

Research Training for the SHARP Project in DRC and Burundi

As part of the [Solutions for Supporting Healthy Adolescents and Rights Protection Project \(SHARP\)](#), our Research Team, Janneke and Gaby, visited our project partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi for a workshop on research and data collection on sexual and reproductive health commodities. Read more about their experience below.

Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

We started our trip on the 25th of October, with a flight to Kinshasa, DRC. For us, this trip was the first introduction to Kinshasa, a city that left us impressed and amazed by its bustle and vibrance.

Over the course of three days, a group of participants from three provinces were trained on all aspects of data collection for a study that will investigate the availability, affordability, and stock-outs of over 50 essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) commodities, and the accessibility of adolescent-friendly SRH services in the country. We were warmly welcomed by our partner [CAFECO](#) and the training participants, who included members from CAFECO, civil society, the reproductive health authorities (PNSA), as well as healthcare providers.

Participants were well informed about the SRH situation in the country, and there was a mutual understanding of the relevance and importance of the research data to inform advocacy and policy change with the ultimate aim of improving the availability and accessibility of SRH commodities for adolescents, in particular for girls. The sessions alternated between instructive, technical presentations and practical sessions in which data collectors practised using the tools featured in the mobile app, KoboCollect.

On the third day, we visited two health facilities in Kinshasa, where the group was able to practice and use the survey tools in real-life settings. It was great to feel the motivated spirit of the group, who proved to be well-versed in how to use the mobile app and how to properly collect the data. The whole exercise ran very smoothly.

Within the three days, participants had familiarised themselves with all SRH commodities surveyed and their uses; understood all aspects of the KoboCollect data collection app, including how to complete and send forms; and had practised completing the research surveys during exercises and a field test. We are very thankful for the engaging and productive days as well as the hospitality and trust of everyone we've met. Data collection is officially commencing this week - we cannot wait to see the research data coming in!

Bujumbura, Burundi

Our trip continued to Burundi, where we were excited to meet up with our partners [Alliance Burundaise contre le SIDA](#) (ABS) and [Twitezimbere](#). Together, we prepared for a technical committee meeting that would happen over the next few days. In Burundi, such a meeting is required to receive clearance from the authorities for research, which will be the same study we're conducting in DRC and the four other SHARP project countries in the Great Lakes Region. The day before the meeting, we met up with the Committee's secretary from the National Reproductive Health Programme (*Politique Nationale de la Santé de la Reproduction* [PNSR]) to make final arrangements.

During a two-day meeting, the technical committee, which included members of PNSR, the NGO PSI, the Burundi Central purchasing department of pharmaceutical products (CAMEBU) and the *Direction du Système National d'Information Sanitaire* (DSNIS), conducted a detailed review of the study protocol and tools. Together with our partners, we presented the study, answered questions from the committee and addressed concerns. With the help of the committee, the protocol was adjusted to match the Burundian context.

Compared to our experience in Kinshasa, Bujumbura was a remarkably calm and relaxed city, with notably lower humidity and more wind, but similarly, the people we had the chance to work with were open-hearted and warm. Moving forward, we will work with ABS and Twitezimbere to prepare for the data collector training, after which the data collection can begin.

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