1. **Overview**

Analyzing data on the DRC is extremely difficult (Marivoet: expert comments). Robust, geographically disaggregated data on poverty in DRC is scarce with most analysis focused on Kinshasa or DRC as a whole. A lot of data has not been processed (e.g. 10% of the 1984 census data has been processed so far) and data from national and different multilateral agencies can contradict each other (Marivoet: expert comments). There is a need for greater capacity to identify and understand the nature of poverty across the DRC, based on robust methodologies.

In light of this lack of data, this report summarises what information it was possible to obtain and summarise in the limited timeframe. This includes an overview of the different definitions of poverty followed by assessments of poverty and vulnerability in DRC at a national level, and localised data where available. Some studies include analysis of the causes of poverty and assessments of the type and quality of data.

2. **Definition of poverty**
Poverty definitions vary depending on the study, with little evidence of strict, universal criteria. In some cases the population is simply divided into five, based on income and assets, and the bottom quintiles are considered the poor (e.g. MINAS, 2009).

Concern Worldwide consider the extreme poor as those who lack basic assets (human, physical, financial and natural resources), and even when they have these assets they have a low return from them (low yields, low payment for labour for example) (Harvey, 2011). In a Context Analysis Report on Masisi (Harvey, 2011) by Concern Worldwide, the precise criteria for those deemed to be poor seems unclear.

In other cases there is an emphasis on non-monetary factors. This can include demographics, health and nutrition, HIV / AIDS, education sector, the living environment and access to utilities (water and sanitation and housing, etc.) as well as gender and other issues (RDC, 2012).

Mossige et al (2003) does not explicitly define poverty except to say that vulnerability is a broader concept of poverty.

3. National and Cross-Provincial Data

The most notable example of a national poverty assessment is the ‘Survey 1-2-3’ or ‘Enquête 1-2-3’ carried out in 2004-2005. The ‘Enquête 1-2-3’ is a statistical tool developed by DIAL to assess poverty over time (DIAL, 2007), which faced a number of challenges in implementation in DRC (see Makabu ma Nkenda 2005, in relation to Kinshasa). Data from this survey does not seem to be readily available, though various analyses have been undertaken on this data, and there does not seem to have been a survey carried out since.

There have been studies examining the variation in poverty in urban versus rural areas. Based on the asset-based approach and analysis of Survey 1-2-3 (2004-5) findings, Marivoet and Keje (2011) find that urban poverty within the DRC is less structural than poverty in the countryside. Households from urban areas possess an aggregate of more important assets. This makes them less vulnerable to shocks and enables them to lead more stable lives than those in rural areas. This seems to be more the case for the province of Kinshasa than for the provinces of Bandundu, Maniema, Oriental and Equateur.

Marivoet (2009) argues that, based on the Survey 1-2-3 data, the decentralising reforms outlined in the 2006 Constitution will have had varied impacts on different regions in terms of poverty. The provinces of Haut-Katanga, Mongala and Bas-Uele stand to be richer, and income distribution may become (with the exception of Haut-Katanga), in fact more equal. On the other hand, South Kivu, Sankuru and Tshuapa may well have remained among the poorest provinces, suffering from physical isolation and from conflict in the case of South Kivu. Also notable is the weak position of Kinshasa compared to other similar provinces.

Mossige et al (2003) identifies a number of serious risks in DRC. These are: war and armed conflict; an unstable macroeconomic framework; loss of employment; legal, physical and social insecurity; absent or insufficient pensions; gender discrimination (notably in education); disease; malnutrition; early loss of a parent; divorce/family breakdown; psychological trauma
and mental illness; and floods and erosion. Between 60 and 80% of people in DRC are considered vulnerable and survive on an income of less than $0.20 USD per day, per person. The main vulnerable groups are: children and women in difficult situations; internally displaced people; people with disabilities and/or HIV / AIDS; and elderly people without support.

MINAS (French acronym for the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity) (2009) used a number of sources to estimate the number of orphans and vulnerable children. To estimate poverty MINAS used the 2007 UNDP Human Development Report and a 2007 Demographic and Health Survey carried out by the DRC Ministry of Planning (Ministère du Plan et Macro International, 2008). Based on these sources, 57% of the population live rurally. 60% of the rural population are in the poorest two quintiles as opposed to 54% of population nationwide. Based on the age distribution in each province the number of orphans and vulnerable children was estimated as follows:

Figure 1: Number of Orphans and Vulnerable children in DRC provinces

Nombre des OEVS: Number of Orphans and Vulnerable Children
Ont reçu au moins un type service: Have received at least one type of (public) service
N’ont pas reçu au moins un type service: Have not received at least one type of (public) service

Source: MINAS (2009)

A 2008 study aimed to establish the levels of income and non-income child poverty, identify those most affected, identify strengths and weaknesses in development planning and policies, and propose areas of intervention (Nzlia 2008). The study argues that poverty is affected by the household, the community dynamics and the institutional arrangements in relation to the child. Based on available information on these variables, indices were calculated to assess the incidence and intensity of poverty based on a monetary and deprivation approach. The study used a number of data sources: Survey 1-2-3 (2003), Multiple Indicators Clusters Survey (1995, 2001); the Demographic and Health Survey (2007); information on households from the National Survey on Housing and Socio-Economic Profiles (1999); and various socio-
economic data gathered by the Ministry of Planning, the Central Bank of Congo, economic forecasters, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies. The study found that compared to the national poverty threshold level, the proportion of poor children is 56.6% while compared to the international poverty threshold level, this proportion is 76.6%. There were significant disparities between children in terms of poverty. The poverty level:

(i) is higher in rural areas (76.72%), than urban areas (61.49%);
(ii) increases over the age of 15 and when the households contain more than seven people;
(iii) decreases with increasing levels of parental education – from 84.9% where the household head is illiterate, to 76.7% where the household head has attended an educational institution;
(iv) does not change with the gender of household head, 77.2% against 73.5%; and
(v) is lower than if the household standard of living is in the fifth quintile, rising from 71% in fifth quintile to 33% in the fourth quintile.

Because of these variations in poverty levels, the groups containing the most poor children, are those children living in households:

(i) that are already experiencing problems with school attendance (53% of children)
(ii) with a problem of unemployment (48.9% of children are in households where neither parent is working)
(iii) with difficulties with drinking water (42%)
(iv) with a householder who has not been educated beyond high school (37.1%);
(v) whose standard of living is in the first two quintiles of the poverty level (33%)

Poverty levels are highest in the provinces of Equator, Bandundu and South Kivu. The lowest level is observed in Kinshasa - 41.6%.

Another report outlines the results of a baseline study undertaken in Eastern DRC to gather information on demographics, welfare, and social and political attitudes of communities (Humphreys, 2008). The study covered South Kivu Province; Maniema Province; and the Tanganyika and Haut Katanga Districts of Katanga Province. The welfare assessment suggests that conditions are very poor, both as measured by outcomes and as measured by access to services. Housing conditions are basic with over 80% of the sample surveyed living in houses constructed of mud or (unbaked) mud bricks. The typical household has to walk 45 minutes to reach drinking water. 42% of the sample has had no access to education. 11% have suffered from severe sickness over the two weeks.

4. Kinshasa

By some studies Kinshasa has the lowest observed levels of poverty (Ntzia 2008; Bailey et al., 2011), whereas in others Kinshasa is one of the poorest in terms of the poverty headcount and poverty gap index and second poorest on the poverty severity index after South Kivu (Marivoet, 2009).

Standards of living seem to have improved slightly between 1986 and 2004 in general, but vary between different population groups within Kinshasa. Over this period, Kinshasa has
become more closely connected with world food markets (which could increase vulnerability); and the level of education of the principal income earner remains one of the main predictors of the level of household consumption, even in a thoroughly informalised economy (De Herdt et al., 2008).

De Herdt and Marivoet (2011) argue that the capability approach provides a more accurate understanding of poverty processes, and can be helpful in exploring the links between poverty and place. As place can have a significant impact on well-being, individuals with similar incomes may experience poverty differently depending on where they are situated.

Bailey et al (2011) found that poverty and vulnerability are widespread and multidimensional in DRC, with particular vulnerabilities facing women and children. Geographic disparities are stark, with rural families poorer than urban families and some provinces, such as Kinshasa, wealthier than others. Women and girls are consistently and uniformly disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, income, health and vulnerability to violence. Household characteristics are key determinants of poverty. Educated, smaller families are less susceptible to poverty. Vulnerability is defined as the likelihood of being negatively affected by shocks or stresses. It occurs when individuals or households lack the capacity to prevent, mitigate or cope with such events. Income poverty emerged as the key factor triggering vulnerability. Poverty is also the consequence of many other risk factors, such as low earnings, unemployment, limited capacity to produce on agricultural land and spending household income on accessing basic services, among others. There are also gender differences as to how vulnerability is perceived: male-headed households identified rising prices, lack of agricultural extension services and low pay as the greatest economic vulnerabilities; female-headed households identified lack of decision making over the use of productive assets and income and lack of access to land. Health-related expenses resulting from injury or prolonged illness were also indentified as a critical source of vulnerability by both male- and female-headed households, in both rural and urban areas.

5. North Kivu

Harvey (2011) looked at various villages in North Kivu, including villages in Lushebere which were titled, for the purposes of the report, as LB1, LB2, etc., indentifying three contexts in which the poor live: insecure, medium security threat, and secure.

The village LB4 and spontaneous camps such as Bonde were the most insecure. In these areas there was a high threat of banditry and pillaging by non-government forces, as well as a large presence of FARDC (French acronym for the Armed Forces of DRC) who put various pressures on the local populations. The community includes more displaced people than other areas, many of whom are without basic livelihood assets. There are some large farms and subsistence agriculture.

At a medium security threat level was the village of LB3 where there is a threat of infrequent banditry and resultant displacement and loss of assets. The communities are fluid and a mix of returnee, recent and long term displaced.

Most secure was LB2 and Lulambo which has been secure since the integration of the CNDP (French acronym for the National Congress for the Defence of the People) in early 2009.
There remains tension over land, and communities are a mixture of local people and the long-term displaced. There is an accumulation of livelihood assets in these more secure communities.

Other findings include:
- food insecurity is clustered around January/March and June/July;
- there are complex but active produce markets;
- health services are often of a good quality, and free;
- water quality is not seen to be a problem but access is poor with large distances to travel to clean sources for many;
- education levels are low, illiteracy is high, and girls in particular are excluded from education;
- communities outside of the formal camps reported problems of violence, use of sexual violence by armed groups, gender inequality and poverty;
- there are a wide range of livelihood options, with the majority but not all, dependent on unskilled labour; and
- there are credible local institutions with whom to partner and liaise with.

Harvey (2010) argues that the ability to move out of poverty and meet basic livelihood needs is determined by:

1) land ownership, and  
2) access to labour within a household.

Save the Children carried out Household Economy Analyses of the rural population of north Kivu. The analysis of the population Plateaux Zone, Masisi identified that the wealth profile of the population had transformed with only three wealth groups continuing to exist – the ‘poor’, the ‘middle’, and the ‘better-off’ categories (Save the Children 2003a). The ‘poor’ category has reduced in size, while the ‘middle’ category has grown. ‘Poor’ households obtain a larger percentage of their food needs from their own harvests; increased their reliance on agricultural labour for cash income and depend less on the sale of their harvests; and can no longer afford to send two children to school. An analysis in Bwito, Rutshuru, found that the ‘poor’, ‘middle’, and ‘better-off’ account respectively for 45-55 percent, 30-40 percent, and 10-20 percent of the population (Save the Children 2003b). ‘Poor’ households rely on market purchase, followed by labour exchange (working on the fields of ‘middle’ or ‘better-off’ households) for food. Up to 85 percent of yearly income goes towards purchasing food. This signifies that very little remains for other important needs, such as education and health. ‘Poor’ households can rarely afford to send more than one child to school and often incur debts from treatment at health centres.
6. South Kivu

In their analysis and synthesis of available information, Ansoms and Marivoet (2010) emphasise the very scarce degree of information written on the contemporary socio-economic situation of South Kivu. Notable findings from their report include the differences between the ‘maskini’ poor and the ‘mkosefu’ poor. The maskini poor are characterised by a situation of dependence, marginalization, lack of rights and freedoms, and disability. People who are often found in this category are widows, orphans and people with physical disabilities. The mkosefu poor are those who live in poverty at some point, but who have some assets or capabilities that could enable them to leave poverty. Many professional categories may fall into this category: small traders, small ranchers or farmers, unskilled labour, but also teachers and others from the public sector.

In rural areas, the size of the farm is the main determinant of poverty. In urban areas, it is the rate of dependency, occupational status, level of education of the head of the household, and access to credit, which determine the standard of living of the household.

Chronic malnutrition in rural areas occurs mainly among the elderly and among the peasants who have almost no access to land. In semi-urban areas, displaced people are the worst affected. The food situation is affected by an interaction between endogenous factors – related to the system of production and exchange - and exogenous factors - related to insecurity.

Consumption rates are higher in urban areas (Bukavu and Uvira Cities), compared to those of rural areas (except Mwenga). Compared to other rural areas, Mwenga territory is by far the wealthiest which is probably due to the importance of mining sites, where formal consumption is more considerable. Fizi, the least populated territory, is relatively better than other territories. Kabare and Walungu, two areas characterized by high overpopulation, have average consumption, similar to about 50% of the poverty line. Kalehe and Uvira (located outside the city) are the poorest territories. Finding Uvira territories among the poorest territories is surprising as Uvira is the only territory with a good quality road running from north to south. As several economic activities, such as trade are developed around this road, this should have had a positive impact on average living conditions of the area.

The size of households in urban areas is generally greater than in rural areas. Households are smaller in territories that are less populated (Mwenga, Fizi and Uvira), except in Kalehe. In relation to the level of education and literacy, Kalehe is notable in that the level of education is quite high, with a high percentage of households literate in the national language or in French, even though this territory is among the poorest. Literacy and education levels are even more pronounced in Bukavu town where virtually all households have a member who can read and write.

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6. Additional information

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