

“VRAI DJO”: PROMOTING POSITIVE MALE ROLE MODELS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN THE DRC

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in the DRC, known locally as Centre Lokole, was established in 2001 to support communications around the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, the cornerstone of the peace process that began in Lusaka in 1999. Its overarching goals are to support the peace process, to promote unity for the Democratic Republic of Congo, and to reinforce the capacity of local organisations to resolve local conflicts through the use of media, arts, dialogue, and training programmes based in peacebuilding centres around the country.

The DRC has frequently been described as one of the most dangerous countries for women. Sexual and gender based violence are rampant throughout society. “Vrai Djo,” or “Real Man,” is a project using mass media funded by the British Government aimed raising awareness of the population of western DRC of the need to change behaviour towards women, and to shape male attitudes so that they are more respectful and positive. It provides men with a positive role model for what it means to be considerate and responsible towards women.



The campaign produced four audio spots and five short films, all of which feature local music celebrity Mazimi Movil, also known as Celeo Scram, as the positive role model. Celeo had previously been identified by locals as consistently having a positive image in DRC society.

The audio and video shorts contained five scenarios in which men might abuse women: a soldier’s interaction with female civilian, sexual advances in the workplace, child marriage and education, courtship and relationships that respect women, and domestic violence and the duties of women vis-a-vis their husbands.

This report presents the findings of the pre- and post-tests of the audio spots and short films to study groups in Kinshasa and Dongo, DRC. It utilized a mixed-methodology in order to assess shifts in attitude, culture and behaviour in pre- and post-screenings of the campaign.

CHANGING BEHAVIORS, CHANGING LIVES

One scenario portrayed by the Vrai Djo campaign concerned the issue of child marriage. A situation was posed in which parents are informed of their daughter’s poor academic performance, and whether or not they should simply marry her, or alternatively, sign her up for remedial courses.

There were considerable improvements between the pre and post-test screening results in both Kinshasa and Dongo. In the pre-test in Kinshasa, seven out of ten single adults said they would sign their daughter up for remedial courses, and this increased to 100% in the post-screening sample. Interestingly, in both pre- and post-screening samples, 100% of married men consistently said they would sign their daughter up for remedial courses instead of marriage.

In Dongo, the pre-test findings were considerably lower, but there was a marked improvement in the post-test screening sample. It should also be noted that the unit of measurement changed between the two locations: instead of groups composed of young singles, single adults and married adults, the Dongo sampling included teachers, local authorities and soldiers.

Are you opposed to child marriage?	Focus Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
	Teachers	52.6%	74.3%	+21.7%
	Local Authorities	37.8%	60%	+22.2%
	Soldiers	76%	90%	+14%

GEOGRAPHIC & CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE DRC

This study was conducted in two locations in the DRC: Kinshasa, the Capitol, situated in the southwest, and Dongo, located in the northwest. The study found considerable cultural differences between the two locations regarding the role of women in society. In Kinshasa, men were found to be quite understanding in the baseline if, for example, their wife were to come home late because of work. Five out of six young singles said they “would calmly ask their wife for an explanation,” as did eight out of ten single adults. Perhaps as a sign of values associated with urban modernity, all the married men in Kinshasa said they would calmly ask their wife for an explanation if she came home late because of work. These ratios remained consistent in the post-test, suggesting that cultural shifts regarding the role of women have already occurred in Kinshasa.

“During discussions, it became clear that the customs in Dongo in particular, and the province of Equateur in general, influenced the perception of the participants regarding the role and ‘place’ of women.”

In Dongo, however, the results were considerably different (with between +10-18% positive increases):

Would you understand if your wife came home late because of work?	Focus Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
	Teachers	62%	80%	+18%
	Local Authorities	58%	70%	+12%
	Soldiers	40%	50%	+10%

These results are largely consistent across the sampling, regardless of question, in Dongo. It suggests that SFCG’s decision to include Dongo in the campaign was indeed well made, and perhaps that the campaign should be expanded to more rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Extend the broadcasting period of “Vrai Djo” to reach the maximum number of beneficiaries as possible. This should involve a sustained and consistent effort to follow up on impact indicators, and increased local media ownership of the campaign.
- There should be additional sketches added to the film and audio spots to expand the issues dealt with in the campaign.

Source: This document is a summary of, and taken directly from “Vrai Djo Project Final Report.” A copy of this document can be acquired at <http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/drcongo/projects.html> or by contacting Nick Oatley, Director Institutional Learning at Search for Common Ground at noatley@sfcg.org

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