

IFP DEMOCRATISATION CLUSTER

COUNTRY CASE STUDY: KIVU

DEMOCRATISATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO:

A Case Study of South Kivu Province

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March 2009

International Alert.



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF CONGO

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all of those consulted and interviewed during the research of this report, especially Congolese civil society members, government officials, women's groups and researchers, as well as the UK government, EU, UN and NGO colleagues in South Kivu, Kinshasa, London and Brussels. Special thanks also go to colleagues at International Alert who contributed to the research process, especially Ed Bell, Annie Bukaraba, Judy El-Bushra, Elly Habibu, Xav Hagen, Ndeye Sow, Phil Vernon and Bill Yates.

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ACRONYMS

AMP	Alliance de la Majorité Présidentielle (Alliance of the Presidential Majority)
CDR	Community-Driven Reconstruction
CEI	Commission Electorale Indépendante (Independent Electoral Commission)
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (National Congress for the Defence of the People)
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CTB	Coopération Technique Belge (Belgian Development Cooperation)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Development Fund
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo)
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda)
FEC	Fédération des Entreprises du Congo (Federation of Congolese Enterprises)
IfP	Initiative for Peacebuilding
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LDFs	Local Development Funds
MONUC	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo (United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo)
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PADDL	Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Local (Decentralisation and Local Development Assistance Programme)
PAIDECO	Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Développement Communautaire (Community Development Initiatives Assistance Programme)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNDP	UN Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2006, elections were held in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) amid high hopes that they would bring about positive change for Congolese people who have suffered long periods of poverty, weak governance and conflict. More than two years after the elections, efforts by the Congolese government and international donors continue to be made to try to consolidate the structures and authority of the new national democratic institutions. Yet research carried out by International Alert in South Kivu in late 2008 suggests that faith in the democratic process among ordinary people has begun to wane. Donor support to democratisation processes in the DRC has tended to focus most heavily on the central government levels, rather than on building the relationship between the Congolese people and the local leaders they come into the most day-to-day contact with (whether they are democratically elected or not). And in the absence of functioning state institutions at the local level, other mechanisms of holding leaders to account have evolved that have so far not been impacted by democratisation. As it is still relatively early in Congo's democratic reform process, donors continue to have a window of opportunity to focus more on strengthening *local governance* in a way that is concrete and visible to ordinary people. This requires locally-targeted interventions that increase public knowledge and participation. It also means a strong donor commitment to operating within the particular "realities" of the DRC context.

Keywords: democratisation, governance and accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Since the formal end of the civil war in the DRC in 2003, international donors have been pursuing a democratisation and good governance agenda through support for the adoption of a new constitution, to national, provincial and legislative elections and by building the capacity of national democratic institutions. The process of democratisation, which empowers individuals to influence the way they are governed, is an attempt to introduce incentives for leaders to make decisions in the public interest rather than their own. Democracy is more than a series of elections and is ultimately a means to an end. While donors support democratisation processes in the hope that they will generate the important “accountability link” between citizen and state, the link between democratic processes like elections and state institution-building and better decision-making by leaders is often assumed to be true without being fully tested. Experience from the DRC suggests that support to formal democratic institutions and processes at the macro level on their own are not sufficient to improve governance, unless citizens are aware of their own power and seize the initiative to hold public and elected officials to account.

The aim of this paper is to explore how democratisation and governance processes actually work at the provincial and local level in the DRC and evaluate whether the “top down” approach to democratic institution-building currently used by many donors is likely to have an impact on the way most ordinary people in the Congo live. This comparison is even more significant when placed against the backdrop of the decentralisation process that is taking place in the DRC today, which will eventually see the devolution of increased powers into the hands of local authorities who are far removed from the information and international support heavily concentrated in the capital Kinshasa. This paper will also attempt to analyse the specific approaches that donors might introduce or reinforce to improve governance at the provincial and local levels, in parallel to national-level democratisation reforms. In accordance with the Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) State-Society Analytical Framework, the intention behind this paper is to ‘help identify the ways and means by which a culture of genuine political participation can be built, and how this endeavour can best be supported by external actors’.¹

A key idea underpinning this research is that “democratisation” is about changing the relationship between the citizen and the state from one of mutual suspicion and exploitation to one of positive action around shared objectives. For many donors, democratisation and hence good governance are ultimately ways to ensure human development happens in a more sustainable manner, with developing country governments themselves leading the process. This is based on the realisation that “sustainable development” is not a technical aspect in the design of an aid programme, but rather the process through which ordinary people begin to expect their government to deliver better public services and do not look for them to be funded and/or delivered by external agencies. Therefore, a key question for our research was whether or not donor interventions reinforce governance by strengthening the relationship between the citizen and state.

The “predatory” nature of the state in the DRC has been widely discussed and written about, especially in terms of how it operates and how it got to be that way.² But how to go about rebuilding citizens’ trust and expectations in such a system has been less widely discussed among aid practitioners. How to change the system of incentives that drives the way influential individuals (both in government and outside it) behave is often

1 Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) (May 2008). *State-Society Analytical Framework. Democratisation and Transitional Justice Cluster*. p.3.

2 For example, see: K. Vlassenroot and H. Romkema (May 2007). *Local Governance and Leadership in Eastern DRC*. The Hague, the Netherlands: Oxfam-Novib. Available at http://www.psw.ugent.be/crg/publications/working%20paper/localgov_rapport_eng_def.pdf.

not sufficiently addressed.³ And how donors can help mobilise people as a driving force for change in a context where people do not always believe change is possible is a very difficult question. Despite the progress that has been made in the DRC since the transition period, for most Congolese people at the local level the concrete impact of democratisation and governance reform remains elusive. This is partly because of unrealistically high expectations of a process that is decidedly long term in nature, but also partly because the approach to state-building in the DRC has been overly focused on the central level and not fully adapted to the needs of local people.

3 Sue Unsworth argues in *Can Political Science Speak to Policymakers?* that the “Drivers of Change” model as a framework for beginning to understand these incentives has gained currency among donor staff resident in-country. But this has not yet translated into a new way of thinking about aid at a macro level. See: S. Unsworth (2007). *Can Political Science Speak to Policymakers?* Paper prepared by Sue Unsworth for PSA Development Politics Group 2nd Annual Conference, International Development Department, University of Birmingham, 26th January 2007. Revised November 2007.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this report was carried out as a case study of democratisation and governance processes in a single province, South Kivu, where Alert has nearly ten years of experience working on peacebuilding and women's political participation issues. South Kivu is also a province that continues to experience both periodic violent conflict and an ongoing democratisation process, providing an opportunity to look at the interaction between the two dynamics. With the structure and lines of enquiry of the IfP State-Society Analytical Framework in mind, the provincial and local-level processes were analysed during a series of visits to the DRC, focusing on Kinshasa as well as the provincial capital of Bukavu, the territorial capital of Uvira and two smaller villages in South Kivu. Interviews were carried out with key interlocutors at various levels from provincial ministers, heads of service divisions, female political leaders, traditional chiefs and urban civil society leaders, to focus groups of "ordinary" people, grass-roots peace committee members, small businesspeople, local representatives of state institutions, and local military and militia commanders. Much of the information in this report is anecdotal. It is not scientific data; rather it is aimed at giving the reader an impression of the governance situation in South Kivu, as lived by a diverse range of individuals at different levels of society.

CONTEXT

The DRC is a young democracy that has made important progress since the periods of colonisation, dictatorship and war that have characterised most of the country's recent history. The national transitional institutions established after the formal end of the war in 2003 attempted to provide a more organised and pluralistic approach to laying the foundations of a democratic state. A 2005 national referendum resulted in the approval of the country's constitution,⁴ a political and logistical achievement that set the democratic process firmly in motion. Electoral legislation, approved by the transitional parliament, established the procedures for the general presidential, legislative and provincial elections of 2006-07, the first multiparty elections in the DRC in 40 years. The pride and excitement the Congolese people had in the fact that their country was on the cusp of joining the ranks of the global democracies was visible, as was the intense hope people had that the democratic process would improve their lives. More than two years after the elections, efforts continue to be made in consolidating the structures and authority of the national democratic institutions. A process of decentralisation, as foreseen in the constitution, has begun, with several pieces of important legislation passed by parliament and local elections ostensibly planned for 2009.

A number of donors are engaged in macro-level capacity-building and technical support to the ongoing process of democratic reform and extension of state authority, both civilian and military, throughout the country. The World Bank funds a five-year US\$50 million Governance Capacity Enhancement project which supports institution-building at the central and provincial level, taking advantage of the decentralisation process as an opportunity for general governance reforms. The project includes supporting provincial assemblies as well as tracking the transfer of resources between provincial and community level, and recognises that governance work must be coordinated with efforts to strengthen service-delivery capacity in other sectors, like health and education.⁵ The European Commission (EC) dedicates approximately 25 percent of its financial envelope for the DRC to reinforcing governance at the central and provincial level, including a limited number of provincial or local development projects.⁶ Most donors, however, seem to concentrate the majority of their support at the central or provincial level, with far fewer projects targeted at capacity-building of local government officials.

Tensions and conflict between different ethnic groups continue to pose challenges to establishing lasting peace and stability in the DRC, in South Kivu as well as other provinces. In looking at the interests and incentives of leaders, overwhelming anecdotal evidence suggests that politicians at both the central and provincial level are distracted by the ongoing conflict in the east which, in addition to being a diversion of valuable attention and resources, can potentially be used as an excuse to chip away at governance reforms. For example, some government officials in Bukavu said they felt that external actors were almost entirely to blame for the problems in eastern DRC, somewhat undermining the potential value of their own role in responsible decision-making.⁷ The longer the conflict lasts, ethnic considerations are likely to continue to distort how people vote and which politicians they support, reinforcing the existing tendency in the DRC towards a politics of identity over ideas, and undermining governance. At the same time, if democratically-elected politicians adopt confrontational ethnic policies, this risks fuelling conflict further, and the cycle continues. Ending conflict and improving governance are two sides of the same coin in the DRC: one is unlikely to be achieved in a meaningful way without the other.

4 The constitution received overwhelming public support among Congolese voters. However, many analysts believe people saw it as a vote for "peace" without being particularly informed about its actual content.

5 World Bank (March 2008). *Project Appraisal Document on Proposed Grant in the Amount of SDR 31.3 Million (US\$50 Million Equivalent) to the Democratic Republic of Congo for A Governance Capacity Enhancement Project*. (Report No: 41748-ZR.) Public Sector Reform and Capacity-Building Unit, Africa Region. p.5-7.

6 European Community (2008). *Document de strategie pays et programme indicative national: DRC, 10th European Development Fund (EDF) (2008-2013)*. p.29.

7 Author interviews, South Kivu, October 2008.

SOUTH KIVU: THE FORMAL STATE STRUCTURES

The political system in the DRC, as established by the constitution and subsequent legislation, is a decentralised system characterised by a mix of appointed, directly- and indirectly-elected posts. Although local elections have not yet taken place, the 2006-07 presidential, legislative and provincial elections resulted in the installation of some elected officials who sit at the decentralised provincial level, namely the governor, vice-governor⁸ and the provincial assembly members (known as *deputés*). In addition, senators⁹ and national assembly members have a national mandate and serve in the capital Kinshasa, but represent their province or local-level constituencies. Other key state officials are in place at the provincial and local levels that have either been appointed by the central government, the provincial governor or are customary, i.e. appointed by a local family or clan in accordance with tradition.

South Kivu province has a population of about 4.5 million people and consists of the provincial capital city, Bukavu, and eight territories. In the rural areas each territory is governed by an *administrateur du territoire*, who is appointed by the central government. The territories are further divided into *secteurs* or *chefferies*,¹⁰ which are in turn divided into *groupements*, then villages. Each entity has a “*chef*” (chief) and under Congo’s electoral law, only the *chefs de secteur*, and the advisors to the *chefs de secteur* and *chefs de chefferie*, will be elected. The *administrateurs du territoire*, *chefs de groupement* and village will continue to be appointed posts. In the urban areas (in the case of South Kivu, this refers only to Bukavu city), the mayor, the *bourgmestres* of each of the city’s four communes and their advisors will be elected.¹¹ (See Annex 1 for a more detailed organigram of the formal structure of the provincial and local government in South Kivu.)

Congolese law distinguishes between decentralised state entities (*entités territoriales décentralisées*) such as the *ville* (city) and commune in urban areas, and the *secteur* and *chefferie* in rural areas, and “deconcentrated” entities (*entités territoriales déconcentrées*), such as the quarter in the urban areas and the territory, *groupement* and village in the rural areas. Decentralised entities are those to which the central state has formally delegated its authority with respect to certain functions. Deconcentrated entities are those that fall under provincial authority. When local elections take place in 2009, the leaders of the *entités territoriales décentralisées* will be elected, while the leaders of the *entités territoriales déconcentrées* will not be. The DRC parliament passed a law on the functioning of the decentralised entities in October 2008 while the deconcentrated entities continue for the moment to operate in a legal vacuum *vis-à-vis* the decentralisation process.

The constitution outlines specific powers which are retained at the central level, delegated to the provincial level, or are shared between the two. Article 2 of the constitution outlines the subdivision of provincial boundaries, ultimately increasing the total number of provinces from 11 to 26, although the boundaries of some provinces like North and South Kivu will remain unchanged. Among the general population, probably the most well-known and eagerly anticipated aspect of decentralisation is the constitutional requirement in Article 175 for 40 percent of provincial revenues to be retained at the source, rather than being sent to the central government.¹²

8 In accordance with Congolese electoral law, governors/vice-governors and senators are indirectly elected by the provincial assemblies.

9 Senators are indirectly elected by the provincial assembly members.

10 These territorial subdivisions are known as “*chefferies*” where there is a traditionally-appointed leader in place and “*secteurs*” in the other cases.

11 In September 2008, a number of local government posts nation-wide were filled by presidential ordinance, leading some observers in the country to question the government’s commitment to holding local elections.

12 For comparison, in 2007 the central government sent only eight percent of its revenues back to the provinces.

According to various sources in the DRC, questions remain around whether decentralisation will spark conflict as boundaries are re-drawn around resource-rich areas and across ethnic groupings. There may be an inherent trade-off between the potentially destabilising effects of rushing decentralisation through too soon versus the risk of aggravating tensions between the centre and the provinces by not doing it soon enough.

At the same time, there are parts of South Kivu with virtually no state presence at all. In Uvira territory, the *Haut* and *Moyen Plateaux* areas are relatively inaccessible due both to logistics and security concerns. In Fizi territory, there are areas occupied by the Rwandan armed group the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda, or FDLR) where the *administrateur du territoire* is not able to go, in addition to places so remote they are only accessible by helicopter, a resource that only the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) has. In some cases, the armed groups have managed to set up parallel administrative structures and taxation policies. Even in areas where the *administrateur du territoire* is established, he generally has few staff and scant resources such as a reliable police force or court system. There are very few civil service representatives deployed outside the provincial capital, with the exception of certain branches of government that seem to be over-represented in the more financially lucrative areas, like customs and immigration, where poorly paid civil servants have managed to transform their posts into a source of income-generation. For many state agents, contact with remotely posted staff members seems to be sporadic at best, although some travel is apparently facilitated by international or national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

When local elections eventually do take place in South Kivu, some officials who have a high degree of *de facto* influence over people's lives will not be up for election. For example, the *administrateurs du territoire* were repeatedly mentioned in rural focus groups as being key figures people felt could handle their problems or grievances. In some cases, the *administrateurs* were even instrumental in controlling the behaviour of government soldiers, depending on their personal relationships with the local commanders. According to electoral law, the lowest level of directly-elected authorities will be the deliberative council of advisors, i.e. the *conseillers de secteur/chefferie* in the rural areas, for whom the constituency is the *groupement*, and the *conseillers municipaux* in the urban areas, for whom the constituency is the commune. Also in the case of the *chefferie*, a democratically-elected deliberative council will advise a traditionally appointed leader, making it difficult to see how the accountability relationship between the electorate and their leader will work in practice in that case.

The civil service technical divisions established by the central government continue to function relatively unchanged at the provincial capital level, despite the appointment by the governor of a provincial government led by cabinet ministers who work in many of the same disciplines as the services. Some service division chiefs reported having delicate relations with the corresponding provincial ministries. Although the law puts the service divisions at the 'disposal' of the provincial government,¹³ we were told that their staff salaries continue for the moment to be paid by Kinshasa. Therefore, the formal links to the central government have not been effectively shifted. Despite the fact that the governor is the representative of the central government in the province, there were some reports of division chiefs referring back to Kinshasa for quite minor decisions, rather than dealing with the related provincial minister. Overlapping responsibilities with ministry staff and a dual chain of command led in some cases to clear competition between the civil service and ministerial cabinet, as well as duplication of efforts and "hoarding" of information. This situation could also potentially be the result of some provincial ministers preferring to rely on their own politically appointed staff rather than civil servants from a previous era.

According to some provincial government officials, lack of staff turnover during many years has meant that a number of civil servants have grown accustomed to working in a "non-collaborative" manner. Indeed, one service division chief spoke of struggling with the lax work culture, with staff turning up late, leaving early and sometimes reporting for work drunk. New division chiefs reported being unsure whether to sanction staff, replace them or retrain them, and it was felt that pushing too hard might simply lead to a wall of resistance. As a result, some division chiefs seemed to end up spending significant amounts of time just dealing with staff management problems, rather than focusing on substantive work. Nevertheless some local officials showed remarkable initiative. One female leader, who found US\$15 in the official coffers when she took office, told us the first thing she did was reform her staff salary system using money received in fees and taxes, as a way of mobilising her team to support her more difficult or sensitive governance reforms.

13 Article 102 of organic law 08/016 of 7th October 2008.

One member of civil society in Uvira described the key challenges for governance in South Kivu as two-fold: a lack of collaboration between the authorities and the population on the one hand, and between the authorities themselves on the other. Since the 2006 elections, relations between the provincial government and provincial assembly have sometimes been strained. The governor and his ministers were removed from power in November 2007 after the provincial assembly passed a motion of censure.¹⁴ Different versions of the circumstances surrounding this event circulate in Bukavu, with those associated with the former governor accusing the assembly of wasting money and the assembly accusing the governor of being unresponsive and uncommunicative. In any case, the province lost more than a year while its key political leaders were locked in institutional crisis and in-fighting.

¹⁴ The removal from power was later found by the supreme court to have been wrongful, but the governor declined to retake his post and eventually new elections were held for a replacement.

GRASS-ROOTS “VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY”: ALTERNATIVE “RULES OF THE GAME”¹⁵

In many parts of rural DRC, the formal processes of the national and provincial governments do not apply, and South Kivu is no exception. In their place, a series of societal practices and coping mechanisms have emerged, attempting to provide a degree of stability. Completely separate from the democratisation process and access to formal oversight mechanisms (like parliament or the court system), there were grass-roots efforts aimed at holding both civilian and military leaders to account, some of which were successful and some of which were not. There was some evidence to suggest that it was not the fact of being elected that provided the crucial “accountability link” between the leader and the population, rather it was the physical closeness or accessibility to the population that created the pressure for the leader to act in the public interest. This seemed to be especially true if the leader was a native of the area, as opposed to transplanted from elsewhere. One *chef de chefferie* we spoke to said that it was very difficult for him to be dishonest with public funds, since he lived there, and thus everybody knew him and he had no place else to go. The most effective check on a person's behaviour therefore seemed not to be legal processes, but whether that person was known to others and had to live among them. However, for many rural people who have limited access to transport or electronic communications, the *secteur/chefferie* may still not be close enough to establish the critical physical proximity criteria. If there are no roads or telephones, for many people 50km might as well be 1,000km.

At the same time, the leaders at the most grass-roots levels who lived day-to-day with their constituents lacked resources to implement state-funded community projects. So although they were susceptible to public pressure, they often could not deliver, creating frustration on both sides. The *chef de chefferie* suggested that being more closely involved in aid projects could help him appear to the community as if he was not totally powerless to act in response to their problems. In fact, he had collaborated on aid projects before, by organising manual labour for donor-funded construction projects.¹⁶

A number of local NGOs in South Kivu have complained that more than half of the 2009 provincial budget was dedicated to government salaries rather than development projects and other investments. At the same time, arguments are often made in the DRC that a primary cause of corruption is the underpayment of state salaries. However, if politicians only have enough money in the budget to pay their own salaries and cannot deliver anything to the population, then they may start to see their days as elected officials as inevitably numbered, which will encourage a “take what you can” mentality while they have the chance.

Being excluded and not being given sufficient resources by their superiors were common complaints at all levels of provincial and local government in South Kivu. One former provincial minister complained that the provincial government was not informed about what was happening in Kinshasa and did not have the power or resources to do anything, but got a lot of the blame. For their part, provincial *deputés* reported feeling frustrated at passing laws that were never implemented. They felt the population blamed them for the lawlessness, when they were only legislators, not executors. This experience seems to suggest that those who felt the most day-to-day pressure (like village chiefs) had limited authority; those who had authority (like the provincial government)

15 According to the IfP State-Society Analytical Framework, the “Rules of the Game” refer to ‘the combination of the “official” framework with “unofficial” processes (that) determines how power is distributed and exercised as well as the nature of state-society relations’. Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP). Op. cit. p.5.

16 While this involvement was a good way to build the collaborative relationship between the people and the state, it would be important to ensure that the opportunity to work did not become another part of the elite patronage system.

had insufficient resources and those who had resources (the central government) were the most insulated from facing widespread public pressure. The three key elements for the effective exercise of power, i.e. pressure, authority and resources, were so widely dispersed across different levels of government, that no single entity seemed inclined and/or able to take effective action.

CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

It is clear in South Kivu that one important function of effective democratic states, i.e. the ability to arbitrate disputes peacefully and impartially, has been replaced in the best case scenario with informal grass-roots “peace committees” that encourage negotiation and dialogue between individuals, communities and authorities, and in the worst case scenario with outright violence.

In different parts of South Kivu, there are numerous examples of the population organising itself to confront and put pressure on local government authorities. In one example, a member of the *Fédération des Entreprises du Congo* (Federation of Congolese Enterprises, or FEC), a professional organisation of private sector entities, described how local truck drivers, angry at having to pay parking taxes (US\$3 per truck per month) but seeing no services in return, were mobilised by civil society to lobby the *administrateur du territoire*. After two months of negotiations, we were told the different sides agreed that the taxes would continue to be paid but would be put into a joint account to be used for road works, with each withdrawal requiring a counter-signature.

In another village where armed groups manned check-points and extracted high levels of taxes from the population, the local authorities, with support from a Congolese NGO, managed to negotiate a “deal” whereby the armed group would secure the area in exchange for a flat fee of 200 Congolese francs per person on the road. As this stabilised the situation and also possibly improved the nature of each individual's daily interaction with the armed group members, commercial traffic on the road increased, benefiting both those manning the check-points as well as the villagers. The NGO stressed though, that it was hard to find “cookie cutter” approaches to these types of problems and each village had to develop its own strategy. Donors could consider how the “tax committee” model could be replicated in other villages. However, instead of donors themselves trying to establish these committees, which would be neither possible nor desirable (their inherent value being in their locally-owned grass-roots nature), they could simply support the sharing of information between village chiefs and civil society leaders who have initiated such projects successfully, and other communities who may be inspired to do likewise.

Recommendation 1: Donors should support local initiatives that strengthen accountability between people and their local officials, whether they are elected or not. For example, donors could consider how the “tax committee” model could be replicated.

There are a number of local NGOs in South Kivu that do important and sometimes dangerous peacebuilding work, often in a “troubleshooting” style, to address small conflicts before they escalate. One local NGO in Bukavu was supporting a Peasants Union engaged in advocacy at the territorial level around arbitrary taxation and extortion of the population. This had reportedly resulted in some reduction in the number of check-points in their area. The Peasants Union targeted its advocacy first at the base, for example the village chief. If that was unsuccessful, they would go to the *administrateur de territoire*, then to the provincial assembly or up the military chain of command. The NGO said that the level of influence local authorities had over check-points depended on the case. Sometimes the civilian authorities genuinely could not control the situation, in other cases they were complicit. In terms of stopping the abuses, in some cases the best results came from appealing up the command hierarchy of the people committing the offence (as opposed to, for example, appealing to the local civilian authority to control the behaviour of the military). By raising each complaint up the hierarchy until they arrived at a superior who was not receiving any benefit from the check-point run by their subordinates, there was a better chance of getting support. The NGO cited an example where the provincial governor had given them permission to use a piece of land that the *administrateur du territoire* later gave to a private company while on a trip to Kinshasa. The NGO complained to the provincial governor who, not wanting to appear powerless, sided with them against the *administrateur* and the land was returned to the NGO. Sometimes, however, this type of strategy backfired, as demonstrated by one case where a farmer had all his cows killed on the orders of the village chief after the farmer bypassed him to complain about something to the *chef de groupement*.

In one focus group of small businesswomen in Uvira, the women told of having to pay 24 different taxes to a confusing multitude of agents at various levels of authority, from those running the local market to the local village chief to the *administrateur du territoire*. At one point the women did rise up to protest and taxes were slightly lowered, though not to a sufficient degree. The women also reported using civil society as a go-between, providing a bridge to the authorities to discuss problems, as the authorities were more susceptible to messages coming from groups of people rather than individuals. Women in a rural village focus group who were involved in small commercial trade also reported paying taxes to a multitude of authorities, which they estimated at about US\$7-8 on merchandise valued at about US\$20-30. They even said that sometimes the same soldiers taxed them multiple times by outpacing them on the same road, making it difficult to see how small business can be an engine of development in such circumstances.

Some citizens felt annoyed at having to pay taxes to the local chiefs without gaining much visible benefit in return. However, some other people felt that this was normal as the chiefs 'had to eat too'. Activism based around taxation will clearly be most successful if people recognise taxes as public money, rather than as something that unquestionably belongs to the leaders because it has always been that way. Some civil society members felt that the population saw provincial-level leaders as "untouchable" and so didn't feel in a position to hold them to account. Another informant said historically, people tended to see their chief as "god". They felt people did not seem interested in discussing issues; the mentality was 'the chief is coming to dish out!'

But tax collection was not a strictly negative experience. In one rural village we visited, the chief had begun collecting US\$1 per house in order to bring some electricity to the village. At the time of the interview, he had collected the fee from 68 houses and was preparing to install security lighting in the main centre part of the village. Yet this same village chief when asked his views on aid projects, said his preference was for the donors to work directly with the communities or go through local organisations to avoid the money being stolen, without seeming to consider the potential role he could play in organising and implementing public service initiatives (along the lines of what he was already doing). Building on local leadership initiatives that already exist, donors could investigate the possibility of offering small loans or grants (US\$500-\$1,000) to village chiefs for minor public projects in their communities, with a mechanism for ensuring oversight by other members of the village built in. The objectives of this approach would be to: 1) encourage local leadership and initiative as an alternative to reliance on aid; 2) show demonstrable impact of development funds at the grass-roots level; and 3) teach citizens to pressure their leaders for results. Some sort of token matching funds requirement could be asked of the villages and successful implementation of a project would be a pre-requisite for applying for new funds. By investing in the *process* of governance at the very local level in a way that the population can see and feel, donors ultimately help encourage broad popular support for provincial- and national-level reforms, which at the moment seem removed from the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.

Recommendation 2: Donors should investigate the possibility of offering small loans or grants to local government authorities for community projects at the very grass-roots levels, in order to strengthen governance in a way that is concrete and relevant to ordinary people.

In addition to tax collection, there are other examples in South Kivu of grass-roots committees being formed around areas of service delivery, such as managing schools and overseeing minor infrastructure works. These committees can sometimes be highly effective, often involving influential members of the population, businesspeople, parents, local authorities, etc. However, forming a committee around each aspect of public life that needs oversight is likely to be quite time consuming. The committee approach effectively takes the place of local government, but at a relatively high cost to the citizen, who must personally participate rather than electing somebody to oversee these various activities on his/her behalf. And there is always the risk that the committees will come into conflict with local government structures unless the relationship between the two is carefully managed and it is understood that ultimately the grass-roots committees must transform into something that does not set up parallel structures to the state. Nevertheless, in the early stages of local governance capacity-building, when the state is too weak to function at all, the committee approach can fuel vital improvements in political culture that will have knock-on benefits on the oversight of the state at a later time.

Experience in South Kivu suggests that even when public pressure was not successful in bringing about a change in a situation, the process of public involvement in policy seemed to have beneficial effects. For example,

in one village a group of women confronted the village chief about his taxation policies, with the help of a local civil society peace committee. Although the situation did not change, the women themselves said they felt that it was important progress that the village chief accepted being interrogated by the population, especially by women. At the very least, grass-roots activism, coupled with the national debate on decentralisation and elections, has meant that people were talking about and reflecting on the role and responsibilities of the state. Perhaps most importantly, the public debates around the electoral process may begin to slowly roll back the entrenched sense that the quickest way to political power is down the barrel of a gun.

In the absence of physical access to key decision-makers, we encountered a number of cases where local authorities (both civilian and military) had repeatedly written letters to higher authorities about various pressing needs. However, in no case did we hear of someone receiving a reply. In one case, the village chief had been writing letters for years to everyone from his immediate superior the *chef de groupement* to ministerial representatives, the *administrateur du territoire*, etc. In this case, being a local authority seemed less like a supposed gravy train and more like a somewhat thankless task. One member of civil society who had worked on corruption and transparency issues suggested that donors support “Town Hall Meeting” style interactions between political leaders and the population in rural areas, as a way of informing the population of commitments made by the government and allowing them to ask questions in person. These exchanges could be recorded for the public record (on radio, TV or in print) so that they could be easily referred back to.¹⁷ Regular face-to-face visits by state officials to the grass-roots areas could also be built into donor projects in other sectors like health, education and agriculture.

Recommendation 3: Donors should help facilitate regular face-to-face meetings between village chiefs and authorities at the *secteur/chefferie* and provincial levels. Donors could also support regular visits of public administration officials to the rural areas, perhaps at the level of the territory or *secteur/chefferie*, to directly address the population.

ARMY/POLICE AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), as well as many donor country strategies, considers putting the armed forces under effective democratic civilian control a key part of their overall governance strategies. For example, pillar 1 of the PRSP ‘Promoting good governance and consolidating peace through strengthened institutions’ includes a section on the integration and administration of the army and the police. Likewise, the governance sector of the EC’s Country Strategy Paper includes a sub-section on ‘Political governance and security’ that covers its value-added to the ongoing work of the EU security reform missions in the DRC: EUSEC and EUPOL.¹⁸

According to information revealed in the focus group discussions, the link between proximity and accountability also holds true with armed group members to some extent, in particular the Mai-Mai who were sometimes referred to by people in rural areas as “children of the village”. Being “of the area” meant that the Mai-Mai were sometimes effectively subjected to the authority of local leaders, who in some cases were able to control their behaviour. For example, there was one report of a local chief denying food to Mai-Mai members to keep them in check. In one rural focus group, the same thing was said about the Congolese armed forces (FARDC), i.e. that the ones based in the village were less likely to harass the population than others that came from ‘the bush’. Similarly, some civil society organisations (CSOs) reported that discipline for rape was effectively meted out in cases where the victim was from a “friendly” population. If rape was committed against “enemy” civilians¹⁹ it went unpunished, suggesting that “justice” in the DRC is not impossible, but that it is certainly not dispensed even-handedly. The FARDC commander in one village claimed he disciplined his troops if they were caught committing a crime, but that most crimes happened outside of the village, in “the bush”. In some cases, it seemed that when women intervened together as a group on behalf of an individual, they could sometimes influence

¹⁷ The NGO Search for Common Ground currently does radio broadcasts throughout the country of Town Hall meetings in a programme called ‘Elongo Tosale’ango’ (Let’s make it happen together).

¹⁸ EUSEC and EUPOL are European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions in the DRC that support the Congolese government in aspects of army and police reform.

¹⁹ For example, people from a different ethnic group with whom there is some kind of conflict or rivalry, perhaps over land.

the armed groups. One woman said she had been raped and forcibly married to an armed group member who had killed her parents. A women's group intervened to secure her medical treatment and instead of living at the military camp she was allowed to live in the village with only the occasional visit from her "husband".

FARDC discipline problems have been linked by analysts and policy-makers to the non-payment of their salaries, which is undoubtedly true in many cases. However, the FARDC commanders we spoke to in two different villages reported that they and their soldiers were getting their salaries and that their salaries had been steadily increasing since 2006. At the time of writing, the monthly salary reportedly being received for an FARDC captain was between 41,000-45,000 Congolese francs (about US\$80 per month). Although not much (and sometimes received late), it probably put the soldiers in better circumstances than the average civilian with whom they lived. The other problem was that, despite the salaries, the FARDC reported having no barracks, medical care, transport or equipment, meaning no matter how disciplined they were, there was little chance of them playing much of an operational role, for example in civilian protection. In fact, we were told that going on mission usually meant commandeering transport from civilians. On the other hand, some people felt that even if the military were better off than the population, they seemed to feel they were "owed" certain freebies due to the "sacrifices" they were making in defence of the country.

One FARDC commander said he had repeatedly informed his hierarchy about the living conditions of his men, by mail as there was no mobile phone coverage and he had no transport to visit them in person. In fact, he had written to his chain of command *seven* times in the past year complaining about the living conditions of his troops, with no reply, and had finally given up. He also said that no state authorities ever visited the community. Although he reported having "good" relations with the civilian authorities, he said that the *chef de secteur* and *administrateur du territoire* consistently referred his problems to Kinshasa as, constitutionally, defence remains a non-decentralised power under the authority of the central government. According to Congolese law, active members of the armed forces and police also do not have the right to vote,²⁰ meaning that even the most basic threat of civic action is not credible. The total lack of responsiveness from different authorities at various levels, and the general passing of the buck, seemed to reinforce the "everyone for himself" survival mentality, characterised by one woman as *'chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tous'* (everyone for himself, God for all).

Under the constitution, responsibility for the national police is also not a decentralised power. However, under Congolese law, the *chef de secteur/chefferie* has the responsibility to maintain public order in his jurisdiction and the national police are supposed to be at his "disposal" for this.²¹ Whether this will be effective and whether this will also empower the chief to deal with police disciplinary problems remains to be seen. In one focus group, a woman said her house had been burned down by armed group members after an argument over fish. She complained to the police who came to investigate, asking her for a US\$10 "tax" for the investigation. When she could not pay, they arrested her and then confiscated her bicycle (important equipment for income-generation for many rural people), in exchange for the payment. It seems to be not only a question of getting no assistance from the police, but that people are actually worse off by using this public service. As the *chef de secteur/chefferie* also has the legal right to supervise tax collection, this risks encouraging complicity between the chief and the police, rather than oversight.

The entrenched nature of the "rules of the game" described above suggest that there are many challenges facing donors in trying to promote democracy and better governance at the local levels in the Congo. However, "business as usual" is likely to continue to neglect and disenfranchise a large part of the Congolese population which, instead of being a powerful democratic force pushing their leaders for reform, may grow to suspect or resent aid as being another tool to prop up an unresponsive elite.

²⁰ Article 7 of electoral law 06/006 of 9th March 2006.

²¹ Articles 85-86 of organic law 08/016 of 7th October 2008.

PROMOTING CHANGE: CHALLENGES FACING DONORS IN SOUTH KIVU

In South Kivu, while many people reported having quite low expectations of their leaders, they initially had high expectations that the democratisation process would change their leaders' behaviour. But many ordinary people do not expect to wait 20 or 30 years to experience the benefits of the democratisation process. Two years after presidential elections, disillusionment among the rural population is becoming more and more evident. Although disappointment and scepticism in the electoral process were common themes in the focus groups, however, the vast majority were not yet ready to abandon this pillar of the democratic process altogether. The overwhelming majority of people interviewed in the focus groups said they planned to vote in the local elections. This nascent but growing disillusionment should serve as an "early warning" to the international community: it will be far easier for political leaders to stall or roll back democratic reforms if the voting public is disenfranchised and sceptical of their importance.

In such a context, the challenges facing donors are quite steep, but not insurmountable. Fostering a strong "accountability link" between leaders and the population must be the priority, and donors should invest in building the relationship between the state and citizen in equal measure to the efforts invested in building the technical capacity of state institutions. The electoral process has so far not generated the strong links between state and citizen, not least because of the under-investment in "citizenship" education initiatives. Issues of inclusion of women in decision-making and political will also remain significant challenges to achieving success in the democratisation process. To overcome these challenges, concrete governance interventions targeted at the local/grass-roots level are needed.

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND CITIZEN

In the rural areas, focus group discussions revealed a general lack of understanding of how the democratisation process changed the old relationship between the state and citizen. People seemed to have high hopes in general that "change" would happen, without any specific understanding of what "change" meant or their own part in bringing about that change, apart from voting every few years. A senior member of civil society in Bukavu said that while ordinary people understood that their vote conferred power on the elected official, there was less understanding of the power the electorate had over the leaders. Worryingly, there was to some degree a sense among the population that being elected into power gave a leader *the right* to the trappings that were assumed to go along with it. There was widespread acknowledgement that people needed to be educated on the roles and responsibilities of different actors in a democratic state, in particular the formal checks on executive power, at a level far deeper and more long term than electoral education.

There were a number of anecdotal examples of senior state officials giving "gifts" to the people in their own name using public money and the public being "grateful" for these handouts. This phenomenon, sometimes referred to as the "personalisation of the state", ensured that political support was built around personalities and individual favours, rather than policies. It also meant that the state took on the role of "donor", of patron rather than employee, distorting the important "accountability link" between the leaders and the public. Some informants felt that poverty was at the root of this phenomenon, that as long as people were poor, it would be easy for unscrupulous politicians to take advantage of them by making grand or unrealistic promises. One civil society member said provincial leaders ignored the law because they knew the population was "ignorant".

There are a number of donor and civil society efforts underway to train and “sensitise” political leaders about their responsibilities, often consisting of workshops or targeting certain individuals for in-depth training. However, a more systematic training system needs to be put in place that goes beyond elected officials and includes all civil servants and state officials, especially at the decentralised level. Just as the UK government announced the opening in November 2008 of an elite officer training academy for the military in the Congo,²² a similar facility could be useful for training a new generation of civil servants who would eventually replace the “old guard”. To achieve this, donors would need to support a retirement scheme for older state employees.

Recommendation 4: Donors should increase their efforts to find ways to foster a sense of public service among state employees. One way to do this would be to support the establishment of an elite government and civil service training academy in the DRC to offer training in a more wide-ranging and systematic manner, especially targeting a new generation of civil servants who do not have the entrenched habits of the past.

Involving local authorities in development projects is another potential way of helping to strengthen the state-citizen relationship. In South Kivu, we were told the local authorities were often invited to project launch events, although this usually seemed to be more on a ceremonial basis as opposed to a substantive contribution. We were told that involving the local authorities in actual project development or design was rare. At the same time, numerous placards could be seen in towns and along the main roads describing various development projects, giving the impression that a lot of investment was being made, but that the international community was the only entity responding to community needs. While this may be a good public relations strategy for donor organisations, it risks reinforcing people’s perception that their own government is “useless” and that their time is better spent appealing to donors for better public service delivery and monitoring donor behaviour and performance.

Indeed, an increasingly common activity among CSOs in the DRC is the monitoring of donor activities and discussions on aid effectiveness. While there is undoubtedly good reason for this, it does tend to focus scarce energies on building the accountability relationship between the citizens and the international community, with the state more or less relegated to observer status. Civil society’s advocacy towards the international community on aid, security and economic issues suggests that confidence in the government, as both a protective entity and a potential agent for change, is low. Lack of effective government response to civil society concerns is another factor weakening the incentive for advocacy targeted at the state. Several civil society members told us that parliamentarians did not seem to understand civil society’s role in budget monitoring, seeing it as competing or duplicating their own work. A civil society member in North Kivu said that budget monitoring activity was often poorly received by the provincial assembly members, and the person doing the monitoring sometimes faced retribution, such as career sabotage.

When asked about the potential role for local authorities in oversight or coordination of development projects, one local NGO told us that far from seeking cooperation, they specifically avoided sharing project information with the local authorities, especially in relation to their budget. They felt that the local authorities could not be trusted with sensitive information and that details of how much money a local NGO had received could leak to the community, with security implications for the office and staff. The NGO felt that the local authorities *should* play a greater role in the coordination and oversight of development activities in the community, but that they needed to be trained to deal with sensitive and confidential information first.

In some cases, people reported that local authorities would not participate in community development activities without being paid fees (*“frais de mission”*), per diems, transport costs, etc. Some grass-roots civil society members felt that the local authorities were not willing to sacrifice their time to help out, unless they were being paid.²³ There was, however, at least one example of local authorities (military and civilian) in Fizi territory being involved in a civil society-sponsored workshop to identify community problems and help to establish priorities. This was apparently done because the local authorities themselves had expressed an interest in being more involved – a positive sign. There may very well be other such examples, although this still seems to be more the

22 ‘Taking Sandhurst to the DR Congo’, *BBC News*, 19th November 2008, accessed 9th January 2009. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7736640.stm>.

23 Expectations of per diems, transport costs, etc., in order to carry out professional duties is in fact a common feature in many parts of Congolese society, including among some civil society officials.

exception rather than the norm. Some civil society members in South Kivu felt that donors tended to fund *either* the government or NGOs to deliver services, but did not focus on building the progression between the two.

Box 1 Community-Driven Reconstruction

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) funded Community-Driven Reconstruction (CDR) programme being implemented in eastern DRC by the NGO International Rescue Committee (IRC) is an important example of how donors may engage in strengthening the relationship between the state and the citizen. According to the IRC, the three goals of the programme are to improve improve: 1) people's understanding of good governance; 2) their socio-economic situation; and 3) social cohesion.²⁴ DfID's 2008-2010 country plan further states that a key outcome of the programme is 'improved trust, confidence and cooperation [...] between the target population and their local institutions'.²⁵ Although CDR initiatives have the potential to improve local governance, conflict sensitivity needs to be a key element in the programme design.

At the time of this research, the IRC was in phase one of the three-year programme, i.e. selecting villages at random and creating Village Development Committees (VDCs) made up of elected members, 50 percent of whom must be female. Decisions were taken by the elected committee members who, we were told, often presented ideas to the community in a referendum. Local authorities apparently serve mainly in an advisory capacity, helping to ensure links between VDC projects and local government plans. According to the IRC, the key to the CDR idea is not that the committees will always exist, but that ultimately they will instil an understanding and habit of participative decision-making that will eventually translate into people's relationships with their government.

According to one IRC lessons learned report that evaluated CDR programmes in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kosovo and Rwanda, it is important that donor-funded community governance structures are careful not to sideline or replace those government structures that will ultimately be established or empowered by democratisation processes. Indeed, the report said 'work in all four countries suggested that success is achieved by making elites part of the program design and/or process' to make them stakeholders without allowing them to co-opt the process.²⁶ The evaluation report also found that CDR work in some of the countries was good preparation for national elections in the sense that: 1) people became gradually familiar and more accepting of new democratic processes; and 2) CDR could be an efficient tool for information-sharing with communities. In this regard, the evaluation found that 'because of the large scale, grass roots nature of the programs in Rwanda, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan, the existence of a CDR program and committees provided a trusted and more viable mechanism than standard national or INGO methodologies to disseminate information and train the community with respect to upcoming elections, new ministerial decrees, constitutional reform processes and the new role of local government, etc'.²⁷ In Rwanda, the CDR structures were dissolved by the government when local elections were held. The evaluation report did not consider this a programmatic failure. On the contrary, it noted that 85 percent of the people that had been elected in the CDR programmes were ultimately elected to the national structures.

THE IMPACT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS ON LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY

Local elections, currently planned for 2009, are a key part of the overall democratisation strategy aimed at making decision-makers more accountable and bringing them closer to citizens. As one former provincial minister said, a "chosen" person acts differently from an appointed one.²⁸ However, the predominant view of the focus

²⁴ Author interview with an IRC official, South Kivu, October 2008.

²⁵ Department for International Development (DfID) (May 2008). *Democratic Republic of Congo Country Plan 2008-2010*. Kinshasa, DRC: DfID Democratic Republic of Congo. p.25. Available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/DRC-countryplan08-10.pdf>.

²⁶ International Rescue Committee (February 2007). *Lessons Learned on Community-Driven Reconstruction*. Version 1 [Revised Draft], Post-Conflict Development Initiative. p.11.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p.14.

²⁸ Author interview, South Kivu, October 2008.

groups was that the electoral process that took place in 2006-2007 had not fully established the relationship of accountability between the leadership and the population. Although the local elections are important for symbolic reasons as a bellwether of the government's commitment to empowering the grass roots, it is doubtful that, in the current conditions, the local elections will be any more successful in establishing the intended relationship of accountability between the citizen and the state.

Relations between the political parties in the DRC tend to be personalised, characterised by allegiance to certain individuals or identities, as opposed to differences of performance or opinion on policy. In the 2006 elections, there were a number of anecdotal reports of candidates bribing voters with food and other gifts. The *Commission Electorale Indépendante* (Independent Electoral Commission, or CEI) informed us that this type of behaviour by candidates was not actually illegal; it was often seen as a “humanitarian” act to give things away to poor communities. According to one UN source, many qualified candidates were not successful because they did not have sufficient financial resources to compete with others. One informant spoke of a candidate who spent US\$50,000 getting elected. Once in office, it was seen as likely that this person would spend his/her time paying back debts as opposed to focusing on governance, further reinforcing the public expectation that in the DRC leaders governed by patronage as opposed to ideas. It is also possible that elections might result in some existing technically capable state agents being rejected in favour of those who have used their access to wealth to get elected. Donors should look for ways to facilitate more equitable access for candidates to resources available for campaigns, especially for women and minority ethnic groups who might not normally be able to raise the resources on their own.²⁹ This could be done through the revision of political party guidelines to be more inclusive and eventually through the reform of electoral legislation. Although this may not necessarily prevent candidates who raise large amounts of money from spending it on their campaigns, at the very least it should give others a chance to propose themselves as an alternative.

In terms of how likely the pattern of gifts-for-votes was to be repeated in the local elections, some civil society members and people in the focus groups felt that there seemed to be a growing recognition or “*prise de conscience*” among the electorate that voting on the basis of gifts and handouts last time had been a mistake, as the elections had not resulted in much-needed change in the country. Other people felt that the candidates for local office simply would not have access to the same means to bribe voters on the same scale. People in the focus groups in general said they needed to be educated on what qualities to look for in leaders and how to assess a candidate's campaign promises.

Recommendation 5: Donors should look for ways to facilitate more equitable access for candidates to resources available for campaigns, especially for women and minority ethnic groups who might not normally be able to raise the resources on their own.

The question of whether or not people would vote along ethnic lines in the local elections, undermining the impact that elections should theoretically have on accountability, is an important one. Some experts thought it would be difficult to escape ethnic voting. Some saw it as unlikely in the local elections that people would vote for someone from a different tribe because of the tensions between different communities, particularly over land. Some international observers worried that local elections might exacerbate ethnic tensions in areas where social cohesion is already fragile, for example Fizi and Uvira. Interestingly, some women leaders reported that (unlike men) their candidacies reflected the unique contributions they could make as *women*, rather than as candidates affiliated with certain ethnic or party groups. Also, in constituencies³⁰ that are largely single-ethnicity, it is unclear whether popular support for certain candidates might be more influenced by policies and campaign commitments, or whether allegiances based on identity will continue on a different level like the family or clan. Although all of the South Kivu Provincial Assembly members are in the *Alliance de la Majorité Présidentielle* (AMP) party, meaning that there is no political opposition to strengthen the oversight agenda, there is little incentive for *any* opposition to monitor government behaviour if the electorate will simply vote along ethnic lines or as a result of bribery and intimidation.

In terms of implementing difficult governance reforms, the electoral process itself may even pose obstacles. For example, in one project completion and results report the World Bank said that many key reforms were put on

²⁹ Women and minority groups may face obstacles raising resources on their own due to a lack of any quota requirements on party candidate lists, as well as general economic marginalisation compared to more advantaged groups.

³⁰ For local elections the constituency will be the *groupement*.

hold in the run up to the 2006 elections, as the transitional government found it hard to muster the political will to bring about change.

'In particular, the government was not able to muster enough focus and will to overcome the vested interests during the electoral period. Progress was made in areas that were more of a technical nature, but less progress occurred in areas where political will was necessary'.³¹

It is likely that the impact elections have on governance reforms at any level depends significantly on how popular those reforms are, either with the general public or influential special interest groups. Avoiding making tough unpopular reforms (regardless of how much they may be needed) right before elections is a common feature in many democracies and, in this respect, Congo is no different. How donors can encourage "political will" through the electoral process is the question that underpins much of the democratisation debate.

“CITIZENSHIP” EDUCATION: MORE THAN ELECTORAL EDUCATION

According to the UN, civic education is not to be confused with voter or electoral education, and is more long-term and continual.

'Civic education's ultimate goal is to ensure a future of responsible and informed citizens and is not tied to an election cycle. It has been demonstrated in other newly-democratic countries that the most effective civic education efforts are those that continue years beyond the initial electoral process'.³²

During the 2006-07 elections, there were a number of civic and electoral education initiatives carried out by national and international actors. However, the focus groups convened for this research said that there is still an overwhelming need for civic education in the rural areas, and that this should focus in particular on what citizens have a right to expect and demand of their leaders once in office, in addition to informing voters about the electoral process.

An evaluation of civic and electoral education during the last electoral period, initiated by CEI with support from international donors and NGOs, recommended that civic education should be the first priority in the upcoming local elections. In addition, the evaluation found that during the last elections, while some education projects had a positive impact,³³ many "micro-projects" at the provincial level were not as effective as they could be due to a "sprinkling" of activities and the fact that some implementing partners did not have extensive grass-roots reach. The interventions also reportedly lacked consistency in terms of content, as there was no national programme to adhere to. According to one international NGO official we spoke to, the CEI education materials had also been prepared using 'Kinshasa-style jargon' that was not well understood by ordinary people.³⁴ The evaluation drew several important conclusions, namely: 1) that there was generally a weak coverage of civic and electoral education in the DRC; 2) that education should be a permanent activity that reaches everybody; and 3) that activities needed to be intensified down to the *secteur/chefferie* levels.³⁵

Recommendation 6: Civic education initiatives should receive greater long-term attention from donors and should teach citizens about *their own* power, in addition to the power of their leaders, with a special emphasis on the constitution and decentralisation laws. In particular, this should include what citizens have a right to expect and demand of their leaders once in office, and what recourse they have as citizens when leaders do not perform well.

In Congo, it is clear that this type of education is a massive task that will require years of sustained engagement in order to have an impact. However, it is not clear whether the DRC government and the donors are fully

31 World Bank (May 2007). *Implementation Completion and Results Report on a Grant in the Amount of SDR 62.1 million (US\$90 million Equivalent) to the Democratic Republic of Congo for a Transitional Support for Economic Recovery Operation*. (Report No: ICR367). Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, Africa Region. p.4.

32 MONUC website, 'About Civic Education', accessed 22nd December 2008. Available at <http://www.monuc.org/news.aspx?newsID=11505>.

33 Especially those by the Catholic Church using their existing experience and networks on the ground.

34 Author interview, Kinshasa, December 2008.

35 Commission Electorale Independante (March 2008). *Rapport Consolide du Processus d'Evaluation de l'Education Civique et Electorale en RDC*. 15th December 2007 to 1st March 2008. p.10 and 70.

committed to a long-term, full-time citizenship education programme, as opposed to short-term education initiatives associated mainly around electoral timeframes. The CEI branch in Bukavu, for example, had only eight active staff members as of October 2008 and South Kivu province had only five CEI territorial liaison offices, some of them covering more than one territory. We were told that most of the officers were on *congé technique*, or technical leave, waiting for electoral activity to start up again. The CEI staff reported lacking sufficient means to maintain their level of activity on a permanent basis, even though they had civil society partners reportedly “on standby” waiting to restart the sensitisation process in connection with the local elections.

When they do take place, many education activities seem also to be heavily biased towards the main population centres. While there are some legitimate logistics and security barriers to accessing more remote areas, creative ways should be sought to overcome these obstacles in order to avoid reinforcing the existing urban-rural divide. For example, local village chiefs could be convened and trained to sensitise their communities, or grass-roots civil society and church organisations with existing structures for communicating with the grass-roots could be funded to do intensive outreach in the “down time” between elections. One international NGO operates an innovative “Democracy Quiz Show” for youth which pits two high schools against each other in a different province each week to test the student’s knowledge of democratic institutions.³⁶ There are many radio stations operating in South Kivu (a review by Alert identified about 20, a number of which were community stations in the smaller towns). Radio programmes have been used for education in the past. However, in the rural areas extra care needs to be taken not to bypass women who reported that they do not listen to the radio as often as men, for reasons both of culture and lack of free time. Although CEI and CSOs carried out the bulk of civic education in the past, the government, perhaps through the Ministry of Education, should take a clear lead directing these initiatives to ensure consistent messaging that covers the whole country.

Recommendation 7: Donors should take advantage of the “down” periods in between elections, when the CEI and their civil society partner organisations have more time on their hands to sustain and extend the reach of civic education at least to the *secteur/chefferie* level, and beyond if possible.

The CEI evaluation also recommended to Kinshasa that civic and electoral education should be incorporated into both the long-term poverty reduction strategy and the country’s formal and informal education system.³⁷ With respect to the latter, teacher pay, training and retention are admittedly major problems in the DRC, and a number of donors including the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and the World Bank have been active in supporting education interventions, including expanding access and the procurement of learning materials. This support should be broadened to incorporate aspects of citizenship education, both in terms of teacher training and in ensuring updated information features in textbooks and other materials. With only about a 33 percent school enrolment rate,³⁸ this approach alone will admittedly take time to achieve the scale of impact needed, but will at least be a systematic way of beginning to cover a part of the population that can easily be expanded as enrolment rates increase.

Recommendation 8: Citizenship education should be included in the national education curriculum requirements in both primary and secondary school, and teachers should be a priority for training and sensitisation efforts.

INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Congolese women interviewed for this report often said they believed female leaders would be more peaceable than their male counterparts and would be more understanding of the problems of the grass roots. Although this claim may be open for debate, Congo is already constitutionally committed to achieving gender parity in its national, provincial and local institutions. In South Kivu, only three out of 36 deputies are female (two elected and one co-opted in a seat reserved for a traditional leader) and there are still significant barriers to women’s participation when running as political candidates.

³⁶ See: Search for Common Ground’s website, accessed 8th January 2009. Available at http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/drcongo/drcongo_update.html#5.

³⁷ Commission Electorale Independante. Op. cit. p.73.

³⁸ Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment, according to UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) *Human Development Report 2007/2008*.

A number of women reported problems of jealousy and competition among female candidates who, rather than supporting each other, tried to tear each other down. Some women reported being subject to “smear campaigns”, often by religious leaders, questioning their morality.³⁹ Although reluctance to support female candidates could be found among both women and men, some women seemed to feel that men were *more* likely to support women than other men. One female former provincial minister reported that 100 percent of her political support had come from men. Likewise, one women’s group in Bukavu reported that some men in fact prefer to support women based on the feeling that the men in power have not done so well. More research into the gender considerations that come into play when people choose candidates to support would be useful in attempting to understand what underlies these patterns.

There is evidence of a fairly large class divide in South Kivu between urban and rural women, and women in the rural areas reported facing higher levels of social isolation, lack of education and barriers to accessing information. Women in the village focus groups claimed that they did not usually listen to the radio and that the main way they became informed was through civil society-organised seminars and “listening in” on their husbands’ conversations. With about 80 percent of the population living in rural areas,⁴⁰ this means a major part of the talent pool is excluded from potential opportunities. Women also reported being disadvantaged from a legislative standpoint. Despite Article 14 of the constitution calling for gender parity, there is no legal requirement to include gender quotas on political party candidate lists. Therefore, many women candidates run as independents, depriving them of important financial and political support.

Some informants in the focus groups felt that women’s general status in their communities needed to be raised first, to help them to be regarded as productive, important members of society. This would help them gain confidence and galvanise financial and political support around their eventual campaigns. Because of their low status in society, rural women felt they especially needed to be trained in their rights, the responsibilities of citizenship and how to hold government to account. Possible interventions in these areas include support to women’s networks that make linkages between the political and economic capacity-building of women and an increase in micro-enterprise support to women entrepreneurs.

Recommendation 9: To encourage greater participation of women in decision-making, donors should target particular attention to rural women who face a number of barriers to access that are different from those faced by men and urban women. Interventions should try to make linkages between improving women’s economic status in parallel to their political capacity-building.

Alert and its partners in South Kivu support a number of *Noyaux de Paix* (peace committees) made up of individuals from different villages who are involved in grass-roots conflict resolution work, particularly focusing on building cohesion between different ethnic groups. The leadership role many women have taken in these committees has proved to be an important way of raising their profile in their villages and allowing them to demonstrate the contributions women can make to public life in a way that is very meaningful for their communities. Women who have participated in the programme have highlighted the good relations they have managed to build with local leaders as one of their key successes. Just as the establishment of Community-Driven Reconstruction (CDR) committees (see Box 1) was a way of getting people to gradually become more accepting of democratic processes, the *Noyaux de Paix* has proved to be a way of getting people to become more accepting of the voice and leadership of women.

CAPACITY AND POLITICAL WILL

When discussing the challenges of governance in the DRC, it is common for people to highlight the pervasive lack of resources and capacity, suggesting that money and training will solve the problem. Training and resources *are* undoubtedly needed; for instance you cannot hold someone accountable for a role they do not fully understand or have the resources to carry out. However, it is important that discussions about capacity do not underplay the

39 International Alert and the Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) (2008). *Women’s political participation in countries emerging from conflict in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Report of the consultation workshop, 28th-30th August 2007*. London, UK: International Alert.

40 *DRC Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper* (June 2006). p.33.

question of political will and what motivates government officials in any country to carry out their duties properly. Usually it is a complex combination of training, work environment, personality traits, performance incentives (including but not limited to financial compensation) and desire to avoid negative consequences (such as disciplinary action or loss of the job) that motivate people in any job to do their best.

We noted during our field trips that in some areas, especially at border crossings, state agents are present and often do their jobs quite enthusiastically. Indeed, some state agents spend a lot of time carrying out duplicative, excessively bureaucratic procedures, such as issuing ID cards or passes for internal travel between territories. This suggests that at some level the state does have extensive “presence” and some capacity, but that this capacity seems to be used in a highly inefficient way and directed disproportionately towards areas with revenue-generating potential, as opposed to areas with the greatest “governance” benefits. Some agents were even known to cite specific pieces of Congolese legislation as the basis for carrying out their revenue-generation duties, suggesting that where there is an incentive for the individual to become informed, personal initiative to a degree can offset a lack of formal training.

With respect to politicians, some members of civil society felt that the provincial *deputés* tended to ignore their constituencies, but when they needed the “voice of the people” for their own purposes, they found the means to reach out. In Bukavu we were often told that *deputés* lacked the means to visit remote inaccessible areas of their constituencies. At the same time, we were told by the residents of a village that was relatively close to the provincial capital along one of the few driveable roads, that no politician or government official had ever visited. Yet we were given many examples of ordinary people travelling long distances by bicycle or on foot to carry goods to market or attend “ateliers” organised by civil society. These examples suggest that individual incentives can not be ignored in favour of a purely capacity-building approach.

Heavy reliance on donors seems to have perpetuated a strong emphasis on the need for “capacity-building” in order to achieve many things, including governance. While it is certainly true that most provincial government officials lack the resources to do their job in an ideal way, this approach can also be disempowering, as some leaders wait for their “capacities” to be built rather than looking for creative or proactive ways to get things done out of sheer necessity. This phenomenon has even played into the hands of Laurent Nkunda, the leader of the Congolese rebel movement in North Kivu, the *Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (National Congress for the Defence of the People, or CNDP), who was quoted in an interview as saying ‘Congolese people must stop thinking that they do not have any human or military capacity. The world must also stop presenting the Congolese as people who are incapable of anything. And the Congolese must stop believing the image of incapability that the world imposes on them’.⁴¹

One local traditionally-appointed authority we met recommended implementing a programme “twinning” local leaders and civil servants in the Congo with counterparts in other countries, for example as part of an exchange programme for six months at a time. He made this recommendation after having travelled to South Korea, where he said he was surprised at the negative reputation Congolese leaders had there. He said this “embarrassment” would have the effect of making leaders want to do better, therefore having the dual effect of building capacity and creating incentives at the same time. Careful thought would have to be given to the prioritisation of candidates for participation, for example prioritising high profile local government leaders who had shown strong initiative in other areas. To maximise impact, participants should be required to participate in outreach and information exchange activities with their peers upon their return and this would need to be monitored.

Recommendation 10: Donors should look for ways to create incentives for good performance, in addition to supporting capacity-building programmes for state officials. For example, this could include programmes “twinning” local leaders with counterparts in other countries. To maximise impact, donors should ensure that the leaders who have participated in these programmes do outreach and exchange information with other colleagues upon their return.

In trying to integrate performance incentives into the capacity-building equation, donors should target their capacity-building support at the levels of government where officials face the greatest community pressure and oversight which, as mentioned earlier in this paper, can be a powerful incentive to act in the public interest. As

41 ‘Le General Major Laurent Nkunda parle aux Congolais’, *Kivu Peace*, 25th December 2008, accessed 6th January 2009. Available at http://www.kivupeace.org/laurent_nkunda_aux_congolais.html.

authorities who were familiar to and lived in closest physical proximity to their constituents often faced the most day-to-day public pressure yet lacked the resources to react, it therefore follows that donors should increase their capacity-building support to better target this level.

There are certainly a number of political leaders in Congo who are committed to a change agenda. But they are also clearly facing enormous challenges, pressures and resistance. Donors should do more to seek out these key individuals who demonstrate political initiative and harness their capabilities for change, through encouragement, moral support and even publicising examples of their strong leadership to the general public. However, to do this, donor representatives need to have a greater physical presence throughout the country to do the intelligence-gathering and accompaniment that this sort of information- and time-intensive approach requires. Even if most donors work through implementing partners who are more present throughout the country, this is no substitute for having at least a core of donor staff deployed in the provinces who can understand the realities first hand.

At the moment, many donors say they are unable to deploy the staff required, often due to their own internal reasons rather than an assessment of the country's requirement. Nevertheless, real change on the ground will depend on closer attention to the political dynamics and better support to the drivers of change within provinces. In some donor countries, the discussion on how to increase the numbers of staff deployed in-country will need to take place between multiple government departments (i.e. not just within the international development department) and may be a process that takes some time to be successful, but it is fundamental to donor success in complicated contexts like the DRC.

Recommendation 11: Donors need to be more present and active in the provinces of the DRC and should provide more accompaniment-type support to political leaders in addition to technical capacity-building.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), for decentralisation to achieve the intended effect of greater leadership accountability, the transfer of material resources to the decentralised level is an important part of capacity-building.

'Decentralisation can be one important development to support in a democratisation process, as it can bring political power and accountability closer to the people. However, support for decentralisation warrants caution. The decentralisation of roles and responsibilities must be meaningful if it is to be a constructive mechanism for increased legitimacy. This means the transfer of material resources and human capital, both of which are goods in short supply and/or subject to often destabilising competition in a weak state'.⁴²

In the context of the decentralisation process, there are several donor-funded local government capacity-building initiatives that are being implemented or are under development. In a new initiative, the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) *Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Local* (PADDL) aims to build the capacity of the *entités territoriales décentralisées* in three pilot provinces,⁴³ as one component of UNDP's country-wide governance programme for 2008-2012. In addition to providing technical support, the programme aims to involve local authorities directly in the management of their own development initiatives through the establishment of Local Development Funds (LDFs) which will finance locally-produced development and investment plans. These funds are to be reflected in the provincial and *secteur* budgets, and financial contributions from the provincial, *secteur* and central government budgets will be a prerequisite.⁴⁴ Although there are financial risks involved, according to a UNDP official, this approach is a way for local officials to "learn by doing", of building capacity concretely not just theoretically.⁴⁵ In this sense, it is similar to the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) CDR approach (see Box 1) which helps communities "learn" about democratic processes through concrete and meaningful actions they themselves take.

Coopération Technique Belge (Belgian Development Cooperation, or CTB) manages an EC-funded community development programme in a number of provinces, *Programme d'Appui aux Initiatives de Développement Communautaire* (PAIDECO), that has an important local government capacity-building aspect. The PAIDECO

42 OECD-DAC (2005). *Democratisation and Violent Conflict*. OECD-DAC Issues Brief.

43 Equateur, North Kivu and a third province to be confirmed.

44 UNDP, *Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Local (PADDL)*, *Fiche de Projet*.

45 Author interview, UNDP official, Kinshasa, December 2008.

programme supports the provincial government to support the decentralised and “deconcentrated” entities, particularly in terms of training and planning for development initiatives. Unlike the UNDP programme, CTB does not provide direct funding support to state agents, rather CTB targets its own interventions around the plans that the local authorities have made.

Both UNDP and CTB approaches are innovative and provide important support to local government officials. However, scaling up these types of interventions to achieve full coverage in the DRC would be highly complex and there are not many organisations with the capacity and reach for such large-scale programming. One approach donors could take to mitigate this would be to encourage the development of a set of “best practices” for local governance support based on the experiences of these existing programmes. It would then be easier (and more inspiring) for other donors and organisations who are not currently involved in local governance to plan interventions based on this model, with adaptations to suit local contexts. By focusing on developing a prototype for a successful intervention and sharing that information, donors and their implementing partners who would not otherwise be involved in local governance support might be mobilised to take action.

Recommendation 12: Based on the experiences of existing local government capacity-building programmes, donors should encourage the development of a model or set of “best practices” for successful interventions that could be used to mobilise wider donor involvement.

STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL DONORS

As this paper has pointed out, donors face many challenges in the DRC. They face a vast country with an extremely complicated political landscape, a myriad of diverse international and national actors and their own internal constraints related to staff deployments. As a result of this, some donors perhaps understandably prefer a “top down” approach that allows large amounts of funding to be disbursed at the central level, where donor staff are able to focus greater attention on monitoring its use. This strategy has some logic, as it *is* critically important for the DRC to have a responsible and functioning central government in order to manage the decentralisation process and ensure development processes are equitable and standardised across the different provinces. Corruption continues to be a widespread problem and without a strong national-level response, local development initiatives will inevitably suffer. However, as the experience in South Kivu indicates, a “top down” strategy is not without risks given the political context in the DRC and the degree of marginalisation of the rural areas. As one UN official in Kinshasa summed it up, ‘The Congolese people think their leaders don’t care about them, and they think the international community is on the side of the leaders’.

‘Les politiciens eux vivent à Kinshasa, mais c’est nous qui restons ici qui souffrons [...]’ (The politicians live in Kinshasa, but it is we who live here and who suffer).

SOUTH KIVU VILLAGER

Another risk is that rather than harnessing the power of the population to act as the driving force for change (a scenario that is implied on paper by the democratisation strategy), the donors take on this role.

At the same time, some strains of political science and development thinking are urging donors to take a more “honest” approach to how social order is maintained in fragile countries. For example, Douglass North et al argue that donors often say when reforms fail that the country’s leaders lacked “political will”, as if it were a passive neglect, without appreciating or acknowledging the fact that elites sometimes have *incentives* to undermine these reforms. Formal institutional rules are not necessarily ignored, but are often used expressly to maintain the power of a closed group of individuals.⁴⁶ An example of this is taxation policy in the DRC. The key to this line of thinking is that if donors were more “honest” about the contexts in which they work, they could better target their interventions. Using this framework, several important “realities” that are closely linked to the success or failure of democratisation initiatives in the DRC context are: 1) how to change the incentives of elites to act in the public interest, as opposed to their own; 2) the failure to adequately deal with ethnic exclusion; and 3) the severe marginalisation of the rural areas. Moreover, a question that was repeatedly raised during our research trips and which is the quintessential “elephant in the room” in conversations about democratisation work in DRC, is: why is the international community willing to spend so much money on democratisation support only to have it be so seriously undermined by the perpetual cycles of conflict? It is a question that warrants some serious thought in donor government capitals as they reassess their strategies for helping to end the conflict in the east.

While it may to some degree serve a rational end, a largely “top down” approach also means that visible change in the lives of ordinary people risks taking decades. Donors often talk about a “peace dividend”,⁴⁷ an instant win that will maintain people’s faith and momentum towards the long, difficult struggle to end violent conflict. Less talked

⁴⁶ D. North, J. Wallis, S. Webb and B. Weingast (2007). *Limited access orders in the developing world: A new approach to the problems of development*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4359. p.42.

⁴⁷ For example, see: DfID (May 2008). Op. cit. p.8.

about is the need for a “governance dividend”.⁴⁸ Donors seem to generally accept governance as something that is invisible when being done properly. In this respect it is like peace: people usually only consider it in its absence. However, for the Congolese people to become an engine of support for governance reforms, they will need to see it as benefiting them in some concrete way. Otherwise, it will be easy for elected leaders to roll back reforms without much opposition, or say that democracy was something forced on them by the international community. If citizens themselves are to be the driving force behind a good governance agenda in the Congo, this situation will need to change.

‘The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any’.

ALICE WALKER, AUTHOR

⁴⁸ Although a “democracy dividend” has been mentioned in various policy circles, mainly in relation to giving aid to governments with controversial human rights records.

SUPPORT TO LOCAL GOVERNANCE: A “BOTTOM UP” APPROACH

It is admittedly an enormous challenge for donors to take a “bottom up” approach and target more governance efforts at the local level in the DRC. But that does not mean that they should not try. The international community's approach to democratisation work, i.e. the idea that support for the electoral process and building stronger state institutions will lead to better decision-making, is likely to take a long time to be successful in the current context in the DRC. More needs to be done to ensure that people: 1) understand what good governance means to them; 2) are aware of the respective responsibilities of their leaders and themselves as citizens; and, most importantly, 3) believe responsible leadership is *possible* in the Congo. In other words, donors must invest more in the *process* of governance, with a particular focus on building a positive relationship between the citizen and the state at all levels (from the state agents at the village marketplace up to the presidency). Donors should also support governance through “practice”, by strengthening the accountability relationship between citizens and the leaders in closest proximity to them, while recognising that to be accountable, leaders will need to have resources to show results.

Below is a summary of the practical ideas that have been put forth in this paper on how donors might target specific interventions to improve local governance, separated into three over-arching themes. It cannot be overemphasised that all external interventions in fragile states carry potential conflict risks and must be done with careful planning and context analysis. Although these recommendations are based on our findings in a single province, South Kivu, they could apply to local development initiatives throughout the country. However, more research is still needed into the political dynamics in other provinces in order to expand our general understanding of local governance in the DRC as a whole.

- Fostering links between local people and their leaders must be the priority, whether part of a democratisation process or not. To do this, donors need to work at local levels and local mechanisms are needed. Many of these types of intervention would need to be implemented through intermediate international or national NGO partners.

Recommendation 1: Donors should support local initiatives that strengthen accountability between people and their local officials, whether they are elected or not. For example, donors could consider how the “tax committee” model could be replicated.

Recommendation 2: Donors should investigate the possibility of offering small loans or grants to local government authorities for community projects at the very grass-roots levels, in order to strengthen governance in a way that is concrete and relevant to ordinary people.

Recommendation 3: Donors should help facilitate regular face-to-face meetings between village chiefs and authorities at the *secteur/chefferie* and provincial levels. Donors could also support regular visits of public administration officials to the rural areas, perhaps at the level of the territory or *secteur/chefferie*, to directly address the population.

Recommendation 4: Donors should increase their efforts to find ways to foster a sense of public service among state employees. One way to do this would be to support the establishment of an elite government and civil service training academy in the DRC to offer training in a more wide-ranging and systematic manner, especially targeting a new generation of civil servants who do not have the entrenched habits of the past.

- Democratisation will not ultimately result in leadership accountability if people are not aware of their power and are not able to fully participate in public affairs. Targeted interventions are needed to increase both knowledge and participation in the rural areas.

Recommendation 5: Donors should look for ways to facilitate more equitable access for candidates to resources available for campaigns, especially for women and minority ethnic groups who might not normally be able to raise the resources on their own.

Recommendation 6: Civic education initiatives should receive greater long-term attention from donors and should teach citizens about *their own* power, in addition to the power of their leaders, with a special emphasis on the constitution and decentralisation laws. In particular, this should include what citizens have a right to expect and demand of their leaders once in office, and what recourse they have as citizens when leaders do not perform well.

Recommendation 7: Donors should take advantage of the “down” periods in between elections, when the CEI and their civil society partner organisations have more time on their hands to sustain and extend the reach of civic education at least to the *secteur/chefferie* level, and beyond if possible.

Recommendation 8: Citizenship education should be included in the national education curriculum requirements in both primary and secondary school, and teachers should be a priority for training and sensitisation efforts.

Recommendation 9: To encourage greater participation of women in decision-making, donors should target particular attention to rural women who face a number of barriers to access that are different from those faced by men and urban women. Interventions should try to make linkages between improving women's economic status in parallel to their political capacity-building.

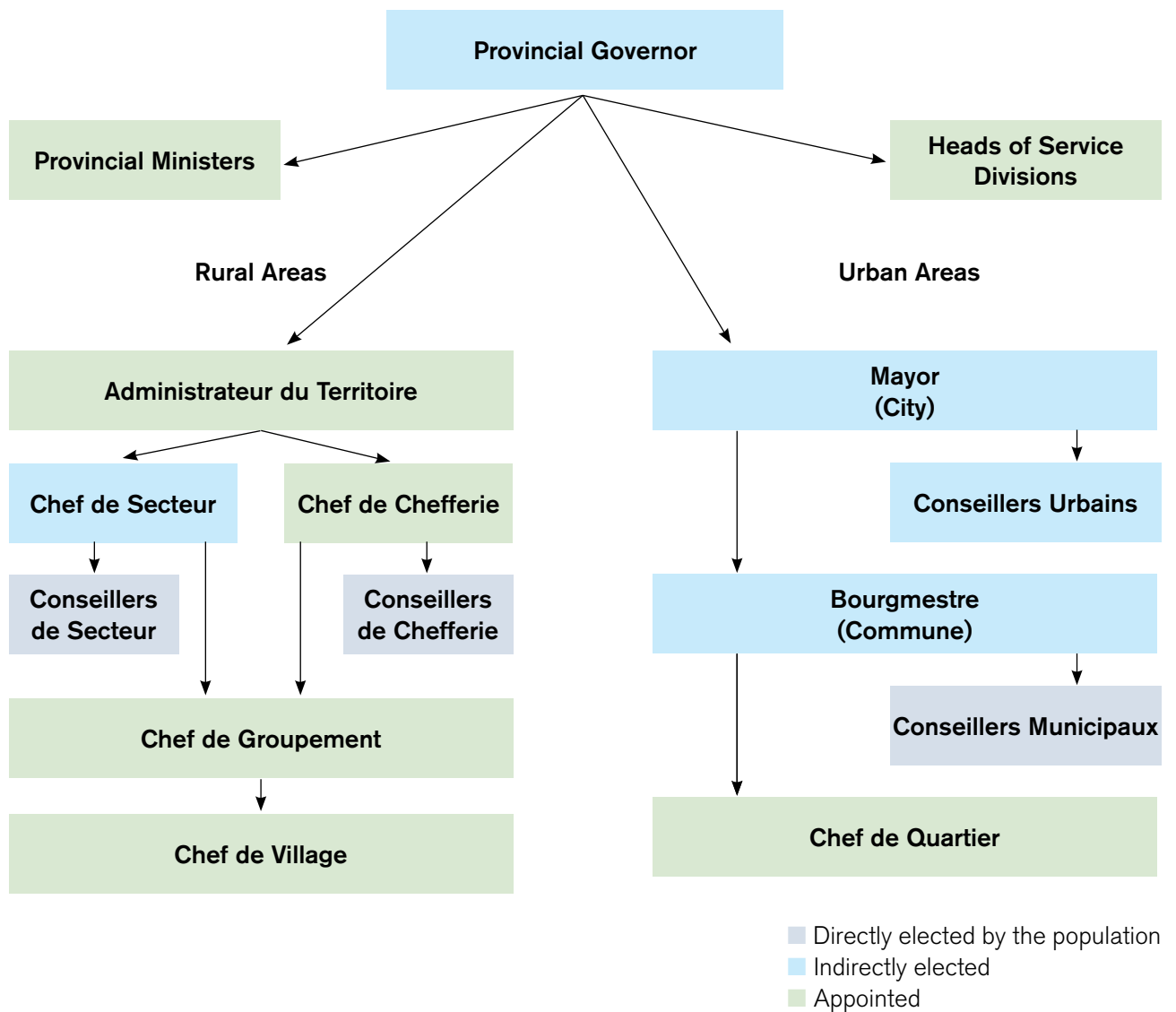
- Donors must ultimately be realistic about the challenges they face in countries like the DRC, especially recognising that elite *incentives* for change are equally important to capacity-building. Because of these challenges, donors should prioritise developing *examples* of local governance interventions that have been done well and that can be duplicated, rather than attempting to sprinkle local governance activities too widely. This approach requires in-depth knowledge and therefore greater donor staff presence in the provinces.

Recommendation 10: Donors should look for ways to create incentives for good performance, in addition to supporting capacity-building programmes for state officials. For example, this could include programmes “twinning” local leaders with counterparts in other countries. To maximise impact, donors should ensure that the leaders who have participated in these programmes do outreach and exchange information with other colleagues upon their return.

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Recommendation 12: Based on the experiences of existing local government capacity-building programmes, donors should encourage the development of a model or set of “best practices” for successful interventions that could be used to mobilise wider donor involvement.

ANNEX 1



INITIATIVE FOR PEACEBUILDING

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