

The Data Centre for IDPs in North Kivu

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Effective provision of aid and protection for those displaced in eastern DRC requires reliable data – which the new Data Centre in North Kivu is helping to provide.

In eastern Congo, as areas of violence shift, new people are displaced while others, previously displaced, are able to return home. During displacement some people live in camps while others live with family or friends or under rental arrangements

For example, there are ‘commuting’ IDPs, people who shuttle regularly between different locations, including their homes and camps. And there are multiple displacements where, if not detected, agencies run the risk of multiplying by the number of displacements rather than counting the displaced individuals. Further challenges include differing methodologies, unknown sources of information, and lack of adjustment for births and deaths.

In order to deal with these challenges, the Commission for Population Movements (CMP) was launched, led by OCHA. The CMP works in cooperation and collaboration with many of the humanitarian actors and agencies to compare and consolidate data. Discrepancies and data shortages continued, however, and in 2008 an innovative project was launched to address this information shortage: the Data Centre for IDPs.

The Data Centre, run by UNOPS, is located in Goma and monitors the provinces of South and North Kivu. The project is funded by UNHCR as part of the agency’s CCCM (Camp Coordination and Camp Management) responsibility but all UN agencies are encouraged to be partners in the project – and any humanitarian agency can

request data from the Centre. On a technical level the project works in direct cooperation with and support of the provincial authorities, the camp managing agencies (local and international) and UNHCR in providing for the needs of IDPs. The Centre aims primarily to:

- undertake individual registration of camp-based IDP populations, including new arrivals, departures, births, deaths, etc
- maintain an up-to-date and real-time database that allows for population tracking and the production of disaggregated data on IDP populations
- manage population movements from, to and between IDP camps by ensuring individual documentation, such as Voluntary Return Attestations, etc
- produce accurate beneficiary lists for assistance purposes, taking into account family size, special needs, and vulnerability criteria such as defined by the humanitarian community in DRC
- help develop a strong humanitarian data analysis capacity within the framework of the Congolese government’s stabilisation plan for eastern DRC (STAREC)
- ensure individual registration of Congolese refugee returnees in order to facilitate verification in the countries of asylum and to assist UNHCR North Kivu in planning for protection and assistance activities



UNOPS team registering IDPs near Kitchanga, North Kivu

commonly referred to as ‘host families’. Collection of data in a camp is relatively easy but data collection among host families – where resident and displaced populations cannot easily be distinguished – is much more difficult, and DRC’s complex displacement patterns make it yet more difficult to arrive at correct and coherent figures.

- maintain a database for protection and returnee monitoring reports.

The Centre gathers and processes information about IDPs living in camps in North Kivu (and to a limited extent in South Kivu). Information is gathered through surveys and interviews, and includes the number of people in a household, their ages and gender, their reason for flight, their plans for the future, and any specific vulnerabilities of family members. Family members are photographed to facilitate identification when benefits are distributed or when IDPs decide they want to return home. The IDP camps are divided into zones and house numbers to allow the team to register people as living in a particular house. This allows for 'fixing' exercises, in which a surprise house-to-house count of the actual population is carried out at night. This work can

be dangerous and requires tight coordination with MONUSCO (formerly MONUC) for security.

The Data Centre has its own GIS mapping capacity. In addition to establishing the origin, flow and present location of the displaced population, the GIS team works with local authorities to clarify administrative boundaries. In 2010 the Google Corporation provided the project with portable smart phones to facilitate more efficient data registration including taking GPS coordinates for mapping use.

UNHCR uses its Health Information System (HIS) primarily in refugee camps but in North Kivu the Data Centre is piloting its use in IDP situations. In close collaboration with WHO and the provincial health authorities, the Centre is partnering with health centres,

within and outside IDP camps, in order to gather health information to help track diseases and health concerns among the IDPs.

All the data collected, including statistical information and maps, is regularly distributed among the humanitarian community in eastern Congo through the internet and meetings. This should help all humanitarian actors supporting IDPs in North Kivu and South Kivu to deliver better, more effective and targeted assistance to the IDP population.

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More information about the activities of the Data Centre for IDPs can be found at <http://www.dc4idp.org>