ANNEX 1:

INTRODUCING GIRL DISCUSSION GROUPS IN NORTH KIVU CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

This annex describes in greater detail than was done in the country case study the introduction of girls groups in North Kivu child friendly spaces, especially with regard to programmatic aspects. For more information on results and lessons learned, please refer to the country case study.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

Amongst the grave human rights violations in eastern DRC, almost all armed groups have used sexual violence against women and children as a weapon of war, largely facilitated by a *de facto* impunity. Since the beginning of the conflict, hundreds of thousands of women and girls have been raped. Half of the survivors are children. Sexual violence has been able to spread quickly because the social status and perceived value of women and girls is very low. Several organizations have denounced the situation as being a feminicide.

Since 2003, UNICEF has initiated, and progressively increased, its interventions for prevention and response to sexual violence. In terms of response, UNICEF provides through its partners psychosocial and health support. With regard to prevention, the organization has launched in collaboration with the movement V Day an international campaign called "Stop raping our greatest resource - Power to women and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

UNICEF's strategy for preventing sexual violence is based on three pillars: 1) Advocacy at all levels 2) Community sensitization, including community mechanisms to prevent sexual violence 3) Social empowerment, aimed at providing Congolese women and girls with spaces to express themselves, to share experiences, to reflect on their status and on the limitations that they are confronted within their every day life.



Girls and especially adolescents are particularly at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. Indeed, the increase of fighting and displacement has scaled up the threat to children of physical and mental harm. Of the IDP population in North Kivu, 50% are children¹.

In accordance with its core commitments² UNICEF has established through its partners Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), adapting the model that was first established in post tsunami affected areas in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Child friendly spaces (CFS) are meant to provide protection for internally displaced children living in spontaneous or assisted and managed camps. This is done through the provision of protective areas, informal educational activities and organized recreational

activities. CFS intend to improve psychosocial well-being of children, female and male youth through psychosocial support activities as well as to prevent separation of children from their families.

Child friendly spaces operate in two different types of IDP camps. Some sites are managed under the UNHCR-coordinated 'CCCM' (Camp Coordination and Camp Management) working group and are referred to

¹ Estimated ratio based upon RRM registration of IDPs 2006 to 2007

² UNICEF, Core commitments for children in emergencies, Child protection, § 8.

as 'official' camps. Other collective self-settled sites are referred to as the 'spontaneous sites' - areas where IDPs have set themselves up with little organized management or structure and where different UN and NGO service providers have initiated different activities³.

Since October 2007, Italian NGO, AVSI has worked with UNICEF as implementing partner for the CFS's in 12 camps/sites reaching almost 37,000 children in 2008. World Vision has been the partner for another 12 CFS in IDP camps/sites, reaching around 30,000 children. Both partners are operating in North Kivu.

PROGRAMMATIC GAP ANALYSIS:

UNICEF DRC Protection section was concerned about the fact that the response provided by CFS was not based on an understanding or analysis of the specific protection needs of girls and boys. UNICEF and its CFS implementing partners World Vision and AVSI had not included in their strategies specific activities to better address differences in girls' and boys' needs and interests. Neither had they engaged in a process likely to enable a more systematic detection and orientation of protection issues that might be identified during CFS activities such as sexual violence. Furthermore, empirical observation had suggested that although teenage girls had been identified as a particularly vulnerable group, they were not readily participating in CFS activities. Lack of livelihoods opportunities had pushed many adolescent girls to engage in survival sex as the only way to support themselves and their families. Similarly, as financial resources were depleted, staff observed that girls were married off at increasingly younger ages.

The Gender in Emergencies Project Manager (GM) was requested to analyze the situation in the field and to formulate practical recommendations to be implemented. The assessment was conducted in August 2008 in Kibumba site and Kibati camp, targeting 65 adolescents, half of whom were boys. Discussion focused on the sex-specific threats of violence teenagers encounter and the link between gendered division of labor and exposure to violence⁴. Participation in CFS activities and expectations on what such a space could provide were also part of the discussion. Analysis revealed that several factors were hampering the CFS program from fully addressing the different needs and priorities of girls and boys:

1. While teenage girls and boys experience different protection threats....

If some risks affect the entire youth, others are sex-specific. Indeed, socially constructed identities imply that girls and boys are expected to play specific roles in society. It does not allow them to enjoy the same rights and exposes them to gender specific violence. While adolescent boys in the camps are most at risk of forced recruitment by armed groups, girls expose themselves daily to dangers by undertaking domestic and income generating tasks essential to family survival, such as collecting wood, fetching water, begging or searching for food.



Girl mapping areas in the camp presenting risks of violence. Kibumba

Gender based discrimination makes girls the prey of masculine violence while undertaking these activities (kidnapping by militaries, rape when going to the toilets or at night in the tents). Considered physically stronger, boys are subject to forced portage by armed groups.

The concern that dominates discussing with girls on the activities and locations that put them at risk is how deeply powerless they feel. All possible strategies to decrease the risks (undertaking activities in girl

³ In Eastern Congo, 10% of IDPs live in official camps against 20% in spontaneous sites and 70% with host families

⁴ Participatory assessment methodology was based on a free adaptation of the WFP's "Access to, and Control of Resources - Picture Cards / Matrix" tool

only or mixed groups, sensitizing parents on the risks taken) would not be efficient in their opinion. This can probably be explained by the fact that they have witnessed atrocities or have been direct victims.⁵

The boys who were surveyed do not seem as victimized as their female counterparts but have also little hope of being able to decrease risks. They are not aware of the daily dangers girls are facing and show very little empathy towards them. The adolescent boys of Kibati do not describe rape as a risk for girls but a risk for the rapist who might be caught by the police.

2.Child friendly spaces provide a gender blind protection response

- At a structural level, partner organizations had mainly recruited male staff whose mindsets perpetuated discrimination. In December 2008, out of 47 partner staff working in the CFS, AVSI had hired 7 women; World Vision, 8. This imbalance was due to a lack of awareness about the importance of having a gender-balanced team, UNICEF's requirement to recruit candidates with university degrees, and to the difficulties of accessing remote sites and the challenges this posed to recruitment of women facilitators. Such considerations should not have impacted on the hiring of female facilitators among the IDPs who are directly recruited in the camps. No diploma is requested for this category of personel. Yet, due to a lack of awareness about the importance of having a gender balanced team, the majority of facilitators were again IDP men. The fact that teams were mainly men has potentially prevented girls who have been survivors of gender based violence from seeking assistance.
- Lack of analysis of the specific protection risks that girls and boys of different age groups face. Lack of genuine understanding of how displacement and life in camps differently affects girls and boys of different ages did not allow the CFS partners to design and implement activities that would respond to specific gendered needs. CFS' protection mandate was in fact compromised by the fact that partners had a blanket approach that gave almost no attention to the specific needs and interests of girls and boys depending on their age.
- Inability to provide appropriate and meaningful answers to adolescent girls and boys concerns. As a result of lack of gender and age related analysis, CFS could not provide suitable answers to youth priorities. Existing activities were sometimes ill-suited to their

situation.

• To address lack of trust between teenage girls and boys, facilitators prioritized gender-mixed activities further exposing girls to sexual harassment. AVSI and World Vision had noticed that adolescent girls and boys have a hard time doing activities together since trust, in such a violent environment, is often lacking. Yet, no preliminary analysis had been done to explain the difficulties

encountered. Gender-mixed recreational activities had often been perceived as a positive way to reinforce peaceful relationships



Boy, Kibumba site

between girls and boys, but were of limited success as the games do not allow improve communication between adolescents since they do not convey verbal exchange. They can also put girls at risk of sexual harassment. Indeed, staff and girls had complained about the fact that boys took advantage of these recreational times to touch their female counterparts.

Weak participation of children in designing and planning activities, inadvertently contributing to
protection threats. The fact that activities had been set without genuine consultation of children had
further negatively impacted on girls' participation. As an example, summer literacy classes in Kibati camp
attracted 23 pupils out of whom only 3 were girls. The latter explain that class schedule, at a time of a

⁵ When a group of girls went back to its village of origin to get food, their friend got buried up to the neck by rebels. Another girl was stabbed, raped and killed. A third one, aged 12, was gang raped by adolescent IDP boys on several occasions and feared being pregnant.

day when most IDPs had left the camp, had put them at risk of physical violence on their way to the class and had subsequently discouraged them from attending.

• Main focus on recreational and occupational activities, not providing a safe time and space where girls and boys can exchange on what truly matters to them. Partners had found it challenging attracting and retaining older girls since they are often engaged in livelihood and domestic activities. Attempts were made to conduct specific activities for adolescent girls with the setting up of knitting classes. While this type of activity reinforces stereotypes, it has nevertheless proved to be somehow popular. But it was not enough to attract female youth. Furthermore, in the absence of a safe forum where girls could openly express their views, needs and concerns, there was little opportunity for the CFS's to be used for the detection of situations of sexual violence. When girls were asked by GM: "What would a child friendly space look like to be girl friendly?", adolescents unanimously requested the setting of girls only groups providing them a safe psychological space for themselves.



Girl participating in CFS recreational activities, Kibumba

INTERVENTION:

Solid local evidence on the ill-suited response of CFS to girls' needs served to validate the orientation of the pilot project toward activities in this area. As a coherent way of attracting and retaining adolescent girls in CFS and of improving the detection and orientation of sexual violence survivors, UNICEF and its partner AVSI decided to explore innovative catalytic ways of

conducting specific activities for girls enabling them to exchange among peers⁶. World Vision staff appeared less engaged in the pilot, accepting to take part in the initiative without fully appreciating the gender dimensions of

the program that were at stake.

The expected results of establishing the girls groups were to encourage girls' regular participation, to increase their knowledge on subjects that matter most to them as well as to allow an improved detection and orientation of sexual violence survivors. At a structural level, it was expected that the CFS partners would have a reinforced commitment and capacity to involve girls and boys in the choice of activities. The experience would then be captured and used in other child friendly spaces both in emergency and post emergency contexts.

The intervention that was developed was based on teenage girls' requests and input. Adolescent girls had expressed the desire to have dedicated times where they would feel comfortable getting together with each other and where they do not have to compete with boys. They wished for this to be done with a female facilitator, offering confidentiality, warmth and advice. They expressed desire to exchange about sexual violence and other concerns such as body hygiene, menstruation and relationships with boys.

Beyond the objective of offering a protective and meaningful environment and of detecting and orienting violence survivors, the setting up of girls groups was meant to answer to a fundamental right: Right to socialize and to have leisure time. Indeed, for displaced adolescent girls this need is of particular importance. They are kept busy working for their family, and that is why it is critical to protect their right to socialize, relax with friends and openly exchange on the subjects that matter at their age and in their peculiar situation.

Training of female facilitators and supervisors:

The organization of two days $\frac{1}{2}$ training by GM and UNICEF protection officer for all female national and international staff of *World Vision* and *AVSI* was organized in September prior to the launching of the groups. The objectives of the training were as follows:

⁶ Need was also identified to set discussion groups for teenage boys. Nevertheless, given time restriction, decision was made to only focus at first on girls as they were the most vulnerable group.

- 1) Enable staff to adopt a participatory approach in overall CFS programme (choice of activities, place, and time)⁷.
- 2) Enable staff to facilitate teenage girls discussion groups in a warm, confidential and participatory manner
- 3) Allow the detection and orientation of gender based violence survivors in a sensitive and confidential manner.

The topics discussed during the first day of the training involved a brief overview of gender inequalities



Teenage girl carrying her little brother, Kibumba

and of the results of the field analysis conducted in CFS, a sensitization to the differentiated needs and responsibilities of girls and boys affected by armed conflicts, a presentation of the obstacles to girls and women participation and the identification of positive ways to increase girls and boys involvement in CFS activities.

The second day was dedicated to how to set up the girls groups (participatory techniques, listening skills) and to the detection and orientation of sexual violence survivors (Myths and realities on sexual violence, types of violence, legal framework, deontological rules for the detection and orientation of survivors, existing specialized partners on the field).

Finally, a half day session was organized in one of the CFS to gain practice on participatory methodologies and to get familiar with participatory tools to be used in the groups. Unfortunately, this coincided with the worsening of the conflict and the exercise was cut short as the group was asked to evacuate.

Monitoring and evaluation of the initiative from distance:

Protection staff in Goma ensured that activities were implemented. A specific point about girls groups was systematically discussed during the monthly meetings that UNICEF staff organized with CFS partners. Yet, given the fact that measurable results had to be produced within a short time frame, most of the monitoring was done directly by the GM. Visits to the sites by UNICEF protection staff to directly

discuss with the girls would have been a useful additional source of information. But heavy workloads, security restrictions, combined with the fact that the GM was perceived as the main person in charge of monitoring, did not allow such visits. The protection unit's role was also to capitalize lessons learned based on GM observations in order to strengthen UNICEF overall CFS orientations, the GM role focused on technical support to partners as well as results based monitoring and evaluation. Facilitators were to set up one group in each of their site. It was decided that, to ensure quality communication, each group would include a maximum of 15 participants aged 12 to 18. Facilitators were to chose whether their groups would be "open" (allowing different girls to join the different sessions on the basis of "first come, first serve") or closed (with fixed participants). Generally, facilitators conducted an initial meeting to explain to adolescent girls the objectives of the group and to identify who would like to attend.

For each session, the facilitators were asked to fill in monitoring forms designed by GM. These forms included information about the number of attendants, their age, the regularity of their attendance, their active

Subjects discussed in girls groups 10

Reproductive health:

Menstruation/menstrual cycle (23), body hygiene (11), HIV AIDS (6), puberty (10), harmful traditional practices (2), pregnancy (1)

Relationships with boys: Sexual violence/how to say "no" (13), (early) sexuality (6), love relationships (8), early marriage (4)

Other: Participation of girls in CFS (4), Self esteem (2), Gendered task division (3)

participation and the subjects discussed. Questions on what girls had learned, liked the most, regretted and would like were included. These questions were important since they enabled the GM to have direct

⁷ Staff who was trained by GM is in charge of general CFS activities, additionally facilitating girls discussion groups.

⁸ In most cases, girls regret that such groups were not set earlier, that discussion was too short or that the group only gathers once per week

feed back from the participants at a time when visits to Goma were not allowed given the volatile security environment.

Part of the form was dedicated to the potential detection of sexual violence cases: How was the situation revealed? Was the survivor oriented to specialized partners and if not why was that so? Facilitators were also asked what difficulties they had encountered, what solutions they would suggest but also what they had learned thanks to the facilitation of such groups.

Two additional questions were included about the participation of girls and boys in overall CFS activities¹⁰. If facilitators filled the form on a regular basis, these additional questions often remained unfilled. The objective of partners increasing participation in CFS in general targeted a general shift in professional approaches without giving it a specific frame to apply the learning, as was the case with setting up the discussion groups.

Doing qualitative monitoring of the activities and providing technical guidance from distance, especially since travels to Goma were not allowed for certain periods of time, proved to be difficult. Weekly monitoring forms did not provide a satisfying level of information. Bi-monthly telephone conferences with each facilitator partly solved this difficulty. Also, identifying facilitation materials adapted to the context of IDP adolescent girls has revealed extremely challenging.

Implementation of girls groups in a highly insecure environment:

The groups were to be set up in mid September in 14 different CFS. This coincided with the worsening of the conflict in North Kivu. As a result, the partners' CFS activities operated intermittently due to the volatile situation and ongoing insecurity. In early November, all CFS activities were temporarily suspended. One IDP site where a girl group had been set up (Kibumba) was completely dismantled as IDP's fled to a new site closer to the provincial capital. During the escalation of conflict, seven CFS pavilions were entirely destroyed; one CFS pavilion was occupied by newly displaced families.

While the situation had stabilized slightly, by the end of 2008, the girls' groups functioned in 14 CFS that were not in the same original sites due to various disruptions and relocations of staff and IDPs.

Girls draw the domestic activities that put them most at risk of violence: Fetching firewood exposes them attacks by armed men, Kibumba

The protection section and partners had committed themselves to maintain the activity as a priority¹². They demonstrated a great ability to adapt the program to this volatile environment: Relocated staff set up new groups as soon as they arrived in new IDP sites, trying to track down displaced girls who had been part of the former group so as to integrate them in the new ones.

Overall, approximately 50 meetings were held from September to December, gathering over 440 teenage girls aged 12 to 18. When security allowed continuity, same participants were regularly attending. For the first time, girls had the opportunity to articulate gender issues that had remained invisible. While

⁹ Several of facilitators' suggestions proved useful: The setting of small pavilions for girls in order to address lack of privacy were made available. Also, attention was raised about the importance of providing female hygiene kits to adolescents. The protection section and GM will explore the feasibility of distributing such kits in all CFS in 2009.

 $^{^{10}}$ "Give an example or tell a story demonstrating that girls and boys have been associated to the choice of the latest activities done in CFS (Content, schedule, place) ", "Give an example or tell a story demonstrating that particular efforts have been made to involve girls"

 $^{^{}ar{1}1}$ Numbers in brackets relate to the number of times each matter was discussed. Several subjects can be talked about during each session

 $^{^{12}}$ World Vision was at first not really motivated to engage in the initiative, possibly because it was less interested in the implication of the results of the initial field analysis that had been done in AVSI's CFS. Also, there was no additional funding for the setting of girls groups. Thanks to actual implementation, facilitators and supervisor realized that the approach was important and showed genuine engagement at maintaining the activity.

facilitators had committed to organize one session per week, many took the initiative of creating 2 to 3 different groups in their site in order to juggle an increasing demand¹³. The increased work load of more groups did not disrupt fairly regular reporting of the activities to GM.

Partner	No of different participants	No of sites	No of meetings	No of cases of violence detected
AVSI	210	8	22	2
World	230	6	30	2
Vision				
Total	440	14	52	4

The following table provides the breakdown per partner of number of participants, number of sites involved, number of meetings and number of cases of violence detected by partner.

There was at first concern that, with the setting up of the girls groups, detection of

sexual violence incidents would be on the rise while field staff would not have the capacity to sensitively handle such cases. Experience proved that proper support was given in such situations¹⁴.

Also, there was an identified lack of privacy for programming given sensitive issues. The CFS pavilions do not provide confidentiality. That is why it has been proposed to build smaller structures only for use by the girl's groups.

WHAT HAS IT CHANGED ... OR NOT?

The initiative has genuinely responded to teenage girls needs. Girls have expressed great appreciation of the activity to GM when she visited in December the two groups that were set up in Kibati. The initiative helped consolidate mutual trust among peers and with facilitators. They have identified CFS as being a meaningful place that provides answers to their questions. As a result, more teenage girls come to the space on a regular basis, even during the days when no groups are scheduled.

Overall, within a short time frame, this initiative has provided answers to several challenges:

- It has enabled the CFS programmes to attract teenage girls who were not readily participating to CFS activities
- In a situation where there was before little space to talk and be heard, the groups have reinforced the CFS program's capacity to detect and orient sexual violence survivors
- It has given girls more knowledge and awareness about possible risks, allowing them to better protect themselves
- Through open dialogue, facilitators have discovered what the situation of teenage girls is and have gained a gender and age differentiated understanding of sinks and have needs and consisting of

What has CFS staff learned?

- "I am learning the way teenage girls think. I am just astonished how much they know, how relevant their analysis of the situation is and how capable they are in identifying solutions for themselves" Aimee, AVSI
- "I realized that, as a facilitator, I play a key role in providing information on matters that girls care most about. Gaining knowledge will help them to avoid problems" Claudine, World Vision
- "I was not aware that displaced girls were so burdened with domestic and income generating tasks" Pitchou, World Vision
- "Two weeks ago, a girl revealed to me that she had been raped. This was the first time for me to detect such a situation. Before, it would not have been possible. There was just no time for girls to share their problems." Odette, *World Vision*
- "As it is a discussion group, we have to accept what children say. We have to be on an equal footing" Aimee, AVSI
- "I was surprised to hear girls talk about traditional harmful practices. I warned them about the impact it could have on their health. They said they would not do that any longer" Odette, *World Vision*
- "In the future, I will make sure I hire more female facilitators. Team mixing is important if we want to make sure we answer to girls needs" Caterina, CFS supervisor, AVSI

understanding of girls and boys needs and capacities. Children are no longer seen as a homogeneous group.

- Facilitation of groups has helped partner staff become familiar with more gender participative /people's centered programme design

¹³ AVSI reports that, while only 15 girls at a time were accepted in the group, frequently an other 100 would surround the pavilion so as to listen to the discussion

¹⁴ From September to December, 4 cases of sexual violence were detected. Two girls accepted to be oriented to appropriate services. In one situation, 2 participants explained to the group that soldiers had asked for sexual favors which they had refused. Still, soldiers came back a few days later. One girl was kidnapped; the second one was shot dead when she cried out loud for help. This situation shows the importance of supporting community protection mechanisms to prevent such tragedies.



Girl laughing, Rumangabo camp

- By demonstrating that effective protection programming cannot be gender blind, it has reinforced UNICEF consideration about the differentiated protection needs of girls and boys.

If providing a safe and meaningful place for displaced teenage girls whose lives are punctuated by daily challenges to survive is in itself a major achievement, it does not in its actual shape sufficiently address key practical and strategic needs. The group could for instance be a means to develop female self esteem and leadership both within the household and in the camps.

Girls and women will face gender based violence as long as socialization will grant more rights to their male counterparts, giving them the power to discriminate and abuse them. CFS could be a space where equal relationships and alternative

gender roles are systematically promoted from an early age on.

Girls repeated their need to live with dignity and have equal access to school through the provision of female hygiene material and hoped that this need could be addressed by the humanitarian community at large. Also, reinforced community protection mechanisms urgently need to be put in place.

In December, the protection unit decided to institutionalize the approach by making of teenage girls groups a standard part of CFS programs. This means that there will be weekly girls' discussion groups in all the CFS that have a female facilitator¹⁵. The initiative has been recognized throughout the organization as highly innovative¹⁶ and important. In 2009, the protection section is also hoping to introduce teenage boys' discussion groups.

Nevertheless, if this action has clearly demonstrated that effective protection programming cannot be gender blind; this has not yet filtered into the overall section plans. The 2009 orientation plan still adopts a relatively gender-blind approach to protection. Yet, gender analysis is key to develop a

Little boy, Kibati camp

relevant emergency response: How is the differentiated impact of the humanitarian crisis affecting the life of girls, boys and women?

 $^{^{15}}$ Around 50% of the CFS has at least one female staff in its team.

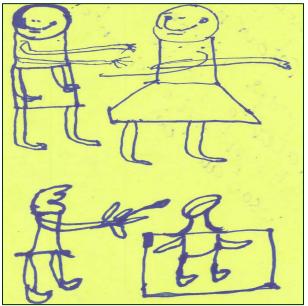
 $^{^{16}}$ The initiative was selected by the CO as one of the 2 most innovative actions and was presented in its 2008 annual report

PROTECTION THREATS FACED BY GIRLS AND BOYS IN SPONTANEOUS AND MANAGED CAMPS OF NORTH KIVU - DRC FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS IN KIBATI AND KIBUMBA CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES - AUGUST 2008

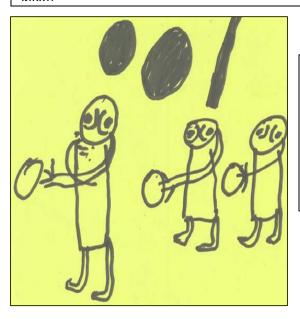
Gendered division of labor puts girls at risk of violence when undertaking domestic or survival chores:



▲ "We went with other girls to fetch wood in the forest. Rebels attacked us and caught one of the girls. They stabbed and raped her. She did not survive the aggression", explains an adolescent from Kibati



Due to food shortages, adolescents have to make day trips to their village of origin in order to fetch something to eat. Going back to war zones poses with tremendous risks of violence. Once, a little girl the group knew was caught by militias and buried up to the neck, say girls from the Kibati camp



■ "Sometimes, when we beg in the villages, men force us into their house and rape us" explains a young adolescent from Kibumba



Violence can be encountered when fetching or selling water

Girls are exposed to physical violence on their way to the market ▼



Because of the structural discrimination girls and women face, they are the prey of sexual violence during their daily routine:



◄Incidence of sexual violence happen when the regular army or rebels enter the camp

Boys from the camp or villagers sometimes enter girls' shelter at night while asleep to assault them ▶



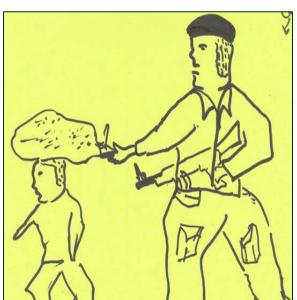


Going to the toilets at night can expose girls to sexual violence by foreign militias, explain girls from Kibati

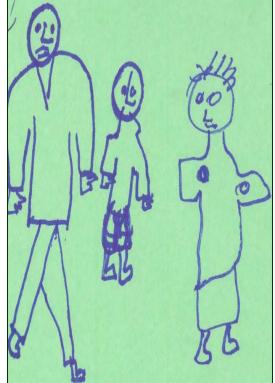
Perceived as physically strong, adolescent boys face other threats:



▲ Going back to the village of origin exposes boys to rebels' or militaries' violence and sometimes to forced recruitment

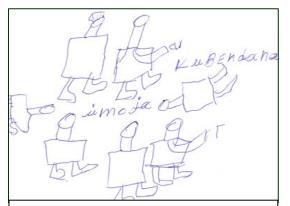


▲ Forced portage of goods or water by militaries and militias is often encountered

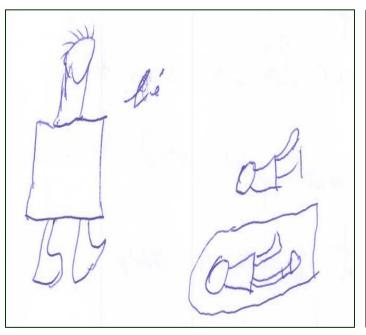


While girls are aware of sex-specific violence threats boys encounter, the latter ignorant about almost everything of the daily dangers girls are facing. Adolescent boys in Kibati were asked whether rape is a risk for girls, for boys or for both genders. To them, rape is not a risk for girls but solely for the rapist who might be caught by the police. This illustrates the very low empathy boys towards their female counterparts

WHAT DISCUSSION GROUPS HAVE BROUGHT IN THE OPINION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION IN KIBATI CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE- DECEMBER 2008



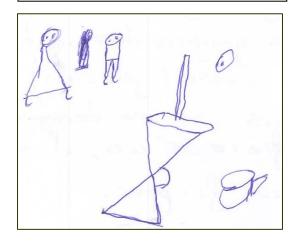
▲ "Imoja" means "unity" while "Kubendana" signifies "Let's love each other" in Swahili: For adolescents, the group is most of all a safe haven where girls can speak freely about what matters most to them and reinforce solidarity among peers.



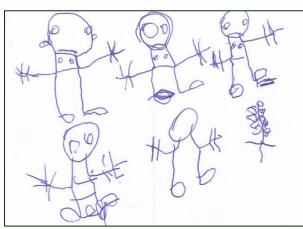
◆The girls' discussion groups facilitated by the trained NGO staff had only just begun when the Kibati group was put to the test.

Two girls who participate in the CFS girls group in one IDP camp were attacked by soldiers. As their attackers attempted to rape them, they sought to escape; one was killed on the spot and the other is in hiding. The girls group at the Child Friendly Space became the source of solace, protection, and mourning for the other girls who were deeply affected by the incident.

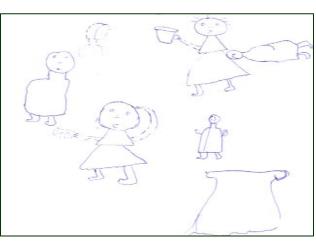
"We were scared, we were cold, and we were lost. We felt a lot better after the group discussion. Before, we would not have gone to CFS in such a moment. It would not have been appropriate to play when grieving. And why come to the CFS when there was no space for us to talk?" explains a participant.



▲ Thanks to the group, girls became aware of the unequal task division between girls and boys in undertaking domestic chores



▲ The girls groups have given the opportunity to discuss among peers about menstruations, body hygiene and relationships with boys



▲ Girls enjoy the group. But it does not provide answers to their material needs, such as menstruation pads or clothing

ANNEX 2: ADDRESSING FEMALE PERSONAL HYGIENE NEEDS

This annex describes in greater detail than was done in the country case study the pilot project of addressing female personal hygiene needs, especially with regard to programmatic aspects. For more information on results and lessons learned, please refer to the country case study.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

The WASH program's goal is to enhance child survival and development through the reduction of water related illnesses. The WASH section mainly works in development contexts, but it also responds to the urgent needs of conflict-affected Congolese. The emergency response consists of both temporary and medium to long-term solutions. Temporary solutions are implemented when displaced populations regroup in centralized IDP camps. These interventions generally consist of the construction of temporary water systems (treatment, bladders, tapstands, etc) and the construction of temporary latrines. When the IDPs relocate in host communities, UNICEF has the opportunity to make long term improvements to the water and sanitation situation of the host

All interventions, regardless of type, are accompanied by hygiene education, including the distribution of jerry cans when necessary.

As WASH cluster lead, UNICEF has taken an active role in organizing and coordinating the emergency response. UNICEF DRC's flagship rapid response programme, RRM (Rapid Response Mechanism) includes emergency WASH response as one of its three core programmatic components along with NFI and emergency education. Since the inception of the cluster mechanism in 2005,



Young woman, Vissiki Butembo

there are already functioning water and sanitation clusters in nine of the eleven

provinces in DRC and emergency pre-positioning of water and sanitation stock in the four most war-affected regions. The emergency supplies are organized and managed by UNICEF but can be loaned or given to cluster members as needed. Indeed, UNICEF is considered the provider of last resort for all water and sanitation emergencies.

The program is based on the concept that demand-driven, community supported interventions are the only sustainable approach to development in the water and sanitation sector. Yet, if this approach is applied in development programmes, it is often lacking in emergency contexts.

PROGRAMMATIC GAP ANALYSIS:

It was recognized throughout the WASH section that gender was not properly mainstreamed in its emergency work. The Eastern zone WASH specialist in Goma and national WASH chief of section were cognizant of the fact that little attention had been paid to the issue by the organization and implementing partners. Reasons for this were several: a male-dominated teams with received mind sets 17, high time constraints and little training or experience in social engineering, community consultation and consideration for protection issues. While the team was aware that the issue should be addressed, the understanding of why exactly it was important, how to analyze the situation of women and men and what it implied in terms of practical applications was lacking.

Former inputs on gender had not gone far in terms of helping the section set up or roll out models or in proposing practical ways to implement the advice provided, discouraging the section from addressing the issue. The fact that the proposed intervention was focused on adjusting solutions to local programmatic and humanitarian context was considered an opportunity.

 $^{^{17}}$ National chief of section considers that team mixing provides increased opportunities to consider women's and men's needs and constraints in our interventions. Because female staff is more aware of the physiological needs of women, there is potentially better consideration in programming. Eastern zone WASH specialist considers as for him that men can be just as gender sensitive as their female counterparts. Team mixing is not a core issue.

Little attention had been paid by the organization and the humanitarian community at large to respond to the practical needs of displaced girls and women of menstruating age. UNHCR developed a female hygiene kit based on the interview of 9 women but follow up monitoring revealed that beneficiaries felt some items were not appropriate. The WASH Section therefore identified this area as a major gap that could be addressed during the short time frame of the project. The Emergency section was also really interested in getting better understanding of the issue. While emergency section manages multi-million dollar programs of NFI distribution, the content of the kit was much more of a standard family kit. The emergency section highlighted this as a major gap and requested that the GM consider looking at personal hygiene kits to help CO better understand the issue. Indeed, in post-distribution monitoring, the need for hygiene kits had not been raised as a 'gap' in terms of content of the kits but this probably had more to do with how post-distribution was being conducted - and who was doing them.

While ultimately the work on studying this issue was placed with the WASH Section, the Emergency unit followed this closely as once the study revealed that indeed this was a major gap, it was clear that to be able to ramp up large-scale provision of a feminine hygiene kit, the large-scale distribution mechanisms (RRM and PEAR) managed by the emergency Unit would have to be mobilized.



An evaluation of girls and women's personal hygiene habits and needs was conducted in 4 camps in North Kivu in August and involved 149 women, 48% of who were teenage girls¹⁸. Topics focused on how they protect themselves during menstruation, on the availability of sanitary protection, on the location where dirty pads are being washed and dried, as well as on the personal, sanitary, social and economic implications menstruation has on their lives. Additional exchanges focused on the content of a potential hygiene kit as well as on the relevance of setting specific washing places for women inside the camp.

What are the personal hygiene habits of displaced girls and women and what are their needs for hygiene materials?

Women and girls usually use old skirts (traditional pagne) as sanitary pads that they cut in pieces. The cloth is held in place either by underwear or by a string tied around the waist. Pieces of cloth and underwear are often in short supply, not allowing sufficient hygiene. Often, 1 to 4 pieces of cloth are dedicated to this use which does not allow enough time for it to dry before using it again. Adolescents and pygmies all have insufficient sanitary protection. Lack of supply has forced women and girl to identify other ways to better protect themselves. Girls regularly wear several pairs of underwear and skirts on top of each other. Since they have used their set of clothes at once, they have none left for the night while clothes are drying. Pygmies are too poor to dedicate an old pagne to the sole use of sanitary protection. All they can do is to wear two pairs of underwear at once, preferring black skirts that conceal stains. Other ways of palliating lack of personal hygiene material are to collect cloth found on the floor, use banana leafs, "borrow" children clothes, wash constantly or hide at home. Washing pads requires several trips between the water point, the shower and the toilets. In collective IDP sites and camps where facilities are not sex segregated, this work can be a source of embarrassment, particularly for younger women. Availability of soap and of a washing-up bowl is often lacking. As for the drying, all female interviewees hang their cloth inside their tent to prevent theft. 19

What is the impact of lack of personal hygiene material on women's and girls health, dignity, access to education, social and economic well being?

- Impact on girls' ands women **dignity** who are mocked when they have stains and who feel powerless at properly protecting themselves. If different strategies are used to prevent or hide stains, most often girls and women will avoid going to public places so as to avoid embarrassment.

¹⁸ Partner Mercy Corps interviewed an additional 199 women as part of this pilot, but the utility of these interviews was limited.

¹⁹ All women and girls interviewed lived in makeshift huts in collective sites and camps.

- -Potential impact on the **health** and well-being of the female population: Limited access to appropriate sanitary materials does not allow girls and women to change pads regularly. As a result, they wash their pads, put them back on immediately or before they are completely dry. Wearing wet clothes can cause discomfort and gynecological complications (mycosis). Use of dirty clothes has sometimes been the cause of gynecological infections²⁰.
- Whether wearing wet or unwashed pads, girls and women have limited mobility since friction cause irritations
- -Shame combined with physical discomfort limits girls' access to education. Around 1/3 of the girls interviewed stated that they do not go to school when menstruating. They would more readily stay at school if they had absorbent pads in sufficient number²¹
- Women often avoid leaving the camp and are consequently not able to engage in livelihood during this time. This

has direct impact on their **economic and social life** and, as a consequence, on the wellbeing of the entire community. When possible, women make up for lack of access to markets, public meetings and family visits by sending their female relatives or neighbors.

INTERVENTION:

The WASH section and emergency units, both at provincial and national levels, were concerned about the multi-faceted aspects of lack of hygiene material on the life of displaced female population. A key objective was to address the practical needs of girls and women in order to ensure their full and equal access to schooling, markets and public places and their right to live with dignity.



Standing line at the distribution site, Shasha

CONTENT OF FEMALE PERSONAL HYGIENE KIT

DESIGNATION	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF THE ITEM
	PER KIT	
Cloth stripes	6	Each piece size is 30 cm X 1m20. Cloth must be of quality "demi hollandais" (genuine block prints HITARGET) and of dark color. In order for cloth not to be used for other purposes, 5 different cloth designs were selected by UNICEF DRC.
Female underwear	3	Underwear must be of a color as dark as possible, with a preference for black and red colors. Each kit contains underwear of different sizes, suitable for Congolese women morphology. Underwear must be of reasonably good quality, especially for its waistband. Preference goes to cotton.
Soap	1	Soap of 250 grammes purchased from the organization <i>Women for women</i>
Small bucket with a lid	1	Capacity 3 liters
Cloth line	1	Made out of plastic, the cloth line is 2 meters and a ½ long (corresponding to the width of a shelter)
Paper bag	1	Bag is big enough to contain the bucket inside of which all other items are placed

In order to achieve this aim, a kit for displaced girls and women living in an IDP site and with host families²² was to be developed and distributed. Also, the setting up of washing spaces for female personal hygiene was to be tested in an IDP site. The plan was to experiment with such response on a small scale, but to then incorporate the activity into UNICEF DRC standard emergency response.

The WASH team in Goma fully engaged in the project, allocating human and financial resources for its completion. The Kibumba spontaneous site was identified as the pilot location. Mercy Corps, the UNICEF partner doing WASH activities in Kibumba, agreed to help with the implementation of the initiative.

²⁰ As reported by the *International Medical corps* clinic staff of Kibumba site, use of dirty pads is also the cause of gynecological complications for women who have recently given birth. The sanitary kit will therefore also be useful for this type of public.

²¹ Other girls explained that even if provided with menstrual hygiene material, they would not attend school because of the pain from menstrual cramps

²² 70% of displaced persons in North Kivu live with host families. That is why it was deemed important to also target them.

Identification of the content of the female hygiene kit:

The identification of the intervention and definition of what a hygiene kit should contain was done with displaced girls and women. Female population was genuinely enthusiastic and grateful about the fact that an organization was finally ready to address this issue²³. They welcomed the initiative as being highly important for their dignity and access to essential activities.

Once the need for a hygiene kit was validated, the GM and WASH assistant identified with the female population the content of the kit. Discussion focused on the type of items, the quality (material, color) and the desired amount for each article. Different samples were bought and submitted to groups of women to define final choice of articles.

Purchase of the items and kitting:

In order to accelerate the purchasing process and to have better control over

quality of the items, local purchasing was pursued. Yet, zonal office was Woman unwrapping her kit, Shasha reluctant to buy on the local market given potential fraud risks. As a result, purchase of items was delayed until December. Specific attention was given to incorporating gender considerations into the procurement and distribution processes. The soap purchase as well as the packaging of the kits was done with Women for women, an INGO offering income generating activities to vulnerable women. Women supported by the organization were also hired for the registration and distribution of the kit. The total cost of one kit was of 7, 4 USD\$²⁴.



Failed attempt to also set up washing places for female personal hygiene in IDP sites:

Initial assessments had revealed that female IDPs living in Kibumba site were interested in having a washing space with water available to wash personal laundry. This would help them to avoid the burden and embarrassment of making several trips between the water point, the showers and the latrines. The pilot initiative was to be implemented by the key WASH actor at Kibumba site, Mercy Corps. The assessment on the design and location of washing places was incomplete given security restrictions. Mercy Corps, which only had men in its team, subsequently hired a female staff to complete the survey and ensure the monitoring of the pilot initiative;

Key hygiene messages

To keep clean and healthy, change of sanitary pads at least 3 times a day

To avoid diseases, ensure you always use completely dry pads

To avoid blood contamination, wash your hands each time you change pads and wash sanitary protections with soap

the hiring process also delayed implementation. However, the results of the assessment were not able to be used given the new staff member's limited capacity in conducting social surveys. This confirmed the concerns that the GM had from the start about the capacity of *Mercy Corps'* North Kivu team to engage in this pilot program²⁵. Given the poor quality of work and limited time, the GM and Eastern Zone WASH Specialist decided to cancel the construction of washing places and to only focus on the kit.

Distribution of the kits and post distribution monitoring:

With the worsening of the conflict there were waves of new displacement and the Kibumba site, where kits were to be distributed, ended up being completely dismantled in October. Subsequently, the spontaneous IDP site of Shasha was identified for the distribution with the support of a new partner, $Oxfam GB^{26}$.

The registration and distribution of the hygiene kit in Shasha took place in mid-

²³ In fact, validation about the relevance of such type of assistance was provided through girls participating in the CFS girl groups. They raised this at their discussions as a critical need without even being aware of the fact that UNICEF was in fact developing such a kit.

²⁴ This price does not include kitting costs

²⁵ While it is UNICEF and WASH Cluster policy to always have separate bathroom facilities for women and men in IDP camps and sites, *Mercy Corps* had failed to do this in constructing the latrines and showers in different camps and sites. The *Mercy Corps* engineer did not seem to consider this as an important issue. Still, the GM thought that with close guidance partner could complete the project.

²⁶ Oxfam GB was chosen for its reputation of working in a participatory and gender sensitive manner as well as for its interest in being part of the project

December, targeting 1,283 girls and women living in the camp or with host families²⁷. All girls and women aged 13 to 49 were registered, in accordance with global recommendations²⁸. But empirical observation during the distribution has shown that response in hygiene kits should not be provided to females above 45 years of age²⁹. Women and girls defined how, where and when the distributions would be done. Indeed, female personal hygiene is an intimate matter and precautions were taken to ensure that attending the distribution would not be a source of embarrassment. For the same reason, an entirely female team was hired for the planning and evaluation of the activity. The distribution was done by a mixed team since it was deemed preferable to associate a few men from the community to avoid possible resentment.

Prior to the distribution, UNICEF and Oxfam GB ensured that the community understood why the distribution was only targeting female IDPs. Key messages on menstrual hygiene were incorporated into the registration and



Mia Farrow, Global Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF attending the distribution of female hygiene kits, Shasha

distribution process. A visual aid (poster) showing the items contained in the kit was also tested on this occasion as a way to promote community's right to information. Such information was appreciated and shall be further used in UNICEF's core emergency programme, the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). Local Media were invited while Mia Farrow, UNICEF Global Goodwill Ambassador, was also present and briefed on the project and the importance of female hygiene issues, particularly in emergency situations.

Post distribution monitoring 30 revealed that all items of the kit were considered useful. The most appreciated item was the cloth strips and the least useful one was the laundry string. Frequency of changing

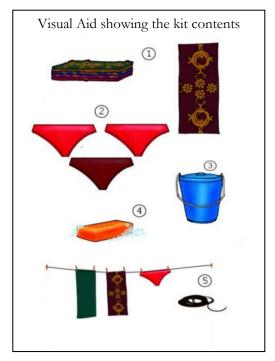
material has increased, especially for girls, and has prevented them from wearing damp material. The availability of sanitary material has had an evident impact on women's dignity since they do not have to worry about being

stained any longer. Impact of the kit on women's mobility shall be further analyzed. Assessment revealed that many girls did not receive a kit given poor information flow and registration set at a time when most of them were at school. Given the fact that such type of assistance aims to increase girls' access to school, specific attention will need to be paid in the future about when and where registration should take place.

HOW HAS THE PILOT INITIATIVE IMPACTED ON UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE EMERGENCY RESPONSE?

A multiplying effect:

Results of gender analysis were presented by GM to UNICEF staff and partners on several occasions³¹. Staff and partners became more aware of the fact that lack of adequate quality and quantity of personal hygiene materials impacts on numerous aspects of programming including increasing girls opportunities for education, economic activities, etc. As UNICEF in DRC is Cluster lead for both WASH and Non-Food Items, the two Clusters at national and provincial level have been briefing cluster members on this initiative. Both clusters are encouraging cluster members to include similar kits



²⁷ 26% of the targeted public was living with host families

²⁸ IASC, Guidelines for gender based violence interventions in humanitarian settings, Action sheet 7.4, p 61.

²⁹ In DRC, women's life expectancy is of 47 years old

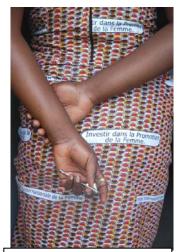
³⁰ The assessment was conducted early February 2009. 69 female IDPs took part to the focus group discussions. 31% of them were girls. 77% of women interviewed live in Shasha camp while 23% live with host families.

 $^{^{}m 31}$ Presentations were done at the national WASH and NFI clusters as well as at the WASH section annual retreat

in their interventions. The GM developed a technical note on the relevance, content and process to deliver such type of assistance. Several organizations developed similar responses³².

Next steps:

A major outcome of the pilot intervention lies in the rethinking of emergency programme design in DRC -indeed, personal hygiene kits will now be promoted as standard practice in NFI programs and will be part of 2009 of UNICEF DRC standard emergency response.



Woman wearing the pagne especially designed each year for women's international day, Kinshasa

Given the multi faceted implications that limited access to appropriate personal hygiene materials for menstruating women and girls has on their lives, especially with regard to girls' access to schooling, female personal hygiene kits should be widely promoted as a standard part of UNICEF emergency assistance not only where UNICEF has large-scale NFI assistance programmes such as the DRC, but in general. Potentially in collaboration with UNFPA, UNICEF should make significant institutional commitments to this type of programming in terms of communication, fund-raising, and advocacy by starting with enshrining it within the *Core Commitments to Children*. While the *Emergency handbook* mentions the need to build separate washing places for menstrual hygiene³³, it does not provide any information on the importance of developing female personal hygiene kits.

17

³² Care, AVSI and COOPI developed and distributed female hygiene kits based on UNICEF experience

³³ Emergency handbook, a guide for UNICEF staff, WASH, § 16, p185

ANNEX 3:

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN DRC'S CORE EMERGENCY RESPONSE MECHANISM

BACKGROUND:

Co-managed with OCHA, and implemented by two international NGO partners, the Humanitarian Coordinator's Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) remains the flagship programme for humanitarian assistance in the DRC. Launched in 2004, RRM partners conduct emergency multi-sectoral assessments and provide rapid assistance to vulnerable groups, especially in case of internal displacement due to conflict, epidemics or natural disasters. It is the only multi-sectoral emergency response programme that exists in DRC. The assistance to IDPs, with special attention given to women and vulnerable children, focuses on NFI, emergency shelter materials, water and sanitation, and education. In NFI and emergency shelter assistance alone, RRM reached over 1,000,000 people in 2008. Beginning in late 2006, UNICEF initiated a complementary programme to RRM, called the Programme of Expanded Assistance to Returns. PEAR focuses on detailed multi-sectoral assessments in return zones and punctual assistance in family NFI return kits and school rehabilitation.



Old lady attending the NFI distribution of PEAR, Vissiki Butembo

The emergency unit had initially hoped that one of the core components of the pilot initiative would include a gender-review and follow up on a 'genderization' of NFI distributions and post-distribution monitoring that form a core part of the RRM and PEAR programmes. Already both the RRM and PEAR programmes had attempted to include certain gender analysis in their implementation, through practices such as the following:

• Registration and Distribution to women. Both RRM and PEAR partners systematically register families by the names of the female adults in the households—except in the case of widowers.

Families are also requested to be represented, where possible, by the female adult members at the distributions. In visits to

NFI distributions, the GM's analysis and survey of beneficiaries confirmed that this approach helped to reinforce the ownership of the NFI kit by women. The practice of registering and distributing kits to women also allowed for second wives in areas of DRC where polygamy is common to not be excluded from assistance as second wives and their children essentially constitute their own households with separate dwellings, kitchens, sleeping quarters, etc.

- 'Pagnes.' Beginning in 2007, UNICEF began systematically including in the NFI kits lengths of cotton material known as 'pagne' which are used for wrap skirts, carrying children on one's back, and making other garments. While previously second-hand clothes had been included for all family members in the kits, inclusion of the pagne was seen to be more appropriate to the needs of women.
- PEAR Gender Check-list. The PEAR programme under the initiative of the PEAR Coordinator and after prioritization by PEAR NGO partners of better addressing gender considerations in the project developed a 'Gender Check-list' in May 2008 for partners to use in all stage of the PEAR operations assessments, interventions, and monitoring.

While there had already been interesting initiatives to better address gender issues through the large RRM and PEAR programs, there had not been a larger gender review of these programmes. UNICEF's two core emergency response programmes operate on an enormous scale with implementing partners mobilizing large teams over multiple provinces. As such, it was felt that it would be a far greater challenge to achieve significant results trying to move these large "beasts" mid-stream than to focus on emergency initiatives of a more manageable size. Furthermore, implementing partners of RRM and PEAR manifested less readiness and interest to take on a pilot programme. Therefore, the pilot converged more on the CFS and WASH, with only a small amount of work accorded to the direct work of the emergency unit's projects.

INTERVENTION:

Without being in charge of implementation and follow up, the GM provided useful recommendations that are now part of the 2009 work plan:

- Systematic community consultation with a clear priority for women's participation: Based on the fact that women are often excluded from information and decision spheres, the PEAR and RRM partners will reinforce efforts to ensure that women are consulted in priority at all stages of the project. When necessary, separate focus groups will be organized. Women's equal representation will also be encouraged in the committees initiated or reinforced thanks to RRM. Partners' reports will reflect how participatory consultation was achieved thanks to sex disaggregated data and analysis of different needs.
- WASH (RRM only): Given the fact that girls and women are the main actors of WASH related tasks, that they are the facilities' primary users, and that their time constraints need to be addressed by building infrastructures where they are most convenient for them, they shall be consulted in priority and in majority about the setting and type of facilities. In order to have equal mastery of the latter, they will equally take part to trainings to be

organized. While the RRM partners systematically separate latrine and shower facilities in their emergency interventions, this necessity of this practice will be reinforced to respond to the need for dignity and security of the population. All RRM facilities will continue to be systematically separated by sex with a clear designation³⁴. A new practice of increasing the ratio of 6 toilettes for girls and women out of 10 latrines will be applied. Toilets and showers will have a light and lock. Men as well as women will be targeted for hygiene promotion/maintenance of facilities.

- Education: Sensitization on the importance of schooling will integrate the socio cultural barriers affecting girls access to education
- Non Food Items: A major outcome of the first phase of the pilot will be the inclusion of female personal hygiene kits into the standard family kit distributed by RRM and PEAR. While the Country Office hopes to 'go to scale' with this and is already including the female hygiene kits in new proposals, there may be funding

gaps in the first phase, so the total number of kits will depend on the availability of funds.

Given the fact that registration lists and distributions are based on adult female members of the family, communities will be sensitized on the importance for



Wife carries back to home a 15 kilogram's kit and a basin, child carries a jerry can, husband accompanies. Vissiki Butembo

women to come to the distribution site accompanied by others and encouraged to share more equally the portage of the kit back to the home. Already most RRM and PEAR partners attempt to start distributions with elderly persons, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups. This practice needs to be systematized and monitored across all partners. The feasibility of purchasing items such as soap from NGOs supporting vulnerable groups will also be explored.

The above recommendations focus on the mainstreaming of gender into existing activities in order to avoid additional workloads. Practical ways of supporting implementation of these recommendations will be pursued in 2009 thanks to capacity building and relevant support.

Delphine Brun, Gender in emergencies project manager Steven Michel, Emergency specialist Kinshasa, the 12th of February 2009

³⁴ The latrines that were observed by GM in the IDP sites during her initial evaluations and that were not sex disaggregated were built by other WASH partners, not involved in the RRM project