

Evaluation of International Assistance Programming in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2012–13 to 2018–19



Global Affairs Canada's International Assistance Evaluation Division (PRA) conducted an evaluation of Canadian international assistance in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the period of 2012–13 to 2018–19. The purpose of this evaluation was to promote learning, inform decision-making and improve Canadian programming. The issues covered by the evaluation included: responsiveness and flexibility of programming in a fragile state; program coherence; achievement and sustainability of results; and good practices in gender equality.

KEY FINDINGS

Canadian development programming in the DRC was modest but addressed important needs. Shifting departmental priorities, rather than the needs of Congolese and the changing context, influenced decisions about which sectors Canada would target for development assistance. Canada's humanitarian funding was rapidly deployed to areas of identified needs.

Programming in the DRC – both humanitarian and development – did not strategically or systematically consider the causes and factors of conflict and fragility in its planning and implementation. There was no strategy for linking the humanitarian, development, and peace and stabilization components of Canadian programming in the DRC. The department could strengthen the links between these three components and better integrate a fragility and conflict lens into its programming.

Programming contributed to improvements in access to, and quality of, maternal and child health services and holistic care services for SGBV survivors. There were early indications of positive results in the areas of child protection and the promotion of democracy. Programming also demonstrated strong gender equality integration. These results, while positive, remained limited in scale and consistency.

Individual projects tried to strengthen the sustainability of results, recognizing the challenge of doing this in a fragile context. This was achieved to varying levels of success. Ultimately, only some results were sustained. Sustainability challenges were more present in the health sector, and to a lesser degree, in the sectors of child protection and SGBV.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The DRC Program should establish a multi-year planning mechanism for bilateral programming in the DRC.** This mechanism would be informed by updated analysis of the context, of the causes and factors of conflict, of the actors involved, and of Canada's positioning in the DRC. The DRC Program should also explore ways to respond more quickly to emerging needs in the context of fragility and conflict in the DRC.
- 2. The DRC Program, in consultation with Global Issues and Development (MFM), Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOPs), and Partnerships for Development Innovation (KFM), should identify options to enable Canada to further engage in the triple nexus process** taking place in the DRC under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) Joint Office.
- 3. The DRC Program should lead a joint reflection with MFM and KFM on the direction of Canada's engagement in the health sector in the DRC** taking into consideration its different programming and policy dialogue channels.
- 4. The DRC Program at headquarters and the mission should build the necessary capacity** (or optimize the use of existing resources) **to better integrate a fragility lens** into programming choices and their implementation, and to enable Canada to better play its role in the DRC as a conflict- and fragility-sensitive donor with a strong humanitarian commitment.
- 5. PSOPs, in collaboration with the DRC Program, should identify and formalize modalities for providing targeted technical support to the DRC Program,** to assist in better integrating a conflict and fragility lens in programming. This should be done by taking into consideration PSOPs' budgetary and human resource constraints when it comes to supporting non-priority countries such as the DRC.

