

2019



CONGO INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT

TRANSFORMATIONAL

COMMUNITY | LEADERS | IMPACT

PERSEVERANCE

During this past year I found myself overwhelmed when thinking about life for my Congolese friends and colleagues. Not only have they had to live under the threat of violence and continued instability for the past several years, since August 2018, the deadly Ebola virus has infected thousands and traumatised many more. The mental image that so often comes to mind is that of a suffocating, giant wave, which is followed by another, ten times as large. The suffering and frustration keeps piling up, higher and higher. It is breathtaking in scope and heart-wrenching in its devastation.

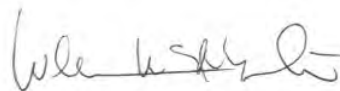
And yet, this isn't the full picture. True, the Ebola virus has ravaged eastern Congo mercilessly and the COVID-19 virus has yet to take hold. The killings perpetrated by militia groups have torn families and communities apart. There is no denying the hardship that so many Congolese face on a daily basis. Even our own Congo Initiative (CI) community has been affected.

I marvel at the **perseverance** of my Congolese colleagues in the face of so many obstacles.

It is simply stunning what they've accomplished, not just this past year, but ever since CI was first founded, 15 years ago!

Yes, in September 2020, CI turns 15. Now that's **perseverance**! Thanks to your love, compassion, and faithful support, CI continues to impact Congo in lasting ways. In the following pages, I hope you will catch a glimpse of the impact we have accomplished together.

Yours in God's grace,



Dr Bill McAllister
Chief Executive Officer
Congo Initiative UK

YOUR COMPASSION IN ACTION

Thanks to your support,
over **100,000** people were empowered through
education, training, counselling, peacebuilding, and
economic opportunities.



UNIVERSITÉ CHRÉTIENNE BILINGUE DU CONGO



292
total students

652
total alumni

74
new students

66
graduates

22
service learning
projects

19
work programme
sessions

THE NEXT 500

FUTURE LEADERS OF CONGO

Thanks to our NEXT 500 campaign supporters, every student was equipped with an education that goes beyond the classroom, providing hands-on learning that serves the common good. Whether on campus or in their communities, students are trained to think critically about challenges and how to identify solutions.

**READ OUR 2019 NEXT 500
IMPACT REPORT**

[futureleaders.congoinitiative.org/
impact-reports/](https://futureleaders.congoinitiative.org/impact-reports/)

Miché graduated from the Theology department with a degree in Biblical Counselling. He now serves as a pastor at a church in Boikene, a neighbourhood in Beni that has been devastated by recent violence.

"The way I was trained at Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo (UCBC), with the philosophy of 'being transformed to transform,' motivates and inspires me to go and serve my community so that those who are traumatised can be healed. The community we had at UCBC where we accompanied one another created an environment that transformed me and made me feel compassion for those who are suffering."



Anuarite, graduate of the Applied Sciences department and Computer Engineering programme, is now working as a database manager at EREST (Renewable Energy and Healthy Environment for All) in Beni.

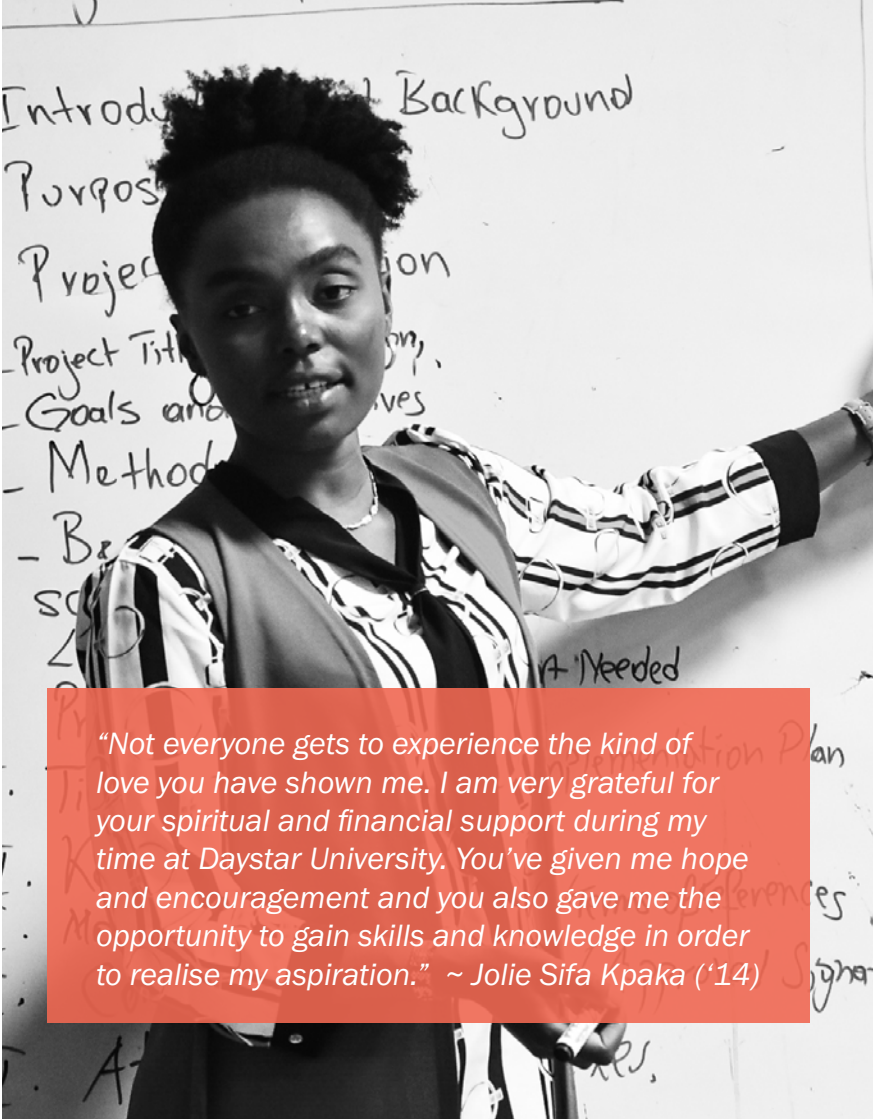
“Through UCBC, I learned that humility is the key to whatever you go on to do. I learned this from UCBC staff. I took this example of humility and incorporate it into my life and work today. I feel very hopeful that one day the vision of UCBC will be accomplished and I pray God uses me to expand this vision. I want to be a source of blessings to many and to use my knowledge to help all those who are in need of my service.”





Sophie Wambale ('20), speaks at a **Women's Voices (WV)** event about the important role women play in leadership. Sophie was elected as the president of Women's Voices, a student-led group that links mentors to female students to assist in developing specific skills and knowledge to enhance their professional and personal development. She follows last year's president Aimée Mapenzi who became the first woman elected to lead the student government during the 2019-20 academic year! Beyond encouraging women in leadership, WV collaborates with Bethesda Counselling Centre to introduce positive masculinity in local communities.

**39% of UCBC alumni
are women.**

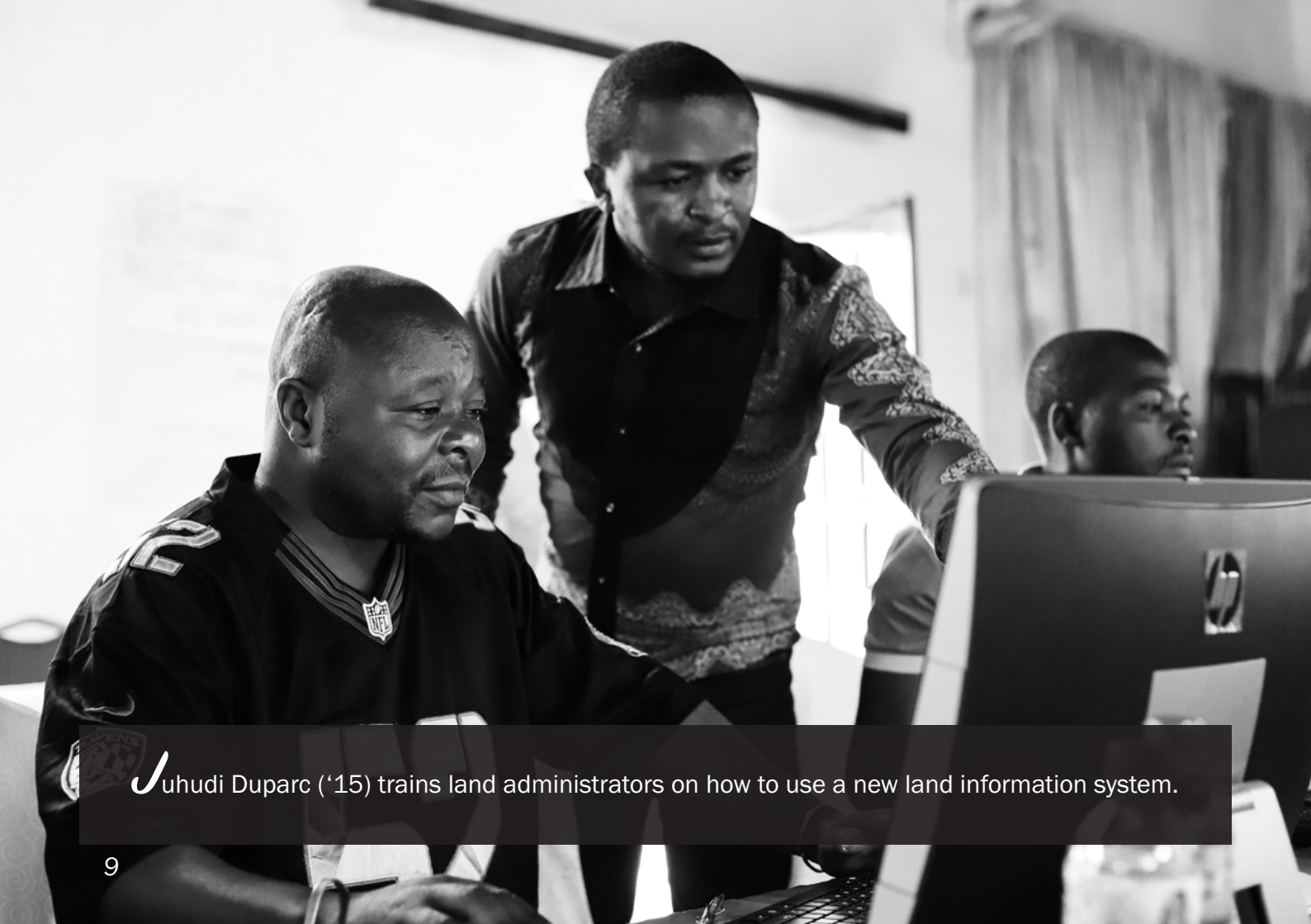


"Not everyone gets to experience the kind of love you have shown me. I am very grateful for your spiritual and financial support during my time at Daystar University. You've given me hope and encouragement and you also gave me the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge in order to realise my aspiration." ~ Jolie Sifa Kpaka ('14)

✓ Jolie Sifa Kpaka's ('14) journey began as a UCBC student and continues now as the first woman on the faculty to complete her MBA through the **Advanced Studies Programme (ASP)**. Jolie graduated from Daystar University in 2018.

Jolie joins 86 faculty members (resident and visiting) who work together to provide a transformative education for Congo's future leaders.

There are 7 faculty currently enrolled in the Advanced Studies Programme.



Juhudi Duparc ('15) trains land administrators on how to use a new land information system.

The Integrated Research Institute and its main project, **Sharing the Land (STL)**, joined a consortium known as “Ensemble Pour Beni” (Together for Beni) in 2018. The consortium engages local communities and authorities around issues of land conflict, and aims to bring about solutions that lead to lasting peace.

STL is the only local organisation in the consortium, providing technical expertise and training in geographic information systems (GIS) and land management. The other member organisations are the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Interpeace, A Search for Common Ground, World Vision, and the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO).

“We as the Beni community are proud of UCBC through its technical services offered through its Integrated Research Institute. UCBC has understood the challenges of our community and it is suggesting revolutionary solutions to the problem of land conflicts.” ~ Nyonyi Bwanakawa, Mayor of Beni

The Agribusiness Centre continues to provide unique opportunities, particularly for female students, to learn the knowledge and skills that will empower them as leaders in the agribusiness industry.

25 students (17 women) received specialised training in the coffee value chain, coffee analysis, and agricultural entrepreneurship.

46 students (45 women) interned with agriculture organisations and businesses.

A **coffee and cocoa laboratory** was established to serve as a practical learning space not only for students but potentially the wider community.

In collaboration with the INGO Welthungerhilfe (WHH), the Centre trained and assisted **35 members** of local farmer organisations (6 women and 29 men) in Lubero territory to develop agribusiness plans.

Breaking the Cycles of Poverty and Conflict

Congo's youngest learners and their families face an uphill battle. Violence and instability is a barrier to education and increases the financial burden on families. The Ebola outbreak only exacerbates the situation, creating another obstacle and source of fear and anxiety. Yet, education is the most valuable tool to break the cycles of poverty and conflict.

Parents desire to prioritise the future of their children through education, and children are passionate about learning. We work to create a safe learning environment so that even during times of uncertainty, children who otherwise would have had no hope of going to school can instead continue defining their future with education.

Over **300 children** received an education through our primary schools **Académie Bilingue du Congo** and **La Charité**.



A Voice for the Voiceless

Pierrot was inspired by an incident he witnessed when he was young. A neighbour girl was assaulted by a young man and she had no recourse because the young man's family had money and influence. Since that day, Pierrot wanted to stand up for justice and be a voice for the voiceless. But he encountered corruption and admittedly engaged within the broken justice system because that was what he was taught. But thanks to the **Justice Initiative**, he found a community that stands up against corruption and is committed to the same thing that started his journey in law: representing those who do not have a voice and those who are wrongfully imprisoned.

The Justice Initiative has benefitted over **300 people** through advanced training and support of legal professionals, and by defending the rights of those who cannot access legal representation due to lack of resources.



Cécile Kavira, co-founder of Grenaldi Food, is a Wakisha Entrepreneur. Created with her husband Arsene, Grenaldi is believed to be the first Congolese-owned company that produces and sells the first brand of chocolate made in Congo with locally-sourced cocoa.

Despite the climate of insecurity and violence, they join other emerging businesses in re-igniting entrepreneurship in a city still full of vibrant life and possibility.



Inspiring Entrepreneurship

Even in a tough environment, women and men desire to create innovative businesses, provide employment opportunities, and invest in their own communities to improve their livelihoods and the lives of others.



Wakisha provides financial and mentoring support to emerging entrepreneurs to scale high impact, innovative startups in eastern Congo. Close to **1000 people** have benefitted from Wakisha entrepreneurship and income-generating activities, including 83 people displaced in rural areas due to conflict.



Neema Congo is a resource and capacity-building programme that fosters entrepreneurship activity within the community and engages in robust monitoring and evaluation of small business ventures. Four projects benefitted **32 people**, including providing employment opportunities.



Through the **Centre for Holistic Family Development**, **12 women** are able to abstain from prostitution and receive vocational skills training so they can provide for their families and make a difference in the community.

A Journey Towards Hope and Healing

Thousands have been devastated by violence and the deadly Ebola virus. One of the most overlooked aspects of people and communities suffering from grief and trauma is the emotional, psychological, and social toll it takes on their well-being. **Bethesda Counselling Centre** has become one of the greatest assets to the people of Beni by responding through psychosocial support programmes.

For people like Kathembo (right), Bethesda offers the tools and the community to cope with grief and process trauma. Through counselling sessions, workshops, music, and more, Bethesda staff provide comfort and walk with women, men, and children on their journey towards hope and healing.

Highly respected by the community, Bethesda has also played a key role in reaching over **30,000 people** with Ebola prevention education.

338 girls benefitted from group counselling for those abused.

96 people participated in grief and trauma counselling sessions.

36 healthcare workers in charge of safe and dignified burials received training.

119 people attended the healing music programme.

57 people received one-on-one counselling.

41 widows/widowers benefitted from group counselling.

133 people attended a workshop on positive masculinity.



Kathembo is a survivor. But a survivor who has suffered unimaginable loss. In just one year, 20 friends and family members died from Ebola and another 10 at the hands of rebels.

Weighted with grief and struggling to get through each day, Kathembo turned to Bethesda for help. There, he found the comfort, counsel, and a community to help process his grief and trauma. Slowly, his internal wounds are beginning to heal.



Empowering Faith Groups

We empower the local Christian communities in conflict regions to become communities of holistic transformation, reconciliation, and to serve the most vulnerable.

148 Christian community leaders participated in leadership development trainings in Beni, Oicha, and Mangina.

1700 youth attended youth conferences promoting peace and positive change.

1 training centre was constructed to enable 8 vulnerable youth to work in carpentry and 20 women in sewing in the town of Mangina.

655 support groups (20,000 members) advocate for a lifestyle of reconciliation in their communities.

“The training on hermeneutics has been very helpful to my colleagues and me. Now I study and understand God’s word better than before. I can see the same in my colleagues’ ministry, particularly those who went through the training. Our ministry has been greatly improved through the marriage enrichment training as well. We now help many couples in the church restore their relationship. And, I was also able to pass on the development teachings to widows in one of our churches and started a [financial] savings cycle programme to support small scale businessmen/ women in our church.”

~ Pastor Kaposo, Training Participant

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PASSION FOR CONGO!

Congo Initiative is an envisioned community of Christ-centered Congolese leaders and global partners united for the transformation of lives and a flourishing Democratic Republic of Congo. Empowered by this vision, Congo Initiative educates ethical leaders who have integrity; invests in a sustainable vibrant Congolese society; and develops grassroots initiatives for peace, hope, and justice.

A full financial audit for Congo Initiative UK (CI-UK) is available upon request.

