

**2011 KESHO NI SIKU MPYA – LOBI MOKOLO YA SIKA – TOMORROW IS A NEW DAY:
Project Evaluation**

A joint project with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to protect civilians, fight impunity and restore military-civilian relations

Since 2007 Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has worked with the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC). The project: “Tomorrow is a New Day” is funded by the Dutch Government and has three primary objectives:

- 1) **Raising awareness:** Fostering an increased awareness of human rights, conflict transformation principles, and the Military Code among the target brigades.
- 2) **Fighting Impunity:** Contributing to the fight against impunity by engaging the FARDC in denouncing violations, monitoring cases before military courts, and implementing an effective media outreach strategy.
- 3) **Collaboration and Solidarity:** Improving military-civilian relations by garnering mutual respect and an understanding of human rights, via joint cultural, sporting, dialogue, collaborative action, and income generating activities.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project draws upon high-visibility ‘solidarity activities,’ as well as sensitization sessions for FARDC troops, participatory theatre performances, mobile cinema screenings, and large-scale radio and television multi-media outreach.

Evaluation Methodology

Beginning in 2010, SFCG conducted in-depth project evaluations, using focus group discussions, surveys, and key informant interviews to assess the relationship between civilians and the FARDC. This combination of tools allowed us to collect a large random survey sample, hold in-depth discussions via focus groups, and speak to marginalized groups and select segments of society in key informant interviews. The evaluation methodology consisted of tracking civil-military relations in 16 localities in Ituri, North Katanga, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces, as well as the opinions of a sampling of soldiers deployed there.



R=Rwanda B=Burundi

Civilian population centers and FARDC units surveyed		
Region	Population centers	FARDC units
Ituri	Bambu, Bankoko, Iga Barriere, Kasenyi, Ngezi	1 st Brigade, 4 th Brigade, 7 th Brigade, 13 th Brigade, 73 rd battalion, and the Ituri Naval Unit
North Kivu	Bunagana, Kahunga, Kiwanja, Nyamilima	131 st Brigade: 2 nd Battalion 133 rd Brigade: 1 st Battalion, 2 nd Battalion, and the Command Staff
South Kivu	Bulambika, Hombo-Sud, Kambali	8 th Brigade Command Staff, 83 rd Battalion, and the 84 th Battalion
North Katanga	Kanengele, Kituku, Regeza, Makala Road	61 st Brigade, Naval Border Battalion (FSB), and the First Naval Unit of Kalemie
TOTAL	16 population centers	17 FARDC units

In total 2,633 people were interviewed and 341 participated in focus groups. Of those interviewed 22% of civilians and 44% of FARDC soldiers had listened to the *Lobi* radio program, figures that suggest a listenership in the millions. Also, 35% of civilians and 80% of soldiers had participated in a joint détente activity in the past three months, and as described below, the SFCG comic book has made a significant mark in the culture of the FARDC, all confirming the wide reach of the program.

Ituri Key Findings

Ituri has seen violence between militia groups, and between rebel forces and the national army.¹ The relationship between civilians and FARDC soldiers in this region is complex. SFCG's baseline found that civilians felt that FARDC soldiers could be abusive but recognized their role in protecting against armed groups. According to survey results at the beginning of the project, 68% of civilians agreed that the FARDC protected the local population, yet 37% also felt that the FARDC caused insecurity.

Six months later, SFCG returned to those communities to re-conduct surveys and focus group discussions after the *Lobi* program had launched in the area. New survey results reinforced focus group findings. There was a 26 percentage point increase, from 22% to 48%, in respondents rating cohabitation with the FARDC, as 'excellent'.

We want to live alongside the FARDC, considering what they have done for us: bringing peace to Ituri; and conducting community work with the population. We see them as our brothers, our children, our friends.

- Focus group participant in Bankoko, Ituri

North Kivu Key Findings

Bordering Uganda and Rwanda, North Kivu has been at the geographic center of the conflicts that have swept the Great Lakes. SFCG's study in North Kivu found the most somber outlook of the four eastern provinces. During focus group discussions, FARDC soldiers estimated that "40% of the civilian population was on the side of rebel groups." For their part, civilian focus group participants complained of extortion by the same rebel groups, and theft and forced labor at the hands of the FARDC. 52% of civilians complained that FARDC troops are rarely or never punished when they commit crimes, and only 35% felt that the FARDC helps civilians.

FARDC soldiers cited an SFCG comic book as a particularly effective tool for improving their behavior. Calling someone "Commandant Janvier", the name of the unscrupulous military officer who is the antagonist of the comic books, has come to be used as an insult within FARDC ranks. Soldiers in the focus group discussions said that the negative example of "Janvier" has encouraged soldiers to stop having sexual relations with young girls, and has led them to understand that their superiors can be arrested, as some have been.

South Kivu Key Findings

Like its northern neighbor, South Kivu has been at the heart of years of conflict in the DRC, and the site of many notorious abuses committed by all sides. Nonetheless, the results of the evaluation in

¹ Human Rights Watch. (July 7, 2003). Summary, in *Covered in Blood*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2003/07/07/covered-blood>

this province found signs of progress. SFCG has already worked with the FARDC's 8th brigade for two years. When they were redeployed to Hombo, the site of some of the most grave human rights abuses, there was a dramatic improvement in civilians' security. 92% of civilians surveyed said that this unit was better at protecting civilians than the previous one.

"If President Kabila wants peace, he should leave these military deployed here."

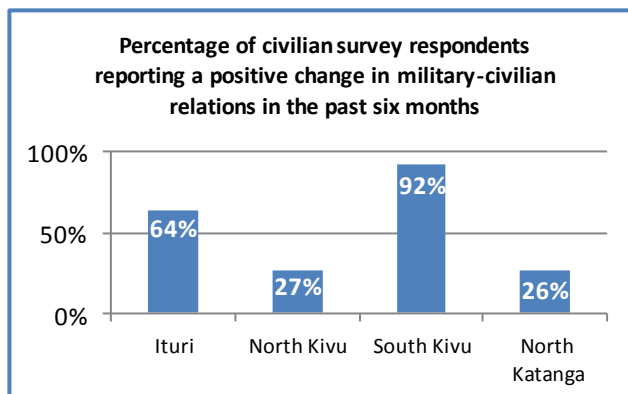
"If these military leave our area, we will follow them. Then we know we'll be safe."

- Civilians in South Kivu

Soldiers and civilians alike testified to the positive atmosphere in the area. FARDC soldiers explained that civilians help them by working together on local infrastructure, providing food and accommodation, and providing sensitive information on the locations and activities of armed groups. Civilians in SFCG focus groups considered the FARDC soldiers to be "family", and declared that impunity no longer reigns, as isolated incidents of theft and extortion were now well dealt with by FARDC commanders. 92% of civilian survey respondents had observed a positive change in military-civilian relations in the past six months, 66% rated cohabitation with the FARDC as "excellent", and only 4% said that the FARDC causes insecurity.

North Katanga Key Findings

Tanganyika district in Northern Katanga continued to be wracked by weak state apparatus, lingering effects of the war and the incomplete reintegration or demobilization of ex-combatants. Located alongside Lake Tanganyika, the evaluation in this area focused mainly on the navy. This is largely because troops that are integrated into naval forces have little or no prior naval experience, and due to the nature of naval service, operate somewhat independently. In focus group discussions FARDC troops explained how sensitization activities encouraged them to speak out against and commit less crime. They also understood how the change in their behavior had led the local population to have more trust in them, which in turn resulted in improved security. From May of 2010 to March of 2011 the percentage of civilians rating cohabitation with the FARDC as 'good' has gone from 19% to 45%. However, there was a much more modest decline, from 33% to 31%, of civilians stating that the FARDC causes insecurity.



Next Steps

SFCG is continuing to evaluate this program. Follow-up missions are planned in 2011 to targeted sites in South and North Kivu provinces. Additionally, SFCG monitors its work through listener feedback hotlines and structured interviews with a sampling of participants at project activities. A final evaluation report is expected to appear in December 2011.

Source: This document is a summary of the project evaluation, "Kesho Ni Siku Mpya- Lobi Mokolo Ya Sika- Tomorrow Is A New Day." A copy of this document can be acquired online at sfcg.org, or by contacting Nick Oatley, Director of Institutional Learning at Search for Common Ground at noatley@sfcg.org

**John Marks
President**

Search for Common Ground
1601 Connecticut Avenue NW | Suite 200
Washington, DC 20009 | USA
Tel: +1 202 777 2222 | jmarks@sfcg.org

**Dirk-Jan Koch
Country Director**

Search for Common Ground DRC/ Centre Lokole
Tel: 243 991 009 889 | dkoch@sfcg.org



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Understanding Differences; Acting on Commonalities (www.sfcg.org)