

QCP NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021



For peace, health, education
and the relief of poverty

www.quakercongo.org.uk

Facebook - Quaker Congo Partnership

email - quakercong@gmail.com

A NOTE FROM OUR CLERK

May I start with a big thank you to all the individuals, meetings and trusts supporting the work of QCP over the years, and this last year in particular.

We have been able to maintain our promised payment of £17,000 every six months and also to send additional money to develop our other work. These developments all come from suggestions made by our Congolese partners and are often financed by specific grants. There is additional equipment in the hospital, the expansion of the work that provides opportunities for women, including vegetable gardens, poultry and goats, and soap making, so improving nutrition and providing a small income. These groups of women are also taking



part in literacy and numeracy classes which enhance their ability to run a business and take part in community affairs. On the nearby plateau the counselling and peace-making group is developing youth peace committees and vocational training groups. This is bringing together young people from different villages where there is often a history of distrust and violence.

We have also been monitoring the spread of Covid-19. Data is limited as there are no facilities for testing but the last we heard was that no cases had been positively identified in the area. Recent statistics suggest that the incidence in the Congo and in Burundi is rising rapidly. Our area of South Kivu has not yet received any vaccine.

The work continues. We are now looking towards the next three-year agreement with CEEACO. We want to strengthen the partnership. It must not be a one-way relationship and we have already learned so much from them.

Margaret Gregory



DONATIONS

- You may donate online at www.quakercongo.org.uk
- Or send donations or CAF vouchers to the Treasurer at:

17 Mersey Meadows, Manchester, M20 2GB

Cheques should be made out to: **Quaker Congo Partnership UK**

Registered Charity Number: 1159781

ABEKA HOSPITAL AND HEALTH

Supporting Abeka Hospital is a core activity of QCP

We continue to support the running costs of the hospital, including a significant proportion of the salaries of key staff. There have been initial discussions with government health officials to explore the possibility of the government increasing their salary contributions. This would reduce dependency on our funding and allow it to be more flexibly used for new initiatives, additional equipment etc.

The main clinical problems, including malaria, diarrhoeal disease, maternity care, pneumonia and malnutrition continue, as new challenges emerge. Covid rates are rising rapidly in neighbouring areas and are probably underreported. Flooding of the main road to Uvira from Lake Tanganyika is compromising referral of patients and supply lines. Closure of the border with Burundi due to Covid has also complicated acquiring supplies and planning training.



Health planning meeting

We have recently used funds to help improve maternity care, purchasing a ventouse (an alternative to forceps) and resuscitation equipment. We hope to support the training (in Burundi) of a nurse in anaesthesia in the future. Dr Sharaf, the senior doctor, has recently attended a health service planning meeting and a maternal and child health care training event, both hosted by the government district health service.

Our thanks to all the hospital staff for maintaining services in such difficult circumstances. It remains important to also recognise that all the other elements of QCP support to CEEACO contribute to improved health in some way.



PLEASE JOIN US AT YEARLY MEETING GATHERING

Our Zoom sessions are online at the following times:

- Groups Fair - Saturday, 24th July from 14:30-16:00
- "Accompanying Quakers in DR Congo: challenges and rewards" - Monday, 2nd August from 12:30-13:30

Please visit our website at www.quakercongo.org.uk for details of how to join.

ACTION FOR WOMEN'S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

New training for women in soap-making for income generation

The Women's group AWID put forward an exciting new proposal for training in soap-making in the Abeka district of DRC. The training was for 25 women heads of household, including widows, single parents, survivors of domestic violence, disabled and demobilized women. Soap-making will provide the participants with an extra source of income as well as increasing vital hand-washing materials for their communities during the Covid pandemic.



After approaching many small soap-making companies, we received donations from FRIENDLY handmade soap of Hebden Bridge, W. Yorkshire and COSY COTTAGE handmade soap of Malton, N. Yorkshire. The cost of £500 for 6 days included a trainer from a local DRC soap-making company, plus premises, materials, and equipment. Our AWID co-ordinators Mado and Yutu recruited 25 enthusiastic participants and in-depth training took place in May 2021. Participants studied soap-making theory, plus hands-on practice days and training in variations in soap manufacture – colours, cutting etc. They also learned about finishing and packaging. AWID sent many photos and videos to document and report the activity, plus a final video summarizing each day's training. We sent a range of photos / videos to our donors Friendly soap and Cosy Cottage soap, to use on their social media sites and as staff training resources to foster understanding in their companies about village soap makers in DRC.

QCP hopes to follow up with support for small scale village soap manufacture, generating income for the women trainees, and contributing to hygiene during Covid. The model of seeking donations from 'green' and ethical soap-making manufacturers is exciting for both parties and enormously beneficial to the AWID women, who really enjoyed the training and are eager to continue the activity.

We welcome donations and contact with any soap-makers interested in this enterprising project. Please contact QCP - quakercongo@gmail.com - for details.

Scott Bader Commonwealth funding for women's agriculture & nutrition

Our AWID partners asked us to build on a small agricultural project funded by QCP from the World Day of Prayer in 2019. This project successfully supported very disadvantaged women in rural villages of the DRC in increasing their traditional crops of cassava and maize and in growing new crops of tomatoes, lettuce and beans, in addition to goat-keeping. The cassava crop returned double the costs of cultivation, although the maize was hit by storms and torrential rain. The cultivation of the new crops was successful, providing both nutritional food for households and a source of income. Goats were placed with participants and successfully bred, with valuable lessons learned about care and maintenance during the lactation period.

In order to scale up this activity, QCP applied for a small grant of £2,400 to the Scott Bader Commonwealth Ltd. charity in May 2021. We were delighted when the project, entitled Combatting Covid through Agriculture and Nutrition, CCAN, Action for Women's Integrated Development was fully funded, to start in July 2021.

The project aims to increase the number of disadvantaged women taking part and to enable them to access land for agriculture in Abeka, Kikongo and on the Ruzizi plain. These villages are on the shore of Lake Tanganyika and between the towns of Uvira and Nundu. Their work will help to combat COVID through improved nutrition, especially for children aged under 5, who already suffer



very serious health outcomes in the area. The project will contribute to the rent and irrigation of land to extend cultivation during the dry season, weed clearing, seeds and fencing for goats. Extending the growing season and the range of crops (tomatoes, beans, cabbage etc), together with goat-keeping will provide a source of income from sales and a more varied diet of vegetables and protein for participants and families. The target number of beneficiaries is 30 women, most of whom are heads of household supporting on average 10 others. The AWID project leaders, Mado and Yuto, therefore estimate that up to 300 people can benefit from this small project over a period of 6 months to a year.

Women's training in local skills and IT

AWID continues to run a range of other projects for women, and works to protect vulnerable children, youth and 3rd age adults. They report that their aim to promote gender and age equality can be hampered by lack of confidence in women 'late starters', who are sometimes reluctant to come forward for training. The project leaders Mado and Yutu do their best to build confidence and encourage participation with the motto 'Better late than never'.

In basket making, funds were used to equip two widows skilled in this income-generating activity, but lack of resources limits their ability to equip others.

Many women are keen to participate in 'Cut and Sew', a training project for dress-making and tailoring. Lack of machines and poor equipment makes progress slow, however 6 learners persevere, sharing two well-worn sewing machines and two experienced participants also require machines.



Testimony of a girl learning dress-making

"I am from Lusenda, I am 23 years old, my name is Suzanne Amis. I first wanted to make myself felt in the field of Beauty Salon for Women, but we missed an expert in this field. This is how I have now made the couture cut,. I find the two areas of similarity in that they demand the attention of wanting to satisfy the customer on what he wants. I already know how to measure different sizes and sew them. I can't find any money, at the moment it helps me cover some of my needs. Thanks."



Many women in the AWID group have had little or no opportunity for school education and levels of literacy / numeracy are frequently low or absent. QCP has endeavoured to provide basic literacy, numeracy and IT training, but funding is severely limited.

The AWID women would like to continue with their basic training in this area. Their project leaders provide immense support, through French, Swahili and local languages but sometimes feel disadvantaged due to lack of English. Clearly, better IT provision would be extremely useful to recipients, addressing in part the lack of English, as reports can be translated via Google, into French or local languages. Local trainers are available and have provided IT training in Word free of charge during January and February 2021, but some support is necessary for them to continue.



Donations to all of these activities are welcome and small contributions can make an immense difference to lives of the most disadvantaged families.



WATER PROJECT

The water supply constructed in 2015, thanks mainly to generous donations from individuals and the Radley Trust, continues to function well and provide safe water to the Community Hospital, the Health Centre and about 300 households living in Abeka. There is a surplus of water from the sources feeding the Abeka supply and following considerable dialogue between QCP, local communities and our partner CEEACO, detailed designs for extending the Abeka water supply to about 400 households in the neighbouring village of Mukwezi are being worked out.

As access to safe water helps significantly reduces disease and save lives, extending the provision of safe water is QCP's priority. This will require significant funding and your assistance in identifying possible funding sources would be most welcome.

Please contact QCP (quakercongo@gmail.com) should you have any suggestions or are willing to contribute to the cost of this important project.



Women collecting water



CENTRE FOR EDUCATION, PEACE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT (CEPAP)

The CEPAP project is building peace, working with young people, preventing sexual violence and providing one to one psychological support.

The CEPAP team has been very active, working to combat sexual violence, mental distress and inter-ethnic conflict. A current priority has been training and establishing youth peace committees in the middle and high plateaux.

The ongoing work to support 31 vulnerable students in school continues and between January to March 2021 51 people were given psychological assistance, six of whom were referred to the hospital because of injuries incurred through rape. The team are working with families where girls had been taken out of school due to early marriage or unwanted early pregnancy, and four young women have returned to school as a result.



Testimony of an older woman

"I regret having known this ever unforgettable tragedy. I am responding in the name of Machozi Nyange. I am about 69 years old. I live with my two granddaughters. My husband died 20 years ago and my daughter lives with her husband in a village 45 km away. It was a certain Monday, around 11 am, I was in the field to collect firewood. Suddenly, three boys dressed in military uniform and with two guns stopped me. One of them forced me to undress and jumped on me. After fulfilling his need, they saw fit to leave. I came home and received physical care and counseling from a CEPAP member. I wonder how young boys can do such things for me? I regret, regret greatly."

Peace building

QCP UK received funding from The Radley Trust to deliver peacebuilding training for members of youth peace committees. A six day course was run in May and 18 young people participated. The motto for the training was 'young people, pillar of peace'. There are now 10 youth peace committees who will form a youth peace network; the participants were from the existing and the new committees. The workshop used both participative and input methods including art, music and drama. They planned future activities and campaigns and set objectives, strategies for intervention and how to make them happen. They hope that new members will find time to learn from the former members. Over six days strong relationships between young people from different communities were formed. Saidi Isaac, the CEPAP project lead says: 'Logically building peace is a long process and requires patience, if it turns out that we run into some thorns along the way then endurance and perseverance will send us back to success.' A three day follow up course will take place in September.



T shirt with motto "Young people, pillar of peace"



Vocational Training

Lack of employment or ways of generating any income can lead young people into joining militia or violence and CEPAP have run some courses for vocational training with financial support from Education Services 2010. The courses were in IT and tailoring. The tailoring classes finished at the end of May. There were eight participants on each course. They all learnt new skills and another outcome was that young people from different groups forgot their differences and became friends. They identified a challenge that it is hard to find employment afterwards and there is a need for equipment so that they can set up their own businesses.

There is a wish to set up a vocational training and production centre for young people.

Other CEPAP work

A small amount of money can make a big difference. In the autumn we sent some additional funding for musical instruments which has improved the morale of the music group. We also sent some money for tools and covering for the workshop of a small garage; there is now a permanent repair service for motorbikes and bikes run by young people.

The CEPAP team only receives small stipends and the purchase of a pig has helped their livelihood.

The team hosted five student interns on programmes for peace and reducing conflict. After the placement the interns have started a new peace education initiative at their schools.

QCP and the CEPAP team are keen to have more resources to run training and workshops on the prevention of violence among young people and with community members. This will be a tool for raising awareness to redress the extent of violence by encouraging greater reporting and the fight against impunity. We were just recently sent this message after a team meeting: We also discussed the identification of cases of any form of violence against women and children. Because there are cases of kidnapping at the moment against women and children. Hence the question of improving communication between different actors to denounce abuses. A recent grant from The James Reckitt Charity will help this work to start however more money is needed.

Challenges

The consequences of restrictions due to COVID are still an issue in the area. Many groups of militia are active in the region regularly attacking villages and leading to many internal displaced people. The illegal mining and trade in minerals leads to violence. (A group has recently been set up to raise awareness of this issue; contact elizcol@dialstart.net). Climate change and an increase in rainfall has led to a rise in levels of water in Lake Tanganyika which means that the road between Uvira and Abeka is often impassable and people and goods are going by boat.



Flooding along the lakeside

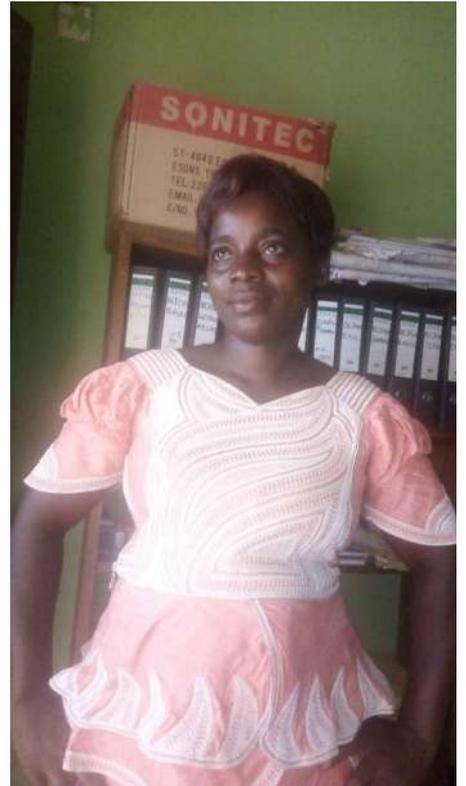
Testimony of a young woman

"I answer in the name of Espérance Mwavita. I am now 18 years old. I have a child. I had a precocious pregnancy when I was still 16 years old. The pregnancy belonged to my teacher. But, I had prohibitions from my family not to report the culprit. He had given money to my grandfather so that he could be his advocate.

When I was asked to pronounce the name of the culprit, I had no more strength and was afraid of blame from my grandfather. There, I said nothing. We wanted to protect the teacher so that he would not be sued and lose his job.

Nine months later, I saw my first son. Funny thing, I regretted having interrupted my school journey through a male malignancy using the power in my regard.

The family was no longer available to help me move forward with my studies. I had talks with CEPAP staff for moral and financial support. But I thank CEPAP for its moral intervention to my family where my parents have agreed to continue with their studies next year. .. the teacher is at home .."



REFLECTIONS OF A NEW TRUSTEE

by Fred Ashmore

I was really pleased and quite excited to be invited to become a Trustee of QCP recently.

It's a challenge to support work in an area like South Kivu with its history of troubles and its status as a focal area for conflict minerals. What could this province and the people who live there become, potentially?

Starting to do my homework, I realise what a huge amount there is to try and understand. The colonial history shaped some of the present (I'm glad I speak French) and the political changes since independence and the many conflicts have forced further changes, many of which sound brutal. I also wonder whether this is one of the areas of the world where climate change will modify the whole area and its economy to the benefit or disadvantage of the population?

It's also lovely to look at some of the pictures in the QCP newsletters and on the website and think that they show us one snapshot of a tiny section of a huge area full of people and energy and life going forward. How can we support and help? There are risks in being led by the spirit. My great grandfather was a medical missionary (Church of Scotland, not Quaker) who worked for several years in a small town on the west side of Lake Malawi – and I expect that he felt led by the spirit, too. His motivation probably included quite a lot of white saviour and certainty. I hope that my motivation has none of that. But there's work that we can do, and it can help people struggling to survive and progress. Give me strength.

Fred Ashmore

Kingston upon Thames

QUAKER CONGO PARTNERSHIP

17 Mersey Meadows, Manchester, M20 2GB

GIFT AID DECLARATION

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ _____

and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Quaker Congo Partnership UK.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Full Home address

Postcode _____ Date _____

We like to send a newsletter to donors about three times a year, by email if possible. If you would like to receive this, please give your email address:

Email: _____

Please notify the charity if you:

- * want to cancel this declaration
- * change your name or home address
- * no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Standing Order

If you bank online, set up your Standing Order there and send us the details.
Otherwise, please complete this form.

New Standing Order Instruction

Name of Bank

Account Sort Code ___ __ ___

Account Number ___ __ ___ ___ ___

Account Name

Beneficiary Quaker Congo Partnership UK

Beneficiary Sort Code 08 – 92 – 99

Beneficiary Account Number 65725825

Reference (inserted by QCP UK)

Amount: £ Amount in words

Each (month/quarter/year) on ___ __ / ___ __

From date of first payment ___ __ / ___ __ / ___ __

Payment to be made until further notice

Signed

Date ___ __ / ___ __ / ___ __

TO RAISE AWARENESS OF OUR WORK

A slide show of our projects is available

One of our trustees, Catherine Putz, has made a slideshow of the work of the Quaker Congo Partnership. If you would like to raise awareness of the work of QCP, perhaps to aid in fundraising, then please contact Catherine on 0778 306 0088 for details.

Shows can be arranged specifically for a meeting or a group, or will take place about three times a year on Zoom.

