



# **THE NETWORK FOR EMPOWERMENT & PROGRESSIVE INITIATIVES – NEPI INC.**

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY**



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## **1.0 THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION/Framework**

### **1.1 Purpose**

We strive for a society that advances solutions to crime and violence, and reduces extreme poverty, among hard-core street youth. We do this by working with poor and vulnerable youth in Africa and the world. We engage people and partners to rehabilitate and reintegrate hard-core street youth into mainstream society. We drive change in practice and policy at local, national and global levels with the work we do with high core street youth.

### **1.2 NEPI Strategic Choices**

- Position NEPI as a center of excellence and a leader in youth crime and violence reduction
- NEPI aims to double its beneficiaries reached in Liberia with a long-term investment with clear evidence of the results communicated to government, policymakers, practitioners, donor's community and the world at large while testing and scaling programs in new locations.
- Position NEPI with donors that understand both the relevance and value of our contribution to crime and violence reduction in alignment with the priority of long-term, unrestricted funding
- Invest in the necessary management structure required for the highest levels of governance, accountability, sustainability, and processes and policies development

### **1.3 Our Vision**

Our vision is a society free from youth crime and violence.

A world where the lives of high core street youths are transformed from crime, and violence and are socially and economically empowered into peaceful and inclusive societies.

### **1.4 Our Mission**

Our mission is to reintegrate high core street youth into mainstream society.

We constantly search for more effective solutions, to crime and violence while sharing our knowledge and expertise with the world. We push for long-term change. We will strive until we find solutions to youth crime, and violence and contribute to reducing extreme poverty, in societies across the world.

## 1.5 The Strategic Direction/Framework

### NEPI Strategic Direction/Framework

#### Our Vision

Our vision is a society free from youth crime and violence.

A world where the lives of at-risk street youths are transform from crime, and violence and are socially and economically empowered into peaceful and inclusive societies.

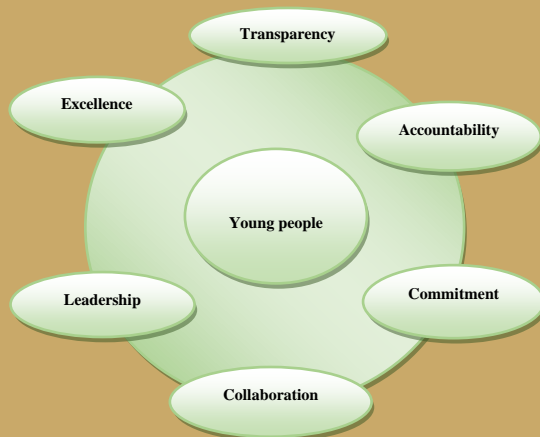
#### Our Mission

Our mission is to reintegrate high core street youth into mainstream society.

We constantly search for more effective solutions, to crime and violence while sharing our knowledge and expertise with the world. We push for long-term change. We will strive until we find solutions to youth crime, and violence and contribute to reducing extreme poverty, in societies across the world.

#### Our Core Value

**Our core values** are inherent in transparency, accountability, commitment, collaboration, leadership and excellence.



#### 2020 – 2025 Goals

Given our organizational strengths and experience in reducing crime and violence, among at-risk street youth through CBT and cash transfer, we have developed the following overarching ambition over the next 5 years.

NEPI will continue to lead the way in evidence-based crime and violence reduction program. We will influence public policy and high impact program design that contribute to policy development on youth crime and violence reduction.

To achieve this ambition, we will engage in the following mutually reinforcing goals. These goals are at the heart of our core approach, which will help us link vulnerable population with practice and policy to make post conflict communities peaceful, inclusive and safe. Each of the goals is underpinned by a set of intended outcomes. Every year we will review and assess our progress and adapt to present realities in host countries. We recognize that the context in which we are working and at the global level, we will contribute along with other organizations to realize these changes.

#### Goal 1:

Develop and implement country strategies that incorporate performance measures that are effectively communicated internally and externally

#### Key Initiatives Supporting the Goals:

- Develop NEPI strategy to launch operations and establish a strong presence in host countries

#### Outcomes:

- Programmes that aligned with and reflect host country crime and violence reduction priorities developed and implemented

#### Goal 2:

Increase revenue for scaling STYL evidence across 4 counties in Liberia by 2025.

#### Key Initiatives Supporting the Goals:

- Establish and evaluate program fundraising strategy, develop country-specific fundraising plans,
- Increase headquarters engagement with the US and European donors
- Diversify NEPI funding sources

#### Outcomes:

- Overall revenue with emphasis on unrestricted and diversified funding sources increased [5 years target: 5M and 30:70 ratio restricted to unrestricted; 10% of restricted revenue generated at country level; at least 60% of programs funding acquired by year 3],

#### Goal 3:

Strengthen the quality and consistency of existing crime and violence reduction programming activities

#### Key Initiatives Supporting the Goals:

- Assess the potential for expansion within existing countries of operation, establish assessment criteria for new country expansion in alignment with mission

#### Outcomes:

- Demonstrable social impact achieved in the areas of crime, and violence reduction,
- Scale STYL evidence to an additional 5,400 at-risk street youth, maintained and program quality, and consistency achieved,
- 5 external program evaluations conducted and increased beneficiary reach to 5,400 in 4 counties of operations in Liberia,

## 1.6 NEPI Action Plan for 2020 – 2025 (NEPI Focus: Goals, Activities, and Outcomes)

Given our organizational strengths and experience in reducing crime and violence among high core street youth and knowledge and psychology in the reintegration of former child soldiers, we have developed the following overarching ambition over the next 5 years. NEPI will find solutions to extreme poverty among poor and at-risk youth, reduce crime and violence, and reintegrate former child soldiers in mainstream societies. To achieve this ambition, we will engage in the following mutually reinforcing goals. These goals are at the heart of our core approach, which will help us assist poor, marginalized youth with practice and policy to make post-conflict communities peaceful, inclusive and safe. Each of the goals is underpinned by a set of activities and intended outcomes. Every year we will review and assess our progress and adapt to present realities in host countries. We recognize that the context in which we are working, we will contribute along with other organizations to realize these changes.

### NEPI Focus: Goals, Activities, and Outcomes

Goal	Activities	Outcomes
1. Develop and implement country strategies that incorporate performance measures that are effectively communicated internally and externally	1.1. Establish operational standards for field programs and operations, 1.2. Implement internal commitment and communication mechanisms to align Headquarters departments with country strategies, 1.3. Develop NEPI strategy to launch operations and establish a strong presence in host countries,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs that aligned with and reflect host country youth crime and violence reduction priorities are developed and implemented,</li> <li>Resources that aligned with specific country needs are developed,</li> <li>Effective communications strategies are developed and implemented,</li> <li>Headquarters policies and practices to help attract and retained staff continuously improved,</li> <li>Financial systems, policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms between field and Headquarters continuously improved,</li> <li>Administrative and logistics standard operating procedures continuously improved,</li> </ul>
2. Increase revenue for scaling STYL evidence across 4 counties in Liberia by 2025	2.1 Establish and evaluate program fundraising strategy, 2.2 Develop country-specific fundraising plans, 2.3 Increase Headquarters engagement with the US, and European donors, 2.4 Diversified NEPI funding sources 2.5 Maintain and improve financial controls and management to stay ahead of changes in the sector,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund development specialist or a director for program operations to increase and diversified NEPI funding sources recruited,</li> <li>Communication specialist to disseminate NEPI evidence to attract the interest of host government, policymakers, donor for scaling NEPI/STYL evidence in the host country and elsewhere recruited,</li> <li>Comprehensive fundraising strategy that informed NEPI capacity needs established,</li> <li>Overall revenue with an emphasis on unrestricted and diversified funding sources increased [5 years target: 5M and 30:70 ratio restricted to unrestricted; 10% of restricted revenue generated at field level; at least 60% of programs funding acquired by year 3],</li> <li>Strong and secured long-term funding relationships with unrestricted focus identified among donors, policymakers, and host government and retained,</li> <li>Local and country-specific fundraising plans are established and implemented,</li> </ul>
3. Strengthen the quality and consistency of existing programming activities	3.1 Invest in the capacity building of field offices and staff, 3.2 Invest in key field positions to successfully manage and grow country programs, 3.3 Engage with donor networks and beneficiaries, 3.4 Conduct an annual assessment of capacity building needs, 3.5 Assess the potential for expansion within existing countries of operation, 3.6 Establish assessment criteria for new country expansion in alignment with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly talented people from the countries and regions in which we work recruited and retained, under the principle of ‘as local possible, as international as necessary’</li> <li>70% of training and development needs to be identified through performance appraisals,</li> <li>Demonstrable social impact in the areas of youth crime and violence reduction achieved,</li> <li>Scale STYL evidence to an additional 5,400 at-risk street youth maintained and program quality and consistency achieved, 5 external program evaluations conducted and increased beneficiary reach to 5,400 in 4 countries of operations,</li> <li>Skills and knowledge of managers to conduct an effective performance appraisals system acquired,</li> </ul>

	NEPI mission,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamental practices, policies, and techniques for providing an employee with constructive feedback understood,</li> <li>• Managers ability to develop/formulate key performance indicators, competencies, and standards enhanced,</li> </ul>
4. Develop results-based monitoring and evaluation systems and standards and apply to all stages of program development and delivery	<p><b>5.1</b> Recruit monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) specialist,</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Develop and implement the M&amp;E Framework (including goals, indicators, and measures),</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Provide on-going support and training as required to Headquarters and field staff on M&amp;E,</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Identify and disseminate best practices from the field, both internally and externally,</p> <p><b>5.5</b> Improve knowledge management at all levels,</p> <p><b>5.6</b> Conduct one external country program evaluation per year,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the way in evidence-based crime and violence reduction program,</li> <li>• Influence public policy and high impact program design that contribute to policy development on issues of youth crime and violence reduction [5 years target: 2 academic and research partners; 500K in research funding; 2 research reports/publications/policy documents],</li> <li>• Program results disseminated at workshops with host country government, policymakers, and at international conferences,</li> <li>• Technique advisor to provide consistent field support recruited,</li> <li>• Field reporting mechanisms to document learning and to mitigate risk established,</li> </ul>

**1.7 Our Core Value:**

Our core values are inherent in transparency, accountability commitment, collaboration, leadership, and excellence.

**1.7.1 Transparency:**

We believe in total transparency. Whether for partners, donors or beneficiaries of our work, we make clear information available on the allocation and management of our funds and provide guarantees of good management.

**1.7.2 Accountability:**

We believe that it is our duty to create an environment of trust internally and externally in the organization by being open, honest and transparent. We hold ourselves and others to account for the content and process of decisions we make, the actions we take, and the resulting outcomes. We challenge ourselves to be effective stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us. We are accountable to our Donors, Board, and host Government for the impacts of our organization and the use of resources.

**1.7.3 Commitment:**

We believe that our success is based on the commitment we make by devoting our time, talents, and resources to those who entrust their care to us. That is why we make long-term commitments to support a resilient transformation of youth from violence and crime to lasting peace.

**1.7.4 Collaboration:**

We believe that people affected by conflict have a stake in the peace process. By collaborating and partnering with local communities, national government, donors to transform violence and crime, we promote peaceful coexistence and achieve lasting peace. Together, we design a timely and effective program that drives sustainable solutions to local community issues.

**1.7.5 Leadership:**

As a leader, we believe it is our duty to be effective stewards, engender trust and provide solutions toward our common goal to lead change and provide the highest quality of integrated

care. We make our ethics and values clear by living them each day, and persistently uphold our organizational culture that recognizes and supports our diverse strengths. We believe in the unique identity of those we serve, treating each with friendliness, dignity, respect, care, and compassion. Our values are inherent in our passion and desire to provide exceptional service.

### **1.7.6 Excellence:**

We believe that the excellence we achieve is based on the best practices we incorporate and innovation we stimulate in the services we provide. We believe in the desire for, and pursuit of, the highest quality in any undertaking, process or result.

## **1.8 Our Philosophy**

- We believe that all people have the right to live in safe and peaceful communities and **participate** fully in the decisions that affect their lives.
- We believe that safe and peaceful societies emerge when poor, vulnerable, and at-risk street youth lives are transformed. Having youth move from a position as an outcast to an economically and socially integrated members of society.
- We believe that **transformation** and future-orientation are of central importance in changing risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use/abuse, crime, violence, and vulnerability to recruitment into armed conflict.

## **1.9 Our Stakeholders**

**NEPI stakeholders** are people or organizations affected by the decisions we make and the actions we take.

**Our primary stakeholders** are the people and communities we serve (at-risk street youth, former child soldiers, former combatants, war-affected youth and local community dwellers).

**Other stakeholders include** donors, partners, governments, and philanthropists.

### **1.9.1 Accountability to our Stakeholders:**

- As individuals and as an organization, we act ethically.
- We treat all people with respect.
- We are open and transparent about the work we do and how we do it.
- Our stakeholders participate in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our work.
- We are effective stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us and the natural environment in which we live.
- We commit to achieving demonstrable impact for our stakeholders, using their feedback to innovate, learn and improve.

## **2.0 NEPI RESPONSE**

### **2.1 Our Strategy**

Since its inception, the Network for Empowerment & Progressive Initiative (NEPI) has been providing a highly effective, evidence-based program to hard-core street youth with the goal of mainstreaming them back into society. NEPI identifies these youth living on the fringes of society and rehabilitates them using therapy and counseling to foster character skills such as self-control and a noncriminal self-image as well as provide cash support.

NEPI engaged young people aged 10 – 24, to build a crime and violence-free society. We work with partners to develop and implement approaches that influence policies that result in a real, measurable reduction in organized crime, violent protests, communal violence, and drug use. We aim to empower hard-core street youth, and young people to be in charge of their own destinies. We endeavor to support local communities and national institutions to develop long-term collective approaches to reinforce their capacity to better respond to organized crime and violence reduction. We do what it takes to bring young people closer to a society free from organized crime, violent protests, communal violence, and drug use.

NEPI targets the hardest to reach, most vulnerable and poor youth with a tested and proven intervention, the sustainable transformation of youth in Liberia (STYL) program, to address youth crime and violence which establishes our vision, our goals and the targets we aim to achieve.

STYL is an 8-week behavior change and cash transfer intervention that bolsters hard-core street youth's cognitive and social skills necessary for entrepreneurial self-help raises youth's aspirations and equips them to reach their goals. STYL has three components: (1) role models show at-risk youth how they have been able to change their lives for the better; (2) youth learn practical steps to changing their lives, learning to adopt normal, non-criminal dress, behavior, and lifestyles; and (3) through a series of assignments, youth practice improving their self-control and discipline. It combines cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and a cash transfer. Through these interventions, STYL aims to reduce anti-social behaviors by changing noncognitive skills and preferences; and to shift hard-core street youth living within a present-oriented framework to more future-oriented goals and behavior.

STYL is unique in that it is an evidenced-based intervention. It has been tested and proven effective through a randomized control trial (RCT) conducted by researchers from Columbia University, Harvard University, the World Bank and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA). The findings from the RCT have been featured in the Washington Post and on the influential podcast, Freakonomics, highlighting NEPI's success in identifying a workable and affordable solution to rehabilitating street youth. Based on the positive evidence from the RCT, NEPI plans to expand STYL to reach an additional 5,400 youth over a period of 5 years while pilot testing new programs.



### **2.1.1 How our Transformation Work Supports our Strategy**

Our work contributes to the change our intervention creates in society by transforming the lives of poor, vulnerable hard-core street youth lives from extreme poverty, crime, and violence to productive members of local communities in Liberia. Our transformation work had changed behavior by enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitude to socially, and economically empower hard-core street youth and break the cycle of violence and crime among youth.

STYL's effectiveness in rehabilitating the hardest to reach youth attracted the attention of international researchers who wanted to determine, through a rigorous scientific study, if STYL was the cause of these youth forgoing crime. And if yes, what elements made this training effective. The program designed focus on two different treatments to test two different theories of poverty and violence in order to scientifically test STYL's effectiveness. The intervention engages behavior roots with the transformation program and economic roots by providing a capital injection and unconditional cash grant.

The researchers - from Columbia University, Harvard Medical School, and IPA - conducted an RCT, the gold standard in quantitative research with a sample of 1,000 youth, into treatment assigned by lottery, placing them into four groups:

1. 25% of the youth receive the transformation program training and a \$200 unconditional cash transfer to do business;
2. 25% of the youth receive a \$200 unconditional cash transfer only;
3. 25% of the youth receive transformation program training only; and
4. 25% of the youth did not receive any interventions. This fourth group of youth is the control group.

### **2.1.2 Contribution to the Reduction of youth crime and Violence**

Our impact is to create a society free from youth-crime and violence. STYL led to significant decreases in crime, drug use, and violence for participants. The results confirmed that investments in programs that focus on self-control and self-image can help to reduce crime and violence among youth. Researchers found out that just the offer of therapy had huge impacts. Issues of crime, carrying a weapon, fight with each other and with the police, arrests, and even things as simple as losing your temper — they dropped by 20 to 50 percent within a few weeks of finishing the therapy. After a year, these effects had started to dissipate if the men got therapy alone. But if they got cash after the therapy, the effects stayed steady or grew.

The cash grant is both a treatment and measurement tools to evaluate the effect of the transformation program. 50% of the program participants receive the unconditional cash grant in total. Of that amount, participants spent:

- 20% on savings and debt payments,
- 23% on business investments and expenses,
- 8% of the cash on their own health and education,
- 28% of the cash on consumption and rent,
- 6% on durable assets,
- 4% on drugs, alcohol, gambling, and sex, and 11% on gifts and transfers.

The evaluation found that the young men largely invested and saved a substantial fraction of the unconditional cash transfer, yet the money only produced short-run improvements in investment and income, an outcome that NEPI proposes to address in STYL's expansion. Results suggest that character skills and self-image remain malleable and that STYL is a powerful tool to reduce poverty, crime and violence in fragile states.



For more information about our work  
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