



« Tô » a typical dish in West and Central Africa, sold at the market

IEDA Relief DRC Highlight Report

« Thanks to IEDA Relief, we have regained our dignity»

Kichanga, Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province

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Summary

The province of North Kivu in Eastern DRC has been subject to a cycle of violence and insecurity due to several different wars as well as the proliferation of armed groups. Thus, the insecurity has generated massive displacements of populations who take refuge in numerous displacement camps. IEDA Relief helps some of them to support themselves.



A Constant Battle

Our IEDA Relief office is located in Kichanga, a locality situated in the Masisi territory, in the province of North Kivu. Since 1993, this territory has faced persistent insecurity due to repeated wars and the proliferation of armed groups. Thousands of people had to flee their villages and seek refuge in numerous camps situated around the city of Kichanga.

IEDA Relief collected the testimony of three women who have had to leave their villages – places where rival armed groups make the laws, do not hesitate to kill, rape, loot, and engage in all kinds of human rights violations. Often civilian populations find themselves in the crossfire. Consequently, these three women have lost all their belongings, their husbands have been killed, and they themselves had undergone trials of various kinds prior to meeting in the Mungote displaced persons camp in the city of Kichanga in 2011.

Unfortunately, aid in the camp does not satisfy basic needs; there is insufficient food, children go uneducated, and there is little to no clothing to distribute. Beyond the trauma of war, these three mothers and their children were having problems surviving. Confronted with budgetary problems, the humanitarian community can no longer guarantee even the little food it has provided in the past, so aid has become more selective.

It turned out that, for survival reasons, numerous women who went into the bush to look like they were selling twigs for firewood were actually working in the fields of local residents for \$0.50 per day, which did not protect them from rape or sexual exploitation.

« The autonomy of the financial and economic plan that IEDA Relief has allowed me to have has remade me a person worthy of my name. »

-Mariam, Displaced woman and beneficiary of IEDA Relief's aid.

The Three Mothers

IEDA Relief, with funding from the UNHCR, put in place income-generating activities within the framework of sexual violence prevention in the camps. These three women were selected for the program and received bakery training (making breads and donuts). After the training, IEDA Relief granted a kit to each beneficiary so she could continue her activity.

Since 2013, they have received this assistance, and today these three women have become independent. With the revenue from this first activity, they have started up other activities.

« The support of IEDA Relief has allowed us to dream of a possible future : I have been able to educate my children, to dress and feed my family. »

-Chantalle, displaced woman and beneficiary of IEDA Relief's aid

Mrs. Chantalle¹ rents a field where she grows corn, beans, and potatoes according to the seasons. With the profits, she educates her children, and dresses and feeds her family. She has even started to raise a small animals.

Meanwhile, Mariam² farms and sells a part of her crop (potatoes and beans, which are basic foods in the region). She was also able to educate, feed, and clothe her children thanks to IEDA Relief.

« My greatest satisfaction is having recovered my dignity. I no longer depend on humanitarian aid. For the first time in a long time, I feel that I can control my future and that of my children. »

-Cécile, displaced woman and beneficiary of IEDA Relief's aid

Cécile³, like the others, farms and she produces more than a ton of sorghum each season, which she sells to breweries.

The greatest satisfaction that these women take from this project is that they can recover their dignity. They are no longer dependent on humanitarian aid; they provide for the needs of their children and prepare for their future by providing them with valuable education and training.

More than 100 women have received aid from IEDA Relief and UNHCR, and are today economically independent.

¹ The names of the beneficiaries have been changed to protect their anonymity.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The Story in Pictures

