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# RESILIENCE IN TANGANYIKA

## A MOTHER IN LUKWANGULO REBUILDS HER LIFE

Ms. Mungela Elise once led a joyful life. A mother of four, she farmed a four-hectare plot with her husband in Lukwangulo, situated northeast of the provincial capital Kalemie in Tanganyika province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). With her husband, she also raised goats and poultry and they were able to make ends meet and take care of their family.

But the ethnic conflict between the Batwa and Bantu took all of it away. Her husband was killed and the violence forced her to abandon her house and farm for Rugumba, located 30 km from Kalemie, where she stayed in an internally displaced persons camp with her four children for more than four years. She received food and emergency assistance from the World Food Programme and other humanitarian actors such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who, along with other donors, serve more than 100,000 IDPs in Tanganyka. When she was finally able to return to Lukwangulo Ms. Mungela, now 58, found that her home and land had been plundered and destroyed. Even worse, she remained traumatized, convinced that conflict could resurface and wary that new atrocities may arise.



**A cassava plant sprouts a few days after planting in Lukwangulo, DRC**

The USAID-funded Tanganyika Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation Project (TCMR) is working to ensure that families like Ms. Mungela's can recover from violence and never experience it again. The project is reducing the incidence of conflict between the Batwa and Bantu by building collaboration between them, strengthening structures for conflict mitigation and resolution, and improving local livelihoods and social cohesion. For instance, the project established a network of 980 volunteers composed of 400 Women Organizing Resources Together (WORTH) <sup>1</sup> group members, 400 Youth Association members, 180 Peace Committee members, and set up 10 hubs where early signs of conflict are detected and disseminated. Peace champions manage ten listening centers to address intercommunity issues and prevent conflicts from occurring.



**Ms. Mungela (center) with WORTH group members and TCMR staff**

Ms. Elise decided to become a TCMR volunteer and promotes messages and community activities to build peace. Ms. Elise, who is Batwa, also joined a WORTH group, composed of both Batwa and Bantu members, which is helping her to save money, access internal low-interest loans, and build skills in literacy, numeracy, and entrepreneurship. She has also participated in trainings on conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution, trauma healing, and agricultural techniques.

Ms. Elise now takes part in group farming with an inter-ethnic team. Based on her experience, she observed that working in a group reduces frustrations between ethnicities and helps to rebuild local livelihoods. She mentioned that members have also reported that their perceptions of each other have started to turn positive, reducing the instances of conflict. The team has learned to respect each other, solve problems, and work together to effectively diffuse tension within the group and in the community at large. Today, Ms. Mungela believes that her commitment to agriculture will allow her to recover and rebuild to ensure a better future for her children.

Community participation of Batwa and Bantu in joint activities has played a major role in reducing interethnic conflicts. To date, thanks to the assistance of more than 980 volunteers, over 60,000 people have been reached through interethnic dialogues and awareness raising campaigns. Ten peace zones were established with regular meetings that detected and avoided over 100 potential conflicts. Via WORTH groups and Youth Associations composed of both Batwa and Bantu, the project has promoted

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pactworld.org/worth-program>

social cohesion by addressing economic insecurity through 32 income-generating activities, including groups focused on livestock management, sustainable agricultural practices, corn/cassava flour production, and fisheries.



***“I am satisfied with TCMR’s activities, which give me the courage to work hard and believe in a better future” - Ms. Mungela Elise***