



BRIEF PRESENTATION OF SOPRODE AND THE PROJECT

A. History of SOPRODE and the Project

1. Creation of SOPRODE

The civil society organization, Solidarity for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, SOPRODE in acronym, was founded in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on June 3, 2014, by a multidisciplinary and multicultural team. This team is driven by the desire to contribute to the sustainable development of the country, for the inclusion and protection of human rights, especially of vulnerable people, such as children and young people with disabilities.

- From 2016 to 2019, SOPRODE trained a total of 186 young people in various disciplines, such as New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT), English, agroecology, cutting and sewing, entrepreneurship, carpentry and sculpture. Of these 186 youths, 140 were persons with disabilities, including 64 girls/women and 76 men.
- Between 2020 and 2024, SOPRODE trained 485 participants, including 186 with disabilities, of whom 24 found salaried employment and 76 launched their own businesses in the fields of agroecology, cutting and sewing, carpentry and sculpture.

2. SOPRODE Products and Services

- Training and capacity building: Workshops, vocational trainings, incubation and mentoring programs for people with disabilities and vulnerable youth.
- Diversified production: food crops, market gardening and arboriculture.
- Sustainable land management practices.
- Livestock: Farmyard, small and large livestock.
- Rational management of organic waste and water.
- Climate justice: restoration and conservation of ecosystems, fight against fossil fuels, plastic pollution, promotion and development of renewable energies.

3. Our Mission

To support communities, especially children, youth and people with disabilities, in improving their living conditions through the protection of human rights, the promotion of peace, food security, environmental and climate justice, as well as capacity building and professional training for sustainable and inclusive development.

4. Our Vision

An inclusive, just, equitable and sustainable society where every individual, especially vulnerable communities, benefits from the protection of their rights, a healthy environment, food security, and vocational training for sustainable and harmonious development.

5. SOPRODE Values

SOPRODE is committed to promoting inclusion, sustainable development and inclusiveness based on fundamental values such as inclusion, transparency, diversity, equity and integrity. These principles guide our actions to ensure ethical and responsible work. We ensure that all individuals have access to the opportunities needed for a better future. In addition, SOPRODE

is based on human rights, social justice, environmental sustainability and community engagement.

B. The Essence of the Project

Its essence lies in its desire to meet the specific needs of young people, especially those living with disabilities, by providing them with the necessary tools to improve their socio-economic condition. This project is part of an inclusion model that takes into account the particularities of each individual, whether they are disabled or not. The aim is to promote equal opportunities by providing these young people with vocational training that prepares them to enter the labour market or start their own business, while facilitating their reintegration into society through appropriate psychosocial support.

This project stands out for its ability to simultaneously address several challenges faced by vulnerable young people, offering them not only technical skills, but also moral and psychological support.

It thus helps to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion by facilitating access to employment opportunities and economic empowerment.

Since 2016, SOPRODE has been implementing the project to empower vulnerable youth through vocational training and employment opportunities. This project aims to strengthen the professional capacities of vulnerable young people in order to improve their living conditions. Through this project, SOPRODE is organizing six training sectors in response to the needs expressed by local communities. These sectors are:

- a) Agroecology professions (tree production, market gardening, development of agricultural sectors, management of organic waste, livestock farming, etc.).
- b) Training in New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT)
- c) English.
- d) Youth entrepreneurship.
- e) Training in cutting and sewing.
- f) Sculpture.

The project responds to several major issues that mainly affect vulnerable young people, and in particular young people living with disabilities. These challenges include:

- The lack of professional skills.
- Poor access to employment opportunities.
- The social marginalization of people with disabilities.
- Poor psychosocial support.

✓ *Project actions:*

The project addresses the above-mentioned problems through the following actions:

-Strengthening the professional capacities of vulnerable young people.

-Promoting access to employment opportunities.

-The socio-professional integration of vulnerable young people, including people living with disabilities.

- Psycho-social reintegration in view to strengthen cohesion within communities.

C. Innovative aspects

- *Alignment with the SDGs and the CRPD*

The project is directly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). By

addressing the needs of people with disabilities, it contributes to the creation of a more just, equitable and inclusive society, without barriers.

-Inclusive and accessible approach

-Our project focuses on empowering vulnerable youth, including youth with disabilities, who are often overlooked in mainstream programs. By providing equal opportunities, we break down social, economic and physical barriers.

-First project in agroecology for people with disabilities

SOPRODE will be the first organization to work with young people with disabilities in the field of agroecology, an innovative approach compared to other projects that focus mainly on crafts.

-Training in New Information and Communication Technologies

The project includes training in ICT with a particular focus on technologies that improve accessibility, such as automatic captions and smart devices.

-Partnerships with local businesses: Another innovation of the project is the creation of partnerships with local businesses to facilitate the employment of young people with disabilities.

D. Project Impact

-Improved socio-economic status

The project improved the socio-economic status of young people with disabilities, encouraged their integration into the community and promoted their socio-economic and cultural rights.

- Social and economic impact

The project has a significant impact on individuals and communities by providing vulnerable young people, especially those with disabilities, with the skills needed to improve their economic and social lives. This contributes to their empowerment and the reduction of inequalities.

-Development Officers

The young people with disabilities trained become agents of development, thus contributing to the sustainable development of their communities.

E. Success Factors

-Alignment with SDGs and Strategic Partnerships

Success factors include aligning the project with the SDGs and collaborating with local stakeholders. Tailored training for young people with disabilities and access to inclusive employment opportunities are also key to success.

-Success stories

- Mrs. Bitangalo, a young blind girl, was able to become self-sufficient thanks to an income-generating activity (IGA) supported by SOPRODE.

- Miss Cikuru Masika, a deaf and dumb girl, overcame social rejection after a violent attack, becoming an entrepreneur thanks to training in cutting and sewing.

- Aaron, a young person living with a disability, trained in financial management and computer science, became the director of an Economic Interest Group (EIG), a position he would not have been able to hold without the project.

-Post-training support and follow-up

Success is also due to the post-training coaching, which includes advice on starting a business, access to finance, and ongoing support to navigate the professional world.

F. Financing, Sustainability and Challenges

-Financial requirements

For the full implementation of the project in 2025, SOPRODE needs USD 538,480, which it is requesting from Zero Project and its partners.

- Project sustainability

Sustainability is ensured through the project's ability to generate resources, as well as the pooling of efforts within the Economic Interest Groups (EIGs) that sustain the project.

- Challenges to overcome

- Internal challenges: Difficult access to finance, lack of resources.
- External challenges: Lack of professional skills, poor access to employment opportunities, social marginalization of people with disabilities, and psychosocial challenges to be overcome.

G. Next Steps of the Project

-Seek partnerships

We will seek and form partnerships at the Zero Project 2025 conference to solicit support for this SOPRODE project.

-Sign a grant contract

We plan to solicit and negotiate the signing of a grant contract with Zero Project and its funding partners.

-Launch and implement the project

Once the funding is secured, we will launch the project and implement the planning.

-Monitoring and evaluation

The project will be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure its long-term impact and effectiveness.

In conclusion, SOPRODE is honored to be able to share its innovative project and to have been recognized by Zero Project for its significant impact. This project is a model of inclusive and sustainable development for vulnerable young people, especially those with disabilities.

Done in Bukavu, February 15, 2025

For SOPRODE,

The Management