

Contribution of Survival Mechanisms and Strategies Relating to the Promotion of Socio-Economic Household Development (Case of Volunteer Leavers of Kolwezi, 2014-2020)

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Abstract: *The objective of the study is to assess and analyze the sources of income, coming from different mechanisms and survival strategies developed by the Volunteer Leavers of Gécamines Kolwezi and their families. This study highlighted the mixed approach (Quanti-Quali). Exploratory analyzes reveal the following results: 93% of income is generated by newly hired ex-agents, of which (59%) comes from their monthly remuneration (salaries), (34%) comes from rental income and other activities, versus (7%) income from assistance received. However, for voluntary departures who do not have a remunerative job, 77% of their income comes from rental income and other activities against 23% from the assistance received. The provisional budget of the average envisaged expenses of food, the education of the children, the use of medical care and housing, is around 60% against 40% for all other expenses. The gap still persists between the estimated budget for the expenses of Volunteer Leavers, and their achievable income for all socio-professional categories. The results of qualitative interviews confirm that survival strategies contribute to the development of households of different Volunteer Leavers and their families in different sectors of social life, in particular food, children's education, medical care., housing as well as in areas related to other needs. In conclusion, the survival mechanisms and strategies developed by the Volunteer Leavers and their families effectively contribute to the development of their social life at different levels.*

Keywords: Mechanisms-Survival strategies-Volunteers-Blossoming-households

1. Introduction

Market activities, qualified today of informal activities existed in the XXth century. However, the study of the informal sector and its introduction into the field of development economics are relatively recent (1972) (1).

The informal sector plays a positive role in the sense that it is part of household survival strategies in times of crisis (2). It is perceived as a parasitic sector (3) insofar as it exerts unfair competition towards companies in the formal sector. Thus these companies complain about their expansion (4, 5) or as an extra-legal sector whose development reveals the excessive and unsuitable nature of public regulation (6).

In developing countries, more than 50% of the working population is interested in the informal economy (7). Before the invention of the concept of the informal sector by the ILO in 1972, economists and sociologists used the concepts of "marginality", "underemployment" and "urban poverty" to qualify small market activities (8).

The economic crisis that began in the early 1980s significantly reduced the financial capacities of States and with serious repercussions on families. More than ever, the expression "survival strategies" takes on its full meaning in African societies today (9). This economic crisis, as well as the structural adjustment policies that followed, led to a remarkable development of informal activities. This has given rise to new economic behavior among agents (households and businesses).

Since these years, many individuals who find themselves cornered, do not stop developing strategies to survive. This

situation can be observed regardless of the level of economic development displayed by the country.

The notion of survival strategy associated with the most disadvantaged population represents the case of a concept that arose out of research efforts (4). It found so much acceptance in Latin American literature and investigation and eventually became a priority research topic (4). Thus, survival strategies are a set of material and immaterial means and actions, continuously combined according to the environment and its constraints, and this in order to stay alive physically, morally, economically and socially, within its family and group (9).

Family strategies for economic survival are manifested mainly by the intensification of the exercise of economic functions for all or most of the members that make up the family units (4).

The deterioration of the economic situation has generated survival strategies at the household level (9). By way of illustration, the refugees and their group are intimately linked and live in symbiosis. While improving the living conditions of their families, they participate, directly or indirectly, through their initiatives, in the existence of their community. (4).

The diversity of survival strategies is mainly linked to the socio-economic conditions of households. These survival practices present some major characteristics which show that they are not neutral in terms of development. This is why reflection must be focused on the approach to socio-economic development inspired by individual survival strategies. The vulnerability of households or individuals is a complementary approach that could contribute to the revision of poverty reduction strategies (10).

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In the DRC, due to operating and management constraints which were faced with an unfavorable international environment, Gécamines entered a zone of severe turbulence in 1986, with the consequences of a vertiginous drop in its production, starting from 476, 000 tonnes in 1986 to only 20, 000 tons in 2002. It was confronted with a significant and unsustainable debt with outstanding amounts estimated at 1.6 billion USD. This situation put the finances of the company in jeopardy and put it in a state of insolvency, in particular of the salaries of the employees. To stop the bleeding, the company was forced to take internal adjustment measures, in particular to reduce the number of its staff, through a voluntary departure incentive program, a program piloted by the Bureau. Central Coordination (BCECO) and financially supported by the World Bank. In the field, this program was piloted by the Katanga Reintegration Unit, URK in acronym. After an intense information and awareness campaign, 10, 654 employees agreed to leave in 2003, receiving voluntary severance payments in the three mining sites and some benefited from social reintegration activities.

This operation, called "Voluntary Departure", concerned a population of nearly 45% for agents who had completed 25 years of service, against 55% still in service.

The ex-agents of the GCM, called in the new jargon "Volunteer Leavers or ODVs" and those who continue to work, lived in a "system of total paternalism", a system established by the employer since 1910. Thus, nearly 16 years, after the operation called "Voluntary Departure",

- What are the different strategies developed by the Volunteer Leavers in this new configuration where they must take charge of themselves, in the face of the old system of paternalism?
- What about these strategies in terms of contribution ?

These are the few concerns that have been the subject of reflection and research.

2. Materials and Methods

The mixed approach, known as Quanti-Quali, was chosen for this study. It put upstream the sampling frame of 3318 (population of ex-Gécamines agents from Kolwezi) who subscribed to the operation called "Voluntary Departure Operation ", ODV in acronym, and also called Volunteer Starters.

A stratified random sample with respect to the different socio-professional categories of 448 (nearly 13.5% of the sampling frame) was drawn at random.

Thus, a questionnaire highlighting the variables of different sources of activities developed by the Volunteer Leavers was administered to the respondents. After the operations of encoding and checking the data encoded on the basis of completeness and consistency tests, processing and statistical analysis were carried out on a staff of 425 voluntary starters using SPSS software.

To further corroborate the statistical results, and this, for a good and better interpretation, the choice was made in the second place on the qualitative approach.

The qualitative data collection favored ethnographic analysis which highlighted the observed data as well as the series of individual and collective interviews (focus group). On the basis of saturation and deification criteria, 30 individual interviews and 8 collective interviews (focus group) were carried out).

3. Results

3.1 Results of the quantitative approach relating to the different sources generating revenues

Table I: Distribution according to Protection and Social Security, Job search needs, New employment, other Survival activities and debts of Volunteer Leavers to third parties

Social determinants of health	Variable modalities	Workforce (n = 425)	Percentages (%)
Social protection and security	Not eligible for retirement	302	71.5
	Eligible not retired	68	16.0
	Eligible retired	55	12.5
Need or looking for a job for voluntary starters	No	265	62.4
	Yes	160	37.6
New job for volunteer starters	No	307	72.2
	Yes	118	27.8
Other survival activities	No	22	5.2
	Yes	403	94.8
Debts of voluntary departures to third parties	No	2	0.5
	Yes	423	99.5

Source: Ourselves

The results show that the majority of Volunteer Leavers (72%) tend towards retirement age. And more than a third of Volunteer Leavers (38%) expressed the need for a new job, which is why they are looking for a new job.

Almost 28% of Volunteer Leavers have found employment. Despite the different survival strategies developed by the Volunteer Starters, the majority of the Volunteer Starters (95%) have reintegrated into rural activities (survival activities).

Finally, the results show that almost every Voluntary Leaver has incurred a debt to a third party.

Table II: Breakdown according to Social Support (potential support from voluntary departures-Assistance received by Voluntary Leavers and Assistance provided by voluntary departures)

Social determinants of health	Variable terms	Effective (n = 425)	Percentages (%)
Potential support from voluntary starters (last year or this year)	No	103	24.2
	Yes	322	75.8
Aid received by voluntary starters from last year or this year	No	179	42.1
	Yes	246	57.9
Help provided by voluntary starters?	No	289	68.0
	Yes	136	32.0

Source: Ourselves

Three quarters (76%) of Volunteer Leavers have developed the ability to rely on family, neighbors, friends,

acquaintances and others for help in the areas of employment (work), housing, financial and material aid as well as emotional and moral aid.

However, more than half (58%) are receiving help in one of the areas mentioned above. Despite the situation that Volunteer Starters are going through, nearly 32% of Volunteer Starters are providing assistance to third parties.

Table III: Distribution of income (salaries, rental income, other activities) and aid received according to categories socio-professional

Income (USD)	MOE	Mastery	Framework	Total	Proportion
Wages	450	750	1200	2400	59%
Rental income	50	200	350	600	15%
Other activities	100	250	400	750	19%
Help received	50	100	150	300	7%
Total	650	1300	2100	4050	100%
Proportion	16%	32%	52%	100%	

Source: Ourselves

Out of 93% of the income from Volunteer Leavers, of which 59% of the income comes from the salary (remuneration of the new job) and 34% comes from the rental income generated by other sources of activities against 7% of the income from the assistance received.

Table IV: Breakdown of different income (rental income, other activities) and aid received according to socio-professional categories

Income (USD)	MOE	Mastery	Framework	Total	Proportion
Rental income and other activities	250	300	450	1000	77%
Help received	100	100	100	300	23%
Total	350	400	550	1300	100%
Proportion	27%	31%	42%	100%	100%

Source: Ourselves

77% of the income for almost all socio-professional categories of Volunteer Leavers comes from other activities (small businesses, transport, etc.) against 23% which comes from the aid received;

The average income of the socio-professional category of the Executive class is worth 1.4 times the average income of Masters and 1.6 times the average income of MOE. While the average master's income is 1.1 times more than the average MOE's income.

Table V: Breakdown of the provisional budget for desirable expenses by voluntary departures according to their categories socio-professional

P Desirable expenditure line items (USD)	MOE	Mastery	Framework	Total	Proportion
Food	300	500	700	500	27.7%
Lodging	80	150	350	580	10.7%
Water	10	20	25	55	1.0%
Electricity	10	25	30	65	1.2%
Non-electrical energies	25	10	10	45	0.01%
Use of health care	150	200	250	600	11.1%
Hygiene and toilet	50	100	150	300	6%

Instruction	150	210	200	560	10.3%
Transport	120	150	150	420	7.8%
Communication	100	120	150	370	6.8%
Clothing	100	150	150	400	7.4%
Culture and leisure	50	50	50	150	2.8%
Miscellaneous and other expenses	100	120	150	370	6.8%
Total	1245	1805	2365	5415	100%
Proportion	23%	33.3%	43.7%	100%	

Source: Ourselves

In general, the 4 budget items of expenditure, in particular food, recourse to health care, housing and schooling, approach 60% of the desirable average expenditure of the household basket against 40% for other items. remaining budget.

The estimated average budget estimate of desirable expenses of an officer of the Executive class is 1.3 times more than the average budget of expenses of a Supervisor and 1.9 times (almost 2 times) more than 'an agent of the MOE class and finally the average expenditure budget of a Mastery agent is 1.4 times more than the average expenditure budget of an MOE agent.

Table VI: Comparison of Average Income (USD) of Volunteer Leavers with Employment and Other Sources (Rental Income-Other Income and Aid Received) and Those in Relation to Other Income and Aid Received)

Category socio-professional	Rental income for employers (1)	Other income (2)	Deviations Income (1)-(2)	Income report (1) / (2)
MOE	650	350	300	1.9
Mastery	1300	400	900	3.3
Framework	2100	550	1550	3.8
Total	4050	1300	2750	3.1

Source: Ourselves

The average income reports respectively of an Executive Officer, a Supervisor and an MOE agent coming on the one hand, from the remuneration of a new job, rental income, other activities and the aid received, and on the other hand, the income from other activities and the aid received, vary in the range from 1.8 times more to 3.8 times more.

Table VII: Comparison between the average expenses desired in USD by the Volunteer Leavers and the achievable average income (findings) for the Volunteer Leavers who have found a new job and have rental income

Categories socio-professional	Desired expenses	Realizable income	Absolute deviations	Relative deviations
MOE	1245	650	595	48%
Mastery	1805	1300	505	28%
Framework	2365	2100	265	11%
Total	5385	4050	1335	25%

Source: Ourselves

There is an average of about 25% relative variance between the desirable expenses (proposed) by Volunteer Leavers who have a new job and who receive rental income from the estimated probable income. With a difference of 48% in the MOE category.

Table VIII: Comparison Between Desired Average Expenses (In USD) and Probable Average Income (Findings) of Volunteer Leavers who have not found or are looking for a new job and who have average rental income

Category	Desirable Expenses	Likely Income	Absolute deviations	Relative Deviations
MOE	1245	350	895	72%
Mastery	1805	400	1405	78%
Framework	2365	550	1805	76%
Total	5415	1300	4105	76%

Source: Ourselves

Generally speaking, there is on average around 76% relative gap between the desirable expenses (proposed) by Volunteer Leavers and the income of Volunteer Leavers who have no main income from the new job and rental income. Vulnerability is the same for all socio-professional categories. Volunteer starters.

Table IX: Distribution of variables relating to the education of the children of Volunteer Leavers

Social Determinants of Health Variables	Variable modalities	Workforce (N = 425)	Percentages (%)
School situation of the children of the Volunteer Leavers	Schooled	369	87
	Out of school	56	13
Children's education payments	Ourselves	310	73
	Talk about family members	115	27
Problems with payment of school fees	No	127	30
	Yes	298	70
School application of the children of the Volunteer Leavers	Good	221	52
	Bad	204	48

Source: Ourselves

The difference is statistically insignificant between: " the school situation of the children of Volunteer Starters and the different socio-professional categories of Volunteer Starters ". Therefore, there is no link between these two variables.

Results of the Qualitative Approach (Focus Groups)

Contexts and perceptions of survival strategies

Volunteer Starters and their families recognize that the survival strategies developed by individuals depend on the environment in which they operate. In a context of poverty, families are looking for alternatives and survival strategies, the consequences of which are, among other things, the participation of everyone in the search for means of subsistence. So the economic dimension of survival strategies is manifested mainly by the multiplication of productive functions in the family.

Survival strategies as a new form of development indicator

Qualitative interviews reveal that voluntary departures and their families recognize survival strategies as sources of income. They contribute to the development not only of food, moreover, they contribute as well as badly, to the schooling of their children, to the assumption of responsibility for medical care and allow them to face certain constraints of the life., payment of related costs

(water, electricity, clothing and other needs). Not all being easy, they pinpointed that the difficulties still persist, however, they no longer have a choice.

4. Discussions

The results show that the informal incomes of Volunteer Leavers vary between 34% to 77%, for those who have found a new job and also for those who are unemployed and who live only on informal incomes. These results do not differ from the results below when considering the extremes of 43.2% in West Asia) and 76% in sub-Saharan Africa.

Also since the 1980s, the share of informal employment in total non-agricultural employment has grown remarkably in virtually all regions of the developing world. Depending on the region, this represents half or even three quarters of total non-agricultural employment (47.3% in North Africa; 76% in sub-Saharan Africa; 54.2% in Latin America, 69.9% in South and Southeast Asia and 43.2% in West Asia).

Regarding schooling, the results show that the schooling rate of the children of Volunteer Leavers is 87% against 13%. And more than 70% of the Volunteer Leavers who cover the school fees of their children, find it difficult to pay school fees. By comparing these results with the results below for the Province of Kinshasa, it is appropriate to assert the hypothesis according to which the income from the informal sectors would not be essentially subsistence income, moreover, contribute to the the education of children, and also to other sectors of social life.

In the province of Kinshasa, the school attendance rate and the literacy rate are the highest in the DRC. The net primary school enrollment rate is 74.8% in Kinshasa against 55.0% for the DRC. The literacy rate is 67.6% in Kinshasa against 43.2% in the DRC (11).

The results of the qualitative interviews confirm the effectiveness of the implementation of survival strategies developed by the Polar Leavers as mechanisms contributing to the well-being of the households of the Volunteer Leavers.

According to NKUKU KHONDE. C and RÉMON million explained that in a society where the population is predominantly young and where the labor market has gradually disappeared, the standard of living of the population is also declining, the social charges of the adult population become more and more important and thus other survival strategies developed in them (12).

In her Thesis, "Survival Strategies for Palestinians in the BOURJ EL BARAJNEH Camp in Lebanon, " reveals that the women multiplied survival strategies, among other things, they planned and organized themselves. They stood in solidarity with their family and their community and invested themselves in education (13) and, in times of war, despite being in a living environment that is difficult: polluted, overcrowded, precarious, unstable, violent and discriminatory and, in times of war, some assisted combatants and spoke out against aggression.

In addition, the ability of women to influence household decisions has a positive impact on children's schooling (14).

JUAN F. SCHOEMAKER, in his thesis tried to show that the high fertility which characterizes the marginal urban populations of the Third World can be explained by the hypothesis of survival strategies. According to this hypothesis, the reproductive behavior of marginal women is the result of a conscious survival strategy which aims to increase the size of the family so that the potential sources of help and support are thus more numerous.

KOKO SIAKA KONE, in his study: "Poverty, gender and household survival strategies in Côte d'Ivoire", shows that the economic crisis, structural adjustment and poverty that the Ivorian populations have been confronted with during the last two decades have led to new strategies tending to cope not only with the erosion of the social fabric but also with growing difficulties at a more individual level. Then, they prioritize their needs, and adjust their expenses accordingly.

AMINATA SALL, in her study "Strategies and initiatives of women in the microfinance sector. The case of Senega", explained that the informal economy in the third world and particularly the economic activities of women, through microcredit programs, have played a decisive role in ensuring the survival of families following the fragility and difficulties of our states: waves of layoffs, business closures and state budget cuts in the years 1980-1990.

5. Conclusion

The results of the quantitative approach almost generally reveal that the contribution of survival strategies developed by voluntary departures contributes as best they can to the development of well-being in various sectors (children's education, medical care, food and other related sectors).

The same is true of the conclusions drawn from the interviews (life stories and focus groups).

Moreover, the quantitative approach does not capture the characteristics, behaviors and logics implemented in the informal sector. However, the informal sector being deeply heterogeneous and covering a diversity of fields, the results of the qualitative approach almost manage to show that the more or less certain path in an economy where the formal does not validly fulfill its functions, households resort to the different survival strategies that allow them to face the different constraints of life, in particular: food, children's schooling, medical care and other sectors of life. Not all being easy, it is necessary that only sacrifices remain the only means for the sustainability of these survival mechanisms and strategies.

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