



Les Enfants
de Panzi et d'ailleurs

Annual report 2023



Foreword

from the President of CPE

2023 closes on a note of hope and optimism for the children of Panzi and elsewhere. Unfortunately, we have to admit that many children around the world continue to suffer more and more from the barbarity of adults.

In Ukraine, Syria, Gaza, Sudan and many other often forgotten countries, the future of far too many children is threatened. And when children's futures are threatened, isn't our entire humanity at risk?

The multiplication and complexity of crises is a real challenge for humanitarian aid workers. It is therefore with deep gratitude and many plans for the future that I present our association's annual report for 2023.

Our organization has undergone significant developments over the past year. Despite the challenges, we have maintained our program and offered the children family integration, psychological balance, access to quality education and initiation into various trades.

At the same time, we have expanded our network of local and international partners, strengthening our ability to reach a greater number of children in need.

Synergies with other organizations have also enhanced the effectiveness of our interventions, particularly in the areas of prevention and awareness-raising. And while we are proud of the progress we have made, we are also aware of the continuing challenges.

Limited resources and complex geopolitical circumstances require us to be constantly adaptable. We remain determined to overcome these obstacles, aware that every child we help represents another step towards a better future.

Our successes would not have been possible without the tireless dedication of our team in the DRC and in Belgium, the unfailing support of our donors and the renewed confidence of our partners. Once again, we would like to thank all those who have contributed, directly or indirectly, to the realization of our mission.

The coming year will be marked by new challenges, but also by new opportunities. We intend to expand our training programs, step up our prevention efforts and strengthen our impact on communities in the DRC. We must also intensify our fundraising campaigns.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the cause of vulnerable children in armed conflicts, and in particular children who are victims of and born out of sexual violence. Together, we can create a world where every child has the opportunity to realize his or her full potential.

Cathleen de Kerchove

President and co-founder of CPE

Table of contents

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Foreword | 2 |
| Presenting CPE | 4 |
| Organization chart | 7 |
| Mission, Vision, Values | 8 |
| Objectives | 9 |
| 2023 achievements | 10 |
| Home visits | 11 |
| Therapeutic playgrounds | 12 |
| School support | 13 |
| Prevention campaigns | 14 |
| Radio campaigns | 15 |
| The young women of CPE | 16 |
| The story of Nadia | 17 |
| Trainings | 18 |
| Missions | 19 |
| Event : Jambo 4 | 20 |
| Challenges and perspectives | 21 |

Presenting CPE



In many countries, sexual violence is still used to humiliate, terrorize and destroy communities. It has very long-term consequences for women, young girls and, more recently, even babies. This crime still goes largely unpunished, and victims rarely receive any reparation, be it physical, social or legal.

Between 1996 and 2012, over 200,000 women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo were victims of sexual violence. (UN, 2012) This alarming number of cases of sexual violence is denounced by the UN and by Dr. Mukwege, gynecological surgeon and co-winner of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.

Doctor Mukwege treats victims of sexual violence at the Panzi hospital in Bukavu.

In Panzi, medical care for victims is complemented by a holistic psychosocial program.

In 2013, Dr. Mukwege began to see younger and younger children arriving at his hospital. He was unable to offer them the same holistic care because of their family background : their mother left her other young children in the village, whom she had to care for and work to support.

It was at Doctor Mukwege's request that Véronique De Keyser, Cathleen de Kerchove, Isabelle Durant and Marie-Dominique Simonet decided to create the non-profit organization The Children of Panzi and Elsewhere (CPE) in 2015.

Presenting CPE



CPE cares for young victims of severe trauma in conflict and post-conflict zones, with a particular focus on children who are victims of and/or born of sexual violence.

CPE has developed a three-year holistic psychosocial care methodology for children in partnership with the University of Liège (ULiège). This methodology is taught on an ongoing basis to local teams of psychologists and psychosocial assistants, and is the subject of training courses for other non-governmental organizations.

The local team accompanies these young victims of serious violence, using individual therapies, but also group therapies inspired by play therapy and art therapy, school support, and support for mothers and families.

This comprehensive care is complemented by prevention campaigns on themes relating to children's rights, education, conflict prevention and sustainable development goals (SDG's). These campaigns are aimed at children's parents, teachers and community leaders.

CPE initially supported a first group of children, mostly victims of sexual violence, for 3 years. In 2020, a second group of children was supported, this time children born of sexual violence. Children from the village also take part in CPE's group therapies to avoid any stigmatization.

Presenting CPE



The CPE methodology takes place over three years.

In the first year, CPE psychologists organize activities around themes such as attachment and identity. In the second year, activities focus on strengthening personal resources, expressing and regulating emotions, and finally, in the third year, addressing the child's traumatic history, and working to build a better future with the child.

Since its creation, the association has worked closely with the Panzi Foundation DRC and the Panzi Foundation USA. The Panzi Foundation DRC employs CPE's local team, while the Panzi Foundation USA coordinates various financial aspects.

CPE also works closely with ULIège: its holistic methodology has been validated by the university, which also analyzes the data collected in the field.

All of this wouldn't have been possible without the immense support of our donors, especially the Kingdom of Belgium Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and Mankind Is My Business Foundation.

For one-off projects, EPA has also received support from UNWG Geneva and the City of Liège.

In Belgium, CPE counts on the support of Silversquare and Doctors of the World to host its employees.

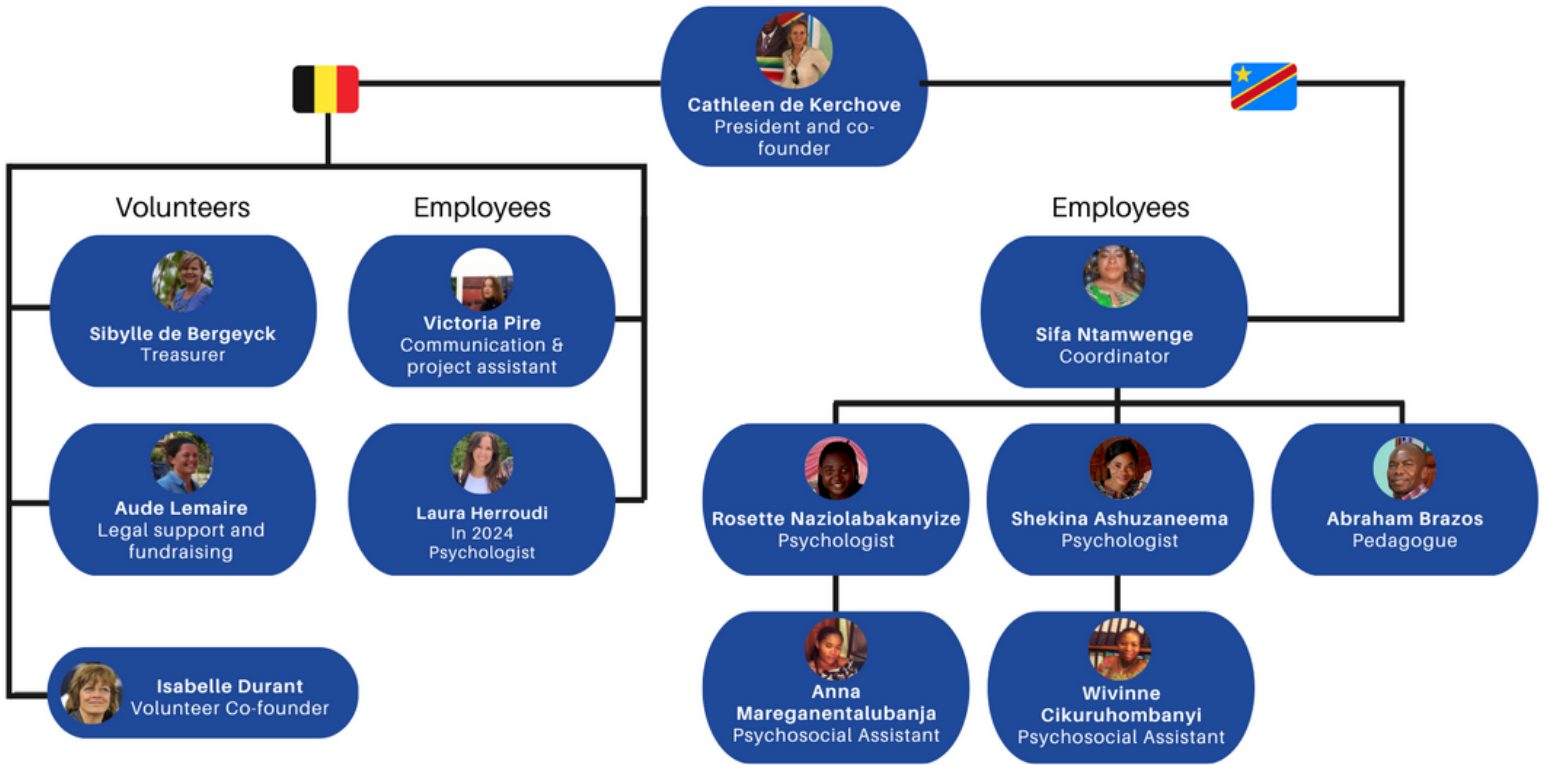


Organization chart



THE CHILDREN OF PANZI AND ELSEWHERE

Organizational chart





Mission

Accompany very young children who are victims and/or born of rape in conflict and post-conflict zones towards psychological reconstruction and a possible future within their community.

Vision

Facilitate access to reparations for children who have been victims of sexual violence through holistic psychosocial care.

Values

Our actions are committed, collaborative and sustainable, with a basic principle of *do no harm*.

Objectives

Provide psychosocial support
to child victims of trauma in armed conflicts

Build
a better future

Raise awareness
on children's rights, gender equality and sustainable development goals

Promote
peace and education

2023 achievements

IN KAVUMU

40 children born of rape, 10 from the community

520 home visits

13 therapeutic playgrounds

12 prevention and awareness campaigns

6 radio campaigns

IN BUNYAKIRI

30 children born of rape, 20 from the community

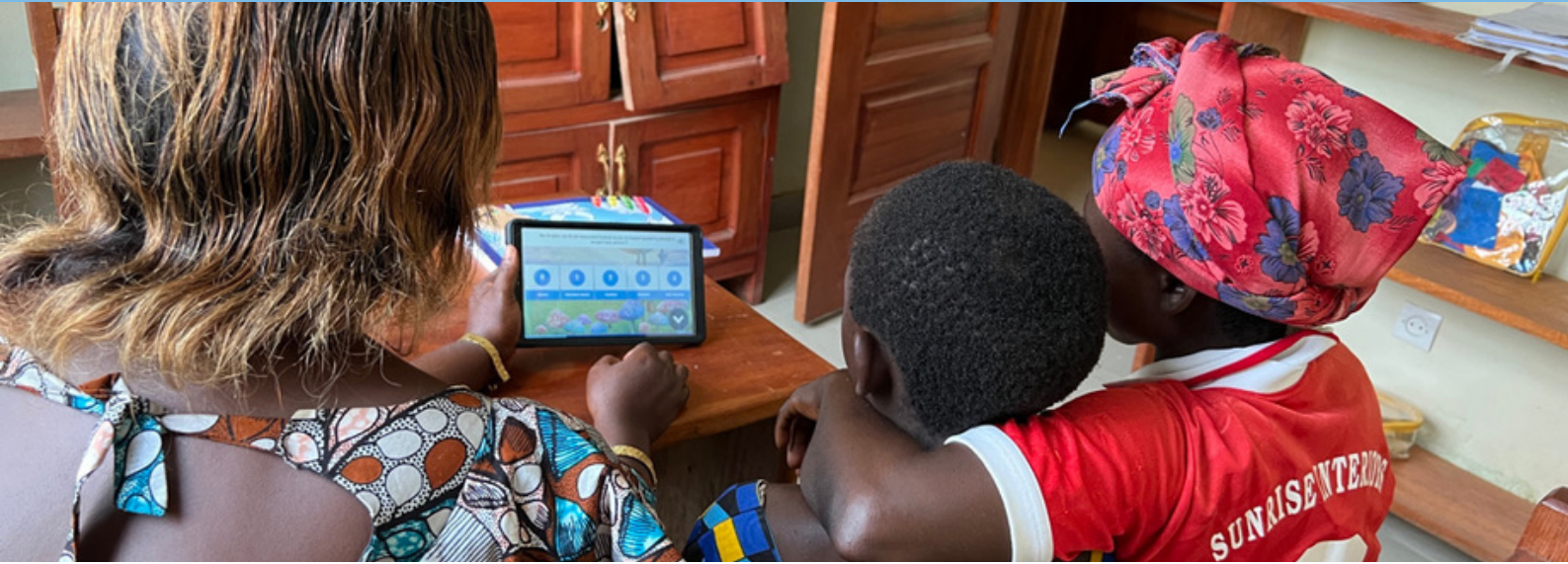
320 home visits

12 therapeutic playgrounds

12 prevention and awareness campaigns

6 radio campaigns

Home visits



Home visits enable CPE’s psychologists and psychosocial assistants to meet the children in their family environment.

During these visits, the psychologists establish a climate of trust with the children and their families. They observe the child's interactions with his or her environment and loved ones and intervene if necessary, with appropriate therapies and psycho-education.

In 2023, the field workers also conducted home visits to administer end-of-program tests to children and mothers using the Kooki application, created in 2022 by CPE.

The app is designed to replace tedious paper-based psychometric tests, which often lead to transcription errors. It also enables data to be recorded directly on the database, making it easy to analyze results.

Therapeutic playgrounds



Therapeutic playgrounds are organized for the group of children suffering from trauma, while also including children from the community. In this way, CPE aims to prevent any form of stigmatization between the children.

These group therapies are organized over three years, twice a month, and explore evolving themes designed to support the child's development and integration of his or her traumatic history.

Mothers are also invited to take part in these playgrounds. Their presence is important for strengthening the bond of attachment, exchanging ideas with other moms and fostering their integration into the community. They are also invited to, in turns, prepare the children's meals, for which they receive financial compensation that they are encouraged to invest in an income-generating activity.

CPE also ensures that the children receive a general education in health, personal hygiene and nutrition.

School support



CPE attaches great importance to promoting education in its program. The communities in which the organization operates are extremely vulnerable, with little to no access to information. Children generally start working at an early age to contribute to their family's financial resources.

CPE promotes education throughout its program : field workers support the children and explain the importance of applying themselves to school. The project's pedagogue leads prevention campaigns on the benefits of consistent and sustained education, and the CPE Belgium team seeks subsidies to help families finance their children's schooling.

The children's parents, educators, and teachers are also involved in the program to ensure better monitoring of their education. CPE provides school kits (including uniforms, school bags, and stationery) to every child in the program, thanks to the generous support of donors.

Prevention campaigns



CPE's prevention and awareness campaigns are part of the program's community dimension. Their aim is to support the children's parents, involve teachers, strengthen social ties in the community and appeal to community leaders.

Prevention and awareness-raising themes are prepared in advance, based on needs observed on the field, children's needs and parents' questions.

Campaigns focus on children's rights, gender equality, conflict prevention and, more generally, the Sustainable Development Goals.

Radio campaigns



In July 2023, CPE initiated radio programs focused on prevention and awareness raising. They have garnered significant success, with increasing audience ratings and growing community interest each month.

The programs are overseen by CPE's pedagogue, who has extensive experience in organizing prevention campaigns within the communities. He is supported by CPE psychologists and a panel of guests, each bringing expertise relevant to the theme being discussed.

The program themes are consistently aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The young women of CPE



The first group of girls cared for by CPE consisted mainly of young girls who had been victims of sexual violence.

Although these girls have now grown up and are, for the most part, well-adjusted students, CPE continues to monitor their development and listen to each of them. This year, the field teams organized three home visits for each of the girls.

They were also invited to take part in an embroidery/sewing workshop organized by an expert from Belgium, who will continue the introductory embroidery course in 2024.

Nadia's story

(borrowed name)



“

Little Nadia was raped when she was just 8 years old, in 2016. One night, rebel soldiers broke into her home, abducted her into the forest and subjected her to severe sexual violence, leaving her for dead.

The next day, her grandparents found her just in time to save her and take her to Panzi hospital, where Dr. Mukwege provided her with the surgical care necessary for her physical reconstruction.

Nadia is part of a long list of little girls who have lived through the unthinkable. She was part of phase one of the CPE program. The psychosocial reconstruction program enabled her to express her trauma, to feel supported, to work on her emotional bond with her grandparents and to keep going to school even though her life had been destroyed.

Today, Nadia is 15 years old. She is in her 5th year of secondary school and one of the best students in her class. She wants to study psychology at the University of Bukavu, so that she can provide psychological support to vulnerable children in her community. She is an example of resilience and courage in Kavumu.

Trainings



The CPE Belgium team trains psychologists and field workers from several other associations in the DRC and elsewhere, to build their capacity to care for children who have suffered severe trauma in armed conflicts.

The tools developed and used by CPE are made available to partners as required.

The training courses are interactive and based on theoretical concepts linked to the child's clinic. The experience of each participant is solicited, and clinical cases are presented in each chapter and documented by the theoretical foundations of the psychotrauma clinic.

Missions

The CPE Belgium team organizes three to four field visits each year. In 2023, the President visited Bukavu three times. The aim of each visit is to continue training the teams, meet local partners and supervise activities organized for the children.

In January, Cathleen de Kerchove visited Bukavu for a 10-day mission. One of the highlights of the visit was the presence of Damien Boyer, a French film-maker who came to film his next documentary on children born of rape, *Prendre un enfant par la main* ("Take a child by the hand").



In February, CPE co-founders Cathleen de Kerchove and Isabelle Durant travelled to Sarajevo to take part in a conference on children born of sexual violence in wartime, organized by the Children Born of War (CBOW) association. Cathleen was invited to present the CPE methodology and the results obtained. Many of the testimonies collected following the presentation demonstrate the importance of the CPE model.



In May, Cathleen and the CPE project assistant were accompanied by visual artist H el ene de Gottal on their mission to Panzi. In addition to achieving their main objectives, this mission was also an opportunity to bring together the young women from the first group of children cared for by CPE for an introduction to embroidery with H el ene, an expert in the field.



In September, the President trained teams from CPE, WAPA International, Doctors of the World, BVES and Maison DORCAS in the DRC on child psychotrauma in conflict and post-conflict zones. A field visit to Kavumu and Bunyakiri showed that the children were progressing well clinically and that family ties were improving.



Event : Jambo 4

In November, the CPE Belgium team organized its annual fundraising event. After staging film screenings and a concert in 2022, in 2023 the Jambo event made its grand return to the WHALLL in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre.

The program included a convivial aperitif, followed by an original show presented by Laurence Bibot. The show featured a wide variety of Belgian artists: comedians (Laurence Bibot, Kody, Dena, Inno JP and Bruno Coppens), rappers (Roméo Elvis and Smahlo) and music groups from different worlds (Idyl, Yellstone).

During the evening, CPE launched the auction of 7 works of art generously donated to the association by artists and gallery owners. All proceeds from the evening went to support CPE's mission.

The evening was sponsored by WHALLL, Loterie Nationale, Brussels Beer Project, Exki, Delen, Brussels Distillery, Pain d'Antan and Comptoir des Vins.





Challenges in 2023

- CPE faced challenges linked to the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo and to organizational and logistical constraints at Panzi.
- Communication between Belgium and the DRC is also a constant challenge. The areas in which CPE works are often subject to road and telephone cuts.

Outlook for 2024

- An assessment of the needs of different communities in the DRC to care for groups of children born of sexual violence.
- Partnerships for trainings on child psychotrauma.
- Expansion of the CPE Belgium team.
- Missions to the DRC and Iraq.