



International Peace Support Training Centre Nairobi, Kenya

Assessing Effectiveness of Protection Mechanism for Women and Girls in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



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FOREWORD

The International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) is a Peace Support Operations (PSO) research and training institution focusing on capacity building at the strategic, operational and tactical levels within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). IPSTC has developed into the regional Center of Excellence for the African Standby Force (ASF) in Eastern Africa. It addresses the complexities of contemporary United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) integrated PSOs through analysis of the multi-dimensional nature of these operations. The research conducted covers a broad spectrum ranging from conflict prevention, conflict management to postconflict reconstruction.

The Center has made considerable contributions in training and research on peace support issues in Eastern Africa through design of training curriculum, field research and publication of *Occasional Papers and Issue Briefs*. The Occasional Papers are field based research products produced annually, while the Issues Briefs are secondary sources based products produced quarterly. These publications are an important contribution to the vision and mission of IPSTC.

The Peace and Security Research Department (PSRD) of the IPSTC presents one of the occasional papers produced this year titled: *Assessing Effectiveness of Protection Mechanism for Women and Girls in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. This research sought to appraise mechanisms of women and girls' protection in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) provinces of North and South Kivu. This region has experienced violent conflicts over two decades during which violations of the rights of women and girls have occurred. The general findings is that there has been some improvement of institutional capacity for protection of women in eastern DRC especially in South Kivu in recent years. However human rights violations and abuse continue without access to justice for the victims.

This study has generated valuable information necessary for improving policy, practice and strategy development for partners in protection of women, children and specifically girls. This publication will further cement collaboration with our esteemed partners; Save the Children International.

I wish to thank Save the Children International who provided funding for the whole research and publication of this study. IPSTC appreciates this continued support and will continue to deliver high quality products as per our partners' expectations.

R.A Elmi
Brigadier
Director, IPSTC

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The study could not have been successful without good will from the respondents who despite their busy schedules provided audience to the researchers. The respondents participated in the research with passion and devotion to contribute towards a better protected community of women and girls. The research team of Joseph Kioi Mbugua and Major Nina Omanyo however take responsibility for any shortcomings in the study.

Lastly, we wish to thank *Save the Children International* team who provided guidance on the research and for their generous support which made the research and publication of this Occasional Paper possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	American Bar Association
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms Discrimination against Women
CJPC	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CRSV	Conflict Related Sexual Violence
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
DFJ	Dynamic Women Lawyers
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EJVM	Expanded Joint Verification Mission
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo
FGD	Focus Groups Discussion
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Center
JPT	Joint Protection Teams
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

NAP	National Action Plan
OAG	Organized Armed Groups
POC	Protection of Civilians
PSO	Peace Support Operations
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Associations
WPS	Women Peace and Security

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Protection Mechanisms

Refers to the treaties, United Nations Security Council resolutions, AU protocols, national legal, policy, strategies, institutions, measures, programmes and activities employed to protect women and girls against human rights violations, gender discrimination, violent conflict and its impact in eastern DRC. The global pillars for gauging level of Protection Mechanism for Women and Girls were developed by the UNSC in 2011. They provide indicators for measuring progress and decline.

Woman

An adult female human being (OED, 2019).

Girl

A female child above the age of 13 and below 18 years (DDR, DRC, 2019).

Protection of Women and Girls

This means using the UNSCR 1325 and additional protocols and the UNSC, 2011 spectrum of indicators to ensure full prevention of conflict, violence, promotion, participation and participation of women in peace and security decision making, access to justice and post conflict recovery.

Indigenous Protection Mechanisms

These refer to a myriad of gender responsive conflict prevention, management and adaptation mechanisms adopted by local communities as a result of conflict. They help communities to be resilient after the impact of conflict and violence.

ABSTRACT

This research sought to appraise mechanisms of women and girls' protection in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) provinces of North and South Kivu. This has experienced violent conflicts over two decades during which violations of the rights of women and girls have occurred. Using Feminist Institutional Theory and Gender equality analytical tools, the study examined how the legal, policy, institutional and programmatic frameworks are protecting women and girls. The study utilized mixed method survey design targeting women and men in government institutions and international organizations including United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and members of communities working on protection of women and girls. Krejcie & Morgan (1970) framework was used to determine the sample size where a sample of 384 respondents was randomly and purposively targeted. Structured Survey Questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) were used to collect data. 292 questionnaires were filled, including 40 KII and 4 FGD with a total of 32 participants were also conducted. Quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was reviewed through content for analysis. The study accessed both men and women. The general observation is that there has been some improvement of institutional capacity for protection of women in eastern DRC especially in South Kivu in recent years. However human rights violations and abuse continue with high impunity. The government and international actors including MONUSCO have made significant contributions though owing to state fragility; large areas with limited infrastructure, entrenched inter-communal conflict, rampant poverty and women vulnerability. The capacity of various mechanism put in place to protect women and girls is low. Significant differences in response by gender were found across all the five pillars. Men were more likely to confirm presence of effective protection mechanism compared to women. This implies transition between traditional and modern views on the role of women and gender equality. Significant differences in responses by region was also found across all the five pillars with respondents from South Kivu more likely to confirm presence of effective protection mechanisms compared to north Kivu due to various factors such as presence of community radio and internationally recognized Panzi Foundation in South Kivu. Promotion of gender equality in peace and decision making had the highest score (mean =3.27) while women's and girls' specific relief needs and women's capacity to act in relief and recovery in conflict and post conflict situations had the lowest score (mean=2.7425) indicating the need for strengthening post conflict recovery mechanism. The study recommends more capacity building of mechanisms, enhancing government and MONUSCO support to all pillars, coordination framework, inter regional learning platforms and building on local formal and informal women mechanisms for self-protection.

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide the vulnerability of women and girls during and after conflict is well established (UNSCR, 2019). Subsequently, the United Nations (UN), other international development partners, governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and communities have put in place multiple resolutions, treaties, legal framework, policies, strategies and measures to protect this vulnerable group. However, putting mechanisms in place alone is not enough. The need to continuously monitor and assess if they are working to achieve the desired goals is equally important.

Despite the advancement of Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda at the normative level from a global perspective; there has been poor record of practical advancement in protection of women and girls in conflict situations or women participation in peace processes (UN Women, 2015). Ineffectiveness of protection mechanism could have a bearing on the low level of protection.

The UN has progressively included protection of civilian (POC) mandate in most Peace Support Operations (PSO). POC forms the global framework for protecting civilians including women and girls in conflict and post conflict situations. However, implementation of POC in conflict areas has not been effective (Boutellis & Arthur, 2017). Some of the reasons advanced for poor protection of women and girls are; women peacekeepers are only 3% of troops deployed in UN PSO, National Action Plans (NAPs) on implementation of UNSCR 1325 have weak accountability mechanisms and low budget allocation (UN Women, 2015).

Due to complex historical, political, economic, geographical and cultural factors; protection mechanisms for women and girls have not prevented rampant cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) including rape perpetrated by armed groups and members of Congolese armed forces (ACHPR, 2014). The DRC has faced political instability since independence making the government unable to enforce laws, implement policies and programs and deliver services including protection of women and girls. There are still many organized armed groups (OAG) operating in the region thereby hindering implementation of protection programs. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and the police are unable to maintain security and sometimes they are the sources of insecurity for women and girls (ACPHR, 2014).

Since the entry of United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) with POC mandate in 2010; the protection mechanisms in place have not been able to effectively stem human rights violations and SGBV especially in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), (JICA, 2017).

Background on Protection Mechanism for Women and Girls

Five pillars are used to measure level of protection as provided by UN SC, guidelines on protection of women and girls, 2011. Given that conflict and violence are the main source of insecurity for women and girls; the first pillar on *conflict prevention and building capacity of women to participate in peace and security* would go along way towards enhancing capability and gender mainstreaming of mechanism for conflict prevention. This means having mechanism that can effectively reduce SGBV, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), promote gender inclusion in early warning data collection process, support women formal and informal conflict prevention mechanism, building capacity of women mediators, inclusion of women leaders and groups in Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and violence prevention; police, military and MONUSCO surveillance of remote areas and monitoring and evaluating progress in accountability for human rights.

In the second pillar; *promoting gender equality in peace and security decision making at national and local level*, the following mechanism are recommended; policies for affirmative action, presence of gender experts and capacity building programs to increase women representation in state institutions at all levels.

The third pillar speak to *protection and promotion of women's and girls' rights in conflict and post conflict situations*. Some of the mechanism required are; POC guidelines and operations should include specific protection of the rights of women and girls, protection for internally displaced women and girls and their inclusion in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp Committees, gender mainstreaming in DDR programs, affirmative action on training women in peace and security, ensuring gender responsive security sector reforms (SSR), MONUSCO capacity building for gender responsive arms proliferation control programs and gender mainstreaming of national security policies, strategies, plans and programs.

The fourth pillar on *access to justice for women and girls whose rights are violated* is gauged on; affirmative action in funding for justice programs, MONUSCO and government provision of technical assistance to formal and informal judicial reform and legal support services; and their support to corrections reform services.

The fifth pillar on *women's and girls' specific relief needs and women's capacity to act as agents in relief and recovery in conflict and post conflict situations*; seek to ensure UN and development partners funding respond to gender equality issues, humanitarian relief services are gender responsive, projects and programs respond to distinct needs of boys and girls, men and women, female heads of households and female ex-combatants, victims of SGBV, people living with and affected by HIV, people with disabilities, IDPs, refugees and returnees; presence of gender experts in DDR programs and transitional justice programs including reparations have specific funds for gender equality.

The legal framework for protection of women and girls stemming from the global treaties and conventions, national constitution, laws and provincial by-laws are critical aspects of protection. The way laws are interpreted, implemented and enforced in courts, prosecution, trial, conviction and correctional services are key to women access to justice and prevention of human rights violations. Effective laws would restrain SGBV, SEA and other vices against women and girls through punishing perpetrators legally to act as deterrence, compensation and reintegration of victims to restore their dignity. Avoiding negotiation for rape cases would make perpetrators individually accountable for their actions rather than deferring crimes to their society. The law would also empower the victims to have hope that justice can be achieved in spite of the rampant violence and conflict in their villages.

There are cases where laws may be in place but women have no capacity to take advantage of their presence. Therefore building capacity of women through training, advocacy and education to know their rights, to access medical, legal and financial services is crucial to their protection. This would also make them assertive and thereby empower them to resist exploitation and to seek justice. They also need to understand peacebuilding so that they can participate effectively in conflict prevention and resolution. Sustainable protection rest on women's own agency – capacity to protect themselves. Therefore both formal and informal mechanism should provide for their effective participation.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the presence of an elaborate set of mechanisms for protection of women and girls in eastern DRC, women still suffer human rights violations and discrimination, (JICA, 2017). The DRC Constitution of 2006 commits the country to eliminate discrimination, protect women against violence and advance women participation in national and local institutions (Mbambie & Faray-Kele, 2010). DRC is among 19 African countries with NAP on UNSCR 1325, which forms the global bedrock of women and girls protection.

Further, there are many contradictory and discriminatory laws and widespread impunity which renders their impact on the protection of women insignificant, (ACPHR, 2014). Though the government established gender focal points in ministries and provincial governments, technical and coordination capacity remains low. Also, while the number of female police personnel has been increasing, this has been more prevalent in the lower ranks (JICA, 2017). UN, MONUSCO, international organizations, local CSO, women groups and communities have also put in place strategies, measures and activities to enhance protection but they seem to be ineffective (JICA, 2017). These glaring gaps between policy and actual practice informed this study in order to actually determine the factors behind this apparent ineffectiveness of mechanisms in as far as the protection of women and girls in eastern DRC is concerned.

Hypothesis

Systemic socio-cultural, economic and political factors may limit effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to protect women and girls in conflict and post conflict situations

Justification

The findings from this study will provide evidence on sources of weaknesses and strengths in the protection mechanism(s) in place that could benefit legal and policy makers and practitioners who have the interest of protecting women and girls. By using feminist institutional theory within gender framework to analyse women and girls protection mechanism; the study provides case specific empirical model that could inform praxis in the advancement of WPS. The findings could also be valuable in review and improvement of design for protection courses

Focus and Scope

This study will assess how women and girls in eastern DRC; North and South Kivu are protected by the government, humanitarian organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), MONUSCO, and their own self-protection mechanisms. The findings are context specific and therefore generic replication may not be viable.

Research Objectives

Main Research Objective

- To assess the effectiveness of the current mechanisms for protection of women and girls in eastern DRC

Specific Research Objectives

- a) To assess application of conflict and violence prevention mechanisms for women and girls;
- b) To analyse gender equality promotion in peace and security decision making at national and local level;
- c) To review mechanism for protection and promotion of women's and girls' rights
- d) To assess access to justice for women and girls whose rights are violated; and,
- e) To determine level of protection for women and girls' specific relief and recovery needs and women capacity to act as agents in relief and recovery.

Overall Research Question

- a) What hinders effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to protect women and girls in eastern DRC?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews literature that has been written on POC and protection mechanism for women and girls in general from a global perspective and by the DRC government, Regional organizations, MONUSCO, UN, CSO and women groups.

Women Peace and Security Agenda as a Protection Mechanism

Protection of women rests in the general framework of WPS agenda where rights, empowerment and gender equality are key factors. All WPS resolutions promote POC (DPKO, 2015). Though women and girls are vulnerable in conflict situations, they equally play a significant role in maintaining peace and security, as armed fighters, politicians and leaders (EUISS & ICRC, 2014). Women are negotiators, mediators, early warning data providers and participate in Council of elders meetings. Women social, political and economic empowerment is key to their protection including protection against conflict related SGBV, (Sarah, 2016). This means enhancing their role in traditional societal leadership and peace making, leadership in formal institutions and as managers and entrepreneurs in their small micro-enterprises.

Protection mechanisms should enable women to advocate for change in retrogressive traditions such as early marriage, negotiation for rape crimes and discrimination against women in leadership positions. Women should be able to participate equally in politics and economic activities. This means that laws, policies, funding programs, gender focused institutions should promote and support women.

UNSCR 1325 of 2000 called for increased representation of women at all levels of decision making in international, regional and national institutions for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. It also called for protection of women and girls against SGBV and more gender sensitive DDR programs (UNSC, 2000). Subsequent resolutions address SGBV in conflict, monitoring and evaluation and zero tolerance on SEA perpetrated by the UN Peacekeepers. The UN also established office of Special Representative of Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (ACPHR, 2014). Despite these measures protection mechanism especially in eastern DRC are not effective. It is necessary to interrogate operations of MONUSCO, the measures that the government has taken, role of CSOs and communities, role of internal and external armed agents such as organized armed groups and mining companies in order to understand why the mechanism are not working.

Protection of Civilians in International Peacekeeping

Protection of civilians (POC) is the broader concept on which women and girls are protected in international peacekeeping. According to UN guidelines protection of

civilians involve protection against physical violence, political process and establishing a protective environment. POC gained more attention after the drastic failure of UN missions to protect civilians in Rwanda and Somalia in the early 1990s. POC has since developed in conceptual clarity and operations. However, in many recent cases of armed conflict such as eastern DRC, civilians are still at risk and the PSO have not been effective. POC does not consider men and women as separate identities with different needs and experiences during conflict (Ravndal & Kjeksrud, 2011). The UN has progressively included POC mandate in most PSO. However implementation of POC in conflict areas has faced many challenges (Michael et al. 2011). POC has been a failure in eastern DRC, a situation that translates to weaknesses of other protection mechanism and vulnerability of women and girls.

Protection of Women and Girls

Protection of women and girls encompasses a wide spectrum from prevention of Conflict and all forms of violence to post conflict recovery (UNSC, 2011). Protection measures range from the global level - UN, African Union (AU), national governments to local authorities. The UNSC developed indicators for effective women and girls protection for implementation of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions (UNSC, 2011). For the AU, Protocol to the AU Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol, 2003) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA, 2004) provides guidelines for continental commitment to women protection. Protection of women and girls is guaranteed under regional protocols of the Great Lakes Region (GLR) (IA, 2015). However these frameworks are not effective due to lack of implementation or enforcement, lack of adequate budget, monitoring and evaluation among other factors (JICA, 2017; UN Women, 2015).

MONUSCO Protection Mechanism

The peacekeeping force was established by the UNSC after the failure of the government of DRC to protect civilians. MONUSCO was established in 2010 after the failure of MONUC to protect civilians in DRC. According to Sarah, (2016), the UN created a SEA focal point in DRC and internet site for training and established rules of engagement between UN staff and local people but to date no peacekeeper has been convicted of SEA or lost employment. Peacekeepers cannot claim to protect women and girls where they are accused of SEA.

Government of DRC Protection Mechanism

DRC has put a number of mechanisms relevant to protection of women and girls; ratified Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which recognizes equality between men and women, and ratified Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1986 and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2009. It is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (JICA, 2017). This puts the country in a better position to implement global standards for protection of women and girls. There are national laws (2006) criminalizing SGBV. DRC created the Ministry for Advancement of Women in 1980 (Sarah, 2016). These initiatives indicate that laws and institutions have been put in place to raise level of protection. However the government of DRC has not been able to protect women even with support of MONUSCO. The military and police of DRC as primary national mechanism for protection are not only incapable but sometimes have been accused of perpetrating human rights violations against women. This research will go further to examine why the mechanism are not able to protect women effectively.

Empirical Studies

In an assessment of United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC) done by Boutellis & Arthur, (2017); the solution to the identified weaknesses were; developing training materials on POC for peacekeepers, use of protection clusters to enhance identification of needs, pooling resources and quick response. MONUSCO also established Joint Protection Teams (JPT) comprised of UN troops and civilians and a Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC). The authors also found out that effective protection was hindered by low resources provision, vast territory, lack of helicopters, night vision equipment, leadership and command and lack of training in POC.

WDR, (2011) study assessed MONUSCO's source of low protection and found that holistic strategy that recognizes the need for local, regional and international political support for Security Sector Reforms (SSR) and extending state authority was lacking. The study also found that creation of community liaison assistants and networks alongside deployment of troops near vulnerable villages enhanced response. UN Intervention Brigade deployed in 2013 supported by a Peace and Security Cooperation Framework (PSCF) agreement among ICGLR member countries made significant achievements in POC, (UN, 2013).

The above reviews were based on general POC and not specific to women and girls and emphasized UN protection more than other actors. This study fills that gap by analysing role of government, CSOs, international Non Governmental Organizations (INGO) and communities.

JICA, (2017), surveys country gender profile for DRC that include protection of women and girls. The study identified most of the weaknesses within mechanism but it provided a general outline and was not specific to particular region. A review of the of the GLR by International Alert (IA), (2015), revealed that there was insufficient gender integration. Based on field research in eastern DRC, the study identifies gaps in mainstreaming gender within the framework. PSCF, addresses the regional dimension of the DRC conflict and recommends measures for countries to restore peace and security. This regional mechanism can enhance protection of women and girls in eastern DRC if properly implemented. This research corroborates findings of the latter two studies.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Feminist Institutional Theory (FI)

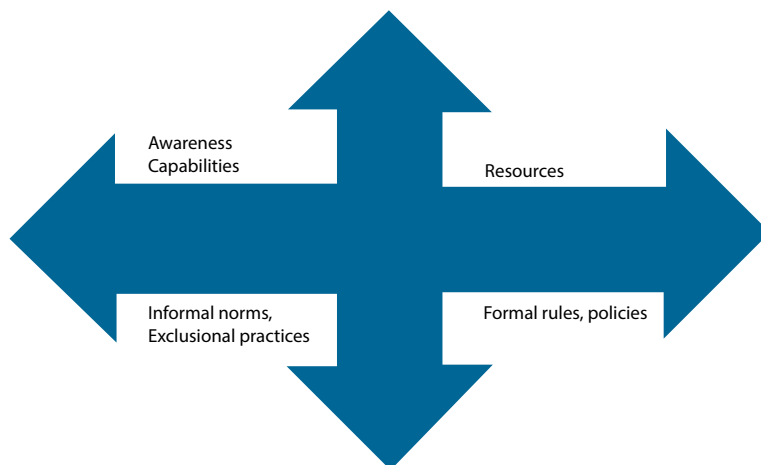
According to Thompson, (2018), the above theory informs women involvement in the WPS agenda. The theory originates in feminist political science and examines how gender is framed in both formal and informal institutions. It aims to make these institutions more gender equitable. The theory proposes that examining the design and implementation of post conflict political institutions could inform WPS agenda. Examining WPS from this theory can provide insights and greater understanding of the situation of women in conflict and post conflict situations. In the eastern DRC this theory can inform women participation in national and provincial politics, security sector, peacekeeping and socio-cultural and economic institutions. This is the framework of reference used in assessing protection mechanism for women and girls.

The limitation of the theory is that it is women rather than gender based. In this study the role of men in empowering women has been noted. However such a strategy is not explicitly acknowledged in the feminist theory. The gender framework below provides further details on sources of institutional power and their relations with gender.

Gender Analysis Framework

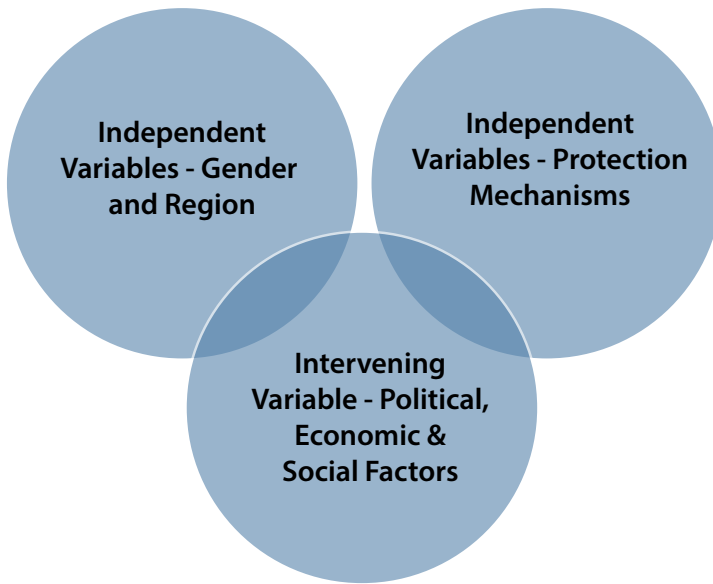
This tool provides a lens through which distinct needs of men and women, boys and girls are addressed in development (UNDP, 2016). The diagram below indicates the necessary ingredients for an effective system for protection of women and girls. This framework is a practical tool used in assessing gender integration in development and peacebuilding. It encompasses all the areas of inquiry in the protection of women pillars. Behind the framework are institutions that determine distribution of power. Therefore the feminist theory and gender framework reinforce each other in a multi-factor analysis.

Fig. I. Gender Analysis Framework



Source: *Gender at Work*, www.genderatwork.org

Fig. II. Conceptual Framework



The study examines how the 50 dependent variables under the five protection pillars have been applied or achieved. Since the individual response items (likert items) are ordinal data, we used chi-square test to test whether there was association between 4 independent variables (region, gender, designation and work experience). These revealed significant association especially between gender and the region. The tests were run through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

METHODOLOGY

This section explains the research design, its justification and highlights on the target population. It elaborates on data collection tools selected, analysis techniques employed and rationalization for the selected data analysis instruments.

Research Design

The study employed survey design. This strategy was the most appropriate since it brings out indicators of effectiveness of mechanism and the factors informing their variability at a specific time frame. Survey is the most popular method for describing characteristics of a large population and offers broad capability to ensure more accurate sample on which to draw conclusions (Creswell & Plano, 2007).

Target Population

A population is defined as an entire group of individuals, events or objects with some common observable characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). This study focused on men and women who implement protection programs in both formal and informal sector. It sampled government agencies, hospitals, CSOs, humanitarian organizations, communities and MONUSCO.

Study Site

The study was carried out in North and South Kivu provinces of DRC. Main respondents were living in the cities of Goma and Bukavu and their suburbs. The DRC is the second largest country in Africa covering about 2 345 000 Square Km with a population estimated at 86.79 million people (WPR, 2019). Women make up 51% and 48% of the population is below 15 years. Over 60% of the population in DRC live below the poverty line. Gender inequality index is 0.652, placing DRC at position 152 out of 160 globally (UNDP, 2018). The literacy rate for women is 66.5% compared with men at 88.5%. Bukavu has an estimated population of 1 million people while Goma has a population of 599 000 (WPR, 2019). Both cities have experienced high internal migration due to insecurity in the rural areas.

Sampling frame, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Krejcie & Morgan (1970) framework was used to determine the population. The sample size was derived from an estimated population of more than 10 000 people. According to standard quantitative sampling procedures quoted above, from such a population a sample of 384 respondents were randomly selected out of which 292 respondents were interviewed. We were not able to meet the target due to incomplete questionnaires identified during data cleaning. The quantitative questionnaire was administered through random selection. For qualitative data, key informants were purposively selected based on their knowledge and experience of the subject of interest.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

A research instrument is a tool that facilitates collection of data from respondents (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). Primary data was collected through structured survey questionnaires where 292 were filled and qualitative interviews.

Structured Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire had questions or statements based on Likert scale where respondents ticked a box as appropriate according to their assessment of effectiveness of protection mechanisms for women and girls.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focused Group Discussions (FGD)

KII were conducted to collect information from the key target population at managerial/technical level, community members and women leaders. Key informants were 40 while four. FGD were conducted with a total of 32 participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean, median and mode were used to describe the level of the study variables. The data is presented in tables and graphs using SPSS. The data derived mean, median, mode, percentages, chi-square, correlation and T-test values. The data collected from KIIs and FGDs was reviewed through content analysis where it was sorted into emerging themes and frameworks. The data from both tools was interpreted in view of the study objectives and protection indicators.

Data Validity

According to Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008), validity is a test that seeks to determine the extent to which a research instrument facilitates collection of requisite data as it purports. The study therefore focused on content and construct validity.

This was ensured through translating and pretesting questionnaires and data triangulation. A number of changes were made before embarking on field research. Interpretation of data took note of the study context. The variables were also subjected to Chronbach analysis and Pearson correlations where their significance was tested.

Data Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Kothari, 2004). Data reliability was measured using Pearson Correlation and Cronbach Alpha values. Triangulation using both quantitative and qualitative data added values from both approaches and addressed their weaknesses.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation was measured using composite mean calculated from variables of each pillar. All the five pillar items exhibited significant level of correlation to each other which ranged from weak ($r < 0.5$) to moderate ($r < 0.7$). Highest correlation was observed between pillar one (prevention of conflict and all forms violence against women) and pillar 3. On the other hand pillar 2 and pillar 4 had the weakest level of correlation. This means that improving the mechanism under variables with close correlation can have significant effect on overall performance of mechanism.

Table 1. Correlation

Pillars	Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5
<i>Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women</i>	-				
<i>Promotion of gender equality in peace and decision making at national and local level</i>	.568**	-			
<i>Protection and promotion of women and Girls' Rights in Conflict and Post Conflict Situation</i>	.688**	.636**	-		
<i>Access to Justice for Women and Girls Whose Rights are Violated</i>	.603**	.374**	.558**	-	
<i>Women's and Girls' specific relief needs and women's capacity to Act as Agent in Relief and Recovery in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations</i>	.568**	.435**	.664**	.527**	-

****.** *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was carried out to test the internal consistency of the 50 items on the questionnaire. The resulting Cronbach's alpha indicated strong level of reliability with $\alpha = 0.910$. All the questions appeared to be worthy of retention with none resulting in a substantial increase in alpha if deleted. This means that all the variables are reliably measuring the same construct – protection mechanism.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.910	.910	50

Observing Moral and Ethical Standards of Social Science Research

Moral and ethical standards was observed as per IPSTC requirements. Consent from respondents was sought before interview was done. Respondents were assured of their confidentiality. The purpose and use of information was explained. Information from SGBV victims was obtained from CSOs and other intermediaries to avoid victims exposure.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the study findings and analysis based on the study objectives and the variables under investigation. The section provides descriptive analysis and inferential statistics for analysis of protection of women and girls.

Respondents Characteristics

There were slightly more respondents from South Kivu (146) than North Kivu (143). Overall, there were slightly more males 152 (52.2%) than females interviewed 139 (47.6%). However the proportion differed within the two provinces with a higher proportion of females in North Kivu (55.2%) and higher proportion of males (59.6%) in South Kivu. The gender disparity is informed by the position that men and women held in protection mechanism. In terms of designation nearly 70% of the respondents were either top/strategic level management (24.8%) or middle/operational level management (44.7%) with only 30.5% at local/community level management. Community respondents participated in FGD and filled quantitative questionnaire. Additionally, a majority of the respondents (43.9%) had 5 years or less of work experience; this was mainly due to low level of experience from some of community respondents. Key informants had a higher level of technical knowledge and experience.

Table 3. Respondents Characteristics

		North Kivu (n=143)		South Kivu (n=146)		Total (n=292)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gender							
	Male	64	44.8%	87	59.6%	152	52.2%
	Female	79	55.2%	59	40.4%	139	47.8%
Designation							
	Top/Strategic Level Management	23	18.0%	43	31.6%	66	24.8%
	Middle/Operational Level Management	62	48.4%	55	40.4%	119	44.7%
	Local/Community Level Management	43	33.6%	38	27.9%	81	30.5%
Working experience in Protection of Women and Girls							
	Between 0 - 5 Years	62	43.7%	63	44.7%	125	43.9%
	Between 6 - 10 Years	43	30.3%	34	24.1%	77	27.0%
	Over 10 Years	37	26.1%	44	31.2%	83	29.1%
Type of organization you work for							
	Government	41	28.9%	23	16.3%	65	22.8%
	United Nations	5	3.5%	2	1.4%	7	2.5%
	MONUSCO	5	3.5%	0	0.0%	5	1.8%
	International NGO	14	9.9%	3	2.1%	18	6.3%
	Civil Society Organization	37	26.1%	76	53.9%	113	39.6%
	Local Community	40	28.2%	37	26.2%	77	27.2%

The research targeted more members of CSO and community because they are living with or near the victims. As AI, (2015) notes it is the women and girls on the ground in the Great Lakes region who can judge best about level of their protection.

Thematic Performance of the Five Pillars

Within each pillar comparison of responses to test significance ($P < 0.05$) based on mean was made both for region and gender with findings as follows:

- Significant relationship in responses by gender was found across all the five pillars. Men were more likely to provide positive responses (agree and totally agree) compared to women
- Significant relationship in responses by region was found across all the five pillars with respondents from South Kivu more likely to provide positive responses compared to north Kivu

Obj. a) Prevention of Conflict and all Forms of Violence against Women

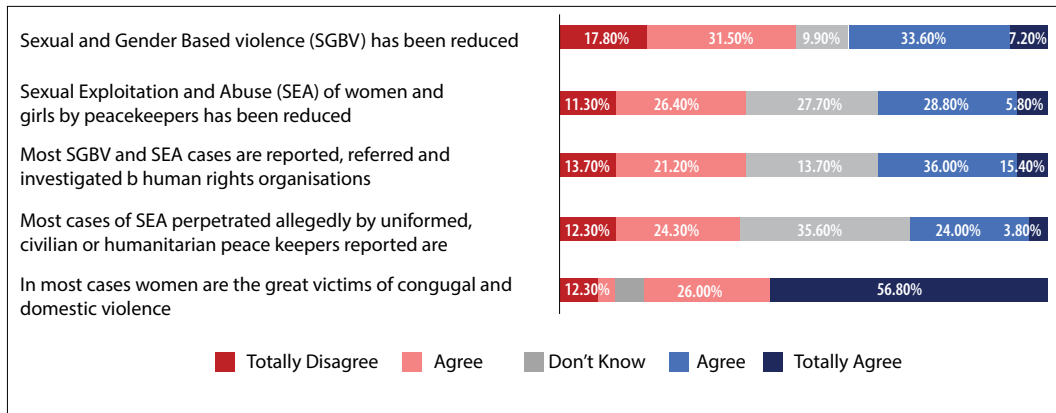
From the responses, the perception is that SGBV and SEA cases against women and girls have not been reduced. However further analysis shows differences in gender with more women believing these cases had not been reduced compared to men. Most of women also do not believe efforts have been made towards management of conflict, for instance only 18.1% of women believed early warning systems utilized gender specific indicators and about 32.4% believed that support was provided both for formal and informal conflict prevention efforts of women. This gender discrepancy may indicate cultural and normative values dynamics where men feel a lot is being done for women while women need accelerated change to acquire more ability to address their protection needs. Responses also indicate more involvement and support provided to women in South Kivu compared to North Kivu. The latter variation could be associated with more awareness created by an active and people centered community *Radio Maendeleo* among other factors explained further in the document.

These statistics contradict the findings of a study conducted by JICA, (2017) where SGBV and SEA were said to be reducing due to government efforts. Mistrust of the government and peacekeepers by communities may be the cause of the different perceptions.

There were perceptions in both regions that poverty and insecurity make women vulnerable to SGB and SEA. Most cases are not reported or even properly investigated so it is difficult to tell when cases are rising or falling. Due to the high cost of legal services, corruption of the security agents and justice system, most SGBV victims

prefer out of court/traditional settlements. The latter options also guarantee them safety when they return to the villages since perpetrators were not punished. However this recourse is illegal according to DRC law and it encourages impunity and does not address victims' trauma.

Figure III: SGBV and SEA against Women and Girls has been Reduced



Conflict Prevention Mechanism

The research identified many intervention strategies and measures that the government, MONUSCO and CSOs have taken to address this situation.

Legislation and Implementation of Laws and Policies

According to respondents MONUSCO supports implementation of the laws including the National Strategy on SGBV, 2006. A Committee on Implementation of UNSCR 1325 is in place. There is also a North Kivu context plan supported by government. This forms the core framework of coordinated government, CSOs and development partners' actions for protection.

CSOs were successful in lobbying for enactment of laws against rape. Despite these legislations, policies and strategies protection is low due to slow implementation, enforcement and inadequate funding. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Family does not have adequate capacity. Therefore women and girls are not effectively involved in critical aspects of violence and conflict prevention.

Engendering Early Warning Data

Protection can be enhanced where women are fully involved in early warning data collection. Less than half of the respondents (45.5%) believed that women were involved in gathering data for early warning of conflicts with only about a quarter

of respondents (25.0%) believing that early warning systems utilized gender specific indicators. While 48% indicated that women were trained as community level mediators; 56% disagreed that women leaders and groups were actively consulted or involved in disarmament and arms control and violence prevention activities. Sarah, (2016), notes that challenges in women's participation in early warning initiatives and arms control have not been overcome.

Promoting Peace in the Great Lakes Region

The study established that MONUSCO and ICGLR Expanded Joint Verification Mission (EJVM) enhanced cross border peacemaking between Rwanda, Burundi and DRC through facilitating stakeholder meetings. EJVM verifies activities of external forces including those countries training and supporting armed groups. Maintains data on peace and security issues in the region and advice member countries. Protection of women require a stable region with no cross border conflicts, illegal armed groups and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). CSOs also undertake cross border peacebuilding to address SALW and refugees. They build capacity of women leaders, journalists and raise visibility of women political leaders through radio. Respondent below indicate CSO advocacy strategies.

In a project dubbed 'Nothing Without Women', 'Women Caucus for Peace Networks', deal with specific women/gender issues and forge strategic alliances within regional and national level'. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

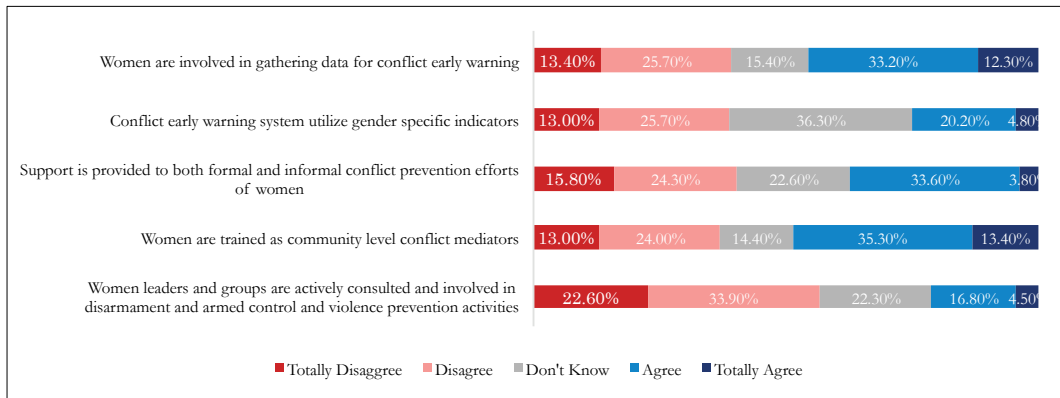
Local women efforts are more sustainable than donor funded projects therefore external support that build on the local projects would ensure continuity.

Capacity building in Human Rights

MONUSCO has trained women groups and other CSOs on human rights, mapped SGBV hot spots and sometimes provided Helicopter transport to the sites. It facilitated SGBV victims access courts, provide phones and air time to field monitors to raise alerts and trained police and lawyers.

According to respondents local chiefs and traditional leaders have been sensitized by Police Unit against stigmatizing the needy ones. Office of Human Rights and Women Rights premises have been devolved to the territories such as Walungu and Kalehe in South Kivu. The excerpts below indicate low performance given that NAP encompasses all the women protection pillars. CSO use mobile phones and short text messaging (SMS) to issue alerts and report on women rights violations. They train, sensitize Peace Committees to include women and promote networking and equal access to services.

Fig. IV: Women Involvement in Conflict Prevention Efforts



Statistical Significance

Nearly twice the proportion of men agreed that conflict early warning systems utilized gender specific indicators (31.5%) compared to women (18.1%). However more than a third of both men (35.5%) and women (36.7%) did not know whether this was true or not ($X^2 (4) = 20.18, P < 0.05$). Lack of knowledge on integration of gender in early warning systems in the region has also been noted by IA, (2015).

About 42.1% of men agreed that support was provided to both formal and informal conflict prevention efforts. On the other hand nearly half of women (48.9%) disagreed ($X^2 (4) = 10.93, P < 0.05$). In most cases formal peace mechanisms in the DRC involve men more than women (JICA, 2017; IA, 2015). Peacebuilding and reconciliation in traditional societies was perceived to be a preserve for men (Mbugua, 2015; Mbugua, 2018). In North Kivu it was reported that the Council of Elders (CoE) has one woman out of 40 members. There was more positive responses in South Kivu (mean = 3.21) compared to North Kivu (mean = 2.77).

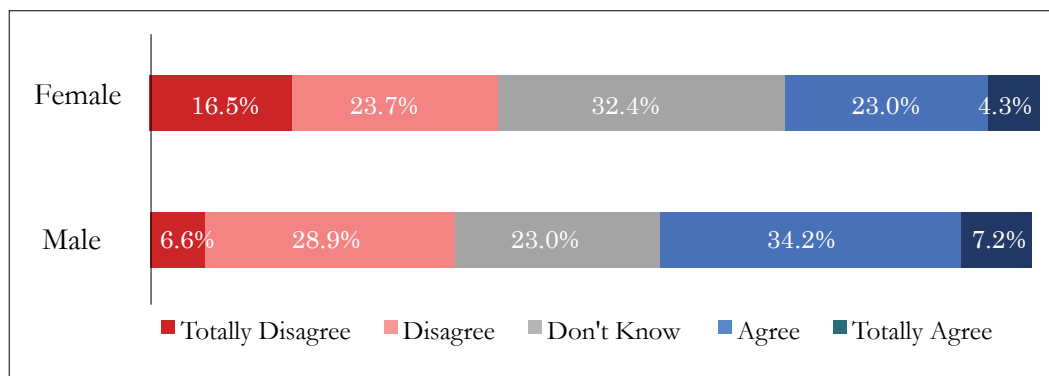
Creating Awareness on SGBV and Health Services

The Panzi hospital in Bukavu, recognized internationally for highlighting plight of the SGBV victims and offering treatment could have raised more awareness in South Kivu and also attracted development partner’s support. The Panzi Foundation provide holistic – ‘one stop shop’ social support to SGBV victims.

‘CSO listen and respond according to needs and refer victims to hospital such as Panzi in Bukavu. The hospital offers medical and legal services and psychological support for trauma counseling. Record claims even of run-away perpetrators. Trains medical workers from different areas and provide materials and promote spirituality approach for medical workers.’ KII, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

The Foundation empowers women to be autonomous. This model is being replicated in other territories of South Kivu such as Walungu and Kalehe. There are other hospitals that assist victims such as Heal Afrika and North Kivu General Hospital. These integrated services are key to healing and recovery of victims in both regions. According to Sarah, (2016), there is a relationship between systemic gender discrimination and SGBV.

Fig. V. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Women and Girls by Peacekeeper has been reduced



Advocacy against Retrogressive Cultural Practices

CSOs sensitize and train traditional leaders on negative cultures, inclusion of women in Public *Barazas*, gender equality and rights of women and involve traditional leaders. They also campaign against early marriage and reduction of discrimination against women; SGBV victims, albinos and marginalized groups and promote sharing of responsibilities to lessen the burden on women. This is one area where improvement on protection could be registered significantly since some cultural practices discriminate and harm women.

Prosecution of SGBV/SEA Offenders

CSOs collaborate with police for speedy investigations and maintain a data base on violations of women rights, domestic violence and human rights violations. Deterrent sentences of between 5 to 20 years are provided in successful convictions. Appeal Court support victims’ reparations. Below are more CSO contributions;

‘CSO are providing free consultation, legal services to get credible evidence to support conviction in cooperation with Congolese Bar Association. Organize training and conferences on human rights and how to analyse court judgments on human rights and SGBV. Sensitize community leaders on laws and legalization. Women groups such as Women for Women refer cases to police’. KII, June, 26, 2019, Goma

On rape cases courts collaborate with hospitals to determine veracity of evidence. Reducing impunity through providing credible evidence is a key contribution to protection of women, Sarah, (2016).

Economic Support

Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) enable strengthening livelihood capacity in order to prevent stigma and discrimination of returnees. CSOs assess family vulnerability and economic capacity for trade and farming in collaboration with CBOs. Some CSOs also perform activities below;

‘Training on socio-economic development, peaceful relations and women student leadership. Conduct baseline survey and tailor programs to gaps identified. Provide water facilities to prevent attack on women while fetching water and firewood’. KII, June, 27, 2019, Goma

Women require to be economically empowered in order to access their rights including justice where court processes are expensive and time consuming.

Enhancing Organizational Management

CSOs also coordinate CBO activities including women groups and train men to be partners with women on women affairs. Some of them train in project management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Well performing CSOs will use resources optimally and therefore meet the larger protection goal.

Women Participation in Peace building

In North Kivu 56% disagreed that women were involved in gathering of data for conflict in early warning systems, compared to 22.6% in South Kivu, ($X^2 (4) = 37.64$, $P < 0.05$). One indicator is the membership of only one woman in the CoE of North Kivu. The excerpt from a respondent below indicates more visibility for women in South Kivu.

‘Radio Maendeleo founded in 1993 provide an alternative source of information, space for dialogue between community and government and has given space for women to vent out their trauma. Spearheads peace and development conversations. Some women from South Kivu have been recognized internationally after getting exposure from the radio. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

Engendered Formal and Informal Conflict Prevention Mechanism

In North Kivu 53.2% disagreed that support was provided to both formal and informal

conflict prevention efforts of women (compared to 27.4% in South Kivu). Though some support is provided to formal mechanism, it is inadequate and there is no linkage with other mechanisms. The government recognizes and support CoE but support for other traditional mechanisms is limited.

Training as Community Level Mediators

50.4% of respondents in North Kivu, disagreed that women were trained as community level conflict mediators compared to 23.9% in South Kivu ($X^2 (4) = 36.04, P < 0.05$). Though CSO train, promote equal access to services and sensitize *Peace Committees* on gender issues, engage in lobbying, advocacy and facilitating women networking in peace making; the impact is felt differently in the region.

Participation in Disarmament Programs

While in both regions, a majority of the respondents disagreed that women leaders and groups were consulted and involved in disarmament initiatives, in North Kivu the cumulative proportion was almost two thirds (64.4%) compared to 49.3% in South Kivu ($X^2 (4) = 22.35, P < 0.05$). Generally it is established in the study that there is low participation of women in disarmament and arms control. Women are minorities in OAG, therefore more efforts are geared towards men.

Building Capacity of Informal Peacebuilding Mechanism

Though informal peacebuilding mechanisms are recognized by the government and other actors, there is no effective fusion with formal mechanism. MONUSCO does not factor them at all in its planning on gender equality or SGBV. CSO work with informal institutions but they lack capacity to impact significantly on the vast region. CoE facilitate conducive conditions for women issues to be addressed using traditional knowledge for conflict resolution. It provides quick response and dialogue with armed groups to get out of the bush.

Peace Education

Peace education is a way of imparting knowledge on peaceful co-existence to enhance women participation. It was being provided through schools where peace and human rights are integrated in curriculum. According to respondent;

'Aims to create model schools for young boys and girls trained in peace, security and human rights. Peace clubs for parents and children which meet on weekends or holidays to discuss issues affecting children. Publish children issues in a newsletter. Children compose poems on violence prevention, peace, child rights and protection'. KII, June, 20, 2019, Bukavu

Due to rampant poor leadership it was felt that girls and boys require role models in order to improve their protection. Introducing peace to children at an early might also have long term positive effects in protection. This strategy can work if local people were majorly the cause of conflict but more often than not; conflict in the region emanates from external parties who use local unemployed youth.

Promoting Registration of Children

CSOs assist in registration of children, build and equip schools. Registration offer legal identity that is required in property inheritance or accessing other social services. Promote registration of marriages to protect women inheritance and land ownership. Protect girls and advocate against early marriages and protection against HIV/AIDS, abuse by police and OAG. Women were successful in dialogue with Mwami/Paramount chief, who agreed to reduce marriage registration fees by half. Connect children with no father with legal paternity – a key factor in accessing Congolese citizenship. Assist in registration of births which contributes to stable families and security for women. CSOs also provide other protection activities such as;

‘Accompanies victims to high offices to seek for redress. Fencing area of victims, providing solar panel, delocalization of victims away from insecure areas, provide education and reintegration after completion of case.’ KII, June, 25, 2019, Goma

These are helpful services for protecting victims, trauma healing, empowerment and reintegration. However very few victims were accessing such vital services. Without such services victims fall back on traditional mechanism that may not offer justice or hold perpetrators to account, ACHPR, (2014).

Implementation of NAP on UNSCR 1325

CSOs use UNSCR 1325 for advocacy on conflict prevention, resolution, planning workshops and sensitization on peace. Faith Based Organization (FBO) develop strategies for trust building. Promote negotiation, forgiveness and reconciliation and mediation except in SGBV cases.

Coordination Mechanism

There are forums where different actors come together to improve performance. The government team up with actors to pool resources, share knowledge and experience. According to respondent;

‘Ministry of Gender holds bimonthly meetings with partners on assessing progress, challenges and is undertaking mapping of actors. Advocate on GBV in schools for students, teachers and administrators. There are teams in schools and places of work for following up on SGBV’. KII, 26/06/2019, Goma

Such long term efforts are meant to change attitudes and behaviour from an early age. There are organs such as *Provincial Steering Committee* headed by the Governor which brings together thematic groups that meet once a month to review progress in various women protection sectors. Police Commissioner chairs *monitoring group of human rights violations* in collaboration with other partners. Inter-departmental collaboration is done within Ministries and office of the Prosecutor. CSOs coordinate different activities to promote accountability of funds/practices and improve response.

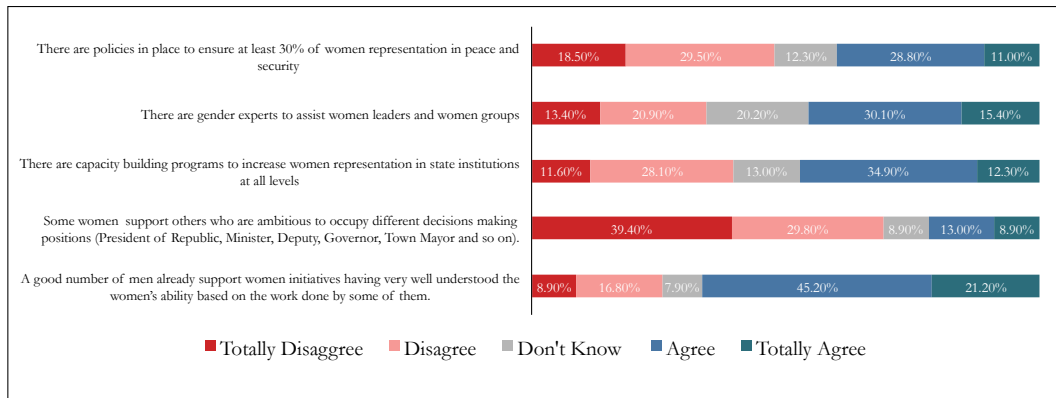
Joint Missions are clusters that include CSOs, Government and MONUSCO with specific protection task. *International Organizations* work with women groups and women formed organization. There are UN agencies supporting women including diplomatic missions from developed countries. *Justice Cluster* brings together Politicians, CSOs, Police, FARDC, Police Women Protection Unit, and legal aid staff to offer assistance and CSOs make follow up. *Joint Committees to Review Human Rights Violations* - hold monthly meetings. *Network of SGBV Sector* offer psychological, medical and legal assistance. Brings together Police, Military, Department of Justice and Courts, Tribunals and Prosecutor. As an indication of effective collaboration, a case was given where;

‘There was collective community violence in Walikale where CSO responded with help of MONUSCO to bring injured to hospital; collect information on insecurity and issue alerts’. KII, June, 25, 2019, Goma

This indicates the value of rapid response since evidence can be destroyed and victims can die due to injuries. Despite the low performance of mechanism in this section; the study recorded many innovative strategies, programs and activities that various actors are implementing to improve capacity of the protection mechanism in both regions.

Obj. b) Promotion of Gender Equality in Peace and Decision Making at National and Local level

Fig. VI. Promotion of Gender in Peace and Security Decision Making



The section had the highest composite mean score of the five pillars (0.683). This may be due to contributions of the different actors to gender issues. Most of the respondents were dealing in gender equality especially in North Kivu compared to peace and security issues. MONUSCO gender unit coordination with other POC units, government and CSOs was also noted. The gender and SGBV sector working group were also quite active in both regions. Gender considerations are at the core of women protection meaning that investment in this pillar can translate to better protection.

Statistical Significance

Most of the respondents believed there was more support for women initiative from men compared to women (66.40%). This was due to cultural factors where some women especially in the rural areas and less educated still perceived men as more likely to be leaders compared to women. Due to awareness on gender issues among urban educated men, they were more likely to support women initiatives. The men's positive view augurs well for improvement of protection given their predominance in institutions.

Gender Mainstreaming Protection Mechanism

Legal Mechanism

According to respondents the government has taken some legal and institutional measures to protect women and girls. DRC Constitution, Articles 14 and 15, outlaws all discrimination between men and women and it provides that they must be granted

equal rights. Further equality in rights and dignity is guaranteed under Article 15 that requires public administration to eradicate all sorts of sexual discrimination including SGBV. Art. 14 & 15 also prohibited marriage of minors. However there are no corresponding by-laws or action plans at the provincial level to actualize and reinforce implementation. The constitution obliges government to make known all national laws and international. According to ACPHR, (2014) and JICA, (2017), lack of awareness and enforcement of these laws is the main hindrance to protection in DRC.

In 2015 the National Parliament passed a law on gender equality. In 2009 Parliament passed a law to protect children and specifically the girl child and prohibited forced and early marriage. Family Law, 1987, was reviewed in 2016. Before then women could not access formal employment without their husband's consent. Labour Law of 2002, revised in 2016 revoked that article. These amendments indicate progressive revisions of the law to enhance protection with respect to changing global gender paradigms.

Institutional Mechanism

The Ministry of Gender, Family and Children was created alongside a Special Advisor to the President on Gender. These institutions are crucial in promoting women leadership, participation in elections and decision making and in protecting the rights of women, men and children. Gender units were established in all ministries and provincial governments but according to JICA, (2017), technical and coordination capacity is low. The Ministry is the central depository of gender information and coordinate collection, storage and release of information on SGBV and other gender issues. According to this data civilians are currently the highest perpetrators, followed by FARDC, Police and OAG.

Ministry of Gender holds bimonthly meetings with partners on assessing progress, challenges and is undertaking mapping of actors. Advocacy on GBV in schools for students, teachers and administrators. There are teams in schools and places of work for following up on SGBV'. KII, 26/06/2019, Goma

CSO felt that the ministry is under resourced to meet its mandate.

Capacity Building of Women

CSO support women leaders and journalists through training, sensitization, provision of materials and access to credit. They forge strategic alliances at regional and national level.

Military and Police Protection of Women and Children Units

This is the focal point of police and military protection of women to change practices through instilling ethical behaviour and professionalization. Established in 2002, they are playing a crucial role in improving protection against SGBV and promoting women participation in decision making. However due to low funding and donor dependency

these units are not available in the villages where most violations take place.

Economic Empowerment

Various actors have projects to support women enterprises. The Ministry of Gender trains widows on small scale businesses through Saving and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs). CSOs are also;

'Supporting Small and Micro Enterprises (SME) such as baskets, soap making, weaving beekeeping and trade. Promoting formation of women groups such as Self help groups and entrepreneurship to access loans. Use small women traders as an avenue for peace advocacy. KII, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

Some of them also;

'Build women capacity in business management, offered tailoring machines and flour mills. Kilimo project promote agriculture, farming and livestock keeping. Use CBO structures to reach the villages. KII, June, 25, 2019, Goma

These strategies enable CSOs to share resources with the most needy and inform their fund raising strategies. CSOs also support a merry go round system for offering credit. UNICEF, UN, have helped these associations to assist victims of SGBV and women to participate in political affairs, inherit matrimonial property, promote women rights and support education and health services. These are wholistic tools for improving protection by addressing different factors and building capacity of women. Sarah, (2016), notes that given the poverty in the region, economic support has high potential to raise level of protection.

Gender Affirmative Policy

Only about 39.8% of respondents believed that there are policies in place to ensure at least 30% representation in peace and security compared to 48% who did not. Though there is a policy on affirmative action for women especially in nomination for candidates in political parties, it is rarely enforced. In order to illustrate marginalization of women, respondent observes;

'Of 10 ministers in South Kivu regional government, only 2 are women. Low number of women university graduates. There are many women in CSO but still low at decision making level. Some men don't support women empowerment'. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

This reflects low access of women to decision making positions in political field. Given the conflict in the region most women have not acquired resources to enable them participate effectively in politics. But the few women at that level indicate positive

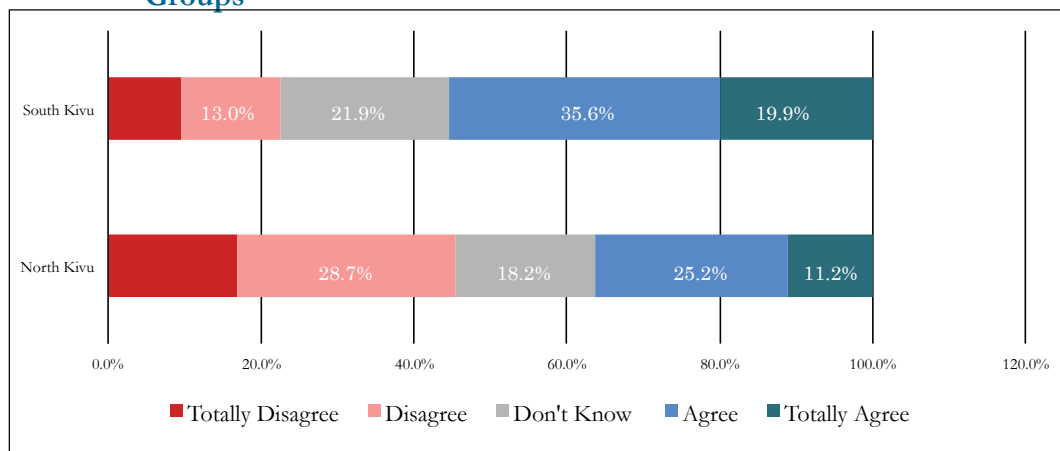
change which require further support. The region is in transition from purely culturally determined gender relations to neo-liberal gender paradigms which offer opportunities for better protection (Thompson, 2018). The voices below reflect diversity of perception.

‘Some progress has been made on gender equity. The Speaker of the National Parliament is a woman alongside the Vice Governor and Speaker of the North Kivu provincial Parliament. Sometimes in urban areas there are more girls than boys in schools. Many women participate as candidates in national elections’. KII, June, 27, 2019, Goma

Gender Experts

While there were more respondents (45.6%) in agreement that there were gender experts to assist women leaders and women groups, about (20.20%) did not know whether this was true. There are gender experts among CSOs, government and MONUSCO but they are few and only in urban areas. So many people in the rural areas are not aware of their presence.

Fig. VII. There are Gender Experts to Assist Women Leaders and Women Groups



There was an observed association ($X^2 (4) = 17.94, P < 0.05$) between region and whether respondents believed there were gender experts. In North Kivu most respondents (45.5%) disagreed. South Kivu on the other hand more than half of the respondents (55.5%) agreed. Gender experts are crucial in identifying areas where women are disadvantaged and where there are opportunities for advancing gender equity. Lack of such expertise therefore means limited progress in protection, (Susan, 2006). The regional difference could be an indicator of more CSO activities in gender mainstreaming and more awareness in South Kivu with the presence of *Radio Maendeleo*.

Advocacy on Women Participation in Political Affairs

The research established there were many CSO activities to promote rights of women and gender equality using radio and theatre. Advocate at community, national and international level for enactment of protection of women laws. They also put diplomatic pressure on national government to ratify international laws. They use 'Mama Radio'. As an informant noted;

'Radio Maendeleo provide an alternative source of information, space for dialogue between community and government and has given space for women to vent out their trauma. Spearheads development conversations. Some women from South Kivu have been recognized internationally after getting exposure from the radio'. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

As noted earlier there is more awareness in South Kivu. Radio Okapi used by UN does not seem to be as popular as the Mama one.

Advocacy on Stiffer Penalties for Offenders

CSOs train and advocate on prosecution of SGBV perpetrators, raising penalty to prevent impunity, shaming and naming against rape. Laws have been put in place where convicts get up to 20 years sentences. Working with police unit and coordination networks, they have increased the rate of prosecution as one informant observes;

'CSO provide a good office where women can feel free to report domestic violence, rape, discrimination and SGBV, provide free legal representation to affected women. For SGBV the organization offer free advisory services'. KII, 26/06/2019, Goma

Advocacy on Enactment of Laws and their Implementation

Women lobby national and provincial parliament, government on implementation of laws. They drafted law for protection of women which parliament passed as an Act in 2018. They sensitize through media, Churches and Community including men, women and local partners. As one informant observed;

'Family law was reviewed as a result of women advocacy. Advocated for implementation of laws including development, implementation and review of UNSCR 1325 NAP. There are women groups that share knowledge and experience. Advocate on good governance, equal treatment of boys and girls'. KII, June, 20, 2019, Bukavu

Graduate Women Lawyers have united to advocate for the rights of women, girls and families. Advocate for equal treatment between the boy and child in access to education. These lawyers come from the local communities and understand the vulnerability of women. Low education, lack of political participation and inability to influence decision

making were hindering gender mainstreaming and there is no effective mechanism for M&E leading to low accountability in delivery of public services.

Promoting Women Leadership

CSOs build leadership skills and capacity through confidence building measures, civic education, observing elections and documentation on conduct of elections. They sensitize women political leaders to change their fear of politics and promote gender sensitive interventions. They also;

Involve men and grass root community to make gender advocacy more effective. Implement He for She, a UN Women project to assist women in political participation. Members of 'Women as soldiers of the nation' – created law but it is not being implemented.
KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

CSOs apply the UNSCR 1325 and create awareness about its provisions. Women form gender equality groups that also include men and boys and girls in communities and schools and also sensitize on women abuse against men. Protection of women occurs when women can actively participate in decision making on issues affecting their security, rights and well being.

Statistical Significance

Significant association ($X^2(4)=20.8$, $P<0.05$) was also seen between region and whether respondents believed there was capacity building programs to increase women representation in state institutions at all levels. In South Kivu, a majority of the respondents (53.4%) seem to agree that these programs did exist compared to 41.3% in North Kivu. This reflects the general trend in performance of protection matrices across all pillars.

Research and Documentation

Some CSOs in collaboration with Universities conduct survey on public perceptions of insecurity, elections and human rights. Involve lawyers and students in the research.

University of the Great Lakes Region participated in a research program sponsored by European Union (EU) in collaboration with American Bar Association (ABA) and in cooperation with Heal Afrika, dubbed 'Haki Safi', on GBV where a book was produced'.
KII, June, 27, 2019, Goma

Research ensures that decision making is based on credible evidence. This can increase ability of women to influence decision making in favour of protection.

Monitoring and Evaluation

MONUSCO, CSOs, Local Authorities, NGOs and women groups monitor, review and evaluate projects. According to respondents;

‘Evaluation of the DRC, NAP on UNSCR 1325 was done in 2017 and it revealed failure to achieve its intended objectives. CSOs are waiting for new national and regional governments action plans. NAP Steering Committee does not meet on regular basis. Government officers conversant with NAP are easily transferred hindering continuity’. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

Performance of NAP is the foremost indicator of women protection because it actualizes the UNSCR 1325 and addendum resolutions. UN Women often gauges advancement of women in peace and security mainly through the status of SCR 1325 implementation (UN, 2015).

Coordination Mechanism

There are national, international, Women and CSO networks to enhance protection. For example gender sector working groups; monitor, evaluate and review programme, identify gaps and address them.

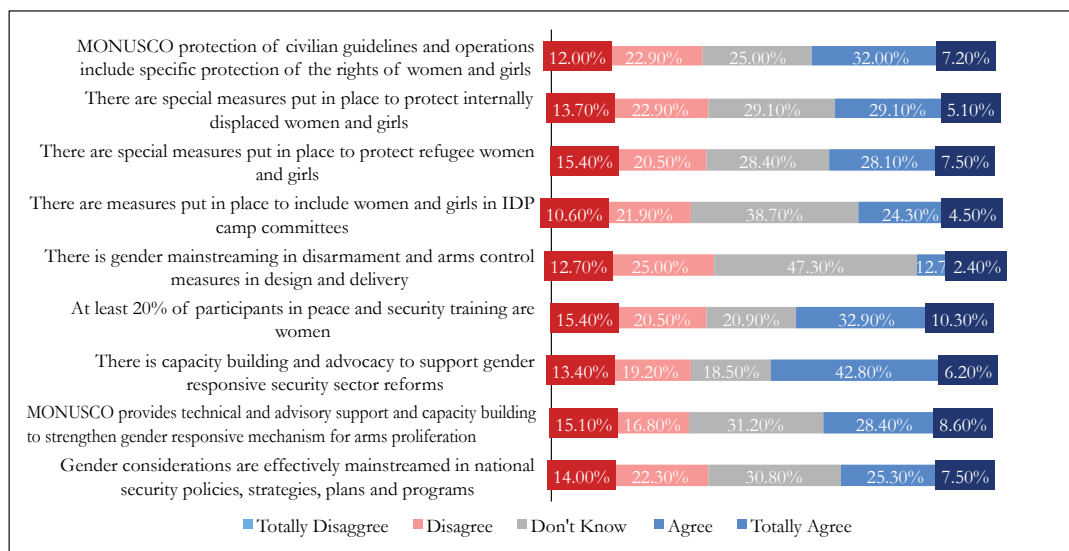
Women CSOs hold joint forum to lobby high offices on behalf of women. Some of the women networks are;

Nothing Without Women, ‘Sauti ya Mama Mkongomani’ - Women working or moving together. Federation of Women Lawyers of DRC (RAFEJ); National Forum of Humanitarian and Development Organizations (FONAHD DRC); Collective of Women Groups/Associations for Development (CAFED); Women’s Synergy for Peace and Reconciliation of the Peoples of the Great Lakes Region; South Kivu Media Women’s Association and Women Lawyers of the Great Lakes Region.

Aliance building increases lobbying capacity for change of policy and practices. These networks connect with international movements on human rights and gender equality. Overall gender equality is still low but efforts are being made to improve protection iunder this pillar.

Obj. c) Protection and Promotion of Women’s and Girls’ Rights in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations

Fig. VIII. Protection and Promotion of Women’s and Girls Rights



There were relatively higher proportions of respondents who had no knowledge of the existing initiatives in this pillar compared to other pillars. The proportion of respondents who had no knowledge of existing measures, stood at above 20% in nearly all of the response items. Most notably, about 47% of the respondents did not know whether there was gender mainstreaming in disarmament and arms control measures in design and delivery. Another 38.7% of respondents did not know whether there were measures put in place to include women and girls in IDP Camp Committees.

In North Kivu there are active conflicts in the territories of Masisi and Rushuru involving local communities and OAG associated with Rwandese and Burundian perceived immigrants who are not regarded as genuine citizens of Congo. Owing to previous peace agreements, the police and military (FARDC) integrated these immigrants as senior officers thereby complicating security management in the region. The respondents alluded to massive human rights violations without justice or reparations. Many people were not aware not only about existence of most human rights protection activities but also their gender integration.

‘MONUSCO and UN Agencies are not very effective. Sometimes they compete with local actors on projects implementation. INGO do not reach grass root level where there are many violations and do not work with small CBO/CSO’. FGD, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

Most IDPs are integrated among communities in South Kivu except in Fizi territory that host refugees from Burundi. Due to presence of these refugees and some OAG from Burundi there are conflicts with local communities and insecurity on the highways. Weaknesses of the police, some of who are perceived to be operating in cahoot with OAG exacerbate this insecurity. Given the magnitude of insecurity, the contribution of MONUSCO is hardly recognized.

Protection Mechanism

Formal and Traditional Mechanism

Though both mechanism are not yet well streamlined, some initiatives to improve cooperation were noted.

Formation of Women Groups

These are mechanism where women support other women and provide forum for sharing ideas and access funding. For example *Wamama Simameni*, offer a model of healing art in facilitating conflict resolution among different communities. It lobbied the regional government in South Kivu and national government in Kinshasa to have their protection and rights enhanced

Legal Structures for Protection of Women

The Penal Code – 2006, increased penalties on SGBV cases. Since then the rate of SGBV is perceived to have gone down. Reproductive rights and rights of child are also protected in prison. Government banned traditional negotiations for rape crimes. Punishment is meted even where there were customary agreements and compensation. Improvement of the laws has been noted in the study as a positive protection measure.

Human Rights Capacity Building

CSOs trained on human rights and women based on DRC Constitution. Some developed applications for tracking human rights violations and assisted human rights defenders seeking asylum. They also collectively strategize with Army, Police and Politicians to bring suspected perpetrators to justice. Other strategies are; prosecution through courts, providing legal aid and peaceful demonstrations. CSOs in collaboration with academia also;

‘Assess legal discrimination through analysis and interpretation of international, national and provincial laws to explain how women rights are protected. Coordinate work on human rights and raise community grievances to the national leadership’. KII, June, 19, Goma

The CSO and academia cooperation appears to be a potential strategy of empowering

CSO protection activities and making academic output have immediate relevance to the problems facing society.

Engendered Protection of Civilians Approaches

Cumulatively almost half of males agreed that MONUSCO protection of civilian guidelines and operation include specific protection of the rights of women and girls compared to about 30.9% women ($X^2 (4) = 9.77, P < 0.05$). It has been noted in this study that there were more men working in formal and informal peacebuilding mechanism who interact with MONUSCO activities and therefore this association could reflect that awareness. When POC are responsive to gender, opportunities for women protection will go higher.

Engendered Security Sector Reforms

SSR involves changing security laws, policies, programmes and activities to reflect global standards of professional and accountable sector. Gender mainstreaming in SSR means engendering national security policies, institutions, strategies and plans. Such reforms would protect women and children.

In both regions there were active women protection units in the police. According to respondents the unit improved police relations among themselves and among civilian. The unit train police officers on SGBV, leadership and gender equality. Protection has been devolved to territories covering 7 out of 8 in South Kivu.

Despite some efforts made by MONUSCO, SSR has not been accomplished in DRC and in the east in particular. Due to divided loyalties of some members of the security agencies; communities and women particularly have least trust in their protection and actually perceive them as primary threats to their safety.

Engendered Protection of IDPs and Refugees

Women and girls require distinct support as IDPs and refugees. This calls for gender disaggregated statistics, specific training and protection measures. According to respondents;

Insecurity affects women and girls more as IDPs where they outnumber men. Some IDPs find their land taken when they go back. Women are not fully involved in many protection areas. KII, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

There is limited assistance for IDPs and refugees by government or development partners in South Kivu.

Engendered Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration

Significant relationship was also found between region and three response items:

MONUSCO provides technical and advisory support and capacity building to strengthen gender responsive mechanism for control of arms proliferation ($X^2 (4) = 22.15$ $P < 0.05$). There is capacity building to support gender responsive security reforms ($X^2 (4) = 22.12$, $P < 0.05$). Gender considerations are effectively mainstreamed in national security policies, strategies, plans and programs ($X^2 (4) = 11.273$, $P < 0.05$).

Like SSR; DDR has not been successful though the government, MONUSCO, CSOs have invested in improving their performance and gender mainstreaming. These observations are supported by respondents.

‘There is low commitment of the DRC government to bring about stability in the region; Some Brigades cannot be transferred to other areas of Congo according to previous agreements and no proper SSR has been done while 8 years of MONUSCO DDR Plan has not been successful’. KII, 27, 06, 2019, Goma.

In Bukavu respondents felt that MONUSCO presence has a positive bearing on local police and military officers behaviour.

‘MONUSCO gender and security evaluation survey indicated mixed results in different territories. FARDC and police were blamed for poor performance. However MONUSCO help to keep perpetrators in custody since Police/FARDC behave well under its oversight’. KII, June, 17, 2019, Bukavu

MONUSCO facilitate stakeholder meetings, training women groups and other CSOs on human rights. There is no effective integration of women and girls rights in SSR and DDR or emergence of a reliable and effective security sector. This spells doom to protection of women.

Provision of Legal Aid

CSOs provide legal aid. MONUSCO provided materials to facilitate SGBV victims access courts and trained police and lawyers. Liaise with CSO networks and local authorities to share information. Provide phones and air time to field monitors to raise alerts. According to key informer;

‘Actions are taken according to the reports on human rights violations. Work in joint teams to arrest and prosecute offenders, sensitize on human rights through Radio Okapi.’

Engage in SGBV advocacy, DDR, sensitize government to provide protection for women and local communities'. KII, 25, 06, 2019, Goma

This assistance however reaches a small percentage of the deserving population and many people are not aware about it.

Pyschosocial Support

MONUSCO coordinated joint program to assist SGBV victims where psychological and economic support were provided. Provided vocational training, reintegration KIT and children were taken back to school. Counseled on the justice process where perpetrators were tried. MONUSCO maintain gender statistics focusing on the whole society. One CSO observes;

Protection of civilians, gender and elections sectors funded quick impact projects for access to justice and building human rights capacity. Sometimes it provide flight tickets to women going to lobby government in Kinshasa'. FGD, June, 27, 2019, Goma

Some members of MONUSCO, were accused of engaging in illegal mining. Relative positive response in South Kivu towards MONUSCO could be associated with more vibrant CSOs and active community media.

Promoting Accountability and Labour Rights in the Mineral Sector

CSO advocate for mining companies to follow regional and international guidelines on responsible mining and respect human rights of miners. Advocate against deplorable conditions of pregnant women who enter mines with children. According to CSO;

'In the Mining sector women and children are abused, exploited and they don't know how to claim rights. Children leaving school are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and SGBV due to movement from one area to another. There is use of force and no respect for human rights during displacement of populations to access mining areas'. KII, June, 27, 2019, Goma

The presence of valuable and lootable minerals such as Gold, Diamond, Tantalum, Cassiterite among others create resource curse in the region where mining companies, military and OAG collude to exploit the people and don't pay royalties to the government. Therefore the mining industry does not improve the well being of women but actually increases insecurity. Therefore CSOs are doing commendable efforts to change the situation. CSOs lobbied the Minister of Mines in South Kivu on mineral surveillance to:

Engage armed groups on rights of women through conflict resolution. Monitor compliance with regulations and guidance on responsible mining in mining sites, transport and sale point. Collaborate with local structures who are on the ground. Raise alarms on violations through the Mining Sector Working Group. KII, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

They also promote dialogue with mining companies and government and provide leadership for local committee on mining that trace movements of minerals. They also support women to use better instruments, access good shelter and acquire identity cards for protection while engaging in mining.

Legal and Peacebuilding Advocacy

CSOs sensitize and advocate for effective laws for women and children protection and they lobby Ministers of Health, Finance and Governor and train para legals. They also facilitate women to meet local leaders for security dialogue, monitoring, reporting on violations of women rights and sensitize on national and international rights and positive masculinities. They also do cross border peacebuilding to address SALW proliferation and refugees.

Coordination Mechanism

There are various collaboration frameworks such as *Victims of Human Rights Violations Defenders Network*, which harness CSO synergy. Coordinated by MONUSCO to review human rights situation it meets once a month. Work with women groups to advocate on women issues and men as allies of women. Early warning alerts are sent by *Joint Protection, Assessment, Human Rights Monitoring and Judicial Investigation Missions*. There are several networks in South Kivu that protect women rights: *South Kivu Network of CSO* is an FBO that coordinate protestant churches. *Community Human Rights Defenders Network* - Brings together organizations working on human rights advocacy. *Network of Organizations Working in Support of Electoral Processes (ROC)* - provide oversight in the mining industry. *Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)* collaborate with other CJPC chapters in Burundi, Rwanda, Goma and Catholic Rescue.

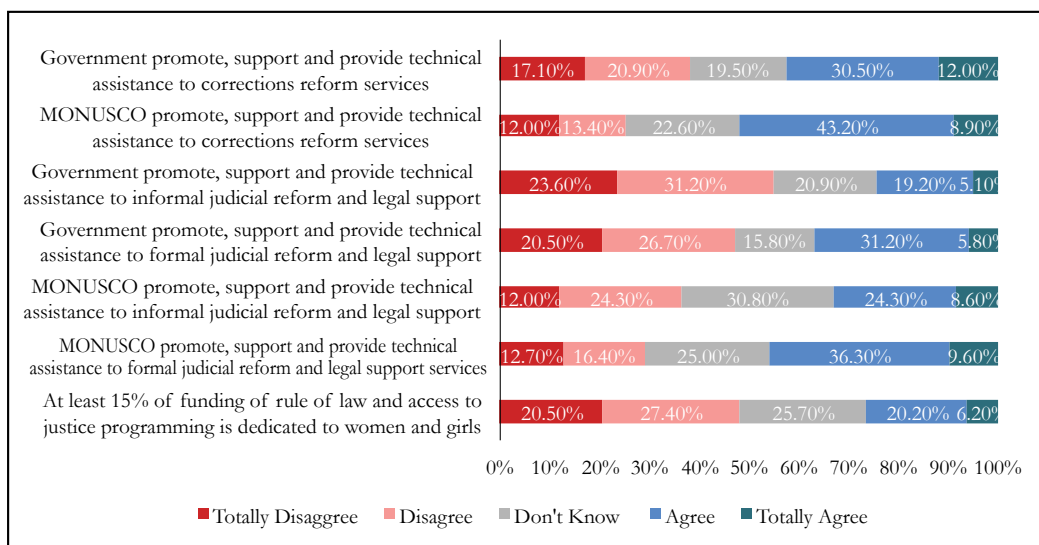
Joint Missions are clusters that include CSOs, Government, INGO and MONUSCO with specific protection task. The *'One Stop Center'* is a special forum where all actors in a particular sector come together to address specific community human rights issues such as SGBV. There are specific working groups for each thematic area. These mechanism facilitate synergy where best practices and experiences are shared. CSOs facilitate access to victims, development partners assist in funding, the Judiciary and Bar Association provide legal expertise. High indication of lack of awareness in this pillar may imply that despite all these activities mostly concentrated in cities among elites working in gender and security sector; majority of the rural communities where human rights violations take place are not aware.

Obj. d). Access to Justice for Women and Girls Whose Rights are Violated

Overall, there were more positive response in terms of MONUSCO efforts in promoting and supporting correctional reforms and formal judicial reforms and legal support services. On the other hand, a majority of the respondents disagreed that there was promotion, support and provision of technical assistance to the informal judicial reform and legal support services either from the government (76%) or from MONUSCO (67%).

Cumulatively about 45.9% agreed that MONUSCO did provide technical assistance to formal judicial reform and legal support services with only 29.10% disagreeing. However there was still a substantial proportion of the population indicated that they did not know whether this was true or not. This may imply that there were still many people who were not aware of such services.

Fig. IX. Access to Justice for Women and Girls whose Rights are Violated



Protection Mechanism

Funding of Rule of Law

Generally there was limited funding in this sector from both MONUSCO and government. A properly functioning justice sector is a precondition for protection of women.

Formal, Informal Judicial Reform and Legal Support Corrections Reform Services

Integration of these approaches in traditional societies is vital for effective protection of women. In most cases the government and MONUSCO use international gender frameworks that don't consider the local judicial and legal context thereby causing disconnect between its approaches and the ones of CSOs. Support for formal judicial and legal mechanism was noted by respondents from MONUSCO and government. Respondent below acknowledge MONUSCO support.

'MONUSCO monitors human rights violations and keep record of individual victims and witnesses. Most victims are women during and after the judicial process. Provide assistance according to individual harm and needs. Supports the national program on SGBV and assist in access to justice through representation, provision of advocates to accompany victims.' KII, June, 26, 2019, Goma

The respondents' views below indicate dissatisfaction with government support provided.

'Corruption across legal administrative chain; Police, Courts, Tribunal, Prosecutor and Magistrate. Compensation for victims of SGBV is rare. There are very few successful prosecutions of SGBV perpetrators and armed groups.' KII, June, 24, 2019, Goma

Assistance to Corrections Reform Services

In eastern DRC, there are no legal, policy or institutional support for changing the ideological paradigm of prison to corrections. Respondents acknowledge contribution of MONUSCO but government's support in this sector is not visible. Cases of jailed SGBV offenders being released irregularly were reported. Corruption and lack of gender responsive practices where women are jailed with their children was reported. Cases were also mentioned where released perpetrators threatened victims on their return to the villages. Local communities devised a number of measures to cope with the conflict situation where they could not access justice.

'Communities formed farming groups for security purposes. Men escort women going to farms or work with them. Military and police established camps near such stations but taxed protected women while some raped them. There is low trust in local military and police. CSO work has reduced abduction. Women from different ethnic groups work together and share information among themselves.' KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

For government workers accused of SGBV, SEA, such as Army, Police, Teachers the punishment is higher. Police has women and observe gender equality and Justice sector working group facilitate Court martial of suspected perpetrators.

Legal Measures

The child was legally defined in 2009 with respective rights and responsibilities pronounced on how laws would be enforced; procedures and protection of pregnant women, injured, vulnerable children such as orphans, street boys and child witnesses. CSOs sensitize and advocate for effective laws for women and child protection. They have lobbied Ministers of Health, Finance and Governor and;

‘Facilitate women to meet local leaders for security dialogue. Form women groups, monitor, report on violations of women rights. Sensitize on national and international rights and positive masculinities’. KII, June, 25, 2019, Bukavu

Provide passports for human rights defenders seeking asylum. Collectively they strategize with Army, Police and Politicians to bring suspected perpetrators to justice. They also prosecute through courts, provide legal aid and advocate on UNSCR 1325. Despite these measures access to justice is still low as one respondent asserts below.

‘Convicts often break away from jail. Courts are long distant away from communities. Fines not paid to SGBV victims leading to breakage of marriages, loss of reparations and healthcare. Lack of proper details on perpetrators hinder investigations. MONUSCO SEA perpetrators have not been brought to account – Some of them left children who by local customs don’t belong to any community’. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

Obj. e) Women’s and Girls’ Specific Relief Needs and Women’s Capacity to Act as Agents in Relief and Recovery in Conflict and Post Conflict Situation

The pillar had the lowest scores of the five pillars (2.74). With the exception of humanitarian relief services, the general perception was that there was little gender consideration from other programs on funding both in North and South Kivu. The findings also revealed high levels of unawareness for some of the response items. The respondent’s perceptions below indicate some of the reasons behind low performance.

‘DDR failed due to corruption, poor compensation and unemployment. Some demobilized members of armed groups have not been economically supported to reintegrate in community. There was limited assistance in psychosocial support and reconciliation has not been realized’. FGD, June, 21, 2019, Bukavu

This observation confirms JICA, (2017), report that transitional justice and recovery has not taken place in eastern DRC.

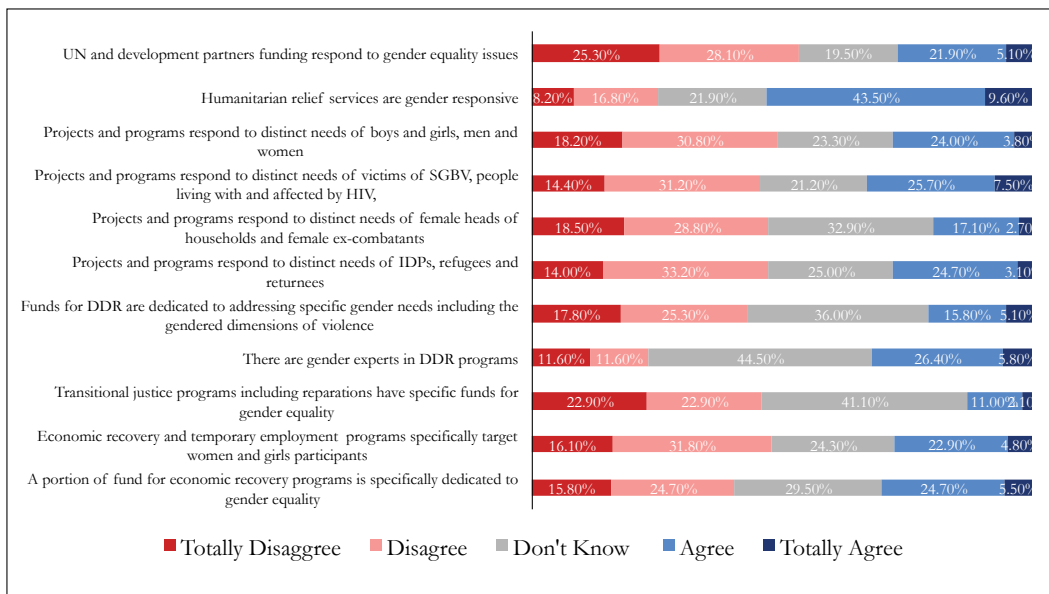
Protection Mechanism

Gender Responsiveness in Programs

More than half of respondents disagreed (53.4%) that UN funding responded to gender equality issues. About 49% disagreed that projects or programs responded to the distinct needs of boys and girls. The findings also show a high number of respondents not aware whether there were gender experts in DDR programs (44.5%) and whether transitional justice programs including reparations had specific funds for gender equality (41.10%).

The DDR department indicated that they follow guidelines where gender consideration is a requirement but presence of gender experts was not confirmed. Reparations are hardly accessed by women SGBV victims, IDPs or refugees. Generally qualitative data indicate that post conflict recovery, transitional justice, inter communal reconciliation and GLR peace and security has not been achieved. The process has also not integrated gender effectively as also confirmed by IA, 2015.

Fig. X: Women and Girl’s Specific Relief Needs and Women’s Capacity to Act as Agents in Relief and Conflict Recovery



Gender Responsive Funding

Both South and North Kivu had less than a third of the respondents agree that UN and development partners funding responded to gender equality issues. In North Kivu however about 63.7% disagreed compared to 43.1% in South Kivu. CSOs

acknowledged that one of the requirements of development partners funding is to indicate gender considerations. However given low access to funding among CSO, the impact of that requirement is not known or well felt. There are also poor relations between development partners and local CSO/CBO.

The strategies used are based on frameworks that are not informed by local situation. Some CSOs allege there is complicated process to access MONUSCO funding and some development partners do not fund local CBOs.

MONUSCO provide training, information which sometimes differ from local practice. They seem to be more interested in collecting information and pictures for their reports. Does not provide material support to children. FGD, 27, 06, 2019, Goma

A majority of the respondents in both North and South Kivu were of the perception that humanitarian relief services were gender responsive. Although this was composed of only 32.7% in North Kivu, in South Kivu this represented about 63.7% of the respondents. Some humanitarian agencies such as UNICEF enjoy goodwill among the local people because they consult them when delivering their services.

Gender Disaggregated Programming

More than half of the respondents (53.9%) in North Kivu did not believe that projects and programs responded to the distinct needs of boys and girls, men and women compared to about 44.5% in South Kivu. Gender integration especially for refugees and IDPs is low. In general support for these groups is low; therefore gender integration is not prioritized.

Both regions had the majority of respondents who did not know whether transitional justice programs including reparations had specific funds for gender equality. This figure was higher in South Kivu (48.6%). There is a high need for reparations for people who lost their land, property, death of family members and SGBV victims during previous conflict. There is little support towards this end for both men and women.

Gender Responsive DDR

The government has made a number of initiatives in this pillar. Department of DDR in the Ministry of Defence implement programs for adults, children, men and women, boys and girls. Ex combatants, both women and men form the bulk of clients.

The Department assist wives of ex-combatants in collaboration with CSO. Children below 18 years are referred to UNICEF together with orphans and child soldiers. Use global

standard DDR guidelines on how to treat women. Children stay maximum of 80 days in the Transit center where they undergo rehabilitation and training for effective reintegration. Civilians collaborate with FARDC in handling Child soldiers'. KII, 26, 06, 2019, Goma

DDR for adult transit center take 9 months. Transit centers for demobiliation are in Masizi, Goma and Beni. Both men and women receive vocational training, civic education, literacy, human rights education and psychosocial support. Assist members of OAG who want to rejoin families. According to one DDR expert;

'Chiefs are briefed by provincial administrators to welcome ex-combatants. Educate armed groups, Police, FARDC on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) since laws of armed conflict provide protection to children'. KII, 26, 06, 2019, Goma

CSOs have also made contribution through promoting reproductive health projects with budget line for men, women and youth.

'Heal Afrika was founded in 1994 during a time of conflict. The founders realized there was a need for wholistic healing. This vision of healing the body, mind and soul continues to inform the institution's approach. This was to be accompanied by socio-economic projects to increase household income. KII, June, 25, 2019, Goma

Other CSO offer community health education for prevention of diseases, leadership and adult education on reproductive health.

Socio-Protection of Children and Psychosocial Support

Given the past traumatic experiences especially for children, the need for healing is high in the region. CSOs have programs for children trauma healing and mediation. As one respondents asserts;

'Organize mediation relating to children issues such as abandoned children and matrimonial issues. Refer some cases to Tribunal or Courts. Promote registration of children. Take care of child convicts and the sick. Nurture children to have faith in the future and in their careers. KII, June, 21, 2019, Bukavu

CSOs also campaigned for introduction of law for protecting children below the age of 5. According to respondent, there is a legal clinic to provide legal assistance to children where;

'Vulnerable and children separated from families are placed in social protection department. Use local media to reconcile lost children with parents. Refer cases to Tribunal where perpetrators are identified and cases determined. Where children are suspected perpetrators, they are inadmissible if below 13 years; 14-18 years they transit through a Tribunal'. KII, June, 24, 2019, Goma

In 'Tuungane School', CSO pay school fees, offer materials, help HIV orphans and street children. Sensitize on rights of children for women prisoners with children. Traumatic events during the protracted conflict left children in vulnerable situation. If left unaddressed these children will become sources of more insecurity for women.

Education Support

CSOs encourage parents to take girls to school and provide education support to the girl child where parents pay teachers and government provide limited funding. In 'TEMBEA' project in South Kivu, CSOs educate girl child from vulnerable families and victims of SGBV. Due to cultural issues, lack of free education and high cost, parents in the region prefer to take boys to school.

Responsiveness to Needs of Women IDPs, Refugees and Returnees

Given the distinct level of vulnerability of above mentioned groups especially women, they require targeted support. CSOs register, reintegrate IDPs, refugees and Ex-combatants and raise awareness on the plight of displaced people. Provide funds and food through 'food for work'. Hold exhibition/shows for trading goods where specific group of IDPs come with coupons to buy products using the cash value of coupons.

In Bunyakiri there is a system for local communities integrating IDPs and refugee involving local authorities. Assist orphans through feeding and education at Fizi territory. Help women and girls who have young children. Provide health services for women IDPs and Refugees'. FGD, June 21, 2019, Bukavu

According to respondents in South Kivu, there is gender disaggregation in some camps. In shelters there are no separate rooms for boys and girls. Provide education and physical protection for refugees at Fizi but not IDPs. Protect women in IDP Camps such as Mugunga in South Kivu. Wives of demobilized soldiers are involved in DDR in order to raise their incomes. CSOs advocate against stigma and provide training, KIT for business, farming and transport. Use education and sports such as football. Communities have resorted to their own meager resources through cultural mechanism where DDR funding is low. Fizi territory is one of the highest source of conflict in South Kivu. Failure of DDR remains a major cause of recurrence of conflict and therefore source of insecurity for women and girls, JICA, (2017).

Coordination Mechanism

There are several coordination mechanisms and grassroot structures that were put in place so that women at the community level could speak out and inform/alert on issues affecting peace and security in their respective areas. Development partners such as UNICEF, UN Women and ICRC provide various services for women.

There are collaboration and coordination mechanisms such as working groups, sector groups, committees, councils and associations to enhance synergy and effective response to protection of women. CSOs are members of working groups and clusters at the national level where they solicit for assistance from government, UN Agencies and MONUSCO.

However these structures seem to address consequences rather than prevention and there is low women voice. Local communities devised a number of indigenous measures to adapt to the conflict situation and protect women. Communities formed farming groups for security purposes. Men escort women going to farms or work with them. Military and police established camps near such stations but taxed protected women while some raped them. CSO work has reduced abduction. Women from different ethnic groups work together and share information among them.

Women work as groups in farming, fetching firewood and they adorn trousers. Involving wives of military and police in women group activities in order to influence their husbands. Move with radios to receive alerts. Women don't get out too early and return home early. Use whistles to raise alarms and collaborate with local vigilante groups'. KII, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

This voice indicate that there is no effective government or MONUSCO support to indigenous mechanism. Use of these local resources could assist in creating ownership and sustainability of post conflict recovery protection measures.

Factors Hindering Effective Protection of Women and Girls

The study notes many factors that hinder full protection of women and girls. Most challenges emanate from the fragility of the DRC state and presence of valuable lootable minerals that attract foreign interests and armed groups.

Socio-cultural

There are entrenched cultural beliefs that women are not capable of handling public/community affairs. Women also fear getting into senior offices sometimes due to illiteracy or ignorance. Women don't inherit according to local culture and religion. There are early marriages and social stigmatization of unmarried girls, breakage of societal moral codes such as fidelity and lack of parental guidance. Traditional elders and leaders such as Sultan, Council of Elders exclude women. There is customary preference for educating boys. Some respondents viewed DRC as a patriarchal society where even some women are not committed to gender equality.

Women victims of SGBV are ostracized by the community and lose economic support.

Parents sometimes don't support their daughters to be independent. Men are not ready to give women opportunities in the public sector. At home they discourage their wives to participate in public affairs'. KII, June, 27, 2019, Goma

Conflict can create opportunities for changing gender power relations depending on the local context (Thompson, 2018). Respondents excerpt below provide such dynamics in South Kivu.

Traditionally men engaged in cash crop farming while women engage in subsistence farming. This situation is however changing with the rise of insecurity. Some OAG were founded by communities to offer protection of indigenous soil (euphemism for local peoples' interests). They forced women to provide food to them in the forest. These OAG started raping women who went to farm while most rapes were not reported due to social stigma'. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

Economic

Poverty make women vulnerable where families have many dependants. Women and girls are easily compromised by Army, Police and OAG. There are inadequate funds to enable CSOs to offer services in all the vast areas and donor funds are short term. Few women access mobile phones for raising alerts.

Women receive limited economic support, education and health services from the government. The local government harass and impose taxes on small traders. There is high unemployment affecting women. DRC including the east is a vast territory with poor infrastructure – roads, airport, water and electricity. Lack communication facilities including smooth internet operations.

Political

There is no political will to implement laws and policies given that most provincial leaders are not elected by the people. Women don't have the economic means and power to compete in politics. As a key informant notes;

'Empowerment of women in politics and leadership is low. Women make up 10% of the national parliament and 6-8% of the Jimbo/provincial parliament. There is no political will to implement laws to protect women rights'. KII, June, 17, 2019, Bukavu

There is mistrust among neighbouring member states and among communities where they collaborate with different armed groups. Marginalization of women at the political level will prevent their protection since major decisions are made at that stage.

Weak Governance

The capacity of DRC government is low where its presence in terms of offering security and other services is limited. There is poor access to education in rural areas. Teachers are poorly paid, schools charge high fees and there is low budget allocation to schools and Ministry of Education. FARDC allegedly controls some mine sites and supply arms to rebels due to poor working conditions. There is leakage of intelligence within FARDC and Police due to divided loyalties.

'DRC government is not visible beyond 50 kms of urban areas. In Walikale there is one police man in charge of 100 Sq. Km area. Investors mine without paying due royalties to government, abuse labour rights and thrive through corruption'. KII, July, 27, 2019, Goma

There is no effective coordination among protection actors by government leading to duplication of efforts. There is no accountability of local leaders. A respondent observes below;

'Government lack commitment to public policies such as provision of free education from ECD, Primary to University. There are no employment policies. Citizens pay tax but is misused by public servants. Though rights of women were given nominal recognition, they are not respected in reality'. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

OAG are perpetuating a war economy and seize land from local communities by force.

'No access to women living in remote areas due to high cost and presence of OAG. Religious and media persecution'. KII, June, 18, 2019, Bukavu

There are mapping reports of perpetrators but no action on report implementation. Poor border control lead to proliferation of SALW. Pandemics such as Ebola sometimes hinder projects implementation.

Gender Inequality

There is poor women representation in governance at the political level. There are very few women leaders in CSOs that have knowledge in law and leadership. The voice below illustrates the situation further.

'Women don't participate in party politics. Government does not allocate adequate funds for protection of women and girls and it does not support CSO. Gender Ministry has low capacity and rely on international assistance'. FGD, June, 21, 2019, Bukavu

Impunity

Sometimes government officers are perpetrators of rights violations. Cases are expensive and donor funding is short term while judicial processes takes a long time.

'CSO documented cases of some active heads of militia accused of perpetrating SGBV since 1998 but unfortunately some are still serving as commanders in the security sector. Therefore community resort to local mechanisms. There are no consequences where government officers fail to protect human rights'. KII, June, 20, 2019, Bukavu

It is the same in North Kivu as one respondent observed;

'In the military human rights abuse involves senior officers who make excuses to avoid arrest. A very senior officer of FARDC is still in office after human rights abuse accusations were levelled against him'. KII, 27, 06, 2019, Goma.

Lack of conviction places victims in danger of retribution while making the public lose confidence in the judicial process.

Unaccountable Security Agencies

There is low response to violations by security forces. Some respondents alleged that the army, police and civil servants have been accused of perpetrating SGBV. Teachers and education officers from Primary, Secondary up to University use their power to exploit women and girls. Peacekeepers pursue their own interests rather than protect civilians, women and girls.

'Peacekeepers comprised of Pakistan troops built Mosques in the region to spread Islam. Some MONUSCO troops engage in mineral exploitation thereby hindering its capacity to protect women in the mines'. KII, June, 19, 2019, Bukavu

There are weak enforcement institutions. Number of Ex-combatant returnees is low. Women representation in military and police is low. Sometimes external support is given through government which is often not transparent. FARDC and Police lack professionalism and adequate support from the government. There are past and present links between FARDC and ethnic based armed groups making enforcement of laws and conflict management very difficult.

Abuse of Human Rights by Foreign Mining Companies

Wachimba migodi (Women Miners) are highly abused as sex workers. Very few mining sites have been reached by CSOs for human rights sensitization yet there are hundreds of sites where women work. GBV perpetrators in the mines who have been jailed or have paid compensation are very few. Training of security sector has not trickled down to the grass root level.

Mismatch between Foreign and Local Intervention Strategies

Development partners do not often use government coordination structures or respond to government plans. International organizations lack context specific interventions

and the local people are not consulted about their needs and priorities. Some are not transparent and accountable to the beneficiaries. MONUSCO has failed to contain armed groups from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda and therefore the local people do not have absolute faith in the force. The mandate of MONUSCO is not well understood by the local people and there are perceptions that what is written on paper (mandate) may be different from what is practised on the ground.

Summary

Table 4: Comparison of the Five Pillars based on the Composite Mean Scores

Pillar	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
1. <i>Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women</i>	2.9858	3.0000	.65408
2. <i>Promotion of gender equality in peace and decision making at national and local level</i>	3.2733	3.2000	.79895
3. <i>Protection and promotion of women and Girls' Rights in Conflict and Post Conflict Situation</i>	2.9315	3.0000	.70535
4. <i>Access to Justice for Women and Girls Whose Rights are Violated</i>	2.8855	3.0000	.78221
5. <i>Women's and Girls' specific relief needs and women's capacity to Act as Agent in Relief and Recovery in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations</i>	2.7425	2.7273	.71098

The findings indicate significant initiatives by CSO, women and other partners. However development is uneven across thematic areas and regions. This section confirms Thompson's (2018), assertion that institutions play a key role in facilitating or hindering women participation and protection.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a snapshot of the main arguments, conclusions drawn according to objectives and suggestions for improving the protection environment.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that there are efforts among actors to strengthen protection mechanisms in both provinces. Regional variations are based on specific local factors and context. Given the structural vulnerabilities discussed earlier, protection mechanisms are still weak and ineffective.

The study corroborates previous findings of Boutellis & Arthur, (2017) on performance of MONUSCO POC; JICA, (2017) on poorly resourced mechanism; Sarah, (2016) on empowerment of women; International Alert, (2015) on regional gender integration; and Ravndal & Kjeksrud, (2011) on the challenges and options of realizing full protection of civilians. This study however provide current and realistic information of situation on the ground, regional and gender variance, weaknesses of mechanisms in place and proposed remedial measures.

The varied pillars scores illustrate that post conflict DDR and SSR have not been successful. The men positive responses compared to women may imply some cultural resistance to gender equality and women pessimism towards the pace of change. The regional variance may be attributed to the presence of more active OAG in north Kivu than South Kivu. The latter might also enjoy presence of high profile CSOs, effective community media and therefore more awareness. Some sectors performed better than others meaning that protection agencies can know where to put more efforts in order to realize better results.

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that there has been some improvement in the capacity for protection but the basic structural vulnerability of the region continues to hinder effective protection. The limited contribution of the government and international community is utilized by CSOs in collaboration with communities to enhance protection. Conflict and violence prevention mechanisms have not yet reduced SGBV, SEA or fully involved women in disarmament programs, gathering data and in early warning systems.

Informal mechanisms of conflict prevention are also not well supported. In gender equality, though significant contributions have been made, there was poor implementation of laws and policies, gender experts were present but inadequate and poorly distributed, men are willing to support women and coordination mechanism are enhancing protection. On protection of human rights, efforts have been made to improve protection but human rights violations are still a threat. There are various strategies for improving access to justice but corruption, impunity, unprofessional security agencies and vulnerability of women and girls continue to hinder full realization of justice.

The capacity of post conflict gender integration and recovery mechanisms is low especially with regard to transitional justice, women IDPs and refugees. This therefore implies that a lot of efforts is required to strengthen and engender DDR and SSR mechanisms from the national, provincial to the village level. South Kivu's better performance provides lessons on media sensitization that the north could emulate.

Recommendations

National Government

- Build capacity of SSR/DDR to enhance accountability of the security agencies
- Provide adequate resources to agencies for protection of women and girls and CSOs
- Enhance oversight on mining companies to raise tax compliance and labour rights

Provincial Government of North and South Kivu

- Enhance legal and resources support; cooperation with CSOs and traditional mechanism
- Enhance awareness on the available mechanism for protection especially in North Kivu

International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

- Accelerate implementation on international and regional peace agreements especially PSCF

International Development Partners

- Enhance SSR/DDR support to make security sector accountable to citizens
- Integrate programs with local context and build on local formal and informal mechanisms for self-protection

MONUSCO

- Make peacekeepers and Congolese security sector accountable for human rights violations and provide resources to CSO

Civil Society Organizations

- Raise level of collaboration among CSOs in order to influence priorities and effectiveness of government and MONUSCO programs
- Increase advocacy for cultural change, security sector and development partners accountability

International Peace Support Training Institutions

- Build capacity of EJVM - ICGLR, Congolese Military, Police and CSOs on human rights and protection of women and girls

Further Research

- Role of organized armed groups and security agencies in the eastern DRC conflict
- Women access to natural resources and their participation in peacebuilding

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