



FINAL EVALUATION

Strengthening media as a tool for information, dialogue and exchange in the Great Lakes

East Democratic Republic of Congo - Rwanda- Burundi

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1. Executive summary

The project '**Strengthen access to information, dialogue and exchanges through media within the Great Lakes region**' was implemented from July 2021 to June 2023 with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Its primary objective was to enhance the capacity of media professionals in the Great Lakes region, specifically in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Rwanda, to effectively report on peace and security issues. The project aimed to promote conflict-sensitive reporting, facilitate knowledge sharing, and foster collaboration among media professionals in the region.

This final evaluation engaged a total of **314 individuals through surveys and focus group discussions from Kigali (Rwanda), Bujumbura (Burundi) and Goma, Bukavu (DRC)**. The project's major findings highlight the progress made and the areas that require further attention in enhancing the capacity of media professionals in reporting on peace and security in the region. The project's initiatives, such as training programs and knowledge-sharing platforms, have been positively received, with media professionals acknowledging their value in promoting conflict-sensitive reporting and understanding regional dynamics.

80.75% of media professionals targeted during this project report having confidence in their ability to produce conflict-sensitive information on peace and security issues. The data reveals varying levels of confidence among media professionals in their abilities across the three regions. While some respondents feel completely or partially confident, a significant portion express uncertainty or lack of confidence in their abilities.

The survey also sheds light on the collaborative efforts of media professionals. **64.2% of media professionals express confidence in collaborating in diverse groups to produce conflict-sensitive and impartial information.** In contrast, respondents from the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) show a more mixed response with a relatively higher percentage expressing neutrality.

52% of media professionals report an increase in interactions with peers from different sectors and/or locations throughout this project (remote or in-person). 64.2% of media professionals trust their peers' abilities to impartially address common interest information such as "security and peace." However, there is a need to strengthen their confidence in the capabilities of their colleagues. While individuals may have self-confidence, it does not automatically translate into confidence in others. Therefore, it is crucial for the project to address this aspect and focus on fostering a sense of trust and confidence among media professionals towards their peers. Creating an environment that promotes collaboration and builds trust can maximise the potential impact of the project.

In terms of **agency**, media professionals from Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda generally believe in their ability to undertake initiatives to influence and make a positive difference in the context of peace and security. However, **the responses from the DRC show more variability and uncertainty compared to Burundi and Rwanda, which may reflect the complex and challenging environment in the DRC.**

The evaluation also included data from the community, providing valuable insights into their perspectives and expectations regarding the "Génération Grands Lacs" (GGL) broadcasts. While the overall satisfaction is high, the data also indicates some specific expectations and suggestions from the community. There is a desire for greater media coverage in remote areas to ensure broader access to the

broadcasts. The usage of local languages for GGL broadcasts is also suggested to improve understanding and engagement among the audience of radio programs. [93% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" about their satisfaction with the media's ability producing GGL broadcasts to inform listeners about peace and security issues and regional dynamics.](#)

The programs are seen as valuable sources of relevant information and contributors to mutual understanding among countries in the region. However, there are areas for improvement to further enhance the impact of the broadcasts.

Both data from media professionals and the community provide additional insights into the project's impact and stakeholders' perspectives. The varying levels of confidence among media professionals and the community's expectations for expanded coverage and localised content highlight areas for improvement and further development. By addressing these findings and incorporating them into the project's strategies, the GGL program can better meet the needs of media professionals and the community, resulting in increased impact and effectiveness in promoting peace and security in the Great Lakes region.

The findings indicate a [strong demand for ongoing training programs](#) to enhance journalistic skills, promote adherence to ethical standards, and address specific challenges in reporting on peace and security. Continuous capacity building is essential to keep media professionals updated with emerging trends and challenges.

[Collaborative initiatives and platforms¹ have facilitated knowledge sharing, professional development, and regional cooperation among media professionals.](#) The project's efforts to foster collaboration and create spaces for dialogue have been instrumental in promoting balanced and conflict-sensitive reporting, however strategies to [strengthen the relationship and trust between media professionals should be further enhanced](#), as the results of this evaluation still show negative perceptions about the quality of their relationship in order to achieve successful mutual collaboration.

The findings emphasise the importance of incorporating [gender perspectives in peace and security reporting](#). It is crucial to ensure that women's voices, experiences, and perspectives are adequately represented, and gender dynamics are analysed and understood in the context of conflict and peacebuilding. The evaluation findings emphasise the importance of promoting constructive interaction, trust-building, and overcoming divides among media professionals in the Great Lakes region. By fostering collaborations, joint training, and open dialogues, we can strengthen partnerships, break down barriers, and build a cohesive and united media community.

The recommendations presented in this report, such as increasing broadcast frequency, expanding coverage, strengthening social media presence, and foster collaboration among journalists by continuing to strengthen cross-country dialogues like the project will contribute to maximising the project's effectiveness. By implementing these recommendations, the GGL program can better serve the audience, enhance the capacity of local media professionals, and promote peace, security, and social cohesion in the Great Lakes region.

¹ implemented during the project

2. Background information

Introduction

Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda continue to face a number of challenges that hinder sustainable peace and security. Identity and resource-related conflicts, exacerbated by structural issues, have created an atmosphere of unrest and instability in the region. Despite occasional periods of reconciliation, the relationships between the three countries suffer from a climate of tension that impedes peace and security in the region. In this context, the media has a crucial role to play in promoting peace and respect for human rights through freedom of expression, the right to credible information, and the dissemination of pluralistic, diverse, and independent opinions. However, all three countries rank poorly in terms of press freedom, and the overall lack of capacity among a diverse range of media professionals hampers their collective ability to collaborate and report on national and regional trends in an impartial and conflict-sensitive manner.²

The baseline study³ reported that media professionals and their audiences in the Great Lakes region face challenges in covering peace and security issues due to a lack of information and resources. The selection of topics to cover is influenced by the context of peace and security with 33% of media professionals focusing on these issues. However, access to information is difficult, and professionals often align their coverage choices based on ease of access and subject neutrality. The quality and impartiality of media productions on peace and security receive mixed reviews from the community, with concerns about self-censorship and limited representation of diverse voices. While there is empathy for the challenges faced by media professionals, some lack the necessary capacity and resources to produce high-quality content. The regional dimension poses further obstacles, as there is a weak connection between the countries and limited understanding of the true dynamics of peace and security. However, there is potential for collaboration among media professionals to enhance coverage and address these issues. Overcoming technical issues and barriers to access to information is crucial to achieving responsible and conflict-sensitive journalism in the region.

Search intends to conduct a final evaluation of the project to capture its outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices for future initiatives at the end of implementation phase. This evaluation aims to assess the project's achievements and identify areas for improvement. By analysing the project's outcomes, valuable insights can be gained to inform future programming in similar contexts. The evaluation will focus on documenting the tangible results and changes brought by the project. Lessons learned will be identified and documented, providing valuable knowledge. Ultimately, this final evaluation will serve as a comprehensive review of the project's performance, enabling Search to refine its approaches and contribute to the continuous improvement of peacebuilding and security initiatives in the region.

Project Overview

Search implemented a 24-month project with the **objective to *strengthen access to information, dialogue and exchanges through media within the Great Lakes region*** (Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern DRC). This project had two interrelated objectives and produced four expected results.

² Project document - 2021

³ March 2022

- **Objective 1.** To expand the cadre of media professionals throughout the Great Lakes region -- from rural communities to urban centres -- capable of producing high-quality, impartial, and non-politicized news and information, especially on issues of peace, security and regional dynamics.
 - Expected result 1.1. Trained media professionals from the Great Lakes region demonstrate increased capacity to produce conflict sensitive information on issues of peace and security in their communities and throughout the region.
 - Expected result 1.2. Trained media professionals from the Great Lakes region produce relevant news at the local, national and regional levels, developing constructive interaction and dialogue on peace and security in ways that are accessible to the public.
- **Objective 2.** Established platforms promote a community of practice around dialogue and collaboration between media professionals throughout the Great Lakes region.
 - Expected result 2.1. A diversity of media professionals from the Great Lakes region, representing different sectors and media houses, leverage platforms to work across divides to address areas of mutual concern.
 - Expected result 2.2. A diversity of media professionals from the Great Lakes region has increased trust in the benefits of working together on sensitive issues and areas of mutual interest.

This project partnered with **103 media professionals**⁴ in Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern DRC who have experience in reporting on topics that contribute to local and regional-level peace in a broad sense.

Theory of Change

The theory of change (ToC) underlying this project is that ***If*** media professionals have increased capacity in peace journalism and conflict-sensitivity ***and if*** they have platforms for cross-fertilisation and peer-learning to collaborate among themselves and work together to foster dialogue among their audiences, ***then*** access to credible information and diverse voices will increase, and opportunities for constructive interaction across national and regional dividing lines will be created for, ultimately leading to an improved environment for freedom of expression and peace and reconciliation in the region.

Key project activities

- Common Ground Journalism training sessions
- Webinars on media topics for media professionals (in English, French, and Swahili)
- “Generation Grand Lacs” (GGL) radio programme (75 weekly radio programmes for 18 months broadcast on radio stations in the three countries)
- “Generation Grand Lacs” (GGL) forum
- “Generation Grand Lacs” (GGL) social media

3. Methodology

Objectives of evaluation

The evaluation focused on two objectives:

Objective 1: Identify the outcomes generated by the project's various interventions.

⁴ Media professionals partnering with Search in the project. These professionals have benefited from project activities such as training and sharing of experience.

1.1. What are the (positive or negative) outcomes of the project's interventions on the targeted media professionals in Rwanda, Burundi, and eastern DRC?

1.2. What are the final values of the following indicators:

targeting media professionals

- Percentage of media professionals who declare their ability to produce high-quality and impartial information on peace and security issues.
- Percentage of media professionals who have confidence in their ability to produce conflict-sensitive information on peace and security issues.
- Percentage of media professionals who feel capable of collaborating with a diverse group of their counterparts to produce conflict-sensitive and impartial information on common interest subjects.
- Percentage of media participants who report that exchanges with peers from the region have added positive and/or significant value to their professional capacity and expertise.
- Percentage of media professionals who report an increase in interactions with peers from different sectors and/or locations through this project (remote or in-person).
- Percentage of media professionals who trust their peers' abilities to impartially address common interest information such as "security and peace."
- Peace impact framework indicator:
 - Percentage of media professionals affirming their ability to make a positive difference in their community as media professionals.
 - Percentage of the population taking actions to influence matters that are important to them.

targeting community

- Percentage of satisfaction of citizens, women and men, on the availability and quality of information from different types of media supported by this project
- Percentage of respondents who report that the media information produced by this project is accessible to women and marginalised group
- Percentage of satisfaction of citizens, both women and men, with the quality and plurality of media productions supported by this project on issues of peace and security and regional dynamics
- Percentage of satisfaction among citizens, both men and women, regarding the ability of media products to inform listeners about peace and security issues, as well as regional dynamics.
- Percentage of surveyed listeners who report that radio coverage of peace and security issues includes balanced debates.

Objective 2: Identify lessons learned and best practices for future initiatives.

2.1. What are the lessons learned and best practices for programmatic adaptations in future initiatives?

Data collection and management

The methodology used for data collection was a mix of qualitative and quantitative, depending on the target audience:

- **Desk review:** quarterly narrative reports, monitoring report and outcome reflection log of the project were reviewed and analysed to capture the results and activities carried out.
- **Survey** carried out using 3 different collection tools depending on the target:
 - *Search's media professionals' partner* via Google form capturing indicators value and open-ended questions asking for explanations of the expected changes.
 - *Listeners of GGL* programmes broadcasts from Rwanda, Burundi and DRC, identified by media partners.
 - *Users of Search Facebook pages (GGL - DRC and Burundi).*
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)** reaching listeners of GGL programmes.
- **Reflection session** with Search staff involved in the project, in order to identify the results, lessons learned and good practices of the project.

The final evaluation was carried out internally and *led by the research officer of the Institutional Learning (ILT) for Africa from the Strategic Alignment Department*, in collaboration with the programme staff involved in implementing the project.

Data management

- **Data entry by the country team :** data from the Google form has been entered in the spreadsheet and transcripts of FGD in the Excel database, in order to ensure that the data was digitised and ready for further processing.
- **Data cleaning and validation by the lead of the evaluation :** checking for and correcting any errors, inconsistencies, or missing values.

Data analysis process for this evaluation involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

- Qualitative content analysis was employed to analyse interview and focus group discussions transcripts, and open-ended survey responses. We proceed to data coding and categorization in order to enable analysis and identification of patterns or themes.
- Quantitative analysis techniques were applied to structured survey data, using descriptive statistics to summarise numerical information and calculate percentages. This provided a quantitative understanding of participant satisfaction levels and other key indicators.

Scope of the analysis

Search collaborated with a total of 13 radio stations and 1 online media, engaging 103 media professionals in Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern DRC during the implementation phase. The analysis conducted in this final evaluation report is primarily derived from the data collected from these media professionals and radio stations that partnered with Search to produce the program "Génération Grand Lacs" (GGL). It is important to note that this evaluation does not encompass all media and radio professionals operating in the three countries of intervention, but rather focuses on assessing the outcomes achieved through the project, specifically targeting the media and journalists involved. Furthermore, community perceptions were also captured for this final evaluation, with a specific focus on the listeners and followers of "Génération Grand

Lacs" (GGL) from the three countries/areas of implementation. The findings presented in this report are based on the feedback received from the community members who engage with the GGL broadcast.

“Génération Grands Lacs” (GGL) radio and social media program

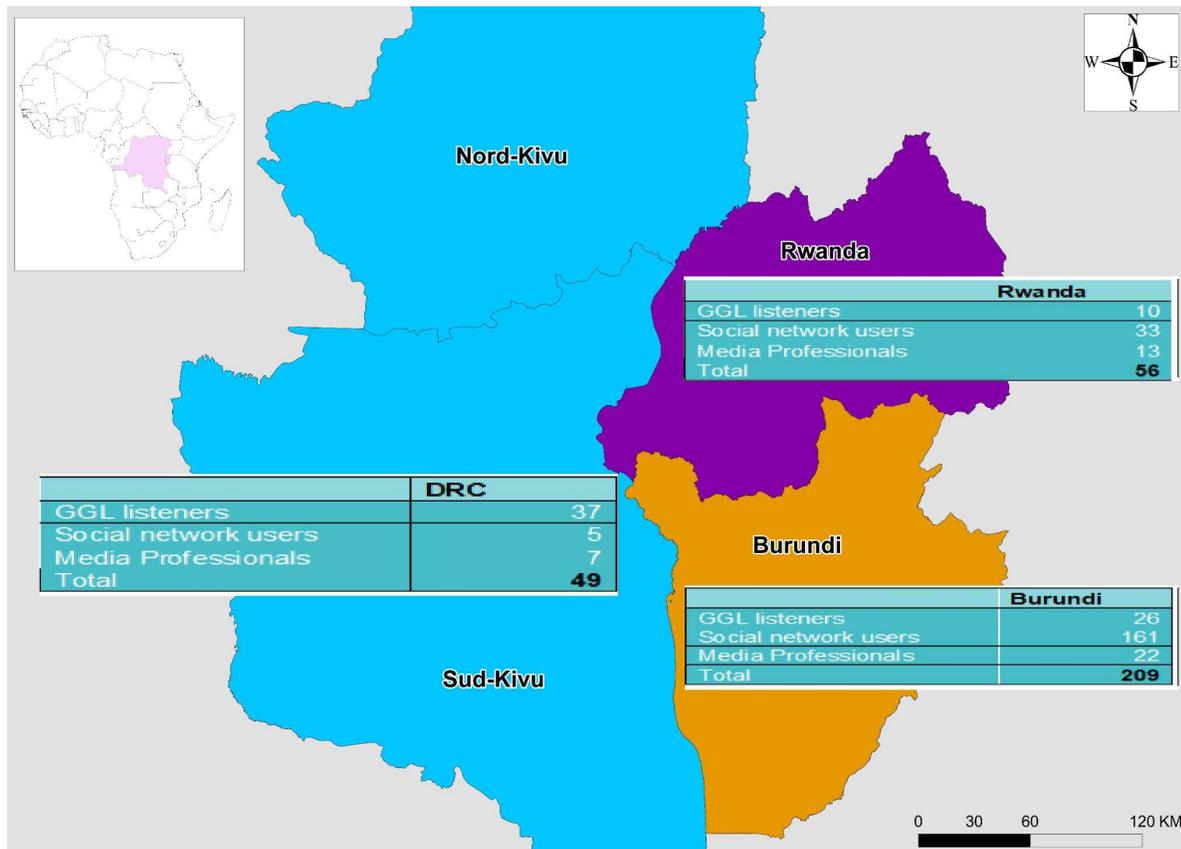
The GGL radio program is produced in the form of a weekly podcast, which is then broadcasted through radio partners and social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Soundcloud, all under the name "Génération Grands Lacs." The program is accessible through different platforms using the following links: our YouTube channel, Soundcloud, and Facebook page.

The GGL program employs a combination of approaches to capture and maintain audience attention, including pre-recorded interviews, vox pops, spots, jingles, and reportages. Listeners actively participate by sending text messages or messages on Facebook.

Characteristics of the respondents

This final evaluation engaged a total of 314 individuals through surveys and focus group discussions, specifically targeting media professionals and media listeners/GGL broadcasts who are mainly located in **Kigali (Rwanda), Bujumbura (Burundi), Goma, Bukavu and Uvira (DRC)**. Among the participants, 15% were men, 10% were women, and a significant majority of 74% were young people. It is worth noting that the high participation rate of young individuals was primarily achieved through active engagement on social media platforms, particularly in Burundi.

The figure below shows the profile demographics for the study desegregated by target and location.



Limitations

The sample size for the survey of "Génération Grands Lacs" radio broadcast listeners was not intended to achieve statistical representativeness, also given the fact that the project targeted media professionals and radio working in Kigali, Bujumbura, Goma, Bukavu and Uvira. Instead, it was based on listeners provided by media professionals who are partners of Search, as well as participants in focus groups. Therefore, the reported proportions in the analysis reflect trends based on the response rates per country, rather than allowing for a comparative analysis of cross-country trends, since no sample weighting was applied during data collection and community targeting was randomly done based on age and gender as defined in the terms of reference. In other words, the analysis does not take sample weights by country into account, as the distribution was random.

Another limitation was the difficulty in reaching the target media professionals for the online survey, resulting in a response rate of 40% among the total Search's media professional partners, as they are not accustomed to online surveys. However, as highlighted in the section below, this allows us to identify certain trends within each country.

3. Findings

3.1. Outcomes

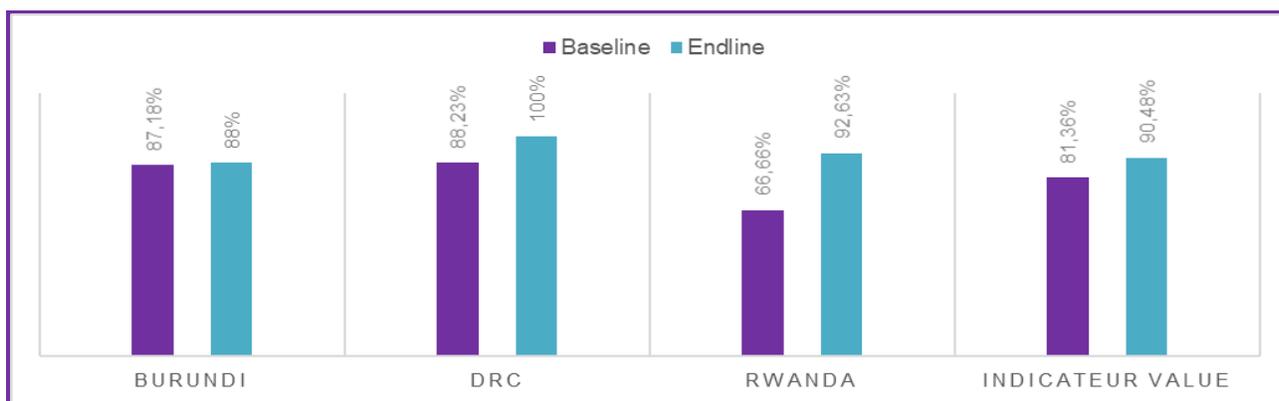
3.1.1. Capacity of media professionals to produce conflict sensitive information on peace and security

- *Capacity to produce high-quality and impartial information on peace and security issues.*

Endline: 90% of respondents in all three countries feel they have the necessary capacities to provide impartial and high-quality information, with some variations among the countries.

Comparative trends: The analysis reveals that in Burundi, 86% of respondents feel they have the necessary capacities, while 13.64% do not. In the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, 42.86% express having the necessary skills, and 57.14% indicate having these capacities to a limited degree. In Rwanda, 53.85% of participants believe they have the necessary skills, 38.46% state they have these capacities to a limited degree, and 7.69% do not feel they have the capacity.

Graph 1: Percentage of media professionals declare that they have the capacity to produce quality and impartial information on peace and security issues



General outcomes reveal that media professionals in the Great Lakes region have acquired valuable skills through training, enabling them to produce impartial information on peace and security issues. Their commitment to peace, ethical standards, and expertise contribute to their capacity to deliver high-quality reporting that promotes understanding and reconciliation in the region.

- **Training and skills:** many respondents mentioned that they have received various forms of training, including specific workshops on conflict-sensitive journalism. These trainings have equipped them with the necessary skills to produce balanced and unbiased information. They also acknowledge the significance of training and continuous learning in honing their skills. They emphasise the value of understanding ethical principles, diverse source, and conflict-sensitive journalism.
- **Commitment to peace:** several respondents emphasized their role as "journalists of peace" and stressed the importance of working towards peace instead of fuelling hatred or conflict. They expressed their dedication to promoting peace and ensuring that their reporting aligns with this objective.
- **Ethical standards:** journalists' respondents recognized the significance of adhering to ethical principles and maintaining impartiality. They mentioned the need to verify information, uphold journalistic ethics, and avoid biased reporting.

Gender perspective analysis seems to be a similar distribution of responses in terms of confidence and abilities, it is worth noting that some women explicitly mention their participation in specific training programs and their commitment to being "journalists of peace." This highlights the potential impact of empowerment initiatives and specialised training in fostering their capabilities in reporting on peace and security issues.

Challenges and Limitations: some respondents mention limitations and challenges they face in providing impartial and quality information. These include constraints imposed by legal considerations⁵, media owners, the lack of resources or expertise, and the difficulty of maintaining⁶ balance and impartiality in reporting some topics. It is important to note that the specific legal considerations and challenges faced by media

⁵ The data from the final evaluation does not detail what legal considerations respondents are referring to. However, during the baseline, respondents related to press freedom and media laws. Each country may have specific laws and regulations governing the media industry, including restrictions on freedom of expression, censorship, defamation, or restrictions on reporting certain topics. These laws can pose challenges for media professionals in providing impartial and quality information.

⁶ During the baseline, respondents related to self-censorship. Due to the aforementioned challenges and potential consequences, media professionals may engage in self-censorship, limiting their ability to report on sensitive or controversial issues. This can affect the overall impartiality and quality of information available to the public.

professionals in each country may vary. These challenges can impact their ability to provide impartial and quality information, highlighting the need for supportive environments that promote freedom of expression, media independence, and access to information.

Overall, the analysis of the data reveals a diverse range of perspectives and experiences among respondents. While some express confidence in their abilities, others recognize the need for further training and support. The data also underscores the importance of gender-inclusive training programs and the role they play in empowering women to actively engage in reporting on peace and security. Continued investment in training initiatives, coupled with practical experience, can contribute to the development of a skilled and knowledgeable group of journalists capable of delivering impartial and high-quality information on peace and security matters.

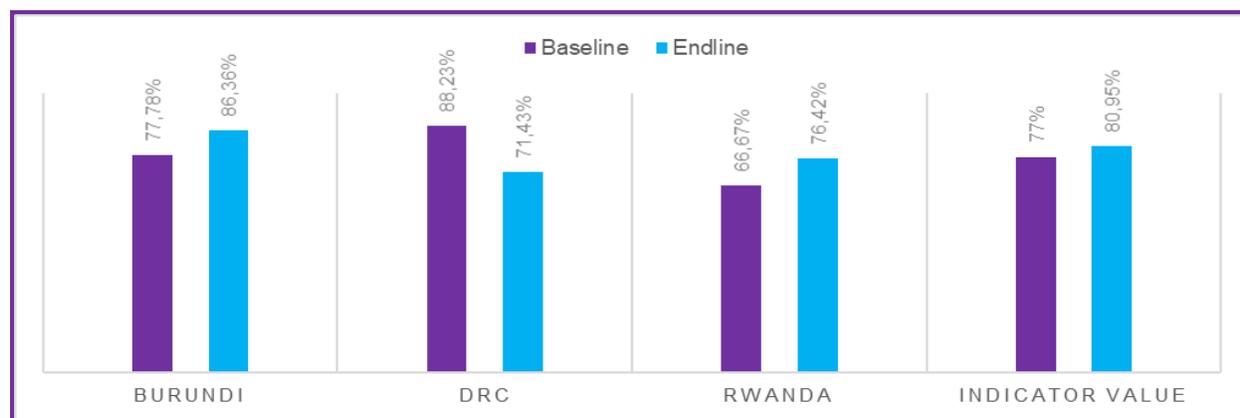
- **Confidence in their ability to produce conflict-sensitive information on peace and security issues**

Endline: 80.95% of media professionals who have confidence in their ability to produce conflict-sensitive information on peace and security issues.

Comparative trends: Overall, when considering all the countries, 47.62% of respondents believe they have all the necessary skills. 33.33% indicate having these capacities to a limited degree, 7.14% feel they don't have the capacity, and 11.90% are unsure.

Only 28.57% of respondents in the DRC indicate that they have all the necessary skills, which is the lowest percentage among the three regions. Furthermore, 42.86% of participants state that they have these capacities to a limited degree. Additionally, 14.29% of respondents in the DRC express that they do not really have the capacity, implying a lack of confidence or competence in providing impartial information on peace and security. This indicates that while they may possess some level of competence, they still perceive limitations in their abilities to deliver impartial and high-quality information. *This suggests that a significant portion of individuals in the DRC may not feel fully equipped to provide impartial and quality information on peace and security.*

Graph 2 : Percentage of media professionals who have confidence in their ability to produce conflict-sensitive information on peace and security issues



General outcomes: the data reveals a group of confident and committed media professionals who understand the significance of producing conflict-sensitive information on peace and security. Their

confidence is rooted in their training, expertise, and commitment to impartiality, and they recognize the ongoing need for learning and access to resources to continue improving their skills in this field.

- **Training and expertise:** media professionals attribute their confidence to the training and expertise they have received. They highlight the importance of previous training programs, workshops, and experiences in conflict resolution and peace journalism that have equipped them with the necessary tools and techniques.
- **Commitment to impartiality:** media professionals emphasise the need for impartiality in reporting on peace and security. They are aware of the potential impact of biased reporting and strive to provide balanced and objective information to the public.
- **Positive impact:** media professionals are driven by a sense of purpose and believe that their work can make a positive impact on society. They see themselves as agents of change and peacebuilders, using their platforms to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and promote understanding.
- **Ongoing learning:** despite their confidence, media professionals recognize the importance of continuous learning and development. They express a willingness to further enhance their skills and stay updated on evolving conflict dynamics and best practices in conflict-sensitive reporting.
- **Resource constraints:** some media professionals acknowledge that resource constraints can limit their ability to fully realise their potential. They highlight the need for adequate resources, such as access to information, technology, and more training opportunities, to further strengthen their capacity in producing conflict-sensitive information.

Gender perspectives analysis indicate a general belief in their (women) capacities to provide sensitive and quality information on peace and security issues. Some women respondents mention that they have received sufficient training and knowledge in this area, including specific programs such as "conflict sensitive journalism" and the "Common Ground" approach.

However, some female participants acknowledge that while they have some capacity, it may still be limited. They mention the need for further training and development to enhance their skills in producing impartial and high-quality information. Lack of resources and limited access to opportunities for training are also mentioned as challenges that hinder their full potential.

On the other hand, the male participants' responses are more concise, with a majority expressing confidence in their capacities. They mention having the necessary knowledge and experience, with some referring to their long tenure in journalism and previous training provided by organisations like "Search for Common Ground." They emphasise principles such as impartiality, adherence to ethical standards, and the role of media in peace consolidation.

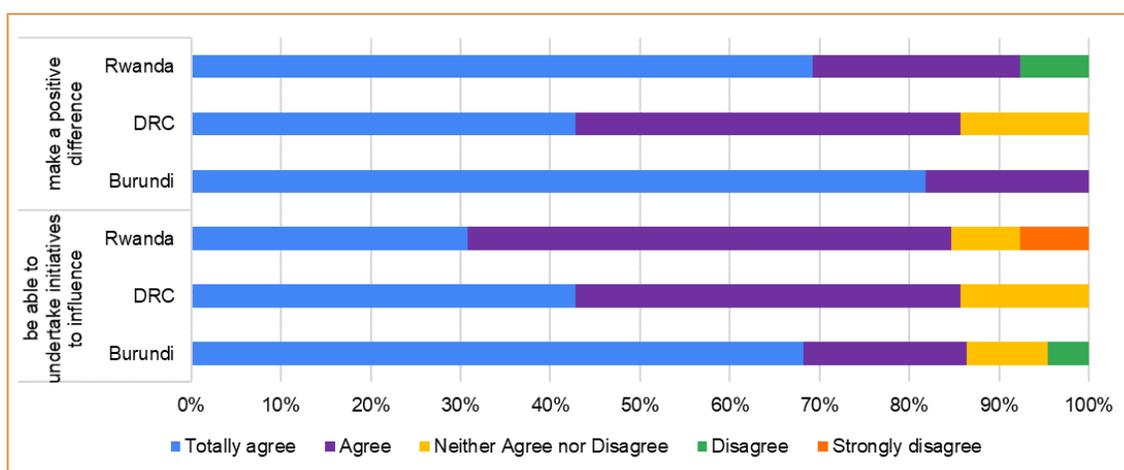
- ***Agency of media professionals***

Endline: 95% of media professionals questioned believe that they can make a positive difference in their community as media professionals (79% strongly agree and 21% agree), stating that the media have a crucial role to play in their community.

Endline: 85% of media professionals questioned think they can take action to influence the things that matter to them as media professionals

Comparative trends: Overall, the data indicates that media professionals from Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda generally believe in their ability to undertake initiatives to influence and make a positive difference in the context of peace and security. However, the responses from the DRC show more variability and uncertainty compared to Burundi and Rwanda, which may reflect the complex and challenging environment in the DRC. Actually, for the ability to undertake initiatives to influence and to make a positive difference, respondents from the DRC show mixed opinions, with 42.86% totally agreeing and another 42.86% agreeing with their ability to undertake initiatives to influence. This suggests a level of uncertainty or varying perceptions among media professionals in the DRC regarding their influence.

Graph 3 :Comparative graph between percentage of media professionals who feel being able to undertake initiative to influence and to make a positive difference



General outcomes from a cross-analysis between the questions around “agency”⁷ indicate a strong belief among media professionals that they can indeed have an impact and bring about positive change in their communities.

- **Empowerment and influence:** media professionals express a sense of empowerment and believe in their ability to influence and shape the issues that matter to them. They recognize their role as agents of change through their work in the media industry.
- **Collaboration and networking:** many respondents emphasise the importance of collaboration, networking, and partnerships among media professionals. They understand that working together and supporting each other can amplify their impact and create a stronger collective voice.
- **Capacity building and training:** Media professionals highlight the significance of continuous learning and capacity building. They recognize that by improving their skills and knowledge, they

⁷ As a media professional, do you believe you can take action to influence the things that matter to you? And "Do you think you can make a positive difference in your community as a media professional?"

can enhance the quality and effectiveness of their work, thus making a positive difference in their communities.

- **Cross-border exchange and productions:** Several respondents suggest cross-border collaborations and productions as a means to foster understanding, cooperation, and peace in the region. They believe that sharing experiences and perspectives can contribute to building stronger connections and breaking down barriers.
- **Responsible journalism:** Media professionals acknowledge the importance of responsible journalism in promoting peace, unity, and social cohesion. They strive to maintain impartiality, avoid political conflicts, and treat sensitive issues with sensitivity and professionalism.
- **Meetings, Evaluation, and Reflection:** The respondents propose organising regular meetings, evaluations, and forums to assess the progress of their initiatives and reflect on ways to improve. These gatherings provide opportunities to discuss challenges, share best practices, and identify areas for growth.

Through collaboration, continuous learning, responsible journalism, and cross-border exchange, they strive to address important issues, promote peace, and contribute to the betterment of their societies. **However, these positive responses are, however, made in parallel with the mention of conditions for fully exercising this power to act, such as having the resources and the positive environment to be able to act.**

3.1.2. Constructive interaction for cross-fertilisation and peer-learning among media professionals throughout the Great Lakes region

- *Relations and collaboration between media professionals*

Endline : 92% of media professionals who feel capable of collaborating with a diverse group of their counterparts to produce conflict-sensitive and impartial information on common interest subjects (57 % “yes completely” and 35% yes but, to some extent)

Comparative trends: the data shows that a significant portion of the respondents from Rwanda and Burundi feel confident about collaborating in diverse groups to produce conflict-sensitive and impartial information. In contrast, the respondents from **Eastern DRC show a more mixed response, with a relatively higher percentage expressing “I am not sure” (14.29%)**. Actually, tensions between DRC and Rwanda increased during the last semester according to implementation staff.⁸

Regarding the neutral response from respondents in the East of the DRC, the qualitative data does not explicitly address the reasons behind it.

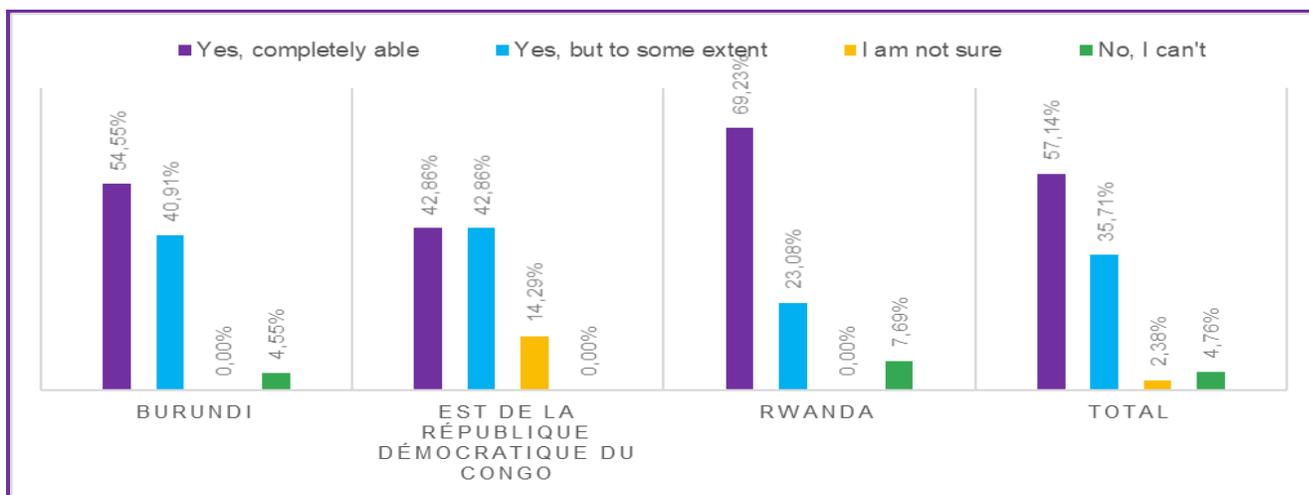
For DRC specific case, based on the quantitative and qualitative responses and the baseline study, it appears a few possible reasons for this neutral response:

- **Limited access to training opportunities:** Some respondents mentioned that while they have the capacity to collaborate, they face challenges in finding regular training opportunities. This lack of access to training may lead to uncertainty or hesitation in fully agreeing with the statement.

⁸ Reflective session with Search staff on June 2023

- **Regional dynamics** : other respondents mentioned being part of regional journalist networks and collaborations within the Great Lakes region. However, it might be also because of the tension between DRC and Rwanda in general.

Graph 4: Percentage of media professionals who feel capable of collaborating with a diverse group of their counterparts to produce conflict-sensitive and impartial information on common interest subjects



General outcomes based on the qualitative data, several reasons can be identified for the respondents' positive and confident responses regarding their ability to collaborate with a diverse group to produce conflict-sensitive and impartial information on subjects of common interest:

- **Experience and expertise:** many respondents mentioned having previous experience and expertise in working with diverse groups and collaborating on similar projects. They highlighted their confidence in their abilities based on their past collaborations and the skills they have developed through their work in journalism.
- **Collaborative platform:** contribute to building trust among media professionals. By engaging in collaborative activities, professionals develop a sense of camaraderie and mutual support, fostering a community of practice. Create opportunities for media professionals to build networks and establish partnerships. These connections can lead to collaborative projects, and resource sharing.⁹
- **Training and capacity building:** Some respondents mentioned receiving specific training or participating in programs such as the "Common Ground journalism" training by Search for Common Ground. These training initiatives likely provided them with knowledge and strategies for effective collaboration, enhancing their confidence in working with diverse groups.
- **In country network:** In Burundi, the Prime Minister's Office organised an activity with journalists from various media outlets to establish a network of journalists. The initiative taken by the Prime Minister's Office in Burundi to organise an activity aimed at establishing a network of journalists signifies a recognition of the importance of collaboration and engagement between the government and media professionals. By creating such a network, the government is demonstrating its commitment to fostering a conducive environment for media practitioners to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- **Regional networks and partnerships:** Several respondents mentioned belonging to regional journalist networks or organisations that facilitate collaboration with their peers from the Great

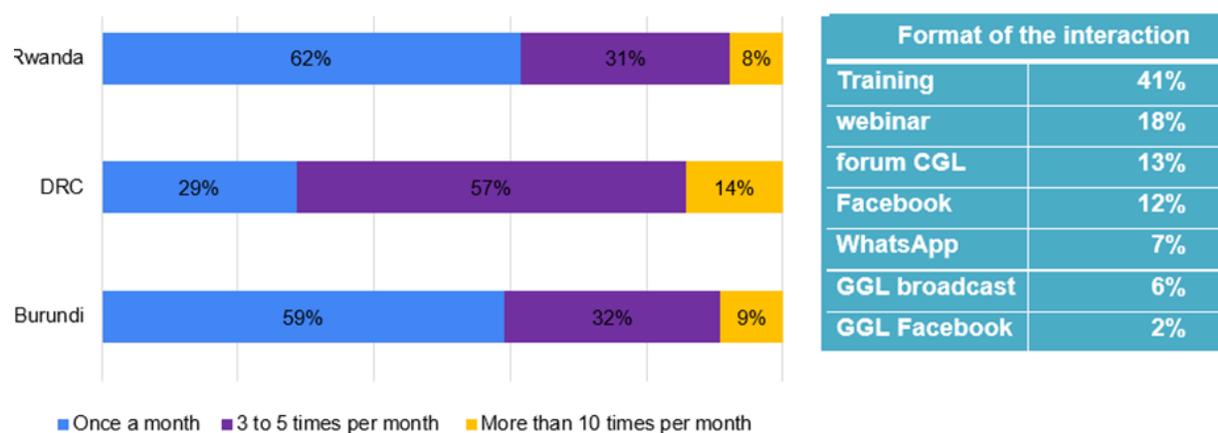
⁹ Journalists trained during the project are acknowledge by their peers as source for information on regional peace and security issues (reflective session on June 2023)

Lakes region. These networks create opportunities for exchange, cooperation, and joint projects, fostering a sense of comfort and familiarity in working with diverse groups.

- **Shared goals and purposes:** Respondents emphasised the importance of working together towards a common goal, such as peacebuilding or contributing to the consolidation of peace in the region. They acknowledged that their respective countries share similarities and face similar challenges, making collaboration essential.
- **Mindset and values:** Some respondents highlighted their inherent inclination towards collaboration and teamwork. They expressed a natural disposition to work with others and complement each other's skills, emphasising the benefits of synergy and collective efforts.
- **Value added of the exchange with their peers across the region and trust their peers' abilities to impartially address security and peace information**
 - **Frequency and format of exchange among media professionals**

Looking at the overall data, 55% of media professionals collaborate once a month, 36% collaborate 3 to 5 times per month, and 10% collaborate more than 10 times per month. Training is the most commonly mentioned platform, with 41% of respondents indicating its usage, Webinars are the second most mentioned platform, with 18% of respondents and Forum GGL is mentioned by 13% of respondents, showing that more than 75% of the exchange format is within the project. The prominence of training programs, webinars, and collaborative forums indicates a strong commitment to professional development and the exchange of ideas during the project. The usage of social media platforms underscores the role of digital tools in facilitating communication and networking within the media community. These findings emphasise the importance of creating inclusive and accessible platforms for media professionals to collaborate, learn, and contribute to conflict-sensitive reporting and shared understanding.

Graph 5: Frequency of interaction among media professionals



In addition to frequency and format, we also asked whether interactions with your peers from different sectors and/or locations have increased as a result of this project (remotely or in person). From a broader perspective, the overall data reveals that a considerable portion of media professionals across the three regions have mixed opinions or uncertainties regarding an increase in interactions with their peers. While there are positive perceptions of increased interactions in some regions (such as the East of the DRC), there are also notable percentages of respondents who neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

Table 1: Percentage of media professionals who report an increase in interactions with peers

media professionals who report an increase in interactions with peers					
	Totally agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Burundi	27%	18%	32%	9%	14%
East DRC	43%	29%	29%	0%	0%
Rwanda	46%	8%	31%	0%	15%
Grand Total	36%	17%	31%	5%	12%

However, there is a very **positive trend in the perception of Rwanda**. During the baseline: 46.67% of media professionals in Rwanda said that they very rarely interacted with media professionals from other countries in the sub-region, whereas now the figure is 54%. Some media professionals targeted during the project, did not succeed in attending the webinar to foster their exchange because of power and internet issues¹⁰.

Endline : 52% of media professionals who report an increase in interactions with peers from different sectors and/ locations through this project (remote or in-person).

- *Confidence in their peers' ability to deal impartially with information of common interest such as security and peace*

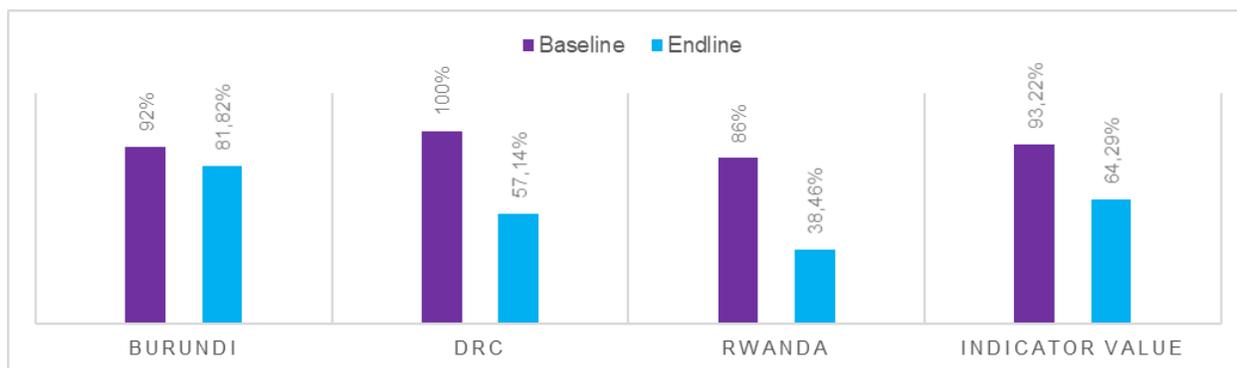
The data suggests that media professionals are open to collaborating with their peers. However, there is a need to strengthen their confidence in the capabilities of their colleagues. While individuals may have self-confidence, it does not automatically translate into confidence in others. Therefore, it is crucial for the project to address this aspect and focus on fostering a sense of trust and confidence among media professionals towards their peers. This analysis highlights the importance of creating an environment that promotes collaboration and builds trust among professionals in order to achieve the desired outcomes and maximise the potential impact of the project.

That being said, the overall data reveals **varying levels of confidence** with considerable level of uncertainty among media professionals in all three regions regarding their peers' abilities to handle information on common interests impartially, specifically in the context of security and peace. While some respondents feel completely or partially confident, a significant portion express uncertainty or lack of confidence in their abilities.

Endline: 64.2% of media professionals who trust their peers' abilities to impartially address common interest information such as "security and peace."

¹⁰ Reflective session on June 2023

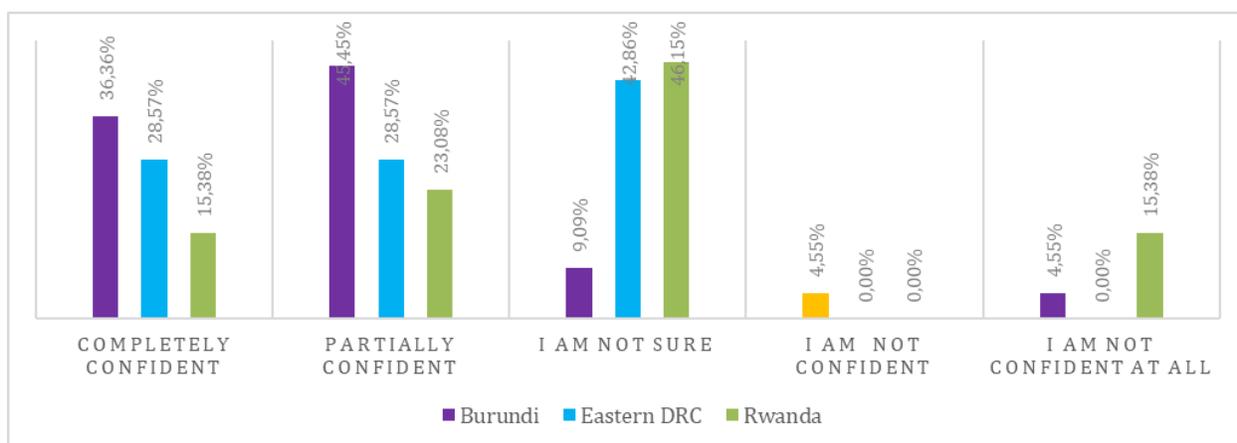
Graph 6 : Percentage of media professionals who trust their peers' abilities to impartially address common interest information such as "security and peace"



The data shows varying levels of confidence in the abilities of peers to handle information impartially on common interests such as security and peace. Overall, 28.57% of respondents reported being completely confident, 35.71% were partially confident, 26.19% were unsure, 9.52% were not confident. This indicates a mixed perception of their peers' abilities to deliver impartial information.

The negative perception of media professionals in Rwanda and the DRC regarding their handling of information on common interests, particularly in the context of security and peace, can be attributed to a combination of political, social, and historical factors that have influenced media environments in these countries.

Graph 7 : Percentage of media professionals who trust their peers' abilities to impartially address common interest information such as "security and peace" – desegregated by country



Gender Differences: There is a noticeable difference in confidence levels between male and female respondents. Among male respondents, 36.36% expressed complete confidence, while 45.45% were partially confident. In comparison, female respondents showed lower levels of confidence, with only 15.38% reporting complete confidence and 23.08% reporting partial confidence. This suggests a potential gender disparity in the perceived impartiality of information handling.

The trends observed in the data show varying levels of confidence in the abilities of peers to handle information impartially on common interests such as security and peace. It is worth noting that the responses

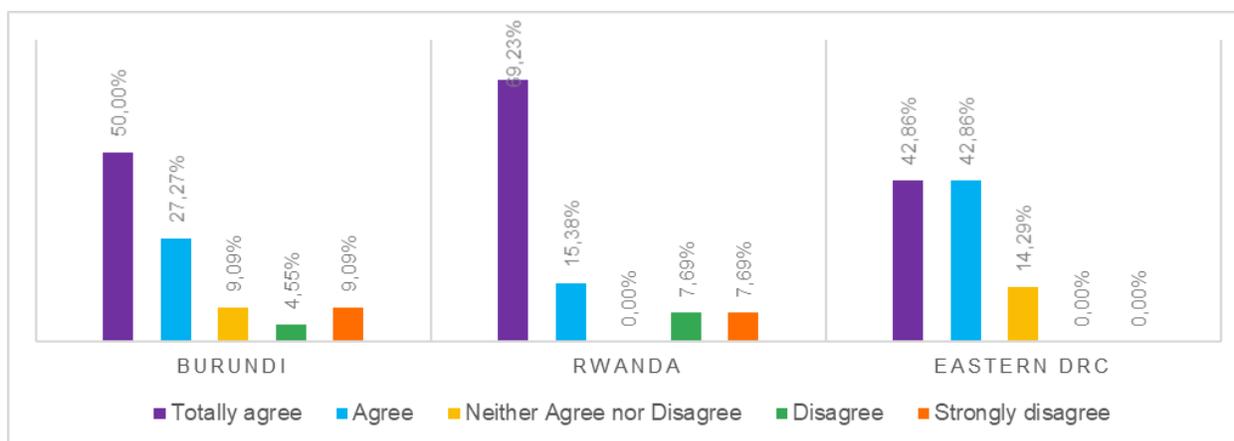
are subjective and based on individual perceptions. The overall confidence level varies among respondents, and it is influenced by factors such as personal experiences, interactions with peers, and the professional environment.

- **Reservations and lack of trust:** Some respondents expressed reservations or lack of trust in their peers' impartiality. Concerns were raised about journalists prioritising personal interests over public interests, the influence of media organisations' editorial lines, limited training opportunities, and the influence of political actors on journalists. These factors contribute to scepticism regarding the impartial handling of information.
- **Training and experience:** Several respondents emphasised the importance of training, experience, and professionalism in building confidence in peers. They noted that practical exercises, previous collaborations, and experiences in the field have demonstrated the ability of journalists to handle information impartially. However, some respondents highlighted the need for continuous training to enhance skills and maintain impartiality.
- **Subjectivity and perception:** It is important to recognize that confidence levels and trust are subjective and based on individual perceptions. Different experiences, interactions, and professional environments influence how respondents view their peers' impartiality. These subjective factors contribute to the varied responses observed in the data.

Therefore, it is crucial for the project to address this aspect and focus on fostering a sense of trust and confidence among media professionals towards their peers. This analysis highlights the importance of creating an environment that promotes collaboration and builds trust among professionals in order to achieve the desired outcomes and maximise the potential impact of the project.

It is worth to note that, among those who report having exchanges with peers from the region, **80% report having positive value added and/or significant value to their professional capacity and expertise.**

Graph 8: Percentage of media participants who report having exchanges with peers from the region have added positive and/or significant value to their professional capacity and expertise.



The exchange of experiences, training sessions, and the creation of platforms such as WhatsApp groups have contributed to a greater understanding of common regional issues, improved information analysis, and enhanced collaboration among journalists.

- **Knowledge and learning:** Participants expressed that the exchange of experiences and interactions with their peers from different countries within the Great Lakes region have been valuable. They have gained insights into different approaches to journalism, organisational dynamics, and strategies for information verification, such as fact-checking. This knowledge sharing has broadened their understanding and improved their ability to produce well-informed and impartial reports.
- **Building trust and collaboration:** The project has facilitated trust-building among journalists from different countries. Through face-to-face meetings and virtual sessions, participants have had the opportunity to engage in open dialogue, discuss common challenges, and exchange ideas. This collaboration has fostered a sense of camaraderie and mutual support among journalists, leading to more effective and unbiased reporting.
- **Professionalism and ethical standards:** Many respondents highlighted the importance of professionalism and adherence to ethical standards in their work. They emphasised the need for impartiality, accuracy, and the pursuit of public interest in reporting. The project has provided a platform for reinforcing these principles and sharing best practices, contributing to the overall objective of the project.

Gender perspective analysis: It is worth noting that some gender disparities were evident in the responses. Female participants expressed lower confidence levels compared to their male counterparts. This suggests a potential need for targeted interventions to address gender imbalances and provide additional support and opportunities for female journalists in the region.

Overall, the findings demonstrate the value of collaborative initiatives and knowledge-sharing platforms for journalists in the Great Lakes region. The project has contributed to improved information handling, increased professionalism, and enhanced regional cooperation.

3.1.3. Coverage of peace and security issues in the “Generation Grand lacs” broadcast

Example of the resonance of GGL radio program to the community

A positive reception and global trends regarding the GGL program have been reported by respondents. Participants from both the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi appreciate the program's objectives and its contribution to peace and unity in the Great Lakes region.

The GGL program is seen as an important initiative that promotes dialogue and understanding among media professionals and the community of the region. It is praised for addressing pressing issues such as peace, security, and corruption. The program's frankness and informative nature are widely acknowledged, with participants finding it instructive for various stakeholders, including authorities, citizens, and border migration officials.

One beautiful quote that captures the sentiment expressed by participants comes from the group of press Ongea Yaga: "These broadcasts contribute to the restoration of trust among the youth in the Great Lakes region, especially those living in border areas like Kamanyola-Bugarama and Kamanyola-Rugombo. We believe that these broadcasts are of paramount importance."

This quote exemplifies the positive impact of the GGL program in bridging divides and nurturing a sense of unity and trust among the youth in the region, particularly those living in border communities. It highlights the program's ability to foster connections and contribute to the restoration of confidence among young people in the Great Lakes region.

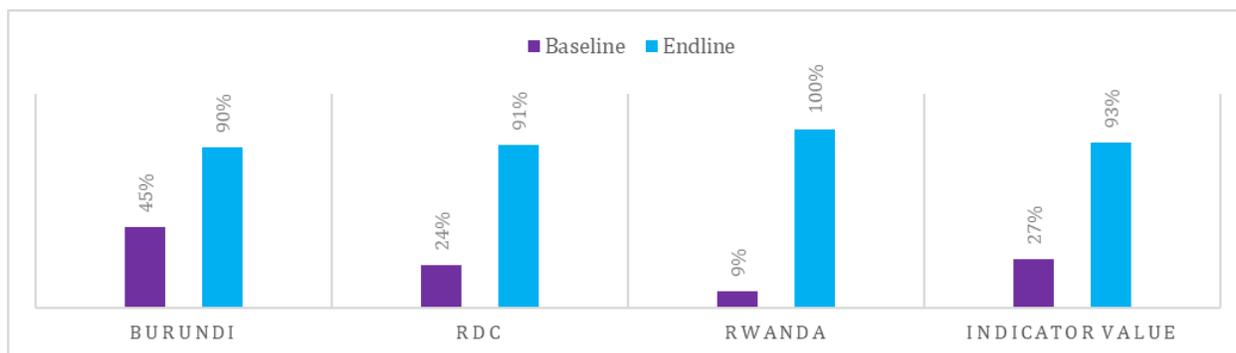
- **Positive perception of the capacity of media to inform on peace and security issues**

Endline: 93% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" about their satisfaction with the media's ability to inform listeners about peace and security issues and regional dynamics.

Comparative trends: The quantitative data suggests a generally positive perception of the media products provided in the GGL to inform on peace and security issues, with varying satisfaction levels among the three countries. Rwanda stands out with a 100% satisfaction rate, while the DRC has a significant percentage of extremely satisfied respondents. Burundi shows a mix of satisfaction levels but still reports a high overall satisfaction percentage.

Graph 10 suggests a positive trend over time, with a significant increase in the indicator value from the baseline to the endline. The communities exposed to the GGL program, as interviewed, recognize that the GGL program and its associated social media have the capacity to inform listeners about peace, security, and regional dynamics.

Graph 9: Percentage of respondents about their satisfaction (extremely satisfied and satisfied) with the media's ability to inform listeners about peace and security issues and regional dynamics



General outcomes indicate that the media has the capacity to inform and engage the audience:

- Listeners express satisfaction with the *GGL programs and their ability to provide relevant information on peace and security* in the Great Lakes region.
- The GGL programs are appreciated for *their ability to bridge differences and emphasise commonalities among the countries in the Great Lakes region*. The programs allow listeners to learn about the situation in different countries and promote better mutual understanding, fostering connections among populations.

even though the program is dedicated to the Generation Great Lakes, the majority of people engaged in cross-border trade are small-scale traders who do not follow the program and do not understand the language of communication often used in French, while these traders use local languages such as Swahili, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, etc. Women participants to FGD in Burundi

- Participants *emphasize the importance of impartiality, professionalism, and responsible journalism* in the GGL programs. This suggests that maintaining high journalistic standards is crucial for the credibility and effectiveness of the media in informing on peace and security issues.

However,

- *Language barriers pose a challenge to the effectiveness of the programs*. While the broadcasts are primarily in French, listeners express a desire for the use of local languages such as Swahili, Kirundi, and Kinyarwanda. This suggests that incorporating local languages could enhance understanding and engagement among the audience.
- Some respondents from FGD relate *the limited access of leaders to social media*, which restricts their engagement and participation in the GGL programs. This is a significant concern, as leaders play a crucial role in addressing peace and security challenges. Efforts should be made to increase accessibility for leaders and ensure their involvement in these initiatives.
- Some listeners express the need for *greater media coverage* in remote areas to ensure broader access to the programs. This indicates that expanding the reach of the media and addressing coverage gaps is essential to maximise the impact of the programs.

Gender perspective: Both women and men appreciate the programs and recognize their value in providing information on peace and security. Women specifically emphasise the importance of exchanging opinions and perspectives between countries, promoting better understanding and stronger connections among populations. Men, on the other hand, appreciate the inclusive nature of the programs, which address issues in the Great Lakes region comprehensively and allow for listener reactions, providing a more complete perspective. Some highlight that the programs contribute to peace and security by fostering social cohesion and mindset change.

The findings indicate that the GGL programs and associated media have the capacity to inform listeners about peace, security, and regional dynamics. However, challenges such as language barriers, limited access for leaders, and coverage gaps need to be addressed to maximise the effectiveness and reach of the media. Incorporating local languages, expanding media coverage, and maintaining high journalistic standards are important factors for enhancing the media's capacity in informing on peace and security issues.

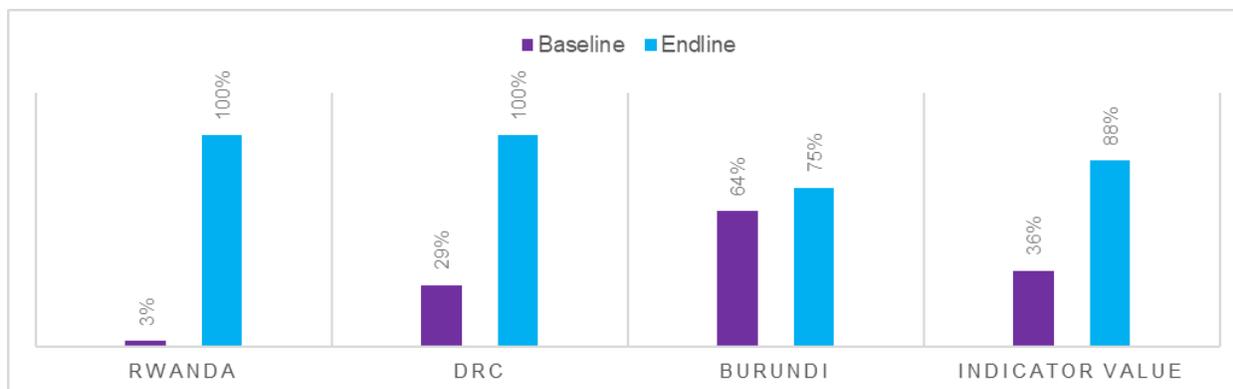
- *GGL program is highly regarded for providing high-quality and diverse information on peace and security*

Endline: 88% of community respondents are 'completely satisfied or satisfied' with the quality and plurality of media productions on issues of peace, security and regional dynamics

Comparative trends: 88% of respondents are 'completely satisfied or satisfied' with the quality and plurality of media productions on issues of peace, security and regional dynamics. Overall, data shows that 39.02% of all respondents from the three countries combined are extremely satisfied, while 48.78% are satisfied with the diversity and quality of information on peace and security from GGL broadcasts. It can be inferred that there has been a significant improvement in meeting the indicator criterion in all three countries, with

Rwanda and the DRC reaching 100% at the endline. Burundi also shows progress, although not as high as the other two countries.

Graph 10: Percentage of respondents are 'completely satisfied or partially satisfied' with the quality and plurality of media productions on issues of peace, security and regional dynamics



General outcomes

- The GGL program is highly regarded for providing high-quality and diverse information on peace and security.
- The program effectively engages the audience, encourages participation, and fosters informed dialogue.
- The listeners appreciate the comprehensive coverage, diverse perspectives, and inclusion of expert insights.
- The language barrier is identified as a challenge, and the use of local languages is suggested to enhance accessibility and inclusivity.
- The program contributes to a deeper understanding of peace and security issues in the Great Lakes region.

Regarding the perceptions from Burundi, findings show that the program covers themes such as security, economy, and social cohesion, addressing audience interests. It motivates and involves young people in decision-making processes and clarifies identity conflicts through expert insights.

Community respondents to this study appreciate *the comprehensive coverage* of various topics - related to peace and security, including topics like peaceful coexistence, economic development, political dynamics, and social issues, arts, catering to various interests - and find the information valuable and informative. The program's diverse range of topics, which go beyond security issues to include sports, education, and other aspects that influence peace and stability in the region and might enhance engagement and interest among listeners.

FGD participants DRC-Goma highlighted special episodes unite humor artists from Rwanda, DR Congo, and Burundi, fostering cultural exchange. Additionally, specific programs address the security concerns of Congolese and Rwandan women engaged in cross-border trading.

The program challenges preconceived notions and provides accurate and unbiased information. The *journalists hosting the program are consistently coherent, effectively conveying essential points*. Audience engagement is promoted through post-presentation discussions. Their presentation style is well-received by the audience. The program provides listeners with the opportunity to share their opinions and engage in

discussions after the journalists' presentations, promoting active participation and interaction.

Respondents appreciate the *concise format of the program*, which lasts for 15 minutes, allowing for focused and effective delivery of necessary information.

Community highlights that the GGL broadcasts provide them with *valuable insights and a deeper understanding of the peace and security situations in the Great Lakes region*. They feel that the information presented in the broadcasts goes beyond their initial expectations and challenges preconceived notions they may have held about certain countries or regions. The program's ability to provide accurate and unbiased information is regarded as highly important and valuable.

Additionally, respondents appreciate the inclusion of different perspectives and voices in the GGL broadcasts. They find the presence of experts, journalists, and community members contributing to the discussions to be beneficial, as it enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the information presented. Participants value the fact that they can hear directly from individuals who have first-hand experiences and knowledge of the situations being discussed.

However, some respondents express concern about the language barrier - the use of the French language in GGL broadcasts. They mention that not all community members, especially women and young people, are proficient in French, which creates a challenge in understanding the content. **Outreach and engagement** have been raised as well, participants highlight the importance of reaching out to young people who may not regularly listen to the radio or be aware of the GGL program.

Gender perspectives: The analysis reveals that both men and women are interested in the topics of peace and security discussed in the Génération Grands Lacs (GGL) broadcasts. They appreciate the program's diverse range of themes and its focus on engaging young people. Trust in journalists and the desire for interactive participation and dialogue are common among both genders. The program's role in providing information about neighbouring countries is valued, promoting regional understanding and solidarity. Overall, the analysis emphasises the shared interests and perspectives of both men and women, highlighting the importance of inclusive communication, youth engagement, language accessibility, and participation opportunities.

Overall, the analysis highlights the effective delivery of high-quality and diverse information on peace, security, and regional dynamics by the GGL program. The concise format, coherent presentations, and opportunities for engagement contribute to its positive reception. The inclusion of various themes and the involvement of experts promote informed dialogue and encourage active participation, particularly among the youth.

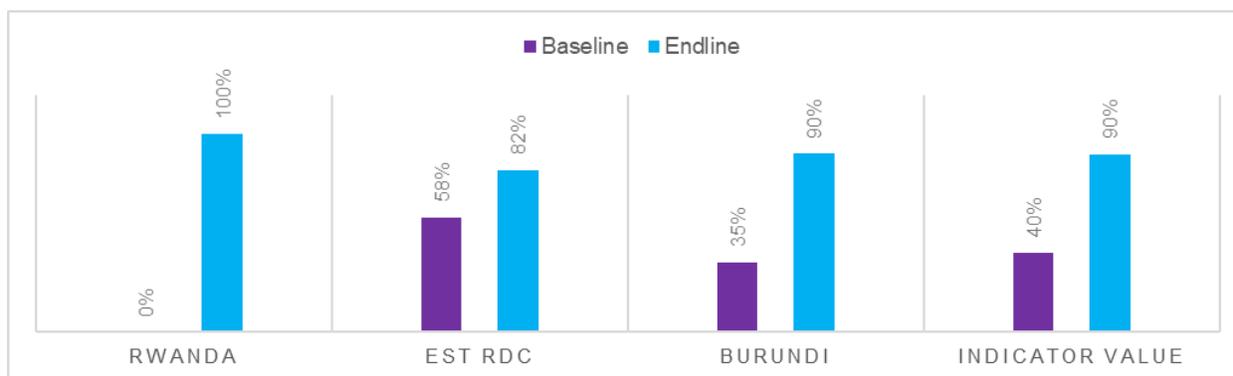
- *Involvement of different nationalities and the representation of all voices is emphasised as a contributing factor to the balanced nature of the debates in GGL broadcasts.*

Endline : 90% of the population surveyed "strongly agree and agree" that media programmes on peace and security issues should include a balanced and participatory debate

Comparative trends: the majority of respondents from Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda express agreement that the GGL broadcasts on peace and security include balanced debates. In Burundi, 90% of respondents either strongly agree or agree, while in DRC, 81.82% of respondents either strongly agree or agree. The overall

response indicates that a significant portion of participants perceive the debates in the GGL broadcasts to be balanced. In the baseline assessment, 0% of respondents in Rwanda believed that GGL broadcasts included balanced debates. However, in the endline assessment, 100% of respondents in Rwanda indicated that GGL broadcasts included balanced debates. This indicates a significant improvement in the perception of balanced debates in GGL broadcasts among Rwandan respondents.

Graph 11: Percentage of the population surveyed "strongly agree and agree" that media programmes on peace and security issues should include a balanced and participatory debate



General outcomes show that the majority of respondents view the GGL broadcasts as having balanced debates, where multiple viewpoints are presented, and efforts are made to involve different segments of the population.

- Many respondents agree that the GGL broadcasts include balanced debates because they address sensitive topics related to peace and security.
- The *inclusion of all countries and involvement of different nationalities and the representation of all voices is emphasised as a contributing factor to the balanced nature of the debates*; their perspectives are seen as a positive aspect, with respondents appreciating that each country has the opportunity to present the true situation from their own perspective.
- The importance of *involving local leaders, such as traditional chiefs or mayors*, in discussions about security and other relevant topics. This approach recognizes their role in ensuring community safety and acknowledges that security concerns start at the local level.
- There is a sense that the *timing and participation of the three countries*

From FGD participant - DRC-Bukavu related: « One significant aspect emphasized is the inclusion of diverse perspectives and voices in the program. The interviewee mentions inviting representatives from the Congolese community living in Rwanda to address misconceptions and stereotypes. This demonstrates a commitment to fostering dialogue, understanding, and breaking down barriers between different communities in the Great Lakes region.

The GGL program has expanded its range of participants beyond politicians and now includes members of civil society, deputies, and local authorities. This shift aims to involve individuals with firsthand experience and comprehensive knowledge of the issues being discussed. By inviting these individuals, the program aims to provide real-time and verified information, contributing to a more informed and nuanced public discourse.

(Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda) are balanced, with no one country dominating the discussions.

- The *engagement and encouragement of women's participation* in the debates are highlighted as a positive aspect that contributes to the overall balance.
- The *experts and invited guests provide* clarity and insights on the topics discussed, enhancing the balance of the debates.
- The openness to different opinions and the absence of bias or favouritism are appreciated by respondents, contributing to their perception of balanced debates.
- The interviewees highlight that the *program has evolved over time, transitioning from recorded episodes to live broadcasts*, including interviews and debates. This change has allowed for more dynamic and interactive discussions on important topics.

However, some respondents suggest the need to further involve the youth and authorities in discussions to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives and to address specific issues affecting the region.

Participants from Burundi generally perceive the debates as balanced in the 2023 broadcasts. The participants remained impartial and focused on conflict-related matters. However, due to the limited time allocated to the program, topics often conclude without substantial conclusions or recommendations.

While some respondents through the social network appreciate the efforts to provide equal opportunities for everyone to voice their opinions, there are concerns about limited reach and the exclusion of certain groups, particularly young people. The influence of individuals in positions of power is also highlighted as a factor affecting the fairness of these debates. *Participants express the need for greater youth involvement and the consideration of proposed solutions*. Additionally, social issues such as unwanted pregnancies and access to land are mentioned as priorities for discussion. A journalist suggests that while the debates are balanced, the decline in traditional media viewership and limited internet access pose challenges in reaching wider audiences, emphasising the importance of partnerships for broad dissemination, even in remote areas.

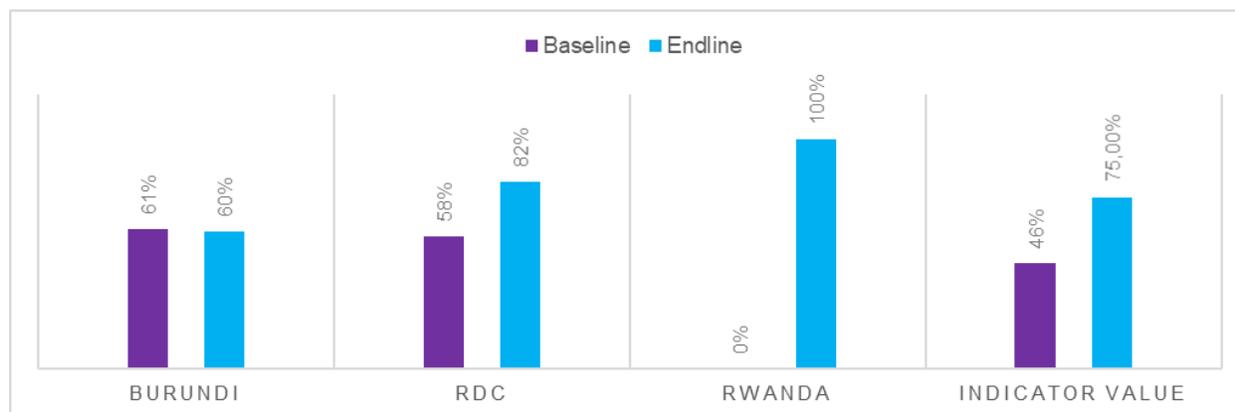
It can be observed that the GGL program and GGL social media platforms strive to maintain balanced debates on peace and security. The *rotation of presenters from different backgrounds contributes to diversity and inclusivity*. However, the time constraints may limit the depth of discussions, resulting in incomplete conclusions or recommendations.

Gender perspective reveals that both men and women perceive the GGL broadcasts as having balanced debates on peace and security issues. The analysis highlights the importance of involving women in the discussions and encouraging their active participation. Participants also acknowledge the efforts made by the program to invite women to expose their point of view. Overall, the analysis indicates that the GGL broadcasts are perceived as balanced and inclusive, allowing for a variety of opinions and fostering regional understanding.

- *Women and marginalised groups have access to the information and discussions presented in GGL broadcasts*

Comparative trends: 75% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that GGL broadcasts are accessible to women and marginalised groups. This indicates a positive perception among a small portion of the respondents. 22.5% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree, indicating a level of uncertainty or lack of awareness about the accessibility of the broadcasts.

Graph 12 : Percentage of respondents "strongly agree and agree" that information produced by the media is accessible to women and marginalised groups



Endline: 75% of respondents who report that the media information produced by this project is accessible to women and marginalised groups

General outcomes relate:

- **Increased awareness:** several respondents acknowledged that women and marginalised groups have access to the information and discussions presented in GGL broadcasts. This indicates that the broadcasts have successfully reached these target audiences and raised awareness about important topics and issues.
- **Inclusive representation:** respondents emphasised that GGL broadcasts do not discriminate against any specific group and provide an inclusive platform for everyone to participate. This inclusive representation fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment for women and marginalised groups, as their voices are acknowledged and valued.
- **Participation and engagement:** some respondents mentioned instances where women actively participated in GGL broadcasts, either by sharing their opinions or through direct involvement in specific episodes. This indicates that the broadcasts have successfully engaged women and provided them with an opportunity to contribute to the discussions.
- **Recognition of women's role:** A few respondents highlighted the positive shift in society, where women are no longer confined to traditional roles but are now recognized as active participants in peacebuilding and decision-making processes. GGL broadcasts have played a role in this recognition by featuring women's perspectives and emphasising their importance in security and peace initiatives.

While the GGL program addresses positive shifts to women and marginalised groups, there are accessibility challenges, particularly for illiterate women. *Language barriers and limited familiarity with social media platforms contribute* to this issue and further limits their engagement.

Likewise, the analysis of the comments from social networks highlights different perspectives on the accessibility of GGL programs to women and marginalised groups. While some participants believe that these programs are accessible to all, there are concerns about the limited time and resources available to certain individuals, particularly women and marginalised communities. In other terms, *lack of access to*

information and limited means of communication are identified as barriers for these groups, specifically targeting rural women who may have limited access to radios.

A few respondents highlighted that *radio coverage is limited* in certain areas, especially rural regions, which could affect the ability of women and marginalised groups to access the broadcasts.

There were *mixed opinions regarding the level of interest and engagement of women* and marginalised groups in the broadcasts. While some respondents believed that they have access and participate in the discussions, others mentioned a *lack of specific topics or low interest from these groups*. However, Participants from Goma acknowledge that there are specific episodes addressing issues such as the harassment faced by women engaged in small-scale commerce and individuals with disabilities at the small border crossing. The inclusion of these topics provides a platform for women and marginalised groups to have their concerns addressed and discussed.

Overall, the majority of respondents believed that GGL broadcasts are accessible to women and marginalised groups, *emphasising inclusivity and equal participation in the discussions*. However, there were a few respondents who *expressed uncertainty or lack of knowledge about the topic*. Some respondents highlighted potential barriers and others acknowledged the need for further sensitization and awareness campaigns.

- ***Availability of information on peace and security issues provided by GGL broadcasts***

Endline: 90% of respondents are "completely satisfied and partially satisfied" with the availability of information from different types of media on peace and security

Comparative trends: the data shows a positive trend in satisfaction with the availability and quality of information in GGL broadcasts, with varying degrees of satisfaction observed across the three countries. Rwanda stands out with the highest satisfaction level, followed by the DRC, while Burundi has a relatively lower level of extreme satisfaction but still maintains a high overall satisfaction rate.

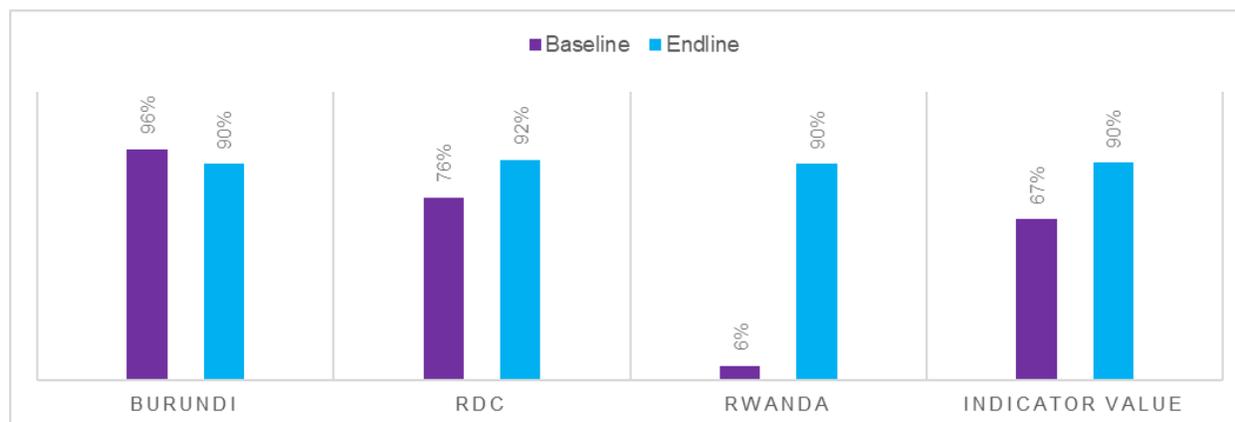
Participant from FGD -DRC Bukavu "...if the program is currently airing on Sundays at 7:30 am on Mama Radio, changing the broadcast time to 7:30 am may conflict with people attending church. However, if it could be broadcasted in the evening, around 8:30 pm or 9 pm, it would allow others to access it"

Need to mention that in Burundi, 5.00% of respondents expressed being extremely satisfied with the availability and quality of information in GGL broadcasts, which is the lowest percentage among the three countries. However, the majority of respondents (85.00%) expressed satisfaction, and 10.00% remained neutral. This trend in Burundi is linked to:

- *language and duration of the program* : although the program is considered good, it is in French, which could be a limitation for some individuals. Additionally, the duration of the program is mentioned as being short, potentially leaving viewers wanting more.
- *Timing and accessibility*: The timing of the program on Sundays is mentioned as conflicting with church attendance, suggesting that some individuals miss out on the broadcast. There is a desire for better notification about the timing to ensure broader access.

- *Increasing the frequency of broadcasts*: most of the respondents express the wish of expanding the program's schedule to include additional days besides Sunday. By increasing the frequency of broadcasts, more people would have the opportunity to listen to the program and benefit from its content. It would help in reaching a wider audience and maximising the impact of the program.

Graph 13 : Percentage of respondents are "completely satisfied and partially satisfied" with the availability of information from different types of media on peace and security



General outcomes relate to:

- **Awareness and access to information**: GGL broadcasts are praised for providing information on peace and security issues in the region. The program is seen as a valuable source of knowledge and a way to stay informed about what is happening in neighbouring countries.
- **Mindset change and cohabitation**: The program is credited with changing mindsets and challenging preconceived notions. It promotes cohabitation, peaceful living, and harmony among different ethnic groups and nations in the Great Lakes region.
- **Break down cultural barriers and promote cross-border mobility and interaction**. The program provides opportunities for young people in the region to contribute their ideas to the development of their respective countries and the sub-region as a whole. It fosters knowledge sharing and cohesion among young people from neighbouring countries.
- **Availability and quality of information**: Participants appreciate the availability and quality of information provided by GGL broadcasts. The program covers various topics related to peace, security, and economic development, offering a diverse range of perspectives and experiences.
- **Confidence building**: Some individuals mentioned that the program gave them the confidence to interact with people from other countries and travel to neighbouring countries without fear. It provides assurance and dispels stereotypes or misconceptions.
- **Contribution to peacebuilding**: GGL broadcasts are viewed as contributing to peacebuilding efforts by sensitising and informing young people and communities about the importance of peace and security. It fosters a sense of responsibility among youth and emphasises collaboration and cooperation.
- **Accessible platforms**: GGL broadcasts are not only available on radio but also shared on social media platforms, allowing individuals to catch up on missed episodes and engage with the content.

However, again, *language and duration are mentioned as a limitation*. Additionally, some individuals expressed the desire for longer program durations to cover more topics in-depth. Some respondents requested *the need for Language Diversity*: There is a suggestion to include local languages, such as Swahili, to cater to a wider audience and ensure broader reach.

Participants from Goma express that the availability of information from the GGL program is somewhat limited. The program airs once a week on a local radio station, Kivu Star, and there is a suggestion to increase the frequency to enhance information availability. Additionally, the coverage of the radio station may not reach all areas of North Kivu, limiting access to the program for those in remote territories

Scheduling and Timing needs to be contextualised: Some participants highlighted the need for better communication regarding the program's timing to avoid conflicts with other commitments like church attendance. However, in Burundi the GGL is broadcast on national radio.

Awareness of the program's social media pages is also limited, highlighting the need for wider dissemination of information. Some participants propose conducting physical outreach to engage with individuals and provide them with relevant knowledge.

Gender perspective: Both men and women express satisfaction with the availability of the radio program. However, there are a few mentions of technical difficulties and limited access due to power outages in certain areas. These challenges can affect both genders, but they may disproportionately impact women, especially if they have less control over access to radio devices or face additional barriers in seeking alternative means of information.

Gender-specific Concerns: The responses do not specifically highlight gender-related concerns or issues affecting women. However, it is essential to recognize that women may face unique challenges and experiences related to peace, security, and coexistence. It would be beneficial to include gender-sensitive content that addresses women's perspectives, experiences, and concerns in the radio program to ensure their meaningful participation.

Overall, findings reflect a positive perception of GGL broadcasts, emphasising their importance in promoting peace, providing valuable information, challenging stereotypes, and fostering a sense of community and collaboration among young people in the Great Lakes region.

3.2. Project Indicators

Table 2 : *Project Outcomes by Indicator*

	Project baseline	Project target	Endline	Comments
Overall objective: To strengthen access to information, dialogue and exchange through the media in the Great Lakes region (Rwanda, Burundi and eastern DRC).				
Ind 1: Satisfaction rate of citizens, women and men, with the availability and quality	66%	70%	90%	

	Project baseline	Project target	Endline	Comments
of information from the various types of media (supported by this project)				
Ind 2: Percentage of respondents who say that the media information produced by this project is accessible to women and marginalised groups	46%	60%	75%	
Specific Objective 1: Develop the cadre of media professionals across the Great Lakes region - from rural communities to urban centres - capable of producing quality, unbiased and non-politicized news and information, particularly on peace and security issues and regional dynamics.				
Ind 1.1: Satisfaction rate of citizens, women and men, with the quality and plurality of media productions on issues of peace, security and regional dynamics.	36%	50%	88%	
Ind 1.2: Proportion of media professionals who declare their ability to produce high-quality, unbiased information on peace and security issues	81%	90%	90%	
Specific Objective 2: Established platforms foster a community of practice around dialogue and collaboration between media professionals in the Great Lakes region.				
Ind 2.1: Satisfaction rate of citizens, men and women, with the media's ability to inform listeners about peace and security issues and regional dynamics.	27%	40%	93%	
Indicators linked to specific objective 2				
Ind 1.1.2. Percentage of media professionals confident in their ability to produce conflict-sensitive information on peace and security issues	78%	80%	80.95%	
Ind 1.2.2 Percentage of listeners surveyed who say that radio coverage of peace and security issues includes balanced debates.	40%	60%	90%	
Ind 2.2.1 Percentage of media professionals who feel able to collaborate with a diverse group of their counterparts	98%	100%	92%	57% “yes completely” and 35% yes, but to some extent)

	Project baseline	Project target	Endline	Comments
to produce conflict-sensitive and unbiased information on topics of common interest.				East of the DRC show a more mixed response, with a relatively higher percentage expressing ‘I am not sure’ (14.29%).
Ind 2.2.2 Percentage of media professionals who have confidence in their peers' ability to deal impartially with information of common interest such as "security and peace"	93%	100%	64.2%	28.57% of respondents reported being completely confident, 35.71% were partially confident, 26.19% were unsure, 2.38% were not confident, and 7.14% were not confident at all The overall confidence level varies among respondents, and it is influenced by factors such as personal experiences, interactions with peers, and the professional environment.
Media Professionals' agency				
Percentage of media professionals who say they can make a positive difference in their community as media professionals	100%	N/A	95%	These positive responses are, however, made in parallel with the mention of conditions for fully exercising this power to act, such as having the resources and the positive environment to be able to act.
Percentage of people who think they can take action to influence the things they care about as a media professional	92%	N/A	85%	

3.3. Best practices - lessons learned and recommendations

3.3.1. Best practices

- **Promote collaboration and dialogue:**

The project has demonstrated the importance of collaboration and dialogue among media professionals. Creating platforms and opportunities for media professionals to come together, share experiences, and work across divides can foster understanding, build trust, and lead to more comprehensive and nuanced reporting.

Encouraging collaboration and dialogue should be a continued best practice to strengthen the media landscape in the Great Lakes region.

- **Foster in-person interactions**

Organising in-person meetings and events with various stakeholders in the Great Lakes region can provide a platform for media professionals to connect, exchange ideas, and collaborate on addressing common challenges.

Encouraging face-to-face interactions involving diverse stakeholders in the Great Lakes region can serve as a valuable platform for media professionals to establish connections, exchange ideas, and collaborate in tackling shared challenges, as they can facilitate trust-building and enhance the sense of community among media professionals.

- **Capacity building for conflict-sensitive reporting**

The evaluation findings indicate that training media professionals in conflict-sensitive reporting is crucial for producing high-quality, impartial, and non-politicized news and information. The project initiatives can inform the design of targeted training modules that address the specific needs and challenges faced by media professionals in the Great Lakes region – such as conflict sensitivity, and regional dynamics can enhance the skills and knowledge of journalists in reporting on issues of peace and security. Continued investment in capacity building initiatives, including both technical and journalistic skills, is essential for promoting high-quality and impartial reporting.

- **Multimedia platforms and collaboration**

The project leveraged online platforms to facilitate collaboration and cross-fertilization of ideas among media professionals. Furthermore, promoting collaboration across different sectors, media houses, and areas of expertise can enhance the quality and diversity of news coverage, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of peace and security issues.

- **Strengthen communication on social media**

Enhance the project's communication strategy on social media platforms to reach a broader audience and engage with listeners. Utilise social media channels to promote the GGL program, share relevant news, and encourage dialogue and interaction among the audience.

3.3.1. Lessons learned and recommendations

The following recommendations based on lessons learned from the analysis of the evaluation are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the project in the Great Lakes region:

- **Incorporate local languages**

The project has underscored the importance of using local languages in media content. By incorporating local languages in radio broadcasts and other media platforms, journalists can improve accessibility, reach a broader audience, and ensure better understanding and engagement.

- **Tailored training approaches**

To effectively expand the cadre of media professionals, the project should adopt tailored training approaches that consider the diversity of the target audience. This includes ensuring access to training for media professionals in both rural and urban areas. Customised training programs should focus on building skills in conflict-sensitive reporting, fact-checking, and ethical journalism practices. Additionally, incorporating practical exercises and case studies from the region can enhance the relevance and applicability of the training.

- **Reinforce communication strategies on social media**

In order to reach a larger audience reflects the evolving landscape of media consumption and the increasing presence of people on these platforms. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for information dissemination and audience engagement, so GGL Facebook page needs to be better showcased so we can have a wide reach and the potential to connect with diverse demographics, including young people who are increasingly active on these platforms.

- **Peer learning and mentoring**

To enhance collaboration and foster a community of practice, the project should incorporate peer learning and mentoring mechanisms. Establishing mentorship programs where experienced media professionals provide guidance and support to emerging journalists can enhance skill development and knowledge transfer. Peer learning platforms, such as online/in-person discussion groups and regular knowledge-sharing events, can create opportunities for media professionals to learn from each other's experiences, share challenges, and seek advice.

- **Address regional disparities**

The project has revealed regional disparities in media capacities and confidence levels. It is crucial to acknowledge and address these disparities to ensure equal opportunities for all media professionals. Tailored interventions and targeted support should be provided to regions with lower capacities, such as the East of the DRC, to enhance their abilities and confidence in reporting on peace and security issues.

- **Continuously evaluate and adapt:**

The project evaluation highlights the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness and impact of media initiatives. Regular evaluations can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. It is crucial to adapt strategies and approaches based on the evaluation findings to maximise the project's impact and meet the evolving needs of media professionals and audiences.

- **Promote Gender Equality**

The project has revealed the need to address gender disparities and promote gender equality in the media sector. Efforts should be made to provide equal opportunities for women journalists, ensure their active participation and representation, and address any gender-related challenges they face. Gender-inclusive training programs and mentorship opportunities can play a significant role in empowering women journalists and fostering a more inclusive media landscape.

- **Foster youth engagement**

The project evaluation has highlighted the importance of engaging youth in media initiatives focused on peace and security. It is recommended to develop targeted programs that empower young people to actively participate in media content creation, storytelling, and dialogue. By involving youth in media initiatives, their perspectives and voices can be amplified, leading to more inclusive and representative reporting on peace and security issues in the Great Lakes region

- **Promoting constructive interaction and dialogue**

The evaluation findings highlight the importance of promoting constructive interaction and dialogue on peace and security issues. The project should employ strategies that encourage participatory journalism, community engagement, and multi-stakeholder dialogue to foster a sense of ownership and inclusivity.

- **Building trust and overcoming divides**

The evaluation findings underscore the importance of trust-building among media professionals in the Great Lakes region. The project should prioritise activities that foster trust, such as collaborative reporting, shared resources and solidarity events. Creating safe spaces for open dialogue and addressing potential biases and prejudices can help overcome divisions and build stronger partnerships.

- **Effective planning and time management**

The need to anticipate the production of broadcasts and avoid a rushed dissemination towards the end of the project reflects the importance of effective planning and time management. By planning ahead and ensuring a steady production schedule, we can maintain a consistent and sustainable pace of broadcasting throughout the project duration. Accelerating the dissemination of broadcasts at the end of the project can pose challenges and limitations. It may lead to potential quality issues, such as inadequate time for thorough research, fact-checking, and editing. Rushed production can compromise the accuracy and integrity of the information being shared, which is crucial when addressing peace and security issues.

Anticipating the production of broadcasts allows for a more thoughtful and deliberate approach. It provides sufficient time for content development, ensuring that the information is well-researched, comprehensive, and balanced. This approach enhances the quality of the broadcasts, increasing their impact and effectiveness in reaching and engaging the target audience.

Regarding the funding of future regional media projects to continue strengthening cross-country dialogues, it would be beneficial to:

- **Sustain and expand funding:** consider allocating continued funding for similar regional media projects in the Great Lakes region. This will ensure the sustainability of initiatives aimed at enhancing media capacity, promoting dialogue, and facilitating knowledge sharing on peace and security issues
- **Foster partnerships and collaboration** among media organisations, civil society, and other stakeholders in the region. This can facilitate resource sharing, joint advocacy efforts, and the creation of platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogues.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the responses from media professionals in the Great Lakes region reveals several key findings. The collaborative initiatives and knowledge-sharing platforms, such as workshops, training sessions, and virtual exchanges, have had a positive impact on the professional development and collaboration among journalists. These initiatives have facilitated the exchange of experiences, improved understanding of common regional issues, and enhanced the ability to produce impartial and well-informed reports.

The findings highlight the value of knowledge and learning, as participants expressed gaining insights into different approaches to journalism and strategies for information verification. The project has also contributed to building trust and collaboration among journalists from different countries, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual support.

Professionalism and adherence to ethical standards emerged as essential elements of journalism emphasised by the participants. The project has provided a platform for reinforcing these principles and sharing best practices, ultimately contributing to the overall professionalism of the participating journalists.

The evaluation findings underscore the importance of incorporating local languages in media content. By recognizing the significance of using local languages, we can enhance accessibility, reach a broader audience, and foster better understanding and engagement. This approach aligns with our objective of promoting inclusive communication and ensuring that information is accessible to all.

The evaluation findings emphasise the importance of promoting constructive interaction, trust-building, and overcoming divides among media professionals in the Great Lakes region. By fostering collaborations, joint trainings, and open dialogues, we can strengthen partnerships, break down barriers, and build a cohesive and united media community.

Our evaluation provides valuable insights and concrete recommendations for the media project in the Great Lakes region. By incorporating these findings into our future endeavours, we can enhance media capacities, promote peace and security, and contribute to positive change within the region. It is essential that we continue to collaborate, adapt, and innovate to ensure the success of our media initiatives in the Great Lakes region and beyond.