



DRC-HEA-VJE-P01, Goma, DRC
Reporting Period: July 2018 – June 2019

Village Justice and Empowerment – Democratic Republic of Congo

Budget: Year One (of 3). Fully funded. Year 2 began 1 July 2019 - \$11,731 still needed (of \$24,000)

The Project:

Our partners live and work in a troubled part of the world, the eastern part of DRC that borders Rwanda. In an area that has been ravaged by ongoing civil conflict and horrendous genocide in neighbouring Rwanda, our partners offer compassionate and relevant healthcare together with community development to the marginalized, vulnerable and needy. This project seeks to establish local village leadership committees of twelve (six men and six women) to bring about justice and empowerment to help their communities. Through training and capacity building, it is empowering local leaders from all groups to come together to effectively contribute to peace and stabilization. The aim is to help reduce violence (particularly sexual and gender-based violence) through conflict resolution and mediation and establish practices for long-lasting community development.



A village committee meets with Jenny Cramer from Entrust.

Update:

Following on from the initial four training sessions (in the previous report) the 72 local community leaders have initiated significant conflict resolution and empowerment strategies within their communities. Leaders are collaboratively working out ways to conduct social dialogue in their rural communities to fight against injustice, insecurity and sexual/gender-based violence. They feel better equipped to take care of their communities and are working closely together to teach and enlighten the villagers about these issues. To date over 1500 community members have been recipients of sessions held by the committees and participated in community dialogues. DRC continues to struggle. National elections eventually took place in December 2018 after much unrest and turbulence. The new leaders have not been able to improve communities and strengthen systems as yet.

Virginie (left) is one of the committee members. With her new skills and the support of the committee, she has helped Francine (right), to claim her house as her right. When Francine's husband passed away, the family tried to "grab" the land and house, which would have seen Francine destitute on the street. This is a common practice where women are



regarded as having very few, if any, rights. Thanks to the conflict resolution training and negotiation skills learned, the families came together and agreed to allow Francine to live in her home. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed and the community is behind the decision. This is a major breakthrough, particularly for women. Jenny Cramer, Entrust Project Manager, heard the story first-hand when visiting Idjwi Island, a poor remote community where one of the four committees has been established. Francine was overjoyed with the outcome, not to mention relieved! Jenny said, "We are proud to stand alongside women like Francine and communities on Idjwi. We thank you for empowering communities, supporting rights, respect and dignity."