CONFLICT SCAN

"RESPONDING TO THE HEALTH AND PROTECTION NEEDS OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES AND THEIR HOST COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH UBANGUI"

Democratic Republic of Congo

North-Ubangi (Mobayi-Mbongo, Yakoma, Kotakoli)
South Ubangi (Zongo)

April 2021

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1. Executive Summary

As part of the project "Addressing the Health and Protection Needs of Central African Refugees and their Host Communities in North and South Ubangi", Search organized its fourth conflict scan. This was done to understand the evolution and new dynamics of conflict in North and South Ubangi, particularly in the areas of Mobayi Mbongo, Kotakoli, Yakoma and Zongo.

A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data in the field, with a total of 502 community members, 48% of whom were part of the host community (hosts) and 52% of the refugee community, respectively. The individuals taking part in the conflict scan resided in North-Ubangi (Mobayi-Mbongo, Yakoma, Kotakoli) and South-Ubangi (Zongo).

The purpose of this study was to understand how the ongoing changes in the current context are directly related to the dynamics and trajectory of conflict between hosts and refugees, and to understand the changing and emerging conflict dynamics between them. This, in order to provide recommendations to adapt the program to the uncertain conflict dynamics and ensure a conflict sensitive intervention.

Main Results

At the beginning of 2021, after the presidential election in the Central African Republic, the number of Central African refugees in North and South Ubangi increased. This, particularly as a consequence of the renewed threat caused by the actions of Central African armed groups. The exponential number of refugees put additional pressure on the already precarious and insufficient resources of the Congolese host communities, in North and South Ubangi equally. In other words, the demands and needs of both hosts and refugees are growing exponentially, while there is neither the infrastructure nor the resources to meet these demands. Compared to the 2020 conflict scan, the socio-economic context of the area remains a major factor of conflict due to economic inflation, which is perceived by study participants as the result of insufficient supply compared to their needs.

These factors are the main drivers of the division and source of conflict between the host communities and the refugees now in the area. Through this conflict scan, three main forms of conflict were identified in the community: conflicts related to access to resources and land, conflicts related to social discrimination, and conflicts related to abuse of power. Beyond issues of access, humanitarian aid continues to be a source of tension, undermining social cohesion and reinforcing perceptions of discrimination. Indeed, as shown by the results of the 2020 scan, host communities feel discriminated against in relation to refugees. This is because they perceive to have given up enough of their already precarious and insufficient resources to refugees, without receiving the same humanitarian support. On their side, refugees denounce problems of abuse of power. These are related to abuses committed against them by some members of the host communities, due to the impunity they enjoy.

The non-representation of all segments of the community in activities organized by international organizations, tensions over resources between refugees and host communities, poor communication around beneficiary targeting, different social and cultural norms, the perception of unequal relations between host and refugee communities on the issue of access to economic resources, and the lack of knowledge and/or the non-existence of conflict resolution mechanisms are identified as the main sources of tension undermining social cohesion between the two communities.

The analysis carried out as part of this research has enabled us to propose the following lines of recommendation:

Recommendations

- **Boost coordination among humanitarian actors in the area to strengthen communication with the community on the definition of beneficiaries**;
- **Strengthen communication on the project's intervention strategy** by using Search's communication means and tools in the process of distribution activities, for example;
- **Strengthen the existing protection platforms** for the care of gender-based violence (GBV) victims, by setting up a system that facilitates access to refugees in cases where the language barrier hinders their access, for example;
- **Increase awareness about GBV** through participatory theaters and radio programs that can reinforce knowledge about GBV itself;
- **Strengthen activities that facilitate ongoing encounters between the host community and refugees, taking into account age, gender and ethnicity**;
- **As part of Do No Harm, the consortium team (Search and World Vision) should review projects to improve approaches, particularly inclusive approaches**, such as setting up inclusive and transparent targeting systems;
- **Strengthen the community's understanding of all the steps involved in defining the criteria for targeting aid recipients**. The proposed approach is to **conduct a step-by-step dialogue at each level of the target population in order to define the vulnerability criteria**;
- **Strengthen the accountability framework in the governance of public services**:
    - Establish frameworks for dialogue between users and public service providers (support, health care, market) on access issues;
    - Strengthen service providers' skills on accountability;
    - Organize roundtables where both communities can discuss issues of access to public services with service providers.

2. Context

In consortium with World Vision (WV), Search is implementing the program "Addressing the Health and Protection Needs of Central African Refugees and their Host Communities in North and South Ubangi", with the objective of finding long-term durable solutions for refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) in the northern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The 2020 conflict scan identified two main sources of tension between refugees and hosts, namely tensions related to access and exploitation of natural resources and tensions related to humanitarian assistance. In the new phase of the project, Search and its partner wanted to conduct this conflict scan in April 2021, having as objectives:

- Analyze the changing context directly related to the dynamics of conflict between hosts and refugees;
- Understand the changing dynamics of conflict between hosts and refugees, with a particular focus on gender;
- Analyze the "Do No Harm" project and its sensitivity to conflict, based on the risks that may arise from the identified conflict dynamics.

The methodological approach of this scan is based on a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) survey of the host and refugee communities, for a total of 502 individuals, 48% of whom were hosts and 52% refugees. More specifically, 367 people participated in the quantitative part of the survey and 123 in the qualitative part (12 focus groups and 23 individual interviews).The areas taken into account for this conflict scan are North-Ubangi (Mobayi-Mbongo, Yakoma, Kotakoli) and South-Ubangi (Zongo). More details on the methodology and sample are available in the appendices.

3. Recent developments

3.1 Factors influencing the dynamics of conflict between the host and refugee communities

➢ **Election in Central African Republic**

Both the elections that took place at the end of 2020 and the inauguration of the new president in March 2021 are contributing to the exacerbation of certain tensions in the Central African Republic. In this already uncertain context, the actions of some armed groups that have grouped again contribute to create psychosis in the community[1]. Overall, the security situation in CAR remains volatile, causing many families to move to the DRC for protection.

"Since the new year 2021, we are seeing a massive influx of Central African refugees who keep fleeing possible unrest after the elections" Central African Supreme Court (Interviews with authorities in Yakoma)

[1] The United Nations reports 60,000 refugees since the beginning of 2021 - https://www.caritasdev.cd/v3/index.php/actualites/879-le-nord-ubangi-accueille-sans-moyens-consequents-plus-de-20-000-refugies-centrafricains

➢ **Influx of new Central African refugees that may further increase the lack of resources and access to public infrastructure**

Since late 2020 and early 2021, the influx of new waves of Central African refugees has been witnessed in the area. Some members of the host communities participating in this study say that the new arrivals risk having a negative impact on the health situation in the areas, leading to the saturation of access to public infrastructure[2]. On another line, some members of the Congolese authorities who took part in this conflict scan affirm that the presence of refugees has played a positive role in the development policy of the area, as the situation has caused them to review certain frameworks for dialogue between refugees and hosts (such as the protection mornings[3]). At the same time, these authorities believe that the presence of refugees could promote development[4]. Also, they affirm that the refugees are bringing about new positive changes in Congolese norms, with each community learning from the other, especially in the agricultural sector. However, while the hosts accept the refugees by housing them or letting them settle in certain neighborhoods, local resources are also limited, which can easily create tensions between the two groups. Indeed, this influx of population means that the concrete needs are increasing rapidly, that there is a very strong competition (growing in cases of insecurity), and that housing is becoming scarce, a factor boosting the price of renting. As a result of the demographic spike, access to land is now a challenge for the entire community, as there are fewer living spaces than those demanded by the population. Also, respondents to the focus groups pointed out the lack of means and resources to ensure their needs, as well as the insufficiency of water points to draw water (which makes people fight and injure each other) and the non-representativeness of all layers of the community in the activities organized by international organizations. Finally, poverty and inequality during the sharing of goods distributed by different support organizations constitute significant causes of conflicts. *"The real problem is to take care of the populations that come to find our population already bruised and impoverished. So there will be a problem of food and space" (Interview with an authority - Yakoma).* Even if the local population is generous, this crisis increases the protection risks for refugees, as it creates an environment threatened by tensions over resources between refugees and host communities.

➢ **Economic Inflation**

The price of food has doubled or even tripled, and there is a scarcity of basic necessities due to the population growth. The economy has also been affected. In the words of a CNR (National Refugee Commission) officer, with the arrival of the refugees, economic activities have decreased and money does not circulate as it used to, which is linked to overpopulation and the demand for housing. In this context, many economic spaces are now used as housing, and agricultural land has been given up to build refugee camps, which reduces the available surfaces for agriculture and livestock. This overpopulation has caused a significant increase in the price of all goods and services on the market, as demand has become greater

[2] Most Central African refugees currently live on riverbanks in hard-to-reach border areas in host communities with limited resources. Their living conditions are dire. Many refugees sleep in makeshift shelters. Most have little or no access to clean water, sanitation or food. Some are staying with host families, with up to three refugee families living in one house.

[3] Interview with the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs

[4] During the interview with the representative of the refugees in Mobayi, the latter mentioned that the policy supported their arrival in the area, and that sensitization had been done saying that the presence of refugees in the area would promote the development of Mobayi.

than supply. In addition to this, the number of unemployed people has increased, as refugees have no jobs and a precarious lifestyle. Another case mentioned during the focus groups is that refugees trade the food they receive from humanitarian aid, exacerbating the hostility of some host communities both towards them and international organizations, which are seen as prioritizing refugees while neglecting the poverty and economic needs of the hosts. The combination of all these elements constitutes the causes of conflicts, particularly conflicts related to access to economic resources (i.e., land and natural resources).

3.2. Gender dynamics and Conflict Trajectories

Two main trends can be observed in the influx of Central African refugees; some claim to have fled preventively, while the vast majority have been forced to flee after suffering abuses and looting of their property by the rebels. As such, these refugees live with host families or in camps that are themselves already living in poverty, and who believe they are being self-sacrificing by sharing their already meager resources. The refugee community is primarily composed of women and children, but it also includes many people with special needs, such as individuals with serious health problems, unaccompanied or separated children, women and elderly people at risk, and victims of gender-based violence. Discussions with hosts and refugees revealed that some of these new arrivals are still very traumatized by the events they experienced before and during their flight to the DRC, with some of them still presenting physical scars. In addition, they face a lack of multi-sectoral services in the sites where they have found shelter. In such a context, the deprivation they face appears to be a contributing factor to other harmful coping mechanisms, such as prostitution.

Abuse and exploitation, including cases of gender-based violence, are currently highly present in the areas. When asked what GBV is, several definitions were given in the focus groups. Specifically, GBV is gender discrimination, discrimination against people with disabilities, and rape. For refugees, the issue of sexual violence is related to forced sexual relations, but if the girl consents, then it is not considered rape, whether she is under 18 years old or not.

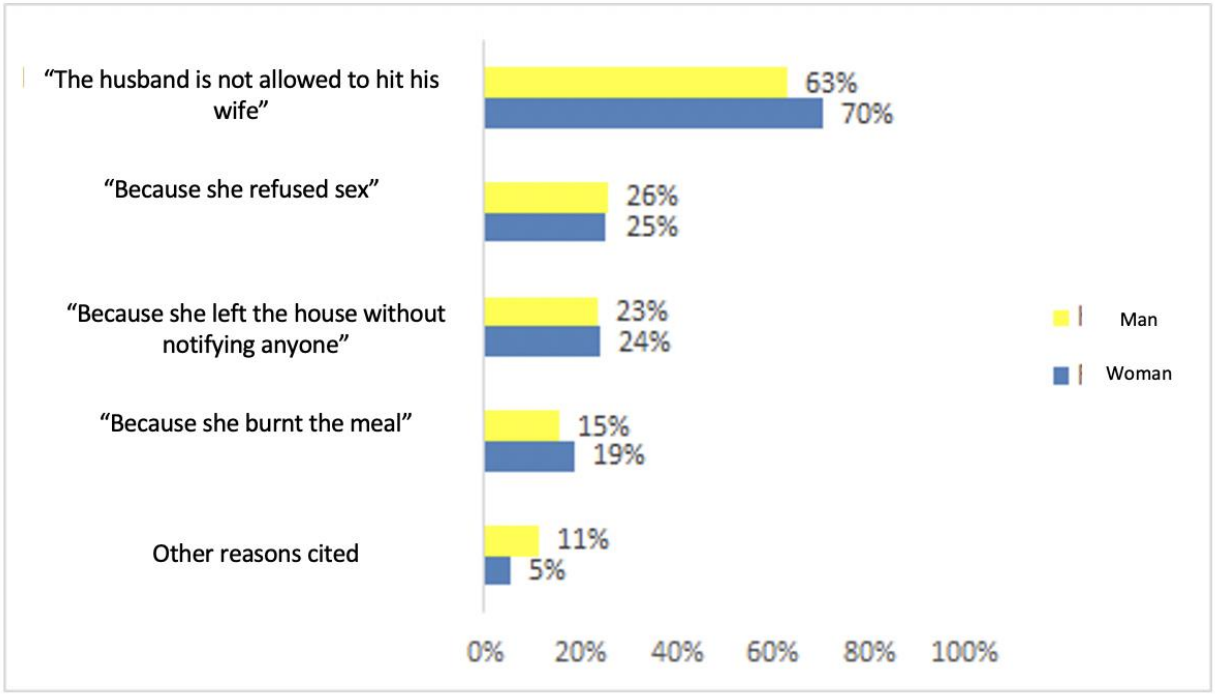
Examples of GBV reported during the focus groups

- Forced labor for young girls and boys;
- Young girls and women forced to prostitute themselves in order to find food due to lack of means;
- Physical violence among young girls;
- Domestic violence, particularly that perpetrated by men on their wives.

The causes cited that drive actors to violence are poverty, unemployment and, above all, jealousy. **Poverty** can be considered as the major cause of violence against women, as poor women (either hosts or refugees) end up being the most exposed to violence. For example, participants in the focus groups testified that many people living in cities where houses are shacks experience daily violence and insecurity, both in their homes and on the streets, and often work in deplorable conditions. **Unemployment** is also a cause that drives some actors to GBV. Indeed, the feeling of not being able to provide for their family, of not having a job, of not being socially useful, and of not having real prospects for the future, triggers frustrations that can turn into

violent actions. **As for domestic violence**, this question was asked during the survey: *Do you think that in the household a husband has the right to hit his wife for a reason?* On average, 63% of men and 70% of women said that a husband does not have the right to hit his wife for any reason (Graph 1). Differently, other reasons, such as refusal to have sex, leaving the house without informing the husband, or when the meal is badly cooked, were given to justify violence against the wife. The disaggregation by refugees and hosts does not show any difference in perception.

Graph 1: Proportion of the community affirming the reasons that the husband has the right to hit his wife



Participants in the study speak of the existence of conflict resolution platforms set up by Search[5] commonly known as Real Djos, Real Mothers, Real Daughters, and Real Fathers, as mechanisms for raising awareness against different forms of violence. However, despite the existence of these platforms, not everybody knows them. For instance, in Mobayi Mbongo, only 29% of respondents said they were aware of the existence of these conflict resolution platforms. In Appendix 3, a graph detailing knowledge of platforms by zone is presented. In addition to these platforms, mothers' groups within the church are informal coordination platforms that promote the involvement and strengthening of the role of women in the community. However, their influence is limited because it cannot go beyond the people who pray with them.

[5] The groups called "Real Fathers", "Real Mothers", "Real Daughters" and "Real Djos" hold awareness-raising meetings about GBV. These platforms are functional and they communicate and disseminate information about GBV during organized awareness-raising days. There was no platform before SFCG arrived in Bangila. "Yes, it is functional," said a refugee in Zongo.

3.3. The evolution and news of conflict dynamics between host and refugee communities.

3.3.1. Dynamics of social cohesion

Before pointing out recurring conflicts, it is important to define the context of social cohesion, as experienced by the surveyed population. In the areas where the research took place, there is generally a high level of cohesion, with more than 80% of respondents stating that relations between hosts and refugees are good. In Appendix 2, a graph representing the relationship between them is presented.

As a result of this conflict scan, wanting to highlight the elements that **connect** refugees and hosts, religion appears to be the major unifying factor of these two communities (Table 1). Members of the host and refugee communities sharing the same beliefs and attending the same churches tend to collaborate, communicate, and live peacefully together. The table below shows the different connecting elements for each locality.

Table 1: Connectors by zone

Connectors	Kotakoli	Mobayi-Mbongo	Yakoma	Zongo
Religion	**92%**	**84%**	**73%**	**89%**
Access to social services	**33%**	**10%**	**72%**	**12%**
Financial opportunities	**7%**	**63%**	**43%**	**9%**
Common difficulties	**18%**	**87%**	**14%**	**22%**
Common interest	**6%**	**37%**	**28%**	**47%**
Common values	**17%**	**53%**	**14%**	**33%**
Ethnicity	**18%**	**13%**	**19%**	**22%**

Cultural differences and economic inequalities are on average the main dividing factors mentioned, especially in Kotakoli and Zongo. In Mobayi Mbogo and Yakoma, religious differences are indicated. Economic inequality and power divide many, refugees and hosts alike. This division is linked to the fact that those considered "rich" in the community can more easily access the various opportunities that exist in the areas studied. This economic and power inequality creates a variety of effects at the community level. Firstly, it causes a distancing in the coexistence and relationship between the members of the community, and secondly, it leads to harmful attitudes, such as jealousy, gossip, suspicion, vanity.

In such a context, the sense of ongoing discrimination by hosts against refugees and vice versa is: (1) mostly due to the hosts' perceived sense of victimization by humanitarian aid towards refugees and (2) the permanent denigration of refugees by hosts. The hosts feel aggrieved by the attention given to the refugees, even though they live in the same socio-economic conditions.

Table 2: Divisors by Zone

Dividers	Kotakoli	Mobayi-Mbongo	Yakoma	Zongo
Cultural (including ethnic) differences	**53%**	**37%**	**37%**	**61%**

Differences in religion; belief	**2%**	**54%**	**45%**	**32%**
Inequality (economic-power)	**38%**	**40%**	**39%**	**28%**
Inequalities in political protection and specific treatments	**41%**	**46%**	**6%**	**30%**
Social discrimination	**23%**	**38%**	**22%**	**51%**

3.3.2. Dynamics of the conflict

The most recurrent conflicts

This conflict scan showed that the major causes of conflict are access to land, access to natural resources, and problems related to social discrimination.
The extent of cohesion at the community level is impacted by the conflicts that the community faces. The three major conflicts identified are: **conflicts related to access to resources and land, conflicts related to social discrimination** and **conflicts related to abuse of power.**

Indeed, the scan showed that the level of satisfaction of hosts and refugees varies both by area and according to their status within the community, as the two groups perceive one as having more access than the other, further accentuating the division between them. Refugees and hosts have contrasting opinions about their possibility to access different public services, infrastructure, economic resources (land, natural resources), and markets.

Access to land is a major cause of conflict (Table 3). Land conflicts are all those confrontations related to parcels of land - its soil and subsoil - and involving at least two parties with opposing claims to these parcels. The reasons for land conflicts in North and South Ubangi appear to be the scarcity of land and increasing demographic pressure. However, when broken down by zone, different trends in the causes of conflict can be observed. In Mobayi Mbongo and Yakoma it is access to land, in Kotakoli it is poor governance/abuse of power, and in Zongo it is social discrimination.

Table 3: Causes of conflict by Zone

Causes	Kotakoli	Mobayi-Mbongo	Yakoma	Zongo
Access to land	**17%**	**51%**	**83%**	**33%**
Access to natural resources	**9%**	**51%**	**39%**	**37%**
Discrimination on the basis of identity	**17%**	**25%**	**19%**	**49%**
Access issues and opportunities	**33%**	**16%**	**21%**	**29%**
Problems related to social discrimination	**11%**	**41%**	**12%**	**50%**
Impunity	**9%**	**22%**	**25%**	**21%**
Movement of the population	**1%**	**34%**	**15%**	**30%**
Poor governance/abuse of power	**46%**	**19%**	**4%**	**9%**

Conflicts related to discrimination perceived by hosts for the benefit of refugees

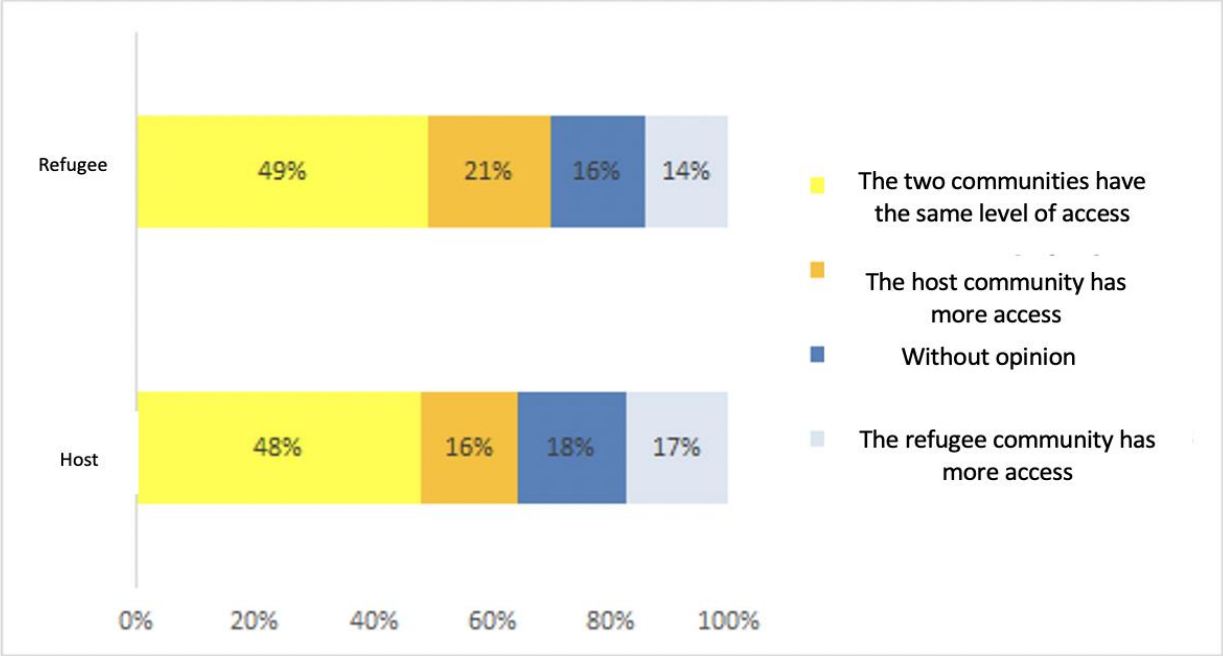
The major problem related to discrimination is linked to humanitarian aid and access to social supports. As shown in the 2020 conflict scan, **humanitarian aid** is a major source of conflict between hosts and refugees, as the former feel discriminated against by their position as hosts. This perception is justified by the hosts' feeling that they have given up their resources (which are already considered precarious and insufficient) to the profit of refugees, and that they do not benefit from the same humanitarian support. According to the data from the various FGs and interviews, the confrontations related to humanitarian support, where the hosts feel marginalized because they are excluded or not considered very much by the NGOs, is the main cause of the conflicts. In other words, the lack of representation of all segments of the community in the activities organized by international organizations negatively influences the perception of refugees and hosts about the project. This can have a significant impact on both the level of participation and commitment in the activities, but also on the level of ownership of the project by the communities, and on the restoration of a climate of peace in the region.

Generally, conflicts break out during food distributions by the organizations. This is because the hosts are unhappy to receive little or nothing, even though they live in poverty, too. Among refugees, there are often confrontations about lists and registrations for humanitarian aid. More specifically, according to the respondents to the FGs, some delegates favor their relatives to the detriment of others, which creates serious tensions.

Additionally, FGs data and interviews indicate that these feelings of discrimination are perceived by the hosts during food distributions and other humanitarian support operations, as well as in accessing public services. Such discrimination is grasped in different ways. Specifically, refugees consider it difficult to access the resources, while hosts find it hard to access the support provided by international organizations, whose principal target is the refugee community. (Graph 4 - Appendix 4)
However, trends in access vary from "*we have equal access to psychosocial support*" to "*refugees have more access than hosts.*" Hosts believe that refugees have more access than them to public services and other supports, and justify their opinion by the fact that different organizations or support structures focus more on assisting refugees[6]. Examples of perceived access include: psychosocial supports, public services, and government contracts.

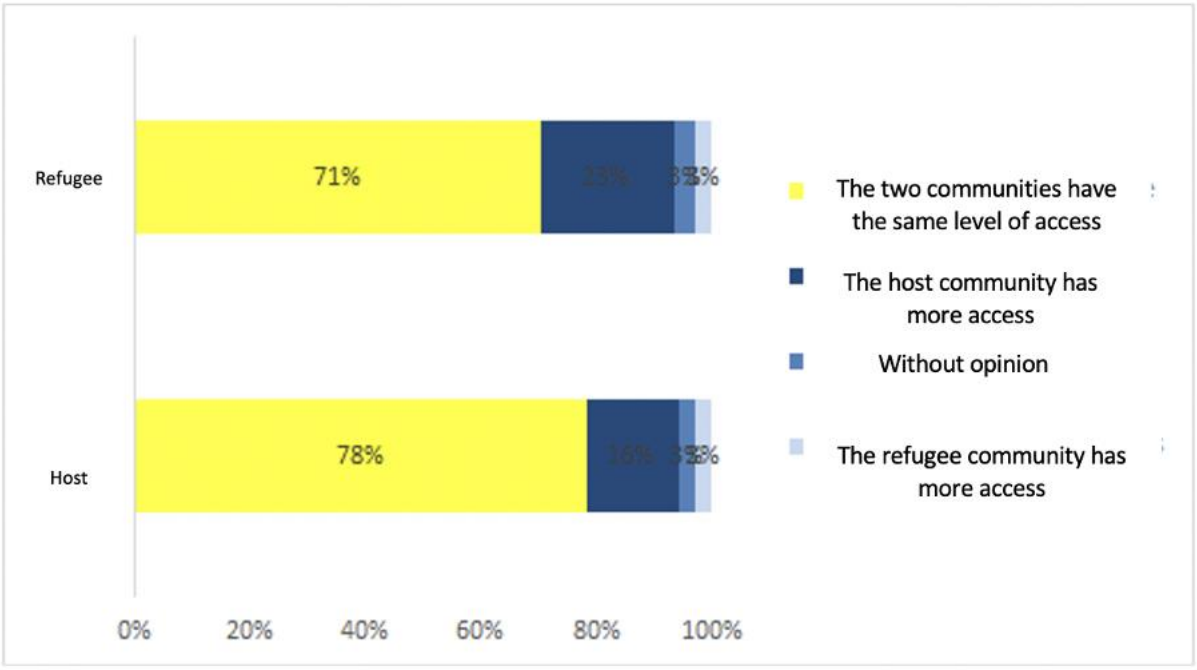
[6] This was said during a focus group with male hosts over 35 years old in Yakoma.

Graph 2: Percieved access to psychosocial support



In Kotakoli **(60%)** and Yakoma **(78%)**, refugees and hosts agree that there is equitable access to public services, but in other areas, notably Mobayi Mbongo **(51%)** and Zongo **(58%)**, hosts seem to have more access than refugees. Refugees in Mobayi Mbongo and Zongo said that they had difficulty accessing certain public services because of their lack of money and knowledge of the local language.

Graph 3: Perception of market access



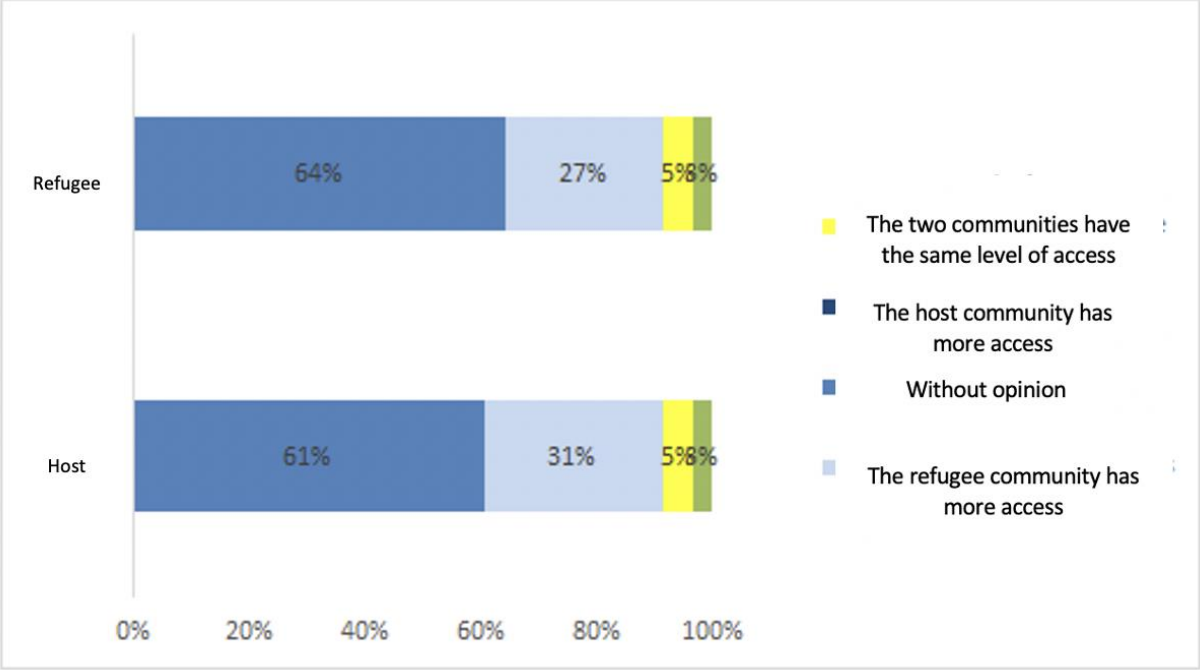
The trend shows that both communities have the same level of access to markets (Graph 3). However, during a focus group in Mobayi, refugees indicated that this was not the case because of the numerous taxes that they are asked to pay. This did not happen in other zones, such as in Zongo, Yakoma and Kotakoli, where refugees stated that the two communities have the same access to the markets, they pay the same amount of taxes, and there is no discrimination.

Different opinions and perception on access may be related to the main obstacle refugees face, namely the language problem. "There is no refugee organization to help us," said a refugee in Nzakara. In the event that the conflict persists and creates serious tensions, refugees have to meet with the refugee delegate to seek a solution.

Conflicts related to access to resources (land, natural resources)

The lack of resources and jobs, combined with the lack of language skills, force some refugees to become GODOBEs (domestic workers) in the host's field to live.[7]

Graph 4: Perception of access to economic resources



Hosts and refugees share the same trend on access to economic resources, with the host community generally having more access (Chart 4), and this is the opposition between refugees and host communities on the exploitation of land, forests, water, and fishing. Host communities perceive that refugees are already at a great advantage because they are the primary target of humanitarian interventions. As a result, hosts feel that refugees should no longer engage in natural resources exploitation activities, as this could lead to depleting resources, negatively impacting their own income. This conflict undermines peaceful

[7] Focus group in Zongo

cohabitation and gives rise to violence (for instance, rape of women and young girls when they are looking for firewood, as well as arguments that sometimes lead to fights between refugees and host communities). On their side, refugees show that this conflict is caused by the discrimination they suffer. In this context, many of them claim to be excluded from access to certain services, as well as economic resources.

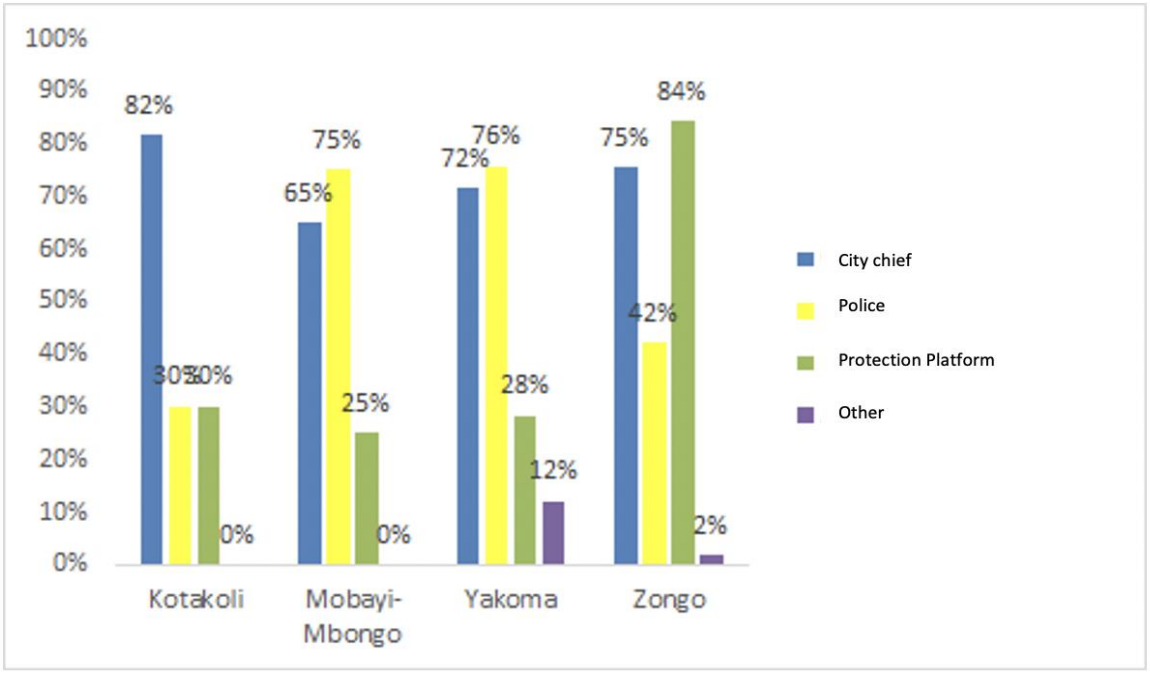
Conflicts related to abuse of power

Clashes related to abuse of power were identified by respondents as a recurring conflict in the community. These same conflicts were found to be the ones leading to physical violence and having the potential to harm the future of the community. Abuse of power or authority can take many forms, including intimidating or harassing behavior that is experienced between refugees and hosts in the study areas. For most respondents taking part in focus groups and individual interviews, this conflict is caused by the influence peddling that refugees experience when they need to access Congolese state services.

3.3.3. Existing conflict resolution mechanisms in case of problems

To resolve conflicts, the results show that the majority of those surveyed resort to the chief of the city, except in Zongo where most of the people resort to the protection platforms (specifically, it is the refugees who resort more to the protection platforms). In Kotakoli, the city chiefs are the most sought after in case of conflict, while in Mobayi Mbongo and Yakoma the police are.

Graph 5: Actors to whom community members turn in case of conflict

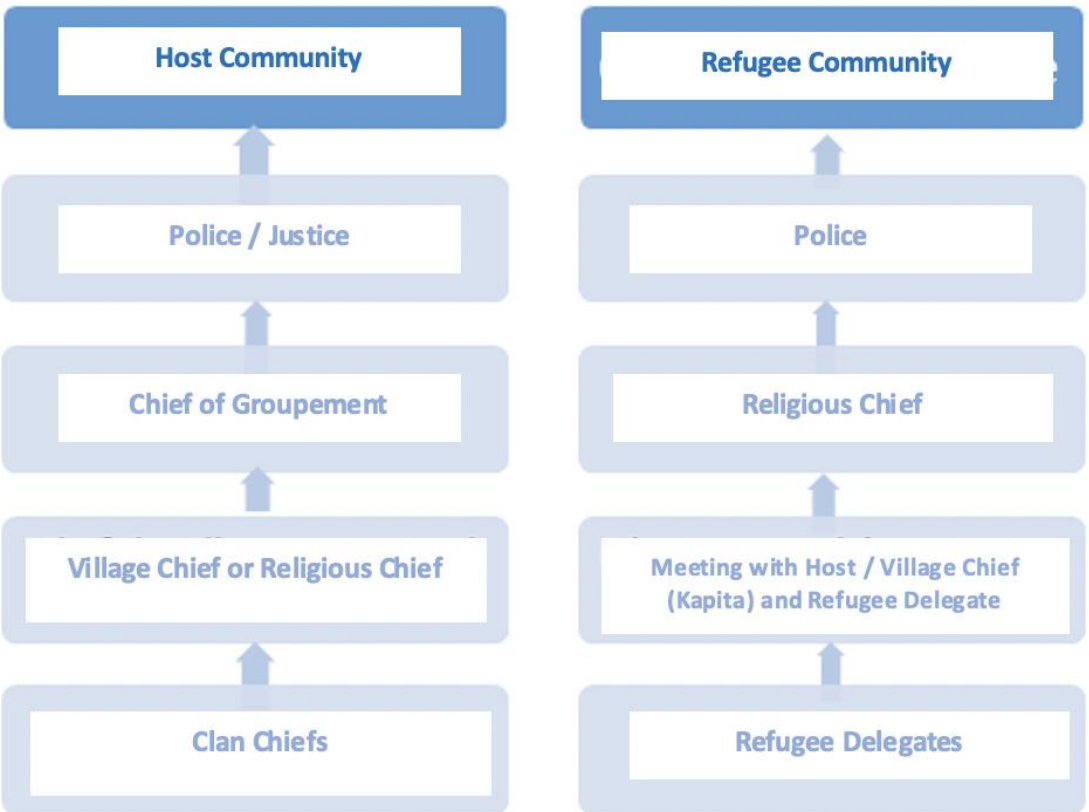


However, even though communities address these actors, their perception of them is negative. Indeed, the respondents to this study consider these actors as corrupt and ready to accept bribery, which makes the trust in these mechanisms biased.

Beyond the perceptions around these actors, the study wanted to point out the existing mechanisms in case of conflicts.

- Within the host community, the oldest clan leader is called upon to bring together and mediate between the conflicting parties. More specifically, in case of failure, the chief of the village, (*kapita*) is called upon; in case of lack of consensus, the group leader is called upon; and finally, the police is called upon when one of the conflicting parties feels that the dispute will not be well handled by the group leader. Also, religious leaders may intervene to resolve disputes within the community.
- Within the refugee community, the refugee delegates are called upon, and then a joint meeting between them and the village leader (*kapita*) is organized.
- In case of conflict between the host community and the refugee community, the two meet with the assistance of the refugee delegate and the village chief (*kapita*). In such a context, also the pastors or priests where the conflicting parties pray can take charge of the matter and assist them in the process of finding a peaceful solution.

When conflicts are not resolved through these mechanisms, the courts are called upon.



4. "Do no harm": Pragmatic adaptation and recommendations

4.1. Do no harm analysis

This section highlights the opportunities and risks to the project that the team must consider in order to ensure the execution of the "Do No Harm" campaign.

- **Humanitarian interventions are accused of prioritizing refugees at the expense of hosts, while both communities live in the same difficult living conditions**. Hosts perceive supporting interventions as benefiting only refugees, who, in addition to humanitarian aid, exploit the natural resources of the host communities, too. This perception leads to the development of tensions with the refugees, leading to all forms of violence.
- **The economic resilience of the two communities is very low**, causing various tensions. The growth in the number of refugees increases the demand for arable land and other resources, which are already scarce according to the hosts. This boosts tensions, particularly over land, as well as over the access to resources and existing opportunities. Being the sources of income for community members scarce, the resulting poverty leads to division and conflict.
- **The non-representation of all segments of the community in activities organized by international organizations** negatively influences the perception of refugees and hosts about the project as a whole. This can have a significant influence on both the level of participation and commitment in the activities, but also on the level of ownership of the project itself by the communities, and on the restoration of a climate of peace in the region.
- **The misunderstanding of beneficiary communities about the strategy for carrying out support activities**. This refers to problems of access to infrastructure, such as water points. Given the exponential number of incoming refugees, water points are becoming places of conflict, causing a feeling of lack of support from the consortium to the maintenance committees.
- **Poor communication around beneficiary targeting negatively influences the project**. For instance, the targeting of international agencies that privilege refugees against hosts, when the truth is that both groups experience poverty and economic resilience. The perceived lack of transparency exacerbates tensions between the two communities, resulting in a feeling of unequal treatment, despite the same economic problems.
- **Support and protection mechanisms are under pressure due to the increase in GBV cases**, and different social and cultural norms can exacerbate community tensions. Acceptance of each other's norms and identity is the basis for peaceful cohesion and collaboration. As long as cultural differences are a dividing line, the cohesion between the two communities is threatened.
- **The lack of knowledge and/or the non-existence of existing conflict resolution mechanisms** is currently a risk factor. Although search platforms do exist, they remain unknown to some community members.

4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed to the main actors involved in assisting refugees and hosts in the areas studied and, when implemented, they can help alleviate tensions and conflicts within the two communities.

These recommendations are proposed to prevent risks, to ensure that the project is sensitive to conflict, and that it does not cause harm.

- **Boost coordination among humanitarian actors in the area to strengthen communication to the community on the definition of beneficiarie**s:
    - Make a restitution of the conflicts scan to humanitarian actors, local authorities, project beneficiaries and all project stakeholders;
    - Actively participate in clusters and provide technical support in terms of conflict sensitivity to cluster leads (OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF...);
    - Make the accountability mechanism more effective, accessible, confidential, secure, and gender-sensitive to bring about sustainable change.
- **Strengthen communication on the project's intervention strategy**, by using Search's communication resources and tools to assist in the process of distribution activities, for example. In this way, Search will be able to use its expertise for raising awareness and preventing possible conflicts that may break out because of distribution or other project activities. It is important to ensure that the criteria for selecting beneficiaries are widely disseminated, as well as the rules for the intervention. In the sites bordering with the Central African Republic, the migration services and the CNR must be used to validate the final lists.
- **Strengthen the existing protection platforms**, aiming to be the vectors of information between the community and humanitarian actors, but especially in the management of GBV victims. This could be done by setting up a system that facilitates admission for refugees when language barriers hinder their access, for example.
- **Increase awareness about GBV** through participatory theaters and radio programs that can reinforce knowledge about GBV itself.
- **Strengthen activities that facilitate ongoing encounters between hosts and refugees, taking into account age, gender and ethnicity**:
    - Ensure that the composition of local structures initiated by the project takes into account gender, age, and the community to which they belong (host and refugee, respectively);
    - Organize mixed sports events and traditional dances between members of different ethnic groups within the host community and between the host community and the refugees.
- **As part of Do No Harm, the consortium team (Search and WV) should review projects to improve approaches and specifically inclusive strategies through the following actions**:
    - Establish an inclusive and transparent targeting system. Once the criteria have been defined in an inclusive and participatory manner, radio messages, SMS, and posters should be used in the villages of intervention to disseminate information on the targeting criteria and methods;
    - Involve local actors in the sensitization and communication work, in particular government technical services, traditional communicators, community leaders, and leaders representing different social groups (youth, women, people);
    - Establish ethical and deontological rules in the contract or agreement with community leaders and, above all, issue regular reminders;
    - Constantly monitor targeting activities;
    - Establish a training of management committees on the maintenance of these works for the sustainability of the actions, to set up a joint monitoring committee for water points and their infrastructure rehabilitation.

- **Strengthen the community's understanding of all the steps involved in defining the criteria for targeting aid beneficiaries** (from formalities with local authorities to the finalization of lists). The proposed approach is to **conduct a step-by-step dialogue at each level of the target population to define vulnerability criteria, through**:
    - Dialogues, in the form of focus groups, homogeneous by category, to define their vulnerability criteria;
    - Multi-group dialogues to gather the criteria defined in each group.
- **Strengthen the accountability framework in the governance of public services**:
    - Establish frameworks for dialogue between users and public service providers (support, health care, market) on access issues;
    - Strengthen service providers' skills on accountability;
    - Organize roundtables where both communities can discuss issues of access to public services with service providers.

5. Conclusion

Generally, the flow of refugees due to the situation in CAR increases the pressure on arable land and resources. This is one of the main factors leading to conflict, as resources become scarce and this causes different socio-economic impacts.

This conflict scan allowed us to understand the context of the area, the changing dynamics of conflict, and to understand the ways in which project interventions can unintentionally increase tensions in communities in order to make recommendations for programming based on the principle of "Do no Harm".

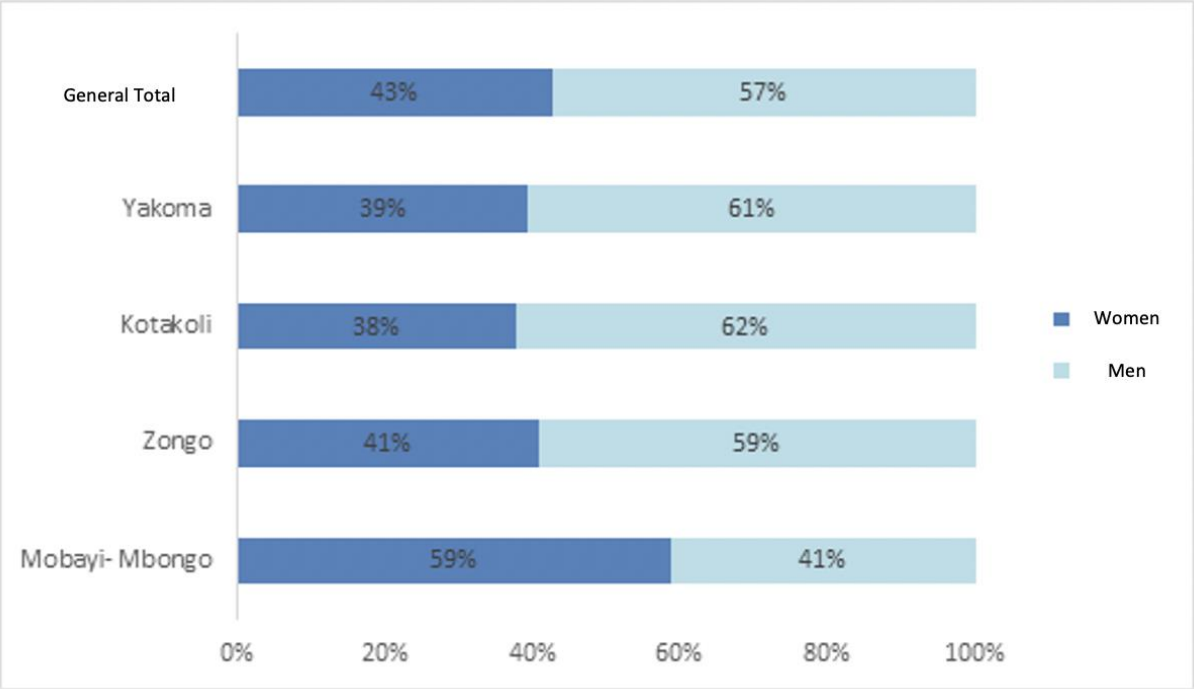
Three main types of tensions have been identified that undermine social cohesion, namely tensions related to access to resources and land, tensions related to social discrimination, and tensions related to abuse of power. Tensions related to discrimination are linked to issues of access to resources and humanitarian aid. For what concerns the risks that these conflicts can generate, the greatest is the threat of losing trust in both humanitarian organizations and public services.

In terms of project interventions that may unintentionally increase tensions in communities and put participants at risk, our study identified the perception that hosts continue to perceive refugees as privileged over the host community.

6. Appendix

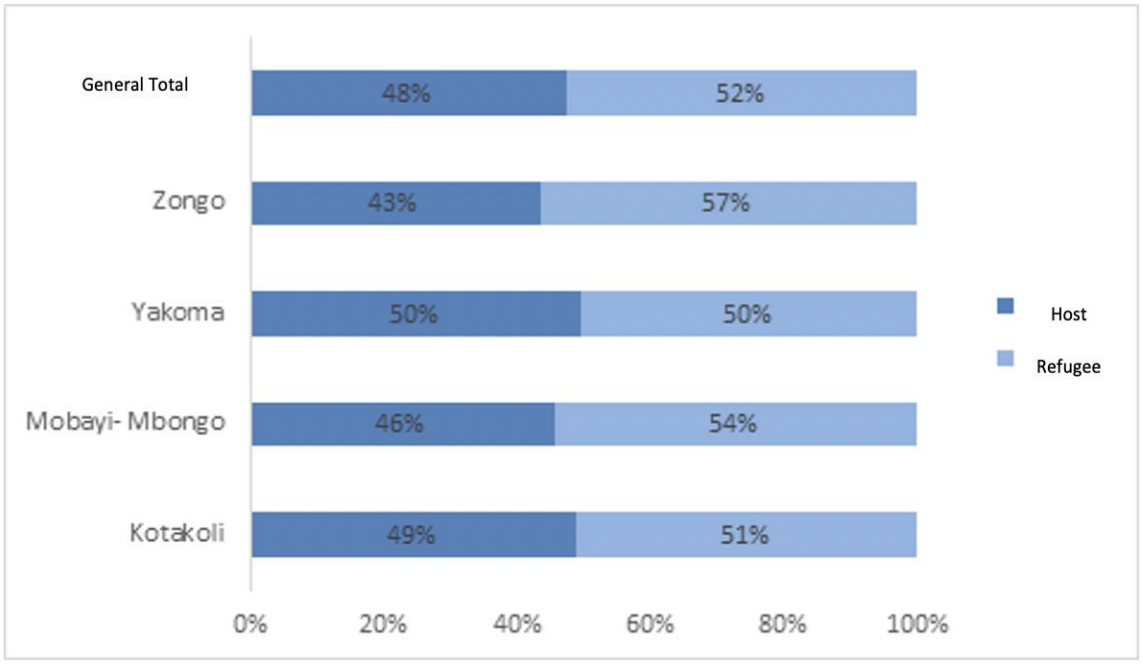
Appendix 1:

Chart 7: Respondent Disaggregation by Zone and Gender



The majority of respondents to this study were men (57%) versus women (43%) (Graph 1). The research team made sure to have an equitable distribution of men and women during the collection. However, slightly more men than women participated in the research.

Graph 8: Disaggregation of respondents by status

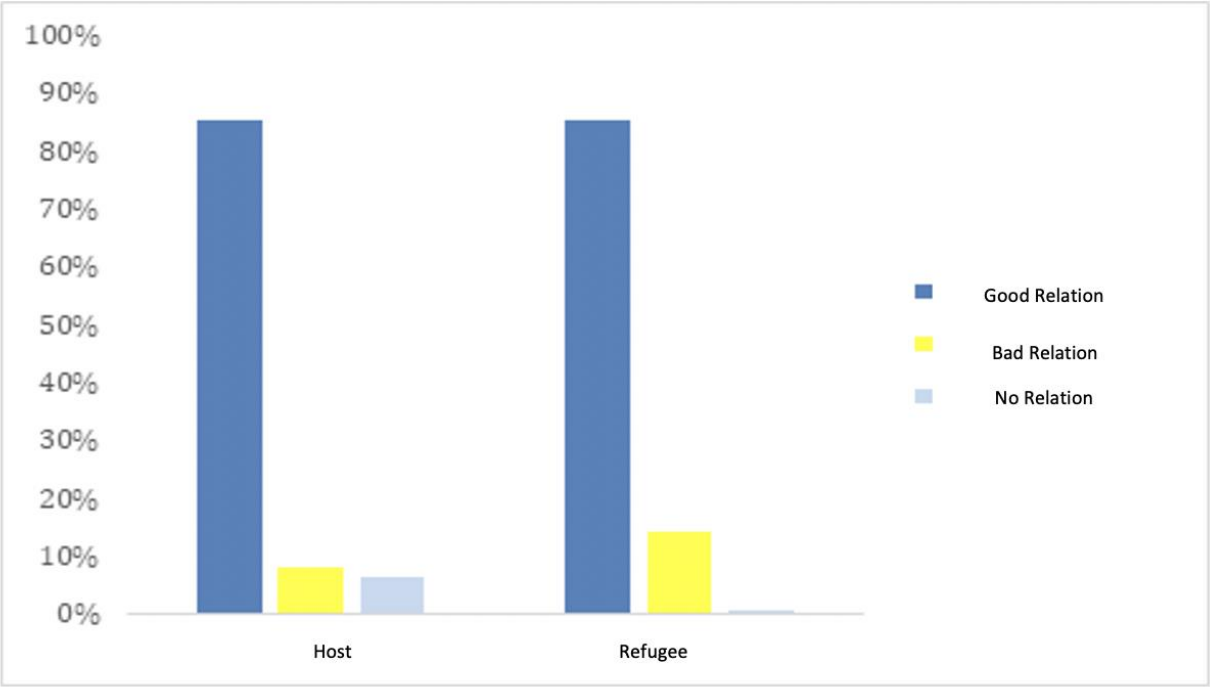


The distribution of respondents to the study is 48% host community members (hosts) and 52% refugees. (Graph 2).

As for the age of the respondents, the analysis showed that 3% of the respondents are under 18 years old; 16% of the respondents are between 18-24 years old, 33% are between 25-35 years old; 43% are between 36-59 years old and 5% are 60 years old and above. The graph for the age of the respondents will be put in the appendix.

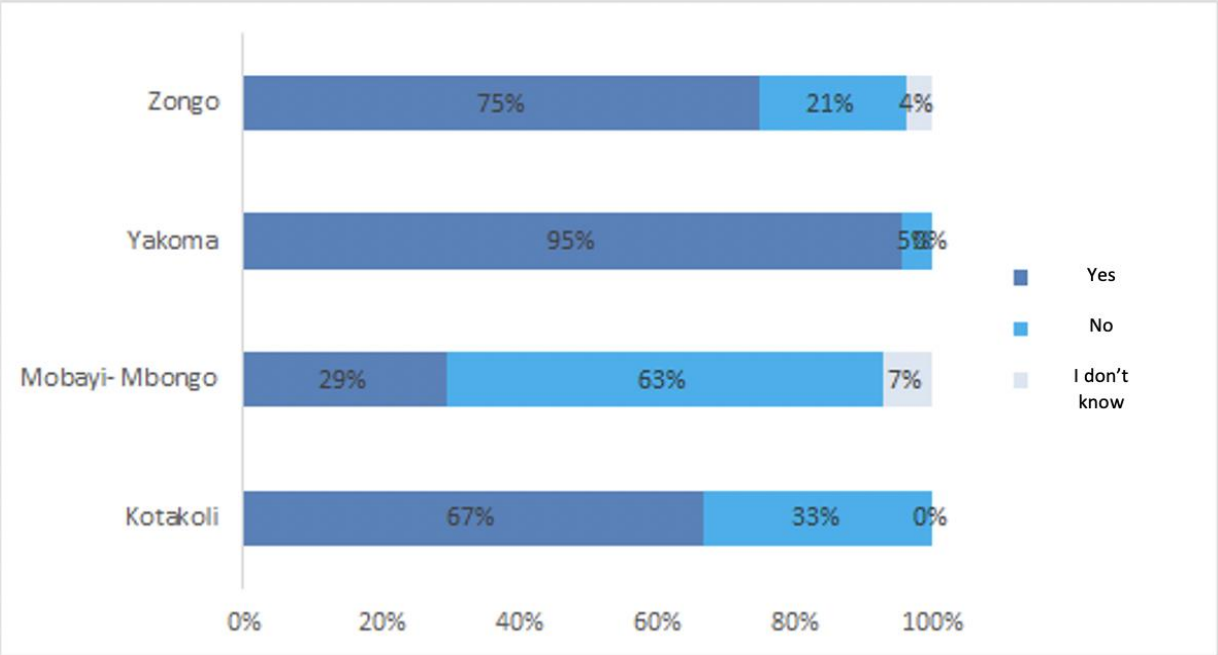
Appendix 2:

Graph 9: Relationship between refugee and host



Appendix 3:

Graph 8: Knowledge of existing platforms to reduce GBV in the community



Appendix 4:

Graph 4: Problems faced by communities

