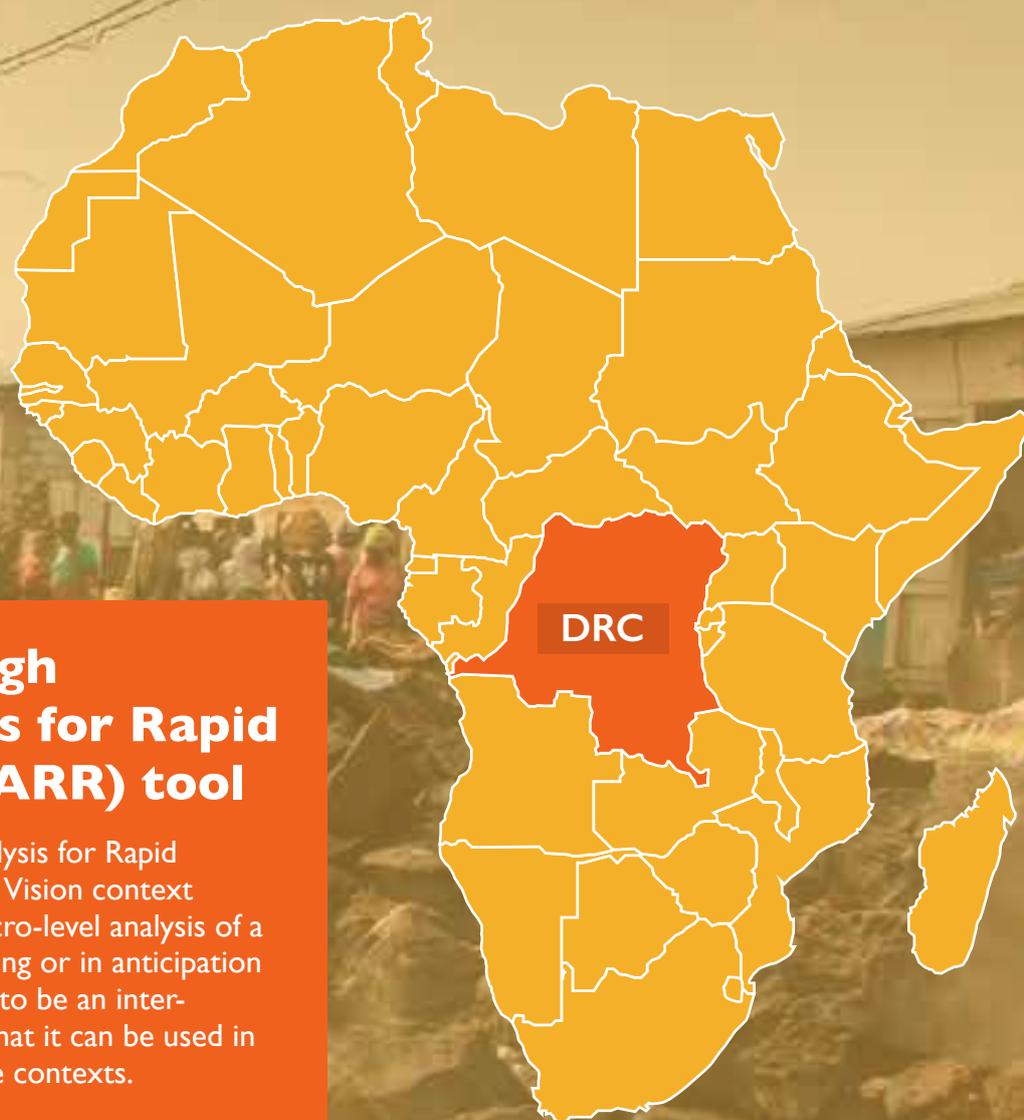


Use of GECARR in conflict contexts

Case Study: Democratic Republic of the Congo



The 'Good Enough Context Analysis for Rapid Response' (GECARR) tool

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

GECARR draws together the views of a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, including local community members and produces a snapshot of the current situation and likely future scenarios. It generates actionable and practical recommendations for INGOs involved in humanitarian responses. Between 2014 and 2016, World Vision conducted eight GECARR analyses: Central African Republic, Syria, Jordan, Kurdish Region of Iraq, Sierra Leone/ Ebola Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali.



GECARR
Good Enough
Context Analysis
for Rapid Response

The Process:

World Vision carried out a GECARR in DRC in May 2016. This was at the request of the World Vision DRC office in the context of upcoming presidential elections scheduled for November 2016 and visibly growing tensions. The GECARR aimed to inform their preparedness activities as well as programming, security, advocacy and communications.

Over the course of two weeks a GECARR facilitator team of six plus other national staff, spoke to 197 people across five regions of the DRC (Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu, Katanga and Gemena). 151 of the informants were community members (men, women, boys and girls) and 46 were representatives of NGOs, civil society, UN, donors and religious groups. Data collection was done through 28 key informant interviews and 15 focus group discussions. A scenario planning workshop was convened to validate data and identify and outline 3 key scenarios likely to unfold in DRC in the next 6-12 months. Several of the key trigger dates and events identified as a part of this scenario unfolded and continue to unfold as predicted.

The Impact:

The WV DRC office found the GECARR useful for a number of reasons. In the months following the analysis, the report recommendations around preparing for a tense electoral period were useful for several grant proposals for the UK (Magna Carta fund), US (DFAP, USAID Food for Peace) and UN (SSU - Stabilisation Support Unit for UN pooled funding)¹. They strengthened the risk assessment and analysis sections required by the donors, as they provided evidence-based predicted risks around increased ethnic tensions in the East and urban violence during these (with the potential risk for this to halt project implementation).

The analysis also contributed to strengthening sections around staff skills in context analysis and communications with donors. In the first month following the GECARR the report findings were used as an entry point with new donors and their newly arriving staff to gain meetings and pre-position the organisation.

1. At time of writing, two out of three of these proposals have been successful (with the UK and the US).

The report recommendations around preparing for a tense electoral period were useful for several grant proposals for the UK

The GECARR recommendations continue to feed into operational decision making. For example, the GECARR recommendations were used to support the hiring of a Security Manager for the Eastern office, which happened shortly after the report was released. The GECARR report provided an up to date context analysis for the Security Manager to get a quicker grasp of national dynamics and established the importance of regular context updates and strong co-operation between World Vision security, programming and advocacy departments.



The GECARR process also strengthened linkages between the Eastern and Western offices in DRC as well as helping to increase understanding of the DRC context amongst other World Vision offices, including at a regional and global level.

Given that the GECARR in-country focal point had advocacy capacity, the report was particularly used to inform advocacy messages on the ground, including private advocacy briefing papers. The GECARR report was a critical factor in catalysing the UN (UNHCR, Department of Political Affairs, OCHA-Goma and CM-Coord) to consider inter-agency analysis in their own contingency planning around the elections, as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities. As a result of sharing GECARR, they shared their analysis with the wider humanitarian community as a way of getting feedback and encouraging NGOs to look at the potential impact of elections on their work if there was urban violence.

Externally, findings were also presented to representatives from the EU, UK, US, Canada and were well received. The report gave the office a good summary that was shared with all key donors in-country and other partners during advocacy and pre-positioning meetings. As a result, relationships with new in-country donors were strengthened and the World Vision office was able to build up a reputation amongst external actors as 'an organisation that is thinking in advance'.

Staff based in DRC who participated in the analysis noted that their capacity to understand and analyse the context had increased. The key in-country focal point involved in the analysis felt that she was now able to conduct a GECARR in the future and utilised the skills gained to continue context monitoring going forward, and is more closely integrating with other teams for comprehensive information management.

The GECARR process also strengthened linkages between the Eastern and Western offices in DRC...



Reflections:

• Capacity and diversity:

Given that 5 external facilitators participated in the GECARR, it was found that the team provided both substantial support where in-country capacity was stretched but this also presented challenges given that the team was more highly visible and perhaps prevented more intimate discussion with stakeholders on the ground. The facilitators came with different operational backgrounds which was an additional strength to the analysis.

• Timeframe:

The timeframe to run the GECARR was appropriate given that tensions were escalating but incidents had not yet escalated to a level where the ability to conduct an analysis would have been more severely limited. This is a key factor when considering future GECARRs. The lead-in time for preparation was longer (approximately 2 months) which was needed given the size and complexity involved in working in DRC.

• Use of Technology:

The DRC GECARR was the first time Google Forms were used to capture and store data in one place and in a uniform way; this helped when analysing data later on. It is recommended as a mechanism for future GECARRs, depending on internet connections.

• Cost:

The DRC GECARR was a more expensive GECARR given the size of the country. The GECARR involved collecting data from the largest geographical area to date as well as in terms of people spoken to. This GECARR was also particularly expensive given the high costs involved in working in DRC. The reflection from facilitators was that GECARR is not always a low cost analysis and should not be marketed on this basis, to ensure that areas where costs are high but analysis is necessary do still consider it.

• Flexibility:

Many of the logistical details were not completely confirmed until in-country and also needed to change and adapt during the GECARR process. Therefore the facilitators and national office had to allow for this flexibility. Given the volatility in the context, there was a need to accept a level of uncertainty in the process and facilitators needed to be able to make rapid changes at short notice throughout the preparation and execution phases of the GECARR. Participants noted that the choice to adapt GECARR was critical to its effectiveness and use in the context of DRC.



- **Senior Leadership buy-in:**

There was senior leadership buy-in at the start of the process and all the way through to their participation and active engagement in the debrief at the end, which enabled swift take up of recommendations and further follow up by different senior leadership members.

- **Documenting lessons learnt and follow up support:**

Various lessons learnt from the DRC GECARR were collected through debrief discussions with national and external staff and were collated and discussed in order to improve GECARR practices. Members of the GECARR Management Group continue to support the DRC office in implementing and tracking GECARR recommendations. This is now recommended as a standard practise for future GECARRs where possible.

- **The importance of triangulation:**

Ensuring data is collected and contrasted between multiple perspectives across different organisations and geographic areas is important. This generates better and more nuanced analysis.

- **Need for regionally proportionate data:**

Significantly more data was collected in Goma compared to the other four regions. This was influenced by staff capacity on the ground and the fact that external facilitators were primarily based in Goma. However, it is important to collect regionally proportionate data so that the findings accurately represent various regions.

Senior Leadership buy-in at the start and through out enabled swift take up of recommendations...

