



Annual Report
2024

Dear Friends of Congo Initiative,

This past year, we celebrated a **remarkable milestone—1,000 UCBC graduates**. These men and women are the heart of our mission, equipped with knowledge, skills, transformed minds, and hearts for service. As educators, journalists, pastors, entrepreneurs, and community leaders, they are driving change, breaking down barriers, and shaping a more peaceful and flourishing Congo.

Your unwavering support has made this possible. **Because of you**, students were equipped to serve their communities, women gained access to education and leadership training, and families affected by conflict have received critical care and counselling. Primary students benefitted from safe learning environments. Together, and even in the face of uncertainty, we are building a movement of transformation, where peace and flourishing become the norm.

This year has been a powerful testament to faith and community resilience. Our 2024 Annual Report reflects the progress we made together. You walked alongside courageous and dedicated staff to ensure a holistic education was delivered. Yet, even as we celebrate, we cannot ignore the escalating conflict in eastern Congo and the challenges facing the communities we serve. Thousands of families have been displaced, and hardship continues to grow - worsened by shifts in humanitarian aid and development.

Even in a world that pushes us towards despair, **our hope remains unshaken—not in circumstances, but in Christ, in the resilience of our people, and in the power of education to bring lasting change**. Now more than ever, Congo Initiative's mission is critical. As many organisations are forced to shut down programmes due to instability and cuts in international funding, those in need are looking for help. **We are still here.**

As you read this report, we invite you to celebrate what has been accomplished, stand with us in prayer and solidarity, and continue partnering with us as we seek to reflect light in a world longing for hope. Together, we can live out our shared hope, equip leaders, and build a future rooted in justice and peace.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'David McAllister'.

David McAllister MBE
CEO, Congo Initiative

CELEBRATING 1,000

**493**UCBC students
2024 school year**45%**Female
Ratio 222F/271M**94**

2024 Graduates

1,048

Total Alumni

"UCBC led me to believe in the potential of women. Now I am capable and able to deal with life's challenges. After graduation, I plan to work as a journalist and continue with my master studies."

Ismael Lauriane



Advanced Studies Programme

In 2024, 8 UCBC staff members completed their graduate or doctoral programmes, bringing the total to 22 advanced degrees through ASP. An additional 18 staff members are currently enrolled in programmes around the globe and we are on track to reach our 25 x 25 goal - 25 graduates by 2025.



Mapamboli Ebuta Bénie, Master in Mechanical Engineering from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya



"I am deeply grateful and proud to have belonged to UCBC, a prestigious institution that trained me to become a role model for our community. I acquired the technological skills needed to solve complex problems and contribute to social progress. UCBC taught me to be a critical and innovative thinker, to work in a team, and to communicate effectively. Thanks to UCBC, I am ready to apply my knowledge for the good of our community. UCBC is much more than a place of study; it is a home, a family. It is a centre of excellence that offers quality training, essential for the progress of our community."

Johnson Hangi Makwera



Primary And Secondary Education

629

Total Students



Académie Bilingue du Congo

223 students
(45% female)

La Charité Bilingue du Congo

406 students
(53% female)

Adelphine Angemito Acira became the first woman to join the Management Committee of UCBC. Her new title is Gender Equity Advocate. With expertise focused on the promotion of gender equity and positive masculinity, her commitment and experience will help strengthen academic and social initiatives within the Management Committee.

**EDUCATION**

Church Renewal And Global Mission

The Centre for Church Renewal and Global Mission (CRGM) is one of UCBC's Community Engagement Initiatives, which works to train leaders, pastors, and agents of change capable of providing lasting solutions to the problems of Congolese society.

Its programmes not only focus on direct interventions to improve the lives of local communities, but also address their spiritual development.

CRGM is a key player in the landscape of positive change, community engagement, and strengthening community resilience.

227

Pastors and their spouses were trained in Beni, Oicha and Mangina

3,050

Youth attended youth conferences



Healing Music Session

Bethesda Counselling Centre

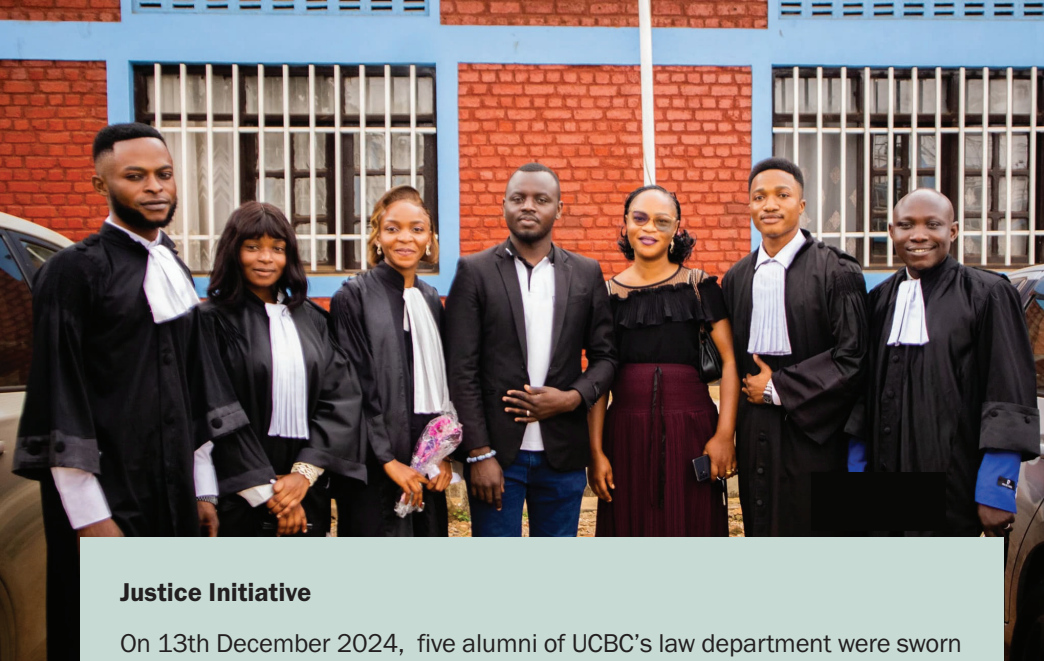
Healing Music Participants: 193 children, 625 adults

Counselling: 77 Individuals

Éspace Capacité: 12 families with children with special needs

Bethesda Counselling Centre is committed to providing services for the large number of Internally Displaced People (IDP) in the area.

Group Counselling: 6,581
Individual Counselling: 709
Recreation for Kids: 972



Justice Initiative

On 13th December 2024, five alumni of UCBC's law department were sworn in as lawyers at the Beni High Court. The ceremony not only marks the beginning of promising new careers for these women and men, but is also a testament to UCBC's commitment to academic excellence and preparing students for life after graduation.

Law Students



24

Law Students



45%

Female
Ratio 13F/11M

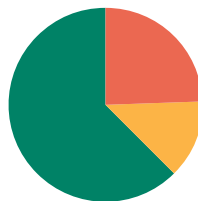


5

Graduates

Pro-bono Services

933 beneficiaries across
all three areas in 2024



Beni: 229

Butembo: 123

Bunia: 581

UCBC's entrepreneurship programmes helped train 14 coaches, 238 entrepreneurs, and 100 additional members of the community in best practices in business.



Women In Law "Women's participation in the electoral process" March 2024 Women in Law conference

"I was edified by the presentation made by the speakers. I've realised that women underestimate themselves, they think they're incapable. But this conference has made me more aware that women are also capable, and have something to contribute to society. They must also take an interest in political affairs."

Espérance, UCBC second year Law Student



NYOTA

In collaboration with Impact Now, UCBC launched the NYOTA Leadership programme for women in the autumn. NYOTA, meaning 'star' in Swahili, is designed to inspire and equip women with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to lead in their communities and beyond. This new initiative empowers women to become change-makers, leaders, and advocates for positive change, offering mentorship, training, and support tailored to their needs. NYOTA graduated its first cohort of 24 women in December.

"NYOTA is much more than just a training programme for me; it is a true catalyst for change that has transformed my vision of leadership in a context of permanent crisis. Thanks to its innovative approaches in transformative leadership, I have been able to strengthen my autonomy and build strong networks, thus enabling the implementation of concrete initiatives for the benefit of my community. In an environment marked by war, violence and systematic violations of human rights, women leaders, driven by a resilient vision and a strong commitment, play a vital role in inspiring and mobilising their communities to overcome adversity." *Linda, 2024 NYOTA Graduate*



Vocational Training

At the Holistic Family Development Centre (HFD), incredible strides are being made to empower women through education and skill-building. By offering vocational and literacy training, women are equipped with the tools they need to create better futures for themselves and their families. In 2024, 52 women were equipped through HFD's vocational and literacy training. These programmes not only help women gain valuable skills, but also open doors to economic independence, leadership, and opportunity.

**Mental Health/
Counselling**

36

Female victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence received care and trauma counselling

42

Female widows received group counselling



Development Team

In 2024, UCBC formed its first formal Development Office team with the purpose of strengthening partnership development, diversifying funding sources, and improving communications and marketing. It is a significant step towards strengthening sustainability and positioning UCBC for growth in one of the most challenging contexts. Through its efforts the Development Team was able to secure £1.3 million in project funding for UCBC.



Solar Project - Completed in 2024

The solar project at UCBC was completed in 2024. The campus now has at least 8 hours of sustainable power daily. The project included the installation of solar panels and a bank of batteries with a 94 kWh storage capacity. It is anticipated that during the sunny summer months, the batteries will be able to provide 24 hours of energy.



WASH Project - Phase One Completed in 2024

- Facilities in the UCBC Administration Building were upgraded and expanded.
- Facilities in the UCBC Community Centre were made operational by constructing a septic system.
- The UCBC student toilet block was upgraded and expanded.
- Each location now has hand-washing facilities, hand dryers, and dustbins.

A large water tank capacity of 10,000 litres was also installed on the UCBC campus. This strategic infrastructure project ensures a continuous supply of drinking water for UCBC and the local community. A mini water treatment plant also installed at UCBC provides clean water at an affordable price to the entire community of Beni. This eco-friendly system uses solar power and reusable jerry cans.



Under Phase One, a local trainer also delivered instruction to the female participants of the Holistic Family Development (HFD) vocational training programme, on how to sew reusable menstrual hygiene pads. Lack of information or misinformation, coupled with lack of supplies, are primary barriers to girls' and young women's educational attainment. The women of HFD created 350 pad kits which were distributed, along with educational materials, to women and girls over age 12 at UCBC and the two primary schools.



Congo Initiative-UK
7 Irwin Place
Donaghcloney
Co. Armagh
BT66 7LN
Northern Ireland
contact.uk@congoinitiative.org
CI-UK NIC: 107268
www.congoinitiative.org

