



December 2014

CongoAction NEWS



Welcome to the annual Congo Action newsletter, an opportunity to let you know about and see some of the work done by Congo Action in the DRC over the last year.

How are things in the Congo?

Pat and Martine (Congo Action trustees) visited our projects in November 2014 and reported on the following:

Education / Sponsorship News

The individual sponsorship programmes came to an end in July 14. While in the Congo Pat and Martine received the grateful thanks of the parents and guardians of the children who had been sponsored over the past 12 years for all the support they had received. In our turn, we would like to give our personal thanks to those of you who have decided to continue with their monthly contributions which is now going to support the school itself.

The “TUMANI LA WOTE” school (“Hope for All”) is educating over 320 children, and showing excellent standards of education; out of 35 students sent to take the end of primary school National test, 32 succeeded and are now in secondary school. With your financial help, Congo Action gives support to

the teachers and supply materials for the children. Pat and Martine met with the parents’ committee to organise the construction of more school toilets and order more school benches and tables, as the number of students is increasing.

The good news is that the school is officially registered by the Congolese state and we are hopeful that the teachers will soon receive a salary.

The Sewing Groups

Pat and Martine were warmly welcome by members of the sewing group which was started in January 2014. The lady students are demonstrating a real enthusiasm and determination. We believe that the success of this group is largely due to the fact that it is taught by two ladies who graduated from our 2012 project .On completion of the course, students are provided with a sewing machine, so that they can start earning money using their new skills.

Congo Action has had a request to start a similar project in another village in 2015. Janet, an ex-graduate student, has offered to run the new course. Judging by the ladies’ coloured outfits, the standards are very high. The project has contributed to an

Photos

Very top from left: New spring; sewing group; Andre Thijs and Raymond –the champions of the disabled– with Martine and Pat

Above right: Two local children

Above left: School children welcoming Martine and Pat

Below: Village children





improvement in the village's economy and self-help capability.

Meeting with the Villagers

Dancing villagers greeted Pat and Martine at Cidjo and Bunkivane which is near Bukavu, in dresses made by the sewing group — blue for one village and red for the other. This was a good opportunity to get feedback from group members about other projects supported by Congo Action including

- their community health fund
- the goat breeding project
- the micro loans made to them by Congo Action.

Pat and Martine were able to report on how solid and trusting the relationship that Congo Action has built with the villagers is. The villagers willingness to become self reliant, and their ability to use whatever help is offered is proof of the success of Congo Action's strategies. The villages also remarked on their strong group adhesion and how important their well laid out rules for membership were.

Water Projects

This year, Congo Action funded two new springs in Cidjo & Bunkivane villages, a great improvement for women and children as it saved them time and effort when collecting water. Each village has elected a committee who is responsible for the care and maintenance of the springs. Congo Action has received more requests for similar water projects to be considered for nearby villages...

Encouragement for the Disabled

Immense work is needed here to provide appliances and equipment for the disabled. Photos taken by Pat & Martine demonstrate

how a very basic piece of equipment can improve life for a disabled person.

Congo Action plans to continue working in partnership with Péré Andre Thijs who is the "Champion of the disabled" in Bukavu! (Please see our website for more news of disabled projects).

Back in Britain

JO-JO and BEN – our youngest donors.

Jo-Jo at the age of just five, helped Congo Action last year by fore-going his birthday presents and donating the money to Congo Action instead. As his dad is from Bukavu, both his parents were very willing to encourage his generosity.

Ben, his four year old brother, has followed in his brother's footsteps, by donating to Congo Action the £60 raised at his birthday party which was held in a yurt and a great success!

Thank you to Jo-Jo and Ben for your gift of money; You are indeed our youngest donors so far!

Please continue to visit our website and let us know if in future you like to receive this newsletter by email.

Best wishes for 2015

from all of us at Congo Action



Photos
Above left: Street scene
Above: Village child
Below from top:
 Janet, a sewing group graduate who will now teach a new group;
 Vital Kulimushi –our precious counterpart in the Congo;
 Disabled young man with a hand tricycle
Bottom left: Martine and Pat at a village reception

