



Communication for development in DRC

Despite the progress made over the past decade, the situation of children and women in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains precarious. According to the *Demographic and Health Survey* (2013-2014), one child out of ten dies before reaching the age of 5; 27% of girls aged 15-19 are pregnant and only 25% of children under 5 years old are registered at the Civil registry. Universal school attendance is not yet a reality in the country.

In addition to operational purposes linked to basic services, this situation is explained by the low level of adoption of Essential Family Practices, which promotes better survival, education and protection of children. 71% of parents in DRC report having adopted at least three of the five essential family practices but there are significant disparities between the provinces. In the Provinces of South Kivu and North Kivu, only 39% and 56% and in the former provinces of Katanga and Province Orientale, this proportion is 64% and 60% respectively.

In order to improve health of children, in addition to the adoption of Essential Family Practices, the average rate of utilization of health services should be increased, which according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is only 25%. It is also worth mentioning the existence of perceptions, beliefs and social norms that are unfavorable to the realization of the rights of women and children. For example, in the former Province of Katanga, preventive medicine, including vaccination, is perceived as doubly blasphemous by the followers of the Kitawala sect, which explains their strong resistance to vaccination and modern interventions. These resistances are to date one of the main bottlenecks in efforts to stop the poliovirus epidemic in the provinces of Maniema, Tanganyika and Haut-Lomami.

Key figures

- **45% of children** received all vaccinations
- **25% of children** under five are registered at the Civil registry
- **50% of household members** sleep under insecticide-treated nets

Realizations in 2017

- **28 million people** reached by messages promoting Essential Family Practices
- **46,642 Community Animation Cells** set up in 279 Health Zones
- **90% of parents** informed before vaccination campaigns



UNICEF's action

In support of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Communication for Development (C4D) contributes to creating an enabling environment for children's rights by promoting the adoption of practices favorable to the survival, protection and child development and the demand for and use of basic services. C4D also contributes to the empowerment of communities by strengthening their capacity to act for their own development and building positive social norms while deconstructing those that are deemed negative.

The promotion of Essential Family Practices is ensured through channels of interpersonal communication (community relays, health workers, religious leaders) and mass communication (participatory radios, theater, TV, songs). Strategic partnerships are thus developed, in particular with the five main religious denominations, consortia of community radios or national and international NGOs.

In order to strengthen dialogue, accountability and community resilience, multisectoral community facilitation units are established at the village level. They coordinate community initiatives for social and behavioral change at both the individual and collective levels.

UNICEF is also supporting communication capacity building for the development of government and civil society actors and the development of micro-level communication plans at the Health Zone level to promote Essential Family Practices and Demand and the use of basic social services.

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Donors

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- **CDC**
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Budget

US\$ 3,355,000
for 2018

US\$ 4,262,0500
gap to fill