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A woman purchases food using vouchers at the market fair.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Reducing vulnerability of Burundian refugees and host families in Uvira territory, South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Emergency aid funding report: August - November 2015

Reducing vulnerability of Burundian refugees and host families in Uvira territory, South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Key project successes:

- ▶ **Approximately 2,976 people affected by the political crisis in Burundi have been supported with food and household items to meet their basic needs**
- ▶ **Community involvement in project planning ensured the needs of refugees were central to the response**
- ▶ **The quality of the response was highlighted by the National Commission for Refugees in DRC**

Violence and unrest have been ongoing in Burundi since April 2015, as a result of tensions surrounding the presidential elections held in June 2015. As a result of the unrest, thousands of Burundians have been fleeing to neighbouring countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Many fled without their possessions and are living a hand-to-mouth existence with no resources of their own. These refugees are in urgent need of shelter, food and other basic supplies, protection, health, and water and sanitation.

In the DRC, Burundian refugees are living in extremely precarious and inhumane conditions in temporary camps or with host communities - putting a strain on resources and further increasing tensions. There is inadequate food available for refugees - food consumption is below the United Nations' cluster emergency threshold and as the situation deteriorates, there is a severe risk of death from disease and malnourishment among children.

With support from the Isle of Man Overseas Aid Committee, ActionAid has been supporting refugees living in host communities in Luvungi in Uvira territory. They are some of the most vulnerable Burundian refugees and we have been able to support them by providing them with food and other basic but vital relief items. Thank you for your crucial support.

Progress against planned activities

The overall aim of our emergency response in the DRC was to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of Burundian refugees and host communities in Uvira and strengthening their access to basic essential goods and services. We completed two key activities to achieve this:

- 1. Reduce the vulnerability of 200 refugee families through the provision of vouchers to access essential food and household items at an organised local market fair**
- 2. Improve the food security of 300 households fostering refugees through the provision of vouchers to access essential food and household items at an organised local market fair**

As part of the **preparatory stage** of the response, we:

- Held a preliminary meeting with different stakeholders - including local authorities and community representatives such as police, religious representatives, schools and local civil society organisations - in order to establish a Basic Humanitarian Committee (BHC).
- Selected 12 community members in Luvungi to be trained as facilitators of the fair - training topics included market fair organisation and beneficiary identification, on baseline data collection, supplier identification, administration of beneficiary lists and distribution records, and implementation of the fair. Those selected were required to have a basic level of education, knowledge of local languages, relevant availability and not be related to beneficiaries.
- Worked with local authorities to identify the site of the fair. The identified site had been used for fairs two years ago and was agreed as a suitable location and easily accessible for the refugees.
- Identified 500 households who would benefit from the food and non-food item voucher distributions. Priority was given to female-headed households, pregnant women, families with young dependants, and families with disabled family members. ActionAid includes vouchers as part of our emergency response work as they enable families to make their own decisions on what items they need most and also help to support the local economy.
- Organised a meeting with beneficiary representatives, suppliers and fair facilitators to identify a list of items to be made available at the fair. For example, women with young children had identified mosquito nets as an item they would like to be available.
- Completed an analysis of the availability and quality of goods to be included at the fair based on beneficiary suggestions, and agreed prices with suppliers. We then created a list of food and non-food items to be published and communicated at the fair.
- Held four meetings with local communities to inform them about the organisation and the importance of the fair

Together with the BHC and fair facilitators, ActionAid organised a **local market fair** over two days on 21st and 22nd October 2015, which was implemented successfully:

- Based on the closed market approach, two types of vouchers of different colours were available to make purchases at the fair: green vouchers for non-food items and red vouchers for food.





The registration desk at the fair, coordinated by the trained facilitators. PHOTO: ACTIONAID

- In total, we supported 500 households – including refugee families and foster households hosting refugees. This ensured almost 3,000 vulnerable people have been able to access food and basic household items to support them during this difficult time. Almost 2,500 of these benefiting were dependants of the households, for example children, those with disabilities and elderly people.
- Refugees and host families were given the choice of which goods to buy based on their own individual needs.
- Green vouchers valued at \$70 (approximately £50) per family were distributed to the identified beneficiaries to enable them to purchase items such as mosquito nets and basic household items. And red vouchers with a value of \$60 (approximately £40) were provided to families to purchase food items such as milk for those with young children. The value of the vouchers allowed families to purchase food in bulk to sustain themselves.



Some of the basic household items available at the local market fair. PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Cooking oil (left) and flour, were available at the local market fair. PHOTO: ActionAid

Project impact

Through our emergency response, ActionAid has been able to support approximately 2,976 refugees and host community members affected by the political crisis in Burundi. The response was guided by those affected and ensured the needs of the target communities were met. By training local community members to run the fair and coordinate relief items, we empowered them to be part of the response and helped to maintain the dignity of those we aimed to support. Our emergency response has been recognised by the National Commission for Refugees in DRC, whose representatives participated in the fair and acknowledged the high quality of its organisation.

Real lives

Boraboza Uzima is a widow with six children who fled to the DRC from Kibitoke province in Burundi. Thanks to ActionAid's emergency response programme, she was able to purchase wheat, sugar and oil at the market fair. She used some of the ingredients to start up a small business making and selling doughnuts at a street stall. Boraboza has been able to generate a small profit, which has allowed her to feed her family and contribute to rent and her children's education whilst they are all living in their host community in Luvungi.

Project monitoring

To deliver this project effectively we have worked closely with the local facilitators and BHC, who conducted two review meetings to monitor progress of the planned activities. ActionAid's Project Manager oversaw the day-to-day monitoring of the project, supported by the BHC. We also facilitated an evaluation meeting at the end of the response with the BHC and local leaders in order to assess the results of the project.

Looking forward

The political situation in Burundi remains fragile. Violence and the associated security crackdown have been attributed to President Pierre Nkurunziza's controversial re-election for a third successive term. Media reports indicate that this is plunging the country into its worst crisis since the end of a 12-year civil war in 2005. It has been warned that decisive diplomatic action is necessary if Burundi is to avoid another civil war. Concern has been expressed by the African Union's Chief Commissioner, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma; United States President, Barack Obama (the USA has placed sanctions on four key Burundian officials); United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon; and Kenya's President, Uhuru Kenyatta. There are now more than 280,000 Burundians who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries or have been internally displaced. ActionAid is continuing to monitor the situation and we will respond where possible in Burundi as well as in its neighbouring countries. We are currently exploring funding opportunities to support our response.

Financial report

The table below outlines the costs associated with the project:

Activities	Budget GBP	Actual GBP
Distribution of food and non food items (voucher programme)	£ 20,483.13	£ 21,185.90
Transport (Vehicle hire to distribute relief items and transportation of staff, volunteers and/or consultant)	£ 400.00	£ 527.08
Security (Storage of relief items and hiring of security guards during distribution)	£ 200.00	£ 396.80
Logistics & overheads (Accommodation, Per diem, Consultancy, establishment of database)	£ 250.00	£ 441.78
Staffing & support (Stipends for Basic Humanitarian Committee, Volunteers & Supporting Stakeholders)	£ 750.00	£ 902.95
Monitoring & Evaluation (Monitoring visits, post-monitoring distribution, coordination meetings, review meetings, photography and reporting)	£ 416.87	£ 456.32
In country management support (10%)	£ 2,500.00	£ 1,089.00
Total	£ 25,000.00	£ 24,999.83

Thank you for supporting ActionAid's emergency response to the Burundian refugee crisis in the DRC