

Field Experiments on Targeting Labor-Intensive Public Works in Eastern Congo

i2i Dime

World Bank

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FINDING THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Field Experiments on Targeting Labor-Intensive Public Works in Eastern Congo



A beneficiary undertakes a road re-construction project as part of the rural LIPW program

Photo Credit: World Bank

Did you know?

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ranks at the bottom of the UNDP's 2016 Human Development Report (176th out of 188)

Throughout DRC, **basic infrastructure** such as schools and health facilities **is lacking**, either due to destruction or a lack of investment.

From 2014-2018, the LIPW is expected to:

- ❖ Rehabilitate 1,800 km of rural roads
- ❖ Create 2.4 million days of work
- ❖ Employ about 30,000 individuals
- ❖ Distribute over US\$7 million in wages

Context

Persistent violence and instability in the Eastern Congo region over the past three decades have left millions of communities plunged into acute vulnerability, with limited access to basic infrastructures. The international community has been actively involved in efforts to re-establish peace and security in Eastern DRC, in part by supporting economic recovery in the region. The World Bank's support to these efforts include the International Development Association (IDA)-funded Productive Opportunities for Stabilization and Recovery in the DRC (STEP, in its French acronym), being implemented by the Social Fund of the DRC (FSRDC) in North Kivu (NK), South Kivu (SK), and the Ex-Oriental Province (OP). The livelihood and employment generation component includes a labor-intensive public works (LIPW) program, which embeds an impact evaluation (IE) study undertaken by DIME.

Intervention and Rationale

LIPW programs can provide improved access to key infrastructures for communities while offering temporary employment opportunities and earnings to "targeted" households or individuals. However, incomplete or missing information on income and wealth status in developing county contexts, complicates the selection of beneficiaries (targeting) for these programs. While increased emphasis is being given to targeting strategies for social protection programs in developing countries (Alatas et al. 2012), the available evidence remains very thin and evidence from fragile and conflict affected contexts such as the DRC are even more scarce, leaving very limited sources for governments and policy makers to draw from. The IE implemented by DIME on the STEP LIPW program in rural Eastern DRC aims at filling such knowledge gap by testing the efficacy of alternative targeting mechanisms in ensuring that the poor and vulnerable households are selected into the scheme, while also assessing the direct impact on the selected beneficiaries.

Targeted Cities: Rural areas of Bukavu, Goma, Bunia, Beni, and Butembo

LIPW Activities: Garbage collection, street cleaning and road maintenance

Project Key Characteristics:

- Approximately 12000 beneficiaries
- Priority given to women, youth at risk, former combatants, and displaced/returned populations among others
- Paid \$3 a day for working four days a week for 4 months

Research Questions

1. How effective are different targeting mechanisms in ensuring participation of poor households in LIPW rural schemes?
2. What are the direct social and economic impacts of different targeting mechanisms on beneficiary households and communities?
3. What are the overall social and economic impacts of LIWP rural schemes on recipient individuals?

Evaluation Methodology

The effects of targeting mechanisms will be evaluated using a randomized control trial study design, with villages as the unit of randomization. 150 villages located on the rehabilitated roads axes will be included in the study. Randomization will be done by strata according to village size, assigning 1/3 of villages to beneficiary selection by public lottery, 1/3 by chief selection, 1/3 by community choice.

The welfare effects of the LIPW will also be evaluated with an RCT design. However, the unit of randomization will be at the individual level where people will either be allocated to the treatment or control group per the targeting mechanism assigned to the village.



A truck accident on a badly maintained road.

Photo Credit: World Bank

Preliminary Findings

Preliminary results show that the selected workers along the Walungu, South Kivu axis are mostly farmers. LIPW will thus provide a new source of stable income to local populations. In the long term, the rehabilitated roads will help farmers expand their activities to other markets and provide further economic opportunities.

Demographic



- The average **household** in NK and SK has 6 members, while OP has 4
- **Early marriage** is pervasive with at least 80% of girls married by 18 in NK, SK and Ituri
- Most respondents have **some primary schooling**; while in Oriental Province, 40% completed that level
- Ituri records the **highest rates of former fighters and physically disabled persons**

Economic



- Food, health and maintenance comprise **largest HH expenditures**
- NK (49%) and SK 45% have most **HH roofs made of concrete cement**
- Large share of wood/bamboo and straw roofs and mud walls
- People are either involved in **agriculture or breeding (> 50%)**
- Only 14% of HHs have **practical job training**

Policy and Program Design Lessons

LIPW is a popular social-safety net model across developing countries because of the presumed socio-economic impacts but program design is critical:

- The target population is poor and underemployed so they

are likely to respond positively to the \$3per day program. The transfer amount should be tailored to the target beneficiaries.

- This IE is particularly warranted, given the presumed importance of effective targeting in improving the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs and lack of consistent evidence about which targeting method works best.

Social & Psychological



- The **major security issues** across all villages are **land conflict, burglary and domestic violence**
- **Village chiefs** generally either inherit power or are designated by the population.
- The main **rural cleavages** are those between **peasants and herders** with an important incidence in Ituri
- HO and BO are the places with the **most self-esteem**: mean Rosenberg index of 16 and 17 while 13 and 14 in the other provinces.
- At least 20% of HH have experienced headaches and nightmares as a result of **war violence**