



Working Together for Health, Education and Peace in the DRC

Vision:

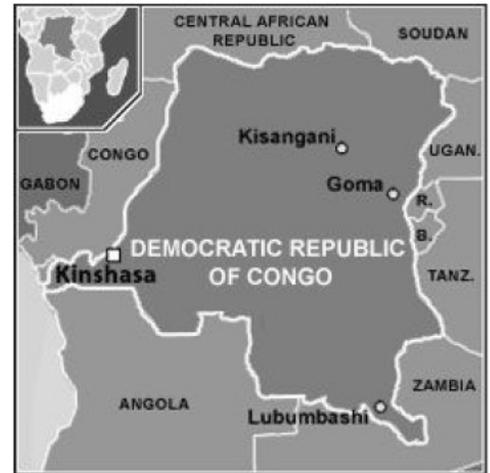
To promote community development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through health work, education, advocacy, and relationship-building between the people of the U.S. and the DRC.

Objectives:

- Provide financial assistance for education and job skill development of Congolese youth impacted by the ongoing conflict in the DRC
- Facilitate access to health care for the communities of South Idjwi Island, with special programs for women and children
- Advocate for peace and an end to the violence in the DRC
- Organize exchanges between the USA and the DRC to raise awareness and build solidarity

Context:

The DRC is in the middle of a long political and economic crisis caused by repeated wars and armed conflicts. The principal victims of this violence and instability have been women and children. In spite of the DRC's ratification of the UN Conventions on Women's and Children's Rights, women have been and continue to be raped and sexually exploited by militias, while children are recruited to fight as soldiers. Many studies from the DRC have found these practices to have reached the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity.



Accomplishments:

A \$70,000 grant made possible the construction of dormitory space for 18 women and their children as they receive professional training with our partner Let Africa Live. The completed third floor is shown in this photo. Safe on-campus housing is a key component to training success and trauma healing for the vulnerable youth, including victims of rape, who enter and are transformed by their experiences at Let Africa Live.

Our support for health on Idjwi Island continues, where the infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world. A \$30,000 Mwendo Congo grant, combined with other funding sources, made possible the purchase of a health speed boat by our partners at Idjwi Initiative. The boat, to be delivered in early 2018, will allow transport of women with high-risk pregnancies to health facilities, visits by health professionals to the island, and generation of revenue for health programming by operating part-time as a for-fee water taxi.



Key Resource People*

Dr. Edwige Mubonzi is a general practice medical doctor from the DRC. After graduating from medical school, she worked at Panzi Hospital, treating female victims of rape in the ongoing civil conflict. Dr. Denis Mukwege, Nobel Peace Prize nominee, was her medical director and mentor in that work.

Pastor Kubisa Sosthene Muzenende is the founder of Let Africa Live (Laissez L’Afrique Vivre or “LAV” in French), a non-governmental organization providing job skills training and psycho-social support to victims of war. LAV has provided training to over 3,000 youth since its founding in March 2000.

*Dr. Mubonzi, Pastor Muzenende and other Mwendo Congo members speak regularly about issues in the DRC and the work of Mwendo Congo. To learn more about our speakers, please visit the “About Us” section of www.mwendocongo.org.

A letter from Aziza Rusina, graduate of the tailoring program, Let Africa Live



“Today, thanks to you, I have recovered my value and my self-esteem. As a victim of sexual violence at 15—and having been rejected by my community—I lost the will to live... Thanks to Mwendo Congo, in 2015 I succeeded in opening my own business because I received a sewing machine and other materials necessary to start my own tailoring workshop.... [I’ve now] decided to start training [other] young girls in need. I have already trained 6 girls for 6 months each...

[My other big news is that] I have been married now for 6 months.... It is thanks to Let Africa Live and Mwendo Congo that I found an ideal husband, because [before my training] I was despairing as a rape victim and thought that I would never be able to find someone who could love me. I have also earned enough money to pay the school fees for my son and my little brother and sister. Paying these fees makes me very proud.”

Opportunities

LEARN / EDUCATE: Visit the Mwendo Congo website. Invite members of our speakers bureau to your school, club, place of worship, house meeting, etc. Tell others about the situation in eastern Congo. E-mail us with questions and requests!

ADVOCATE: Visit the “Advocacy” page on the Mwendo Congo website to find information on how conflict minerals contribute to the continuing violence in the DRC. There are also resources on how to buy conflict free and how to contact your representatives.

GIVE: Mwendo Congo is a 501(c)3 organization, so your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent under the law. Checks can be made out to Mwendo Congo and sent to Mwendo Congo, 1620 Aquila Ave. N., Golden Valley, MN 55427. Or you can give on-line using your credit card at www.mwendocongo.org/donate/ (all on-line donations incur a small charge through paypal).

We look forward to hearing from you!

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