

## Guidelines for intersectoral synergies in sites and collective centers in the Democratic Republic of Congo

### I. Introduction

#### 1.1. Background

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been facing a complex security and humanitarian crisis for almost 30 years. The country is home to some 7 million internal displaced persons (IDPs). In 2024, 25 million people need humanitarian assistance, among which 8.7 million people have been targeted in the Humanitarian Response Plan.

People in displacement areas occupy collective centers (schools, churches, etc.) and gather in arteries thus forming spontaneous sites. According to data from CCCM Cluster, the country has 236 sites and collective centers, housing 1250000 people<sup>1</sup>. Most of sites and collective centers have been identified in North Kivu, a province that continues to be the scene of armed clashes between the March 23 Movement (M23) and the Congolese army, and in which more than 1.5 million people have been displaced since the beginning of 2024. In addition, IDP sites and collective centers have counted 293,000 school-age children, including 140 530 girls as of February 29, 2024<sup>2</sup>. Access to education for these children remains a major challenge in the majority of IDP sites/collective centers, which do not have dedicated learning spaces and whose schools are often too far from the IDPs' sites. In some cases, the temporary learning spaces (TLS) set up are insufficient to accommodate all the children. When a school exists near the sites or collective centers, the classrooms are overcrowded due to the massive influx of students, as IDP children are added to the children of the host community. When a school is used as a shelter for displaced populations, children's education is severely disrupted, and school buildings and equipment are threatened by destruction and looting. In February 2024, an estimated 121 schools were being used as shelters by IDPs, representing 14% of the 869 closed schools identified<sup>3</sup>.

In the field of protection, analyses carried out by the Protection Cluster have highlighted the challenges of access to land to set up IDP sites, the proximity of certain approved sites to areas of armed confrontation, and the risk of eviction of IDPs living in sites and collective centers. The analysis of the results of security audits carried out by the GBV Sub-Cluster has enabled to develop recommendations on mitigation measures to be implemented by all operational actors in IDP sites, with the advantage that mitigating GBV risks in all program sectors also contributes more broadly to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)<sup>4</sup>. In the shelter sector, overcrowding in the sites has exacerbated promiscuity and affected households' dignity. In most cases, households benefiting from shelter assistance have had to extend the size of their shelters with makeshift materials to accommodate more people. In the Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) sector, the distance between water points and shelters in some sites has led to risks of exposure to sexual assault and rapes, particularly for women and girls.

Since 2023, the year in which the humanitarian response has been scaled up<sup>5</sup>, the Clusters have intensified their field visits in the regions affected by conflict or crisis, particularly in the eastern of the country (Ituri, North

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<sup>1</sup> Source: dashboard of the CCCM Cluster, May 2024

<sup>2</sup> See the CCCM Cluster infographic of 02/29/2024 (6–17-year-olds representing 30% of the total number of people displaced to sites and collective centers).

<sup>3</sup> Source: Education Cluster

<sup>4</sup> Source: Safety audit report\_ GBV AoR Safety

<sup>5</sup> From June 16 to December 31, 2023, the world's top humanitarian aid officials have triggered an immediate intensification of "Scale Up" humanitarian operations in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This decision was taken in line with the five assessment criteria of scale, complexity, urgency, capacity, and risk of aid



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the negotiation of land for the installation of temporary or emergency shelters in synergy with other stakeholders</li> </ul>	Protection/HLP Cluster, CCCM, Wash Cluster, Shelter Cluster.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the recommendations made by the GBV area of responsibility in the various security audit reports on IDP camps<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	VBG AoR, Protection cluster, all clusters/actors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the maximum and real capacities of WASH actors (water, latrines, showers, etc.) and shelter actors (number of shelters) before deploying sectoral interventions in sites and collective centers</li> </ul>	Shelter cluster, WASH Cluster/All actors or partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In collaboration with Protection/HLP, sensitize landowners to prevent the risk of eviction of displaced people from sites and collective centers.</li> </ul>	Shelter cluster, Protection cluster/ HLP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure compliance with standards in the planning and delivery of multi-sectoral services or responses.</li> </ul>	All clusters or partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify households using schools or classrooms as shelters and define the modalities of transfer to formal sites or host families asap, following an intention survey.</li> </ul>	Shelter cluster, Education Cluster, CCCM Cluster, Child protection AoR, Protection Cluster, Wash cluster

## 2.2. During the implementation phase (multi-sector)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaborate and validate a joint timetable of activities between WASH and Shelter actors as part of the implementation of activities in the sites.</li> </ul>	Actors or partners, Shelter cluster, WASH cluster, Cluster CCCM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share plans, drawings, and all other key documentation on site planning and development</li> </ul>	Actors or partners, Shelter cluster, WASH cluster, Cluster CCCM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonize beneficiary lists or alternatively ensure their sharing with all actors intervening in the sites and collective centers, with the aim of reducing the risks of tension, duplication, or exclusion of vulnerable persons.</li> </ul>	All clusters or partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly provide stakeholders with statistics, disaggregated by age, gender and diversity, of the populations at the sites.</li> </ul>	CCCM cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify people with specific needs for each intervention</li> </ul>	CCCM cluster, Protection cluster in collaboration with site stakeholders or operational partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the issue of crop reimbursement is considered when land is made available by local authorities.</li> </ul>	Shelter cluster, CCCM cluster, Protection/HLP cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilize site committees to support the various interventions of stakeholders</li> </ul>	CCCM cluster

<sup>6</sup> For more information, please find the report here: <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/rapid-gender-analysis-kanyaruchina-displacement-site-goma-north-kivu-woman-has-do-anything-provide-her-family-march-2024/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate the installation of temporary learning spaces and the school's rehabilitation with the Shelter and Wash actors to benefit from their expertise and complementary actions</li> </ul>	Education cluster, Shelter cluster, Wash cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the CCCM cluster to reinforce/implement a systematic collection of civil and humanitarian violations at IPD sites, to better measure their extent and use them as a basis for advocacy with the relevant authorities.</li> </ul>	Protection cluster + AoRs and CCCM Cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce/install vigilance committees at PDI sites.</li> </ul>	Protection Cluster, CCCM Cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce/implement community-based protection approaches in IDP sites, including both IDPs and host populations, to understand their perception of existing security problems and gather their opinions on the most appropriate protection and defense mechanisms.</li> </ul>	Protection Cluster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage innovative initiatives on site (installation of solar pumps, recycling of latrine sludge and other waste, soap production by displaced women, etc.)</li> </ul>	Shelter cluster, Wash cluster, CCCM Cluster or all clusters or partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness and disseminating key cluster messages to IDPS at sites or collective centers and to host communities.</li> </ul>	All clusters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint field visits to humanitarian intervention sites and collective centers to assess progress in implementation and cross-sectoral links between different actors</li> </ul>	All clusters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize periodic cross-sectoral reviews of the humanitarian response in sites and collective centers, to assess the achievement of cross-sectoral results.</li> </ul>	All clusters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share mission reports on gaps and cross-sectoral needs.</li> </ul>	All clusters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint advocacy to address cross-sector gaps in sites and collective centers</li> </ul>	All clusters

### 2.3. Consideration of the cash transfer method

Cash transfers are the most appropriate and straightforward way to ensure market-driven programming in protracted and complex conflict contexts. This approach encourages humanitarians to consider affected people not only according to their immediate needs, but also according to their capacities, investing in the resilience of communities affected by support to local markets.

Market-based programming, through cash transfers, requires in-depth reflection on labour markets— considering the capacities, experiences, and skills of displaced people— the survival of emerging small traders in affected communities, and the integration of the preferences of affected people into the design of humanitarian interventions. The working group on cash transfers encourages actors to follow these approaches for a quality intersectoral response:

- Value the skills and experiences of displaced people in analysis, rather than focusing exclusively on needs.
- Spend time understanding market dynamics and using the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative.
- Leverage the capacities of displaced and local populations to meet needs, for example:

- Implement cash transfers for work in sites and camps, with programming to share and invest in skills.
- Develop flexible programs on financial inclusion, household budget management and peaceful decision-making within households, when the response takes the form of cash transfer.
- Use digital coupons in small markets created within camps and sites.
- Support small markets around sites and camps to open mobile money accounts.
- Purchase of soaps or feminine hygiene products produced by displaced communities.

The Cash Working Group (CWG) proposes adapting monetary responses to the specific needs of households as much as possible. It invites humanitarian actors to respect the recommendations on the values of transfers, such as:

- Cover survival needs based on SEMB<sup>7</sup> transfer value by province.
- Increase support value based on cluster recommendations on specific or programmatic needs.

For example: A household of 5 people including a nursing mother, a person with a disability and a school-age child could receive:

SMEB.

A kitchen kit – in stores, in fairs or as a top-up, depending on the cluster.

A tarp or shelter kits.

Assistance for access to education, in the form of an education kit or in cash.

Nutritional assistance for lactating women, in food or cash, to ensure sufficient purchasing power for fresh food.

In case this type of adaptation is not possible, the CWG invites humanitarian actors to assist households with the recommended transfer values for MEB by province. The MEB covers food, non-food, small household contributions and access to education and health services.

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<sup>7</sup> The Minimum Survival Expenditure Basket (SMEB) consists of the following items: - Maize flour 250 grams per person per day + Cassava flour 250 grams per person per day + Beans 180 grams per person per day + Local oil (palm) 22 grams per person per day + Salt 5 grams per person per day / WASH - Dishwashing soap 3 bricks + Laundry soap 50 gr + Sanitary napkins 10 packs / NFIS (essential household items) - Mats 2 places 180x90 + Loin cloth 100% cotton, mosquito net 2 places + Plastic can 10L + Solar lamp. You can find out more about MEB and its products at this [link](#)