



Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Analysis

USAID/DRC Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA)

December 2021

I. Overview

USAID’s Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA), implemented under the lead of Education Development Center (EDC) is seeking to enhance its ability to contribute to the transformation of harmful gender norms by empowering adolescent girls, engaging men and boys in practicing positive gender norms, contributing to a reduction of the incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) and promoting a culture and practice that supports social inclusion, especially of the traditionally marginalized and most vulnerable. This IYDA cross-cutting intervention was designed based on the understanding that women, men, boys, and girls experience the high-risk environment present in targeted urban and rural zones differently, due to diverse levels of access and control to education and resources as well as gendered expectations for the roles and responsibilities they adopt during the transition from childhood to adulthood. Enhanced gender equality in IYDA-targeted zones is essential for all young people to reach their full potential and become healthy, successful contributors to their families and communities.

In this fourth and final year, IYDA will make a more intentional investment in critical resources to support USAID’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy and Disability-Inclusive Development Framework. EDC will integrate Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) into interventions by:

1. Ensuring activities do not exacerbate or perpetuate gender and other social disparities.
2. Reducing disparities where possible.
3. Empowering women, adolescent girls, and members of traditionally disadvantaged groups to access education and training opportunities that lead to social inclusion and economic growth.

In both existing and new expansion areas (Idjwi Island, in and around Kahuzi Biega Park, as well as in Beni and Butembo), IYDA will work with key stakeholders to examine existing inequities and exclusion at the community level; work with non-formal school partners to improve GESI policy and practice; identify CBOs and community-driven networks that support the rights of vulnerable groups to engage in education and skills training opportunities; and increasingly involve private sector, master apprentices, and other trade or artisan networks that engage indigenous, disabled, adolescent and young women, and Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI) populations in training, community activism, income generation, and work opportunities.

To ensure activities to not exacerbate or perpetuate gender and other social disparities, and to reduce disparities where possible, we will keep in mind the following table of intersecting domains and issues.

Table 1. Intersection of PYD & ADS 205 Domains with GESI

	Law, Policies, Regulations, Institutional Practices	Cultural norms and beliefs	Gender roles, responsibilities, time use	Access and control over assets and resources	Patterns of power and decision-making
Enabling environment	Laws, policies	Norms, beliefs		Regulations	
Youth Agency and Contribution		Youth self-esteem and leadership (WRN) Civic engagement (New Modules that include GESI) Participation in the labor market (WRN + BYOB) AG-specific Intervention (Proof-of-Concept Model)			
Assets				Education, training, participation,	Engagement of media in supporting

				mentorship networks	youth agency/story of PYD
Cross-Cutting	IR, Development Cooperation, COVID-19 impact				

*Adapted Youth Excel GESI Analysis, IREX, 2021; EDC additions

II. Assessing the enabling environment for GESI commitments

In May and June 2019, IYDA conducted two foundational assessments related to contextual inequity and exclusion in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a **Gender Analysis Report (GAR)** prepared by Catholic Relief Services and a **Rapid Risk Assessment and Do No Harm Conflict Sensitivity Analysis (RERA/DNH)** prepared by EDC. As a first step in this current exercise, we have reviewed these two documents and updated with regard to laws and policies, development commitments and relevant regulations and norms and beliefs, so as to provide current context for the integration of GESI across program interventions.

Legal and Policy Environment. DRC’s legal environment for gender equality and social inclusion is commendable, but largely limited to law and policy and not practice or enforcement. The DRC has ratified many UN Conventions relating to equity and inclusion, including the 1969 Convention on Eradication of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and the 1966 Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Further, DRC has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention concerning the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The DRC is a signatory to the Optional Protocol to the CRC related to involvement of children in armed conflicts. Of note, the DRC is not a signatory to the Optional Protocol of CEDAW which allows individual or groups of women to submit claims of violations of rights to the requisite UN Committee or allow for an inquiry into situations of grave or systematic violations of women’s rights in the country. Further, domestic violence is not recognized under national law. And, despite the Convention on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, child labor exists as a widespread practice especially in areas of mining and mineral resource extraction.¹

The DRC is a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, as well as the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The DRC is a co-sponsor and signatory of the 2008 Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development which seeks to protect commitments to the UN Conventions related to the rights of the child and the prevention and eradication of violence against women and children and ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all community building programs in the region. In addition, the DRC supports the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. As part of the UN stabilization mission in DRC (MONUSCO, Resolution 2556 through December 2021), the DRC has committed to increasing women’s political participation and their security during election periods, promoting gender-sensitive and non-sexist communications in the media, and increasing women’s involvement as part of social cohesion, non-violence and peace mediation.² The DRC provides regular updates to its commitment to Resolution 1325.

With regard to intersecting forms of discrimination or exclusion, the DRC is not a signatory to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, nor the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Neither has DRC signed the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights

¹ See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

² See <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/mandates-and-objectives>.

of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families which would protect the rights of children born to migrant workers. The DRC is a signatory to the 1965 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1975 Protocol, which given the history of conflict in the Great Lakes Region has meant that the forced displacement of people into the DRC has strained an already weak State system. As the State is unable to meet certain basic protections, the DRC coordinates with international humanitarian organizations to provide security and protection for refugees and internally displaced populations within the country.

DRC seeks to ensure that its commitments to international law are enshrined in the Constitution. Under the 2006 Constitution, the DRC provides for the acquisition of citizenship through birth within the country or from either parent being of an ethnic group documented as having been located in the country in 1960 (Article 10). Lack of registration does not significantly affect access to social services, although it can be used to manipulate users for individual gain.³ That said, 75% of children in DRC are without birth certificates, which increases multidimensional risks and vulnerability. For example, without proof of age for girl children, the potential for child marriage increases.⁴ In addition, a lack of documentation can impact voting rights, access to financial services, freedom of movement between territories and across borders, as well as active civic engagement.

The 2006 Constitution prohibits discrimination against women in its many forms and emphasizes gender parity in public institutions (Article 14). It also provides through Articles 5, 14 and 15 the foundations of legitimization of any policy of equality and equity in the country. Under the Constitution, women and men have equal rights to work, education, vote, justice and political participation. In 2015, Law n°15/013 was passed to establish specific procedures to implement Article 14 of the Constitution and ensure its enforcement. That said, while a Ministry of Gender, Family and Children exists at the national level, supported by gender focal points within different ministries and in each province, the necessary resources (including both capacity and budget) have not been provided to ensure effective implementation, rendering any application of the law largely unrealized.⁵ Furthermore, while family laws have been updated, many have been yet to be ratified. Specifically, Article 444 of the DRC Family Code (1987) provides that a husband is head of the household and the revised Family Code (2016) still maintains this. However, of note in the revised version, is the elimination of the need for a married woman to obtain her husband's permission to open an individual bank account, or access financial services such as credits or loans.⁶ As such, most married women's decisions remain under the discretion of their husbands, who retain control of all household, financial and medical decisions in both statutory and cultural law. Widowed, divorced or single women face ostracization and most often must submit to the will and authority of male family members.

Indeed, per the last Submission of the DRC to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2019), DRC still demonstrates only a little over 10% female representation in the National Assembly, 10% of women elected at provincial level, no female governors in the provinces, and just under 14% women representatives as decision-making authorities for public administration.⁷ There are no indigenous women represented at any level of government and only one woman recently put to lead the newly created Ministry for People with Disabilities.⁸ Gender parity as stipulated in Financing and Electoral laws, including promoting women in the political and judicial system, has been lackluster.⁹ Further, few women hold positions in institutional service provision; education and health service providers are generally men, resulting in inequitable distribution of wealth and power as well as services that are not attuned to the specific needs of women and girls.

³ See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>.

⁴ <https://borgenproject.org/tag/the-drc-family-code/>

⁵ CRS (2019). *USAID DRC, IYDA Gender Analysis Report*.

⁶ <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/CD.pdf>

⁷ https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CEDAW_DRC-EN_Web.pdf

⁸ https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CEDAW_DRC-EN_Web.pdf

⁹ http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/hrinst_genderinequalityinthedrc_wilpf_december2010english.pdf

Law No 06/019 relating to the Congolese Penal Procedure Code (2006) has seen several revisions to broaden the definition of rape and align with international protection standards. The law seeks to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of any victim of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual assault, rape and gender-based violence in general. The law criminalizes assault and rape, but such offenses are not always reported by victims, and those meant to enforce the law or provide proper response and referral supports fail to act.¹⁰ ¹¹In South Kivu, only four courts have the ability to judge a crime of rape. Across the DRC, courts are very poorly equipped to adjudicate sexual crimes. That said, MONUSCO reported that on January 15, 2020 the military court in Bukavu, South Kivu Province, convicted one FARDC soldier and one PNC officer on charges of rape and sentenced them to 20 years in prison each.¹² Further, under Law No. 06/019 FGM as a form of sexual violence carries a sentence of two to five years in prison, substantial fines, and a life sentence if convicted of an FGM-related death.¹³

Article 57 of the Law on Child Protection (2009) confirms the right of the child to protection from all forms of violence and states that discipline in the home, schools and institutions should be administered with respect for the child's humanity but it does not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment.¹⁴ While the literature on school related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is scarce, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that many teachers believe that harsh discipline helps children become better students and is thus an accepted practice. While boys are more at risk for exposure to corporal violence in school settings, girls face significant levels of sexual harassment and abuse in schools by both students and teachers, with an impact on their enrollment, retention and performance.¹⁵

The DRC is a signatory to the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. The 2006 Constitution prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities and requires the state to promote their participation in national, provincial, and local institutions, including access to national education, employment and government services (Article 49). There are roughly 10 million people living with disabilities in Congo.¹⁶ Amongst people with disabilities, 90 percent are illiterate, 93 percent are jobless, and 96 percent live in an unhealthy and inhumane environment.¹⁷

Despite Article 49 of the Constitution, access to and availability of quality public services that support people living with disabilities is limited. Recent national attention to disability legislation offers some hope. In 2018, DRC's first minister for people with disabilities, Irène Esambo, herself living with a disability, began work on a bill to ensure greater protections for rights to education, employment and health and freedoms from abuse or exploitation for people living with disabilities.¹⁸ Her bill passed in the National Assembly in late 2020 and is set to be heard by the Senate in 2022.

Related to the rights of those who identify as LGBTQ+, the 2006 Constitution explicitly prohibits same-sex marriage.¹⁹ While no law specifically prohibits consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults, same-sex conduct in public is subject to prosecution under public indecency provisions. Identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer remains a cultural taboo, and harassment by police and the

¹⁰ See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

¹¹ https://www.law.cornell.edu/women-and-justice/location/democratic_republic_of_congo

¹² See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

¹³ See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

¹⁴ https://www.africanchildforum.org/cfr/Legislation%20Per%20Country/DRC/drc_children_2009_fr.pdf

¹⁵ See <https://theirworld.org/voices/safe-schools-drc-girls-face-gender-based-sexual-violence>

¹⁶ <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20201203-new-bill-offers-hope-to-people-with-disabilities-in-dr-congo>

¹⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/disabled-left-fend-themselves>

¹⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/11/disability-rights-bill-offers-hope-congo>

¹⁹ <https://www.equaldex.com/region/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>

judiciary is known to occur.²⁰ There are no protections for LGBTQ+ related to employment discrimination and data about access to education and skills training, or access to economic opportunities are difficult to find due to the lack of protection for those identifying as such.

Some religious leaders, radio broadcasts, and political organizations play a key role in supporting discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, including through “corrective” rape, arbitrary detentions, other acts of physical violence, including beatings, being stripped naked, humiliating acts, and sexual abuse in public settings. In some cases LGBTQ+ persons were forced by threats of violence to withdraw from schools and other public and community institutions.²¹

Commitments of DRC to SDGs (national development frameworks). The DRC is a signatory to Agenda 2030 and submitted its first progress report in 2020. It has ensured that the *Plan National Strategique de Developpement* (PNSD) reflects the DRC’s commitment to the SDGs and has established the Congolese Observatory of Sustainable Development to evaluate and measure progress. The DRC’s National Development Plan for 2020-2024 includes a commitment to inclusive growth and human and social development which reinforces its alignment with the SDGs.²²

In addition, DRC has been strengthening its framework laws on national education through the Education and Training Sector Strategy 2016-2025, the Specific Strategy for Technical Education and Vocational Training 2016-2025, and the National Qualifications Framework ministerial decree N°179/MINETAT/MTEPS/01/2018 relating to the transformation of some general education schools into technical education and vocational training centers.²³ That said, DRC has not yet ratified the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education nor the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education, instruments intended to advance equity and inclusion in light of SDG4. The 2006 Constitution guarantees free basic education and or cooperation with religious authorities to provide a relevant education (Article 44), but in practice access is a challenge due to weak education infrastructure, and poor quality teachers, and often schools apply a fee that many cannot pay.²⁴ DRC allows religious institutions to provide education that conforms to national guidelines set by the government so long as these adhere to standards of quality curricula, class size, the qualifications and salaries of teachers and the system of assessment.²⁵ Only 12.5% of secondary school teachers are female; the presence of female teachers in schools has been linked to higher enrolment, retention and learning for girls.²⁶

In a joint effort, UNDP and UN Women support the government to undertake gender-responsive planning and budgeting, providing technical support on gender mainstreaming in budget development processes; strengthening the capacity of various government departments on gender responsive budgeting, supporting national and provincial women’s organizations to monitor gender-related and women empowerment commitments and action research on gender responsive budgeting. In addition, support to the government is provided for monitoring and communications related to reporting on Resolution 1325 as part of support for a formal peace and conflict resolution process.²⁷ While DRC continues to strengthen its language on gender equity, parity and inclusion as part of law and policy, progress against SDG5 benchmarks and indicators reflects challenges in achieving behavior change or local enforcement of women’s rights, recognition and increased decision-making as per the law.²⁸

²⁰ See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

²¹ See <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/>

²² https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Public_CDCS-DRC-12-2025.pdf

²³ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_742204.pdf

²⁴ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26296VNR_2020_DRC_Report_French.pdf

²⁵ <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/congo-literacy-project-democratic-republic-congo>

²⁶ INEE (2021). State of girls ed in emergencies

²⁷ <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/democratic-republic-of-congo>

²⁸ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26296VNR_2020_DRC_Report_French.pdf

DRC faces enormous challenges related to SDG 8 and SDG 10 as 40% of its population lives in urban areas (therefore the country is dependent on agriculture), there are large inequities between provinces, and national level data indicates that 35% of the majority youth population (ages 15 -24) is unemployed, although that number is probably much higher in reality.²⁹ Prior to COVID-19, more than half of the country suffered from multidimensional poverty, and as a result of COVID-19, DRC's economy contracted due to restricted mobility and constrained spending.³⁰ ³¹ In 2021, an estimated 3.3 million children in the DRC suffered from acute malnutrition, with 1million of those suffering from severe acute malnutrition.³² Malnutrition has direct and negative effects on child to adolescent development and learning outcomes. And, when combined with generations of poverty, conflict and fragility, contributes to a vicious cycle of stunted growth at every level of the socio-ecological ecosystem, undermining both individual and national social and economic development.

Social and Cultural Context. The eastern provinces in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remain one of the most challenging environments in which to support the positive development of children and youth and strengthen equitable access to learning and livelihoods opportunities. In North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces, where the Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA) operates, numerous armed groups continue to operate, attacking unarmed civilians and exacerbating longstanding vulnerability and exclusion. A surge in violence and continued political instability has resulted in a military and police presence in the region, with the Provinces of North Kivu (a key IYDA intervention zone) and Ituri currently under state-sanctioned military rule. A wide range of resourced-actors, including state officials, armed groups, customary chiefs, church leaders, civil society members, and international organizations, continue to compete to assume public authority over people and resources.³³ Extreme anxiety, provoked by persistent political instability and fragmentation of the social space, has led to weak governance structures with chronic capacity deficits, corruption, exclusion, elitism and competition over resources and power.

In addition, because of protracted conflict, the region maintains one of the highest incidences of conflict related violence with generations having been exposed to multiple traumatic stressors that are linked to mental health challenges, ongoing community aggression and the destabilization of peace efforts. Violence has been normalized and data indicates that the majority of incidents of sexual violence in eastern DRC are committed by civilians and not armed actors. Furthermore, survivors- who are generally women and girls but include men and boys- have little access to services, with the UN estimating that in 2020 “barely one in four victims of GBV had access to medical care, 5 per cent to psychosocial assistance, 15 per cent to legal assistance, and only 0.5 per cent to socioeconomic reintegration.”³⁴

On the **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** which measures disparities between men and women in the areas of economic opportunities, reproductive health, and empowerment, the country is ranked among the highest in the world.³⁵ Political uncertainty at the national level and tensions at the provincial and local level are further impacted by socio-economic insecurities, ethnic tension, education and health inequity, economic contraction, poverty, and unemployment. The tying of ethnicity to geographic locations has inscribed itself in the discussion about ‘who belongs where’ in the DRC and has been a primary driver of conflict and

²⁹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_742204.pdf

³⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/drc/overview#1>

³¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_742204.pdf

³² <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/estimated-104-million-children-democratic-republic-congo-northeast-nigeria-central>

³³ Hoffmann, K., Vlassenroot, K., & Marchais, G. (2016). Taxation, stateless and armed groups public authority and resource extraction in Eastern Congo. *Development and Change International Institute of Social Studies.*, 47(6), 1434–1456

³⁴ <https://www.msf.org/thousands-survivors-sexual-violence-need-physical-and-psychological-care-drc>

³⁵ Landis, D. (2018). Examining participation in formal education and exposure to violence among girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Columbia University, 1–265.

exclusion in the Kivus as well as nationwide.³⁶ Further, men dominate the political sphere and are the culturally and legally appointed heads of the household, presenting them with decision-making power over most domains of life. Women are defined by their household or reproductive responsibilities, which include maintaining the physical and moral well-being of their families. Men are perceived to be responsible for the financial health of their families.³⁷ Traditional gender roles and social norms exist in both urban and rural areas; however, they appear to be more rigid in rural settings.

In addition, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been a defining feature of the ongoing conflict in the country. The DRC has one of the highest incidences of rape in the world, with the Kivus especially hard hit.³⁸ While there are cases of male victims of SGBV, women and girls are far more likely to suffer from sexual violence.³⁹ Beyond the conflict context, sexual violence against women and girls has been prevalent, especially by a partner or household member. UN Women reports that 51% of Congolese women experience lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, with 37% reporting violence in the last 12 months.⁴⁰ Unintended pregnancies are one of the many public health, political-legal, and socioeconomic consequences of sexual violence. Records of survivors of sexual violence in Goma found that among child survivors, the majority (75 percent) were between the ages of 11 and 18.⁴¹ Male toxic masculinity, rooted in the way men are socialized as boys and their perceived failure to provide for their households has led to toxic and violent outbursts against women in the home, in the community, and in other spheres of socialization.⁴² Efforts are being made to install community early warning mechanisms in every province and establish local security councils comprised of men and women who would work more closely with the police.⁴³ In recent years, some multilateral and bilateral funding investments have targeted the abuse and (sexual) exploitation of women and children at the hands of both national protection forces, such as the military and police, training officers to combat violence and impunity within their ranks.

Access to and retention in education and skills training. SRGBV, malnutrition, insecurity and poverty contribute to psychosocial trauma that impacts children's ability to learn and complete their education.⁴⁴ Analysis of Demographic and Health Data from 2020 reveals an alarmingly high proportion of women reporting that they had experienced teacher-perpetrated rape and sexual abuse in school, indicating that 6 million women in DRC have been victims.⁴⁵ Overall, girls, including those with disabilities, are more likely to fall prey to SRGBV; boys are more likely to receive corporal punishment; and children with disabilities are more likely to face bullying and harassment. Perpetrators of this violence include school administrators, teachers, and students themselves, who are often the source of bullying and harassment of other students. Especially as many non-formal learning centers, like the IYDA supported *Centres d'apprentissages professionnels* (CAP) and *Centres de rattrapages scolaires* (CRS) include over-age students and less qualified teachers, cases of bullying, intimidation, and harassment by older youth is common.⁴⁶ IYDA data indicate that while past humanitarian interventions supporting socio-economic reintegration for children

³⁶ Vogel, C. (2017). Between tags & guns: Fragmentations of public authority around eastern Congo's artisanal 3T mines. *Journal of Political Geography*, 94–103.

³⁷ CRS (2019). *USAID DRC, IYDA Gender Analysis Report*.

³⁸ Ingelaere, Bert; Willen, Nina. (2017 August 31). War-torn Congo has been called the 'rape capital of the world.' Here is how fighters think about sexual violence. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/08/28/what-do-rebels-think-about-sexual-violence-in-congo-we-asked-them/?utm_term=.1382d46c6020

³⁹ (2019) USAID DRC IYDA RERA DNH Report, Revised Final.

⁴⁰ <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/africa/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>

⁴¹ Landis, D. (2018). Examining participation in formal education and exposure to violence among girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Columbia University, 1–265.

⁴² Akinyemi, Aaron. (2019). 'No sex without fighting' - tackling toxic masculinity in DR Congo. *BBC World News*. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48094438?fbclid=IwAR1W_QJUQA6a0blhhJE9V60R84v3FGPG_hJLqD-Fi14My0CBGWMog7t3pKE

⁴³ <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/democratic-republic-of-the-congo-drc/>

⁴⁴ CRS (2019). *USAID DRC, IYDA Gender Analysis Report*.

⁴⁵ <https://inee.org/resources/mind-gap-state-girls-education-crisis-and-conflict>

⁴⁶ CRS (2019). *USAID DRC, IYDA Gender Analysis Report*.

associated with armed forces and armed groups resulted in high levels of boys and young men enrolled in non-formal education centers, these same centers today are populated by a female majority (>50%). While nationally the rate of female enrollment in nonformal education centers remains around 35%,⁴⁷ increasingly at the community level, young women are assuming leadership roles in their homes and communities, and investing in their own education, training and skills development. As women find greater participation and agency, the demand for prioritization of GESI within the education, training and skills development space, including to strengthen a more forward-looking TVET system, will increase.

In many contexts in Eastern DRC, school itself is perhaps the highest risk setting for sexual exploitation for girls, both from boys, teachers, and other adults (e.g., in exchange for passing grades, or in lieu of fees, further examined in the next section) that results in early pregnancy, early marriage and school dropout. Nonetheless, the high level of poverty and unemployment in the region and the dearth of a quality education that builds youth resilience compound their exposures to these risks outside of school. Specifically for girls, summer vacations in the dry seasons and short holiday breaks increase their susceptibility to risky behaviors.⁴⁸

The average Congolese woman will benefit from 5.3 years of formal schooling compared to 8.4 years for men; as such, only 37 percent of women have attended secondary school compared to 66 percent of men.⁴⁹ Nationally, an estimated 66% of Congolese women are literate compared to 89% of men.⁵⁰ Among young women, literacy is increasing; an estimated 80% of young women are literate compared to 91% of young men.⁵¹ Congolese Law 15, adopted in 2015, protects young mothers' right to return to school; however, this remains rarely practiced.⁵² To increase enrollment and retention of adolescent girls, in particular, in school, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has worked to promote child protection and address gender barriers such as early marriage, early pregnancy, violence, and domestic servitude at a decentralized level.⁵³ Further, GPE has worked with the Ministry of Education to eliminate gender-stereotyping in textbooks for grades 1-3.

Access and retention of children living with disabilities is also of concern. As previously reported in RERA/DNH (2019), children living with disabilities, notably those who have low mobility and are low functioning are even less likely to attend school.⁵⁴ A lack of facilities to accommodate their needs is a great barrier to their access to an education. Compared to their counterparts, the investment in the education of children with a disability is generally viewed as a wasted investment given their low prospect for employment or an independent future. Stigma around people living with disabilities not only means a lack of representation in school and challenges in accessing vocational training opportunities but in society overall given the lack of protection or opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency.

Access to economic opportunities. Sixty percent of the country's population is under the age of 20, and this percentage will only expand, as DRC is projected to attain a population of 120 million by 2030.⁵⁵ More than 60% of women live under the poverty threshold as compared to 51% of men.⁵⁶ The youth unemployment rate for DRC is difficult to verify. The National Human Development Report (NHDR) indicates a total unemployment rate in the working age population of about 54.0 per cent, and 24.7 per cent in the case of youth in urban areas. The position of young people in DRC's labor market is extremely

⁴⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_742204.pdf

⁴⁸ (2019). USAID IYDA RERA DNH Report, Revised Final.

⁴⁹ <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/COD.pdf>

⁵⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.FE.ZS?end=2018&locations=CD&start=2018>

⁵¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.MA.ZS?end=2018&locations=CD&start=2018>

⁵² Global Coalition to Protection Education from Attack. *"All That I Have Lost": Impact of Attacks on Education for Women and Girls in Kasai Central Province DRC*. April 2019.

⁵³ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/bridging-gender-gap-democratic-republic-congo>

⁵⁴ (2019). USAID IYDA RERA DNH Report, Revised Final.

⁵⁵ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Public_CDCCS-DRC-12-2025.pdf

⁵⁶ <https://www.peacewomen.org/content/gender-inequality-and-social-institutions-dr-congo>

precarious, even though youth represent an asset for the workplace, and enormous potential for social and economic development.⁵⁷ While the agricultural sector employs over 60% of Congolese workers and comprises almost 20% of GDP, it fails to ensure food security and generate sufficient revenues or sustainable employment.⁵⁸ Further, land rights have been at the center of conflict in the DRC, fueling class and tribal wars that have resulted in the death and displacement of millions, as well as stifled development of the agricultural sector. Bulk exports for agricultural products, including minerals, are largely unregulated. Cross border trade of agricultural products is open and accessible to women, while trade in minerals is generally reserved for men. While rural-urban agricultural value chains exist, they are focused solely on demand for household consumption.

Women in particular cannot directly access, inherit or buy land per customary law practices managed by local chiefs (of 24 chiefs in South Kivu only two are women).⁵⁹ Women are still discouraged from entering certain occupations and inequity in wages and social security nets persist.⁶⁰ In the Kivus, much of the arable land is owned by an elite minority, frequently associated with state and non-state armed forces. Thus, the majority of the population cannot access sufficient land and resources to move beyond subsistence farming, even though most of the farms owned by the elite remain underutilized.

In urban areas, the participation of women in the workforce remains equal to that of men.⁶¹ Wage employment opportunities outside of family networks is severely limited, however. Even in the Kivus, the economy remains largely informal, due to a historically predatory urban administrative structure that stifles attempts to create a more diversified and thriving local formal economy. Informal sector work is precarious, characterized by low wages, irregular pay, no social protection and poor or dangerous working conditions.

Recommendations from the GAR (2019) will inform the integration of cross-cutting interventions as part of Year 4 and include:⁶²

1. **Challenge: Gender-related educational constraints and gaps affecting access to, retention in and completion of both formal and alternative education opportunities.**

Study finding(s): Parents – particularly fathers – hold a lot of decision-making power about whether to send their children to school. While boys report being engaged in these conversations, girls are generally not included and fathers typically have the last say. Combined with a second finding – that girls are overburdened with domestic responsibilities – this contributes to limiting educational opportunities for girls.

Initial project recommendation(s): Social and behavior change communication on the importance of education amongst youth alone will not improve girls’ retention in and completion of both formal and alternative education opportunities if traditional gender norms and financial realities incentivize fathers to pull girls out of school. To overcome this challenge, the project could **enlarge the proposed “Youth Gender Champions” approach to include not only parents but also local leaders as “Gender Champions”** in targeted communities, including but not limited to **identifying strong women role models** in communities (for instance, there are at least two female chiefs in South Kivu) and/or showcase educated women as role models, emphasizing the positive impact and use of that education on their families, to the benefit of others.

⁵⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_742204.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/democratic-republic-congo-agriculture>

⁵⁹ Women for Women International. *Women inherit wrappers, men inherit fields: The problem of women’s access to land in South Kivu, DRC*. 2014.

⁶⁰ <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/CD.pdf>

⁶¹ https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/background/c8h0vm0000anj6-att/drc_2017.pdf

⁶² CRS (2019). *USAID DRC, IYDA Gender Analysis Report*.

Year 4 project recommendation(s): Given existing higher than anticipated rates of enrollment in education and skills training, build out networking and mentorship modules that support the retention and continued engagement of young women and girls. Strengthening existing networks and associations and connecting these organic mentorship mechanisms and supports to female youth has a higher likelihood of increased opportunities and sustained benefits beyond the project life.

2. **Challenge: Elevated risk of SGBV in schools and by teachers.**

Study finding(s): According to both the IYDA RERA/DNH study and Gender Analysis, a significant number of youth mention schools as places in which youth experience violence, including SGBV, and teachers in particular as perpetrators of violence.

Initial project recommendation(s): IYDA should develop an **ongoing gender sensitivity and protection training module for educators in ALPs, vocational training centers, and community literacy programs**. The project could invite other local leaders to participate in these trainings, and **establish accountability mechanisms** for reporting cases of violence. **Each educational center should designate a focal point for reporting any cases of SGBV to the project.** The project should review these institutions' codes of conduct and relevant laws, and facilitate assemblies at these centers in which they are presented to students.

Year 4 project recommendation(s): Building on three years of solid implementation and relationship-building, IYDA should focus on ensuring that GESI standards are integrated into school culture through strategic school improvement plans that reflect real commitment to behavior change, resource mobilization, reporting and enforcement protocols for students, teachers and community members. This activity should be conducted using an adapted version of the INEE Equity and Inclusion Index and Framework. This is highlighted further in Section III.

3. **Challenge: Barriers and opportunities for equitable participation of young women and men in youth civic engagement activities.**

Study finding(s): While there are many existing resources, groups, and associations that could facilitate active engagement in civil society, information about and access to these groups is a significant barrier for young women and men.

Initial project recommendation(s): Build on project **mapping of existing civil society resources** to identify those that are most accessible to young women and men. Examine any capacity-strengthening efforts that the project could conduct specific to the groups that could have the greatest influence, such as women's groups or youth associations.

Year 4 project recommendation(s): **First**, diversify NGO and CBO partners to reflect an investment in those that support more marginalized and highly vulnerable populations, focusing more on mission and mandate than the capacity to reach large numbers of participants. This will support populations that have been traditionally and increase community engagement, by providing quality service delivery to a more diverse population. **Second**, enhance the current mentorship model to better meet the needs of adolescent girls and young women who want to enter the job market, providing them with opportunity to learn from and connect with women leaders from different professional and service oriented fields. As such, female youth and female youth serving associations should be provided civic engagement training, information on adolescent girls/young

women-centered resource supports, and access to career guidance and mentorship opportunities (through greater interaction with women leaders).

4. Challenge: Gender norms at the household and community levels that influence job choices for young men and women.

Study finding(s): Generally, girls have lower access to school and therefore lack literacy skills later in life, presenting a specific barrier to employment. This is reinforced by very rigid norms around the types of jobs perceived to be suitable for women and men, contributing to a limited range of economic opportunities for women.

Initial project recommendation(s): In curricula that are being rolled out at targeted ALPs, vocational training centers, and community literacy programs, the project should place **renewed focus on numeracy and literacy skills (such as basic accounting) for young women learners**, preventing this basic barrier from being a reason why women don't have control over income generation or use. In ALPs, the project could encourage **young men to learn skills traditionally associated with women's responsibilities** (such as cooking or washing clothes) while young women participate in activities such as livestock-rearing or carpentry more typically associated with men, with the aim of breaking down the idea that these trades are gendered, instead putting the emphasis on marketable skills.

Year 4 project recommendation(s): Recognizing the burden of household and community responsibilities, and how this differs by gender, IYDA should focus on ways to support those most economically vulnerable and marginalized to increase access to livelihoods opportunities. Future iterations of IYDA should support CAPs and CRSs to offer more market-driven skills training, support identification of diverse job opportunities and niche markets, strengthen the role of female mentorship and accompaniment for adolescent girls and young women, and increase the integration of GESI into education and skills training content, teacher professional development, and experiential work-based learning.

III. Adapt INEE Equity & Inclusion Index & Framework to local context

The 'Index for Inclusion'⁶³ is a set of materials meant to support increased learning and participation in schools.⁶⁴ The Index is promoted as an adaptable resource by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, meant to encourage increased learning and participation (among which are vulnerable groups, children and youth with disabilities, and others).

We have adapted this Index to support greater equity and inclusion in CRSs, CAPs and CBOs, providing approaches to teaching and learning and behavior change between and among learners and teachers. **In schools**, this will translate to codes of conduct and equity strategy improvement plans (ESIPs) that reflect commitment to and investment in social inclusion. **For YSLOs**, this will raise awareness and strengthen capacity to monitor and support equity and inclusion as part of learning, civic engagement, and positive transitions to employment for youth. Curricula reform is covered by the Index, but will not be part of IDYA activities for this year.

⁶³ Booth T., Ainscow, M. (revised edition 2002) The Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools, Bristol, Centre for Studies on Inclusion in Education.

⁶⁴ For countries of the South words such as 'learning centre' are sometimes used instead of 'school' to reflect the variety of formal and informal learning arrangements. In this report there is a change of usage from school to learning centre in the final two Sections to reflect the changes envisaged in new country specific versions of an Index.

The Index has four critical elements:

Key concepts – to provide an approach to thinking and talking about increasing learning and participation.

A Planning Framework (Dimensions and Sections) – to structure the approach to the evaluation and development in the school environment.

Indicators and Questions – to support a detailed review of all aspects of a school and to guide implementation of greater GESI.

An inclusive process – to ensure that review, planning and implementation are themselves inclusive and roles and responsibilities are clear in terms of supporting sustainable approaches to equity and inclusion.

IYDA will ensure that the four key elements of the Index are integrated into an adapted approach.

Using Elements of the Index for GESI sensitization and training. [The Index](#) process involves five phases. In phase 1, a GESI coordinating group is created and includes those with leadership, accountability and influence within CRSs and CAPs, in addition to representatives within the community whose mission is to serve and support the needs and interests of youth. This coordinating group will inform themselves about GESI concepts and take responsibility for gathering and disseminating knowledge to all members of a learning community. In phase 2, simple tools to think about culture change and examine the realities of the CRS/CAP will be developed and refined. In phase 3, the ESIP is revised in the light of these new priorities. In phase 4, the GESI coordinating group supports the implementation of agreed changes, including CRS/CAP and community activities necessary to support the process. In phase 5, best practice and lessons learned will be reviewed for how to improve in successive years.

For the purposes of IYDA activities in Year 4, the project will support phases 1-3 through facilitated discussion and training support. Some monitoring will be conducted to report on progress, which we indicate as Phase 4 for the purposes of IYDA implementation of GESI.