

# Use of GECARR in conflict contexts

## Case Study: Kasai, the Democratic Republic of Congo



### The ‘Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response’ (GECARR) tool

The Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response (GECARR) is a WorldVision context analysis tool that provides a macro-level analysis of a country or a specific region during or in anticipation of a crisis. GECARR is designed to be an inter-agency tool and it’s adaptable, so that it can be used in unpredictable and conflict-prone contexts.

GECARR draws together the views of a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, including local community members and produces a snapshot of the current situation and likely future scenarios. It generates actionable and practical recommendations for key stakeholders involved in humanitarian responses. Between 2014 and 2019, WorldVision conducted 30 GECARR analyses in locations including the Central African Republic, Syria, Jordan, Kurdish Region of Iraq, Sierra Leone (Ebola), Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and the Philippines.



**GECARR**  
Good Enough  
Context Analysis  
for Rapid Response

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### The Process

World Vision, Caritas, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) carried out an inter-agency GECARR in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of Congo in July 2017. This was at the request of the World Vision DRC office in the context of the unprecedented security and humanitarian crisis in the Kasai regions, with some 1.4 million people displaced in 2017. The GECARR aimed to inform the participating agencies programming, security, advocacy and communications in the Kasai region.

Between 12 June to 5 July 2017 a GECARR facilitation team of staff from World Vision, Caritas and CRS spoke with 133 people across four areas

(Kananga, Lubondaie, Dibaya, Goma and Kinshasa). This included 14 focus group discussions and 15 key informant interviews. Interviewees included community members, displaced people, demobilized children donors, local and international non government organisations (NGOs/INGOs), UN agencies, and faith leaders, among others. Findings from the interviews were presented at a scenario-planning workshop in which a further seven local organizations, four UN agencies, three international organizations, several cluster leads and one donor convened to identify and outline three key scenarios likely to unfold in the Kasai region in the coming six months. Several of the key trigger events identified as a part of this scenario unfolded and continue to unfold as predicted.

World Vision food assistance coordinator speaks to a family at a food distribution in Tshikula, Dibaya Territory, Kasai Centrale.



# The Impact

The Kasai GECARR was seen as useful by the World Vision DRC office for a number of reasons. One of the main areas was how it informed the office's strategy and operational approach. The GECARR analysis was one of the first assessments done by World Vision DRC as it entered into the Kasai region. As a result it helped to inform the strategic intent of the response, providing momentum and confidence for the start up but at the same time giving validation of sector focus (initially food security and child protection), geographic location and a template for continuous monitoring of the context, especially the scenarios. Initially the response was going to be both in Kasai Orientale and Centrale provinces but the GECARR helped to realise the depth of need whilst at the same time pushing for a multi sectoral approach. This resulted in World Vision DRC deciding to just focus on the area of Dibaya in Kasai Centrale with food, nutrition and education, rather than expanding further into Orientale province.

The context analysis within the GECARR gave World Vision an in-depth overview of the dynamics of the Kasai area, which was invaluable given the organisation was new to the area and informed several proposals for funding. The speed at which it was ready and its concise nature were also helpful given the urgency of the situation. The analysis demonstrated the differences with other areas of DRC such as the East and how approaches needed to be tailored. For example the power analysis component of GECARR

demonstrated the strong influence of the local chiefs. As a result having a strong link with local chiefs became a key part of how World Vision began to operate. The organisation focused on consultation to build trust and good relationships and brought the chiefs in early to work with them on assessments, communication with communities, access, programme design, beneficiary selection, and implementation. This level of trust was particularly important given the number of new INGOs that came into Kasai as a result of the crisis. World Vision was one of the first of the new INGOs to concentrate on this dynamic and after this others followed suit. It helped the organisation to establish a good footprint, especially in Dibaya, and resulted in a stronger programme impact earlier on.

The GECARR also helped with mainstreaming cross cutting issues such as Do No Harm<sup>1</sup> in the response. The response began to action this recommendation through training, both for consortium partners and standalone for World Vision. Within World Vision the GECARR report was used or drawn from as one of several products used for mobilisation of funding and raising awareness of the situation, combating what seemed to be apparent fatigue with the country. As a result the crisis was elevated to from a national to a global response for the World Vision partnership<sup>2</sup>, which resulted in additional capacity and support.

1. <https://www.wvi.org/peacebuilding-and-conflict-sensitivity/do-no-harm>

2. World Vision categorises emergencies into Category I, II and III depending on the percentage of the population affected. Category III (highest level) is either a National Office led response or a Global response depending on National Office capacity.

A World Vision supported farmers cooperative in Tshikula in Kasai.



In relation to programming the GECARR analysis and recommendations gave a helpful steer to the response to take both a short and long term approach, focusing in the immediate on interventions such as food and protection, but expanding in due course to livelihoods, emergency education, psycho-social support (within child friendly spaces) and peace building (integrated within education programmes for example rather than standalone). Whilst some staff reflected that they had overestimated how much time longer term interventions would take to start, they still attributed them in part to the GECARR. The GECARR also challenged World Vision DRC to examine pre-existing ways of working. For example as a result of one of the scenarios in the GECARR pointing to necessary assistance not being sufficient or disbursed quickly enough and possibly exacerbating tensions, World Vision reassessed its method of food distributions with the UN World Food Programme. It undertook an assessment to

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validate the GECARR scenario and when this fear was confirmed, switched from a targeted food distribution to a blanket one. As a result of one of the other likely scenarios around cautious returns possibly resulting in increased tensions, World Vision DRC also started to include working with both returnees and host communities in its programming. GECARR asks also helped in strengthening calls for strong security and coordination in the Kasai area, including playing a role in the eventual establishment of an INSO<sup>3</sup> base.

3. International NGO Safety Organisation, <https://www.ngosafety.org/>

In Luiza, Kasai, World Vision has been working with 9 schools since 2017, strengthening child protection and literacy to further improve the lives of the children there.

Image © Kate Shaw, 2019, World Vision



The analysis also made a large contribution to advocacy by the response. It raised a number of issues for advocacy and provided guidance on languages, all of which was taken up into World Vision key messages and advocacy products (including joint INGO documents). The GECARR particularly helped form INGO thinking around access. Although some asks were ongoing, such as the need for funding, others were successful. This included getting a United Nations Level 3 declaration<sup>4</sup> (UN L3), increased UN flights into the area and better access and visas. Many staff attributed GECARR to have played a part in contributing and/or reinforcing these wider dialogues.

The content of the report enabled senior level World Vision staff to undertake more vocal advocacy at the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) level with confidence and to have increased visibility and legitimacy regarding World Vision's work in the Kasais, especially with donors. It complemented communications content and resulted in World Vision being seen as an agency that was not only well informed (and that quickly) but also forward thinking. The GECARR was also crucial in enabling the office to bring in further communications support, from which content (especially interviews with children) was instrumental in feeding into external presentations that were a part of starting discussions around the UN L3.

4. <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/42280/humanitarian-systemwide-level-3-emergency-declaration-policy-iasc>

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# Learnings

- **Prioritising external engagement**

One reflection from staff involved was that if the Kasai GECARR had been pushed as much externally as it was internally, the impact could have been a lot higher, both in terms of take up by peer agencies but also informing donor strategies for the region. A clear proactive external dissemination plan for a GECARR (with follow up) is always needed to maximise its potential as well as making sure it is quickly translated into the local language for maximum use. These things will ensure that agencies can lead conversations about what needs to change rather than trying to influence afterwards.

- **Investment and planning in recommended programme choices**

Some of the programmatic recommendations in the Kasai GECARR came to fruition at a later date (e.g planned Do No Harm assessments) or in a different iteration (e.g peacebuilding integrated within other sectors rather than standalone). GECARR programmatic recommendations always need to be accompanied by an adequate resourcing plan (ie staffing, training). They also need dedicated technical support to adapt models and approaches for the context, so that interventions can be rapidly implemented or scaled up if needed, or so that they can have the initial start up investment in order to avoid delays further later in the response. Such upfront investment and planning will ensure realistic expectations about timeframes and outputs.

Former child soldiers sit in the grass together in the Kasai.



Image © Kate Shaw, 2018, World Vision



## • Investing in partner relationships post GECARR

The Kasai GECARR had three external partners in UN OCHA, CRS and Caritas as well as a local NGO partner (which then went on to become World Vision's main local partner). However, further collaboration post GECARR did not materialise with peer INGOs for various reasons including possibly lack of buy in at the start and staff turnover. Whilst conducting GECARRs inter-agency brings a lot of added value to the actual process, it should be considered a starting point and can and should result in deeper partnerships post assessment. To build off inter-agency relationships in a strategic way requires a deliberate and proactive approach to maintain these relationships, including allocation of staff time for follow up and where appropriate capacity building.

## • GECARR contributes to a bigger picture

The Kasai GECARR in some aspects validated and reinforced existing messages and debates. This is an equally valid and helpful contribution of GECARR alongside providing new ideas or information. GECARRs often feed into strategies and work plans as part of a number of assessments and information sources. Whilst this may not mean sole attribution for any progress, it is helpful visibility and additional triangulation nevertheless.

The broad benefits of the GECARR process to the World Vision DRC office meant that many in the office felt that the tool should become a standard and integrated component of World Vision's emergency management system procedures when launching a response. There should also be further marketing of the tool to external actors within the humanitarian system.



Marie, a mum of two children, receives food from a World Vision distribution in Dibaya, Kasai.

Image © Kate Shaw, 2017, World Vision

