



RAFIKI

the Quaker Congo Partnership Newsletter

SPRING
2026

For peace, health, education, and the relief of poverty

Web: www.quakercongo.org.uk

Facebook: Quaker Congo Partnership

email: quakercongo@gmail.com



ACTION FOR WOMEN'S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

Women's Projects: Hope, Hard Work, and Progress

Over the past twelve months, the women involved in our projects in Abeka, Kigongo, and Uvira have continued to work with remarkable dedication.

Despite challenges, their determination to build stronger, more self-reliant communities shines through in every activity — from farming and soap-making to literacy and numeracy training.

Agriculture:

Persevering Through the Dry Season

Between April and June, the women worked tirelessly in their fields. They focused on weeding, repairing irrigation systems to cope with the dry weather, and selling harvested crops to support ongoing activities.

Regular monitoring visits in Abeka and Kigongo helped to keep the projects on track. However, the communities faced a setback

when an epidemic swept through the area, leaving only two goats despite veterinary efforts.

Even so, the harvest brought positive results: cassava from Kigongo and three bags of peanuts (75 kg) from the newly established Abeka project, a stunning result in a short time. Of these, 50 kg were sold to fund weeding, while the remaining 25 kg were shared among the volunteer women as a small thank-you for their hard work and dedication. The Abeka women also took part in literacy and numeracy training with huge enthusiasm and excellent results.

Soap-Making: Enterprise and Education



The soap-making group continued to thrive, combining practical production with vital numeracy training. Members purchased materials such as oil, caustic soda, dyes, and packaging, and produced 72 bags, each containing 24 bars of soap — enough to generate around \$240 in income.

Soap-making not only provides a source of livelihood but also helps women strengthen their confidence in handling money and managing small businesses. Production is temporarily paused while a more suitable

workspace is sought, but the group remains eager to resume as soon as possible. Our current Appeal is to urgently find premises for this thriving enterprise to continue.

Soap-making helps women strengthen confidence in managing small businesses

Literacy and Numeracy: Learning That Empowers

Literacy classes in Abeka and Uvira continue to make a real difference. Lessons are linked to everyday skills — including soap-making, tailoring, and farming — ensuring that learning is both relevant and immediately useful. For many women, this is their first opportunity to learn to read, write, and manage numbers, opening up new paths for independence and leadership.

Management: Strengthening Our Team

We are pleased to announce that Mme Victorine Mangapi has been appointed as Assistant to the Project Manager, Mme Issa Mado. This added support will help ensure that all activities continue to run smoothly and that each project receives the attention it deserves.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who continues to support these women's projects through funding, encouragement, or partnership. Together, we are helping women build sustainable livelihoods, one season at a time.





ESTABLISH A BUILDING FOR WOMEN'S INCOME GENERATION

In the villages of Abeka and Kikongo, women are working tirelessly to build better lives for their families despite facing extreme poverty, armed conflict, and disease. For over 12 years, QCP has provided small grants to a group of projects called Action for Women's Development (AWID). AWID helps these women to start vital income-generating activities such as soap-making, sewing and tailoring, vegetable growing, and juice production. Their skills and determination are remarkable - many create beautiful garments on treadle sewing machines without electricity, while others produce and sell handmade soap or grow food to feed their families.

The women need a space to bring all their work together under one safe roof

Now, the women's groups urgently need a shared space which will provide proper

facilities to bring all their work together under one safe roof. They have identified a plot of land with a small building on it which can be adapted to meet their needs. The women have a realistic plan to secure the land and begin work immediately—they just need £3,000 to make it happen.



Watch the video to learn more about this inspiring initiative:

bit.ly/QCPBuildingAppealVideo

Click here to donate:

bit.ly/QCPBuildingAppeal



DONATIONS

Projects cost over £40,000 a year. Please support us to address inequalities between global north and south. We can always do more and our partners are keen to develop the work.

Donate online

- Donate to the Building Appeal: bit.ly/QCPBuildingAppeal
- Donate to the Emergency Appeal: bit.ly/QCP-EmergencyAppeal
- Donate to our other projects: quakercongo.org.uk

Donate by post

- Mark donation with the name of the project, e.g. **Building Appeal** or **General Purpose**
- Cheques should be made out to: **Quaker Congo Partnership UK**
- Send your donation or CAF vouchers to the Treasurer at:
2 Hurst Royd, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8HY



CENTRE FOR EDUCATION, PEACE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT (CEPAP)

It's been a time of growth and challenge for the CEPAP projects. The ten-person team is working hard; led by their project leader Isaac Saidi.

The ongoing work is thriving: these include a network of clubs for friends of girls, (Clubs des Amis des filles) based in schools, and youth peace committees in the middle and high plateaux and in camps for refugees and displaced people. Both of these initiatives work to prevent and combat violence in particular gender-based violence. These networks are represented on a Youth Peace Council which meets regularly. Members of the CEPAP team also give counselling and psychological assistance often to women who have experienced domestic violence and one counsellor is based in the hospital in Abeka.

Education: Building Knowledge and Challenging Fear

Education is a key tool for improving the quality of life. Many children in DRC do not go to school or do not complete school especially girls and young women and orphans. There are other projects supported

by Quakers in DRC providing school fees and expenses. For example, African Great Lakes Consortium www.copgla.org

Through the work of CEPAP and the school-based clubs for girls we became aware of how few teachers are women: five out of 1000 in Fizi. Five young women have just completed their first year of teacher training at the Higher Pedagogical Institute in Uvira despite interruptions due to the war. They have recently started their second year and we wish them luck in their studies and hope that when qualified they will help educate and inspire many others. Their progress is a wonderful example of how targeted support can open doors and create ripples of positive change.





Working for peace: Turning the Tide advanced level training

We have been very fortunate to get funding from the QPSW relief grant programme and Network for Social change to run an advanced level training course for Turning the Tide. The Turning the Tide East Africa programme helps local activists to stand up for social justice and peace.

The ongoing unstable security situation delayed the training, but finally the workshop was held from 7th-13th October 2025 in Uvira with great success. This advanced training was for those who had gone through the introductory and basic training. 22 participants participated in the 7 days intensive residential training workshop. (14 men and 8 women, 12 from Fizi and 10 from

Uvira.) The overall goal was to develop a strong core team of experienced facilitators/trainers able to work together as nonviolent social change agents. The participants can now plan and deliver Turning the Tide training workshops and are skilled in interactive group facilitation and TTT-style training, and have confidence in handling mediation cases within their communities. There is now a core team of skilled TTT trainers able to deliver workshops within their respective communities who will introduce the TTT programme in different communities in Congo through training of more community groups and formation of nonviolence movements in DRC Congo. At the end of the workshop Fizi and Uvira groups both developed a 3-6 months action plan to deliver TTT workshops in their communities. At least 10 one day workshops will take place.

QCP ONLINE

Website: quakercongo.org.uk

email: quakercongo@gmail.com

YouTube: **Quaker Congo Partnership:** bit.ly/QCP-Youtube

Facebook: **Quaker Congo Partnership:** bit.ly/QCP-Facebook



Links to more information on TTT:

[quaker.org.uk/blog/engaging-with-conflict-a-toolkit-for-difficult-times](https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/engaging-with-conflict-a-toolkit-for-difficult-times)

[quaker.org.uk/action/peacebuilding-and-nonviolence/east-africa](https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/peacebuilding-and-nonviolence/east-africa)

Youth Environmental Project: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS A PILLAR OF PEACE

One outcome of the previous basic TTT training was the development by participants of an environmental project in the middle plateau. It is very ambitious with plans to plant many trees, mostly fruit trees, and to cultivate vegetables. We have not yet been able to raise the full \$8,143 however the work has started with clearing the ground and planting some seeds and saplings.

The aims are to educate young people about environmental protection, and to create community forestry activities in each village to reduce natural disasters. The overall objective is to call on young peacemakers, users, associations, indigenous people, environmentalists, hunters and fishermen to participate in the planning and sustainable management processes of our forest resources, which are in danger due to a lack of knowledge. They hope there will be a reduction of wood consumption by using improved fires for cooking.



This is an exciting proposal with long-term benefits; we are pleased that we have just been able to send £800 for more seeds and packaging but more is needed to make these plans a reality.

Challenging Prejudice and Violence Linked to Witchcraft Accusations

This CEPAP initiative addresses harmful superstitions. A workshop was held in Mboko in South Kivu on 18 August to tackle the growing problem of violence against people accused of witchcraft. The event brought together 50 participants from the local community to discuss the causes of such violence and ways to prevent it.

Tragically, 10 people were killed in South Kivu between early July and mid-August following accusations of witchcraft. The situation has worsened with the increased availability of firearms after the recent M23 incursions. People go to “faith healers” or prayer houses in search of cures — and, when healing does not occur, take revenge on those accused of causing illness through witchcraft. The workshop focused on dispelling these dangerous beliefs, promoting understanding,



and encouraging communities to turn away from violence and fear. Participants expressed a strong desire to continue the conversation and to raise awareness; to involve the police and courts and take practical action. Like most CEPAP projects there was strong support from local and civic authorities. The Head of the Tanganyika Sector, the political

and administrative authority, GEDEON MSABAH, delivered the opening remarks of the meeting, giving his support for CEPAP and QCP UK as a whole and asked that donors support various projects for the well-being of the population.

Isaac Saidi, the project lead for CEPAP, plays a key role in bringing organisations together in Fizi and Uvira. On 13th September CEPAP organised meetings with local development organisations to help them collaborate and get to know each other.

EMERGENCY APPEAL

🚨 Uvira on the Brink: Displacement and Fear in Eastern DRC 🚨

A major humanitarian crisis is unfolding in the eastern DRC following the capture of the city of Uvira by the M23 militia. Since the 10th of December 2025, hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled their homes in fear, leaving behind livelihoods, possessions and access to basic services in what is now one of the most serious emergencies in the region.

Uvira is a vital trading hub on the north-western shore of Lake Tanganyika, situated close to the border with Burundi. Its strategic location has long made it economically important, but that same position has now deepened the crisis. The border has been closed since the fighting intensified, cutting off crucial supplies of food and medicines on which the population depends.

The M23, widely believed to be backed by Rwanda, has been advancing steadily southwards through eastern DRC. Earlier in 2025, the group seized the cities of Goma and Bukavu. Hopes of stability were raised on 5 December, when the presidents of the DRC and Rwanda signed a peace agreement in Washington, endorsed by US President Donald Trump. However, the subsequent

capture of Uvira has shattered confidence in that deal and renewed fears of a prolonged conflict. American diplomats are now reportedly pressing the M23 to withdraw, but on the ground the situation remains volatile. On January 25th the M23 withdrew from Uvira to their previous frontline position south of Bukavu.

Fighting between the M23 and the Congolese army (FARDC), with local militias known as the Wazalengo, has continued around and beyond Uvira. Clashes have spread south to Makabola, forcing villagers to flee and causing local health centres to close, although the hospital in Abeka - that QCP supports - remains open for the moment. Gunfire is a constant threat, and civilians are caught in the middle of the violence.

QCP trustees are in close contact with Congolese colleagues, receiving daily updates from the ground. Recent reports from Uvira describe a fragile and fast-changing situation. Health facilities face shortages of medicines, worsened by displacement and tensions between patients and medical staff, as many people have no means to pay for treatment. While the number of those who fled towards the Fizi Territory or into Burundi is significant, it is likely that a substantial proportion of the population remains in Uvira. The announced withdrawal of M23 brought brief relief and hope, yet uncertainty persists, particularly as fighting resumed shortly afterwards when other armed groups entered the city. Many families remain displaced, relying on assurances of improved security, while concerns grow about accountability for those who supported the occupation.

People are dispersing in multiple directions in search of safety: towards Burundi (where the border is closed), into the Ubwari peninsula, north to Kalemie and Kazimia, or simply into the surrounding bush. Pastor Etabo estimates that around 600,000 people are displaced,

many living with little shelter, food or medical care.

The human cost is mounting. Civilians have been injured and killed in the fighting. Reports of attacks on women add to the climate of fear. Food has become scarce and prices have risen sharply.



Since January 29th, following the withdrawal of M23 from Uvira, food is now arriving by boat from Tanzania and elsewhere; the lake is open and fishing has resumed. Families who fled with only what they could carry are rapidly exhausting their savings. Health services are struggling or have shut down entirely, compounding the crisis. Some children have died from lack of medicine. After withdrawal, and before the FARDC restored some semblance of order, there was largescale looting and robbery by Wazalengo. Some of our colleagues were affected and the wife of the CEEACO accountant was injured by a stray bullet.

The immediate priority is to ensure that displaced families can access food, medical care and basic protection. For years, QCP has supported projects in and around Uvira and Abeka. Those long-standing relationships now form a lifeline in an emergency where international access is limited and conditions are changing by the hour. We are still able to send money to our trusted CEEACO colleagues via their mobile phones. Every contribution helps bring hope and relief to those caught in the midst of this humanitarian emergency.

Please donate to our Emergency Fund and help us to support the local people:
bit.ly/QCP-EmergencyAppeal

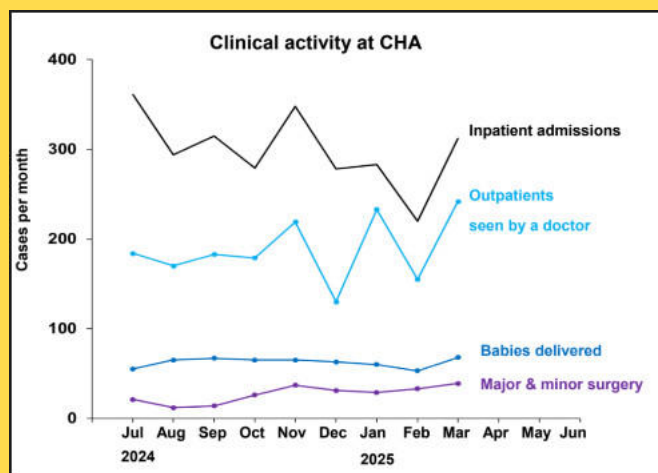
ABEKA HOSPITAL AND HEALTH

Caring for a Growing Community

At the heart of Abeka, the Abeka Hospital Centre (CHA) continues to provide vital medical care to thousands of people living in an area marked by conflict, poverty, and displacement. Despite limited resources and ongoing logistical challenges, the dedication of the hospital team ensures that patients continue to receive treatment and support.

Serving Nearly 300,000 People

In 2025, the Abeka health zone covers a population of 295,923 inhabitants and is served by Abeka hospital and two bigger hospitals. The Abeka hospital operates with a small but committed team of 18 nursing staff and 7 administrative and support staff, who work tirelessly to meet the community's medical needs.



The CHA is structured around four core departments - paediatrics, internal medicine, surgery, and obstetrics and gynaecology - with additional services in laboratory testing, pharmacy, and medical imaging. Each of these plays an essential role in responding to a wide range of illnesses and emergencies.

Improvements and Infrastructure

A recent achievement has been the installation of a new sheet metal roof on the paediatric building, providing safer and more durable shelter for young patients. This improvement marks an important step in

Access to reliable electricity remains one of the hospital's most pressing difficulties

upgrading the hospital's facilities and ensuring that children receive care in a secure and weatherproof environment.

Electricity: A Critical Challenge

Access to reliable electricity remains one of the hospital's most pressing difficulties. The current solar system is small, with ageing batteries that did not store enough power to run key equipment such as the hospital's 400W oxygen concentrator. To supplement this, a 6 kW diesel generator, purchased in 2009, provided power for about four hours each evening and during emergencies. However, the generator often broke down or fell silent due to fuel shortages, leaving the hospital without power for several days at a time. QCP has now sent money to buy a new generator and new batteries.

Nevertheless, the hospital still needs a more capable power supply. An unreliable supply severely limits what the medical team can do - particularly during surgery, childbirth, and critical care cases where oxygen and lighting are essential.

Despite these challenges, the staff at Abeka Hospital remain steadfast in their commitment to saving lives and caring for the most vulnerable. With continued support, we hope to strengthen their capacity - including investment in a reliable, sustainable power source - so that no patient is ever left without the care they need.

Can You Help?

We are raising funds to provide Abeka Hospital with a reliable electricity supply to power vital equipment such as oxygen concentrators and lighting in operating theatres.

Please consider donating today to support this life-saving work:

bit.ly/QCPGeneralFunds

Every contribution helps ensure that Abeka Hospital can keep its lights - and its hope - burning brightly.

WATER PROJECT

Clean Water Comes to Mukwezi: A Life-Saving Achievement

Access to safe, clean water is one of the simplest - yet most transformative - ways to improve health and save lives. In 2016, the Quaker Congo Partnership (QCP) brought clean water to the village of Abeka, resulting in a 95% reduction in deadly waterborne diseases.



However, people in the neighbouring village of Mukwezi were still struggling with preventable illnesses caused by unsafe water. Determined to extend this life-saving benefit, QCP raised funds and, in April 2025, completed the connection of clean water to Mukwezi.

For the first time, families in the village can now access safe drinking water - a milestone that will reduce illness, improve hygiene, and give children a healthier start in life.

A short video, compiled from clips sent from the Congo, celebrates this achievement and the generosity of all our donors.

Watch the video here:

bit.ly/QCPwater

Thank you to everyone who helped make clean water a reality for Mukwezi. Your support truly saves lives.

QUAKER CONGO PARTNERSHIP

2 Hurst Royd, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8HY

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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.

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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:

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Please notify the charity if you:

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Otherwise, please complete this form.

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Reference (inserted by QCP UK)

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

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

Payment to be made until further notice

Signed

Date ___ __ / ___ __ / ___ __

UPHOLD THE CONGO ONLINE

QCP regularly holds Quaker Meetings on Zoom with our colleagues in the Congo and people from other countries in Africa, Europe and the UK. We provide worshipful support and hear the latest news of the conflict in the DRC. The Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday and 4th Thursday of the month, at 2pm UK time. The next ones are on 26th February, 12th March, 26th March, etc. Please join us!

Zoom link: bit.ly/Uphold-Congo

Passcode: LONDONQS MEETING, number: 7095049008

