



NEIP II

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Safe communities for everyone.

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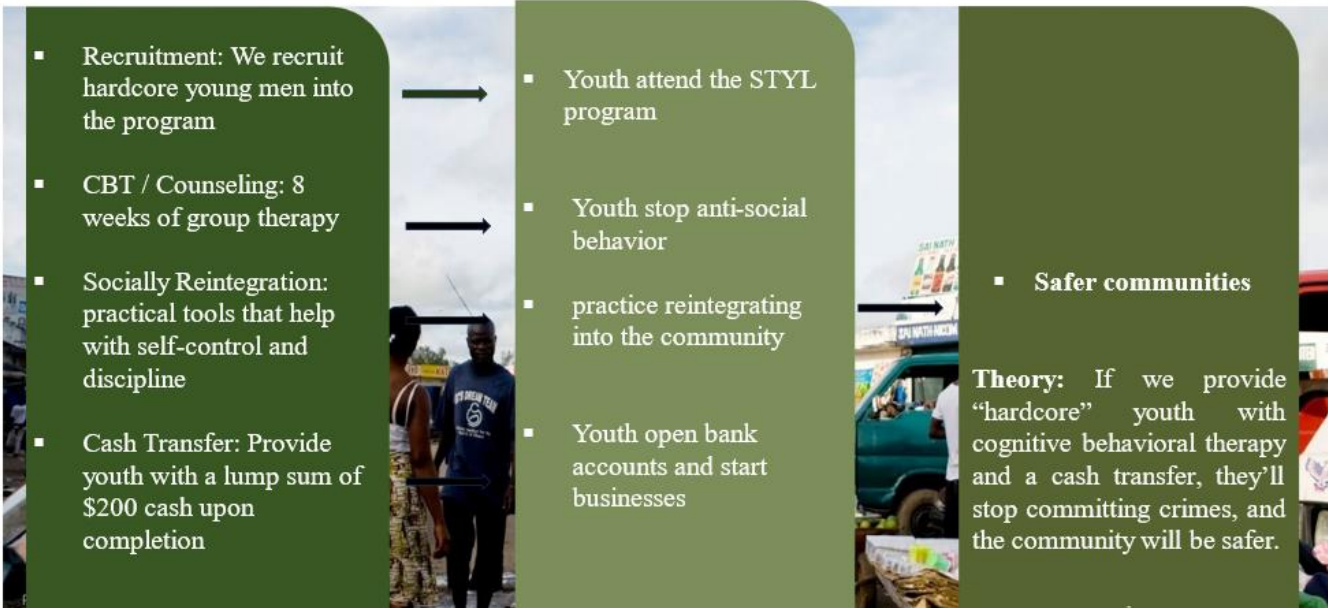
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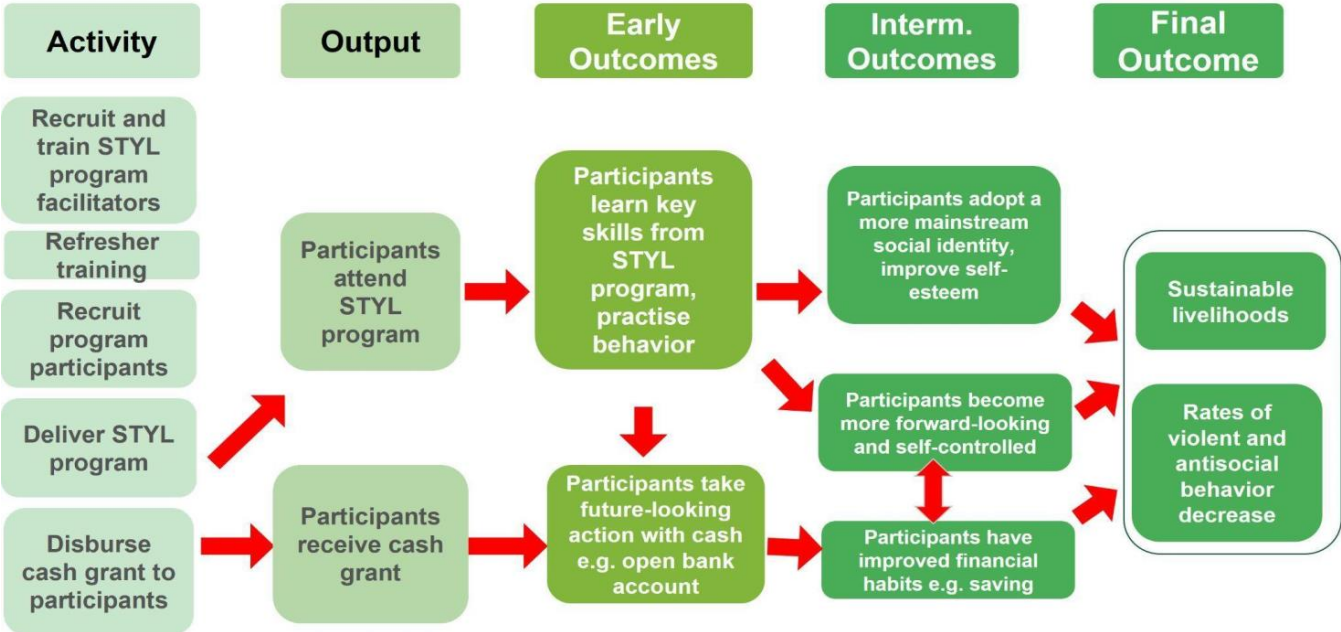
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The STYL model



NEPI Theory of Change



Letter from the Chief Executive Officer



I am delighted to welcome you to STYL, a CBT-based hardcore youth rehabilitation model paired with cash transfer that Creates Safer Communities. It is the Network for Empowerment & Progressive Initiative flagship program. In August 2022, I had the privilege to relaunch the STYL program in Liberia for the highest-risk young men alongside partner organizations like Innovation for Poverty Action (IPA), GiveDirectly (GD), and J-PAL, with the support of donors like Mulago Foundation, Towards Kindness, Wellspring, Livelihood Impact Fund, and the Agency Fund.


NEPI has a proud history of creating bold solutions as an emerging innovation for one of the world's most challenging problems, crime and violence, to create safer communities. This legacy began when NEPI designed the STYL model, developing and adapting it gradually over ten years, leading up to the original Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) conducted by Chris Blattman, his colleagues, and Innovation for Poverty Action between 2009 and 2012. The RCT shows that the program reduces crime and violence by 50 percent over ten years at \$2.50 per crime avoided. I am enormously proud of the team's progress in the STYL program's relaunch.

The STYL solution is unique because it is grounded in evidence from renowned researchers and institutions. The model has promise beyond West Africa with high returns to targeting the most violent and vulnerable highest-risk young men. It could be adopted anywhere there is youth crime and violence as long as NGOs and government ministries are willing to implement it and enough donors are eager to fund it. The simple model also facilitates scale: the model has been designed and refined into a 4-prong approach (we recruit, provide CBT/counseling, socially reintegrate, and provide cash transfers). Other organizations, agencies, and government ministries can easily implement it as a result. The model is cost effective, costing \$530 per person, translating into \$2.50 per crime avoided over ten years.

Following the multi-year results, NEPI has relaunched the STYL program in Liberia, used the opportunity to understand better how the program functions and what it will take to bring it to other contexts, develop an implementation strategy for the scale-up of the intervention across Sub-Saharan Africa while maintaining fidelity to the evidence-based program. It allows NEPI to understand the contextual changes since the previous implementation and adapt the curriculum to diverse contexts.

Given the solid evidence and cost-effectiveness of the STYL model, we are now suited for the big shift to scale up STYL in Subregional Africa. I am confident that donors and funders like you will support our efforts to scale the model across Sub-Saharan Africa and the world to create safer communities.

Sincerely,


Klubosumo Johnson Borh
Chief Executive Officer
NEPI Inc.

Who We Are

The Network for Empowerment & Progressive Initiatives (NEPI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in New York and Liberia (www.nepiberia.org). NEPI is the creator and original implementer of the STYL program. Klubosumo Johnson Borh, a 2021 Rainer Arnold Fellow of the Mulago Foundation and now a 2023 Youth Empowerment Fellow of the Agency Fund, is a founding member and the CEO of NEPI and a key member of the team developing and adapting STYL over the past 10 years. NEPI currently has six (6) full-time employees, a team of three (3) field supervisors, and twenty-three (23) trainers/facilitators.

What is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)?

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is a method for mitigating self-destructive beliefs and behaviors and promoting positive ones by helping people become aware of harmful thoughts and patterns and guiding them to think and react differently. It helps build interpersonal skills, such as assertiveness, perseverance, and emotional regulation, as well as stress management, self-control, and problem-solving. Participants are encouraged to practice productively engaging with their environment, which, over time, helps individuals to modify how they make decisions, break negative automatic behavior patterns, and incorporate these changes into their identity. CBT is used widely to treat depression, but more recently, it has been applied to a broader set of issues, including crime and violence, particularly among high-risk men in urban areas (Blattman et al., 2022).

NEPI creates lasting change by engaging the highest-risk young men involved in crime and violence and working with communities where youth crime and violence are mostly concentrated. We drive change in practice and policy locally and nationally with our work with high-core street youth. NEPI is a leader in crime and violence reduction programs, advocating for resources, practices, and policies that restore the dignity and the potential of young people involved in crime and violence.

The problem we're addressing:

Urban crime and violence are one of the most costly and divisive issues facing cities around the world. A few young men commit Most urban violence (Blattman et al., 2022). Policymakers and donors seek effective ways to reduce crime and violence, particularly among young men at high risk of becoming involved in violence. This has detrimental effects on the individuals involved and their victims and communities, affecting economic and social outcomes. From Liberia to Chicago, research has shown it is possible to identify them, change their mindset and behavior, and integrate them into a law-abiding society.

Our vision: A society free from youth crime and violence

A world where the lives of hardcore street youth are transformed from crime and violence to social and economic empowerment, resulting in a peaceful and inclusive society. We strive for a society that advances solutions to crime and violence and reduces extreme poverty among hard-core street youth. We do this by working with poor and vulnerable youth in Africa and the world. We engage people and partners to rehabilitate and reintegrate hard-core street youth into mainstream society. We drive change in practice and policy at local, national, and global levels with the work we do with hardcore street youth. In doing so, we draw on our extensive knowledge of the target neighborhoods, connections to local leaders, facilitators with lived experience who can serve as role models, and a strong reputation among community leaders and high-risk young men.

Mission: Create safer communities

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

The solution we're advancing:

The Sustainable Transformation of Youth in Liberia (STYL) program, originally implemented between 2009 and 2012, successfully reduced criminal, violent, and other anti-social behaviors among hard-core street youth in Liberia, and the impact was sustained over ten years. NEPI designs STYL to promote future orientation, self-discipline, and norms of non-violent, pro-social behavior. With the STYL model, we find and enroll hardcore street youth into the STYL program, provide an 8-week program with group CBT, and conduct one-on-one counseling. STYL exposes youth to role models, provides practical assignments and training, improves appearance while visiting supermarkets and banks, and provides youth with a \$200 surprise cash transfer upon completion. An RCT conducted by researchers shows that STYL reduces crime and violence, drug use, carrying a weapon, fighting with each other and police, arrest, and even things as simple as losing your temper dropped by 20 to 50% (Blattman et al., 2022; IPA Policy Brief, 2022).

Those who participated in STYL and received a cash grant reduced anti-social behavior by 0.31 SDs after one month, by 0.25 SDs after one year, and by 0.25 SDs after ten years. Ten years later, those who received both CBT and cash reported mental health outcomes 0.21 SDs higher than those in the comparison group.

NEPI's strategic goals

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

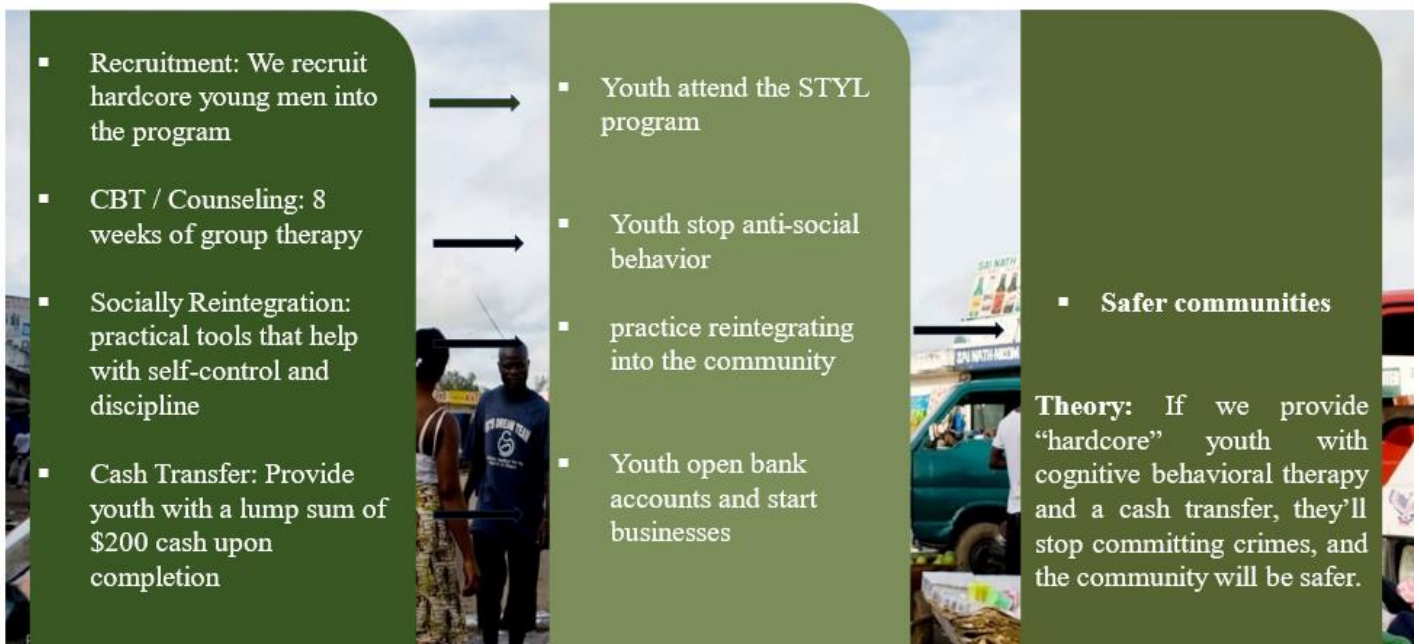
The model is good enough, big enough, simple enough; and cheap enough, costing \$530 per person, translating into \$2.50 per crime avoided over ten years.

The STYL Model

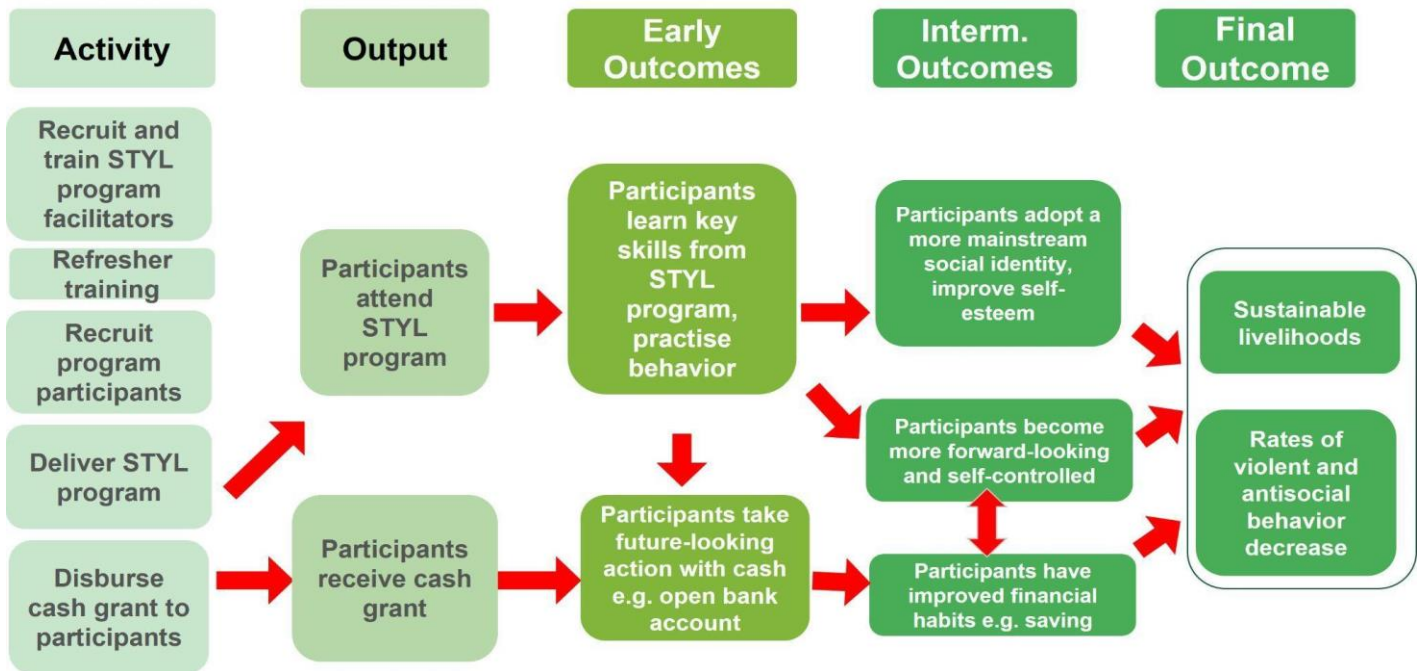
The STYL model is a CBT-based youth rehabilitation program for hardcore street youth, involving therapy and cash to reduce participants' criminal activities and ultimately create safer communities. NEPI recruits young men at the highest risk of engaging in crime and violence and provides eight weeks of CBT-based group and individual counseling, a \$300 cash transfer, and practical tools that help with self-control and discipline to facilitate social reintegration. This is made possible by support from bilateral and multilateral organizations.



The STYL model



NEPI Detailed theory of change:



NEPI Theory of Change Narrative

Need: There are pervasively high rates of crime and violence in Monrovia, Liberia. This challenge is particularly acute given its fragile context, where a high proportion of the population is under-employed or unemployed. The limited economic opportunities—particularly facing young men—are one of the main drivers of high crime and violence rates. The economic marginalization of these “high-risk” men perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability where they may be easily mobilized into destructive activities such as rioting and rebellion.

Inputs: To combat these influences, STYL targets high-risk young men—those who are considered at the highest risk for criminal or violent behavior, ranging from street fighting to drug dealing, petty theft, and armed robbery—to reduce criminality and other destructive behaviors through the implementation of an 8-week CBT program. The program consists of both group therapy and one-on-one counseling conducted by program facilitators who were graduates of a previous STYL program. The curriculum—which combines group discussions, lectures, role-playing, reflection, and practical homework assignments—was designed to help participants recognize harmful thoughts and behaviors and practice new responses. Beneficiaries are also given a \$200 cash grant.

The efficacy of both the training program and the unconditional cash disbursement hinges on the successful targeting, recruitment, and uptake of the program by the “high-risk” men it is designed to serve.

Outputs: Once the beneficiaries are recruited, enrolled, and attending the program, they will meaningfully engage with the training material and receive the cash grant. During the evaluation of STYL, two-thirds of the men recruited agreed to participate in the program and attended at least 80

percent of all sessions. This assumes that the CBT program is delivered with high-quality instruction and that the cash grants are delivered fully and on time.

Outcomes: Through participation in and completion of the STYL program, beneficiaries are expected to learn key self-control and planning skills and values from the program and practice learned behaviors. Beneficiaries will necessarily have to apply the skills learned in the CBT program to real-life situations to actualize the training's benefits. They are expected then to adopt a more positive, "pro-social" self-image and improve self-control, planning, and deliberate decision-making skills. Moreover, [evidence suggests](#) that the program's effects were largest and persistent when combined with a cash transfer, consistent with STYL's emphasis on patience and planning. The researchers posit that the unconditional cash grant allowed beneficiaries to apply more sustained practice and behavior change by foregoing illicit profit-generating activities. This assumes that the beneficiaries will spend and invest their cash grant in forward-looking, financially prudent avenues.

Impacts: The successful implementation of STYL will lead to increases in productive economic activity engagement and an increase in financial resilience (e.g. the ability to cope with economic shocks) and sustainable livelihoods. The program will lead to a large and sustained decrease in criminal, violent, and antisocial behavior on both an individual and community level. Most of the impacts of the STYL program are due to the positive externalities on society, which include increased feelings of safety and lower risk of political instability, which are ultimately likely to have large impacts on investment, tourism, and community development. [Evidence](#) on the 10-year impacts of STYL suggests that the intervention led to a reduction in a wide range of antisocial behaviors, including a reduction of 34 crimes per participant per year at both the 1- and 10-year surveys. Interpolating, this implies 338 fewer thefts and robberies per program participant since the STYL program. These results support the efficacy of programs like STYL that empower young men with the resources and tools to analyze and change their intentions, behaviors, and identity.

Overview of Program

The STYL program consists of identifying the highest-risk young men in a city and offers an 8-week group CBT focused on automatic violence behaviors, improving planning skills and future focus. When CBT and one-on-one counseling are provided, youth stop bad behavior (anti-social – petty crime, drug use, fighting with self and police).

The group CBT program focused on three kinds of behavior change:

- First, the program helps men learn to behave and adopt a more mainstream social identity rather than feel like outcasts or criminals;
- It also teaches men skills of self-control: to manage emotions, reduce impulsivity, become more conscientious and persevering, and more planful and goal-oriented in their daily activities. As part of this, increasing participants' future orientation seems to be a key driver of behavior change;
- Finally, the program strongly emphasizes how to deal with anger, interpersonal violence, and threatening situations;

Youth meet on average in groups of twenty, led by two NEPI facilitators/trainers, and will receive the program 3-4 hours a day, 3 times a week. On alternative days when groups do not meet,

facilitators visit youth at home or work to provide advice and encouragement. The sessions employ a mix of lectures, group discussions, and practice, including role-playing in class, homework that requires practicing tasks, exposure to real situations, and in-class processing of experiences of executing these tasks. Like many CBT programs, these tasks begin simple and get more difficult over time.

The idea behind the use of CBT to reduce violent behaviors is that much crime and violence is the product of poor decision-making and distorted thinking. Youth may react in haste, fail to consider the long-run consequences or overlook alternative solutions to their problems. They may hold on to exaggerated, negative beliefs about a rival. Or they may have difficulty managing their emotions or impulses. Programs informed by CBT try to help youth become aware of these harmful thoughts and patterns and learn to think and react differently in these situations.

There are many potential channels through which the therapy may have an effect on violent behavior:

- First, the therapy teaches skills such as improved emotional regulation, planning, and conscientiousness, a form of human capacity that improves productivity and earning potential, raising the returns to legitimate work and increasing the opportunity cost of anti-social and criminal behavior;
- Second, the therapy could shape time preferences, making decisions more future-oriented and less time-inconsistent. Participants may, therefore, make more forward-looking investments and avoid short-term reactions that will have long-term costs;
- Third, the therapy may change the men's identity. Research in both psychology and economics supports the idea that groups have well-defined norms of their perceived group. To some extent, people may be able to change their perceived social category and, with it values that reward and penalize certain behaviors;

Through social reintegration activities, youth are provided with practical steps to change their lives and space to evaluate how they think and feel about themselves and their experiences. Through a series of assignments like visits to banks, supermarkets, and community-saving clubs, youth practice these practical steps that build toward new skills of self-control and discipline. The program uses role models to demonstrate to program participants that other youths formerly like themselves who have been able to change their lives for the better are welcome back into mainstream society. Youth start good behavior through these social reintegration activities - new haircuts and changing their dress code.

This program is accompanied by an unconditional \$300 cash grant, which provides income support as the young men practice what they learn and focus on changing their lifestyles. The cash transfer will consist of two tranche payments. The first tranche payment is US \$200 six weeks into the program and US \$100 six months after the program's completion. When the cash grant is provided, youth open bank accounts, attend school and start a new job or business. The cash grant may have an effect through different channels. Even a short-term increase in legal earnings may reduce criminality by increasing the returns to legal enterprises and raising the opportunity cost of anti-social behaviors in the long run by positively reinforcing the therapy's push towards a more mainstream, legal lifestyle, and providing increased opportunities to practice these behaviors in the months following the therapy.

A [randomized evaluation](#) demonstrated that STYL reduced violent and criminal behavior by about half and improved self-control, future orientation, self-regard, and mental health among participants. Research completed in 2022 shows that these results persist over a decade. The program is cost-effective, costing just \$530 per participant, translating into \$2.50 per crime avoided.

By empowering young men with the resources and tools to analyze and change their intentions, behaviors, and identities, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has emerged as a potential alternative strategy for the prevention and mitigation of crime and violence. CBT is a therapeutic approach to improving a wide range of harmful beliefs and behaviors, and evidence suggests that it is an effective way to reduce violence and criminality among adolescents and young adults.

NEPI STYL Relaunch and Scaling Strategy

Stage 1: Research, development, and piloting in Liberia (2009-2012)

NEPI pilot tested the STYL model with 1,000 of the highest-risk youth in Monrovia. We designed, tested, and refined the model to make it truly scalable and followed the evidence. We streamlined the model to make it easier to implement and replicate at scale. We partnered with researchers to conduct a randomized evaluation and a 10-year follow-up survey. Results showed a 20-50 percent reduction in crime and violence, demonstrating that the program is cost-effective.

Stage 2: Replication in Liberia and prep for early scale efforts (2022-2025)

Following the multi-year results, NEPI plans to relaunch the program in Liberia and use the opportunity to understand better how it functions and what it will take to replicate a CBT-inspired program such as STYL in other contexts. Develop an implementation strategy for the scale-up of the intervention across Sub-Saharan Africa while maintaining fidelity to the evidence-based program. It allows NEPI to understand the contextual changes since the previous implementation and adapt the curriculum to diverse contexts. The model has promise beyond West Africa, with high returns to targeting the most violent and vulnerable young men. It would be adopted anywhere there is youth crime and violence as long as NGOs, government ministries, and agencies are willing and able to implement it.

Key accomplishments in 2023

- ❖ Hired a NEPI core team of managers, trainers, and facilitators,
- ❖ Developed a recruitment tool,
- ❖ Developed a monitoring and evaluation system,
- ❖ Recruited 1000 young men, delivered CBT training to 360, and disbursed cash to 304,
- ❖ Entered into partnerships with Global Development Incubator, GiveDirectly, and Innovations for Poverty Action to support scaling, cash disbursement, and MEL.

This entails recruiting an in-country team to manage implementation, developing a recruitment process to identify at-risk young men who meet the program's eligibility criteria, and enrolling men to receive an eight-week group CBT training and a cash transfer. In doing so, we are working to systematize the delivery model and develop a standardized training manual and guide. As described in greater detail below, NEPI has now delivered the CBT training to 314 young men in 2023. Our goal is to provide therapy to the remaining previously identified men in 2024, identify, recruit, and serve additional beneficiaries, and reach a total of 2,500 participants in Liberia over 3 years.

Stage 3: Scaling in Sub-Saharan Africa (ongoing efforts)

In parallel to continuing to implement the STYL program in Liberia, we are now in the process of evolving our team and board competencies from issue-area expertise to a focus on organizational scaling. We are in the process of identifying new countries to scale to so we can reach additional high-risk youth, including by targeting a range of NGO partners across Africa in countries where there is youth crime and violence. The goal is to develop a new implementation guide to transfer the impact model to other NGOs while maintaining efficiency and impact at scale, integrating a robust MEL strategy to monitor program rollout and ensure scaling decisions are data-driven. We are building and operationalizing a data platform to support the training of STYL trainers and new dashboards to monitor delivery across a range of implementing partners.

NEPI STYL Scale Strategy

VISION

- Safer Communities
- Doer: NGOs
- Payers: Government and Big Aids

Anywhere there is youth crime and violence across Sub-Saharan Africa and globally.

REPLICATION

Sub-Saharan Africa (2022 - 2025)

2.0 Systemize the delivery model

Develop the training manual into a guide,

Develop an Intake Survey for participant recruitment through J-PAL technical support,

Developing a new MEL framework to ensure NGO partners deliver the solution well through IPA technical assistance..

Recruit a country team to manage implementation (Program staff),

Team/board evolves from issue area expertise to organizational scaling.

At least 2,500 highest-risk youth reintegrated

R&D

Liberia (2009-2012)

1.0 Pilot tested the STYL Model with 1000 of the highest-risk youth.

Design, test, and refine the model, iterate on it, and make it truly scalable.

Developed a scalable 1.0 model through evidence-based, cost-effectiveness.

Streamline the model, and make it simple enough, cheap, and easier to replicate.

Conducted an RCT and a 10-year follow-up survey; results show a 20-50% reduction in crime and violence.

Approach to the Big Shift

Doer: Targeting a range of NGO partners across Africa, Systematically transferring the impact model

Payer: Big Aid, like USAID psychosocial and GiveDirectly cash transfers partnership, which attracts more payers. Leveraging government infrastructure and resources (cost sharing)

Technology: build and operationalize data platform, tech enables training of STYL trainers, dashboards to monitor delivery across a range of implementing partners,

Model: A new implementation guide to work via other NGOs, maintaining efficiency and impact at scale,

Policy: Develop and integrate a robust MEL strategy to ensure that initial program rollout and scaling decisions are data-driven, Model integrated into national youth policy

Collective Action: Membership of the Unblock Aid coalition to coordinate efforts aimed at encouraging the national Gov't to use evidence-based programs.

IMPACT

IDEA

CBT-based hardcore youth rehabilitation Program

TIME

NGOs as doers:

We see two primary partnership models for scaling STYL moving forward, either with NGOs as doers or government partners as doers. Our model for early-stage scaling through NGO partners will:

- Target a range of NGO partners to deliver the model,
- Provide training on the use of the model,
- Systematically transfer the impact model to NGOs

This will require the support of Big Aid like USAID, GiveDirectly, and other bilateral and multilateral to act as potential payer-at-scale partners. Organizationally, our biggest needs are project management, policy, training, and quality monitoring. We must ensure that NGO partners deliver the model with the same STYL results at scale and ensure model fidelity at scale and

over time. Our partnership with Global Development Incubator, described in greater detail below, will be key to this effort.

Ideally, under partnering with NGOs as doers:

- Model: The model is cohesive and fully implemented by the NGOs
- Funding: The government has created new budget line items they fund with taxes or Big Aid funding support
- Org: NEPI becoming a center of excellence and lab for new solutions
- Impact: New impact benchmark that hopefully approaches that of NEPI's replication
 - At the stages of replication, we will use a range of NGO partners, including grassroots organizations as the intermediate doers to assist in bringing government ministries and agencies successfully onboard as potential doers-at-scale partners.

NGOs as Doer

Early Stage at Scale

Model:
Targeting a range of NGO partners to deliver the model,
Provide training on the use of the model
Systematically transferring the impact model to NGOs

Money:
Shepherd the STYL model to a potential scale
Allowing Big Aid like USAID, GiveDirectly, and other
bilateral and multilateral to take on the burden afterward as potential payer-at-scale partners,
while NEPI shifts away from philanthropies funding.

Org: Biggest needs are in project management, policy, training, and monitoring quality
Ensure that NGO partners are delivering the model with the same STYL results at scale
Ensure model fidelity at scale (Where GDI partnership is relevant)

Impact:
Efficacy of impact, NGOs deliver STYL with the same impact

The Dream

Model: The model is cohesive and fully implemented by the NGOs
Money: Gov't has created new budget line items they fund with taxes or big aid funding support
Org: NEPI becoming a center of excellence or lab for new solutions
Impact: New impact benchmark that hopefully approaches that of NEPI's replication:

Government partners as doers:

NEPI's scaling strategy foresees significant collaboration with public and non-profit organizations. NEPI has initiated conversations with several Ministries within the Liberian government, who have expressed interest in CBT programs. The government involvement may take several forms, such as involvement in the participant selection process, participation in the facilitation and coordination of the program, referring STYL graduates to other relevant government programs, accompanying NEPI and IPA staff as they conduct program monitoring, and participating in learning and reflection workshops. In this way, NEPI is not only bringing in external expertise but also creating a more sustainable ecosystem around its model that increases the likelihood of sustained impact at scale. NEPI will scope potential implementing partners to continue scaling the program nationally through a hybrid model using both NEPI and an implementing partner (with NEPI playing a technical assistance role).

Government as Doer

Early Scale
Model: Usually need to break up the impact model and change the implementation strategy
Opt. 1: NEPI continues to do certain pieces of the model and over time transfer all the crucial elements to Gov't
Opt. 2: NEPI pushes each piece of the model forward as the government allows/demands
Opt. 3: in each relevant market (e.g. national gov't), NEPI assesses what pieces of the model are already in play and focuses on the ones that are lagging

Money:
utilizing existing government infrastructure, staff time, and investment but no new budget line items
Big Aid plays a larger role in funding the work

Org: biggest needs are in project management, policy, training, and monitoring quality
Impact:
Efficacy of impact likely declines, at least in the short term
The government often most interested in the case for investment and constituent satisfaction

The Dream
Model: The model is cohesive and fully implemented by the government
Money: Gov't has created new budget line items they fund with taxes
Org: NEPI becoming a center of excellence or lab for new solutions
Impact: New impact benchmark that hopefully approaches that of NEPI's replication

Our model for scaling instead through government partners recognizes that we may need to break up the impact model and change the implementation strategy:

- Option 1: NEPI continues to do certain pieces of the model and, over time transfers all the crucial elements to the government;
- Option 2: NEPI pushes each piece of the model forward as the government allows/demands;
- Option 3: In each relevant market (e.g. national government), NEPI assesses what pieces of the model are already in play and focuses on the ones that are lagging;

Under partnering with governments as doers, it is possible to utilize existing government infrastructure, staff time, and investments, but initially with no new budget line items, Big Aid would need to play a role in funding the work. As with partnering with NGOs, our largest organizational needs will center around project management, policy, training, and monitoring quality. Initially, program impact may decline relative to NEPI's own implementation, as governments are often most interested in the case for investment and constituent satisfaction. However, over time, we hope that:

- Model: The model is cohesive and fully implemented by the government;
- Funding: The government has created new budget line items they fund with taxes;
- Org: NEPI becoming a center of excellence or lab for new solutions;
- Impact: New impact benchmark that hopefully approaches that of NEPI's replication;

STYL scale-up implementation plan



STYL Relaunch in Liberia Outcomes

In 2023, NEPI made significant progress on phase 1 of the program. We developed an intake survey to recruit only the highest-risk participants to ensure the program remains well-targeted and cost-effective through the technical support of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). NEPI also partnered with IPA to develop a new MEL framework to ensure NGO partners can deliver the solution well and monitor our own implementation efforts. Through these efforts, we identified and recruited 1,000 high-risk men and provided therapy to over 300 beneficiaries in Liberia in 2023.

Other outcomes include the following:

- NEPI and IPA successfully disseminated STYL results to policy-makers and practitioners, and convened 34 researchers, implementers, policymakers, and donors to a one-day policy workshop to share the STYL program results and discuss the policy implications for policymakers, implementing organizations, and donors;
- NEPI hired 5 managers (Chief Operating Officer, Program Manager, Finance Manager, Research and MEL Manager, and Policy and Partnership Manager) to take leadership of the country program for the STYL relaunch;
- NEPI also hired 1 (one) Chief Trainer, 3 (three) Supervisors, and twenty-six (26) Facilitators/Trainers for the STYL relaunch;
- Developed and tested the STYL Intake Survey Recruitment Tool;
- Recruited 1000 prospected program beneficiaries;
- Randomly assigned 500 of the 1000 prospective program beneficiaries to the STYL Cohort 1 Implementation;
- Admitted 360 of the 500 assigned participants to STYL Cohort 1 implementation;
- Developed and tested the STYL Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system;
- Graduated 314 participants successfully from the STYL Cohort 1 implementation;
- Issued National ID cards and provided mobile money accounts for 314 graduates;
- Distributed the first tranche payment of \$200 cash grants to 304 successful STYL graduates;
- The second tranche payment of \$100 cash grants to be distributed (6 months) in February 2024;

Next Steps

NEPI has received funding from partners to continue the implementation of the relaunch of STYL, built its capacity to have a sustained organization, built a sustainable donor base for continuing the program in Monrovia at scale, and expanded regionally. The support will provide more visibility to the STYL program in the region, position NEPI to run sustainably, and enroll subsequent cohorts of at-risk young men. Over the next two years of implementation, additional funding support is needed to ensure STYL's scale-up and that the program scale decisions are data-driven and evidence-based.

IPA: NEPI is collaborating with IPA, a research, learning, and policy partner, to provide technical assistance for the program. IPA Will continue to collaborate with NEPI with funding from IPA's Impact Fund. Over the next project year, IPA will support NEPI on our MEL activities to inform the scale-up with data and evidence and explore pathways for scaling the program.

With IPA support, NEPI will achieve the following:

- Developed quality indicators to measure early signs of effectiveness e.g. shifts in financial knowledge/habits, shifts in mindset/behaviors;
- Developed 2024 MEL plan;
- Developed study designs to test scale-program adaptation during the 2024 program cycle e.g. desk research, user-testing, and pilots
- Uses data collected to inform program adjustments;
- Mapped agencies /programs for government linkages
- Determined selection criteria, training, and quality assurance model to deliver STYL through other institutions in Liberia;

GDI: NEPI's regional expansion efforts are being incubated and partially funded by GDI. GDI is an incubator for transformational development ventures, working to build and scale the next generation of social impact solutions. GDI will continue to partner with NEPI to provide strategic and operational support for the regional expansion program.

With GDI support, NEPI will achieve the following:

- Launch a small-scale pilot of intervention with four cohorts of 25 high-risk young men, 100 participants total, in March 2024 in Lagos, Nigeria;
- Replicate the results from the STYL program in Liberia;
- Gain strategic and operational insights on how to scale in a new country;
- Identify opportunities for near – and long-term funding in the new country;
- Secured funding for program expansion in Liberia and Nigeria;
- Identify implementing partners in Nigeria and support partner capacity building;
- Support participants recruitment;

GD: Will partner with NEPI to enroll STYL program participants for the disbursement of an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) and related operational monitoring.

- Use the GD Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) System to distribute cash to STYL participants;
- Enrolled 1,000 participants, conduct operational complexity to reduce payment delays associated with registration errors;
- Distribute cash to 1,000 beneficiaries two weeks to program completion;

Partnership Development

In 2023, IPA, a research, learning, and policy organization, partnered with NEPI to institutionalize evidence use in the Liberian scale-up during its re-launch of the Sustainable Transformation of Youth in Liberia (STYL) program. The technical support built NEPI's capacity to institutionalize an evidence-driven learning system developed and implemented a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) strategy for the program, and developed a strategy for scaling and replication of the STYL program beyond the current implementation by NEPI in Liberia, including replication in other countries. IPA works with NEPI to integrate the robust MEL strategy to ensure the initial program rollout and scale decisions are data-driven. IPA supported NEPI in embedding the data-driven learning cycle into the implementation of STYL. They accomplished staff at NEPI to execute the MEL activities with the STYL program and make the MEL activities more visible.

IPA also supported NEPI in the development of a government engagement strategy. The strategy aimed to enhance the buy-in of the Liberian government ministries into a scale-up of the STYL program across Liberia. The strategy also serves as a platform for other collaboration opportunities, such as NEPI's role in recruiting high-to-reach youth for the government at-risk youth program in Bomi County. IPA supported NEPI to engage the Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Gender to discuss their role in the program scale-up and how to link STYL to relevant government programs. This created a more sustainable ecosystem around its model, increasing the likelihood of sustained impact at scale. IPA supported NEPI in submitting funding proposals to achieve NEPI's fundraising goals for the next two years of roll-out and for potential expansions of the program to other countries.

In 2023, the Global Development Incubator (GDI), an incubator for transformational development ventures working to build and scale the next generation of social impact solutions, partnered with NEPI to incubate the organization. NEPI has successfully completed the GDI discovery and design phase and is now at the building phase of the incubation process. NEPI's regional expansion efforts are being incubated and partially funded by GDI. GDI will continue to partner with NEPI to provide strategic and operational support for the regional expansion program. GDI has a track record of launching transformative social ventures. They will build NEPI's organizational capacity and invest in this regional strategy. [Visit their website for more information.](#)

In 2023, NEPI explored a partnership with GiveDirectly (GD), a non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to delivering unconditional cash transfers directly to people in poverty through mobile money platforms, to deliver digital cash transfers for the STYL program during the 2023 relaunch. GD will continue to serve as NEPI's implementing partner in the program's scale-up phase. The STYL program is accompanied by an unconditional \$300 cash grant, which provides income support as the young men practice what they learn and focus on changing their lifestyles. The cash transfer occurs roughly 6 weeks into each of the phases of the 8-week group CBT training, and all participants are eligible. The cash transfer consists of a lump-sum payment of US \$200 6-week into the program and a \$100 payment 6 months after the training. Youths open bank accounts, go to school, and start a new job or business when the cash grant is provided.

GiveDirectly (GD) partnered with NEPI to enroll STYL program participants for the disbursement of an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) and related operational monitoring. Developed and rolled

out an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) System, conducted an in-person enrollment of STYL participants, and conducted several technical and safety verifications to integrate participants into the cash payment system to complete payments. Conducted post-payment monitoring to collect information on key challenges and any potential issues faced by participants receiving the cash transfer.

Activities in 2022 - 2023

NEPI /IPA Policy Workshop

In 2022, IPA and NEPI convened 34 researchers, implementers, policymakers, and donors to a one-day policy workshop to share the STYL program results and discuss the policy implications for policymakers, implementing organizations, and donors.

The workshop features a panel including Borh, the CEO of NEPI; Julian Jamison, PI and Professor of Economics at the University of Exeter; Hon. Emmanuel Johnson, Assistant Ministry of Youth & Sports; Omalha Konjo, Acting Country Director, GiveDirectly, and Madea Nyumah, USAID. The policy workshop highlighted the stakeholders' perspectives in a moderated discussion by Walker Higgins, Country Director IPA Liberia & Sierra Leone.



Partners are seen at the NEPI/IPA policy workshop in 2022.

STYL Path-to-scale Staff Refresher Workshop

In February 2023, NEPI conducted a two-day in-house refresher workshop for 26 NEPI staff and four co-facilitators who are graduates of the past STYL initiative. The workshop brought staff on to the same page with STYL's design iteration, the evidence-based model, and the path-to-scale journey. The workshop developed the capacity of existing and incoming trainers/facilitators for the scale-up implementation journey.

The NEPI refresher training focused on effective facilitation style and skills, group dynamics, scale strategies, and design for impact at scale. Besides, a thorough review of the STYL manual that has been developed into a guide was conducted. Staff facilitation skills were demonstrated through the exercises to allow for the paring of field teams across training centers and sessions.



Steve Korvah, a former trainer at the Lutheran Trauma Healing and now a program manager at UNICEF, graced the occasion and was a guest facilitator. Edward Mulbah, Executive Director at the Peacebuilding Office, was a guest facilitator.

STYL Intake Survey Development and Enumerator Workshop

NEPI leveraged the technical support of J-PAL over six weeks to co-develop an intake survey with the guidance of a J-PAL Senior Policy Associate, Aimee Barnes, as well as Chris Blattman and his University of Chicago-based Research Associate, Bruno Maguida. Together, they analyzed the factors that predicted responsiveness to the treatment in the original sample to inform the development of the STYL scale-up intake survey. J-PAL also identified what new risk factors may be relevant based on qualitative work from the field, conversations with NEPI, and conversations with other organizations working with at-risk populations in Monrovia.



J-PAL drew on the NEPI and IPA teams' experience with the 10-year follow-up to determine what tracking information would be essential to collect. The SPA updated the survey instrument, coded it into SurveyCTO, and provided training for NEPI staff on how to conduct the survey using tablets and how to adhere to proper field protocol including informed consent. The technical support from J-PAL was to help ensure that the evidence-based lessons from the STYL 10-year follow-up were incorporated into the program relaunch and could be applied at scale, ensuring that the initial program rollout and scale decisions are data-driven. NEPI and partners conducted a week-long intake survey training at the Christian Fellowship Center for 35 enumerators to adequately prepare them for the field recruitment.



(Left) Philemon Gonotee (NEPI) and Aimee Barnes (J-PAL) distributed tablets to NEPI staff during the enumerator workshop in March 2023. (Right) Enumerators are seen roleplaying a survey scenario during the enumerator workshop in March 2023.

STYL Beneficiaries Recruitment

NEPI consulted with partners and identified three program communities for the STYL relaunch: Central Monrovia, Bushrod Island, and Paynesville. NEPI conducted community scoping exercises

to identify localized hot spots for recruiting prospective STYL program beneficiaries in the three program communities.

Pelham Building, West Point, Soniwein, and Slipway were identified as hot spots for the recruitment survey in Central Monrovia. The hot spots in Bushrod Island identified were: Logan Town, New Kru Town, Caldwell, and St. Paul Bridge. For the Paynesville community, the hot spots include Nagbe's Town, Thinker's Village, GSA Road, and Du-port Road.



NEPI staff members survey prospective beneficiaries in March 2023. Photos taken with consent.

The STYL Intake Survey was launched in 2023. We surveyed 2,286 youth, and 1,058 of the highest-risk youth were invited and had a chance to be selected for the program. Of the 1,058 highest-risk invitees, 335 were selected from the Central Monrovia block, 360 were selected from the Bushrod Island block, and 363 were selected from the Paynesville community block.



A team of NEPI enumerators smiles for a group photo in Liberia.

Random Assignment of STYL Beneficiaries

NEPI developed a field protocol to guide how the lottery would be conducted. Through the lottery, NEPI randomly assigned 500 of the 1,058 survey invitees from the three program communities in Phase 1 program implementation in year 1 and 558 in Phase 2 of the STYL implementation for year 2.

During the lottery, NEPI staff pre-number half of the papers in the following orders:

- Central Monrovia (335), 1-166 for Phase 1, with the remaining 169 blanks for Phase 2
- Bushrod Island (360), 1-166 for Phase 1, with the remaining 194 blanks for Phase 2
- Paynesville Community (363), 1,168 for Phase 1, with the remaining 197 for Phase 2

The pre-number and the blank papers were placed in a lottery box at each program community for participants to choose from. 500 of the 1,058 invitees admitted themselves in Phase 1 of the STYL implementation from the three program communities/blocks, and 558 of 1,058 admitted themselves in Phase 2. Therefore, STYL has a total enrollment of 500 beneficiaries representing year 1 intake and 558 for the year 2 intake.



Prospective participants listen to NEPI CEO Klubosumo Johnson Borh as he explains the lottery process with other NEPI staff



NEPI staff and prospective participants are seen during the lottery process

Delivery of group CBT training

Of the 500 randomly assigned beneficiaries in Phase 1 program implementation in year 1 from the three program communities/blocks, NEPI enrolled 360 participants in Cohort 1 and 140 in Cohort 2 of the 8-week group CBT and one-on-one follow-up sessions. Of the 360 beneficiaries in Cohort 1, NEPI admitted 120 participants in each of the three program communities. Each program community had 3 training sites comprising 3 training sessions. Participants were grouped according to their training sessions in the three program communities/blocks. In each program community (Central Monrovia, Bushrod Island,

and Paynesville Community), 60 participants in groups of 20 attended 3 training sessions in the morning and 60 in the afternoon.

The program is accompanied by an unconditional \$300 cash grant, which provides income support as the young men practice what they learn and focus on changing their lifestyles. The cash transfer consists of two tranche payments. The first tranche payment was US \$200 upon program completion and US \$100 six months after the program's completion. Of the 360 participants in Cohort 1, 314 graduated. GiveDirectly delivers digital cash transfers for 304 of the 314 graduates of the STYL program. The 10 participants are yet to be paid due to verification issues. Some of them give their mobile money SIM to relatives for safekeeping.



Size of the Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT)

During the pilot phase in Liberia between 2009 and 2012, STYL beneficiaries received a \$200 unconditional cash transfer after program completion. Given the IMF inflation statistics, the \$200 provided 10 years ago and other economic changes over the years do not apply to the present context in Liberia. NEPI needed to determine the appropriate cash transfer amount that would allow STYL beneficiaries to launch a legitimate small business activity after completing the STYL program. NEPI leveraged the technical support of J-PAL Senior Policy Associate Aimee Barnes and Chris Blattman to conduct qualitative interviews with small business owners and street youth. This was done to determine the appropriate cash transfer amount to allow STYL beneficiaries to launch legitimate small business activities after completing the STYL program.

These respondents had not been recruited for STYL or given a chance at a lucky ticket for the program. Their interviews were considered a completely separate activity from the 2023 STYL intake survey and did not occur in the same hot spots as the main intake survey. Enumerators did not promise respondents access to any program and did not mention STYL.

Identifying the appropriate cash transfer amount for STYL in 2023 consisted of two main approaches:

Approach #1. We conducted qualitative interviews with 30 existing small business owners involved in economic activities to understand:

- What their personal initial business start-up costs were and the ongoing costs of running their businesses
- The approximate range of typical business start-up costs.
- What other business activities they would try to engage in with an additional \$50 - \$200

Approach #2. We conducted qualitative interviews with 30 street youth to understand:

- How much they earned in the past week and past two weeks to provide context for how large the STYL cash transfer would be compared to the average earnings among street youth
- What kind of business, if any, they would try to start if they had more money (\$50, \$150, \$300, etc.)

After the submission of the result to the program committee of the NEPI Board, the committee agreed and recommended that \$300 is the minimum advisable grant. We will continue to provide a \$300 unconditional cash transfer (UCT) to STYL program beneficiaries. Normally, taking a program to scale on a fixed budget, more funds per person could crowd out others from participating. STYL, however, is inherently targeted at the small number of highest-risk youth and has this natural limit on the scale, for there are only so many such youths at a time. The positive externalities from success with this population are huge. Thus, an extra \$100 per youth seems like a reasonable fundraising objective. The committee further recommended the idea of an initial lump sum cash grant followed by a “booster grant.” With a \$300 grant, an initial lump sum of a \$200 cash grant would be disbursed, followed by a \$100 cash grant 3-6 months later. The reason was that the original STYL sample seemed to have experienced adverse shocks, and this adversely affected their business sustainability. They also lacked cheap savings options, making a large lump sum hard to save. Booster grants provide a somewhat natural form of saving and insurance that could plausibly help the participants manage adverse shocks.

Partnership Development Activities

NEPI/IPA Partnership on MEL Development

In 2023, IPA supported NEPI to test, validate, and adapt its program to have maximum impact. The support included MEL/Learning and government engagement.

Key Activities:

MEL/Learning Support: IPA supported NEPI in the development of a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system. The system allows NEPI to track its program activities and outcomes, which is key to tracking implementation fidelity and making adjustments to the program. IPA prepared NEPI to conduct comprehensive MEL activities that achieve the below objectives:

- Monitor program delivery and make data-driven adjustments to ensure the quality of implementation at scale;
- Test program adaptation required for success at scale and
- Foster NEPI’s organizational learning so that NEPI can adjust and improve its program in an evidence-driven way.

IPA also supported the following activities:

- Facilitated a kick-off workshop to set objectives for the MEL system;
- Conducted a mapping of lessons from the previous evaluation of STYL in Liberia to inform the scaling process and ensure they are applied in practice. This mapping has ensured that the evidence-based mechanism for the program's success is incorporated at scale and has also identified evidence gaps and areas for testing to incorporate into NEPI's MEL strategy;
- Facilitated a week-long in-person workshop in Monrovia in May 2023 to develop key priorities for NEPI's MEL system;
- Provided technical assistance in the implementation of NEPI's MEL system;

IPA Support to Government Engagement

IPA also supported NEPI in the development of a government engagement strategy. The strategy aimed to enhance the buy-in of the Liberian government ministries into a scale-up of the STYL program across Liberia. The strategy also serves as a platform for other collaboration opportunities, such as NEPI's role in recruiting high-to-reach youth for the government at-risk youth program in Bomi County. IPA supported NEPI to engage the Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Gender to discuss their role in the program scale-up and how to link STYL to relevant government programs. This created a more sustainable ecosystem around its model, increasing the likelihood of sustained impact at scale. NEPI will scope potential implementing partners to continue scaling the program nationally through a hybrid model using both NEPI and an implementing partner (with NEPI playing a technical assistance role).

Government engagement activities conducted in collaboration with IPA included the following:

- Developed a government engagement strategy;
- Organized and facilitated workshop sessions with key government stakeholders as part of the week-long in-person workshop in 2023;
- Held periodic check-ins on the progress of government engagement strategy and
- Finalized mapping of STYL to existing government programs and identification of potential scale-up partners.

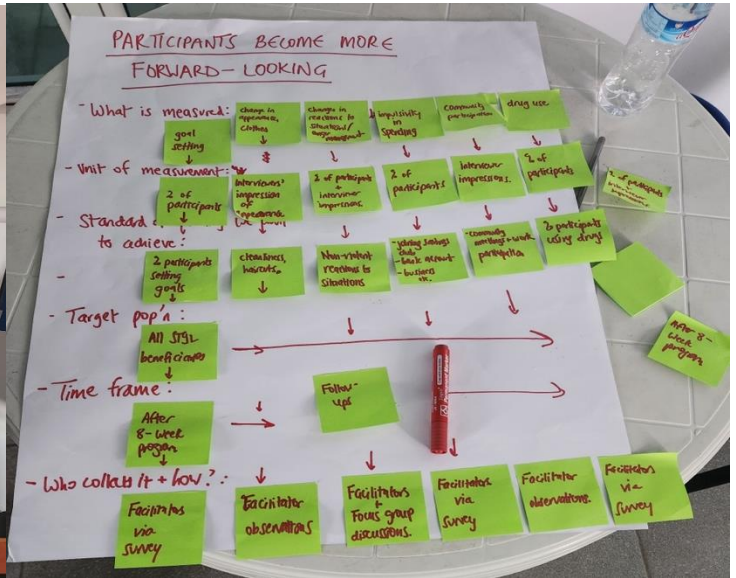
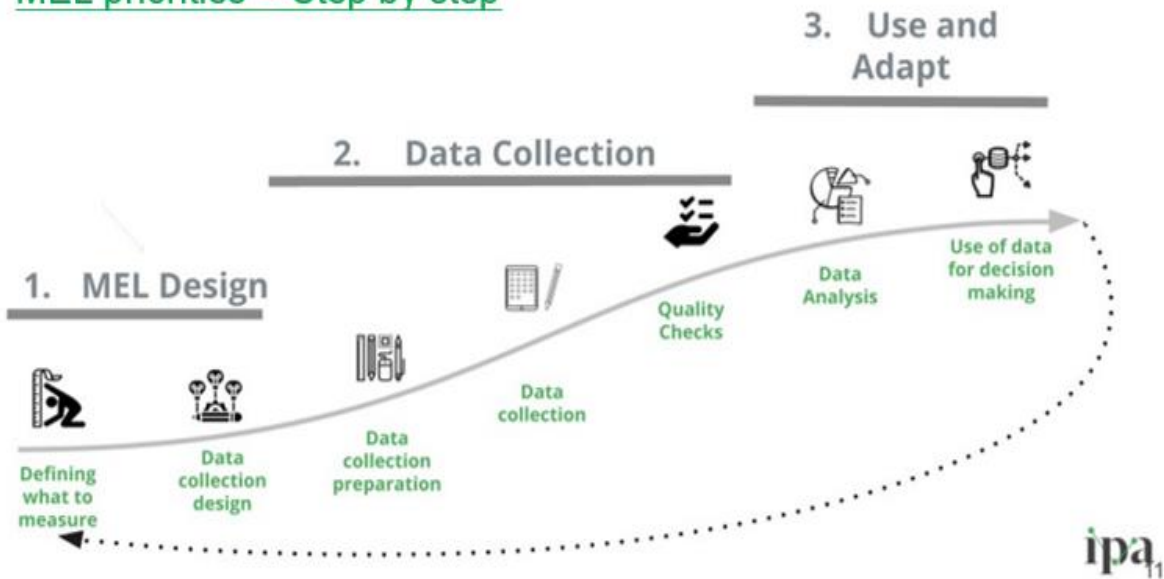
IPA also supported NEPI in submitting funding proposals to achieve NEPI's fundraising goals for the next two years of roll-out and potential expansions of the program to other countries. Activities included:

- Coordination and editorial leadership on FID and DIV proposals;
- Coordination with other funding partners (Global Development Incubator, GiveDirectly) and NEPI's advisory groups (J-PAL, Chris Blattman, etc.); and
- Support for donor pitches, including the WAM Foundation and the Livelihood Impact Fund;

The IPA team accompanies NEPI staff in the execution of the MEL activities with the STYL program and makes the MEL activities more visible.

MEL Strategy Implementation

- MEL priorities – Step by step



NEPI staff are seen participating in an IPA-led training at the IPA Liberia office in Monrovia in 2023

NEPI/GDI Partnership

To develop a strategy for scaling and replicating the STYL program beyond the current implementation by NEPI in Liberia, including replication in other countries, In 2023, the Global Development Incubator (GDI) partnered with NEPI to incubate the organization. GDI has a track record of launching transformative social ventures. The GDI incubation model comprises four phases, which include:

- Discovery phase
- Design phase
- Building phase, and an
- Exit phase

During the discovery phase, GDI discovers the following opportunities with the NEPI model:

- CBT-based violence prevention interventions have a growing body of evidence;
- However, there is a low uptake of these interventions across Sub-Saharan Africa;
- NEPI and its partners have developed distinctive experience in designing and implementing this intervention;

To seize this opportunity, NEPI needs to (1) build its organizational capacity, (2) forge new partnerships regionally, and (3) potentially spin out a new organization. For the design phase, GDI supported NEPI in building its organizational capacity and forging new partnerships regionally, with investment in its regional expansion strategies.

GDI approach during the design phase included the following:

- GDI embed some of its staff into NEPI to support a regional scale-up;
- Develop a regional strategy and methodology for adapting STYL to new contexts;
- Adapt STYL for implementation in at least one additional country, engaging a local partner;
- Cultivate a pipeline of new opportunities in other countries;
- Build the team;
- Develop a new brand and communications strategy;
- Mobilize resources to support near-term projects and longer-term sustainable financing for CBT-based interventions in the region;

NEPI has completed the GDI discovery and design phase and is now in the building phase of the incubation process. NEPI's regional expansion efforts are being incubated and partially funded by GDI. GDI will continue to partner with NEPI to provide strategic and operational support for the regional expansion program.

With GDI support NEPI will achieve the following:

- Launch a small-scale pilot of intervention with four cohorts of 25 high-risk young men, 100 participants total, in March 2024 in Lagos, Nigeria;
- Replicate the results from the STYL program in Liberia;
- Gain strategic and operational insights on how to scale in a new country;
- Identify opportunities for near – and long-term funding in the new country;
- Secured funding for program expansion in Liberia and Nigeria;
- Identify implementing partners in Nigeria and support partner capacity building and support participants' recruitment;

NEPI/GiveDirectly Partnership

In 2023, NEPI explored a partnership with GiveDirectly (GD) to deliver digital cash transfers for the STYL program. The cash transfer consists of a lump-sum payment of US \$200 upon the program completion and a \$100 payment 6 months after the training. The organization partnered with NEPI to enroll STYL program participants for the disbursement of an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) and related operational monitoring.

The partnership developed the following system for the NEPI/STYL program:

- Developed and rolled out an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) System,
- Conducted several technical and safety verifications to integrate participants into the cash payment system to complete payments.
- Conducted an in-person enrollment of 314 participants to decrease operational complexity and reduce payment delays associated with registration errors;
- In collaboration with the Government's National Identification Registry, GD provided program participants with Government ID Card;
- Distributed SIM cards for program participants' mobile money transfers and conducted townhall to explain mobile money basics, including how to withdraw and PIN/security considerations;
- Addressed incorrect mobile money registration and payment issues arising during the disbursement;
- Distributed cash to 304 program beneficiaries;
- Conducted a post-payment survey to confirm successful transfer receipt;
- Collected data on participants' enrollment, participants successfully paid, experiences, operational metrics challenges, and spending choices.

STYL Implementation Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

During the implementation, IPA and NEPI faced a series of challenges that the partners were able to address through their collaboration. These included:

- **Government elections in Liberia in October 2023**
 - Challenge: The general elections required NEPI to postpone the roll-out of the second cohort of 2023. The election will lead to the turnover of key points of contact in Liberian ministries relevant to NEPI's work.
 - Mitigation: After the decision to postpone the second cohort, IPA and NEPI revised its priorities for the remainder of its collaboration in 2023. IPA and NEPI tried to build relationships with technical staff within the ministries that might be less affected by turnover resulting from the elections. The latter approach might reduce the need to rebuild relationships with all ministries once a new administration is in office.
- **Government engagement**
 - Challenge: The counterparts in the Liberian government did not possess the necessary resources/bandwidth to be a scale-up partner for NEPI in 2023.

- Mitigation: NEPI and IPA explored alternative scenarios for scale-up. With the help of one of NEPI's Board of Directors, Heidi McAnnually-Linz, NEPI was introduced to the Global Development Incubator (GDI) for collaboration. Instead of pursuing a scale-up of the program through the government, IPA supported NEPI in finalizing a strategy to link STYL to relevant government programs. By that, NEPI created a more sustainable ecosystem around its model, increasing the likelihood of sustained impact at scale. IPA also recommended that NEPI scope potential implementing partners to continue scaling the program nationally through a hybrid model using both NEPI and an implementing partner (with NEPI playing a technical assistance role).
- **MEL capacity building**
 - Challenge: As NEPI rebuilds its team for the re-launch of the STYL program in 2023, the team requires time to build up its MEL capacity.
 - Mitigation: IPA and NEPI developed key elements of NEPI's MEL system collaboratively over time so that NEPI learns by doing and feels ownership of its MEL system. Likewise, IPA supported NEPI in the recruitment process of a new Research Manager, which was a key step in expanding NEPI's MEL capacities.

GD experienced the following Challenges:

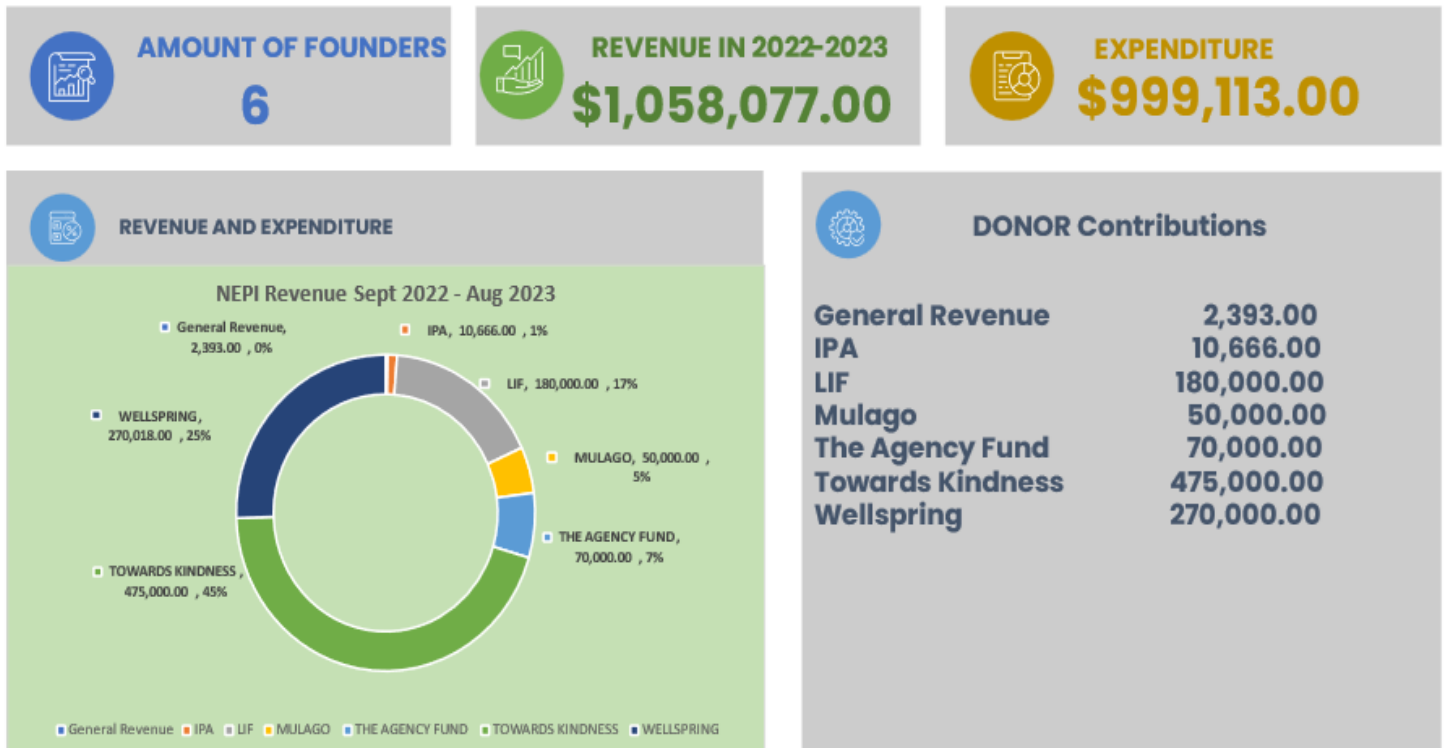
- **Enrollment:**
 - Name mismatch
 - Drop out of CBT training
- **Internal Audit Checks:**
 - Participants' mobility: Participants' unavailability resulted in several revisits.
 - Mitigation: GD staff were pushed to go in search of participants in locations other than where they potentially were to be traced;
 - SIM Card Commercialization: due to the desire for quick access to money, the check revealed attempts of SIM card commercialization for an amount far lower than the expected transfers;
 - Relocation: Some recipients relocated due to the intent of finding newer locations that would impact their social lifestyle positively;
- **Remote Follow-up:**
 - Recipients' phones being switched off or in the possession of an unknown person, making it difficult to:
 - Reach recipients for follow-up
 - Verify if they had issues collecting their transfers
 - Some recipients were taken to rehabilitation centers by relatives so they could not be easily followed up;
- **Lessons learnt:**
 - In-person follow-up success rate would be higher than remote follow-up because of the extreme difficulties in reaching out to most participants as their phones are often with a relative or an unknown person who could not trace them easily;
 - Launching the National Identification drive process a week before enrollment launch would prevent delays in the enrollment process;
 - Verification checks held during the training sessions most likely would reduce the risk of participants lost to follow-up and prevent delays in transfers;

NEPI Updated Website



As part of our efforts to relaunch the program in Liberia and increase our visibility to prospective partners, we worked to optimize our website in 2023, with examples of new webpages below:



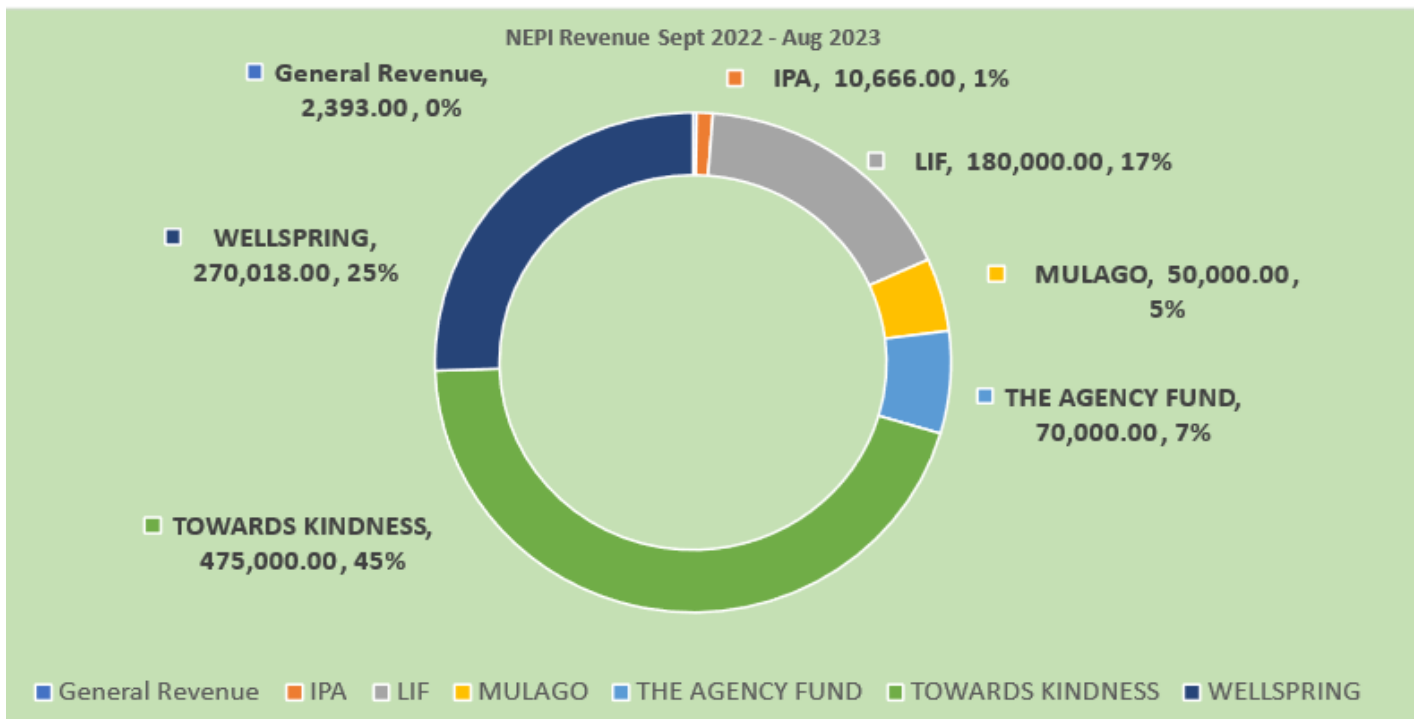
2022 – 2023 Revenue and Expenditure Dashboard



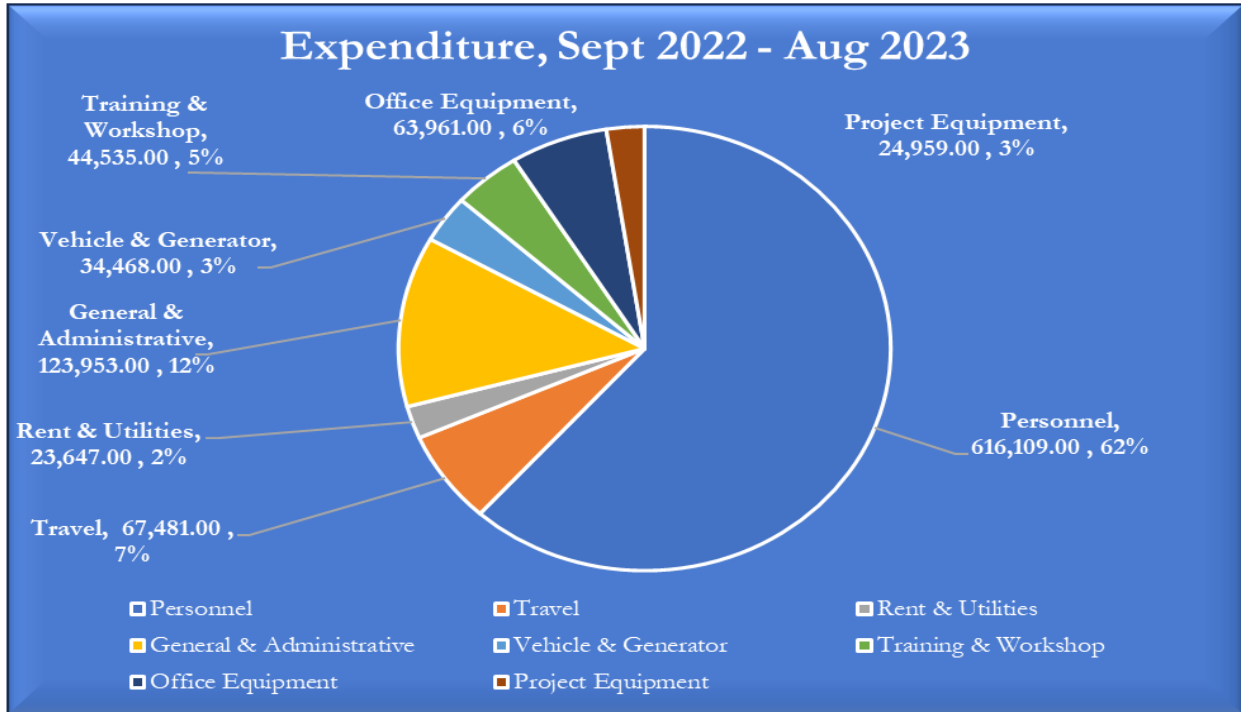
2022 – 2023 Revenue and Expenditure

	 DONATIONS 1,058,077.00	 EXPENDITURE 999,113.00		 SURPLUS/DEFICIT 58,964.00
NEPI Financial Statement as of August 30, 2023				
REVENUE:			Amount	
	General Revenue			2,393.00
	IPA			10,666.00
	Livelihood Impact Fund (LIF)			180,000.00
	Mulago Foundation			50,000.00
	The Agency Fund			70,000.00
	Towards Kindness			475,000.00
	Wellspring			270,018.00
		Total Revenue		\$ 1,058,077.00
EXPENDITURE	Personnel			616,109.00
	Travel			67,481.00
	Rent & Utilities			23,647.00
	General & Administrative			123,953.00
	Vehicle & Generator			34,468.00
	Training & Workshop			44,535.00
	Office Equipment			63,961.00
NET ASSETS	Project Equipment			24,959.00
END OF 2023		Total Expenditure		\$ 999,113.00
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS				\$ 58,964.00

NEPI Revenue, Sept 2022 – Aug 2023



NEPI Expenditure, Sept 2022 – Aug 2023



Statement of Activities by Donor 31-Aug-23

Statement of Activities by Donor 31-Aug-23								
	General Revenue	IPA	LIF	MULAGO	THE AGENCY FUND	TOWARDS KINDNESS	WELLSPRING	TOTAL
REVENUE								
Donation	-	10,666.00	180,000.00	50,000.00	70,000.00	475,000.00	270,005.00	1,055,671.00
Other Revenue	2,393.00	-	-	-	-	-	13.00	2,406.00
Total Revenue	2,393.00	10,666.00	180,000.00	50,000.00	70,000.00	475,000.00	270,018.00	1,058,077.00
EXPENSES								
Personnel	54,522.00	10,666.00	62,444.00	40,000.00	76,186.00	251,008.00	121,283.00	616,109.00
Travel	10,157.00	-	9,415.00	-	-	4,498.00	43,411.00	67,481.00
Rent & Utilities	976.00	-	-	-	-	16,926.00	5,745.00	23,647.00
General & Administrative	19,763.00	-	4,677.00	-	-	86,522.00	12,991.00	123,953.00
Vehicle & Generator	2,685.00	-	-	-	-	31,783.00	-	34,468.00
Training & Workshop	1,407.00	-	29,361.00	-	-	11,611.00	2,156.00	44,535.00
Office Equipment	8,410.00	-	7,123.00	-	-	44,331.00	4,097.00	63,961.00
Project Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	24,184.00	775.00	24,959.00
Total Expense	97,920.00	10,666.00	113,020.00	40,000.00	76,186.00	470,863.00	190,458.00	999,113.00
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	(95,527.00)	-	66,980.00	10,000.00	(6,186.00)	4,137.00	79,560.00	58,964.00

Our Partners



The Agency Fund



GiveDirectly



As seen in the media

The
Economist

THE
HUFFINGTON
POST

The
Washington
Post

Vox

 Becker Friedman Institute
FOR ECONOMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

FREAK  NOMICS

The New York Times

Appendix

NEPI Core Values

Leadership

As leaders, we believe we must be effective stewards, engender trust, and provide solutions toward our common goal to lead change and provide the highest quality of integrated care. We make our ethics and values clear by living them each day and persistently upholding our organizational culture that recognizes and supports our diverse strengths. We believe in the unique identity of those we serve, treating each with friendliness, dignity, respect, care, and compassion. Our values are inherent in our passion and desire to provide exceptional service.

Accountability

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

Excellence

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

Transparency

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

Collaboration

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

OUR PHILOSOPHY

All people have the right to live in safe and peaceful communities and participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives.

Safe and peaceful societies emerge when poor, vulnerable, and at-risk street youth lives are transformed. Having youth move from a position as an outcast to an economically and socially integrated member of society.

Transformation and future orientation are of central importance in changing risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use/abuse, crime, violence, and vulnerability to recruitment into armed conflict.

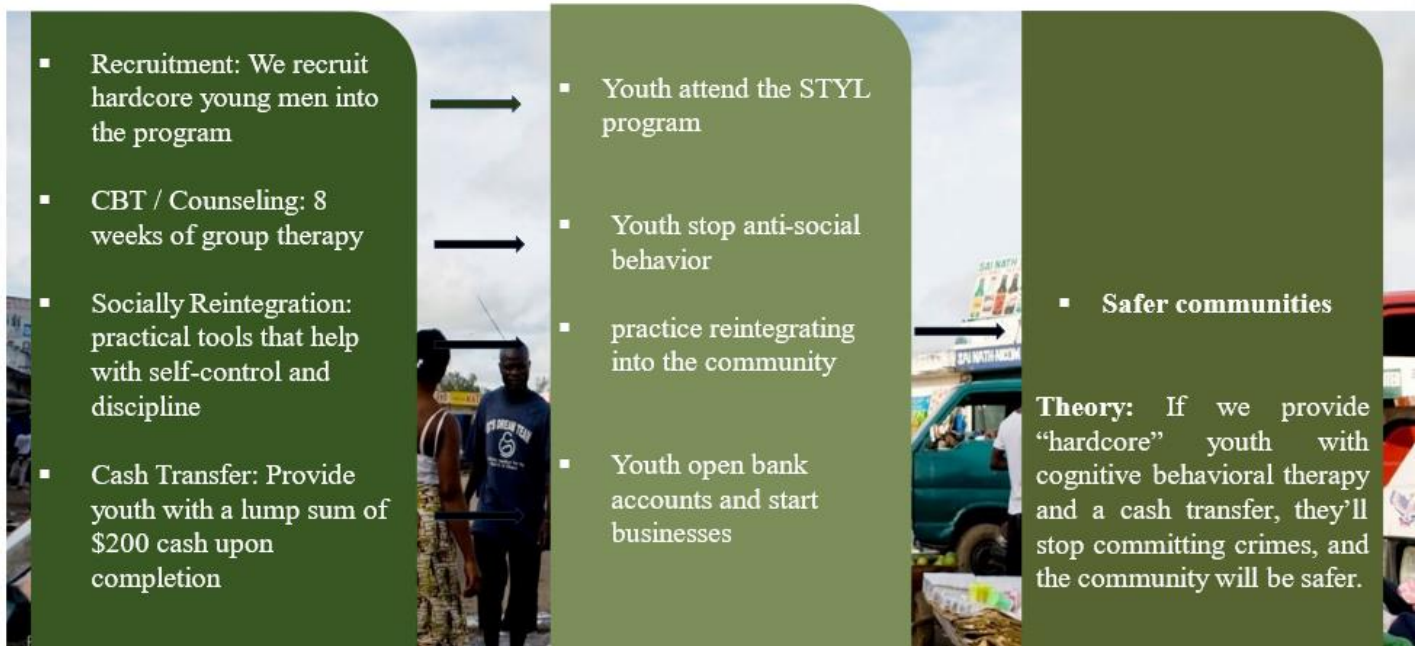
Our Stakeholders

NEPI stakeholders are people or organizations affected by the decisions we make and the actions we take. Our primary stakeholders are the people and communities we serve. Other stakeholders include donors, partners, governments, and philanthropists.

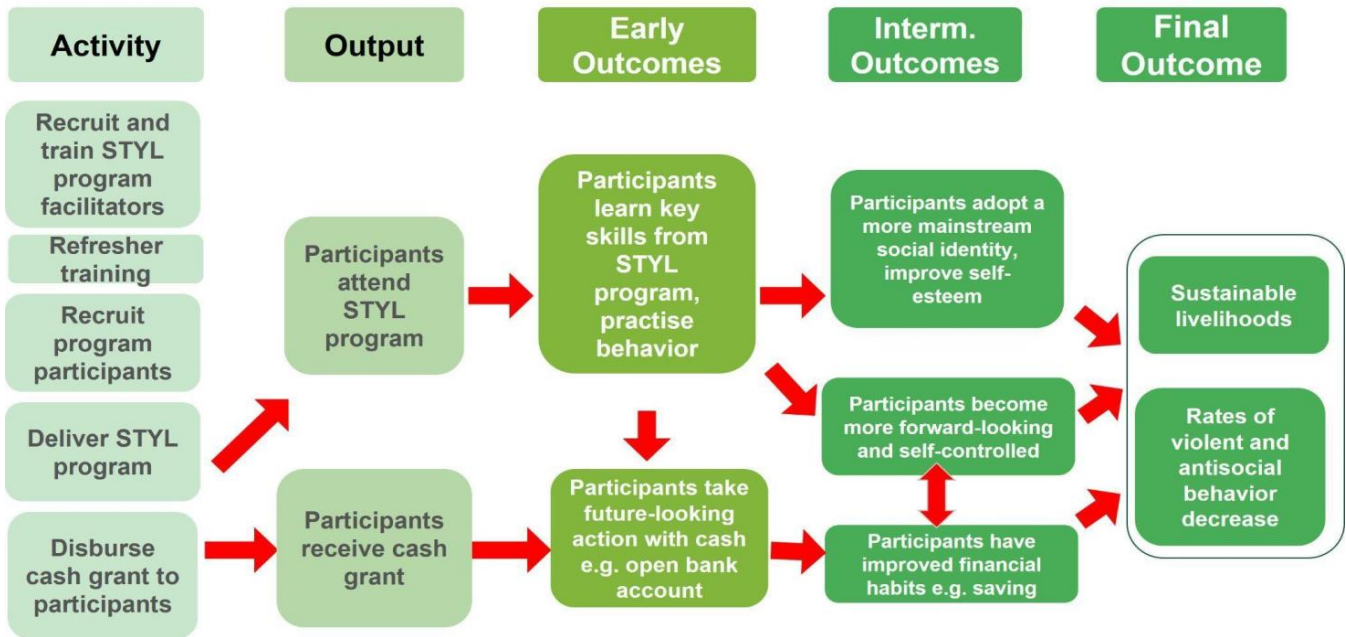
We are accountable to our stakeholders:

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

The STYL model



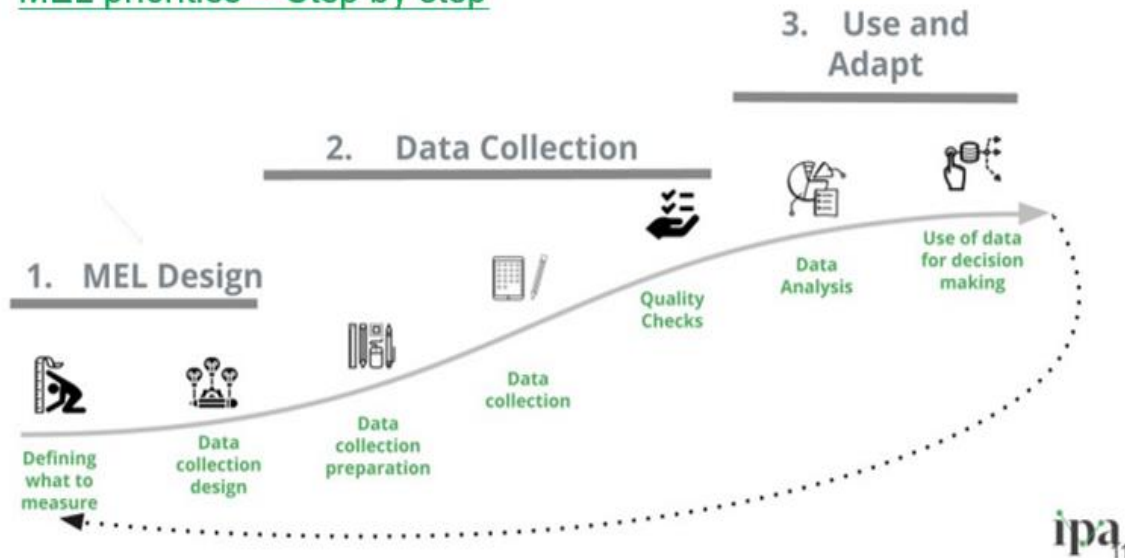
NEPI Detail Theory of Change



MEL Strategy Implementation

MEL Strategy Implementation

- [MEL priorities – Step by step](#)



PARTICIPANTS BECOME MORE FORWARD-LOOKING



NEPI STYL Scale Strategy

VISION

- Safer Communities
- Doer: NGOs
- Payers: Government and Big Aids

Anywhere there is youth crime and violence across Sub-Saharan Africa and globally.

REPLICATION

Sub-Saharan Africa (2022 - 2025)

2.0 Systemize the delivery model

Develop the training manual into a guide,

Develop an Intake Survey for participant recruitment through J-PAL technical support,

Developing a new MEL framework to ensure NGO partners deliver the solution well through IPA technical assistance.

Recruit a country team to manage implementation (Program staff),

Team/board evolves from issue area expertise to organizational scaling.

At least 2,500 highest-risk youth reintegrated

R&D

Liberia (2009-2012)

1.0 Pilot tested the STYL Model with 1000 of the highest-risk youth.

Design, test, and refine the model, iterate on it, and make it truly scalable.

Developed a scalable 1.0 model through evidence-based, cost-effectiveness.

Streamline the model, and make it simple enough, cheap, and easier to replicate.

Conducted an RCT and a 10-year follow-up survey; results show a 20-50% reduction in crime and violence.

Approach to the Big Shift

Doer: Targeting a range of NGO partners across Africa, Systematically transferring the impact model

Payer: Big Aid, like USAID psychosocial and GiveDirectly cash transfers partnership, which attracts more payers. Leveraging government infrastructure and resources (cost sharing)

Technology: build and operationalize data platform, tech enables training of STYL trainers, dashboards to monitor delivery across a range of implementing partners,

Model: A new implementation guide to work via other NGOs, maintaining efficiency and impact at scale,

Policy: Develop and integrate a robust MEL strategy to ensure that initial program rollout and scaling decisions are data-driven, Model integrated into national youth policy

Collective Action: Membership of the Unlocked Aid coalition to coordinate efforts aimed at encouraging the national Gov't to use evidence-based programs.

IMPACT

IDEA

CBT-based hardcore youth rehabilitation Program

TIME

NEPI STYL scale-up implementation plan



NGOs As Doer

NGOs as Doer

Early Stage at Scale

Model:

Targeting a range of NGO partners to deliver the model,
Provide training on the use of the model
Systematically transferring the impact model to NGOs

Money:

Shepherd the STYL model to a potential scale
Allowing Big Aid like USAID, GiveDirectly, and other
bilateral and multilateral to take on the burden afterward as potential payer-at-scale partners,
while NEPI shifts away from philanthropies funding.

Org: Biggest needs are in project management, policy, training, and monitoring quality

Ensure that NGO partners are delivering the model with the same STYL results at scale
Ensure model fidelity at scale (Where GDI partnership is relevant)

Impact:

Efficacy of impact, NGOs deliver STYL with the same impact

The Dream

Model: The model is cohesive and fully implemented by the NGOs

Money: Gov't has created new budget line items they fund with taxes or big aid funding support

Org: NEPI becoming a center of excellence or lab for new solutions

Impact: New impact benchmark that hopefully approaches that of NEPI's replication:

Government As Doer

Government as Doer

Early Scale

Model: Usually need to break up the impact model and change the implementation strategy

Opt. 1: NEPI continues to do certain pieces of the model and over time transfer all the crucial elements to Gov't

Opt. 2: NEPI pushes each piece of the model forward as the government allows/demands

Opt. 3: in each relevant market (e.g. national gov't), NEPI assesses what pieces of the model are already in play and focuses on the ones that are lagging

Money:

utilizing existing government infrastructure, staff time, and investment but no new budget line items

Big Aid plays a larger role in funding the work

Org: biggest needs are in project management, policy, training, and monitoring quality

Impact:

Efficacy of impact likely declines, at least in the short term

The government often most interested in the case for investment and constituent satisfaction

The Dream

Model: The model is cohesive and fully implemented by the government









Money: Gov't has created new budget line items they fund with taxes

Org: NEPI becoming a center of excellence or lab for new solutions

Impact: New impact benchmark that hopefully approaches that of NEPI's replication

What needs to be true for a recipient to be paid?

If a recipient's data checks off all these boxes, then they will be considered 'ready for pay' and included in our payment list.

1	Correct Stage	They are in stage Pay	
2	Correct Transfer Date	Their next transfer date is on or before Preparation Day of payments	
3	Passed Screening	They passed ComplyAdvantage sanctions screening on Processing Days	
4	Passed Name Verification	They passed name verification on Processing Days (the name we have for their phone number matches the name returned by the MNO)	
5	0 Blocking Cases	They have no active blocking cases open (with the call center or IA team)	
6	0 Recipient Pauses	They do not have an active Director's Check (note: it is the CD's responsibility to submit all pause requests)	
7	0 Geo-level Pauses	They are not in a geographic level that has been paused for payments (note: this can only be done at the lowest geographic level)	
8	Transfer Followed Up	Their most recently completed transfer has been followed up (if applicable)	

Why might a recipient's transfer be delayed during payments?

1	Open Case(s)	A recipient has an open case as of Processing Days of payments
2	Director's Pause	A CD has placed requested a director's check on a recipient, which blocks their transfer for a one -month period (checks are reset on Reconciliation Day of payments)
3	Follow Up Missing	A recipient has not received a follow -up for their most recently completed transfer and is therefore not ready for the next payment
4	Geographic Level Block	A CD has placed a request to block certain geographic levels from being paid, which blocks the transfers for all recipients in that level for a one -month period (village blocks are reset on Reconciliation Day of payments)
5	Sanctions Screening Flag	A recipient was flagged during sanctions screening on Preparation Day and Joe did not approve them, or they were newly flagged during sanctions screening on Processing Days
6	Name Verification Failure	A recipient failed name verification (this could be due to several things, such as the provider saying that the account number for a recipient is not registered or the data team manually denying a recipient because the name returned by a provider is too dissimilar to the name we have for a given account)
7	Payment Gateway Failure	Data team attempted to send the payment, but it failed for any number of reasons that vary greatly by the portal and the mobile money provider: not enough funds, challenges with the MoMo or portal itself, incorrect sim registration, etc.

*See more information on why a recipient might not have been paid [here](#) (note that this document includes only Segovia screenshots)

4

CASH GRANT IMPLEMENTATION MODEL



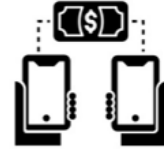
360

NEPI



314

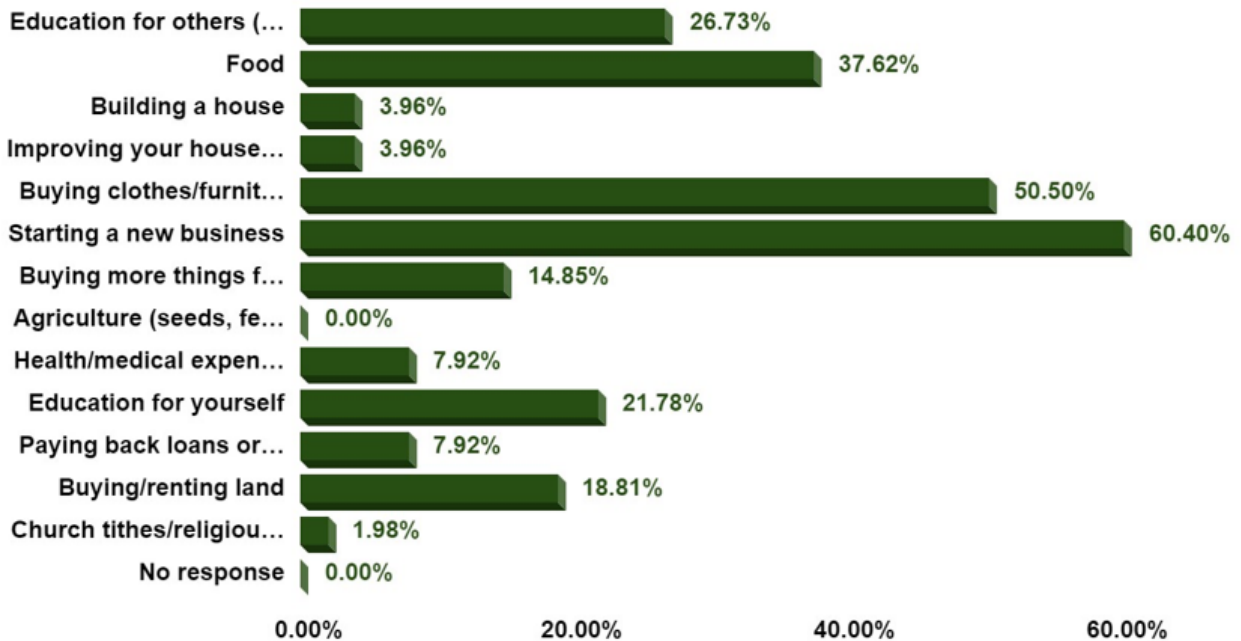
Enrollment - GD



10,470,315 LRD

GiveDirectly

RECIPIENT SPENDING OUTCOMES



Global Development Incubator (GDI)

NEPI First Expansion Goals

- Run 4 cohorts of 25 men per cohort
- Replicate the results from the STYL program in Liberia
- Gain strategic and operational insights on how to scale in the new country
- Identify opportunities for near- and long-term funding in new country

Potential Expansion Country

DRC	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 percent of population in Congo is under the age of 24 • High youth unemployment of 30.5 percent, but likely higher (80 - 90 percent) with lack of access to quality education and market-relevant skills • According to UNICEF, approximately 10,000 youth are associated with armed groups and forced labor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Large share of crime is perpetrated by armed militant groups in Congo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 percent of population under the age of 35 • Nearly 54 percent of youth are unemployed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Estimated that 65 percent of total economy under the informal sector • Lagos state has the largest crime incidence, accounts for nearly 40 percent of crimes in Nigeria • Boko Haram is very active in Northern Nigeria, and able to recruit youth through force, money, and psychosocial factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 percent of population in Sierra Leone is under the age of 35 • Over 60 percent of youth are experiencing structural unemployment, high illiteracy rates and lack of education • Youth are disillusioned and largely become involved in crime to support themselves and their families

Expansion Country Evaluation Criteria

Based on 20+ expert interviews and research, we have identified the following evaluation criteria as vital for the success of the expansion country program:

- Greatest Need
 - Youth Population
 - Interpersonal Violence
 - Absolute Need
 - Organized Crime Index
- High Impact CBT
 - Evaluation of existing CBT interventions
 - Gap in market based on interview insight
- Implementing Partners
- Favorable Environment
 - Conflict Status
 - Government/Political Environment
 - Funding Availability
 - Language
- Potential Risks

Criteria: Greatest Need

In Liberia, NEPI was able to make an impact because of the presence of high -risk youth engaged in crime. The next country should have a high youth population and a high incidence of crime. In -country data collection will be key to understanding the youth crime and violence rates in the chosen country.

	DRC	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
Youth Population (15 -24)	7.7M	18.5M	0.7M
Prevalence of Interpersonal Violence Deaths per 100,000	3,923	2,416	2,764
Organized Crime Index	5.03	7.15	5.40

source: [United Nations Population Fund](#), Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, World Bank, Institute for Security Studies

Criteria: High-Impact CBTN

Initial research and interviews about the potential expansion countries indicate CBT could potentially impact high-risk young men.

DRC	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
There are a few studies and interventions that have utilized CBT to help high-risk young men. However, the studies largely focus on war-affected youth and former child soldiers, under 18. Globally, there are some indications that CBT is effective in the active conflict context.	Existing studies in southwest Nigeria (Ibadan) and southeast Nigeria focused on limited participants (40 and 45, respectively) and different age groups, lacking comprehensive data collection on psychosocial behaviors. Given the success of the READI program in Chicago and similar CBT programming, CBT appears to work in urban areas with organized crime.	There has been a CBT intervention aimed at war-affected youth. Other small-scale interventions but no organizations similar to NEPI doing this work. Further, no indication of cash transfer programs or programs solely focused on high-risk young men engaged in criminal activities. Freetown is similar to Monrovia size and violence-wise, and we believe the intervention could be impactful.
Opportunity: High Existing gap in market	Opportunity: High Existing gap in market	Opportunity: High Existing gap in the market

Criteria: Implementing Partners

DRC	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Program Provider/ Cash Transfer Provider: GiveDirectly DRC Youth Psychologist: CBT Expert from Congo Initiative MEL Provider: TBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Youth Program Provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN) CLEEN Foundation Cash Transfer Provider: GiveDirectly Youth Psychologist: TBA MEL Provider: IPA Nigeria Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) Youth Experts at Ford Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Youth Program Provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Program on Children and Adversity (RPCA) CARITAS Youth Psychologist: RPCA Cash Transfer Provider: TBA MEL Provider: IPA Sierra Leone Prison Watch Sierra Leone WAYout Arts
Dedicated and motivated partners with a strong commitment to utilizing CBT to help high-risk youth. Partners identified have the ability to potentially support program adaptation and implementation.	There are a few youth initiatives in this space, but not many are with youth involved in crime. IPA Nigeria and the experts at the Ford Foundation appear enthusiastic and capable of recommending organizations for program implementation.	Existing relationships and new partners are interested in this work, and there is CBT experience available. However, there are concerns around fidelity to STYL program and making adjustments to include high-risk young women.

Criteria: Favorable Environment

	DRC	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
Conflict Status	Active <i>Kivu Conflict</i>	Inactive <i>Boko Haram active in North</i>	Inactive <i>Civil War ended 2002</i>
Government/ Political Environment	Human rights concerns and large degree of insecurity in the country. The government is viewed as ineffective, corrupt, and unstable.	Recent elections and government is currently tackling economic issues, but it is relatively stable.	Held election in June 2023 and President Bio won his second term. Some corruption concerns, but government is stable.
Funding Availability*	\$752M <i>International community providing a lot of funding to address conflict and restore stability</i>	\$525M <i>Some funding related to youth, addressing Boko Haram (primarily focused on women & children), etc.</i>	\$25M <i>Funders not as interested in, US funding related to access to electricity and water</i>
Language	French	English	English

*Funding availability based on US Foreign Assistance statistics

Potential Risks

DRC	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active conflict status could make working in Congo risky and unsafe • Unclear if STYL program will work in this context • Lack of experience with trauma-informed CBT • Financial fraud risk with cash transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will we be able to expand to Northern Nigeria? • Will the program be a viable alternative for youth considering joining Boko Haram? • Have not identified experienced CBT providers who have worked with this population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a strong partner • Existing partner is interested in providing program to at -risk young women • Concerns around funding availability and funder interests in youth



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