



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



# Endline Evaluation of the Living Peace Project (LPP)

**Executive Summary**  
**January 2023**



## LPP context and objectives

Founded upon preliminary psycho-social field research, pilot programming, and outcome evaluations between 2013 and 2015, the current Living Peace Project (LPP) implemented in Eastern DRC is funded by the Kingdom of The Netherlands as part of the Regional Great Lakes Program. It spans two phases from 2016 to 2019 and 2019 to 2022, both of which are covered by an impact evaluation led by ADE (Belgium) and RISD (DRC).

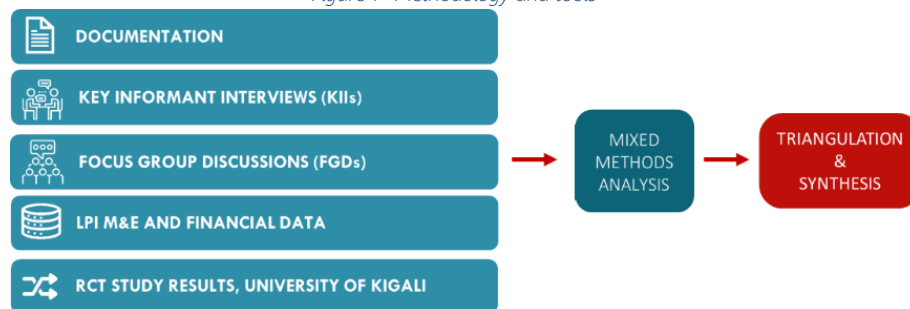
The intended changes, collectively referred to as ‘positive masculinity’, aim to take root first at the individual level through a voluntary three-month, 15-session psychosocial group training. The final aim is to transform individual male behaviors, to reduce all forms of violence against women, men, and children, and to extend the benefits of the program to wives and immediate family members, followed by neighbors and community members, finally impacting surrounding social institutions. LPI considers its activities as a means to ultimately promote peace and stability in the three regions considered, namely North and South Kivu and Ituri.

The main element of novelty of the LPP with respect to other SGBV prevention programs in the area, is the psychosocial clinical approach which targets men as principal participants. The underlying Theory of Change posited by LPI assumes that individual behaviors were previously informed and influenced by groups, peers and institutions according to cultural and societal norms. LPI acts by interrupting these influences, fostering self-analysis, and helping individuals to change. They emerge from training with different attitudes, new models of behavior, and healthier coping mechanisms.

## Methodology

The evaluation approach follows the six OECD standard evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Figure 1- Methodology and tools



The methodology followed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data sources (Figure 1). The different sources of information were triangulated to increase reliability and credibility of the answers to the EQs, and yields evidence-based findings.

The quantitative tools allowed for the quantification of the magnitude of the project's effects on various outcomes as well as the sustainable effects at the participant level for certain indicators. The quantitative information is extracted from data collected by LPI and from the preliminary findings of a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) conducted by the University of Kigali.

Qualitative tools allowed for an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms underlying the (non-) changes at each program level, and to inform the dynamics and catalysts of change and to nuance, complement, and triangulate quantitative information documented elsewhere (RCT preliminary results, LPI reports, independent studies, etc.). The qualitative information was collected over a three-week field visit in Eastern DRC, mostly through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with participants, and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with relevant stakeholders.

## Conclusions

### Coherence and relevance:

Using a **bottom-up, group therapy approach**, LPP addresses the source of problems the project aims to solve. This is **based on the idea** that transformation of individual behaviour can also serve as a driver of change at the other levels of family, community, and society. Personal transformation requires quality interpersonal relationships to help recognize and resolve trauma, and to adopt tolerance and dialog over physical or psychological harm. By targeting **men as the primary vectors of change**, LPI addresses numerous expert recommendations to not focus exclusively on women when working to prevent SGBV. Moreover, the participation of **security sector institutions** reflects the crucial need to educate men in uniform to decrease their use of violence against women and civilians, as recommended in previous studies on SGBV interventions in conflict contexts.

LPI participants and facilitators are identified in **partnership with local community leaders** and security sector officials, who are trained to identify those most likely to benefit from psychosocial group therapy. LPI encourages participation by emphasizing **confidentiality and volunteerism**, and its training modules are targeted to all different categories of participants, including non-violent men. The LPP also targets women's needs by including participants' wives in several group sessions, and by setting up **VSLA** in selected localities, contributing to the sustainability of project impacts.

### Effectiveness and impact:

At the individual level, evidence shows a **reduction in mental health problems** and the abuse of substances, an **improvement of positive coping skills** and confidence in others, **stronger social cohesion**, and a restored sense of belongingness among participating men. At family level, achievements include **more gender equitable behaviors, improved communication in relationships**, and a **reduction of violence against women and children**. In the community, the team detected **increased awareness related to gender equality**, positive masculinity, and condemnation of SGBV, positive effects on security personnel regarding **SGBV prevention**, and improved relations with the civilian population. In local society, CSOs, health services, and public institutions and security sector institutions were involved, and LPI disseminated its activities through different media. Finally, **VSLAs** resulted in **increased opportunities for women to generate income** and less financial conflict within the household.

Some crucial **challenges** pose obstacles to a complete realization of desired outcomes, such as macroeconomic stagnation and the extreme insecurity that hinders reintegration of ex-combatants. Moreover, there is little evidence that LPI methodology has been institutionally adopted by CSOs or by security forces, due to a lack of resources or to no appetite for structural change.

### Efficiency and sustainability:

LPP has been **implemented in a timely fashion**, despite instability and COVID-19, thanks to good communication between LPI and its partners. Available **resources are sufficient** for LPP implementation and **optimized** through voluntary involvement of community leaders and facilitators. However, the **lack of detail of expense allocations** and the nature of the LPP makes it challenging to analyze cost/benefits within the program, which is needed to determine what is most strategic in terms of value for money and ways to increase efficiency.

Whether the program's positive effects are **sustainable** over time is difficult to predict, since the living conditions and institutional culture that surround participants remain mostly unchanged. The risk of relapse, mostly due to instability and poverty, needs to be addressed with improved **monitoring and follow-up**.

While LPI is active in training partner organizations, CSO, and institutions on positive masculinity, **transfer and ownership** to ensure continued, sustainable work in this area remain **unlikely** for now because of little political will and continued dependence on external actors.

# Recommendations

Consortium implementing the project:	Design and implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include <b>security sector superiors</b> as participants to increase understanding of LPI and to model respect, tolerance, and positive masculinity towards women, and their own subordinates.</li> <li>2. Involve <b>wives</b> in more group therapy sessions to maximize impact at the family level and help sustain positive change over time.</li> <li>3. Strengthen <b>VSLA</b> component through increased collaboration with other organizations to increase women's autonomy and gender equality, and to sustain the positive outcomes of LPI therapy for husbands.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Include <b>violent or unschooled youth</b>, especially where armed groups are active.</li> <li>5. For participants seeking <b>facilitator training</b>, make this accessible to them, regardless of whether they serve formally as facilitators.</li> <li>6. Develop and add a training session on <b>couples planning</b> and problem solving in the household, to increase productive interactions in the couple.</li> <li>7. Intensify <b>exchanges and collaboration with other program implementers</b> working on the same topics.</li> </ol>
	Institutionalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Elaborate a clear <b>institutionalization strategy</b> in collaboration with the PNC, FARDC and Gender and Family Ministry. Including security sector leaders in therapy sessions could also improve the chances of national ownership and foster longer-term impact.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Promote <b>impactful and successful public communications</b> by LPI stakeholders and institutional partners to help correct defeatist narratives among Congolese who are conditioned to expecting solutions to come from outside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect <b>data on the well-being of spouses</b>.</li> <li>• Track which <b>recommendations</b> are made by the M&amp;E learning exercises, and how these are followed-up by the program.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
	M&E framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Expand the current M&amp;E focus on inputs and outputs to the broader scope of <b>MERL</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a <b>caseload management and support strategy</b>.</li> <li>• Formalize <b>security networks</b> and <b>monitor participants</b> to capture impact over time and understand factors for both success and failure.</li> <li>• Better <b>define cause/effect relationships</b> between trainings, therapy, and life changes among direct and indirect participants.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Develop <b>objective measures</b> of impact on SGBV by tracking reported cases in provincial health services and partners receiving such cases. Improve the <b>categorization of costs</b> to increase efficiency.</li> <li>12. Build up a <b>cost-benefit analysis</b> to improve LPI's efficiency and its value for money.</li> </ol>
Embassy / Great Lakes Regional Program:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Continue <b>collaborating with and supporting government/ministerial counterparts</b> in the development and diffusion of positive masculinity.</li> <li>14. <b>Strengthen the capacities of government actors before the project is closed</b> to increase understanding and capacity to pursue positive masculinity as applied learning and behavioural change.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. <b>Emphasize NGO and CSO partner development as an explicit goal of LPI programming</b> for the next phase, with clear objectives and metrics of progress.</li> </ol>	
Stakeholders in the project area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Consider following a <b>bottom-up approach</b>, as it has proven valuable in a context of ineffective public institutions, widespread corruption, and impunity.</li> <li>17. Target <b>participants who are causing the problems</b> the project wants to eradicate, instead of focusing only on those subject to those problems. Changing the causes and origins of interpersonal violence can be done without stigmatizing program participants.</li> <li>18. Recognize that <b>prior engagement of community leaders</b> is a necessary condition of success in terms of local ownership, diffusion of impact and visibility, and sustainability of impact over time.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Follow a <b>voluntary approach</b> to ensure individual commitment and internal cohesion among peers, which in turn sets the stage for the voluntary formation of mutual support groups post-training.</li> <li>20. Support target participants with <b>multidimensional support</b> to achieve the desired impacts at different levels of interest and to ensure sustainability of results over time.</li> </ol>	