



**INVISIBLE
CHILDREN**

2021

Impact Report

To our partners and friends,
we thank you

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Who We Are

Invisible Children was founded in 2004 to help end two decades of mass violence and child abductions by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Today, with the support of partners and friends like you, we are leveraging the expertise and relationships we have built to increase our impact. Our community-based programs and conflict analysis help local peacebuilders develop innovative methods to prevent violence and build sustainable peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

VISION

We are building a world where all people and the planet thrive together.

MISSION

We exist to end violent conflict and foster thriving ecosystems in solidarity with our world's most at-risk communities.





Dear friends,

On the afternoon of February 15, 2021, a Central African woman named Tatiana received word through Invisible Children’s Early Warning HF radio System that an armed group was moving towards her community in a remote region of eastern Central African Republic (CAR). Tatiana serves as the Vice President of her community’s local Peace Committee and, as part of Invisible Children’s community protection and resilience program, Tatiana’s Peace Committee worked together with us and the broader community to create a local Community Action Plan that detailed what their community would do in response to potential threats of violence like an approaching armed group. Just as planned, Tatiana and her Peace Committee immediately alerted the community and helped families evacuate to a predetermined safe location. Hours later, as the armed group moved through the community, the population remained safe and out of reach thanks to the swift and smart efforts of the Peace Committee.

Tatiana later told our Invisible Children CAR team, “Without the Peace Committee, our community

would have been looted and destroyed. This program saved our lives.”

As harrowing and remarkable as Tatiana’s story is, it is one of many stories of heroic, creative, life-saving action by Invisible Children-supported communities across central Africa. Stories like these, and unsung heroes like Tatiana, inspire our programmatic work and fuel our commitment to building a peaceful and thriving central Africa by supporting local solutions and peacebuilders.

While Tatiana and others like her continue to inspire us, our work is far from finished. The tragic and unjust reality is that the central Africa region where we and our local partners operate remains one of the most isolated and ungoverned areas on the planet. Families and children across central Africa continue to be neglected by their own governments and vulnerable to armed group violence and exploitation. The insecurity, violence, and trauma they have experienced will have ripple effects that could last for generations.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. A peaceful and thriving central Africa is possible if local peacebuilders like Tatiana are given the chance to lead the way.

That is why Invisible Children has made it our mission to end violent conflict by working in solidarity with our world’s at-risk communities. Our programs seek to leverage the resilience, creativity, and expertise that already exists in these communities because we believe that the people most affected by injustice are also best positioned to design effective solutions.

What does this look like in practice? Invisible Children takes a holistic approach centered around two key priorities: community-led violence prevention and community-led peacebuilding and resilience. All of our programs – from locally-run Early Warning Systems and political advocacy to our community-based trauma healing initiatives — are designed to strengthen the ability of central African organizations and community volunteers to prevent violent conflict, help their own communities recover when violence does occur, and build resilient, cohesive communities

“Invisible Children’s approach reflects an extraordinary combination of grit, humility, endurance, and smarts – a recipe with proven impact for communities in central Africa. Our programs help create safety and well-being for people who are facing violence and exploitation. Together with our partners, we are building sustainable solutions to seemingly intractable problems. It is an honor to serve this vision and communities in central Africa as the Chair of Invisible Children’s Board.”

MICHAEL POFFENBERGER
Chair, Board of Directors

that are committed to lasting peace. (Pages 9-10 of this report provide a comprehensive breakdown of our programs and how they work together).

None of these life-saving programs would be possible without you. As an Invisible Children supporter, you are part of an incredible and vital ecosystem of peacebuilders alongside Peace Committee members like Tatiana, our remarkable Invisible Children staff, Board, and local partners. We are deeply grateful to be on this journey with you and we hope you feel proud of the impact you are making.

Our liberty is bound together,

LISA DOUGAN
President & CEO, Invisible Children

Our Operating Environment

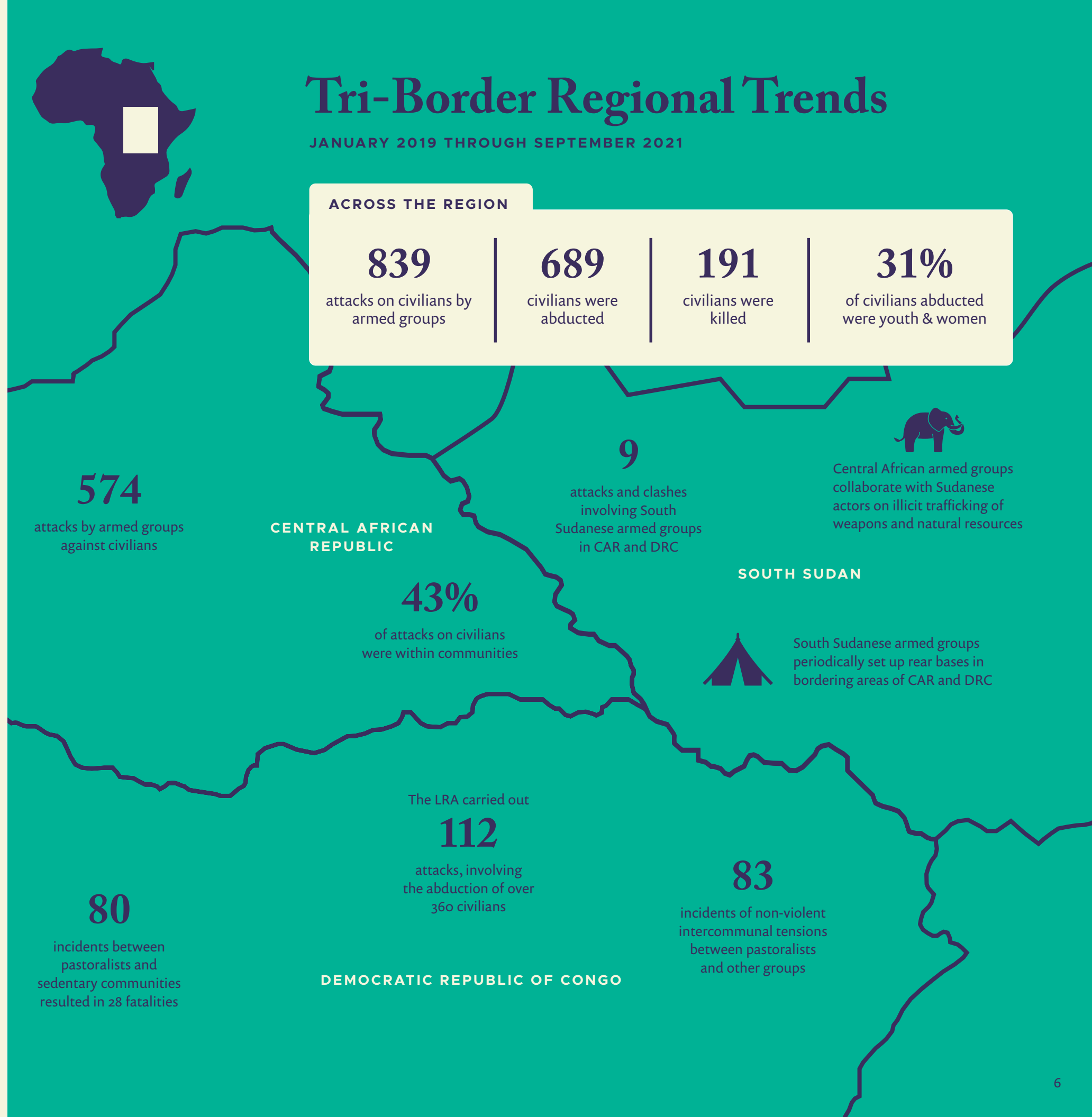
Invisible Children works in the tri-border region of the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. Ethnic groups and communities in this region span across porous national borders facilitating vibrant cross-border trade and movements of people.

Challenges, however, are also cross-border as communities grapple with poverty and a history of neglect. Poor roads and a lack of internet or cellular networks means that many civilians in the tri-border area are cut-off from each other and urban centers. Formal justice systems are weak throughout the region, especially in rural areas, reducing access to conflict resolution and accountability mechanisms. These conditions, combined with the proliferation of small arms and illicit markets for natural resources, have led to insecurity for both people and the environment.

Our deep experience over the past decade has made Invisible Children a regional security expert. The information and expert analysis we provide allows for more effective prevention of atrocities and conflict.

THE CRISIS TRACKER

Invisible Children collects data and analyzes trends in armed group and intercommunal violence in isolated areas of central Africa via our Crisis Tracker database and conflict mapping tool. We provide in-depth, up-to-date analysis on these trends to humanitarians, conservation experts, local peacebuilding partners, and others working in the region. All of the information here comes from the Crisis Tracker; to learn more, scan the QR code.



Meet Our Partners

Invisible Children invites you to meet some of the partners who work with us on a daily basis to develop Peace Committees (community volunteer groups); provide mental health and trauma support; prevent violence; and build peace.

We know that the most effective solutions to violence and exploitation will be crafted by a diverse community, with those most affected by injustice at the head of the table. We work hand in hand with locally-led community and grassroots organizations to develop and implement our programs while building local capacity. Our approach ensures that the solutions we implement are sustainable.

In the Central African Republic

BRIA LONDO

Community partner Bria Londo works with Invisible Children to support volunteer Peace Committees and implement peacebuilding programs in the greater Bria region.

UNION D'ASSISTANCE AUX ORPHELINS ET ENFANTS VULNÉRABLES (UAOEV)

Invisible Children psychologists work with UAOEV to coordinate community mental health initiatives such as community trauma healing seminars and training and supporting community counselor teams.



In the Democratic Republic of Congo

SOLIDARITÉ ET ASSISTANCE INTÉGRALE AUX PERSONNES DÉMUNIES (SAIPED)

A community partner based in Dungu, SAIPED works with Invisible Children to implement Peace Committee programming, as well as developing and deploying sensitization messaging on peacebuilding and conservation through mobile cinema, FM radio broadcasts, and micro SD card distribution.

COMMISSION DIOCÉSAINE JUSTICE ET PAIX (CDJP)

Founded by Father Benoit Kinelegu in Dungu, CDJP developed a local communication network which, in 2010, Invisible Children helped expand into the Early Warning System. CDJP and Invisible Children's partnership has played a critical role in documenting and preventing atrocities by the LRA and other armed groups and sharing information on missing persons.

CARITAS DÉVELOPPEMENT BONDO

Caritas helps facilitate regular communications between communities in the region using Invisible Children's Early Warning System. They also play a critical role in supporting and training Peace Committees, and facilitate regular collaboration between Peace Committees to share strategies for reducing risk in the region.

In South Sudan

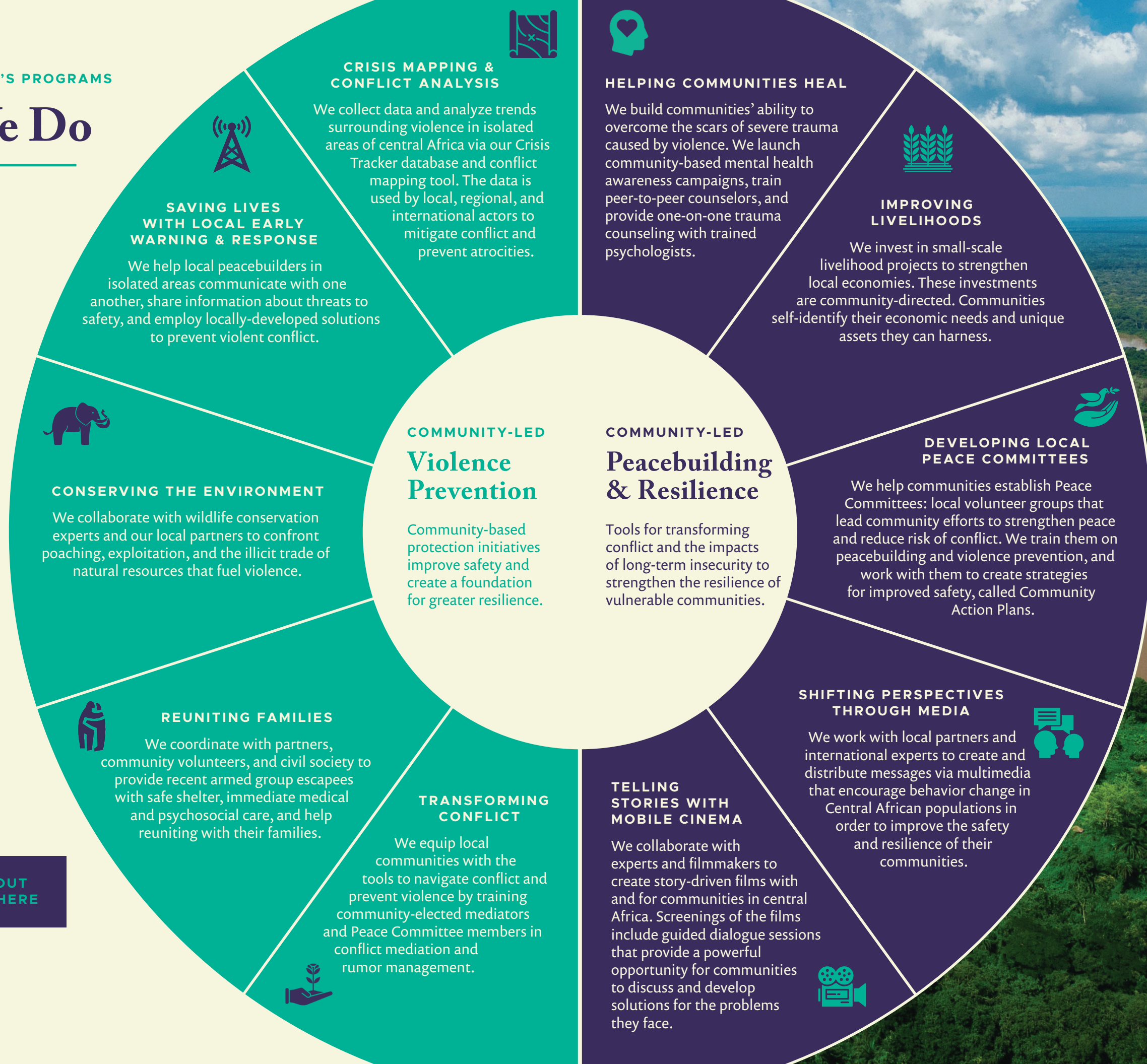
INTERCHURCH COMMITTEE OF SOUTH SUDAN (ICCSS)

Invisible Children partners with ICCSS to carry out Early Warning and Response and Peace Committee development programming. They are also key collaborators in implementing sensitization messaging using FM radio broadcasts and SD cards to promote peace.



What We Do

Invisible Children knows that long-term peacebuilding is not possible without addressing the immediate threat of violence. And that ending violence is not possible if communities are not stable and resilient. That is why our programs have two, mutually reinforcing focus-areas: Community-Led Violence Prevention and Community-Led Peacebuilding and Resilience.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS HERE



Saving Lives with Local Early Warning, Response & Communications



In the Spring of 2021, an armed group barricaded a road in the Bas Uele province of DRC and began ambushing unsuspecting travelers and looting their food. Fleeing civilians alerted the local Peace Committee who activated their plan and used Invisible Children's Early Warning System to alert security forces and neighboring communities.

Gerald*, a community member who had been a victim of the attack, explained that because of the rapid alert:

“The security forces were able to intervene and prevent future violence. Community members in Bangu have been victims of atrocities committed by the LRA, but since the implementation of the Early Warning and Response System, it has experienced calm knowing the military can be immediately alerted and can intervene promptly to protect the community.”

COMMUNITY-BASED COMMUNICATION & EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Communities in remote areas of central Africa have little to no access to cellular networks and the internet. This makes it difficult to call for help or warn neighboring communities when armed groups are present. It also limits basic information exchange and coordination.

Over the past decade, Invisible Children expanded and formalized an Early Warning System founded by Congolese priest, Father Benoit Kinelegu. Today, this system connects more than 160 isolated communities to one another through a variety of communication tools.

Communities are able to regularly and rapidly share information with one another and Invisible Children's Crisis Tracker conflict analysis team. It allows the safe exchange of life-saving information about imminent threats and broader security trends.

Invisible Children supported Peace Committees are also enabled to share critical information with one another about public health, conservation, conflict mediation, and more. Critically, this enables them to create local risk reduction plans, called Community Action Plans, and coordinate regional response and resiliency initiatives, called Network Community Action Plans.

2021 IMPACT

- 165** communities are connected through the Early Warning and Response System
- 156** times communities collaborated on an early response strategy
- 269** instances early warning alerts were used by communities to reduce risk
- 151** community Action Plans created since the inception of the program
- 97%** of Peace Committee members believe that the Peace Committee program has helped make their community safer and reduced their exposure to armed groups

In addition to expanding the existing communications tools, Invisible Children is working with international telecommunications providers to expand cell networks in the region and distribute SIM cards to pull more communities in central Africa out of isolation.

Inspiring Change with Mobile Cinema



Lack of information, the spread of misinformation, and deeply-rooted mistrust often prevent people from effectively addressing the challenges facing their communities. Storytelling through film is a powerful way to challenge a society's perceptions and behaviors and catalyze collective action for positive change. Invisible Children collaborates with local and international experts and filmmakers to create short films with and for communities in central Africa.

Screenings of these films are paired with guided dialogue sessions that provide a powerful opportunity for communities to discuss the issues they face in new and imaginative ways in order to develop community-driven solutions.

In late 2020, we released Invisible Children's third award-winning mobile cinema film: *Le Pouvoir du Dialogue (The Power of Dialogue)*. Previous films include *They Came at Night* and *Ani Wa Sa*.

LE POUVOIR DU DIALOGUE (THE POWER OF DIALOGUE)

Created in partnership with Bria Londo and OAZ Entertainment, *Le Pouvoir du Dialogue* is Invisible Children's first mobile cinema film to be entirely developed and created by Central African artists and filmmakers. It is designed to promote dialogue as a tool for addressing conflict and support local peacebuilding efforts in areas of eastern CAR facing intercommunal tensions and violence.

Le Pouvoir du Dialogue tells the story of two communities at odds following the assault of a girl, Nathalie. Nathalie's community seeks revenge by attacking the perpetrator's community which leads to increased tensions and threats. Community leaders gather to discuss how to solve the issues to de-escalate violence: Should they continue to attack one another? One leader expresses the need to reach out to angry community members to de-escalate the situation.

Meanwhile, Nathalie and her children find refuge at their neighbor's house who comes under attack for sheltering her and her family. However, community leaders intervene to put a stop to the situation by sensitizing the group that has now gathered there on the negative consequences of senseless killing. They explain that attacking

2021 IMPACT

- 2,000** SD cards with *Le Pouvoir du Dialogue* were distributed to communities
- 10** Peace Committees were involved in the grassroots distribution of *Le Pouvoir du Dialogue*
- 10,000** people have participated in *They Came at Night* screenings
- 78** screenings of *Ani Wa Sa*

innocent civilians will not bring justice and will only lead to more violence. Rather, they encourage them to disarm and accompany them to a meeting of leaders to resolve intercommunal tensions. The armed men lay down their weapons and follow.

The story concludes with a voice over message that reminds audiences that prioritizing conflict de-escalation through dialogue is a better way to achieve peace.



*Gerald is a pseudonym

Reuniting Families & Helping Communities Heal



In the middle of the night, on February 25, 2021, 21 captives escaped from a LRA group in CAR and fled across the border into DRC. It was the largest en masse defection in years and part of a surge of escapes. In three months, 62 individuals - mostly children - escaped long-term captivity by the LRA.

These escapees were hundreds of miles from home and had no money or resources. Invisible Children and our local partners immediately got to work. We placed escapees in Invisible Children-supported host families where they were cared for and protected from re-abduction. Meanwhile, Peace Committees used our Early Warning System to locate and contact the families of the escapees. We then worked with our partners in the region to ultimately reunite them with their families and loved ones.

Ensuring their safety is only the first step. Individuals who escape armed groups need mental health support to help them overcome trauma and reintegrate into their communities. Our trained psychologists provide counseling and help them begin their process of healing, while we work to reunite them with their families.

Long before attention to mental health became mainstream, Invisible Children was quietly and intently building the capabilities to provide psychosocial support for those affected by violent conflict in central Africa. These thoughtful, integrated programs have made me a long-term monthly donor.

— Melissa West, Washington, USA

MENTAL HEALTH

Along with providing direct counseling to returnees and other survivors of violent conflict, Invisible Children works to address mental health needs more broadly by developing local capacity for psychological care at the community level.

Mental health services are extremely limited and often unavailable for many people in the remote areas where Invisible Children works. We help build local communities' capacity to address the "hidden scars" of severe trauma caused by cycles of violence and poverty. We accomplish this through community-based awareness campaigns, training volunteer peer-to-peer counselors in Psychological First Aid, and providing one-on-one trauma counseling with trained psychologists. We also work with local health care facilities to equip them with the resources they need to provide mental health services.

We plan to expand the reach and scope of our mental health programming for years to come.



2021 IMPACT

1,779 high-needs individuals received counseling

75% of high-needs individuals demonstrate improved mental health upon discharge

172 children received counseling

1,102 women have received counseling, including addressing gender-based violence

105 teams of community counselors are trained and actively providing first aid mental health services and referrals to Invisible Children psychologists

1,420 individuals have participated in community trauma awareness and healing seminars

Advocacy



Advocacy is part of Invisible Children's DNA. We've been mobilizing people and resources for communities affected by conflict for nearly two decades with major policy wins along the way.

A key focus over the past year has been advocating to the United States (US) Congress for increased funding for programs like Invisible Children's Early Warning System and reintegration of formerly abducted persons.

Our efforts resulted in \$10 million in the FY22 federal budget for these types of programs in central Africa, as well as \$3 million to support the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Invisible Children also co-chairs an NGO Working Group to advocate for US government resources and diplomatic efforts towards addressing the crisis in the CAR.

The NGO Working Group has played a critical role in ensuring continued US government efforts to address the crisis in CAR even as other global crises command more media attention.

Securing government resources is just part of our advocacy work. More broadly, we remain committed to ensuring that the violence and injustice that's perpetrated in central Africa doesn't happen in silence. Through our Early Warning System, Crisis Tracker, and partnerships with communities, Invisible Children is a leading source of information on conflict in the tri-border region. We collect and analyze data and share it across the region and with the rest of the world to encourage and enable effective intervention and atrocity prevention.

Invisible Children is committed to bearing witness to the lived experience of the communities we partner with in order to catalyze solutions, resources, and intervention.

"For the past several years FCNL and Invisible Children have worked in coalition to increase U.S. funding for peacebuilding. In lobby meetings that can often become technical and abstract, Invisible Children focuses on the human stories of peacebuilding. They illustrate to Hill staffers how budget priorities and decisions made in Washington, can have a real impact on peace in central Africa."

- Ursula Knudsen-Latta | Legislative Manager for Peacebuilding Policy, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)



Like much of the continent,

the tri-border region of central Africa that Invisible Children works in can't be understood strictly within colonially imposed national borders. As a career environmentalist and humanitarian, I know that problems (but also resources and human resilience) rarely confine themselves to lines on a map. This is especially true of the area we work in, and as such, Invisible Children internalizes this reality unlike any organization I've ever been a part of.

Our unwavering commitment to the tri-border nexus over the past decade has given us a deep understanding of this precious and complex region and also fostered relationships built on mutual trust and respect with the communities there. These are the intangibles that Invisible Children has cultivated that set our work apart and continue to burgeon critical and life-saving programming.

What also sets Invisible Children apart is our ability to adapt to changes. As armed group dynamics shift and become more sophisticated in central Africa, natural resource extraction is increasingly a primary source of income and fuels campaigns of violence against civilians.

In response, we have adapted our programming to explicitly address illicit wildlife trafficking and natural resource extraction. We are prioritizing this in order to support communities who live in the resource-rich Congo Basin who, as a result, are constantly under threat by exploitative armed groups. But we also recognize that this violence poses a threat to our planetary, and therefore collective, wellbeing.

When I joined Invisible Children, I was greeted with the mantra "Our Liberty is Bound Together." Everyday, the organization lives this out. We work in tandem with leaders in central Africa, supporting community-led violence and peacebuilding with resources and infrastructure. And, as they work to ensure a better future for their communities and natural environment, they are also ensuring our collective wellbeing.

We are deeply aware of our interconnection to the people and natural environment in the tri-border region and we work every day to ensure our programming reflects this.

Thank you for supporting this critical work that I am honored to be a part of.

DR. BILA-ISA INOGWABINI, PHD
| Country Director, DRC

Thank You

"I've supported Invisible Children for a decade now after becoming aware of the horrifying abduction of children in Uganda, CAR, and DRC. I'm a proud supporter because they're passionate about serving communities that are vulnerable to violence and intentional about developing relationships. From developing practical 'early warning' techniques, to educating communities about the devastating ripple effect of trauma - everything Invisible Children does is responsive to the changing needs of the people they serve. I'm delighted to support their wonderful work!" - Maria Armitage, Dorset UK

INDIVIDUALS

Liz Allen
Maria Armitage
Shaun Austin
Sarah Barnes
Zachary Barrows
Samantha Benassai
Angela Bentley
Brianna Blaisdell
Hebote Boughey
Rebecca Bower
Laurie Boykoff
Bethany Bylsma
Yolanda Chankuo
Colin Chapman
Carmen Diaz
Margie Dillenburg
Sreenivasa Doppalapudi
Varsha Doppalapudi
Jessica Eagan
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Patrick John Fenton
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Eugene Kim
James Knipper
Antonio Lucero
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Debra McManus
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Buffy Miller
John Montgomery
Jessica Morris
Maya Moseley
Juli Moses
Keith Muhlenkamp
Robyn Murray

INSTITUTIONS

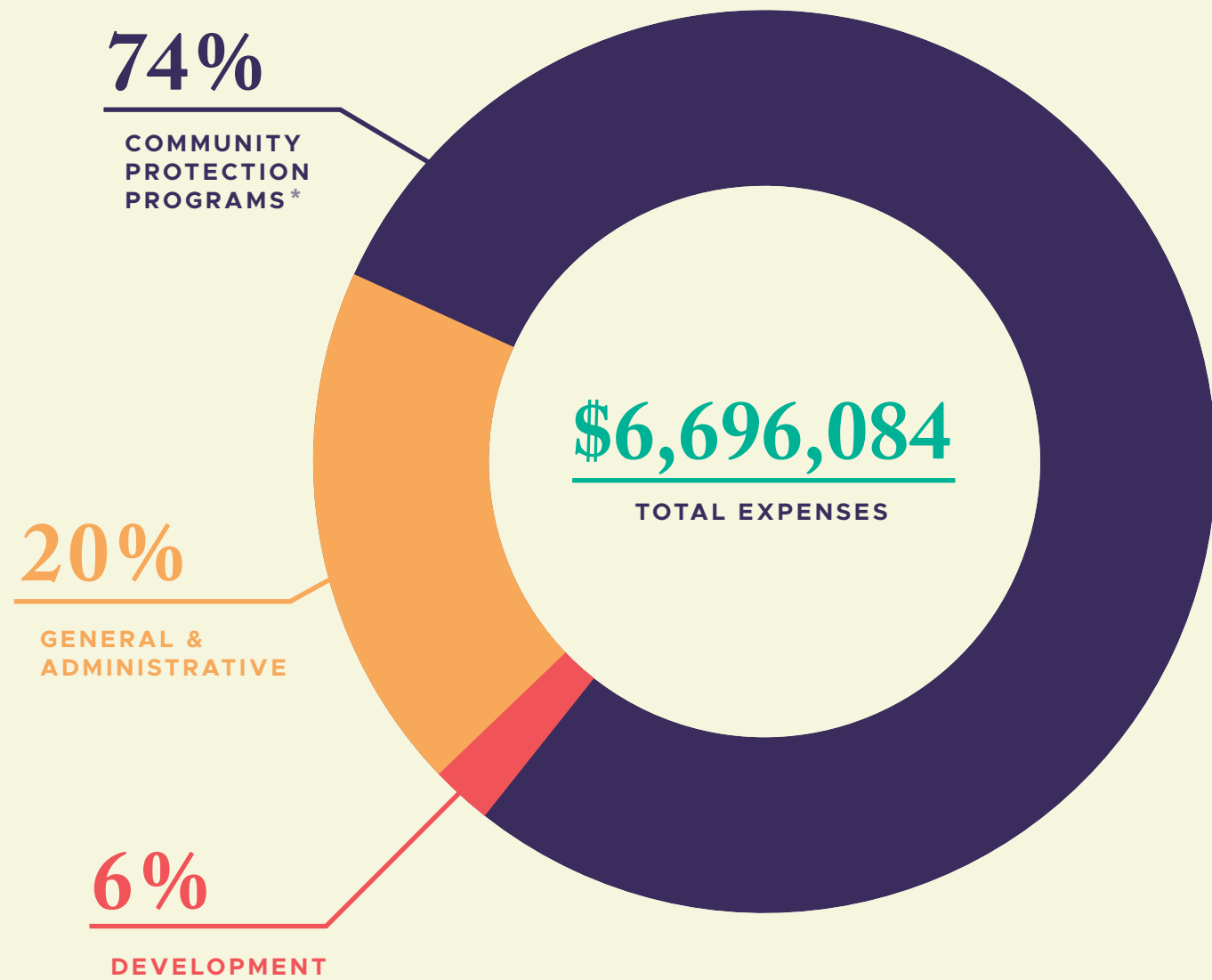
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We also thank the donors who have preferred to remain anonymous.

2021 Financials



OUR TEAM BY COUNTRY

46

Democratic Republic of Congo

60

Central African Republic

12

United States of America

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