



# Social cohesion and value creation

In three communities and the town of Uvira in the province of South Kivu, economic and social conditions are improving for individuals, households and social groups

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the poorest countries in the world. Particularly Eastern Congo has been suffering for many years due to persistent crisis and recurring armed conflicts. Combined with the absence of rule of law that could respond to the causes and consequences of this situation, this has wreaked havoc on infrastructures and economic activities and has steadily eroded the political social order. The situation is more acute in the provinces of North and South Kivu as well as Ituri where it is causing livelihoods to deteriorate. The state is failing to provide basic services, corruption is widespread at all levels and women remain vulnerable, being targets in armed attacks while having no say at home or in public and political life.



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<b>Region</b>	South Kivu
<b>Political Partner</b>	Ministry of Planning
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## Challenges and Opportunities

For many years, the eastern provinces of the DRC have been suffering from a persistent crisis and recurring armed conflicts. The Ruzizi Plain has not been spared and is regularly the scene of conflicts and violence. The dynamics of these conflicts are characterized by the presence of armed groups, intercommunity and inter-personal conflicts.

Despite Congo’s wealth of natural resources, households barely manage to meet their basic needs and the population, especially the youth, faces a lack of economic opportunities. Additionally, there are migration movements of internally displaced people from more fragile areas, who are taken in by host families, but have no real prospects of returning home.

In this context, the project identifies opportunities to develop alternative income solutions in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, while also enhancing life perspectives by strengthening the population’s adaptive capacities and fostering transformation through measures for peaceful coexistence and social cohesion. In this framework, the resilience of individuals and institutions to the effects and consequences of crises is strengthened, and sustainable development opportunities are created.

## Objectives

The transitional development assistance project promotes income-generating activities in agricultural value chains, contributes to non-violent conflict resolution and promotes gender equality. It also advises local development committees to strengthen and involve state actors. Through these activities the project aims to change social norms that are currently characterized by conflicting interests, weak governance, trauma as well as sexual and gender-based violence aimed at reducing women’s influence and power on a local level.

The project is implemented in the Ruzizi Plain and the city of Uvira in South Kivu, Eastern DRC. Its objective is to support individuals, households, social groups and local administrative bodies to adopt social and economic practices.



Photo above: A beneficiary who received a seedling after a training on agri-ecological practices ©GIZ

Photo on the left: Practical exercises in farmer field schools ©GIZ

Photo on the right: Literacy course ©GIZ



Photo on the left: Platform of popular expression organized by local peace organizations © GIZ

Photo on the right: Radio program on the transformation and marketing of agricultural products © GIZ

## Our Focal Areas

The project is directly aligned with the action areas of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) strategy on transitional development assistance, which has the overall objective of increasing the resilience of the population and of local structures. Therefore, the project aims to enable individuals, households, social groups and local administrative structures in South Kivu to implement more sustainable and peaceful social and economic development practices.

In order to achieve this, the project is focusing on five focal areas:

- (1) **The project promotes non-violent conflict management through activities focused on social dialogue:** To improve how conflicts are managed at both the individual and inter-community levels, the project supports the capacity-building of traditional peace structures, such as conflict management committees. Common social activities, for example cultural and sports events, create environments that foster informal and positive interactions between different communities. This contributes to good inter-community relations, helping to build a communication network for the peaceful management of potential conflicts, as well as strengthening trust and social cohesion between communities.
- (2) **Improving income levels for individuals and households:** On one hand, the project supports increasing the supply of food products for the benefit of the local population, and on the other hand, it promotes income generation activities in the agricultural as well as the non-agricultural sector. Strengthening productive structures and economic capacities along value chains increases the local population's resilience to crises and its ability to independently secure supplies. The creation of financial opportunities leads to higher household incomes and supports women's empowerment and equality. Specifically, the project strengthens the capacities of farmers' organizations and cooperatives through training on production, processing, and marketing of products in the Ruzizi Plain. In Uvira, the project assists young entrepreneurs in setting up and managing their businesses.

- (3) **The implementation of local development plans by grassroots actors:** Activities promoting good governance as a framework for sustainable economic alternatives and social cohesion aim to strengthen the capacities of local development committees in planning and delivering basic services. This effort benefits both the target groups and local authorities and opinion leaders. The prioritization of public interest measures to be implemented from the development plans is carried out through inclusive participatory processes at the community level, facilitated by local development committees established by the provincial government specifically for this purpose.
- (4) **Supporting gender equality at the household level:** The project aims to build the skills and capacities of women and girls so that they can participate in decision-making both individually and socially. On one hand, the project emphasizes women's participation in its activities to improve their socio-economic conditions. On the other hand, it involves men to promote changes in social norms and encourages positive masculinity. These activities aim to elevate the social status of women and include literacy courses, women's leadership training, and initiatives targeting male role models.
- (5) **Improving the housing and living conditions of the population of Uvira affected by natural disasters and conflicts:** With the Luxembourg Red Cross, the project is building 100 houses for families affected by floods in Uvira. To strengthen the resilience of these victims, income-generating activities and literacy courses are being implemented.

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