



February 2014

CongoAction NEWS



Hello! We feel it is time to share with you what is happening with Congo Action and the work that ourselves and our colleagues in the DRC are doing:

On the home front

Do take a look at our website from time to time, as it is regularly updated and proves to be a useful point of contact for enquiries, donations and fund raising done on our behalf.

Soroptimists Charity of the Year

For example, we were very encouraged in our work by the fund raising done in 2013 by the Maidstone Soroptimists group, with Dr Nellie Adjaye (*see photo above*) as their president. They brought to Congo Action over £1400, which was immediately put into use for our projects. Thank you to all of them for their efforts!

Sponsorship

We also find it encouraging continuing being supported by many of you as our regular sponsors to our school children. The project has been running since 2003, and enable many youngsters to benefit from regular schooling. This year we are intending to review this project and possibly bring it to a close

by the end of the academic year. We will of course notify you in due course.

100 Club

The "100 club" that some of you participated in for the past two years brought us a steady income, and also many lucky winners! You will see on our website that we decided to bring the "100 club" to an end, due to difficulties in recruiting enough people to support it. Thank you to all of you who participated, and thank you to Pat Phipps, our dedicated organiser!

What is the situation in the DRC?

There is still a great deal of political unrest and tension between the DRC (Eastern Congo), and Rwanda. Threats of invasion by Rwanda and various rebels groups continue to arise. This affects the local economy as goods are often blocked at borders, and prices rise accordingly. Our friends in the DRC have to live with that unrest and constantly battle with poverty. Fortunately they prove to be hard working

Photos

Very top from left: Andre Thijs, Raymond and Little Moise who is hemiplegic with his mum; Nankafu on right with friend Immaculee and 'Raymond' our partner in ADIPH;

Top right: Martine and some of the sponsored children.

Above left: Mama Bitangalo a blind basket maker

Above: Edward, Pat and Valerie receive the cheque from Dr Nellie Adjaye, president of the Soroptimists at their AGM.



and resilient people, able to use the skills and little means they have to fight back:

Sewing Workshop

A good example of this is the initiative shown by a small group of women trained through a project set up by Congo Action. Once their training was completed, they pull their resources together, found a small workshop to rent on a busy and well frequented road leading to town. They used the sewing machines bought by Congo Action during their training, and started work. We gather from the feedback received, that their income now covers 40% of the household expenses. They are aiming to expand their business, and as a "paid back" gesture, they are going to train four new candidates. Congo Action will provide the new ladies with sewing machines that they can keep once their training is completed..... and so on, hence continuing to build on skills received, and passing them back to others, in an effort to support their families.

Other completed projects:

Spring repairs

In the village of "Cidjo", near Bukavu, women had to walk a long way to get water, due to their village spring being out of order. Congo Action financed the essential repairs, after ensuring that a group of villagers would be taking ownership of the spring, and being responsible for its upkeep. With the spring now flowing, life has become easier for women and children, whose daily job is collecting the water for the family.

Goat project

The trouble with goats is their natural habit to wander about and damage and erode the countryside. Being very much aware of this, Congo Action was only willing to finance an "on eco-friendly" goat project: this meant that villagers had to construct a shelter on their home grounds, and learn how to

look after the goats properly. All of them did this with great pride, and took great care of their goats.. Congo Action is paying towards the veterinary costs, and regular vaccination of the animals. We are now four years into this project and can claim it to be a very worthwhile and rewarding enterprise!

Helping the disabled

This is very close to our hearts, as disabled people in the DRC do not get from the government the support that they deserve. Many children are still affected by polio, and if parents are unable to pay for treatment, their whole future will be affected. Congo Action works closely with "Pere Andre Thijs", a Belgian missionary, who has spent his whole working life in the Congo, and regularly receives referrals from disabled adults or parents of disabled children. It is surprising how small finances can transform these people 'lives and give them a sense of hope and pride in what they can achieve!

Some of the photos you can see here and on our website (www.congoaction.co.uk) are to document the most recent help given by Pere Andre on our behalf.

His work is endless, and the referrals keep coming to our team; so please, do continue your support to Congo Action, and a great "Thank you" to all on their behalf!

One last bit of news:

The Primary school built by Congo Action in the remote village of Muganzo is now in its seventh year, and running efficiently. Many of the children who started there have moved on to secondary schools, after successfully taking on exams. We feel that part of the school's success is the fact that the village chief and villagers have "taken ownership" of the school, by forming a committee,, and ensuring its upkeep.

Best wishes to all our supporters, from the Congo Action team.

Photos

Above left:
Sewing Workshop

Above:
Adriane born with malformed legs

Below from top:
Moise has weak leg muscles
One of project goats
A view of Muganzo school

