



# Peace Ambassadors: Approach for Sustainable Peace

*Elikia Afrika | Quarterly Newsletter 1 – 2026*

## Why This Work Matters

I am writing to you from Goma, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where daily life is shaped by uncertainty, but also by resilience.

I founded Elikia Afrika because of what I witnessed growing up.

In my community in Kalehe, I saw friends leave school and join armed groups. Not because they wanted to, but because they saw no alternative.

That reality has stayed with me. And it continues to raise one central question that guides my work today:

***How do we create real alternatives for young people in conflict - affected communities?***

"Elikia" means hope in the Lingala language. But for me, hope is not just a feeling, it is something we build through action.

At Elikia Afrika, we work to rebuild trust and strengthen communities by focusing on those most affected by conflict: young people, women, and children. We create spaces for dialogue, provide leadership training, and support young people to become active agents of peace in their own communities. Over the past three months, this mission has taken a concrete step forward.

## What We Did

This quarter, we focused on one priority: **preparing young people to become Peace Ambassadors.**

From 2-12 February, we organized a 12-day intensive training in Goma, bringing together a group of 12 motivated young participants. From the first day, what stood out was their energy, their willingness to learn to speak, and to challenge themselves.

## Training Curriculum

During the training, we worked on:

- Public speaking and confidence building
- Conflict resolution and nonviolent communication
- Ethical leadership and responsibility
- Community engagement and mobilization

What made this experience powerful was not just the content, but the transformation. Many participants arrived hesitant to speak. By the end, they were standing in front of others, expressing ideas clearly and with conviction.

They are now stepping into their roles as Peace Ambassadors, young people ready to initiate change within their communities.

## Awareness Beyond the Training

At the same time, we addressed a critical issue in our region: the recruitment of children into armed groups.

In February, we joined the International Day Against the Use of Child Soldiers (Red Hand Day) alongside other organizations in Goma. But our work did not start or end there.

We facilitated discussions with young people on the risks and realities of armed group involvement, emphasizing education as a pathway toward a different future.

## Challenges We Faced

This quarter was not without difficulties:

- Ongoing insecurity in and around Goma, limiting mobility and consistent participation
- Economic hardship among participants, affecting attendance and engagement
- Deep, rooted trauma and mistrust among youth, which cannot be addressed in a short training alone

These challenges are real, and they shape how we design our work.

## How We Are Responding

In response, we are adapting our approach:

- Integrating psychosocial support elements into our training sessions
- Strengthening follow-up with participants after training, not just during
- Building smaller, community-based groups to ensure continuity despite instability



What we are learning is clear: transformation takes time, and consistency matters as much as content.

## What Comes Next

In the next quarter, I will focus on deepening and expanding this work in three key ways:

### 1. Strengthening Peace Ambassadors

We will continue mentoring the newly trained participants, supporting them as they begin small, community-led initiatives. The goal is not just training, but action.

### 2. Expanding Our Reach

We aim to reach more young people in Goma and surrounding areas, especially those most at risk of exclusion or recruitment into armed groups.



### 3. Building a Community Multimedia Hub

We are planning to create a space where young people can share their voices through media, storytelling, video, and dialogue. This will help amplify local perspectives and strengthen community engagement.

### 4. Developing Partnerships

To sustain and grow this work, we are actively seeking partnerships with organizations and individuals who believe in youth-led peacebuilding.

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### A Personal Reflection

This work is not easy. The challenges are complex, and change does not happen overnight.

But every time I see a young person stand up and speak with confidence... Every time I hear them choose dialogue over violence...

I am reminded why this work matters.

**Peace is not built in large conferences or declarations. It begins in small spaces, with conversations, with courage, and with choices**

### Gratitude & Invitation

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has supported this journey, our partners, volunteers, and community members. I also extend special thanks to kanthari, which helped shape the foundation of this work. If you would like to support, collaborate, or learn more, I invite you to connect with us.

***Together, we can continue building a generation that chooses peace.***

***Thank you!***

***Elie Mastaki***

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*Elikia Afrika is a community, based organization dedicated to sustainable peace, ethical leadership, and social transformation in conflict, affected communities of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.*