

BATELA MWANA



**A look back at five years of capacity building in the area of child protection
for police, justice and social services personnel**

Democratic Republic of the Congo / 2015-2020



**INTERNATIONAL BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**



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A large-scale initiative to make lasting change



In 2015, the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) received support from Global Affairs Canada to launch a five-year capacity building project benefitting personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's child protection system. This news was met with joy as well as a certain degree of apprehension, because the task ahead seemed daunting: how to instigate change in a country so vast and complex, where trust between children and the institutions charged with their protection is sometimes non-existent?

However, the IBCR was confident that its approach and technical expertise could make a difference, so we proposed this project to improve living conditions for Congolese people and children. Through our organisation's experience in the country and the feedback received from our partners during the preliminary consultations, we discovered the incredible strength of the Congolese people, who aspired to transform their society and simply needed support to achieve this goal.

The project's added value therefore lies in providing the professionals involved in child protection with the tools and training they need to adapt their practice to the needs and specific characteristics of children. It became clear that the key was to teach technical skills that address the challenges specific to each sector while taking into account constraints that might slow down change.

Protecting children is not simply a matter of providing financial support. A police officer can change the trajectory of a child's life by using appropriate language that conveys reassurance and humanises the intervention. A magistrate can instil a deep sense of justice when a child understands the decisions rendered about them and the willingness of institutions to act in their best interest. A social worker can reduce a child's risk of re-offending by skilfully and significantly involving the child in the analysis of the options available to them. A child victim of abuse who has had respectful interactions with institutions may later encourage their peers to report cases of violence. Finally, those who violate the rights of minors are less likely to enjoy impunity when children know child-friendly services are available to them.

By actively listening to our partners and valuing their input, we've learned a great deal about the issues surrounding child protection interventions. Through our close collaboration with partners, we've successfully developed and delivered training and tools that are tailored to specific professions and their everyday practice.

The developments we've observed to date, after five years of active work in the country, have substantially exceeded our expectations. We are particularly proud to see that new police recruits are now offered a completely redesigned child protection course, which has been perma-

nently added to their training programme; that the Ministries of Social Affairs, Interior and Justice have launched initiatives throughout the country to raise awareness of the revised and more child-friendly procedures and intervention protocols; that the redesigned working tools have been circulated among social workers and judges across the country; and that practices are changing in a way that is beneficial to children in contact with the law.

The IBCR is also proud of its partnership with Congolese institutions. Without this collaboration, it would not have been possible to achieve so much and to create lasting

change in the professional practices of the targeted groups. As we close this project, which was one of our first multi-year initiatives, we can only hope that the observed changes will be lasting and inspire other countries in the region to take similar action.

Guillaume Landry
Executive Director of the IBCR



The Government of Canada's objective in funding the *Batela Mwana* child protection capacity-building project for police, justice and social workers (implemented by the International Bureau for Children's Rights, or IBCR) was to improve the child protection system in the DRC. This was directly aligned with one of the three priority areas of intervention in our cooperation programme with the DRC: child protection.

In Canada's view, Congolese children, like children in other countries, must enjoy a safe and secure environment and receive effective protection if they are victims of violence or are called to interact with the justice system, police forces or social services centres.

This five-year project enabled the professionals responsible for child protection within the justice system, police forces or social services centres (namely magistrates, police officers and social workers) to develop new skills and practices applicable to the field of child protection. This is an important step in the process of ensuring that the rights of Congolese children and youth are truly respected.

I would like to congratulate all those who helped make the project a success, including the political authorities and the staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs for their

coordination work (line ministry), to the judicial authorities (Ministry of Justice and High Council of the Judiciary), to the Congolese national police force, to the IBCR team and to our main collaborators for their dedication to this project and to the welfare of Congolese children and the Congolese people in general.

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that the government agencies and organisations involved in the project will ensure that the project's results are sustained over time within the country's juvenile protection system. Concretely, this will involve continuing to offer basic and ongoing training and sharing best practices for protecting children's rights.

Canada is very proud of the *Batela Mwana* project and its results. I would like to extend my warmest wishes for a very bright future to the girls and boys of the Democratic Republic of the Congo!

Nicolas Simard
Canadian Ambassador
in the Democratic Republic
of the Congo



The child-protection capacity building project for police officers, justice personnel and social workers, generically known as *Batela Mwana*, is the result of close collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior and Security. It was implemented by the International Bureau for Children's Rights with financial support from the Government of Canada. By employing a participatory approach, the project successfully mobilised a large number of stakeholders, including actors from the child protection system, and united them to promote children's rights.

The project has resulted in appreciable gains. We've acquired skills that will enable us to reinvent the way we work with children and modify our behaviour as agents of change in our professional circles and communities. The professionals who participated in the programme are now better equipped to interact with and assist children in contact with basic social services, such as the police, justice system and social welfare system. This laudable project addressed child protection, which remains a major development issue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Children are exposed to numerous risks and situations in which they are vulnerable. The challenges are many and immense. It will take time. Child protection

remains a key issue that must be addressed in major strategic discussions leading to a national child protection policy.

This progress report details what has been done and what has been achieved to enable us, as the Congolese government, to ensure that the lessons learned are effective and lasting. To this effect, there remains a long road ahead of us, with much to be done in the area of child protection.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and thanks, on behalf of the Congolese government, to the entire project team and various stakeholders for their hard work.

We also wish to express our deepest gratitude to the Government of Canada, which provided funding for this project through Global Affairs Canada, and to everyone who participated for their commitment and contributions to the initiative.

Rose Boyata Mokandju
Minister of Social Affairs



BATELA MWANA

A far-reaching
project to improve
protection for
Congolese children

- Summary and
key achievements

SINCE 2015

15,045
professionals, including
1,884 women
(12%)

were given information, tools and training on children's rights and best practices in child protection

85%
of women professionals
and **73%**
of men professionals

stated that they were more capable of integrating children's rights into their work as a result of the project's activities

30 to 90 hours
of coursework on
children's rights

were permanently added to the professional training programmes of the police, social services and justice sectors

124 people
including **26 women**

were trained to teach the courses created through the project in the various affiliated learning establishments



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— Taking into account the best interests of Congolese children

The mission of the International Bureau for Children's Rights (hereafter IBCR or the Bureau) is to contribute to long-term structural changes that support children's rights. To achieve this goal, we choose to work jointly with partners in the field. Since 2015, we have been working closely with child protection institutions and organisations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to provide training and tools to police officers, justice personnel and social services workers. Through this project, the IBCR hopes to position the best interests of the child as a key factor in all decisions affecting children interacting with the police, legal system or social services.

Five years later, the results are apparent and the various project stakeholders are filled with enthusiasm, hope and pride.

— Building core competencies for professionals who interact with children

The *Batela Mwana* project rests on two pillars: **standardising practices** in the targeted sectors by developing special tools, and **providing training to student practitioners and professionals** already in the workforce on children's rights and child-friendly practices. Documents and associated tools — such as software programs, data collection tools, etc. — were developed and/or updated to clarify and standardise child protection roles, procedures and best practices for various professional bodies within the police, justice and social services sectors. In addition, new course curricula were created in collaboration with the IBCR and are gradually being rolled out in the various sector-specific training centres. These two main action areas of the IBCR's work in the DRC have led to improved interventions with children.

Substantial progress has been made in creating a safer and more child-friendly environment for Congolese children thanks to the willingness, conviction and involvement the various project stakeholders.

"The police, judiciary and other services involved in this project should all be aiming for a single goal: to contribute to an efficient service that allows children to live in peace and have their rights respected without constraints or obstacles. That is the true meaning of development!"

-John Mugabushaka, Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Social Affairs, 2018

— 5 years later: concrete results*

Numerous changes have been noted in each of the targeted sectors as a direct result of the project:

THE RIGHTS OF MORE THAN 290,000 CHILDREN ARE BETTER PROTECTED AND RESPECTED THANKS TO THE *BATELA MWANA* PROJECT.

// IN THE POLICE FORCE //

The National Police units in charge of child protection and prevention of sexual violence (CPPSV) have gradually become "sanctuaries" for children whose rights are threatened. Improved practices within these units have led to a stronger sense of trust among children and the population as a whole. Unit members now make a point of actively listening to children and using more age-appropriate communication techniques. Their facilities have also been adapted to ensure better confidentiality and to be more suitable to gender-based concerns (separate bathrooms, etc.).

Thanks to the advocacy work conducted through this project, gender is now a key consideration within the national police force. The units in charge of child protection and prevention of sexual violence now employ more women in senior positions and make use of gender-sensitive approaches. In addition, police officers are now

more sensitive to each child's special characteristics and needs based on their gender and personal situation. Four of these units employ an officer specifically tasked with ensuring that children's health needs are met. In addition, when children are interviewed, they can now decide whether they'd prefer to speak to a man or a woman. Greater consideration is provided for their personal care needs and feminine hygiene products are now available.

80 %

of police officers systematically involve a social worker in cases involving children

96 %

of cases involving children in conflict with the law are referred to the juvenile court judge within 24 hours of apprehension

// IN THE JUSTICE SECTOR //

The approach to juvenile justice is changing. Judges are increasingly aware of children's rights and are more respectful, patient and compassionate toward children coming into contact with the law. Judges now avoid questions, comments and attitudes that may hurt, stigmatise or traumatise children. Educational measures are now favoured, with a view to reintegrate children in contact with the law into society and their communities. **Alleged juvenile offenders are now more likely to be treated in**

accordance with their rights and there is better coordination between the different actors in the judicial system.

Case confidentiality is better protected and children are more involved in decisions that affect them. Judges and social workers now take the time to let children know their options at each stage of their journey through the judicial system so that they can formulate informed



* The figures appearing in this report are from data collected in February 2020 from 266 people, 84 of whom were women, in 7 cities: Kinshasa city and province, Matadi (Kongo Central), Lubumbashi (Haut-Katanga), Mbuji-Mayi (Kasai Oriental), Goma (North Kivu), Bukavu (South Kivu), Kisangani (Tshopo)

opinions. Using the tools included the standard operating procedures developed by the IBCR (see page 31) has also improved their responsiveness and efficiency in handling cases involving children.

// IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR //

The social services assistants who participated in the project activities are now able to fully integrate child-rights approach into their practice. For example, while mediating between children and police or justice personnel during hearings and interviews, these workers ensure that the rights of minors are respected. Social services offices were set up in the seven provincial units included in the project scope. This led to a marked improvement in the way cases are handled and the way support is provided to children.

Moreover, social work support staff have actively sought to reduce inequalities between Congolese children and to deconstruct negative gender-based preconceptions. As a result, attitudes are changing and prejudices are less prevalent in comments made by workers in the targeted sectors. **Since children receive better treatment, they are now more trusting of the professionals responsible for protecting them.**

88 % of justice personnel now base their practice on the principle of non-discrimination of children, regardless of their profile

94 % of justice personnel make child participation a priority in their practice

91 social workers trained in children's rights and child protection are now assigned to the juvenile courts, and another

35 in the PEPVS units

100 % of the surveyed social work professionals said they involve children in decisions affecting them

From developing new procedures to drafting legislation

In 2019, the Ministry of Social Affairs issued a ministerial order (No. 107/CAB/MIN/AFF.SOC/2019 of June 13, 2019) to recommend that social services support workers apply child protection procedures, roles and responsibilities within CPPSV units as well as in public and private institutions where social services are provided. These recommendations, which were inspired by the standard operating procedures developed by the IBCR and its field partners, have been included in the country's legal framework. This decision is a testament to the project's contribution to society and marks a shift in the way children will be treated going forward.

This document provides an overview of the five-year project, as well as an analysis of the results.

Detailed information on the project results is included on page 34.

"Over the past years, the project activities gave child welfare professionals the opportunity develop new skills and practices in the area of child protection, which is a very important step toward the realisation of the rights of Congolese children."

-Danielle Gagnon, Head of Canadian Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2020)



Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

As the second-largest country on the African continent, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a nation of contrasts. It is home to tremendous diversity in social groups, cultures, languages (French is the official language and four national languages are also spoken), ethnicities (there are more than 400 ethnic groups) and natural resources. With more than 90 million inhabitants, of whom more than half are under 18 years of age,¹ the DRC is a young and dynamic country with a rich and eventful history.

Despite the economic effervescence of the 2000s, the country still faces major development challenges. In 2016, 77% of its population lived below the poverty line,² and the country ranked 176th out of 189 according to the Human Development Index.³ In addition, the political situation and national security have been unstable since the country gained independence in 1960. This is due to the presence of numerous armed groups. The health situation also remains precarious for a large part of the Congolese population. Ebola, measles and cholera outbreaks wreak havoc every year.

These challenges have a profound impact on children, affecting their access to education and basic services. In fact, 28.9% of school-age children, including 52.7% of girls, did not attend school in 2016.⁴ The disparities between urban and rural areas are also significant and have a major impact on children's wellbeing.

To better understand the situations faced by children in the DRC, the IBCR prepared a situational assessment at

the beginning of the project in 2016. As a result of this exercise, the IBCR identified **15 vulnerable situations affecting Congolese children** (presented on the opposite page).

Faced with these problems, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has taken steps to improve child protection. The country has ratified various international child protection instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, which is cited in the preamble to the country's 2006 Constitution. In the DRC, all ratified conventions and treaties are directly applicable in the legal system.

Child protection institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

- National Human Rights Commission
- National Council for Children
- National Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of the Interior and Security
- Ministry of Gender, Family and Children

1. Human Development Report (UNDP, 2013), p. 9 of the Situational Assessment

2. World Bank, 2016.

3. That is, on less than US\$1.90 per day (UNDP, Human Development Report, 2016).

4. Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rapport de l'enquête nationale sur les enfants et adolescents en dehors de l'école, 2013, p. 12, available (in French only) at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002214/221460f.pdf>.

15 vulnerable situations affecting children in the DRC*



CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREET

20,000 children live on the streets of Kinshasa, 44% of whom are girls



CHILDREN IN CONTACT WITH THE LAW

There are no guidelines for the oversight and enforcement of the *Child Protection Act*



CHILD ORPHANS

8.4 million orphans were identified in 2009, 91% of whom have no external support



CHILDREN NOT REGISTERED AT BIRTH

1 out of 4 children is not registered for civil status and therefore does not have legal status



CHILDREN LIVING WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AS A RESULT OF CONFLICT

68 % of land mine victims are children



TEEN MOTHERS

25.1 % of adolescent girls have a child before age 18



CHILD WORKERS

10,000 children work in the extraction of raw materials



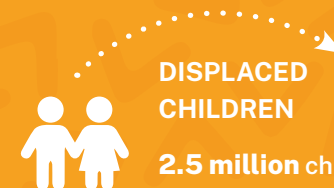
CHILD VICTIMS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Girls are affected more often than boys



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Children are trafficked for the purpose of selling goods (in fixed settings or on the road), prostitution, forced labour in mineral extraction, etc.



DISPLACED CHILDREN

2.5 million children are displaced and the majority of them do not attend school



SEXUALLY ABUSED OR EXPLOITED CHILDREN

18,795 cases of sexual violence were recorded in 2012, **82 %** of which involved rape



GENITAL MUTILATION

5 % of girls were mutilated in 2007



CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED GROUPS

30,000 children have been recruited by armed groups, which are mainly active in the east of the country



CHILD MARRIAGE

10 % of children are married by the time they are 15, and **37 %** at age 18



CHILDREN ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT

70 % of children living in the street are accused of witchcraft

* Data collected by the IBCR for its 2016 situation assessment



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In 2009, the DRC adopted the **Child Protection Law (CPL) No. 09/001**. This important legislation grants children three types of protection:

- **Social protection**, which covers rights relating to family relations, education, health, employment and the physical and moral integrity of children
- **Judicial protection**, which focuses on the education, socialisation and best interests of children
- **Criminal protection**, which calls for children to be given a social placement following an assessment of their situation and makes the state responsible for demobilising and rehabilitating children recruited into armed groups

The situational assessment enabled the IBCR to identify three key sectors of the child protection system that could benefit from its support and expertise: **the security forces (police), the social sector and the justice sector**. These three sectors are pillars of child protection in the DRC, but their day-to-day practices were dysfunctional with regard to interactions with children and the management of cases involving children. Internal and cross-sectoral collaboration was also non-existent, leaving little or no opportunity to share information and best practices.

Upon analysis of these three professional sectors, the IBCR determined that there was a lack of standardised procedures, guidelines and training for practitioners in the areas of child rights and the principles of child protection, and this was determined to be the primary cause of the observed dysfunctions.



SECURITY
SECTOR

Prior to 2015, police officers attending the **Police Academy and schools** were only given ad hoc training on child protection, which was not sufficient for them to master the required skills for working with children



SOCIAL
SECTOR

The **National Institute of Social Work** had been offering a 45-hour course on children's rights and child protection since 2015. However, the course only covered Congolese law relating to children and there were no opportunities for social services workers to strengthen their knowledge and skills in child protection.



JUSTICE
SECTOR

The **National Judicial Training Institute** was inaugurated in 2019. Prior to that, there was no dedicated course on child protection offered to magistrates, court clerks and secretaries working in the public prosecutor's office.



Capacity building in the area of child protection for police, justice and social services personnel

The project is called Batela Mwana, which means "Let's protect the child" in Lingala

The project developed by International Bureau for Children's Rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed to provide the Congolese government with support in strengthening three key sectors of the country's child protection system: the police, the judiciary and social services.

Providing these professionals with capacity building opportunities should result in improved access for children to age-appropriate services and, ultimately, better protection from the security, judicial and social services sectors.

This is why the IBCR undertook to strengthen the capacities of professionals working in these three sectors by adding permanent training courses on children's rights

and protection to their basic training programmes and professional development pathways. The organisation's activities also aimed to create and update work methods, standard operating procedures and other tools to clarify roles and provide consistent guidelines on how to protect and support children interacting with the country's police, legal system and social services.

"We believe that enhancing training for police, justice and social workers will be an effective means of protecting children because it will lead to better decision-making at the political and technical levels and improve the current level of service available to children."

-Eugène Serufuli, former Minister of Social Affairs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2017)



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Steering Committee for the reform of the National Police, 1st mission, 2015



Situational assessment, Kinshasa, 2015



Thematic workshop, Béni, 2015



Training kit development workshop, 2017



Dissemination of operating procedures for the police, Bukavu, 2019



Train-the-trainers, justice sector, Mbaza Ngungu, 2019

//01

Establish the project's governance framework and work plan

//02

Perform a situational assessment in the country

//03

Develop advocacy, monitoring and assessment strategies, and organise trips to exchange best practices

//04

Develop standard operating procedures and information management tools

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

//05

Disseminate standard operating procedures for the project's target groups via workshops designed to ensure understanding and ownership

//06

Monitor the application of standard operating procedures within the targeted structures

Main project phases

Steps 4, 5 and 6 are repeated for each of the training kits and standard operating procedures that are developed. →

Design training kits

Create a pool of trainers for each target group

Follow up on the first courses offered by the schools within their permanent programmes

TRAINING KITS

— Partners from all walks of life

This project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and executed by IBCR.



Global Affairs Canada is a department of the Government of Canada. It is responsible for maintaining diplomatic and consular relations, encouraging international trade and organising international aid. It manages funds earmarked for official public aid, development and other

forms of international assistance, including development cooperation.

In 2015, the IBCR and GAC signed a five-year contribution agreement to make this project possible.

// COLLABORATIVE PROJECT EXECUTION //

The project was led by the IBCR office in Kinshasa, with ongoing input from the organisation's headquarters in Montreal. However, it was implemented in close collaboration with the highest authorities of the Police Reform

Monitoring Committee, the General Police Commissariat, the Police Training School Department, the High Council of the Judiciary, the General Secretariat for Social Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Input was also sought from many local and international organisations.

The project was overseen by the DRC's Ministry of Social Affairs, which chaired the Steering Committee along with the Canadian Embassy in the DRC. During the project's five-year implementation phase, IBCR worked with many local institutional⁵ and civil society partners to expand its reach and scope, and to ensure the project's long-term viability.

5. See Appendix B for more information about our partners.



Departments and services involved in the project, by sector

Security forces

- Ministry of the Interior and Security
- General Commissariat of the Congolese National Police
- General Directorate of Congolese National Police Schools and Training Programs
- Child Protection and Sexual Violence Prevention Department



- Provincial units in charge of child protection and prevention of sexual violence
- Executive Secretariat of committee monitoring the National Police Reform
- National Police General Inspectorate
- Police Academy
- Police schools

Justice

- Ministry of Justice
- Supreme Council of the Judiciary
- National Judicial Training Institute
- Documentation and Studies Service

Social work

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Child Protection Social Work Department
- Provincial Social Affairs Division
- National Institute of Social Work

The IBCR also worked closely with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children to ensure that gender considerations were taken into account in all actions involving the project's three target sectors.

The IBCR also worked with several **civil society partners**, including:

- Réseau d'encadreurs pour l'initiation à la participation de l'enfant
- Réseau des éducateurs des enfants et jeunes de la rue
- Ignitus Worldwide
- Parlement des enfants

"The participatory approach used for the *Batela Mwana* project is what made it so interesting. [...] This means discussing personal experiences and what the students know, and involving them in the course and at the end. The teacher acts as a facilitator and then helps bring clarity to the discussion. [...] I gained a real appreciation for this way of teaching and intend to apply it."

-Participant in the train-the-trainers session for the National Institute of Social Work, Kinshasa, 2018

© Unsplash / Alex Radelich

— Providing better protection for Congolese children: the objectives

The ultimate goal: to better protect girls and boys in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To make this possible, the project focused on two primary objectives:

// 01

Ensuring that Congolese girls and boys have access to police, judicial and social services that are based on the principles of protection and participation

→ How?

- By improving the skills and expertise of individuals working in each sector through the implementation of standard operating procedures and the creation of multi-sectoral sharing spaces
- By increasing responsiveness, efficiency and collaboration between these three sectors
- By improving the quality of the interactions between children and the targeted professions through the establishment of local coordination, referral and care mechanisms

// 02

Enabling police, justice and social work personnel to improve their abilities and qualifications to protect children in a gender-sensitive and situationally sensitive manner

→ How?

- By supporting the training infrastructure for the targeted sectors through the development of mandatory and permanent graded children's rights courses, including notions of gender-sensitive interventions
- By strengthening the knowledge and skills of the workers in each sector through concrete and tailored training offered on an ongoing basis

— Various approaches for well-rounded capacity building

In its planning for the project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the IBCR included a number of approaches that are inherent to child protection.

In addition to adopting these approaches, the IBCR ensured that all activities adhered to the key child protection and participation principles outlined in its Guidelines for the Participation of Children and its Child Safeguarding Policy.⁶

Train-the-trainers session, Police Academy, Mgaza Ngungu, 2019



6. Documents available on the IBCR website: https://www.ibcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Politique-de-protection-de-lenfant_IBCR_2020.pdf and https://www.ibcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Lignes-directrices-participation-FR_WEB-1.pdf.

// COMPETENCY AS THE CORNERSTONE OF PERSONALISED SERVICE //

Child protection professionals make decisions that significantly impact the lives of girls and boys. But the experience of these children is also influenced by the quality of interactions and the ways in which laws and procedures are applied in their dealings with these professionals.

It is therefore crucial for these professionals have the right child protection skills, ones that go beyond simply being familiar with legislative and procedural texts. From the selection stage through to their training and supervision, they must be encour-

aged to have a broader vision that is much more attuned to the rights, needs and special characteristics of girls and boys.

For this reason, the IBCR uses a **competency-based approach** to train and equip the professionals participating in its programmes. These core competencies are based on the principles of child rights and reflect the view that each child has specific needs and special characteristics. This andragogical approach makes it easier to understand how the information and skills presented in the training modules should be implemented in the field. In short, it helps participants learn and take ownership of the course content.

WHAT ARE CORE COMPETENCIES?

The term “competency” is used to describe the knowledge, experiences, skills and attributes required to perform effectively in a given job, role or situation.

When combined, these competencies provide a comprehensive set of abilities required for professionals to fulfil their professional duties effectively. This set of abilities is referred to as core competencies.

The IBCR has led various collaborative activities that resulted in the creation of core competency frameworks for the police (2013), justice personnel (2018) and social services professionals (2019).⁷

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

There are three facets to each competency:

- **Knowledge:** qui fait référence aux connaissances théoriques nécessaires pour guider les interventions avec l'enfant
- **Skills:** your ability to apply knowledge and act on it
- **Attributes:** the qualities, attitudes and behaviours that enable the practitioner to adapt their approach to the environment, child and the child's situation

7. Documents available on the IBCR website: www.ibcr.org/publications/

"What I like about this methodology is that it is respectful of the learners, it places value on their experience, knowledge and progress, and it empowers the learners. The methodology is simple, clear and user-friendly. The content is suitable for all."

-Patricia Muaka, student at G2 INTS



// A GENDER-CENTRIC DIMENSION //

To truly protect children, it's essential to take into account each child's personal background and characteristics. Gender has therefore been a key focus area for the IBCR for several years now. As part of the *Batela Mwana* project, special consideration was given to gender and equality between girls and boys, as well as between women and men in the project's implementation.

Several actions were taken to this end, including:

- IBCR personnel received capacity-building training on gender equality issues
- The IBCR engaged in gender equality advocacy with its partners
- Women's participation in project activities was encouraged
- Gender-sensitive child protection practices were promoted by including gender modules in training programmes and by taking into account children's gender-specific experiences when developing work methods and standard operating procedures

In the IBCR's view, having an egalitarian approach means providing holistic support that takes into account the situations and roles of women and girls, as well as the gender-specific dimensions of each action that is taken.

This view motivated the IBCR to provide the targeted professionals working in the child protection system with tools for taking gender considerations into account, applying a non-discriminatory approach and providing gender-sensitive service.

Female participation increased over the course of the project. Workshop on operating methods, Kinshasa, 2020



— The challenges in the DRC

In 2016, the Democratic Republic of the Congo adopted a law on gender parity and the promotion of gender equality. While this law is intended to be central to institutional management and the fight against violence against women, it isn't applied consistently or comprehensively. Men still make up the majority of institutional workers, especially in the sectors targeted by the IBCR's project. Promoting gender equality in a context where the presence and participation of women remains low and gender biases and stereotypes are still present was therefore a challenge. To overcome this, the project activities and deliverables (operating procedures and training kits) systematically included the notion of gender. The principles of gender equality were intentionally emphasised in order to break down the prejudices and unequal gender relations present in Congolese society.

In addition, the IBCR provided assistance and support to initiatives aimed at increasing the level of responsibility given to women in the institutions involved in the project. Women were encouraged to participate in the project activities at every phase and incentives were established for female leadership. Ongoing dialogue was maintained with policymakers to promote gender equality and strengthen institutional capacity on related issues, including gender-based violence.



Meetings were held annually to ensure alignment between the project's objectives and partner needs (Steering Committee, Kinshasa, 2019)

These actions and dialogue were maintained throughout the project implementation phase, with a participatory approach that allowed the IBCR to gain a solid understanding of its partners' needs and then develop customised solutions.

Since the project spanned five years, the IBCR was able to forge long-term relationships, a crucial factor in ensuring that the activities and results can be sustained over the long term.

// CREATING LASTING CHANGE BY ENCOURAGING PARTNER BUY-IN //

The professionals targeted by the project must be able to actively contribute their own child protection capacity-building on an ongoing basis. To make this possible, the IBCR involved its partners at all stages of a project. This enabled them to gain a more in-depth understanding of the key messages, actions and deliverables. Ultimately, it empowered them to become real agents of change.

From the initial planning phase of the *Batela Mwana* project, the IBCR travelled regularly to the DRC. The purpose of these trips was to establish a permanent office in the country in order to present the project to authorities, to collect information on the country's child protection framework, and to assess the training needs of the professionals involved in child protection through regular interviews with institutions, representatives from Congolese civil society and international organisations.

The IBCR involved the project partners in the earliest project phases, including the needs analysis and strategy definition stages (Situational assessment, Kinshasa, 2016)

"The national partners have demonstrated substantial involvement and commitment, raising awareness of and support for children's rights within the country. Their dedication has led to the implementation of numerous measures that are beneficial to children and result in improved service and protection of their rights. All project stakeholders have made major strides in serving the best interests of children by creating an environment in the DRC that is more protective and respectful of their rights."

-Émile Darribère, head of the *Batela Mwana* project (DRC)



// COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE //

The IBCR employs a participatory and interdisciplinary approach in all its projects. This means involving members of institutions from various sectors, as well as international and local organisations working in the areas of capacity building and/or child protection. Collaboration is effective for triggering lasting change. Not only does it create accountability among stakeholders, it also prevents overlap and gaps in child protection initiatives and interventions. This approach also ensures that project actions remain aligned with the reality on the ground. Being attentive to the changing situation and adjusting accordingly ensures that initiatives are relevant at all times.

In this perspective of coordination and knowledge transfer, a **Steering Committee**, a **Consultative Committee** as well as **three sectoral working groups** (one for each sector, later merged into a single multisectoral working group) were created to provide support and guidance for the project's implementation.

— Steering Committee

This committee was responsible for coordinating, providing guidance and supervising the entire project. It met at least once a year to decide on annual reports, plans and budgets and to assess progress on the desired project outcomes.

It was co-chaired by representatives from Global Affairs Canada and the Congolese Ministry of Social Affairs (the national ministry overseeing the project), with the IBCR acting as secretary.

— The Consultative Committee

A Consultative Committee was set up to advise the sectoral working groups and the IBCR on the development and implementation of the strategic plan and the project activities. It provided a space for consultation on and coordination of the various technical aspects of the project. This committee had a purely advisory and non-decision-making status.

Its members included representatives of other government ministries, national and international NGOs, and UN agencies working on capacity building for the police, justice and social sectors in the DRC.

— Sectoral and multisectoral working groups

Working groups from the police, justice and social sectors were regularly involved in reviewing the process and providing expertise at key stages of the project. Their input was required for several decisions on the political and strategic orientation of the activities.

These working groups were made up of about 10 members from the sectoral training schools, as well as ministerial representatives with expertise related to the project mandate. In 2018, the three working groups were merged into one multi-sectoral group to strengthen cohesion between the sectors and promote interaction between the various focal points, ministerial representatives and department staff involved in the project rollout.

"We welcome this initiative. As it stands, our work isn't coordinated, but we recognise that providing effective care for children requires that the actors involved work in synergy. [...] I believe that establishing inter-sectoral collaboration and synergy, as planned, will result in a quantum leap in the Congolese child protection system."

-Hilaire Ngoie, president of the Bukavu Juvenile Court in eastern DRC, 2017



The Minister of Social Affairs, the Canadian Ambassador to the DRC and the IBCR team in the DRC at the September 2020 Steering Committee Meeting, Kinshasa



Multisectoral Working Group, Kinshasa, 2019



Project Steering Committee, Kinshasa, September 2020

BATELA MWANA

Actions and results

T

he following actions were carried out as part of the *Batela Mwana* project:



- » Developed and disseminated operating procedures
- » Produced training kits and integrated them into professional training programs
- » Shared best practices at the regional level
- » Developed an advocacy strategy
- » Established a tracking and learning process

Our action plans were adjusted annually to make sure they were aligned with the needs present in each context, which was essential for tracking and attaining the project's objectives.

By providing instruction based on the training kits and developing operating procedures, we were able to define child protection guidelines and improve the practices and skills of the professionals working in the targeted sectors. Activities involving the exchange of best practices, advocacy, monitoring and learning were essential for disseminating the proposed changes and ensuring that they would be long-lasting.

The activities were always centred on the best interests of the child and were carried out in accordance with the fundamental principles of child protection and gender equality.

— Deliverables designed to promote far-reaching improvements

The *Batela Mwana* project generated two types of deliverables: **standard operating procedures and training kits**. The purpose of the operating procedures is to standardise interventions, coordination and collaboration between the sectors involved. Meanwhile, the training kits allow for current and future professionals to receive training on children's rights and child protection. All deliverables were tailored to suit each sector and address its specific issues, with a view to ultimately strengthening the broader child protection system.



What is a standard operating procedure?

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) establish and describe the minimum standards to be followed within a department, professional body or system. They specify how to conduct effective interventions that meet international standards and uphold children's rights. Therefore, these documents clearly set out who does what, with whom, where, for whom, why, when and how.

SOPs are developed through a broad participatory and consultative process that includes all stakeholders and that is broken down into five different stages (see opposite).

The five-year project led to the creation and dissemination of four SOPs.

01 SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

— The situational assessment is used to collect information and data from stakeholders (professionals and children) and to identify existing practices and procedures for handling cases involving minors.

02 DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

— This activity is used to determine the structure for the standard operating procedure with the project partners. This type of workshop is useful for determining the trajectories of children within the concerned institutions, so that the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder can be clarified.

03 VALIDATION WORKSHOP

— The purpose of this activity is to review and approve the standard operating procedure prepared by the IBCR. This is a crucial step because it allows for the content to be verified and adjusted as needed to better suit the field of application.

04 KICK-OFF SESSION

— This session is attended by the authorities and partner institutions in the targeted sector(s) with a view to establishing the standard operating procedure's legitimacy, ensuring its recognition and promoting its application.

05 DISSEMINATION AND LEARNING PROCESS

— This process enables the transfer and development of the skills described in the SOP so that the concerned stakeholders can learn child rights-friendly practices. It includes a dissemination strategy, along with mechanisms to promote reappropriation by state actors, to encourage the use and application of various SOPs on a national scale.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Development and distribution of 4 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



1 FOR THE POLICE SECTOR

Operational guidelines on how to effectively protect children during interventions, developed for the national police units in charge of child protection and prevention of sexual violence (CPPSV)



1 FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

Procedures on the child protection roles and responsibilities of social workers working in CPPSV units and in PPSIs



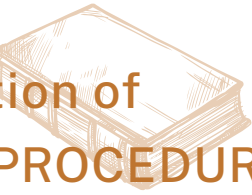
1 FOR THE JUSTICE SECTOR

Standard operating procedure on how to assist children in conflict with the law in the Juvenile Court: roles and responsibilities, intended for judges, court clerks, social workers and members of the Mediation Committee



1 MULTISECTORAL

Standard operating procedure on how to assist child victims and/or witnesses in contact with the justice system



Dissemination of the Police SOP, Bukavu, 2019



Workshop to develop an SOP for the social services sector, UPC, 2017



Stakeholders during the filming of videos made for justice personnel training programs



Cover of the standard operating procedure for assisting children in conflict with the law within the Juvenile Court, developed for the justice sector, 2018

What is a training kit?

The training kits we created are sets of tools used for capacity building in the area of children's rights and child-friendly practices. The kits make it easier to add courses to professional training programmes.

To facilitate the implementation of these courses, the IBCR also provided "train-the-trainer" courses for professionals from each sector. These individuals came away with a solid grasp of the key concepts and skills, enabling them to train others in their fields.

Each training kit includes tools designed to support independent teaching and learning (for trainers and participants) and to facilitate tracking and assessment of what has been learned.

To complement the toolkits, there are audiovisual materials developed with input from children and various practical workshops. Combined, they create a rich, interactive teaching environment that goes beyond simple knowledge acquisition to facilitate a deeper understanding and the development of a comprehensive range of concrete skills.

Training kits are developed through a broad participatory and consultative process that includes all stakeholders and that is broken down into seven different stages (see opposite).

The five-year project led to the creation and dissemination of 5 training kits.

01

SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

— The situational assessment was used to collect information from the targeted departments and institutions, identify training needs and clarify how professional training schools operate in the targeted sectors.

02

EXPERIENCE SHARING

— Research trips and experience sharing with other countries were used to share best practices, learn from the experiences of other countries and explore other ways of organising services and professional training programmes.

03

DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

— This workshop was held in conjunction with our partners to determine the core competencies, as well as the outline of the main models for the training kit to be developed.

04

VALIDATION WORKSHOP

— This workshop was held to present the training kit designed by the IBCR and the associated

course so that they could be validated by the group, supporting the project's participatory approach.

05

PILOT COURSES

— These courses allowed us to test the training kit with professionals already working in the field and make adjustments as needed based on their feedback.

06

TRAIN-THE-TRAINERS COURSE

— This was a key milestone in the process. The IBCR provided training on the core competencies to a group of nationally certified trainers who, going forward, will use the training kits to offer courses in the targeted professional training schools.

07

FIRST COURSES

— When the first courses were rolled out in the professional training schools, the IBCR attended as an observer and provided assistance as needed to ensure the teaching and materials were well suited to the context and determine whether adjustments were needed.

TRAINING KITS

Development and integration of 5 TRAINING KITS on children's rights and child-friendly practices



2 FOR THE POLICE SECTOR

A basic course for students attending police training schools

In-depth training for police commissioners in training at the Police Academy

(Courses offered in the schools and academies of the General Directorate of the Schools and Training Programmes for the Congolese National Police)



Train-the-trainers session, police sector, Mbaza Ngungu, 2019



2 FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

Two courses for social work students (one training kit for each year of training)

(Courses offered at the National Institute of Social Work)



Train-the-trainers session, social work sector, DRC, 2020



1 FOR THE JUSTICE SECTOR

Comprehensive training for active magistrates and judges having completed their studies but not yet entered into professional practice

(Course offered at the National Judicial Training Institute)



Training kit development workshop, DRC, 2017

// A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON CHILDREN //

773 professionals
including **280** women

received training on standard
operating procedures and now
use recommended practices when
carrying out their duties

13 810 people
including **1 401** women

attended courses on children's
rights that were based on the train-
ing kits developed through the
project

124 people
including **26** women

were trained to deliver these
courses in the three targeted
sectors

The work carried out by the IBCR and its partners in developing the standard operating procedures made it possible to determine the trajectories of children in contact with the justice system, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the professionals involved. Combined with the training provided to experienced and student practitioners, these tools have already led to significant changes in the practices used in the judicial, police and social services sector sectors. Children are now better protected and have access to services that are more respectful of their rights.



From top to bottom:

Train-the-trainers session, Police Academy, Mbaza Ngungu, 2019

SOP validation workshop, Kinshasa, 2017

Several major changes have already
been noted, including:

1. Practices are more child-friendly and respectful of children's rights

Children's opinions are taken into account more often, with consideration for their age and level of maturity. All three sectors report increased use of child participation in several different areas.

› Improved privacy and confidentiality in cases involving children.

Professionals now make a special point of shielding children from outside observers and ensuring they are not exposed during the various stages of their trajectory within the justice system. Separate interview rooms have been set up in CPPSV unit facilities to ensure that conversations are kept confidential when handling cases involving minors. Courts now isolate children more regularly during hearings held in prisons. In the social services sector, safeguards are put in place to ensure children's confidentiality and privacy.

64 % of social workers now meet this privacy requirement (closed-door conversations), compared with 37 % in 2015. In the police sector, this number is now **59 %**, up from 23 % in 2015, and in the justice sector it is **61 %**, up from 35 % in 2015.



› Less discrimination.

Thanks to the implementation of standard operating procedures and practitioner training of practitioners, certain prejudices that biased professional services — particularly on issues of economic class or gender — were deconstructed. Standardised interventions are offered to all children, without distinction, in accordance with the adopted protocols and while taking into account their gender and the principle of non-discrimination.

By the end of the project, **88 %** of justice and social services personnel adhered to the principle of non-discrimination, compared to just 35% and 37% respectively five years earlier.

"[...]Before, I didn't know how to interact with children. Now I know how to approach them and what to say. It's important to gain their trust and use the right communication techniques when speaking to them."

-Mamie Tchikarambu, student police officer, Kapalata site, South-Kivu



"We learned a lot of things. For instance, whenever a case involves a child, we must take their best interest into account. Regardless of whether the child is a victim, witness or perpetrator of a crime, he or she must be protected. We must do everything we can to do what is best for them."

-Philippe Lunsua, Director of the Kasapa Police School, Senior Commissioner

© Unsplash / Zach Lucero

STORIES OF CHANGE

Providing better support for children

At the end of the workshop to present the standard operating procedure for justice sector personnel, the president of the Likasi Peace Court stated her commitment to promoting and upholding the rights of all children in contact with the system in her jurisdiction. With support from the local town hall, she oversaw the creation of two holding rooms — one for girls and another for boys — so that children could be kept separately from adults and from members of the opposite sex. The purpose of this initiative was to provide them with better conditions and ensure their rights were upheld while they were at the court facility. Prior to this, men, women and children were all held together in the same cells as adults.

› Children are much more likely to be informed of the reasons for their arrest.

At the beginning of the project, just 2% of police officers thought of informing children of the reason for their arrest. This figure jumped to 69% by the final year of the project, marking a major step forward. This improved practice helps children understand what is happening to them and the decisions affecting them.

› Fewer children are placed in detention.

Depriving a child of freedom is not a trivial matter. It affects their development and can have negative consequences for their safety as well as their physical and mental health. The standard operating procedures, which are based on fundamental child protection principles, recommend that alternatives to detention be used whenever possible in order to better protect the best interest of the child. They also describe best practices for detaining children when it cannot be avoided. The Congolese National Police's child detention rates have fallen signifi-

cantly since 2015, proving that when decisions are being made about children in conflict with the law, their best interests are now taken into account. This change marks major progress in the way children are treated in the DRC.

"The National Police officers and executives that you saw going in on the first day came out quite changed. They learned a lot and, going forward, things will be handled differently in the field."

-M. Mandi, Senior Commissioner, 2017

› Awareness-building programmes have been set up.

The CPPSV units created campaigns for elementary and high school students to inform them of their right to protection and to raise their awareness about sexual violence, including threats to girls. This is evidence that they have successfully acquired the knowledge and skills highlighted in the standard operating procedures and related training sessions. It also shows that the concerned professionals have become true agents of change in Congolese society, promoting better child protection in all circumstances.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Specialised tools to reduce the risk of abuse

In the past, there were reports of sexual abuse involving personnel from the police or justice sectors. When child victims reported such incidents, workers sometimes performed acts that went beyond the scope of their work (such as palpating or touching children's bodies). By developing standard operating procedures that describe why these practices are harmful, we provided workers with a clearer understanding of how they should respond to such cases. This in turn results in better protection for children.



Actors at the recording
of audiovisual tools, 2018

© IBCR

STORIES OF CHANGE

Significantly improved case intaking by CPPSV units

In the DRC, the police sector is often considered a hostile environment for children, due to frequent violations of their rights and the use of violence and other inappropriate practices, such as threats, intimidation and physical harm. Staff often treated children as though they were adults, without regard for their personal situation, needs, vulnerability or how the experience might impact their development.

After receiving assistance through the project, as well as the standard operating procedures created for the police force, the CPPSV units greatly improved their practices. This led to slow but steady gains in children's trust and public confidence, to the point where the CPPSV units are now considered "sanctuaries" for children whose rights are threatened.

"Other institutions, such as City Hall, are increasingly calling on the CPPSV unit whenever they deal with cases involving children because they know that the unit is respectful of children's rights."

-Child protection worker

"The tools are tailored to my work and allow me to determine whether the rights of the girls and boys I assist have been respected. The standard operating procedure has the answers to my questions and emphasises the need for upholding children's rights. I'm now able to perform quality social investigations and develop life plans and intervention plans."

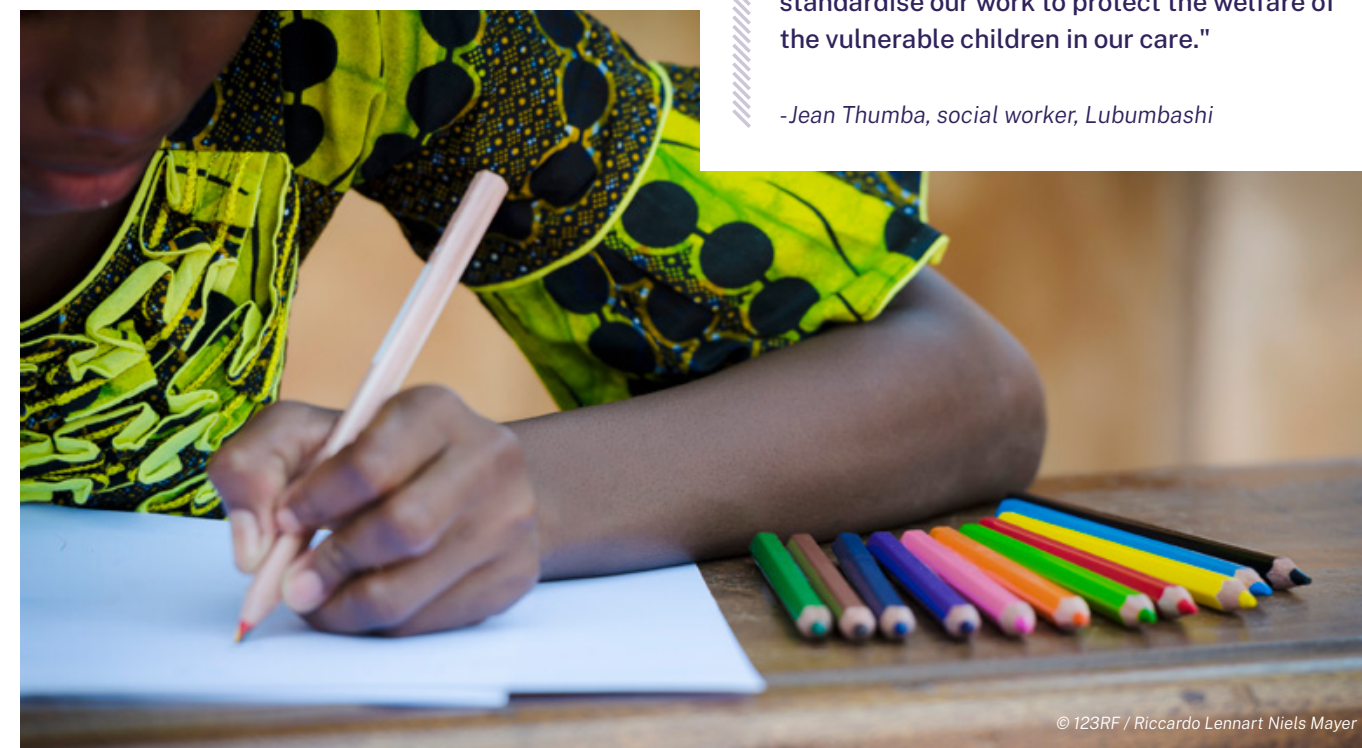
-Venantie Byenda, social worker in Goma

2. Improved cross-sector collaboration

› There is a better appreciation for social workers' cross-sector role.

Whereas social workers used to only occasionally get involved in cases involving children in contact with the law, they are now present at all stages of their trajectory, from police intaking to the courtroom. The project activities helped raise awareness about how to uphold children's rights in social work practices, but also, and more importantly, they helped generate a better appreciation for the value of social work more broadly.

This is a major step forward in ensuring that the rights of girls and boys are respected at every stage of their contact with the system. With respect comes trust and better psychosocial assistance, particularly for child victims of sexual violence. Social workers help children understand their role in the process, while also promoting confidentiality, informed consent and respect for children's wishes, rights and dignity in their interactions with the police and the judicial system. Their presence also leads to shorter periods of detention for vulnerable or accused children.



© 123RF / Riccardo Lennart Niels Mayer

› Social offices have been set up and are running smoothly in provincial CPPSV units.

A directive to set up these offices was issued by the Commissioner General of the National Police and the units are now using the practices set out in the standard operating procedures. At the end of the project, all seven units (in Kinshasa, Matadi, Lubumbashi, Goma, Bukavu, Mbuji-Mayi and Kisangani) had a social office with at least one full-time social worker.

91 social workers, including **39** women, trained in children's rights and child protection have been assigned to the juvenile courts.

"The operating procedure has given us a new vision based on children's rights. It explains how to handle children, regardless of their background, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of social workers at each stage of a child's trajectory. I'm committed to applying the procedure within my organisation so that we can standardise our work to protect the welfare of the vulnerable children in our care."

-Jean Thumba, social worker, Lubumbashi

› Dialogue and collaboration between police officers, juvenile court judges and social workers has improved.

This is thanks to the implementation of the new work methods set out in the standard operating procedures. The three sectors consult with each other more often to optimise their interventions and adopt a more holistic and multisectoral approach. In the past, decisions concerning children were made by each sector without consultation, but the decision-making process is now participatory and collective. The experience for children is now smoother and improved coordination between the various professions results in faster and more appropriate treatment.



Train-the-trainers session for the police sector, 2016

Today, **96 %** of cases involving children in conflict with the law are transferred to the juvenile court within 24 hours of their apprehension, compared to just 10% at the beginning of the project.

› Simplified and standardised tools have been adopted to improve data collection and the management for cases involving children.

As part of the IBCR project, several documents were created or updated, including a social investigation report, identification sheet, etc. These tools have strengthened collaboration between the various professional bodies and significantly reduced processing times for cases involving minors. Thanks to these tools, case files are now clearer and compliant with established standards. Collecting and keeping all the required information facilitates follow-ups and helps prevent procedural irregularities.

20 data collection and processing tools were developed, improved and/or standardised for the police sector, **17** for the justice sector, and **1** for the social services sector.

Training session on software for police officers, DRC, 2020



3. Professionals are better trained and equipped to uphold children's rights

By introducing the training kits in schools, the project has enabled trainees and workers in the three target sectors to develop a better understanding of children's rights and child-friendly practices. Consequently, children enjoy better protection and are treated in a manner that meets international standards. However, since the courses developed through the project have only been offered since 2018, we have yet to see how they might affect the day-to-day practice of the practitioners who have received the training. The results will be seen in the coming years and concrete changes are expected as they develop the skills needed to better protect and promote the rights of children.

Adding the training kits to the school curricula led to notable progress in key areas, including:

› A mandatory course on children's rights and child-friendly practices was permanently added to the professional training programmes offered through the three educational institutions targeted by the project.

The courses range from 30 to 90 hours of total learning time. The three institutions were the GDST (1 police academy and 9 police schools), the NISW (Kinshasa, Goma and Kikwit) and the NJTI (Kinshasa).

"Since I had never read the CRC before, the four guiding principles were new to me. My work is based solely on the application of [these] principles, by always taking into account the child's best interests, life and survival, by ensuring non-discrimination and, above all, by involving the child in decisions that concern them."

-Jean Mfutila, President of the Peace Court in Tshela

› The targeted educational institutions now have a pool of certified trainers to deliver the courses on children's rights.

124 certified trainers, including **26** women⁸



Train-the-trainers session for the police sector, Mbanza Ngungu, 2019

8. GDST: 70 trainers, including 14 women; NISW: 25 trainers, including 5 women; NJTI: 29 trainers, including 7 women.

› 13,810 learners, including at least 1,401 women, received child-rights training thanks to the courses and tools developed through the project. They now have the core competencies to protect children and promote their rights.

These learners included 13,319 workers from the police sector (including 1,139 women), 491 workers from the social services sector (including at least 262 women), and 44 justice-sector workers (including 6 women). This number will grow every year as new cohorts of students complete the training.

"I deal with cases involving children every day. After taking this training, I feel transformed. I wasn't aware of the importance of respecting children's rights or adhering to the principles of non-discrimination, participation and the best interests of the child when working with children in contact with the police."

-M. Baruti, Deputy Commissioner of the Border Police

"I learned the four guiding principles of children's rights. In my practice, I will strive to respect these four principles and ensure my actions and decisions are in the best interests of the child."

-Pierre Sefu Bin Ramazani, a police student at the Kapalata site

› Roughly a dozen audiovisual tools were developed, tailored to the each of the different sectors, and used to complement the courses on children's rights, making it easier for new recruits to develop the core competencies and knowledge needed to work with children.

This audiovisual material — often short videos featuring children and professionals from the targeted sectors —

made the learning process more dynamic and gave learners a better understanding of how the competencies applied to their specific lines of work. Children contributed to the development of the training kits and other materials, through a participatory process.

"The content was interesting, but I also really liked the participatory methodology, which allowed us to share our experiences and discuss the situations we face in our communities. [...] I also really liked the scenarios presented in the audiovisual tools and the group work, because we complemented one another in the discussions and had the chance to do role-playing."

-Epepisa Moseli, first-year student at the NISW

As a result of these changes, the environment is more protective and respectful of children's rights. By developing the core competencies during initial training and professional development courses at the schools involved in the project:

- **The course participants became agents of change in the community.** After becoming more aware of the role they should be playing in promoting and protecting children's rights in community, family and work settings, the learners adopted new attitudes about this issue and even applied their new competencies outside the scope of their professional practice.
- **Effective, child-friendly communication and listening techniques are being taught and used appropriately.** Using appropriate language is particularly important because it promotes a better understanding of the unique needs of girls and boys.
- **Gender-based preconceptions were broken down,** ensuring that girls and boys have access to gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory interventions.

"The two audiovisual tools I watched were tremendously informative and allowed me to quickly gain a new understanding of children's rights and the situation of Congolese girls and boys."

-Erin Cosgrove,
Deputy Director,
Global Affairs Canada

The audiovisual materials are presented to the children who were consulted for their creation



Actors during the filming of audiovisual tools intended for police training, 2018

© IBCR





— Sharing best practices at the regional level

Capacity building isn't unique to the IBCR. In the past, similar actions have been carried out in several countries and in different contexts. But the one constant is the desire to create effective child protection systems that uphold children's rights. In conducting the *Batela Mwana* project, the IBCR sought to follow the best practices used in countries with similar institutional organisation. To support this goal, regional exchange trips were required.

Even though any and all best practices observed abroad needed to be adapted to the situation in the DRC, capitalising on the achievements of similar child protection systems can lead to significant progress and change for children.

In 2017, trips to Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire were organised. Thirteen members of the police, justice and social services working groups, including four women, participated in the exchange trips.

They visited the host country's key police, judicial and social services institutions and had the chance to ask their peers about the contextual, strategic and operational aspects of their mandates. They learned about the host countries' child protection mechanisms as well as the experiences of the intaking and support services for children in contact with the law. They also observed the collaborative work methods and institutional challenges in the child protection system. These two trips provided an opportunity to share child protection best practices and methodologies.

On November 6 and 7, 2017, a national workshop was held in Kinshasa to review to information, best practices and lessons learned through the exchange trips, and to discuss how they might be adapted to the Congolese context. The information exchanged during the workshop was used to enrich the training materials and standard operating procedures under development, to start work on an action plan to promote best practices and to record them in a summary document for the Secretary General of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity.



1 to 3/ Exchange trips to Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco, 2017
4/ Workshop to share travel experiences, Kinshasa, 2017

Some of the best practices observed abroad were implemented in the DRC. A few concrete examples include:

- The Ministry of Justice's Child Protection Department adopted a **positive parenting** programme within centres where minors are deprived of liberty. This measure has strengthened connections between children and their families by increasing the frequency of visits and involving the family in the child's rehabilitation.

- The National Institute of Social Work launched a **collaborative exchange with the National Institute for Social Action in Tangier, Morocco**. They are now working together to develop a training programme for students and a capacity-building programme for teaching staff.
- **A national programme was developed to better integrate social workers** into child protection practices throughout the DRC.

— Advocating for change

The IBCR's advocacy actions aimed to **spur long-term change with improved practices and capacity building (through new or refreshed knowledge, skills and attributes)** to significantly strengthen child protection in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

An advocacy strategy was developed and deployed throughout the duration of the project and also at specific events, such as those held on dates with symbolic value for children's rights (such as June 16, the Day of the African Child, and November 20, World Children's Day).

The advocacy strategy and related actions were implemented by the IBCR team in Kinshasa, which was trained to lead these actions and monitor their impact.

The advocacy strategy targeted the project stakeholders, namely the people and institutions in the DRC's police, justice and social services sectors. The messages and measures were adapted for each target segment, with a view to gaining their buy-in and transforming them into agents of change.



Press conference after a training session, Mbaza Ngungu, 2019



Our messages

To the project's technical and financial partners

All social workers, police officers and justice personnel are responsible for upholding children's rights. It is our responsibility to support these actors by making sure they have the training and tools they need to work effectively.

To the media

Children are full subjects of the law, with responsibilities and guaranteed rights. The media is responsible for reporting on the project's results and the positive impact it can have on the environment provided to children.

To trainees and workers

You are key players in the child protection system. Become an agent of change!



Advocacy work was key to advancing the project and ensuring lasting change. Specifically, it led to:

- **A lasting commitment to the project across the country.** Dialogue with the authorities of the three targeted sectors was established and maintained throughout the project. This led to the signing of protocols aimed at adding and offering courses on child protection and rights within the professional training programmes in these sectors. Protocols were also signed with the Congolese National Police and the GDST (2017), the Child Protection Social Work Department (2018) and the High Council of the Judiciary (2020) to enable and provide the framework for the creation and use of the standard operating procedures developed as part of the project.
- **A political framework to support the expected changes.** Advocacy helped obtain formal commitments from the institutions and authorities involved in the project. The achievements resulting from the project, such as changes in stakeholder practices and behaviours, are indirectly attributable to the advocacy conducted with institutions, government departments, schools, police officers, social workers and judges during the project activities, which included the development, validation and dissemination of the deliverables.

- **Child protection messages were conveyed to all project stakeholders** through the governance bodies and also at project meetings. The project's key messages were shared with the concerned actors at workshops, special events and train-the-trainer sessions. Meanwhile, the media helped get the messages out to the general public.
- **Relevant partners in the DRC's child protection networks were identified** through a mapping exercise. These child protection networks and NGOs were then encouraged to get involved in the project, share input and attend key events.
- **The project successfully gained national visibility and credibility.** This was made possible thanks to good media coverage of the various events and workshops organised by the IBCR. As a result, the project outcomes were shared with the public and the authorities on a regular basis.
- **A strategy to promote gender equality was rolled out.** The key messages were reinforced through ongoing advocacy work. This resulted in significant progress in breaking down preconceived notions and stereotypes related to gender. Thanks to this work, children's gender-specific characteristics are also taken into account in all interventions. There are numerous examples of this change. For example, girls and boys in police custody are now given personal hygiene kits, through an initiative that came directly from the police force and not through a project-led initiative.

— Monitoring results, evaluating progress and adjusting as needed

The IBCR set up a monitoring and evaluation strategy allowing us to track changes resulting from the *Batela Mwana* project and to continually reflect on its implementation. The goal was to learn from our findings and adjust actions as needed.

In 2018, we explained the anticipated changes to a "group of witnesses" composed of actors in the child protection system (lawyers, members of civil society, etc.) who were not targeted by the project but worked or were in contact with the targeted professionals.

Using observation checklists and interview templates, **the members of this group collected data on the project's results. This occurred in parallel with the IBCR's annual data collection exercises, but the control group sometimes had access to areas that were closed to the IBCR.**

For example, lawyers were able to observe changes in the practices of judges at specific times (such as hearings) that often take place behind closed doors.

These witnesses collected qualitative and quantitative data concerning actors in all three sectors targeted by the project. The information they collected was then cross-referenced with the IBCR's findings to cover the project's key indicators.

Shekinah Lonji, Vice President of the Provincial Children's Committee of Kinshasa speaks at a ceremony to launch the training kits for the PEPVS units (police), Kinshasa, 2018



Workshop on the multisectoral standard operating procedure, Kinshasa, 2020



The IBCR also **strengthened the National Police's monitoring and evaluation system** by designing a data collection and management software program and implementing it within the CPPSV department and units receiving assistance through the project. Thanks to this initiative, information on cases involving children was centralised, best practices were established for case referrals, and case management was improved across the DRC.

To ensure these changes would last, the IBCR set up support for each structure's assessment units. They were provided with training on the various monitoring tools developed under the project.

At the end of the project, a workshop was held to review and optimise the use of the standard operating procedures with the project partners. The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on what was learned through the project, to identify best practices and to make recommendations for future projects.



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Batela Mwana: Lessons learned

Six best practices were identified through the project activities in the DRC. The key lessons learned include:

When standard operating procedures are widely distributed, they are applied more effectively.

Broadly disseminating the SOPs was effective in mobilising all stakeholders, promoting collective buy-in and ensuring the widespread adoption of best practices in child protection. It allowed the various stakeholders in the child protection system to become more familiar with each other's roles and responsibilities. The IBCR found that the inclusive dissemination of standard operating procedures led to improved interaction between sectors, more collaborative work and more coordinated interventions.

Establishing dialogue and mobilising institutions and influential authorities is key to ensuring lasting and meaningful project outcomes.

Effectively mobilising government ministries — the Ministry of Social Affairs (the national ministry overseeing the project) as well as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and Security, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children, and the Ministry of Human Rights — led to the creation of a policy framework facilitating the implementation of the deliverables and their application over time.

Aligning work on national policies is important for gaining and maintaining buy-in.

These policies lay out the national priorities and general framework for child protection interventions. Ensuring that the target sectors are aligned when working on the strategic orientations for their national policies is an effective way of obtaining more relevant results and better mobilisation of the competent authorities. Therefore, it is important to track government orientations and priorities and ensure alignment is maintained through ongoing dialogue with focal points. In addition to ensuring lasting change, this practice allowed the IBCR to participate in the Justice and Human Rights Theme Group.

Lessons learned in the area of political advocacy:

- **Political advocacy is directed at institutions and training schools.** In this project, the General Commissariat and the General Directorate of the training schools in the targeted sectors were mobilised, which led to the preparation of directives aimed at ensuring lasting results and anchoring the initiatives within institutions.
- **To achieve consistency, we maintained political advocacy efforts with a large number of focal points.** Due to high personnel turnover rates within government ministries, it was important to have several contact persons. Centralising contact and the exchange of information with a single person would have resulted in delays for the project. For this reason, we increased the number of focal points during the fourth year of the project. Subsequently, briefing sessions were held for the new authorities, to build avenues for communication bridges and get their personnel involved in the project's ongoing activities. This improvement has strengthened the relationship with ministerial

representatives and mitigates the risk associated with high staff turnover.

A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT

Political advocacy work carried out by the IBCR and other international organisations resulted in the adoption of national directives, which in turn had a positive impact on the project. More specifically, these directives were ministerial orders No. 243/CAB/ME/MIN/J&GS and No. 065/CAB/MIN.GEFA/2018, which clarify the roles and responsibilities of the members of the Juvenile Justice Mediation Committee, a committee that encourages diversion.

Lessons learned in the area of female participation:

- **Advocacy is extremely important.** It helped increase the number of women attending workshops and coordination sessions, in addition to promoting structural changes to strengthen the qualitative participation of women in the child protection system.
- **Working with women's organisations and positioning them as spokespersons for the project and its key messages proved to be a very effective way to forge connections with the project and to identify women likely to participate in the project's activities.**
- **Valuing women's opinions and voices is crucial.** Their participa-

tion and opinions were highlighted during the workshops. Moreover, strict rules prohibiting sexist language allowed women to express themselves freely and be fully involved. In all activities, the project team members were sensitised to gender issues, including gender equality and positive masculinity. This prepared the team members to become agents of change, encourage gender equality throughout the project and promote it to the project partners. Significant changes were observed within partner institutions, especially in the police force.

- **Maintaining dialogue with authorities and influencers is essential for facilitating awareness-building activities and making them more effective.** The project partners demonstrated genuine interest and a growing openness toward gender equality issues thanks to the ongoing dialogue.

Training of trainers, Police Academy, Mbaza Ngungu, 2019



A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT

Establishing political dialogue with senior police officials about gender equality led to the creation of an operational plan for improving the gender balance within the National Police. The plan was created with support from the Batela Mwana project team and validated by the Ministry of the Interior and Security. It is already yielding results, including a notable increase in the number of women in senior positions in the child protection and sexual violence prevention units.

The training kits were more impactful thanks to a variety of educational tools, including audiovisual materials.

The diverse content found in the training kits resulted in a higher retention rate, improved learner satisfaction and increased interaction with the facilitator.

Challenges to overcome

The project was hindered by a number of challenges related to its national scope, limited local partner capacities, gender issues and restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary challenges are listed below.

Security tensions and public health concerns in the east of the country: Armed groups were present and there were recurring Ebola outbreaks in Ituri province, limiting the project's reach. In fact, project activities were suspended in the cities of Beni, Butembo and Lubero. This proved to be a major limitation, as this area experienced a spike in the number of children in vulnerable situations due to the rebel group activities. Unfortunately, the project was not able to meet the region's more acute training needs for child protection stakeholders.

Difficulty reaching all communities across the country: The project covered 6 of the country's 26 provinces, or 23% of the territory. In an attempt to broaden its reach, the project team adopted a zone-based approach, through which they involved child protection actors from cities or provinces located on the outskirts of the project's target cities. A considerable effort was made to include professionals from all over the country into the various project activities. However, limited resources prevented broader participation.

Flux within partner institutions: The National Judicial Training Institute (NJTI) was only operational in the project's fourth year. This was a major obstacle to the development of a specialised course on child rights and child-friendly practices. To overcome this problem, the IBCT forged a trusting relationship with the High Council of the Judiciary (HCJ) and involved this institution from the beginning of the project. As a result, a strong working relationship was established between these two entities — the magistrate management body (HCJ) and the technical authority in charge of training (NJTI) — and they were able to collaborate effectively on the project.

Structural gender inequality: Poor female recruitment rates in the targeted sectors (women represent only 8% of the National Police) held back the project's gender objectives. As a result, there were relatively low numbers of women participating in activities, such as tool development and validation workshops, tool-sharing activities, etc. The team therefore decided to focus on an advocacy strategy, aimed at project stakeholders and partners, to promote gender equality and increase the rate of female participation, through recruitment and on-the-job assignments.





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"Even though the project will close in just a few weeks, it will not be the end of Batela Mwana. Discussions and concrete initiatives are already underway to make sure the project results are sustainable and effectively handed over to the State. And the actions carried out over the past year were designed to be long-lasting."

-Roxana Galant, Operations Coordinator, International Bureau for Children's Rights, 2020

The global COVID-19 pandemic: Contagion mitigation measures were implemented as early as March 2020, which slowed the rollout of project activities for several months. In response, the IBCR turned to digital technologies and revised its implementation plan. The public health crisis also forced the government ministries associated with the project to scale back the funding earmarked for our activities. In particular, this affected the dissemination of standard operating procedures and the organisation of group training sessions (especially for the NJTI and GDST). The project team therefore stepped up its communications with political authorities to ensure the project deliverables would continue to be implemented over the long term and to mitigate any risk to the sustainability of the actions.

— Ensuring a lasting impact

Two key avenues were identified to ensure the project would have a lasting impact: **obtaining political commitment and setting up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with local partners.**

// SECURING POLITICAL COMMITMENT FROM THE MINISTRIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROJECT //

The IBCR took special care to align the project with the DRC's national policies on child protection. Government input is essential for ensuring that the key project concepts and deliverables will continue to be used over time. The Ministry of Social Affairs was tasked with overseeing the project, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Gender, Family and Childhood.

The legacy of the project was further strengthened by commitments made by the High Council of the Judiciary (which signed a memorandum of understanding), the Child Protection Social Work Department (which signed a

memorandum of understanding and adopted a directive) and the General Commissariat of the Congolese National Police, as well as their involvement in the workshops to develop and validate standard operating procedures.

Meanwhile, the General Commissariat and the General Directorate of the Training Schools issued directives that called for the systematic inclusion of courses on child protection and child-friendly practices in professional training curricula, thereby anchoring the project and training kits within their respective institutions.

The IBCR's participatory approach encouraged participants to take ownership of the deliverables. Following the operationalisation of the NJTI, remarkable improvements in key project areas were noted within the Institute and the High Council of the Judiciary. In addition, directives, ministerial decrees and institutional measures were adopted to strengthen children's rights and ensure that the project outcomes will last over time.

// SETTING UP MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS //

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are other important means of ensuring the project's legacy. Local

partners must be equipped to monitor changes in professional practice within the country's child protection system. During the last year of the project, the IBCR created various monitoring and evaluation tools, shared them with partner institutions and trained their personnel on how to use them.

These included tools to collect data on child protection and dashboards to assess processing times for cases involving children. Institutions in the police, justice and social work sectors can use these tools to monitor changes in professional practice. The monitoring and evaluation tools were also shared with members of civil society and are used as part of citizen watch and accountability mechanisms, enabling informed decision-making.

"The project outcomes must be protected and its activities must continue, in some form, to reach new workers and geographic areas not covered by the first phase."

-Rose Boyota, Minister of Social Affairs, DRC, 2020



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— **Batela Mwana: What's next?**

Further actions can reinforce the project outcomes and generate more widespread change.

Continuing advocacy work to strengthen partner institutions' commitment to implementing the project deliverables and upholding its key concepts over the long term

Advocacy substantially contributed to the project's success and it will almost certainly be key to ensuring its sustainability over the years to come. Given that the IBCR will gradually disengage, advocacy is needed to ensure adherence to standard operating procedures, support for the training structures in the three target sectors, and continued teaching of the courses developed through the project. On-going dialogue on the issue of gender and gender equality is also essential.

Developing capacity-building programmes for other actors in the DRC's child protection system

The project activities focused on capacity building for professionals working in specialised services, such as juvenile courts and CPPSV units, and social workers. The next logical step would be to extend the reach of these activities and develop capacity-building programmes for other sectors involved in the child protection system. For example, this could benefit civil society organisations, lawyers, peace court magistrates and judicial police officers, enabling them to adopt a more child-friendly approach when dealing with minors and provide an environment that is more conducive to upholding children's rights.

Expanding the geographic scope of capacity-building activities

Stakeholders in other geographic regions have noticed and expressed interest in the changes observed in the project's key action areas. Therefore, it is important to extend the capacity building efforts to eventually reach each of the country's 26 provinces.

Continuing the dissemination of standard operating procedures

Standard operating procedures must continue to be shared in order to help as many child protection actors as possible change their practices. Leaders in the courts, CPPSV units and social services sector are therefore encouraged to continue holding activities to disseminate standard operating procedures and, in doing so, broaden the project's reach.

Offering capacity-building programmes to help workers assist children during public health crises

Child protection workers have been heavily involved in the COVID-19 response since March 2020. Police officers were needed to enforce virus containment measures and assist the public, while social workers played a key role in managing cases of detained children being released. It would therefore make sense to develop capacity-building initiatives for these professionals, to help them provide child-friendly interventions in emergency situations.

~~~~~ **Conclusion** ~~~~~

Over the past five years, the *Batela Mwana* project has led to significant improvements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's child protection system. By encouraging the adoption of directives, ministerial orders and institutional measures that promote the rights of children — and especially those of girls — and by strengthening the skills and knowledge of key workers in the Congolese child protection system, the *Batela Mwana* project has spurred significant changes benefiting the country's children. They now enjoy better protection overall, thanks to improved support from police, justice personnel and social services workers.

At the institutional level, one of the most significant advances is that courses on children's rights and child-friendly practices have been added to professional training curricula. This means that practitioners are more aware of child protection principles and better equipped to provide appropriate services. Inter-sectoral collaboration has also been strengthened and constructive dialogue has been established between the various institutions and actors who work on cases involving children in contact with the justice system. This paves the way for more synergistic interventions. And finally, new professional behaviours and work methods were introduced in the form of standard operating procedures to improve the way cases involving minors are handled. Together, these advances have helped create an environment that protects and upholds the rights of Congolese children in contact with institutions in the police, justice and social services sectors. Protecting children and promoting their rights is the primary objective of the International Bureau for Children's Rights and the *Batela Mwana* project. Our work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed to generate concrete changes in favour of children's rights.

The IBCR has not ruled out completing further work and providing additional support to the Congolese government with a view to strengthening its child protection system. In fact, Canadian and Congolese authorities are currently discussing a number of initiatives that, if approved, could be implemented in the coming years.





# ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

## IN BRIEF...



**4 OFFICES**  
around the world



**25 YEARS**  
OF OPERATION



Approximately  
**40 PERMANENT**  
EMPLOYEES



**45 COUNTRIES**  
in Africa, Asia, the  
Americas and the Middle  
East have been impacted  
by our programmes



The rights of over **2.9**  
**MILLION CHILDREN** are  
now better protected  
thanks to our work



More than **4,370**  
**CHILDREN HAVE BEEN**  
**CONSULTED** during our  
projects



More than **61,200**  
**PROFESSIONALS** have  
received child-rights  
training through our  
organisation

**T**he International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) is an international non-governmental organisation whose mission is to protect and promote children's rights in a manner consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols.

Using a sustainable and participatory approach, the IBCR works with key partners to promote and protect the rights of children, particularly those who are in contact with the justice system or facing a humanitarian crisis caused by armed conflict or natural disaster. The IBCR's actions mainly consist in providing technical expertise to frontline workers who interact with children as part of their professional practice.

## // OUR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES //

- › The best interests of children
- › Non-discrimination
- › The right to life, survival and development
- › Children's right to participation and freedom of expression

## // OUR MISSION //

- LISTEN** to local partners and work with them to develop innovative solutions that are respectful of children's rights and based on existing processes
- STRENGTHEN** the capacities of frontline community actors to address issues affecting children
- PROMOTE** active participation from all stakeholders, including children
- ENGAGE** individuals, communities and institutions so that they become agents of change
- FOSTER** collaboration between the various professionals involved in child protection
- SUPPORT** and **CHAMPION** reforms, action plans and legislation in favour of children's rights



— Guiding principles

// 01

A systemic and integrated rights-based approach

Every child in the world grows up within a protection system made up of girls, boys, women and men, all of whom have a role to play and responsibilities to uphold in that protective environment. Any initiative to strengthen these systems must involve these various stakeholders, provide them with the tools they need and strengthen their capacities so that each actor can effectively fulfil their role in protecting children and promoting their rights.

// 03

Child participation

The IBCR values the right of girls and boys to express their views freely and to be actors in their own development, while taking into account their cognitive abilities, well-being and best interest.

Values underpinning child participation

- Respect
- Equal opportunity
- Honesty
- Responsibility

— Related projects

The IBCR's actions aim to strengthen the system that supports children at all life stages and help workers in this system build their professional competencies. The IBCR has already completed more than 20 capacity-building projects for justice, police and social services personnel in Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire and Afghanistan, among others.

// 02

Child protection

The IBCR's work is centred around protecting and upholding the dignity and rights of children. The organisation applies measures to support privacy, reporting and access to justice, while taking into account the physical and psychological health of each child.

Children are considered full subjects of the law whose rights must be respected.

// 04

Gender equality

All children have equal rights. The IBCR's projects and programmes aim to significantly improve child participation and gender equity.

This involves equal sharing of power between women and men and between girls and boys. Through its work, the IBCR aims to increase awareness of gender equity issues, female participation and recognition of the contribution of girls and women in the socio-economic and cultural development of their communities.

In 2009, the IBCR launched a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to analyse and raise awareness about the work completed by the various actors involved in children's rights. It was therefore with a good working knowledge of the country's child protection system that the IBCR embarked on this new multi-year project.<sup>9</sup>

9. For more information: <https://www.ibcr.org/en>







# Appendix A

## Glossary

**Advocacy:** At the IBCR, advocacy refers to any action aimed at influencing positions, decisions and policies in favour of promoting and protecting children's rights.

**Best interests of the child:** In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.<sup>10</sup>

**Child:** A person under the age of 18.

**Diversion:** The practice of encouraging dialogue and consensus by allowing disputing parties to agree on a means of resolving their dispute without resorting to the state courts. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, diversion in the juvenile justice system requires judicial bodies to coexist with community workers. The juvenile court ratifies compromises reached by disputing parties.

**Gender difference:** The term "gender difference" refers to the specific roles, behaviours, activities and social attributes that a given society deems appropriate for men and women, respectively.<sup>11</sup>

**Ownership:** For the IBCR, taking ownership refers to accepting your role in a project's activities, messages and deliverables, and considering them your own.

**Participation:** Participation is both a guiding principle in the field of children's rights and an active way of exercising citizenship.<sup>12</sup> It is not simply a theoretical requirement set out in international law. Child participation is an effective way of obtaining relevant information on matters concerning the individual, valuing their input and empowering the child, both individually and socially. For the IBCR, child participation is an ongoing process that is based on mutual respect and the right to obtain explicit and appropriate information. It is characterised by dialogue between children, but also between children and adults.

**Protection system:** Every child in the world grows up within a protection system made up of girls, boys, women and men, all of whom have a role to play and responsibilities to uphold in that protective environment. As defenders of their own rights, children are at the heart of this system, in which families, communities, the State and the international community all intervene, both formally and

10. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 3 (1), 1989.

11. World Health Organization.

12. The concept of citizenship is not only a reference to one's legal status (having Canadian citizenship, for example), but also an individual's socio-political contribution. Based on an individual's knowledge, awareness of their rights and obligations, and ability to act, exercising one's citizenship refers to participating actively in society in recognition of the democratic values of solidarity, equality and freedom.

informally. Any initiative to strengthen child protection systems must involve these various stakeholders, provide them with the tools they need and strengthen their capacities so that each actor can effectively fulfil their role in protecting children and promoting their rights.

**Standard operating procedures:** Formalised and clearly stated work methods within a department, professional body or system, specifying how to perform tasks effectively and in accordance with international standards. Standard operating procedures clearly set out who does what, with whom, where, why, when, how and for whom.

**Sustainability:** The time during which an action or deliverable is relevant (i.e., it continues to meet a need) and is actively used or implemented. A project is deemed sustainable when its deliverables continued to be used and its outcomes continue to be observed, even after the project has closed.

**Training kit:** A set of tools designed to support independent teaching and learning (for trainers and participants) and to facilitate tracking and assessment of what has been taught.

### — Abbreviations

**GAC:** Global Affairs Canada

**GDST:** General Directorate of Schools and Training Programs

**IBCR:** International Bureau for Children's Rights

**NJTI:** National Judicial Training Institute

**PPSI:** Public or private social institution

**SOP:** Standard operating procedure

**CPPSV:** Units in charge of child protection and prevention of sexual violence

**DRC:** Democratic Republic of Congo





## Appendix B

### Project partners

#### — Institutional project partners (ministries, departments and services)



// SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS  
AND SERVICES INVOLVED IN THE  
PROJECT //

##### — Ministry of Social Affairs

Batela Mwana, a project that aims to build child-protection competencies among police officers, justice personnel and social workers, is overseen by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which chairs the Steering Committee along with the Canadian Embassy in the DRC.

The Ministry's responsibilities include developing and implementing the government's policy in the social sector, overseeing public institutions and monitoring child protection services for minors in vulnerable situations (such as those in orphanages and social action centres).

It also supervises provincial departments in charge of social affairs and oversees social workers interacting with girls and boys in the juvenile courts, the specialised units of the juvenile police and any government departments in need of child protection support.

In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs organises and supervises the National Institute of Social Work and its branches.

Through its representatives, the Ministry plays an active role in the Multisectoral Working Group, which is tasked

with monitoring the implementation of the project in tandem with focal points from other ministries.

##### — Child Protection Social Work Department

The Child Protection Social Work Department (CPSWD) is responsible for developing policies, standards and operating procedures and for carrying out social interventions to help children in vulnerable situations. As the Ministry's technical arm, the CPSWD is also in charge of competency development for social workers and other social services professionals. This involves monitoring and assessing the quality of the services provided by these workers.

It should be noted that at the provincial level, the CPSWD is represented by the Bureau of Social Interventions for Child Protection.

##### — Provincial Social Affairs Divisions

These are decentralised public administration services that operate at the provincial level. They represent the Ministry of Social Affairs with the aim of coordinating supervisory authorities. The divisions assign social workers to juvenile courts, peace courts and social services institutions.

##### — National Institute of Social Work

The National Institute of Social Work (NISW) is a public institution of higher education that provides training for social workers. Operating under the dual supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Higher and University Education, the NISW is responsible for:

- Organising graduate and undergraduate courses in social work
- Providing professional development training for civil servants and other persons who wish to join the social services sector
- Etc.

To date, two 45-hour courses on children's rights and child-friendly practices have been developed as part of the project. One is for first-level graduate students and the other is for second-level graduate students. These courses have been permanently integrated into the NISW's curriculum and are now mandatory. Through the project, the IBCR has collaborated with the NISW in Kinshasa, Goma (North Kivu province) and Kikwit (Kwilu province). Some 30 people, including 8 women, have been trained and certified to teach these courses.



// POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND SERVICES  
INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT //

##### — Ministry of the Interior and Security

The Ministry of the Interior and Security oversees the Congolese National Police. It develops national security policies and reform plans for the Congolese National Police. For this project, it worked closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice, because it manages the police workforce throughout the country.

The Ministry of the Interior and Security is also responsible for organising birth registrations throughout the country through the Civil Registry Office.

##### — General Directorate of the Schools and Training Programs (GDST) for the Congolese National Police

The GDST is responsible for organising basic training, professional development and specialised courses for police officers in the DRC, guided by the general training strategy for staff members within the Congolese National Police.

The GDST supervises nine police academies in the country's provinces and one police academy in the city-province of Kinshasa. 13,319 student police officers

have taken the training modules to date, and 90 trainers, including 19 women, have been certified to teach the courses.

##### — Child Protection and Sexual Violence Prevention Department

This department is a technical and coordinating body within the Public Security Directorate. It coordinates and supervises child protection and sexual abuse prevention squads, in addition to developing guidelines on child protection

##### — Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Violence (CPPSV) Unit

This operational unit specialises in child protection and the prevention and repression of gender-based sexual violence at the provincial and territorial levels. It assists all children, regardless of whether they are victims or witnesses of crime, in challenging situations or otherwise in conflict with the law, and ensures they are adequately protected.

##### — Executive Secretariat of the Committee Overseeing the National Police Reform

The Committee Overseeing the National Police Reform (CONPR) is an inter-ministerial group that monitors the implementation of the Congolese National Police reform, including both the training and operational sides.

##### — National Police General Inspectorate

This team monitors, audits, investigates and evaluates the National Police. It performs quality control of the training programs and evaluates police officer performance. The Inspectorate is represented at the provincial level throughout the country.



// JUSTICE SECTOR DEPARTMENTS AND  
SERVICES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT //

##### — Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for planning and preparing government policies applicable to the justice



sector. It monitors judicial activities. The DRC's Ministry of Justice developed the 2017–2026 National Justice Reform Policy (NJRP) and the 2018–2022 NJRP Priority Action Plan, which it monitors through the Justice and Human Rights Thematic Group (JHRTG).

— **National Judicial Training Institute**

The National Judicial Training Institute (NJTI), a public institution overseen by the Ministry of Justice, is responsible for basic and professional development training for judicial personnel, including magistrates and prosecutors. A training kit on children's rights and child-friendly practices was developed and integrated into the NJTI's curriculum. The Institute currently has 30 certified trainers, including 8 women.

— **Documentation and Studies Service**

This is a public department overseen by the Ministry of Justice. It plays a technical and scientific role by, among other things, collecting, processing and distributing documentation of interest to the courts and public prosecutors' offices. The Service was a privileged partner in the development of the project deliverables.

— **High Council of the Judiciary (HCJ)**

The High Council of the Judiciary (HCJ) is the body that oversees the judiciary. It is responsible for developing standard operating procedures on how to assist children in conflict with the law within in the juvenile court and child victims/witnesses of crime in contact with the justice system. As such, it issues directives concerning the application of these deliverables and evaluates the performance of judicial personnel (the key audience for the deliverables).

— **Ministry of Gender, Family and Children**

The Ministry of Gender, Family and Children is mandated to protect the status of women, children and the family in collaboration with other ministries. It developed the national strategy for combating sexual and gender-based violence. It was involved in the project because sexual and gender-based violence has a significant impact on girls and boys, who may be victims, witnesses or perpetrators

of these acts. In addition, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children is heading the set-up process for mediation committees throughout the country. The project activities are implemented via the Child Protection Department.

— **Civil society partners**

— **Réseau d'encadreurs pour l'initiation à la participation de l'enfant (REIP)**

This organisation brings together children to advocate for child protection and children's rights. For the *Batela Mwana* project, it led the advocacy efforts aimed at encouraging police, justice personnel and social services workers professionals to pay attention to the various issues affecting children. It also acted as an observer for the project's implementation.

— **Réseau des éducateurs des enfants et jeunes de la rue (REEJER)**

This network includes more than 164 non-governmental organisations working to keep children off the streets. As a project partner, it provided assistance on multiple occasions for the development of standard operating procedures.

— **Ignitus Worldwide**

This organisation promotes human rights, and children's rights in particular, as well as justice and democracy. It also places women and children at the centre of community transformation.

— **Parlement des enfants**

Parlement des enfants enables children to work together as a group. Its mission is to raise awareness about challenges faced by children, discuss potential solutions and promote concrete actions to ensure better protection of children's rights.



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