



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO COUNTRY REPORT

THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN
SYSTEM 2026

ANNEX 3: FGD PROTOCOL

PART 1: OPENING QUESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Events, threats, access to aid

Q1. Thinking about the past two years (2023 and 2024), what have been the most significant events or threats (like conflict, displacement, health crises, disasters, or economic shocks) that have affected your community and created a need for support? [**Probe:** How did these events directly impact your daily life, safety, or access to essential services like food, water, shelter, or healthcare?]

Q2. When you or your community faced these challenges, who were the first people or groups (e.g., family, neighbours, community leaders, local organizations, government, or international aid groups) you turned to for help, or who were present and offered support? [**Probe:** What kind of support did they provide?]

PART 2: AID EFFECTIVENESS AND THEMATIC QUESTIONS (85 MINUTES)

a) Provision of enough assistance (20 minutes)

Q3. You mentioned having received support or humanitarian aid from different groups. From your perspective, how sufficient or appropriate was the aid you received for your family's specific needs? Were you able to access aid when you needed it most? Could you share some examples? I

- **Probe:** Can you briefly tell us how you became eligible for this support, and for how long you received it?

Q4. From your experience, what are the main difficulties that prevent humanitarian aid from reaching all the people who need it, or from being delivered effectively in your area?

- **Probe 1:** What do you think are the main reasons for these challenges? Please provide concrete examples.
- **Probe 2:** How are changes in the security situation affecting aid delivery in your location? Please provide concrete examples.
- **Probe 3:** How do aid workers negotiate access to the field? With whom?

Q5. When aid organizations try to understand what people need, do you feel they truly capture your community's most important needs? Are there specific needs or groups of people that are often overlooked? Why do you think this happens?

- **Probe 1:** How well does the aid you actually receive match what you believe your priority needs are? Please give examples of any gaps
- **Probe 2:** Are affected communities consulted or considered in the design and planning beyond needs assessments?

b) Effective aid and efficient action (20 minutes)

Q6. From your point of view, do you see aid organizations working well together in your community?

- **Probe 1:** What examples have you seen where different aid groups worked together effectively, or where they did not?
- **Probe 2:** What do you think made it work well or caused problems?

Q7. Have you noticed any changes in the type or amount of aid coming in over the last couple of years? If yes, why do you think these changes are happening?

- **Probe:** Have you seen signs that organizations are finding it harder to get money or supplies to help your community? (Probe for perspectives around donor fatigue)

c) Protection, dignity and accountability (15 minutes)

Q8. When aid is delivered, do you feel there is transparency (clear information on who gets what and why), accountability (aid workers are answerable for their actions), and integrity (aid is not stolen or misused)?

- **Probe 1:** Can you share any examples where you felt aid was not delivered fairly, or where there were issues like aid being misused or stolen? What happened, and what, if anything, was done about it?

Q9. Do you feel that the aid provided to you helps protect your safety and dignity? For example, does it address your specific protection needs as a woman, man, girl, boy, person with disability, or older person? Please provide concrete examples.

Q10. Do you feel safe and respected by aid workers? What happens if an aid worker behaves inappropriately or causes harm to you or your community?

- **Probe 1:** Do aid workers explain how they should behave, or how you can report concerns about their behaviour? Please provide concrete examples.

Q11. How well do you feel aid providers listen to your opinions and take your needs into account when making decisions about aid? Also, how do you feel about the ways you can give feedback or make complaints about aid?

- **Probe 1:** What works well, what are the challenges with these processes, and can you give examples of when your feedback led to changes in aid provision?
- **Probe 2:** How common are instances where communities turn against aid workers or restrict certain agencies from operating, and what drives these

reactions? How widespread this is? Can you give concrete examples of this in your context?

Q12. Building on the topic of protecting vulnerable populations, can you discuss the measures in place, and any challenges, related to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) by humanitarian actors themselves in the delivery of aid? This includes issues of accountability and support for survivors.

- **Probe 1:** Have the changes made following the reports on SEA in 2022 (refers to Ebola in Beni) led to more positive approaches?
- **Probe 2:** What explains reported increases in cases from MONUSCO?
- **Probe 3:** Which PSEA initiatives have actually been implemented since the scandal (refers to Ebola in Beni), and what barriers or enablers shape their effectiveness?
- **Probe 4:** What practices do communities themselves view as protective or dignity enhancing?
- **Probe 5:** What are the improvements or gaps in reporting pathways, support, and behaviour of aid workers?
- **Probe 6:** How do agencies coordinate on PSEA, and to what extent are local and women-led organisations included?

Q13. What promising protection practices (including child protection) exist among NGOs, camp committees, or community-led structures?

- **Probe 1:** Please provide concrete examples in your context.

d) Localisation and sustainability (15 minutes)

Q14. How do you feel humanitarian aid has affected your community's ability to respond to challenges and become more self-reliant? Can you tell us about your own local efforts and groups that help in crises, and how aid works with (or against) these?

- **Probe 1:** Please provide examples of whether aid makes your community more self-reliant or more dependent, especially for those returning after displacement (e.g., from Goma or Bukavu).

Q15. What broader impact has humanitarian aid had on your community over the past two years (e.g., on local markets, the environment, or social dynamics), especially during periods of escalating conflict earlier this year?

- **Probe 1:** How consistent was the support you received during these escalating crises, and were there any noticeable gaps when you needed it most? Please provide concrete examples.

Q16. Thinking about disaster and epidemic response, how has the system responded to Moneky Pox pandemic crisis in the DRC? What lessons learned from the previous

pandemic (COVID-19) are currently being put into practice? Please provide concrete examples.

- **Probe 1:** How effective was the collaboration between community structures, state health institutions, and humanitarian responders?
- **Probe 2:** How were political or security constraints managed?
- **Probe 3:** How did displacement affect the effectiveness of the response? Tell us whether there were cases of data losses and difficulties in disease tracking.
- **Probe 4:** How have COVID-19 lessons (on prevention practices, community communication, and clinical navigation) shaped the MPox response?

e) Aid and humanitarian principles (10 minutes)

Q17. Do you feel that humanitarian aid is delivered fairly in your community, based only on people's needs and without favouritism (e.g., not based on ethnicity, religion, or political views)? Also, do aid workers treat everyone with respect and ensure their activities do not cause any harm? Please give examples of when aid felt fair and respectful, or when it did not.

Q18. In situations of conflict or tension, do you feel aid organizations remain neutral and do not take sides between different groups?

- How does this, or the overall behaviour of aid workers, affect your trust in them and their ability to help your community? Please give examples to explain your views.
- Do you trust local actors more or less than international actors? Why do you feel that way? Please share examples.

PART 3: CLOSING QUESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Q19. Tell us if you have any other experience, you would like to share related to humanitarian action in the DRC. [Please elaborate.]

Q20. Do you have any questions for us?

CONSENT STATEMENT

Now that we have concluded this discussion, do you still consent that we use this information for the purpose of our study? Is there anything that you shared with us today that you would like to withdraw?

Thank participants for their time and remind them that they can withdraw from the study at any time. Ensure that participants answered any questions. Provide contact details for any follow up questions. Collect contact information for follow up focus groups and dissemination.

