI+ youth. Additionally, LGBTQI+ youth highlighted that youth who enjoy family support do not have the same problems as those rejected by family and feel that it is the family that should provide support for their growth.
- **Women and girls** exist in all marginalized community and experience twice the amount of discrimination. They face unique challenges in accessing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in both Kinshasa and North Kivu. There is a large gap in women and girls' digital adoption and use compared to men in both Kinshasa and North Kivu, largely caused by both a lack of access (to devices, data, etc.) and skills. Overall, women and girls are estimated to have half of such ICT opportunities and skills compared to men.
- **Girls and oldest sons within a household in rural North Kivu** face the challenge of early and/or forced marriages, with pressure from aunts, fathers, and uncles.
- **Young people with disabilities** live in an environment filled with stigma and discrimination. Legislation to protect them has yet to be enacted. Educational and vocational facilities do not take into account their unique needs. Additionally, it was identified that there are not enough schools adapted to the specific needs of people with disabilities such as blindness and deafness.

- **Many stereotypes related to gender norms**, such as “a woman's place is in the kitchen,” are detrimental to the development of women and girls. On a daily basis, young women spend more time doing housework, while boys engage in play and recreational activities. Young women surveyed mentioned the problem of **assault and battery** against married women, often by their own spouses, as well as misogynistic remarks against them. Certain legal provisions continue to be a barrier to shifting these norms. The misalignment between the Congolese constitution and the electoral law is an example of this. Article 14 of the Constitution establishes gender parity. However, the electoral law has not yet been aligned to this constitutional requirement, and quotas for women are still far from facilitating parity. The law also fails to address the issue of the representation of the youth in decision-making bodies.
- **Banyamulenge youth** say they are victims of social exclusion and describe themselves as an “undesirable minority.” Other ethnic groups consider them as Rwandans due to their “morphology,” seeing them as anti-social “traitors” searching for land that has become scarce in Rwanda. They consider them all as instruments of Rwandan influence in the DRC.

The different perceptions of young people and their roles, contributions, and capacities indicate that many young people in North Kivu and Kinshasa face a variety of obstacles, including access to education, employment, and the ability to improve their living conditions. In addition, they are also victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in schools, workplaces or in the community, including rape, early marriage, sexual touching, and harassment. The majority of GBV victims are women and girls of all ages. Although LGBTIQ+ youth face high levels of GBV and boys in rural areas, especially first-borns, are victims of early and/or forced marriages.

#3 Key Findings from our Protection Analysis: *Risks that youth, especially those involved in the Youth Excel program, face in their daily lives highlight key protection challenges that need to be addressed to facilitate the safe leadership and participation of diverse youth throughout the program.*

- The threats that youth face in both Kinshasa and North Kivu center on the **lack of government or institutional support for youth, freedom of assembly or expression**, as well as current security policies toward youth. In North Kivu, youth face additional threats from armed groups and surveillance by security forces.
- The **risk factors that can lead youth to participate in violence** (exclusion, experiences of injustice, inequalities between groups, and identity-based factors) are present in both Kinshasa and North Kivu. However, higher insecurity and risks of armed violence exist in North Kivu, affecting both rural and urban areas. Mechanisms to improve the protection of youth during activities should be considered, such as the establishment of a protection early warning management mechanism, training in conflict-sensitive communication, and the creation of a referral system for dealing with reports of abuse. While the risk in Kinshasa is centered on financial insecurity, this increases the likelihood of young people turning to violent crimes such as urban banditry, burglary, and armed robbery to obtain resources. This type of risk could be mitigated by creating meaningful employment opportunities for youth.
- **Trust, power dynamics, and exclusion** were cited as major problems both within and outside of youth organizations. Many youth indicated that their work is closely monitored and regulated by the government at the local and national level.

Recommendations

Recommendations for action by USAID and the government of the DRC in developing future programs include:

#1 Improving Partnership Modalities for Future Youth-centered Programs:

- **Establish a meaningful partnership with a diversity of youth-led and youth-serving organizations** by engaging key youth actors in designing youth programs. This should include **influential actors** who hold legitimacy and moral authority and are found among youth leaders of youth organizations in both Kinshasa and North Kivu. This process should include **non-traditional youth leaders**, who might be particularly influential within specific marginalized communities.
- **Integrate young people in Kinshasa and North Kivu who are not members of established associations**, as well as vulnerable youth groups without membership structures, in the design and implementation of development programs, both as actors and participants, and establish a coordination framework for existing initiatives.
- **Identify and support local associations and NGOs that raise awareness** among the population, especially youth, on issues related to **combatting intercommunity violence**.

#2 Adapting Programmatic Approaches to:

- **Strengthen cohesion among youth** of all categories to sustain peace initiatives and youth capacity building in rural areas (North Kivu). Integration and inclusion must begin with capacity building for marginalized and underrepresented youth on communication and leadership; then establishing a framework for dialogue and consultation between excluded youth in decision making, and between them and state actors. This is critical to elevate their voices and connect development programs to the needs they expressed.
- **Promote youth entrepreneurship and business skills**. Interventions should include access to credit and vocational training in business management and entrepreneurship, which can encourage youth to think more creatively about identifying long-term livelihood opportunities, and build their self-esteem. It will be important to refer to existing training and entrepreneurship centers and see how they can be supported. Advocacy at the governmental level is required to support policies and legislation that foster the creation of mini enterprises or other forms of income-generating activities.
- **Cultivating intergenerational dialogue** while taking into account the specific protection needs of gender minorities. The divergent perceptions and understanding of issues between youth and adults shape their response. Program interventions should cultivate safe and meaningful intergenerational dialogue that facilitates a shared understanding and diagnosis of problems so that actions can be taken jointly in ways that build trust and strengthen relationships. The choice of youth and adults included in this process, and the modalities for these dialogues, should take into account the specific protection needs of gender minorities to not put them further at risk.
- **Integrate a “trauma healing”** component into community programs. This is particularly important for conflict-affected zones such as North Kivu. Program interventions aimed at strengthening social cohesion and empowerment should integrate psychosocial support, as program actors and participants are likely to have experienced trauma.

- **Support initiatives to reintegrate former combatants** into communities in North Kivu, and foster their acceptance.
- **Promote peaceful intercommunity coexistence across socio-economic dividing lines** by supporting youth from poor families who have stopped attending school due to lack of resources, as well as youth who have joined armed groups.
- **Initiate a digital capacity building** program on standard word processing software and internet for women and girls in all their intersectional identities in Kinshasa and North Kivu to bridge the gender digital divide.¹
- **Deconstruct stereotypes towards specific minority groups** (i.e. LGBTQI+ people and people with disabilities) in a progressive manner that is sensitive to the Congolese context. Support dedicated initiatives that foster their integration in the community, but also in education and employment:
- **Raise awareness of the human rights of all community members** through dedicated multi-format online and offline communication and outreach campaigns adapted to specific audiences. Content should highlight role models from both marginalized and underrepresented communities and influential actors supporting their meaningful inclusion.
- **Ensure parental awareness raising and gradual inclusion** alongside LGBTQI+ youth and youth with disabilities. Program interventions should gradually engage parents and adults to reduce stigma and foster greater acceptance of these minority youth groups, leveraging existing champions and role models.
- **Design dedicated initiatives** that support LGBTQI+ youth and youth with disabilities, based on specific barriers and inclusion and protection needs. Create a formal program that integrates and strengthens current informal initiatives that are emerging. This could include an integrated program for capacity building; an outreach program for integration into the community, education, and employment (e.g. providing support for young LGBTQI+ leaders and organizations that already have initiatives to support gender minorities to conduct research to fight homophobia or to create jobs open to all people, including LGBTQI+ people). Our recent field data show that currently most LGBTQI+ youth (80%) find their jobs in the informal sector namely as hairdressers (28% of those employed) or cooks (18% of those currently employed). At equal percentage (9% each) other trades they do are running a small business, working as waiters, drivers and teachers. The majority of the LGBTQI+ youth expressed the desire to learn a trade (57%) or run a small business in the future (21%). These expressed needs represent an entry point for USAID support.
- **Advocate towards decision-making bodies** for legislation to decriminalize LGBTQI+ people and to guarantee protections for all LGBTQI+ youth, and youth with disabilities.
- **Destigmatize and degender occupations** that are considered to be reserved for one sex or another through awareness campaigns, success stories, and testimonies of role models.

#3 Institutionalizing Changes by Encouraging Congolese Authorities to:

- **Enact a law institutionalizing youth inclusion.** While application remains a challenge, laws exist to foster women inclusion, such as the Law on Parity. The law on the status of persons with disabilities is waiting to be publicly announced by the Head of State after its adoption in second

¹ E.g. in Kinshasa 54.4 % of men vs. 28.5% of women have already used the internet at least once.

reading by the Senate. Yet, to date, there is no law on youth participation. This law could enshrine youth inclusion by setting a minimum quota for the representation of youth in decision-making bodies.

- **Enact laws that provide a relevant framework to support training and employment of young people**, as well as laws that support the entrepreneurship of youth (e.g. tax benefits). The government must scrupulously apply these laws under the control of parliamentarians. Local authorities and traditional chiefs should ensure that these laws are properly implemented at the local level. Development partners must provide the necessary resources to support the implementation of these laws. These measures should be accompanied by an awareness-raising campaign to combat discrimination and harmful practices against youth.
- **Create a dedicated fund to finance youth initiatives**. These funds and initiatives must be given tax benefits, such as lower tax rates, to ensure their success and sustainability.
- **Establish a youth-only employment system** in both public and private sectors based on the United Nations Young Professional Officers model.
- **Strengthen inclusion of the educational system** so it considers the needs of people living with disabilities through inclusive education and is adapted to the needs of the labor market. Relevant Congolese authorities within the education sector should work with private and public sector actors to identify labor needs and orient training to the needs of the labor market.

2. Context

2.1 Introduction

Search, in consortium with IREX and with financial support from USAID, is implementing the *Youth Excel: Our Knowledge Leading Change* program in the DRC to provide support to youth leaders, youth-led organizations, and youth-serving organizations to form an Issue-based Collaborative Network (ICON) that will conduct research for the development of youth as active forces for change. This program builds the capacity of youth organizations to conduct action research on cross-sectoral youth programs and make recommendations based on the results of this research. Youth Excel is a global program that enables youth and youth organizations to use action research to strengthen local, national, and global development solutions and helps young leaders, as well as youth-led and youth-serving organizations, conduct quality action research. This includes synthesizing data and learnings to improve their own cross-sectoral positive youth development programs and engaging in intergenerational dialogue with adult decision makers so that together, youth and adults can shape and advance data-driven development policies, agendas, and programs. The theory of change underlying this project is as follows:

*“IF Congolese youth from underrepresented and marginalized populations are empowered to lead, study, and test ways to define and advance inclusion in workforce development, **THEN** youth workforce development activities at scale will be better contextualized, engaged with community needs, and more likely to achieve sustainable success resulting in greater opportunities for inclusion for social and economic well-being, as well as conflict prevention and mitigation.”*

The Youth Excel program will enable diverse young Congolese leaders with a demonstrated passion for improving education and work opportunities to co-create practical and actionable learning and research

activities.

At the beginning of the project, Search, in partnership with youth from Kinshasa and Goma, conducted three initial analyses as described below:

- A **Conflict Analysis** to assess conflict dynamics in youths' communities by clarifying interests, positions, and issues within the target communities. The analysis identified emerging risks of violence as well as opportunities and initiatives that support collaboration and peace in the target communities.
- An **Intersectional Rapid Gender Analysis** (IRGA) that builds on the more traditional concept of Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) implemented by humanitarian and development organizations around the world. IRGAs are a tool that humanitarian responders, researchers, development actors, and others often use before, during, and after an emergency (or more generally) to identify, and thus subsequently respond to, the different needs and capacities of women, men, boys, girls, youth with disability and gender non-conforming individuals. By examining the relationship between these groups of different and shared identities, we can better understand how their environments, agency, and assets relative to each other influence the needs and capacities that youth organizations or youth-serving programs must address.
- A **Protection Assessment** to identify and map risks to project staff/partners, programming, and operations, as well as external risks to youth leadership and research in the DRC context. The assessment considers physical, psychosocial, digital, sociocultural, legal, political, and financial risks to youth-led or youth-serving partners, as well as to the youth they will engage in research. This assessment plays an important role in identifying resources and measures for preventing, mitigating, and responding to potential risks, for the protection and safeguarding of youth in programming.

2.2 Objective and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to conduct a conflict, gender and protection analysis in Kinshasa and North Kivu in order to help answer the project's guiding question: "*How do we strengthen the inclusion of under-represented and marginalized youth in education and workforce development programs?*" The purpose of these initial analyses is to inform the program strategy for Youth Excel in DRC and ultimately to generate actionable information and recommendations for conflict-sensitive, gender-sensitive, and risk-aware inclusive youth workforce development programming.

Specifically, this analysis is directed towards the following objectives

1. Analyze the dynamics of conflict in the community, especially those involving youth;
2. Conduct an intersectional gender analysis to understand gender inequalities and other power imbalances in the community; and
3. Conduct a protection assessment around youth participation in the Youth Excel program.

The objectives and research questions described below served as a guide for design with youth, but some of these research questions were revisited during the design workshop with youth (see "Approach" section below).

Research areas

1. **Objective 1: To analyze the dynamics of conflict in the community, particularly those involving youth**
 - 1.1. What are the dynamics of existing conflicts?
 - 1.2. What opportunities and initiatives exist for peace that contribute to the reduction of conflict involving youth?
2. **Objective 2: Conduct an intersectional gender analysis to understand gender inequalities and other power imbalances in the community**
 - 2.1. What are the dynamics of access to goods, power, services and resources like (barriers, control, etc.) - how do norms, beliefs, laws and policies influence these dynamics? This analysis focused on four overarching analytical frameworks including:
 - 1) Enabling environment,
 - 2) Roles and responsibilities,
 - 3) Contribution and agency, and
 - 4) Assets and resources.
3. **Objective 3: Conduct a protection assessment around youth participation in the youth Excel program**
 - 3.1. Are there any ongoing challenges that may impact Youth Excel and youth work in your community?
 - 3.2. What might be some of the major risks that youth face as a result of their involvement in Youth Excel activities?

Approach

As part of these analyses, Search adopted a **youth-led research approach**. This research approach is relevant to the goals of the Youth Excel program because it not only empowers and engages youth, but also contributes to a better understanding of the situation of youth in order to be a positive force for their development. It is also a programmatic approach that can engage youth in peacebuilding, strengthen their leadership skills, and help them build stronger relationships with members of their community. The results generated provide valuable insights for the research subjects, and the act of conducting the research itself can have a positive impact on youth and their relationships in their communities.

The youth-led research approach uses a multi-step participatory approach as outlined below:

Step 1: Selection of Youth: 12 youth researchers were identified in each zone through a transparent and inclusive process. The profile of the youth researchers is young people from youth associations, young academics, youth from the LGBTQI+ community as well as youth from other marginalized groups such as youth living with disabilities.

Step 2: Research Training: Search trained the selected youth for five days in research on conflict analysis, gender analysis, protection assessment, ethics, and the do no harm approach. This workshop was also an opportunity to conduct a participatory literature review with the youth.

Step 3: Participatory Design and Participatory Literature Review: Based on Terms of References developed by Search with the key research objectives, the lines of inquiry were developed and validated

with the youth, including the collection methodology, targets and research area. This training was combined with a participatory review of the conflict and gender situation in the two respective areas, including a literature review of relevant past research. Findings from past research that were assessed by youth as still relevant were integrated in the key results of this report.

Step 4: Area and Data Collection: Youth researchers developed the final data collection methodology, and collected data in:

- Kinshasa, in ten communes: **Selembao, Bumbu, Makala, Kinseso, Ngaba, Kimbaseke, Masina, Maluku, N'sele, Ndjili**. The youth selected these ten communes after a mapping of the 25 communes of Kinshasa, and focused on the ten communes with a high representation of marginalized groups and gender non-conforming people (LGBTQI+).
- North Kivu: **city of Goma and Karisimbi and the Sake group (Nyiragongo)**.

The youth researchers facilitated **20 focus group discussions (FGDs)** in North Kivu and Kinshasa, with the following categories:

- Youth with physical disabilities (mobility and physical impairments, vision disability, hearing disability), as well as albino youth;
- Youth sex workers;
- Female youth who are both members and not members of youth organizations;
- Homeless youth;
- Male youth who are both members and not members of youth organizations;
- Youth from rural areas;
- Youth from ethnic minorities;
- LGBTQI+ youth; and
- Young entrepreneurs.

In identifying respondents, this study considered the inclusion of youth from marginalized groups in order to obtain reliable information from youth who are often not included in other studies (Table 1).

- 42% of these youth were from minority groups: youth with disabilities, youth living in the most precarious communities, female youth sex workers, female and male youth homeless and rejected by their families;
- 10% of these youth were from gender non-conforming groups;
- 14% of female youth were from youth organizations, young entrepreneurs, or academics;
- 34% of male youth were from youth organizations, young entrepreneurs, or academics.²

Chart 1. Overall Distribution of Youth Surveyed by Gender and Group

² This higher rate can be explained by the fact that a majority of youth association members are male.

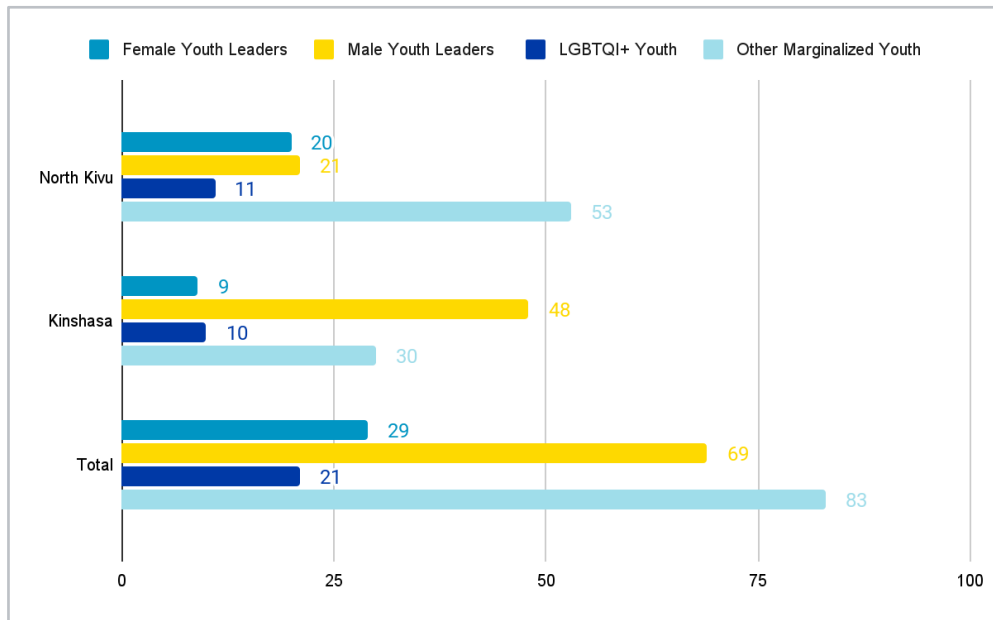


Table 1. Detailed distribution of youth surveyed by group

Focus Group Discussion Participants				
Category	North Kivu	Kinshasa	Total Number	Total (Percentage)
Youth with disabilities	10	10	20	10%
Homeless	13	10	23	11%
Sex workers	10	10	20	10%
Banyamulunge	10	0	10	5%
Student	0	8	8	4%
LGBTQI+	11	10	21	10%
From rural areas	10	0	10	10%
Contractors	0	10	11	10%
Young men affiliated with associations	11	10	21	10%
Young men not affiliated with associations	10	10	20	10%
Young women affiliated with associations	10	10	20	10%
Young women not affiliated with associations	10	9	19	10%
TOTAL	105	97	202	100%

The youth researchers conducted a total of 17 individual interviews (seven in Kinshasa and ten in North Kivu) with the following:

- The Head of the provincial youth division in North Kivu (1) and Kinshasa (1);
- The Head of the Urban Youth Council of North Kivu (1);
- Coordinators of organizations of youth with disabilities (2);
- The Head of the INPP (National Institute of Professional Preparation) in North Kivu (1) and Kinshasa (1);
- LGBTQI+ Youth Representatives (2);
- North Kivu Provincial Deputies (2);
- The deans of university faculties of North Kivu (1) and Kinshasa (1);
- Leaders of startup incubators in North Kivu (1) and Kinshasa (1); and
- Leaders of youth-led and youth-serving organizations (2).

Step 5: Data Analysis

After data collection, Search conducted two participatory analysis workshops with youth to review and validate key findings:

- Workshop 1 introduced young people to data processing, analysis, and transcription.
- Workshop 2 facilitated a common analysis, where each young researcher presented their analysis, for a common validation and further joint analysis with the other researchers.

This report captures the validated results and additional contributions from youth researchers from these workshops and consequent discussions.

3. Key Findings

3.1. Conflict Analysis

This section describes current conflict dynamics and their impact on youth in North Kivu and Kinshasa. Data from focus groups, interviews, and past research highlights that conflicts in North Kivu and Kinshasa share common societal and structural dynamics. These dynamics contribute to the escalation of tensions and affect peacebuilding.

- **Weak implementation of public policies and vertical cohesion:** The governance structure in the DRC is based on a strong concentration of political and economic power in the capital. While some existing laws govern various sectors (employment, economic, etc.), their implementation remains weak across governmental institutions. This lack of enforcement at various levels (local, provincial, national) contributes to fragility and hinders development. Power dynamics among elected officials and authorities do not incentivize accountability towards citizens, and oftentimes the needs of the population are neglected. Citizens tend to lack knowledge and understanding on how, and platforms to, exercise their rights and responsibilities. Governance is characterized by a lack of trust of elected officials and authorities and current dynamics lead to abuses of power (corruption, influence, use of force, etc).
- **Decentralization of power:** Despite attempts to foster decentralization, the gap between central and peripheral power (provincial, territorial, local) remains, and the implementation of the decentralization policy is perceived as flawed, especially for North Kivu (this perception was not often reported by youth in Kinshasa). Traditional leaders wield significant influence and power at the local level. This creates ambiguity and tension over where their authority ends and government authority begins in local implementation of laws and policies. This lack of clarity can lead to conflict. For example, local chiefs and government actors often sell the same plot of land to different people, each claiming the authority to do so, which is a leading cause of land conflict (a majority of land conflicts in North-Kivu originate from this tension between customary and written law).
- **Government corruption and youth experiences of injustice:** This relationship is inescapably linked to the phenomenon of corruption, which contributes strongly to the feeling of impunity and injustice and young people's experiences of structural violence and exclusion. Young people reported corruption and nepotism within state institutions, a key obstacle to their access to public services, which consequently hinder their access to existing opportunities (economic, social, political).
- **Unequal access to basic social services, protection, justice, and economic opportunities:** Poor governance creates and perpetuates unequal access to economic resources and creates very significant and apparent socio-economic divides with strong disparities in access to basic services (education, health, security, etc.). These inequalities accentuate the poor security situation in the country. Young people shared their perception that access to services and opportunities is reserved for a few people who have relationships with power holders or who have the economic resources to facilitate access to education and employment. Only being "rich" guarantees access, while the majority of the population remains excluded from these resources and opportunities.

Besides these commonalities, a series of conflict dynamics are specific to the context of North Kivu, and of Kinshasa. Certain types of conflict also affect certain categories of vulnerable youth more than others.

3.1.1. Conflicts related to insecurity in North Kivu

The prevalence of armed conflict in North Kivu serves as an important foundation for understanding the socio-psychological, political, and economic context of young people. While day-to-day life goes on, the threat of armed conflict – and insecurity more broadly – looms ever present and shapes young people’s perceptions of their personal situations as well as their attitudes towards society, including the state, other communities and ethnic groups, MONUSCO, etc. These conflicts were mentioned by the majority of youth regardless of their status or affiliation. Rural youth emphasized the negative impact of armed group activism on their personal development and on the rural economy. Some young people join armed groups, which prevents them from continuing their education and acquiring skills useful to enter the labor market. Armed groups also take advantage of the lack of employment opportunities and income to mobilize unemployed graduates at all levels (including high school, university, and vocational graduates). Armed violence further erodes the rural economic fabric, negatively impacting agricultural productivity, livestock keeping, and small-scale commerce, key economic sectors in North Kivu and throughout the DRC.

Youth exposure to insecurity, as well as the prevalence of inter-communal conflict, was cited by respondents as a major factor contributing to the decision by some youth to engage in violence. According to respondents, the lack of trust in the judicial system, as well as the failure of authorities to implement meaningful security sector reform, encourages some youth and adults to resort to extrajudicial means to seek justice and ensure the safety of their communities.

For the majority of participants in our focus groups, the failure of the state is the main cause of conflict and insecurity in North Kivu. This is manifested in the absence of the army and/or police in the province, creating a breeding ground for the proliferation of non-state armed groups. In some places where the police and/or army operate, they are either insufficient in number and lack the resources necessary for their work, or they are themselves sources of insecurity and conflict. Young people reported demands for bribes and numerous cases of police harassment. In some places, the police and military refrain from confronting armed groups because these armed groups have more manpower or because law enforcement bodies claim that armed groups help them maintain order and security.

These conflicts are also fueled by tribalism and the lack of awareness and education on the impact of violence and social fragmentation. This leads to manipulation and drives many youth and families into armed groups. Many armed groups are formed around ethnic identities. The young people interviewed said that warlords recruit young people from their own ethnic groups under the pretext of defending their interests against possible attacks from neighboring tribes. In urban areas, according to the youth, churches, businesses, and other institutions recruit members and employees from the ethnic groups of their leaders and founders.

Another factor fueling insecurity in North-Kivu is competition for natural resources. The youth interviewed reported that conflict dynamics around natural resources mobilize diverse actors, including multinationals, neighboring countries, local oligarchs, local and national politicians, traditional chiefs, international NGOs and UN agencies. Instead of opening opportunities for young people, natural resources have become a cause of conflict and fortify armed groups that then prey on youth vulnerabilities (socio-economic, political, and social-psychological). Young people interviewed added that business-minded politicians who often “serve the enemy” have infiltrated and corrupted security forces.

In terms of how this violence affects young people, there are differences between **young women and young men**. Young men are often perceived as victims of physical violence, manipulation, or harassment by authorities, while young women are perceived as victims of gender-based violence (GBV), which contributes to the perception that girls are carriers of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This is in addition to the perception that girls are victims of early and forced marriages, in addition to socioeconomic discrimination.

Rural youth are perceived to be involved in conflict as a result of widespread poverty and lack of employment. According to respondents, these youth are deprived of access to fields and farms, which is why some are involved in violence and theft. Some youth are also involved in conflicts between herders and farmers and are active in armed groups. They also become involved in conflicts as a result of political manipulation.

Young men living in rural areas are perceived by other youth to be the least resilient to conflict because they lack access to education and income-generating opportunities (other than farming or mining) and are easily mobilized to join armed groups. Groups mobilize vulnerable youth in search of identity, belonging, and a source of income. Forced early marriages are common, the victims of which include both young women and men, especially the oldest sons, whose families demand that they marry early. Respondents describe these early marriages as a form of sexual violence that affects all members of the family unit. All close relatives are involved, especially paternal aunts, but also fathers, mothers, and brothers. Young spouses stop their schooling, thus limiting their chances of professional integration. Young married women often suffer from obstetrical complications due to their young age, which worsens the already high level of maternal mortality in North Kivu. Young women living in rural areas are also exposed to risks of violence, especially sexual, caused by armed groups activities in their environment.

Urban youth (male and female) perceive unemployment as one of the factors that mobilize them in conflict. These young people hold the state and its leaders responsible for the lack of employment. This is exacerbated by the inability of youth to enter the professional world. Jobs offered in the market often do not match the skills of young people. This tendency is exacerbated by the feeling of inequality of resources, but also by impunity and exclusion in decision-making. In addition, these urban youth perceive urban banditry in all its forms (gangs in often deprived neighborhoods, settling of accounts, and petty urban crime) as factors that negatively affect their education and professional integration. It is not uncommon in Goma, for example, for rival gangs to engage in urban violence in broad daylight. These conflicts between rival urban youth gangs are fueled by myriad motivations: economic interests of patrons, ethnic prejudice, political manipulation, unemployment, and impoverishment. Usually, there is not one single source but a confluence of factors that contribute to the risk of violence. At the individual level, criminal entrepreneurs, including young people, take part in contract killings or kidnappings for ransom.

3.1.2. Tensions Related to the Abuse of Power by the Defense and Security Forces

According to the youth, police violence and abuse are widespread. Demonstrations in public spaces frequently end in a police-youth confrontation, but youth also experience police harassment and abuse of power in their day-to-day routine.

The causes of these tensions, according to many young people, originate in the system of recruitment for security and defense forces, lack of adequate training, and ignorance of the law by young people and some police officers. Young people stressed the feeling of impunity amongst the police as a major cause of confrontations.

Different groups and identities of youth described specific experiences of abuse:

- **Young men** are often in violent confrontation with the police. This violence is evident during youth demonstrations in public spaces. To this effect, young people are perceived negatively by the police, leading to systematic suspicions towards young men.
- **Young "Kuluna" living on the street** describe how their appearance and the environment in which they live exposes them to violence and mistreatment, including by prejudiced law enforcement officers. Young people also report that police officers stereotype other youth, especially those who are not well dressed, as thieves or "Kuluna" (urban youth gangs).
- **Young female sex workers** report abuse by police. The young women report that police officers sexually abuse them, refuse to pay them, and create false offenses to take advantage of them. The young women lack protection and the officers commit these abuses with impunity because of the stigma around sex work.

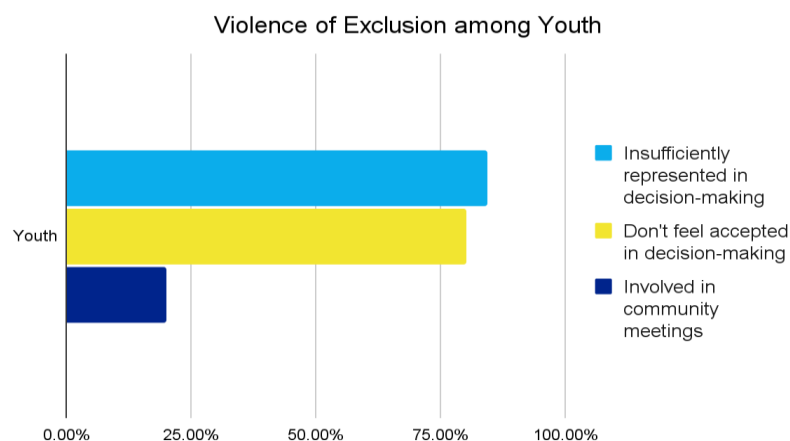
3.1.3. Intergenerational Conflict and Exclusion from Decision-making

Intergenerational conflict and exclusion is a key theme in young people's experiences of violence in both Kinshasa and North Kivu. The two dynamics feed one another in a vicious cycle. Adults fear power sharing with youth based on stereotypes they hold about youth, youth feel discriminated against and react negatively to their experiences of exclusion, which reinforces adult's negative stereotypes and drives further exclusion and discrimination. In turn, the exclusion of youth is a key factor that drives some to violence.

Fear of Power Sharing with or Consideration for Youth

Young people in Kinshasa and North Kivu perceive adults as monopolizing power and decisions, not allowing young people the opportunity to increase their status in the professional or political world. Youth are least represented in politics, both at the provincial and national level, whether it is within provincial governments, territorial and municipal administration, etc. While youth constitute the majority of the troops in the security forces, their representation in officer and senior officer positions is only marginal. In Kinshasa, 85% of youth who participated in the FGDs clearly expressed that adults – especially those in positions of power – are selfish and do not want to give way to young people and enable them to benefit from existing opportunities. Some youth spoke about adults' fear of being replaced by youth as a cause of this. Others spoke about the lack of experience of young people, lack of specialization, and lack of work experience that stems from the fact that youth are not mentored or prepared to hold these positions.

Chart 2. FG Results of Youth's Opinions of Exclusion



Homeless youth describe adults as manipulative, mobilizing homeless youth in political demonstrations as a way of inciting violence. Young people believe that they are not consulted by adults in decision-making, even for matters that concern them. In North Kivu, youth interviewed said that they are regularly excluded from local community consultation meetings, such as those organized by economic operators, development-oriented NGOs, and local authorities. Even when it comes to issues that directly impact youth, they are often left out of the process, without any opportunity to make their views known. The overwhelming majority of youth participating in the FGDs (84.4%) believe that they are not sufficiently represented in decision-making bodies. Only 20% say they are involved in meetings organized within their communities and of these, 10% believe that the opinions of youth expressed in these meetings do not influence the decision. Additionally, 80% of youth do not feel accepted in the decision-making bodies of their communities. According to respondents, when youth perceive discrimination and inequality, they are more easily mobilized for violence.

Whether it is political-administrative or academic authorities, young students from different universities in Kinshasa affirm that in most cases, measures are taken without them being informed in advance. A young academic during a FGD in Kinshasa explained: *“During the lockdown, our universities decided to make distance learning courses without asking our opinion, yet not all students have sufficient means to study at a distance. The consequence was that some students did not have access to all the courses, and this negatively influenced their learning. Some have failed.”*

However, some young members of associations expressed that there is currently an improvement in terms of youth involvement. In North Kivu, youth representation is predominant in youth organizations and in some civil society organizations. In youth movements such as LUCHA (Struggle for Change), 100% of decision-making positions are held by youth. Youth also pointed out that some young people hold decision-making positions within the government and some companies, although the number remains lower, especially for young women. While more than 80% of the agricultural labor force is provided by women, only 44.4% of decision-making positions are held by women in this sector.

Negative Stereotypes Fuel Conflict and Exclusion

Intergenerational conflicts are fueled by adult stereotypes of youth, some of whom label and judge youth as unreliable. Youth develop a certain distrust towards adults because they perceive that, even when some youth are invited to participate in meetings, their opinions will not be taken into account. Youth feel their involvement is simply to meet a quota and that their opinions do not actually influence the intervention strategy. The young participants in the research think that adults are materialistic, selfish, and opportunistic. Adults in turn perceive young people as overly ambitious and unthinking. Overall, young people and adults do not seem to have the same way of seeing things: *“In their time technology was not as advanced as it is now, they were not really in contact with the outside world, so we really disagree. What I can do and find normal, they can't see it”* - a youth during the Kinshasa FGD

Young people consistently view adults’ negative attitudes towards them as a major contributor to youth exclusion and, in its most extreme form, youth participation in violence. This is a sentiment that is reflected among diverse youth from across the DRC and features in past youth-led research in Eastern DRC: *“If we are treated like criminals, like violent parasites, like social troublemakers, then who cares what they (adults) say...I'd rather do something bad to at least give them something to say.”* - Young FG participant (Search, 2019)

As pointed out in this research, adults’ negative attitudes towards youth are self-fulfilling. When adults portray and treat youth as criminals, youth respond and act negatively, which only confirms adults’ misperceptions. The harsh and coercive approaches and policies towards youth which grow from these misperceptions provoke violent responses from youth, and the vicious cycle continues.

Revivalist churches in Kinshasa play an important role in propagating norms and stereotypes that conditions adults’ attitudes towards youth. Churches promote messages that blame children for not following social norms. **Adolescent girls and young women** tend to be categorized as either “good girls” or “bad girls.” According to social norms, if a girl makes a mistake, she can quickly get a bad reputation. She is then stigmatized and excluded from certain social spaces. This contributes to a recurrent intergenerational conflict between adults and youth, and [Section 3.2.2](#) explores these norms and stereotypes in more detail.

3.1.4. Experiences of Discrimination and Injustice

Stigmatization and discrimination cause physical and psychological violence, exclusion, poverty, and rejection. This violence of exclusion happens at many levels for youth, from families to the State. Youth in this study report discrimination and inequalities in their communities, education, employment, and families.

In past research, youth participation in decision making and community life has been identified as one of the key factors in discouraging youth involvement in violence. There are various forms of youth participation and inclusion. Youth association members have highlighted the initiatives of local civil society organizations, as well as international NGOs, that aim to address the social marginalization of youth. However, this study shows that specific groups of marginalized youth - Banyumulunge in North Kivu, young people who are not members of associations, young female sex workers, and homeless youth in both zones - feel that their involvement is not effective because NGOs tend to only involve the same youth leaders from established associations in activities. Further, young people who are not affiliated with

any associative structure and other marginalized youth (LGBTQI+, homeless, sex workers) do not feel entitled to ask for participation or inclusion in community meetings or dialogue fora for fear of stigmatization and violence. Only 50% of young women in Kinshasa feel that they should be able to access higher positions - others felt that these positions were for men. The exclusion of these groups is mostly driven by stereotypes that communities and institutions hold. For example, homeless youth are perceived as unimportant actors, as they are neither educated nor supported by any structure to be included in decision making.

Participants identified access to formal education as a major factor that can enable the inclusion of youth in certain decision making. This confirms findings from previous research, which highlighted that access to formal and informal education was an important protective factor. The types of education identified included formal education (i.e., school), family and social education, and religious education. In this regard, marginalized youth who have not had an education are excluded from all forms of participation. In past research, youth often mentioned the lack of social education as one of the reasons why some youth participate in violence, as these youth have negative social representations from other community members.

Youth who are not members of youth associations describe discrimination compared to members of youth associations and non-members in both North Kivu and Kinshasa. In Kinshasa, youth who are not members of associations describe experiences of exclusion and discrimination compared to members of youth associations, who benefit from training, capacity strengthening, and support to create businesses. In North Kivu, several youth associations have been accused of positioning themselves according to their ethnic and political affiliations. This situation divides young members of the associations and non-members. Non-member youth feel discriminated against because they are not included in decision-making, and they accuse NGOs in North Kivu of discriminating against them by repeatedly including only the same leaders of youth associations/movements. As a result, the young people interviewed believe that young people who are not members of the associations demand their participation through acts of violence.

Unemployed youth in both locations accuse companies and other institutions of nepotism during recruitment processes. In North Kivu, youth accuse companies and other institutions of recruiting employees from the same ethnic groups as their leaders and founders. In Kinshasa, youth cite the lack of youth representation on the boards and leadership of companies as another factor that reduces access to jobs.

Unemployed young men in North Kivu are seen as “actors of violence and insecurity” by community members. This negative perception further drives these young men to join armed groups or any form of income-generating activity - even illegal - that provides them with easy financial income.

Homeless youth (female and male) known as “Maibobo” in North Kivu are perceived as “thieves” and are victims of violence by the police. In order of importance, homeless young people perceive unemployment, police harassment, stigmatization, and GBV as violence that affect them the most. They know that their access to economic opportunities is hindered by illiteracy and think that any effort to empower them must be based on literacy, vocational training, and the creation of jobs that are accessible to them. Because of the harassment they face, homeless young men do not see the police as a protective

force but rather as an enemy. Homeless young women accuse the police of being the main perpetrators of GBV, including rapes they said happen during night patrols.

LGBTQI+ youth in North Kivu and Kinshasa report widespread psychological and verbal abuse, including from family members, stemming from anti-LGBTQI+ stereotypes. They perceive anti-LGBTQI+ violence and stigmas as the most important barriers affecting their education and professional development. For this reason, if they want to access jobs and education without being stigmatized, they must hide their identity. LGBTQI+ youth do not dare to manifest their identity publicly. Furthermore, barriers to education for LGBTQI+ youth - including rejection by family and society, violence and stigma - create additional complications in their access to jobs and employment/livelihood opportunities. Many LGBTQI+ youth drop out of schooling due to these barriers, reducing their likelihood of getting a decent job. Those who finish school are often rejected by colleagues and bosses because of their sexual orientation: *“If you go to apply somewhere, and we know your sexual orientation, people will start saying, this one might infect and affect our team. That's how our peers are uneducated, and many live a life of street wandering, and don't know what to do because their parents couldn't handle their sexual orientation.”*

These young people emphasize the role of Congolese society – from the family to teachers, doctors, magistrates and religious denominations- in driving anti-LGBTQI+ violence and conflict: A member of the LGBTQI+ community described this dynamic: *“A pastor is a leader, and many people do what he says, but you will find that instead of preaching love of neighbor and mutual aid, he is the first to create hatred towards homosexuals.”* Doctors are accused of turning their offices into preaching rooms in an attempt to force LGBTQI+ youth to “change” their sexual orientation. Judges and other law enforcement use Article 178 of the penal code, which prohibits the public practice of “improper moral activities” – interpreted as homosexuality – to harass LGBTQI+ youth.

Young female sex workers experience social scorn, stigmatization and discrimination in their daily lives. This stigma makes them more vulnerable to violence - frequently manifested as GBV perpetrated by their own clients- and inhibits their development.

Young people with disabilities often face a strong perception of stigmatization and discrimination towards them, caused by how members of society and families perceive persons with disabilities. Few parents decide to invest in their education and development. Many other parents consider children with disabilities a burden. Many young people with disabilities in Kinshasa, for example, are forced to go to specialized centers for people with disabilities, which they see as a form of discrimination because it reduces economic opportunities and their aspirations for other occupations.

Young people from ethnic minority groups in North Kivu (Banyamulenge and Batwa) claim that they do not have access to the same opportunities (education, employment, land, or natural resources) as other ethnic groups (so-called indigenous members of the G7: Nande, Hunde, Tembo, Nyanga, Kano and Kumu). Specifically, young Banyamulenge say they are victims of social exclusion and describe themselves as an “undesirable minority.” The Banyamulenge interviewed said that their Congolese compatriots equated them with Rwandans. Others consider them to be Rwandan soldiers and spies or asocial people who do not know how to integrate into Congolese society. They are further characterized as traitors, unfriendly, and lonely people, in search of land that has become scarce in their home country. These attitudes are based on their “morphology,” as well as more contextual factors such as the prominent role that Banyamulenge officers played in the AFDL and RCD rebellions. All these prejudices are

maintained by politicians who manipulate public opinion in a way that negatively impacts their education and employment.

Albino youth feel stigmatized by society because of their physical appearance, and their health needs are rarely addressed in government programs.

Young prisoners and ex-prisoners also experience widespread stigmatization, considered as criminals in society even after completing their time in prison.

3.1.5 Tensions and Conflict Within Families

Youth mentioned tensions within families as another key area of conflict within their lives. Tension over education decisions, which are typically taken by parents unilaterally and differ by youth gender and identity, arose for many youth. Homeless youth, youth with disabilities, LBTQI+ youth, and sex workers described how these family tensions affect them in particular. Each of these groups of youth described how the lack of support from their families limits their ability to thrive - from leaving them in precarious socioeconomic conditions, pushing them to homelessness, harming their psychosocial wellbeing, and hindering their access to education, employment, and other opportunities for development.

Homeless youth pointed to how family disruptions contributed to the increase in homelessness. Among the causes of their homelessness, these young people cite family strife, from polygamy to divorce and inequitable distribution of wealth, their parent's poverty, and false accusations and prophecies within revivalist churches. During the discussion with the homeless youth, more than half of them mentioned that many street children are chased away from their homes because of these false accusations from the pastors (child sorcerer, child source of curses or of misfortune).

Young people with disabilities described how families' lack of support limits their access to education and employment. Many parents consider educating children with disabilities to be a waste of time and resources, and abandon their children with disabilities. Youth pointed out the significant development opportunities they could have with better family support.

Youth in the LGBTQI+ community expressed how tension and rejection in their families results from stigma and harmful anti-LGBTQI+ messages propagated in society, making them feel like the “bane” of the entire family. *“On several occasions, my mother has already taken me to prayer rooms for deliverance. She repeats every day that she gave birth to a boy and not a girl and it disturbs me.”* - LGBTQI+ youth. LGBTQI+ youth highlighted that youth who enjoy family support do not have the same problems as those rejected by family and feel that it is the family that should provide support for their growth.

Young female sex workers described how they turned to prostitution after their extended families denied them support or care after their parents' deaths. In focus group discussions, 70% of young female sex workers described themselves as orphans with brothers and sisters in their care.

The study notes that youth programs often lack a focus on community integration and engagement, which limits the amount of change that programs can make towards youth participation and development. Among youth who are part of underrepresented or minority groups (especially those living with disabilities, single mothers, and LGBTQI+) **those who have access to education, feel they are contributing to society, and report the highest sense of fulfillment generally have support from families and friends.**

3.1.6. Impact of Conflict on Youth

The majority of youth in our focus group discussions identified **unemployment and dropping out of school as the main consequences of violent conflict on youth**. Conflicts disrupt school and academic calendars and encourage school dropout. In addition, violent conflict can destroy school infrastructure, interrupting education or driving youth to join militias. Armed groups and youth in militias also use schools as recruitment centers or for other purposes. Many young people also note that conflict and violence have destroyed sources of household income and livelihoods, thereby also depriving their families of the means to finance their children's education. In rural areas, farmers and herders abandon their fields and farms because of the risk to their lives. Armed militias often slaughter cattle. In addition, armed conflict is a barrier to investment. Many businesses, including those of young people, are destroyed by violence, and others go bankrupt. Foreign investment remains limited due to a poor business climate for international companies.³

In addition to school dropout and unemployment, other consequences of armed conflicts on young people are youth criminal behavior, school dropout, psychological trauma of young victims and witnesses of crimes and atrocious treatments, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, prostitution and early marriages, sometimes forced, as underlined by the majority of young women who took part in our discussions. For the majority of LGBTQI+ youth, the main impacts of conflict they experience are socio-professional rejection, stigmatization, burnout, homophobia, suicidal ideation and suicide.

3.2. Intersectional Gender Analysis

3.2.1 Education and Employment

In addition to violence, our intersectional gender analysis identified a number of barriers to youth education and employment in the DRC. Some of these barriers have been identified in other studies before ours. It is estimated that about 7.3 million children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 are not in school, and 52% of them are girls. Approximately 1.2 million, or 21%, of those not in school are between 14 and 17 years old, and the majority of them are girls (64%). Although the free basic education policy introduced by the current government significantly increased the enrollment rate of primary school children, its implementation and sustainability still face many challenges including an increase in student-teacher ratio, stakeholders' misunderstanding of the purpose of the policy and their doubts about its sustainability, delayed payment of teachers' salaries, unreceipted payment of school fees by parents, insufficient funding to schools by the government, etc.

In the DRC, nearly 20% of secondary school students are enrolled in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) centers. These centers face many challenges, including limited accessibility, lack of curricula for certain trades, obsolescence of teaching materials, lack and/or aging of qualified teachers, and mismatch between learning outcomes and labor market needs. An additional societal challenge is that

³ The mining sector is a notable exception; however, frequently these companies are operating on the very edge or out of compliance with the national labor and mining code. Companies in the mining sector have been repeatedly singled out in reports by the UN Group of Experts for employing children and young people in dangerous conditions under tenuous circumstances (poorly paid and working without contracts). This subjects these children and young people to inhumane working conditions, further aggravating their vulnerability.

the Congolese have a negative perception of TVET as a last resort for youth who have failed in general education.

The Congolese university produces about 10,000 young graduates on the job market every year. Only about 1% of these young graduates find a job. According to the 2013⁴ Youth Map, there is a mismatch between educational attainment and labor market needs in the DRC. This mismatch means that young people have few opportunities to earn a living wage. At 32.2 percent, the official youth unemployment rate is almost double the national average of 17.8% in the formal economy. However, the true extent of underemployment and unemployment among youth in DRC in general and North Kivu in particular is unknown, with some estimates exceeding 70%.

As a result, many young people, even the most highly educated, work in the informal sector. For lack of a better job, some become street vendors, currency dealers, SIM card sellers, or work as security guards in security companies. In North Kivu, where armed groups abound, some forty according to recent studies, unemployment forces many young people to join non-state armed groups. In Kinshasa, the informal sector is the main provider of jobs, particularly the informal non-agricultural sector. The latter provides 65.6% of jobs, followed by the public administration (11.9%), the formal private sector (8.8%), agriculture (5.2%) and finally public enterprises (5.0%). (UNDP 2009).

The Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture and Arts has recently defined the situation of young people in Kinshasa through organizations and infrastructures where young people operate. Furthermore, the Directorate of Studies and Planning initiates training for young people in the agricultural field, or who have created their own small or medium-sized enterprises or those organized in cooperatives under the supervision of the General Secretariat for Youth.

In Kinshasa, poverty is more widespread in female-headed households (45.7%) than in male-headed households (40.7%). This pattern of poverty by gender is not surprising, given the precarious status of women in the labor market and their social status, which limits their access to productive assets. The level of poverty among female-headed households could be explained by the fact that women generally have less physical and human capital than men.

Barriers to Youth Education

Only 39% of the youth surveyed in North Kivu were able to complete secondary school and pursue higher education. There are many obstacles to their schooling in the DRC. Among them, **household poverty** was cited most frequently as the primary barrier to youth education, including by parents and the head of INPP (Workforce Development Authority). **Repeated violence** and quasi-permanent displacement of populations, destruction of school infrastructure and insecurity were also cited as major barriers to education. Other causes that were cited most frequently included the **re-establishment of homes** after parental divorce, **the death of parents**, **marital conflicts**, and **the non-involvement of some parents** in their children's education. In all these cases, young people are neglected by their parents or guardians who very often do not pay for their schooling. Some parents do not even know where their children are studying. Nonetheless, the majority of youth also complained that parents, dominated by fathers, take

⁴ IYF, Youth Map DRC-Congolese Youth: Assets & Opportunities, 2013. <https://iyfglobal.org/library/youthmap-drc-congolese-youth-assets-opportunities>

decisions concerning their education without their input. Only one young person admitted to having left school voluntarily.

Different groups cited additional barriers to education:

- **Female youth** often mentioned unwanted early pregnancies and forced marriage as causes for interruptions in their studies, as well as the idea that their future husbands will support them, so education is not important. They also emphasized the role of sexual harassment in schools, which exacerbates school dropout through several mechanisms. Those who resist sexual advances by educators expose themselves to the educators' sanctions and others end up dropping out.
- **In rural areas** in particular, parents tend to favor educating boys over girls. However, this tendency is decreasing in urban areas.
- **Young people with disabilities** point to an education system that does not integrate the needs of people with disabilities. An exclusive architecture that does not allow people with reduced mobility to access school buildings and public services is detrimental to the education of youth with disabilities. And so is a cultural and educational environment that labels people with disabilities as incapable.
- **Youth who are not members of youth associations or are part of underrepresented or marginalized groups** (LGBTQI+ youth, homeless youth, youth from ethnic minority groups, etc) describe additional challenges to education due to discrimination in [Section 3.1.4](#).

Barriers to Youth Employment

Only an estimated 100 of the approximately 9,000 graduates who leave Congolese universities each year find employment. **The majority of youth who participated in our focus group discussions (66.6%) said they had never had the opportunity to access paid employment in their lives.** Our study identifies a number of key barriers to employment for youth.

Barriers to youth employment include corruption, clientelism, nepotism, tribalism and favoritism, and sexual harassment, especially of women. These obstacles echo a lack of ethics in the workplace as well as the absence of a proactive recruitment policy. They are more acute in the public sector because of family, clan, tribal, and political party affiliations. Many positions in public enterprises and other government institutions are distributed as rewards to activists of winning political parties, often with little regard for competence. Recruitments for postings in the civil service are often driven by clientelism, rather than being an open competition based on merit. Leaders surround themselves with their relatives and recommend others to their colleagues. This even happens in NGOs where they organize recruitment processes even though they know in advance who they will hire.

Other barriers to employment include limited access to business mentoring and lack of access to credit for young entrepreneurs. Those who do gain access are quickly overwhelmed by numerous taxes that prevent them from moving forward and prospering. Analysts have criticized the lack of relaxation of hiring conditions in favor of young people, who are required to have many years of experience (Batumike, 2020). They cite the rigidity of the administrative formalities for the creation of companies as well as the high tax pressure on start-ups as barriers that stifle the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of young people. The **INPP, the Workforce development Authority in DRC**, describes this challenge: *"It is enough for a young person to start an activity and then face a whole litany of taxes- their nascent businesses close immediately and they do not make any progress"*.

Other obstacles to youth employment, according to key informants (including the Director of INPP), include the lack of a public policy for the supervision of young people's employment, the difficulty of accessing microfinance, the lack of creation of new jobs, and **the mismatch between educational achievements and the needs of the job market**. Youth who participated in our focus group discussions acknowledged that the current education system does not allow them to acquire the practical skills needed to enter the labor market. The same faculties are organized by all universities pouring young doctors, lawyers, sociologists, economists without real professional opportunities available to them. The requirement of many years of experience to get a job and a lack of apprenticeship or internship opportunities were also mentioned by youth during the research. Compared to their older counterparts, the competitiveness of young people in the labor market is low and correlated with access to education. The problem of mastering foreign languages, especially French and English, was also mentioned and there are those who feel that some young people have experience but are blocked by the lack of mastery of these foreign languages.

The head of the provincial youth division deplored the insecurity in rural areas which kills the entrepreneurship of young people in the agricultural sector as they cannot access their fields because of the insecurity.

Different groups of young people cited additional barriers:

- **People living with disabilities** are respected by their peers and in church, but in some families, there is still a belief that living with a disability means you “can't do anything.” Some recruiters are starting to integrate people with disabilities into their teams, but for blind and deaf people, the situation is challenging, affecting the self-esteem of young people in this category who have not had the chance to study.
- **Female youth** point out that the community's representation of a woman's success is marriage, not professional (or academic) accomplishments. According to the young people participating in this study, **50% of the girls surveyed in Kinshasa felt that they could work in higher positions** while others thought that leadership positions were for men.
- **Young Banyamulenge** say they have difficulty accessing formal microfinance institutions because of ethnic discrimination. They perceive that it is enough for the manager to see them, their name, and their accent to refuse them credit. This discrimination is less pronounced in the case of the VSLAs (village savings and loan associations), they admit.
- **Young female sex workers** say that they have no access to microcredit because their activity is illegal in the DRC, and society does not trust them.
- **Youth who are not members of youth associations or are part of other underrepresented or marginalized groups** (LGBTQI+ youth, homeless youth, etc.) describe additional challenges to employment due to discrimination in [Section 3.1.4](#).

Youth Adaptations and Opportunities

The youth participation in the study identified a number of ways that they have adapted to the challenges in employment, and made recommendations for how to improve youth employment more broadly.

Youth's main sources of income, in order of importance, are the family, informal saving groups such as tontines and village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), youth organizations, and agricultural activities. Youth believe that access to formal microfinance institutions could help alleviate their poverty. However, they deplore the fact that too few young people have access to it, mainly due to a

lack of information, lack of collateral, and ignorance of the activities likely to generate income in their context.

Youth also proposed the creation of dedicated funds to finance youth initiatives. This fund and these initiatives must benefit from a generous tax regime to guarantee their success and sustainability. Youth suggested the creation of youth-only jobs, the elimination of work experience requirements that eliminate many young people from certain positions, and greater encouragement for retirement to increase employment opportunities for youth. Some youth also insisted on the importance of agency and raising awareness among youth themselves to claim their rights and strengthen their entrepreneurship.

Different groups and identities of youth identified specific ways they have adapted to employment challenges, and recommendations for improving their employment:

- **Many LGBTQI+ youth** rely on sex work and barbershop work to earn money: *“I manage to get money, I can braid. I know how to do all the hair salon work lady”* and another continued, *“I do the sex work, if you have someone who needs to have a good time, I’m there and I earn my money there too.”*
- **Young people with disabilities** recommend the inclusion of sign language in general education, but especially the opening of more EPHPHATHA⁵ schools for deaf people. Similarly, blind youth encourage the government to open more schools where Braille is taught, especially in rural areas. And above all, young people with disabilities recommend the construction of disability-sensitive school facilities.
- **LGBTQI+ youth** and **Banyamulenge youth** emphasized the importance of raising awareness among the general public on their human rights and the need to end discrimination, as an important avenue to improve their social and professional integration.
- **Homeless youth** suggest increased training in manual trades to increase the employability of youth who do not attend school and the creation of factories that can employ them.
- **For many female youth**, there are specific opportunities including easier access micro-credit (with the exception of female sex workers) because society considers male youth to be “unreliable swindlers.” Youth shared the perception that young men often ask for amounts that are too high. Many young people also report that the increase of feminist organizations gives girls more of a chance in accessing resources and employment. Additionally, female youth are recognized as honest and that is why in several banks and companies they prefer to work with female youth rather than male youth.
- However, many young people think that the gap in opportunities between male and female youth remains strong, citing that male youth are nearly always ahead of females in terms of educational attainment and this will continue to give them a strong advantage over them.

Finally, the cultural sector in Kinshasa has responded to the employment crisis, although there are also challenges with ethnic and religious discrimination. Currently, it is mainly through music, theater and religion that the vast majority of the city's population tries to solve problems related to the socio-economic crisis. For lack of jobs in the formal sector, the Kinois have launched themselves into the informal sector where they show great ingenuity and creative imagination. Since the beginning of the 90's, many Kinois have become musicians, theater actors (comedians in particular), and religious figures (evangelists, pastors, etc.) in the so-called revivalist churches. These neo-protestant churches, whose main

⁵ “EPHATHA” in Aramaic (the language that was spoken by Jesus) means “be opened”. It is the word addressed by Jesus to a deaf-mute as Jesus made him hear and speak. In DRC, most schools for the deaf are known as EPHATHA schools. In this report, it simply means “school for the deaf”.

philosophy is the prosperity of their followers, nearly all function in a similar way. They are founded on the initiative of a spiritually “enlightened” person who has a strong divine anointing as a prophet, apostle, bishop and elder.

These leaders may be either the founders themselves or their representatives. In all cases, the self-proclaimed leaders are generally young and come from various socio-economic backgrounds ranging from fairly well-to-do social backgrounds to the poorest strata. Some are educated (students, university teachers, civil servants, executives) while others are illiterate. They say they have the power to perform and distribute miracles: healing incurable diseases such as AIDS, marrying desperate singles, giving children to barren women and work to the unemployed.

According to their functioning, several revivalist churches constitute small and medium-sized enterprises or “stores for many of their promoters.” They have several activities (voluntary and/or remunerative) that keep idle youth busy to the point that their structures have often replaced a deficient state infrastructure.

3.2.2. Legal Frameworks and Norms

The majority of young people in this study identify either the non-application or the misinterpretation of existing laws, as well as discriminatory gender and social norms, as an obstacle to their schooling and professional integration.

Discriminatory Laws and Legal Frameworks

To address the issue of exclusion in decision-making described in [Section 3.1.3](#), youth participants first suggested that the Congolese State pass a law on the status of youth, which should establish quotas and policies that ensure young people are represented at all levels of decision making. Civil society organizations can also play an important role in promoting youth participation in public life, however. They can provide a direct route to state institutions at the national and provincial levels. Many youth who were once LUCHA activists are now employed by international institutions and national government institutions. This movement to public institutions may weaken civil society and citizen youth movements, however. Today, for example, LUCHA, FILIMBI, and other youth movements have less and less prominence.

Young members of the LGBTQI+ community denounced the misinterpretation of article 178 of the Congolese penal code. This article states that: *“Anyone who publicly offends morals by actions that offend modesty will be punished by a penal servitude of eight days to three years and a fine of twenty-five to one thousand zaires or one of these penalties only.”* LGBTQI+ youth have proposed that the constitutional court examine and rule on the constitutionality of this article with a view to its repeal because it is a source of arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, and discrimination against them. They also point out the existence of certain discriminatory practices and rules within certain institutions. For example, some banks prohibit access to management positions for the LGBTQI+ community under the pretext that some clients would refuse to frequent them.

Some researchers have also focused on discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation in law. Kisumbe (2010), for example, points to section 40(1) of the 2006 constitution. This section states that *“every person has the right to marry a person of his or her choice of the opposite sex and to have a family.”* Thus, there is no legal recognition of same-sex couples in the DRC. Moreover, article 20 of the law on the protection of children in the DRC formally prohibits the adoption of children by pedophiles,

homosexuals and the mentally unbalanced. This prohibition, along with the association with pedophiles and mentally ill people, speaks volumes about the Congolese legislator's consideration for LGBTQI+ people.

Young people living with disabilities noted that, while no discriminatory laws exist (towards them), the legal framework for the protection of their status and rights remains weak, leaving them exposed to a high risk of informal discrimination. However, it should be noted that such a non-discrimination law is in the process of being adopted. It has been adopted on second reading by the Senate and is awaiting promulgation by the Head of State. Indeed, the Congolese constitution stipulates that the elderly and the disabled are “*entitled to specific protection measures in relation to their physical, intellectual and moral needs*”. However, school, and other public infrastructures are often not adapted to the specific needs of young people with disabilities. Moreover, the “*State has the duty to promote the presence of persons with disabilities in national, provincial and local institutions.*” Despite this, persons with disabilities are still poorly represented in these institutions.

Norms and Stereotypes

In this study, the influence of gendered norms and stereotypes on youth from different identities and groups and their roles and rights in society arose again and again.

For young women, although the majority of respondents noted that there are virtually no laws that discriminate against women and girls in the DRC, certain societal and customary rules discriminate against young women. This results in harmful practices against women, particularly sexual exploitation and GBV, as well as to their education and employment. These harmful stereotypes for women were reported mainly by female sex workers and female youth who are not members of organizations. A society in which the majority of members believe that a woman's place is “in the kitchen” or that her role is limited to “motherhood and childcare” will have difficulty seeing women educate, work, and develop. The doctrines promoted by revivalist churches impose a set of social norms in which teenage girls and young women are easily classified as “bad girls.” Personal decisions which are judged to be against traditional mores work against young girls and start to earn them a bad reputation. This may be related to the way she dresses (for example, wearing clothes which are viewed as immodest), being seen with a boy, or simply expressing her views and opinions. These girls are often described as rude, disrespectful and promiscuous. They are believed, whether true or not, to be unproductive members of society who have paid sex with many men. If a girl has a child and becomes a “girl-mother,” or if she is known to have had an abortion (which is common in an environment where access to family planning and contraception is limited), then her negative reputation takes root. She is then stigmatized and excluded from certain social spaces.

Young women who get jobs are labeled as “pretentious” women who want to surpass men; or are perceived as women who got the job through sexual favor. Young people (in urban areas) also say that women are more likely to be sexually harassed when they try to complete their education or to gain access to positions of responsibility.

Men who do jobs that are perceived as women's jobs, such as hairdressing, are labeled as homosexual. As a result, young men prefer not to have a job rather than do jobs that are accessible to them if they are perceived as women's jobs. As a result, young men felt like they were not able to pursue their interest based on social stigma.

LBTQI+ youth and youth from ethnic minority groups, as described in [Section 3.1.4.](#) face widespread stereotypes and stigma that fuel violent acts against them and limit their education and employment.

Table 2: Overview of Male and Female Stereotypes

Group	Standards	
	What we expect	Consequences of not complying with the standards
Men	Family guarantor: provide for the family's needs Leader and protector Decision maker ("a man's decision is always good")	Judged irresponsible Viewed as a weak man, dominated by women ("The wife has already put the wardrobe on her husband's head"). This situation is often said when men and women help each other. Mockery from the community Loss of esteem from their children
Women	Procreating Educating her children "A woman should not sit in a group of men" Staying at home ("a wife should only work with her husband's permission") Doing household and domestic chores	Seen as a woman "not well" Discrimination and mockery by other women Categorized from "woman" to "man" Judged as woman disrespectful of her husband
Young women	Helping her mother with domestic and household tasks Studying Staying at home	Female employees are seen as too proud and tending to dominate their husbands, behaving like heads of household. This is why they have difficulty finding husbands because men think they are sleeping with their bosses.
Young men	Studying or working to help his family financially Doing the activities and work of a man	Accused of being homosexual Accused of being a thief Accused of being a "good-for-nothing"

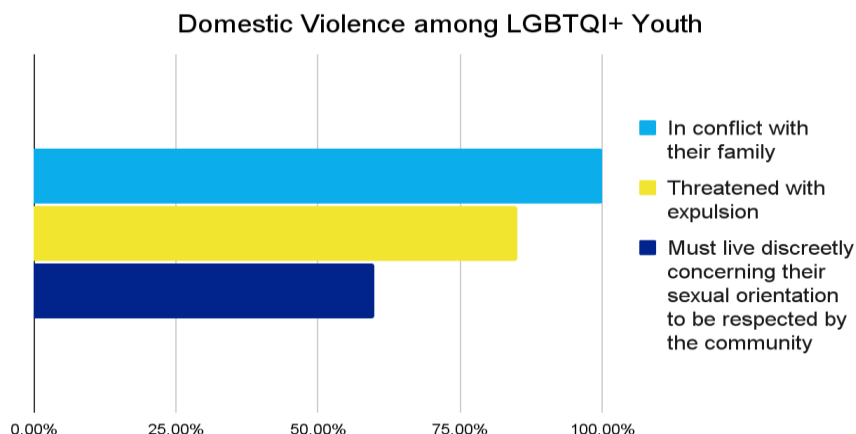
3.2.3 Youth and Gender-Based and Domestic Violence

Most of the young people interviewed mentioned **sexual violence, including rape**, as the most common form of GBV, including in schools: *"Today, in order for girls to get a good grade, assistants and sometimes teachers require them to have sex with them,"* said a young member of a youth organization. This violence can lead to early and unwanted pregnancies, and pregnant girls are often rejected by their families and cannot continue their schooling. **Young women** also mentioned sexual harassment by "rich" adults who take advantage of the girls' poverty or interest in finishing school. They also mentioned the problem of **assault and battery** against married women, often by their own spouses.

Other gender dynamics that particularly affected youth included **forced early marriages**, which affect both young women and men, especially the oldest male sibling, whose families demand that they marry early. Youth also mentioned **sexual harassment and touching**, especially in schools, workplaces, and online. Youth interviewed said most girls who find work are often hired for sex. Even after they are hired, bosses continue to demand sexual favors, a fact unanimously acknowledged by the youth researchers.

For the majority of young people, **society often condemns GBV victims instead of supporting them, which confirms the theory of double victimization**. This was reflected in interviews with Banyamulenge youth who cited victims (girls) as a cause of GBV due to their behaviors or the way they present themselves. Many young people also mentioned the role of family members in perpetuating this issue, as in their experience, most of the perpetrators of GBV are close relatives of the victims. Other perpetrators included security forces (police and military), members of armed groups (especially in rural areas), teachers, church pastors, classmates, employers, and homeless youth. Motivations for such violence include custom, revenge, and other personal motivations.

Chart 3. FGD Results Related to Questions on Domestic Violence



Levels of domestic violence are high among **LGBTQI+ youth**, which demotivates them to attend schools or universities. They are often threatened with expulsion within their family circles. **100%** of the LGBTQI+ youth surveyed are in conflict with their families, **85%** are threatened with being forced to leave the family home, and **60%** believe that they must live discreetly concerning their sexual orientation in order to be respected by the community.

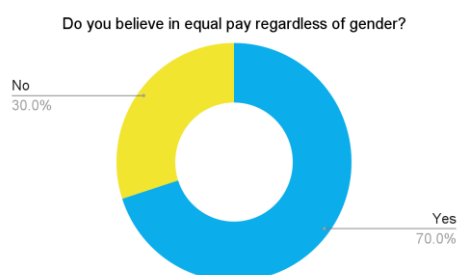
For **youth with disabilities**, many parents have difficulty communicating in sign language with their hearing-impaired children, which prevents these young people from accessing sex education and puts them at risk of early pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI).

The main solutions proposed by young people to fight against GBV are: empowering young people (to take care of themselves), including by strengthening youth leadership and supporting youth entrepreneurship, as well as reporting GBV by victims, and fighting against impunity for perpetrators.

Among young women in this study, 30% percent believe that the equality mentioned in the laws is only theoretical, since levels of GBV are high at home and in the workplace. Youth do not perceive that there are any common initiatives to fight against or reduce GBV in schools, at work or within the community. **Young people from the Banyamulenge minority**, however, say that their organization has a gender department whose responsibility is to fight against GBV. For young male members of these organizations, the only initiatives they know about come from foreign organizations such as international NGOs. For **female sex workers**, the government stifles youth initiatives, including the fight against GBV, and many youth movements are suppressed by the police. Among the international NGOs that have programs to fight against GBV, the ones most often mentioned are ABA, IMA World Health and Heal Africa, CARE International, Search for Common Ground and UN Women. ABA offers legal support to victims, while IMA and Heal Africa offer psychosocial support.

3.2.4. Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use of Young Men and Women

In seven out of ten focus groups, most participants believe that a woman should work and receive the same salary as a man with the same skills. This would help improve the family's overall financial situation. On the other hand, in three groups, namely, **young women who are not members of youth organizations**, **female sex workers**, and **young men who are not members of youth organizations**, many participants think that a woman should not work for pay. Wage-earning women are perceived as being too proud and tending to dominate their husbands, acting as heads of households. They have difficulty finding husbands, as men tend to think that they sleep with their bosses. **There is ambivalence in female sex workers' perspectives on employment. They aspire to work, but paradoxically, they**



adhere to these stereotypes.

Chart 4. FGD Results on Questions of Equal Pay

In terms of young women's and young men's roles, responsibilities, and time use, household chores are generally reserved for young women and girls. Only two out of ten groups mentioned fetching water as a task reserved for males. For some respondents, it is inconceivable in their cultures for young men and boys to do housework. Girls and young women wake up at 5:00 a.m. to begin household chores such as toweling or washing plates while boys stay in bed. However, the **Banyamulenge young men** in the village also wake up at 5:00 a.m. to graze their herds.

Boys and girls are usually in school from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. When the girls return from school, they usually continue with household chores such as washing clothes, shopping at the market, fetching wood (from the village) and cooking. During this time, the boys in the village will either be in the field or in the pasture grazing livestock. In the city, they will be busy either playing soccer, walking with their friends, watching movies or games on TV, or reviewing their school grades.

Female youth's days, both in the village and in the city, are overloaded with housework. They have little free time to devote to reviewing their lessons. Young men in rural areas are also busier than youth in urban areas with field work and animal husbandry, while young men in both urban and rural areas tend to have more time to focus on recreational activities or studying than their young women/girl counterparts.

Table 3: Perceived Roles of Men, Women, Female and Male Youth

	Men	Women	Female Youth	Male Youth
5am-8am	→ Rest and listen to news; → Give orders for the	→ Cleaning; → Going to the market; → Preparing the	→ Household chores.	→ Sports; → Drawing water; → For

	day; → Prepare for work.	children for the day.		Banyamulenge: watching over cattle in the fields.
8am-11am				→ Strolling around town;
11am-1pm	→ At work; → Unemployed; → To the bar or nightclub.	→ At the market; → Itinerant trading (i.e. small scale trade of fruit, vegetables, and other products);	→ School; → Market; → Home.	→ School; → Movies; → Card games; → Soccer; → Checkers.
1pm-3pm		→ At home taking care of the house.		→ In rural areas: working in the fields, grazing livestock.
3pm-6pm	→ End of day activities.			→ In an urban setting: homework or fun activities.
6pm and beyond	→ Sharing news of the day; → Returns home; → Drink alcohol.	→ Market and back home.	→ Market and back home.	→ Drink alcohol; → Late return home.

3.2.5. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

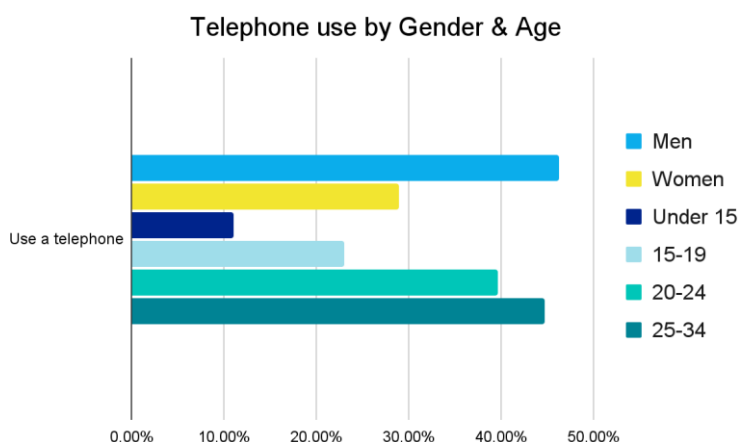
The DRC's cell phone penetration rate is estimated at 47.1%. With a population of more than 80 million, it is a low penetration rate: over 40 million Congolese do not have a cell phone. As far as mobile internet is concerned, the ICT sector regulation authority in the DRC (ARPTC) estimates the penetration rate at 24.6% in the first quarter of 2021: only one in four Congolese is connected to the internet.

According to the National Institute of Statistics, the proportion of the population that owns and uses a telephone is 46.3% and 29% for men and women in urban areas, respectively. This proportion increases with age: among the under-15, it was about 11%; 23% among the 15-19; 39.6% among the 20-24 and 44.7% among the 25-34. Access to ICT increases with age and differs by gender. Technology is an opportunity to communicate with and for youth.⁶

Access to ICT in Kinshasa is better than in other provinces and can be capitalized on by the youth in the project. 91% of households in Kinshasa have a telephone and 18% have a computer.

According to several young people, the statistics do not account for the situation of marginalized communities. In the same city-province, ten communes out of 27 were considered urban-rural or peri-urban; a map was drawn up by the young researchers regarding distance from the city center, difficulty in accessing basic infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions of households, and access to quality information.

Chart 5. Cell Phone Penetration Rate According to Gender and Age



In the ten communes cited (Selembao, Bumbu, Makala, Kinseso, Ngaba, Kimbaseke, Masina, Maluku, N'sele, Ndjili), the situation is different from the other communes of Kinshasa: access to technology is limited, and young girls and young people living with disabilities are the least served.

For other more modern municipalities, young people report that female youth are more connected to social networks (Facebook, WhatsApp and others) than male youth.

⁶ DRC and UNDP. Annuaire statistique de la RDC 2020. <https://www.cd.undp.org/dam/docs/UPS/UN>.

Table 4: Internet Usage Frequencies in Kinshasa and North Kivu

Internet Usage Frequencies ⁷			
Kinshasa			
	Already used the internet once	In the last 3 months	At least once a week for the past 3 months
Women	28.5%	16.7%	13.7%
Men	54.4%	47.4%	35.8%
North Kivu			
Women	15.7%	9.2%	7.5%
Men	24.5%	19.7%	11.7%

Many male youth use the internet for social networking as well as research and development for applications that they can turn into opportunities. However, this access can be a factor of exclusion for young people from vulnerable groups targeted by the Youth Excel project.

Capitalizing on ICT use can potentially expose project youth to cyberattacks and cyberbullying. Congolese laws on communication contain some unclear concepts. For example, Article 52 of the Framework Law 013/2002 on Telecommunications states that, “**the confidentiality of any email sent through telecommunications services is guaranteed by law. This confidentiality can only be violated by the public authority, when necessary for the public interest as described in the law.**” However, there is no explicit definition of what “public interest” actually means. This concept can be exploited and manipulated by authorities to violate freedom of expression and hinder communications undertaken by youth in the project, including topics mentioning sensitive issues (LGBTQI+ youth, young sex workers, etc).

3.3 Protection and Risk Analysis

This risk analysis is part of a protection assessment that informs protection and safeguarding measures and policies for Youth Excel and other youth programs in DRC. The analysis helps identify key protection needs and challenges for youth in North Kivu and Kinshasa in particular. It examines different categories of risk faced by youth including financial, physical, political, psychosocial, and sociocultural risks:

Financial risk: Youth organizations, internally, face a lack of self-financing capacity and low financial literacy. In addition to that, there is competition both within and between organizations over the allocation of positions of power (within organizations) and around status (between organizations). Certain needs of the project's target youth require the mobilization of funds (protection needs, needs of disabled youth, etc.).

⁷ INS, MICS Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2017-2018, survey results report. Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Physical risk: Risk of aggression against young people during program activities (abusive arrests), risk of moral violence, psychological violence against minority groups (LGBTQI+, disabled, etc.), risk of sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Political risk: Interdependent with physical risk. Politicians may believe that the project is about researching flaws and weaknesses or that the team is working with opponents, and this may create problems with threats from the government.

Psychosocial risks: Minority and underrepresented groups (**uneducated youth, youth with low access to ICT, LGBTQI+ youth, Kuluna or homeless youth, sex workers**) face difficulties engaging in activities that may reveal their identity. These risks are often associated with **socio-cultural** risk.

Based on these risks, resources for responding to protection incidents have been identified in each location in the Annex.

3.3.1. Contextual Risk Mapping

CATEGORY	IDENTIFIED RISKS	SOURCES	VULNERABLE GROUPS	MITIGATION MEASURES
Young women	GBV: sexual harassment (including online), rape, misogynistic language, physical violence, trauma, abduction/kidnapping.	Police, army, other youth, local authorities, militias.	Young female researchers, young women in rural areas, female sex workers	Create a protection fund to finance: - Research ethics pamphlets for distribution to all stakeholders. - Identify medical and social care centers. - Distribute communication tools to all partners for permanent communication. - Identify legal assistance services. - Open a toll-free number at Search for victims to call to report any risk.
Youth participating in community research or leadership activities	Theft of data or loss of survey tools, power asymmetry, sexual harassment, police threats and repression, kidnapping/kidnapping, climatic risks such as heavy rains during data collection, impassable roads, endemic diseases, etc.	Police, army, other young people, local authorities, militias, weather hazards.	Young boys for police harassment, young girls for sexual harassment, all for climate risks.	- Establish a back-up for the data. - Create a protection fund (see above). - Initiate contact with the media. - Distribute plastic boots and umbrellas during field missions, provide essential medical kits against malaria for example, use local means of transportation (bicycle, motorcycle).
LGBTQI+ youth	Punitive laws, stigmatization, arbitrary arrests, physical and/or	Courts, police, army, militias,	All LGBTQI+ youth. Lesbian and	- Public awareness of LGBTQI+ issues, human rights and tolerance, media

	verbal abuse, trauma, social exclusion, “corrective”/punitive rape for lesbians and transgender people, kidnapping and other acts of homophobia.	young boys, religious authorities, local authorities, family, society.	transgender for “corrective”/punitive rape.	programs on these topics, legal assistance, counseling centers. - Create a protection fund (see above).
Young people with disabilities	Reduced mobility, stigmatization and discrimination, trauma, abduction/kidnapping, difficulty accessing certain areas.	Other young people, family, classmates, colleagues, bosses, society.	Persons who are blind and deaf	Adaptation of school infrastructures to the particular needs of young people with disabilities, application of the law on the status of people living with disabilities, psycho-social care center.
Young men	Arbitrary arrests, police harassment, forced labor, murder, kidnapping, torture, physical violence, recruitment by armed groups.	Police, army, intelligence services, militias, youth.	Especially young people working in organizations.	Media contacts, legal assistance, contact with local authorities, psycho-medical center, sensitization of security forces to human rights, media and social network programs on human rights.
Members of youth organizations	Arbitrary arrests, police harassment, murder, kidnapping/kidnapping, torture, physical violence, rape, sexual harassment/attachment, suspension and closure of their organizations.	Police, army, intelligence services, militias, youth.	Especially human rights activists and advocates of democracy and good governance	Media contacts, legal assistance, psycho-medical center, sensitization of security forces on human rights, media and social network programs on human rights.
ICT	Social media and internet	Government	All young people	Sensitization of the authorities to respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms,

	shutdown			the right to peaceful demonstration and freedom of expression
Youth-led partners	Weak budget management capacity on the part of partners Corruption and misappropriation of funds Insufficient funds to support implementation research	Partners Partners Partners, landlords	ICONS (Issue-based Collaborative Networks). ICONS Partners	Capacity building in budget management. Compliance with Search or IREX financial procedures. Encourage partners to design affordable projects.

3.3.2. Project Risk analysis

Risk	Probability	Vulnerability factors increasing the impact of the risk	Existing capacities	Required capabilities
The difficulty of identifying LGBTQI+ youth for activities, as most do not want the community to know their identity. Psychosocial risks	High	Lack of confidence, fear of assuming one's sexual orientation in the face of Congolese cultural constraints, fear of judgement from friends and family	In this case, they often opt for camouflage, while making an effort to stifle this personality Work with organizations already working with LGBTQI+ youth to reach out and engage peers.	Their acceptance is not easy, it requires several training sessions on human rights, inclusion, stereotypes, etc. Code of ethics that sets out acceptable behavior among participants. An integrated program for capacity building of members; awareness raising for their integration in the community.

By also working with LGBTQI+ people , the community may view the project as one that aims to encourage homosexuality. Particularly in Kinshasa, parents and churches may prohibit youth from participating in the research and/or block project activities. Psychosocial risks - Socio-cultural risks	Very high	The LGBTQI+ community is misjudged within the community. Many parents do not accept their children to be around homosexuals and churches teach that it is evil. If the program is judged by the community as one that promotes LGBTQI+ there will be more reluctance for youth to get involved	No existing capacity	Use discretion in visibility and communications when activities directly involve the LGBTQI+ community or when the issue touches sensitive environments.
Power asymmetry between participating youth due to educational differences and identity. Psychosocial risks	High	Young people do not have the same capacity to conduct research, which can create divisions among them	The workshops will focus on training and capacity building for all youth	Adopt a flexible training approach adapted to the needs of different youth
In Kinshasa, homeless youth, Kuluna (youths living in the streets) and young sex workers do not accept to participate in the research. Many of them have participated in crimes and fear that the research is a disguised attempt to incriminate them. Psychosocial risks	High	Many youth living on the street are often accused of theft and fights and they do not trust easily. The lack of visibility on the part of the teams can prevent them from participating (service card, T-Shirt, etc...)	There is already support between pairs, young people living in the same situations protect themselves	Create collaboration between all youth without distinction in order to strengthen youth cohesion. Giving more consideration to marginalized youth

<p>The support of travel of young people with reduced mobility for their travel during the activities; Difficulty in involving deaf and visually impaired participants during training activities due to the requirement to pay the interpreter Financial risk - Physical risk</p>	High	<p>Lack of financial resources for youth-led organizations. Some young people are disabled and their participation requires an assumption of responsibility, for deaf people, it will always be necessary to pay for an interpreter</p>	<p>Some legally registered youth-led organizations may receive funds to conduct projects and programs</p>	<p>Assist with grant proposals and management Strengthen their skills and mobilize resources and financial education Strengthen volunteerism, Explore partnership with deaf mute organizations. Commit to hiring appropriate translators whenever necessary</p>
<p>Difficulty in bringing adults together with youth Psychosocial and socio-cultural risks</p>	High	<p>Most adults are hesitant to participate in face-to-face encounters with youth whom they describe as less-educated troublemakers</p>	<p>Involve key players/adults at ICON</p>	<p>Mapping influential adults to be allies for youth</p>
<p>Politicians may believe that the project is about researching flaws and weaknesses or that the team is working with opponents and this may create problems of threats from the government Political risk</p>	Medium	<p>Each government seeks to protect itself from criticism, as research on youth issues, employment, education is the domain of the state, they can block research at the risk that young people do not criticize the government's actions</p>	<p>Several organizations work with U.S. government funds and there is trust and cooperation between the government and NGO partners</p>	<p>Organize information activities with the various authorities Train youth in collaborative advocacy and conflict-sensitive communication to avoid undermining the interests of politicians and authorities in order to avoid adversarial discourse.</p>
<p>Youth aggression and harassment among peers during activities Physical risk</p>	Medium	<p>LGBTQI+ youth inclusion that the law and social norms do not encourage</p>	<p>Youth and youth-serving organizations</p>	<p>A protection mechanism should be put in place by the program (early warning management mechanism - training in communication and referral of abuse</p>

				<p>cases)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify medical and social care centers, - distribute communication tools to all partners for permanent communication, -identify legal aid services.
<p>Moral violence; psychological violence; sexual violence; sexual harassment. The risk of being kidnapped during the different trips</p> <p>Physical risk</p>	Medium	<p>The young researchers will need to collect everyone's opinions, conduct individual interviews with adults who may be abusing them, survivors of rape may not be able to report, and the difficulty of finding safe transportation.</p>	<p>The police receive cases of rape that are reported by the victims</p>	<p>An early warning management mechanism</p> <p>Training in communication and referral of abuse cases, a toll-free number is also needed; anonymity of whistleblowers and restorative justice</p> <p>Recruitment of psychologists on the protection fund to strengthen mental health and support young researchers victims of violence.</p>
<p>Assault and arbitrary or targeted arrests of youth (especially LGBTQI+ youth, homeless youth), police harassment, murder, kidnapping/kidnapping, torture, physical violence, rape, sexual harassment/abuse, suspension and closure of their organizations.</p> <p>Law enforcement and intelligence officers are more</p>	Medium	<p>Youth associations in North Kivu are very divided, as power is monopolized by the same leaders.</p> <p>The organization of focus groups, the inclusion of LGBTQI+ people that the law and social norms do not encourage. Include youth living on the street in the discussions often referred to as</p>	<p>Media contacts, legal assistance, psycho-medical center, sensitization of security forces on human rights, media and social network programs on human rights.</p> <p>Police and program team offices, youth and youth-serving</p>	<p>A protection mechanism shall be put in place by the program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify medical and social care centers, - distribute communication tools to all partners for permanent communication, -identify legal aid services. -early warning management mechanism - training in communication and referral of abuse cases <p>Preparatory meetings with community leaders, authorities, and relevant</p>

sensitive in terms of activities involving youth, authorities are afraid that youth will expose their weakness during searches Physical risk - Political risk		Kuluna or thieves in Kinshasa.	organizations in Kinshasa.	stakeholders at the start of the Youth Excel activity in each context to ensure buy-in and manage expectations. Training youth to develop advocacy products tailored to a variety of different audiences, training in conflict-sensitive communication; to communicate needs more effectively without undermining the interests of authorities.
Lack of financial support for youth-led and youth-serving organizations Financial risk	High	To conduct research, youth-led organizations will need to train their teams	Some legally registered youth-led organizations may receive funds to conduct projects and programs	To empower youth, not only do we need to provide grants to youth-led organizations for protection, but we also need to strengthen their skills and resource mobilization and financial education.
Too many expectations from the youth partner organizations in the project; Participants in the collaborative network may believe that the project will fund their projects and activities Financial risk	Medium	Youth organizations are not able to fund their activities, poor understanding of the roles of youth organizations in the ICON network	The collaboration starts with the clarification of the clauses and the parties decide to work together	Share the different roles and responsibilities of the parties to the ICON collaborative network and the benefits and risks of participation
Corruption and misappropriation of funds Financial risk	Medium	Weak budget management capacity on the part of partners. Insufficient funds to support implementation research	Financial tracking system by Search	-Capacity building in budget management. -Compliance with Search or IREX financial procedures. -Encourage partners to design

				affordable projects
<p>Loss of data, refusal to be photographed or recorded, poor access to digital technologies blocked the access of a large group of young people (no stable power in some municipalities, internet is expensive, some young people do not have a phone adapted to the new technology, others do not know how to use it)</p> <p>Psychosocial risks</p>	Low	<p>Because of the risk of appearing, of being heard, marginalized people are not open to the general public and want their identity to be protected; inflated internet prices, lack of information</p>	<p>Research ethics require informed consent from the individual</p>	<p>The protection policy must remain flexible</p>
<p>Risk of cyber-harassment/ cyber-attack</p> <p>Psychosocial risks Political risk</p>	High	<p>Legal framework/environment unfavorable⁸ to freedom of expression and communications undertaken by youth in the project, including topics mentioning sensitive subjects (LGBTQI+ youth, young sex workers, etc.)</p>	N/A	<p>Capacity building in cyber security Train youth in collaborative advocacy and conflict-sensitive communication to avoid undermining the interests of politicians.</p>

⁸ Article 52 of the Telecommunications Framework Law 013/2002 states that "the confidentiality of any email sent through telecommunications services is guaranteed by law. This confidentiality can only be violated by the public authority, when necessary for the public interest as described in the law". However, there is no explicit definition of what "public interest" actually means.

3.3.3. Top Project and Contextual Risks

Risk categories	Main risks	Sources	Who will face these risks
LGBTQI+ youth, sex workers, marginalized ethnic groups, and homeless youth involved in the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community adults and “power-hungry” youth leaders feel threatened by the participation and opportunity of marginalized youth Young sex workers stigmatized by the same young people with whom they will collaborate in this project The different levels of education among participants further exacerbate stereotypes and divisions among youth Youth hope to solve their socio-economic problems by participating in projects 	<p>The prejudices of adults and others in power</p> <p>Other youth participants</p> <p>Different levels of education</p> <p>Misunderstanding of the project</p>	<p>Project will expose LGBTQI+ people to other youth - risk of stigmatization</p> <p>Other youth in the community who are not directly involved will think that ICON youth are getting a lot of money from the project, especially the homeless, and will be at risk of violence.</p> <p>The difference in ability and mobility of young people who have not had a complete education</p>
Program Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program will bring marginalized youth to the forefront and attract the attention of other community members The young people will receive quite substantial funds, which may divert their involvement in this project The research conducted may raise sensitive issues for those in power Politicians may believe that the project is about researching their flaws and weaknesses or that the team is working with opponents 	<p>Policies - the community</p> <p>ICON members</p> <p>National Intelligence Agency (ANR)</p>	<p>Homeless youth will have to manage a fairly large sum of money for research, risking being attacked by other youth</p> <p>Youth participants in research will be viewed negatively by those in power who have a vested interest in excluding youth from decisions that affect them</p> <p>The NRA's agents circulate everywhere for governmental control; it is an intelligence service on activities that may undermine governance,</p>

4. Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations for Donors and International NGOs

- **Partner with structures that work in youth development.** Donors and international NGOs should strive to partner with existing youth and youth-serving structures that are dedicated to education, employment, development, and peacebuilding. These partnerships should be meaningful and start as early as possible in the project cycle. Donors and international NGOs should also establish a framework for coordinating existing initiatives to avoid duplication and foster knowledge sharing and synergies.
- **Meaningfully engage a diversity of youth and adult influencers from design to implementation.** Donors and international NGOs should engage a diversity of key youth actors in the design of any youth development program. Actors who are seen as a source of legitimate and/or moral authority should also be included, so that programs can drive positive and sustainable youth engagement more effectively by ensuring youth needs and perspectives are better considered in decision-making. In these efforts, donors and international NGOs should integrate youth who are not members of established organizations and marginalized youth who are not part of any formalized structures into development programs.
- **Empower and connect diverse youth to foster collaborative leadership and strengthen cohesion.** Programs should focus on strengthening collaborative leadership among diverse youth, especially marginalized youth, and equip them with critical communication and leadership skills that will facilitate their meaningful inclusion. The capabilities of youth participating in decision-making processes should be strengthened so that they can meaningfully advance inclusion and governance. These efforts should be designed in a way that encourages youth to share their knowledge and engage with all their peers to ensure effective participation of youth with different identities and backgrounds.
- **Ensure that programming facilitates meaningful interactions between diverse youth and decision-makers.** Meaningful interactions between networks of youth and key decision makers within government and non-state organizations (NGOs, UN agencies, MONUSCO, etc.) will ensure that youth have increased access to information and connections. Establishing a framework for dialogue and consultation between young people excluded from decision-making and state actors would enable the two groups to strengthen their collaboration and empathy. Exchanges would focus both on issues faced by young people and on the obstacles faced by institutions in improving governance and participation.
- **Cultivating intergenerational dialogue.** The divergent perceptions of youth and adults towards each other leads to a divergent understanding of issues and radically different responses to address these issues. Program interventions should take these intergenerational dynamics into account and cultivate meaningful intergenerational dialogue that facilitates a shared understanding and diagnosis of problems so that joint actions can be taken that build trust and strengthen relationships. Donors and international NGOs should especially support jointly designed and initiated programs between youth and adult decision-makers for positive youth development, as

positive youth programming can only be meaningfully advanced if youth and adults (especially adult decision-makers) work collaboratively to find solutions to specific youth problems.

- **Integrate community-based trauma healing programs.** The effects of trauma were raised repeatedly by participants in the research study. Given the extent of violence and trauma experienced by populations in general, and marginalized youth especially, program interventions to strengthen social cohesion and youth empowerment should integrate psychosocial support trauma healing, as both program stakeholders and participants are likely to have experienced or suffer from trauma.
- **Promote youth entrepreneurship and business skills.** Interventions should include vocational and qualification training, as well as additional business management and entrepreneurship skills, which can encourage youth to think more creatively about identifying long-term livelihood opportunities, as well as build their self-esteem. This support should be tailored, as detailed below.
- **Provide support to vocational training, ICT training, and small scale entrepreneurship tailored to the specific needs of various marginalized youth groups.** This support should focus on the trades that are the most popular among marginalized youth, and should be tailored to their needs, which differ from a group to another, as highlighted by our research and the preferences and needs that youth expressed. For young people with disabilities, as well as young single mothers, priority should be given to training in sewing and ICT. Additional efforts should be made to support cross-border businesses, as many youth with disabilities work in this sector either as small-scale cross-border traders or carriers. For LGBTQI+ youth, initiatives should focus on supporting training in hairdressing, aesthetics, ICT, and small scale businesses. For homeless youth, trades they are interested in include car driving and mechanics, and masonry. For homeless youth, to ensure its success, vocational training should be accompanied by a public health approach, focused on addressing drug addiction. This approach should engage relatives, drug addiction specialists, psychologists, and social workers to ensure holistic health care. For young ex-combatants, priority goes to training in carpentry and ICT and to small-scale businesses, as many of them expressed their desire to start their own businesses.
- **Encourage youth-initiated income-generating activities.** This support will contribute to strengthening youth economic and financial autonomy and their self-esteem, fostering their independence and strengthening their resilience to manipulation. Advocacy initiatives should accompany this effort and focus on the adoption and improvement of policies and legislation aimed at creating small-scale enterprises or other forms of income generating activities. Avenues for improvement could include:
 - Strengthening training centers dedicated to youth economic and financial empowerment, and ensure they support youth entrepreneurship.
 - Facilitating access to credit, including for youth working in the informal sector, to help youth strengthen their small businesses.
- **Initiate digital capacity building programs tailored to the needs of marginalized youth.** These programs should be especially tailored to young women to bridge the gender digital divide,

as well to youth living with disabilities (visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing), as these technologies could facilitate their empowerment.

- **Deconstruct stereotypes of LGBTQI+ youth.** Donors and international NGOs should support initiatives that foster the acceptance and integration of LGBTQI+ youth by:
 - **Raising awareness about human rights for all, including LGBTQI+ youth** through mass media campaigns and outreach, mobilizing key influencers and highlighting role models from marginalized communities such as LGBTQI+ youth and supporting parents.
 - **Supporting intergenerational initiatives** that involve adult and parent champions to start building trust and acceptance across the community and when safe among families, so that an enabling environment for their empowerment supports lasting impact. These activities require careful and sensitive management to prevent any further harm to participating LGBTQI+ youth, considering that many LGBTQI+ youth face abuse and rejection from their families and society at large, and may face backlash and difficulties in employment and accessing basic services if their identities are revealed.
 - **Dedicating additional support to LGBTQI+ youth** by creating more formalized support and programs that leverage and strengthen existing informal initiatives. An integrated program of capacity building for LGBTQI+ youth, awareness raising for their integration in the community, dedicated support to their education and employment, and advocacy on legislation that would support the legitimization of their status.
 - **Destigmatizing and de-gendering professions** that are considered for a specific gender group through awareness raising campaigns including success stories, and testimonies of role models and youth who have transformed gender norms.
- **In North Kivu, initiatives to reintegrate ex-combatants into the community should go further to destigmatize ex-combatants and restore trust between them and communities.** In addition to “traditional” disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration approaches that provide economic and skill-building opportunities, support should be provided for trauma healing, substance abuse management, and conflict transformation skills. Donors and international NGOs should identify and further existing initiatives and support local associations and NGOs that work on addressing inter-community violence and fostering social cohesion, as well as on school retention, especially among children and youth from poor families, who have stopped attending school due to poverty, and among youth who join armed groups.
- **Especially for underrepresented and marginalized youth identities, ensure meaningful community engagement in youth programs.** Stigmatization and discrimination is a main inhibiting factor for these groups of youth, and the support of family, friends, and other community members can make a life-changing difference for their development and sense of fulfillment. Youth programs should work closely and continuously with families, caregivers, and the communities in which these young people live to ensure a supportive, enabling environment for their participation and growth.

4. 2 Recommendations for the Government of the DRC (GDRC)

- **Enact or amend laws to institutionalize youth inclusion, including for marginalized youth.**

The GDRC should accelerate the promulgation of the law on the status of persons with disabilities, which is waiting to be publicly announced by the Head of State after its adoption in second reading by the Senate. This law should establish a quota for the representation of people with disabilities in the public service. The law on political parties should also define a clear quota for inclusion of people with disabilities, women, and youth. Similarly, the electoral law should include provisions that guarantee quotas for the representation of youth, women, and people with disabilities. The adoption of a law on overall youth participation could further guarantee the institutionalization of youth participation and could enshrine youth inclusion by setting a minimum quota for the representation of youth in decision-making bodies.

- **Enact laws that provide a relevant framework to support training and employment of young people, as well as laws that support the entrepreneurship of youth (e.g. tax benefits).** The government should apply these laws under the control of parliamentarians. Local authorities and traditional chiefs should ensure that these laws are properly implemented at the local level. Development partners must provide the necessary resources to support the implementation of these laws. These measures should be accompanied by an awareness-raising campaign to combat discrimination and harmful practices against youth.
- **Create a dedicated fund to finance youth initiatives.** These funds and initiatives must be given tax benefits, such as lower tax rates, to ensure their success and sustainability.
- **Establish a youth-only employment system** in both public and private sectors based on the United Nations Young Professional Officers model.
- **Strengthen inclusion of the educational system** so it considers the needs of people living with disabilities through inclusive education and is adapted to the needs of the labor market. Relevant Congolese authorities within the education sector should work with private and public sector actors to identify labor needs and orient training to the needs of the labor market.

Annexes

Resource Mapping for North Kivu

RESOURCES	SERVICES	DESCRIPTION	CONTACTS
Medical centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of pp kits to victims of GBV - Medical care for victims of GBV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HGR/CBCA Virunga • CS.Majengo • Heal Africa • Murara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0998721633 • 0991487655
Psychosocial Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of psychiatric drugs - Psychological care/ psychosocial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HGR/CBCA Virunga • CHNP mental health • Heal Africa • Murara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0991366810 • 0993121530
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFJ • PSPF (police) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0991086568 • 0975750444 (Commissioner Saleh)
Human rights NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitation in digital privacy. - Advocacy on digital issues - Human rights - Monitoring of HR violations - Advocacy - Human Rights Education - Awareness raising, training and information of young people on human rights - Legal support in case of a lawsuit or complaint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blogoma • Rudi International • Congo Peace Network • Congo Men's Network • UJADP asbl • GEP • JUDCM • AJED • UJD • FON-RDC/DDH • GLOMEEC • ABA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0979045699 • 0990961665 • 097096888 • 997173525 • 999323979 • 993994845 • 970608423 • 991643873 • 995164295 • 978244147
Media	Denunciation of the risks of which the young people would be victims. Raising awareness among the general public	RTNC-GOMA MISHAPI VOICE TV HOPE CHANNEL TV EMMANUEL TV POLE FM RTCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0998610977 • 0979327043 • 0991265745 • 0995673357 • 0997533284 • 0994013064

		BLESSING FM	• 0992443169
		RADIO OKAPI GOMA	• 0998508389
		VIRUNGA BUSINESS RADIO (VBR)	• 0971272458
		RADIO ALPHA OMEGA RAO FM	• 0977867463
		SHEKINAH FM	• 0993328743
		RADIO MARIA	• 0990775464
		RADIO SAUTI YA INJILI	• 0993448122
		RT Dove	• 0993709191
		WWW.GLOBALETUDIANT.NET	• 0974303438
		Le Renouveau.net	• 0998089258
		AGRIMINES.CD	• 0990882030
Community leaders, MPs, traditional leaders and local authorities	Denunciation and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honorable Patrick Munyomo Furuguta 	
Police	Reporting, investigation, securing	Provincial Justice Division	
Social assistance and emergency humanitarian aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of food and non-food items (PLWH, PLWH, Young Sinisters, raped women) - Apprenticeship of trades (Girls and Boys) - Sexual and social education, youth outreach and conflict resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic Church Protestant Church PAM Search Don Bosco Center 	

Resource Mapping for Kinshasa

- Search for Common Ground works to reduce sexual and gender-based violence in its programming and offers opportunities to denounce and refer cases of rape for free treatment in different hospitals in Kinshasa. These efforts are supported by a program implemented until 2023.
- Victims and witnesses of rape are urged to report crimes to the nearest police station and to bring the survivor as soon as possible, with consent, to the multisectoral integrated service center for physical, psychological and legal treatment.

As for the free care hospitals:

Hospital for the management of sexual abuse cases	Address
Kintambo General Referral Hospital	on OUA/Bangala crossing, flag 8
Ngaba mother and child center	on Avenue Kianza n°58, Commune de Ngaba, pediatric ward
Nd'jili General Referral Hospital	on avenue de l'hôpital n°1 Quartier 7, Commune de Nd'jili, Pavillon gynécologie
Saint Joseph Hospital	Lumumba Boulevard 15th residential street next to the Fikin on small boulevard limete
Marie-Antoinette Women's Center	Limit 13th Street Limit-industrial n°80 and 81

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