

## **SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

### **BACKGROUND**

The former UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict<sup>1</sup> dubbed the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as the 'rape capital of the world'. The Guardian called the DRC 'the world's most dangerous place for women'.<sup>2</sup> In a recent study, the American Public Health Association estimated that 4 women were raped every 5 minutes, equivalent to 48 every hour, 1152 every day and over 400 000 in a year.<sup>3</sup>

### **THE PROJECTS**

In response to this, Claudaline Mukaniwa, a pastor's wife in Goma, in the then diocese of Bukavu, formed Action Salulaire pour le Developpment Integral de Goma (ASDIG), a registered NGO, in 2006. This was funded from profits from her small tailoring business; the aim was to bring hope to rape victims by teaching them tailoring and dress making skills. Thus began Project 'Hope'. Later she began feeding malnourished children – the product of the rape pandemic. In 2010 she started a school for the poorest unschooled children. Later she started a separate agricultural initiative in Kalehe – Project 'Stand Up Women'.

**Project 'Hope'** is centred around a small compound in Keshero, some 10ks outside Goma, owned by Claudaline and her husband Désiré. The aim is to feed and school some 250 children and run 6 month tailoring courses for vulnerable women.

The school is run by a director and 8 teachers, a chaplain and nursery staff. A project manager has recently been appointed; Désiré has recently been made the Anglican bishop of the new diocese of Goma and has increased church responsibilities. Teachers are paid \$50 pcm when money is available (which it often isn't). Some of the original children have recently graduated from the primary school; the ASDIG trustees decided to embark on secondary schooling in the compound. A doctor comes once a week (voluntarily). A medical technician and a nurse also attempt to identify and treat the various health needs (malnutrition, HIV, TB, malaria etc).

The dressmaking courses are run in a small room in the compound - and also in the Anglican Centre in Goma. So far over 500 women have completed the dressmaking course.

The agricultural initiative **Project 'Stand Up Women!'** provides an income-generating opportunity for 300 women in Kalehe to farm cassava, ground nuts, pigs, goats and chickens. Hoes, spades, rakes and machetes are all provided. A local agricultural specialist supports the project (voluntarily). Again, a project manager has been recruited. A micro-finance project has recently been started up.

The **Mothers' Union** faces similar needs in the various communities in the diocese of Bukavu and the new diocese of Goma. Mama Nyota, the Bishop of Bukavu's wife, runs eight different projects for vulnerable women and their children. Claudaline is starting up the diocesan Mothers' Union initiative.

These projects are based in the area of Lake Kivu, in the eastern part of the DRC.

### **THE NEEDS**

The needs are huge: salaries for teachers, instructors and supervisors; building materials and workers; sewing machines; food and recreational materials for the children; IT equipment; agricultural equipment and materials; and so on. See the attached estimates of costs.

### **OUR RESPONSE**

Two small charities, India Africa Foundation [www.indiaafricafoundation.co.uk](http://www.indiaafricafoundation.co.uk) and Voice of the African Child <http://voiceoftheafricanchild.org> are supporting Projects 'Hope and 'Stand Up Women' as well as the Mothers' Union initiative in the Lake Kivu area. Please help us to help Désiré, Claudaline and Mama Nyota.

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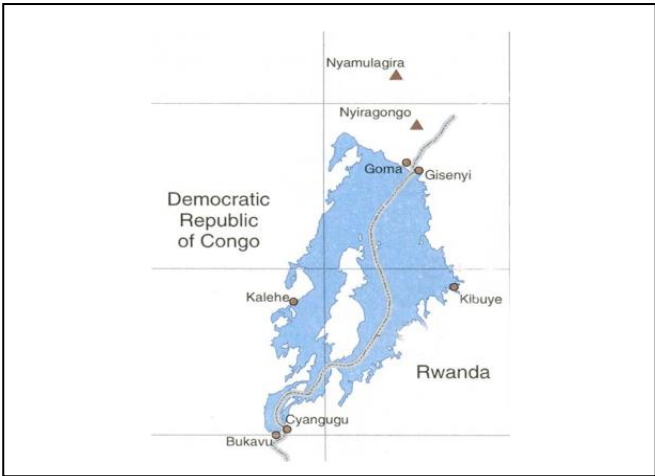
<sup>1</sup> Margot Wallstrom, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The Guardian 27 Mar 2010.

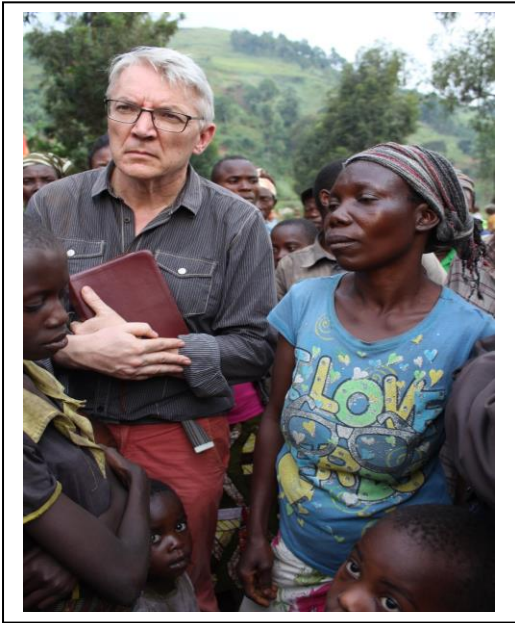
<sup>3</sup> Estimates and Determinants of Sexual Violence Against Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3093289/>



The Great Lakes



Lake Kivu



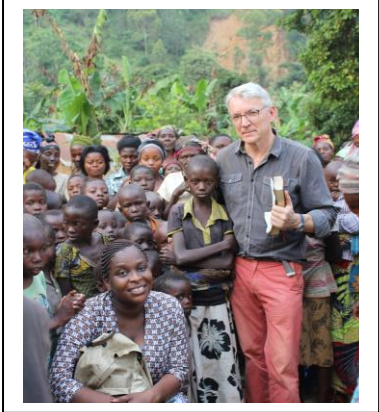
At one of the MU projects Siuzike recounts her experience of rape



Feeding children at Project 'Hope'



Graduation of Project 'Hope' Women



Christina – a 12 year old epileptic who runs a Child Headed Household of 8 at another MU project



Project 'Stand Up Women' and a ground nut harvest