

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Congo Initiative community, we are deeply grateful for your unwavering support and dedication to the staff and students at Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo (UCBC). Together, we accomplished some remarkable things, including the graduation of **75 UCBC students** in December. These are among the **419 individuals** who received a transformative education - one capable of creating lasting change in Congo.

I will never tire of sharing the story of Congo Initiative because it is a story of hope. It is a story that bears witness to God's love and peaceable Kingdom - a reminder that God remains ever present and moving in a world that often feels heavy and chaotic. It is a story of dedicated staff and passionate students who are being the light they want to see in Congo. And it's

a story about people like YOU, accompanying them through your friendship, generosity, and prayers. Thank you for standing with the rising generation.

In January, we celebrated the enrollment of more than 500 students at UCBC for the 2024 academic year, our highest enrollment since we launched the university in 2007. This is an affirmation that in one of the most challenging places in the world, we are creating something new, rooted in the context, and led by the indigenous leaders.

You are part of this solution and we will continue equipping and investing in these young Congolese only with your support and with others like you. **We hope you will join us again this year as together we invest in their hopes and dreams.**

Justin Hubbard
Congo Initiative USA Executive Director



419
STUDENTS



82
NEW GRADUATES



937
ALUMNI SERVING
THEIR COMMUNITIES



2023 GRADUATES





“We have dreams, visions, and goals to achieve. We have crowns to win that sometimes seem elusive and hopeless to reach. Every day, someone or something seems to tell us, ‘Stop dreaming, stop trying; it’s too difficult for you; it’s not meant for us.’ My message today is emphatic, ‘Yes, we can.’ Whatever the challenges and obstacles, ‘Yes, you can!’

...Remember, your feet cannot go where your mind and faith have not gone first. So, never give up. Be all that God wants you to be.”

Dr. David Kasali

President and Co-Founder



Priscille is the first woman in her family to attend university and appreciates that UCBC promotes women’s education, “UCBC is a university that pushes women to have confidence and not underestimate themselves so that they can impact their communities. UCBC wants women to feel empowered to make decisions and pushes women to develop through the various activities that the institution provides.” She wants girls and women in Congo to know, “we have potential in us and we should have confidence in ourselves that we can positively impact our communities and our beloved Democratic Republic of Congo.”

“Congratulations to you, on your achievements and for choosing UCBC for your studies. Today is the crowning moment of your efforts to move into professional life. Our congratulations also go to parents, friends, and all faculty members and staff, heroes behind the curtains, thanks to whom you have made it thus far. It is now time to live what you have received from us, assured of our support, as much as possible.

We wish everyone a happy celebration! TukoPamoja!”

Dr. Honoré Bunduki

UCBC Rector



Bibuya “In just four years, my life drastically changed during my time at UCBC in the Computer Engineering department. Initially drawn by a passion for software development, UCBC revealed to me a broader purpose: solving real-world problems at local, national, and global levels, with software development as one of the tools. Now, I am proud to be an agent of transformation, passionate to make a positive impact wherever my path takes me.”



Ornella is a third year UCBC student studying communications. She hopes to become a journalist and use her skills to restore peace in her hometown of Bunia. Her experiences at UCBC have shaped her as a person. “Being at UCBC has helped me to be open and think out of the box. Before that, I was closed to myself and afraid to express what I felt in front of an audience.” Through her classes, her work with UCBC’s radio broadcasts, and time spent working with others in groups, Ornella has discovered more about herself. Now she knows she is a changemaker. “I will be a changemaker wherever I work...promoting women is a great opportunity to develop a community because a transformed woman is a great agent of change for a nation.”

Potent is a second year Agribusiness student at UCBC. His dream is to one day work on food security in the DRC. Potient notes that, “the community life, wonderful teaching, smart teachers, and exceptional activities,” are what makes UCBC special. “Every moment on campus is a perfect opportunity to learn something precious for life...UCBC is not just a university, it is a transformative system for producing leaders.”



ADVANCING EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

In July 2023, UCBC unveiled two updated computer labs on campus which house 55 new computers and provide faster, more reliable internet. Access to consistent and quality technology has remained difficult in Congo and these computer labs are a huge gain for the students, faculty, and staff. The computers are part of a major technology upgrade funded by a grant from First Fruit Inc., a longtime CI partner rooted in faith and dedicated to supporting leaders and organizations in the Majority World. Before receiving this grant, UCBC had only 10 outdated computers and 20 mini computers for the entire student body to use.





ALUMNI

In October 2023, several UCBC alumni gathered at an event in Bunia. The event was part of a series of visits organized by the UCBC Development Office to strengthen alumni relations and meet with potential partners. Community is an important part of the UCBC experience and these events help strengthen the bond of UCBC alumni living and working throughout DRC.



Marc "I would not be where I am today if not for UCBC. UCBC has transformed me and many others. It has inspired a new vision, infused in us enduring values, and equipped us to be agents of change...not only in our country, but our continent and even the world. I am evidence of the new thing God is doing."

Busike is a UCBC Agribusiness alumna. "My journey at UCBC has been shaped by community life and service. UCBC, through its various activities - academics, chapel, mentoring, service learning, work-program, women's voices - helped me know and develop myself better. I also learned more about good resources, the environment, relationships, and time management. UCBC is a true transformative machine that has helped me acquire values, critical thinking, and the spirit of entrepreneurship. Today, I am able to create my own company to solve some problems in my community and maintain myself [well] in the business world. For those who want to make positive changes in their academic and professional lives, UCBC is the right choice."



ADVANCED STUDIES PROGRAM

19 UCBC faculty and staff members are fully financially supported for their Masters or PhD programs this year. This is the largest cohort we have ever had at one time participating in the Advanced Studies Program. With this progress, we are on target to have 22 total graduates by the end of 2025 and 29 by the end of 2026!

Viviane Bibuya Bwirabuli is pursuing a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership at Africa International University in Nairobi.

350+

children are receiving a primary education at ABC and LCB in 2023. 49% of these students are girls.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RELIEF FOR THE INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Over 2,600 families who are internally displaced were beneficiaries of relief materials and counseling services from Congo Initiative's Bethesda Counseling Center and Center for Church Renewal and Global Mission.



JUSTICE INITIATIVE

In March 2023, the Justice Initiative hosted its 6th International Justice Conference at UCBC. At least **120 law students and legal professionals (including 40 women)** attended the International Justice Conference in March 2023. An estimated 1,400 listeners tuned in to sessions by radio and 1,000 tuned in on facebook live.



In October 2023, UCBC law professor, Sandra Nyandulu, along with two law students (Grace, center; Freddy, right) attended the iPeace Great Lakes Regional Training in Kigali. The annual conference brings together law professionals and students from DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya, and focuses on human rights and international humanitarian law.



NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

Natural Resource Governance creates a more equitable land management system, especially for women and youth. The team hosts community dialogue and mediation workshops in various regions of the country. Over **8,000 people** participated in workshops in Nyunzu Territory in 2022-2023! Of that number, **4,691 were women**. It's estimated that over **500 women's land rights** were secured by being digitally mapped through this process.

HOLISTIC FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The construction on the new Holistic Family Development Center building was completed in April 2023. A joyful dedication ceremony was held on the campus to commemorate the occasion. UCBC Rector, Honoré Bunduki, was at the celebration and took part in the tree planting – a UCBC tradition to mark something new.

Over 250 women and children benefit from vocational training and education at HFD.



72

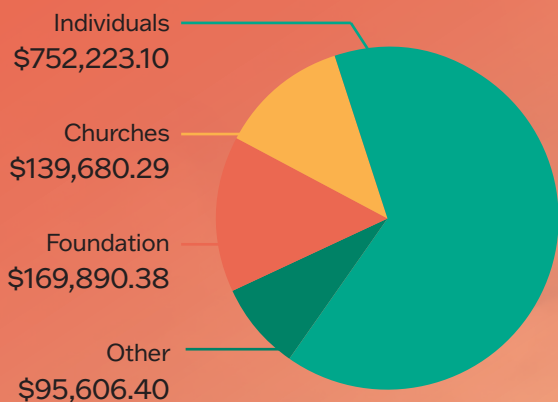
people have been served by pro-bono services through CI's Justice Initiative in the last six months.



2023 FUNDING SUMMARY

Generous partners gave one-time gifts, monthly gifts, and multi-year commitments to equip Congo's rising generation and make an impact beyond the campus through community engagement initiatives.

Here is a snapshot of our funding in 2023:



TOTAL FUNDING \$1,157,400.17

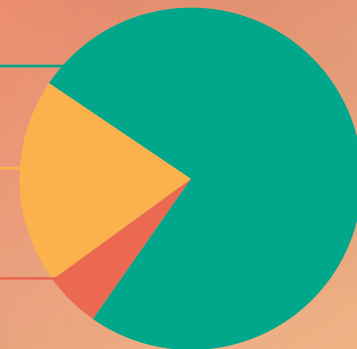
CONGO INITIATIVE USA'S IMPACT

In 2023, we once again invested most of our resources in our programs. We continue to play a instrumental role in ensuring students receive a transformative education.

Program Services
\$903,861.27 (75%)

Support Services
\$232,097.90 (19%)

Fundraising
\$62,915.68 (5%)



TOTAL 2023 EXPENSES* \$1,198,874.85

* Expenses exceed funding due to roll-over funds from previous year. Complete financials will be available on our website soon, pending 990 submission and financial audit.

LOOKING AHEAD 1,000 AND COUNTING

This report was produced while tensions in eastern Congo continue to escalate. As a result, more than 250,000 people have been displaced in the early months of 2024, adding to the nearly 7 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the country, most in the east. There is reason to despair, yet the staff, students, and alumni at CI-UCBC do not. They move forward with steadfast hope and resolve.

They receive encouragement through Congo Initiative, a community of partners, churches, foundations, and individuals like you, standing in solidarity with them as they chart a new path towards a flourishing Congo. This year, we will celebrate a significant milestone in our story - 1,000 graduates from UCBC. You are part of this milestone and ongoing narrative of hope and transformation in the lives of the rising generation.

As we celebrate, we also look ahead to the future with faith and hope in Christ, who has taught us how to pray, love, and care for one another, particularly those experiencing oppression, violence, and hardship.

Because of you and other members of our global community, we are reminded we are not alone and we

are given courage to continue our work and mission amidst adversity and instability. Now more than ever, we believe we are positioned to meet the emerging needs and opportunities of a growing university - both in equipping students and serving the community. Indeed, God continues to be faithful in provision and we are eager to invest in our programs, staff, infrastructure, and educational resources so we can rise and respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Congo.

By God's grace, we will continue to accompany the rising generation as they lead change to build thriving and just communities. Asante Sana ("thank you very much") for your partnership with us. For providing pathways of hope, healing, and renewal. For your support and prayers. **And for standing with the people of Congo.**

Tuko Pamoja,
The Congo Initiative Team



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