



# 20 Years of Transformation:

Congo Initiative 2005-2025

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## Welcome

For twenty years, Congo Initiative has walked alongside communities in Congo with a simple but powerful belief: true transformation begins with people shaping their own future. Over these two decades, we've witnessed change that can't always be captured in reports or numbers—change found in courage, faith, creativity, resilience, and everyday acts of hope.

This photo book aims to tell that story.

Each image invites you into moments where hope and transformation is taking root: students discovering their purpose, families building a more stable future, leaders choosing peace over fear, and a community imagining new possibilities together. These photos don't just document our history—they show the faces and places that make this work real. These are the lives you have touched and impacted.

As you turn these pages, we hope you see the heartbeat of Congo Initiative: locally led leadership, education that serves the whole community, unshakeable faith, and a vision of a flourishing Congo shaped by its own people. Thank you for standing with us, investing in this journey, and believing in what is possible.

*Here's to twenty years of impact—and to the future we are creating together.*



## Messages From Our Founders

As we look back over these twenty years, my heart is filled with deep gratitude and awe. When we first envisioned Congo Initiative—Christian Bilingual University of Congo (CI-UCBC), all we carried was a vision, a calling, and a profound conviction that God could bring hope and transformation to the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through faithful men and women working together. What began as a small seed has grown into a vibrant movement—forming leaders, strengthening families, renewing communities, and revealing the power of God’s grace through both adversity and extraordinary breakthroughs.

These photos capture more than memories; they recount a story of resilience, collaboration, sacrifice, hard work, tears, and joy. They remind us that this work has always been bigger than any one individual. It is the story of students and staff; of men, women, and children who refused to surrender their hope; of churches, partners, and friends around the world; and of countless people in Beni and across Congo who rallied behind a vision and believed a new future was possible.

As we celebrate twenty years, we honor God’s guiding hand and the many lives that have shaped this journey. And we look ahead with renewed hope, trusting that the next chapter will bring even greater impact for the glory of God and the flourishing of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

So, let us rise and build... *Tuko Pamoja!* We are together... doing a new thing!

### **David M. Kasali, PhD**

Co-Founder and President Emeritus

### **Kaswera Kasali, PhD**

Co-Founder and Director of Holistic Family Development

As I reflect on 20 years of Congo Initiative, I am filled with deep gratitude and gladness for having been invited by dear friends—Congoese visionaries—to accompany them in their pursuit of transformation and hope for one of the most disenfranchised, marginalized, and conflict-affected places in the world. I am astonished not only that CI and our flagship program, the Christian Bilingual University of Congo, have survived the past two decades, but that they have flourished. They stand resolute in the conviction that change can—and will—happen when, with God’s help, faithful people refuse despair and instead persevere with courageous resolve toward a future that can only be described as the Kingdom of God among us. What remarkable, audacious hope animates Congo Initiative!

I am reminded of the words of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: “The real journey from captivity to freedom is not a physical one. It is a mental, moral, and spiritual journey.” That journey is long, arduous, and demanding. It lasts as long as it takes for a people to cultivate the practices that allow them—and their children—to claim responsibility for their future. It calls for virtue, courage, and discipline. For a people are not formed only by the removal of tyranny or escape from structural evil; they are shaped equally by their own transformation—an active commitment to being formed, through rigorous and life-giving education, into new habits of mind and heart.

This is the heart of Congo Initiative. And it is a vision we can only pursue together. With heartfelt gratitude to all who join and journey with us!

### **Paul Robinson, PhD**

Co-Founder

# A NEW THING

*Isaiah 43:18-19*

Do not remember the former things  
or consider the things of old.

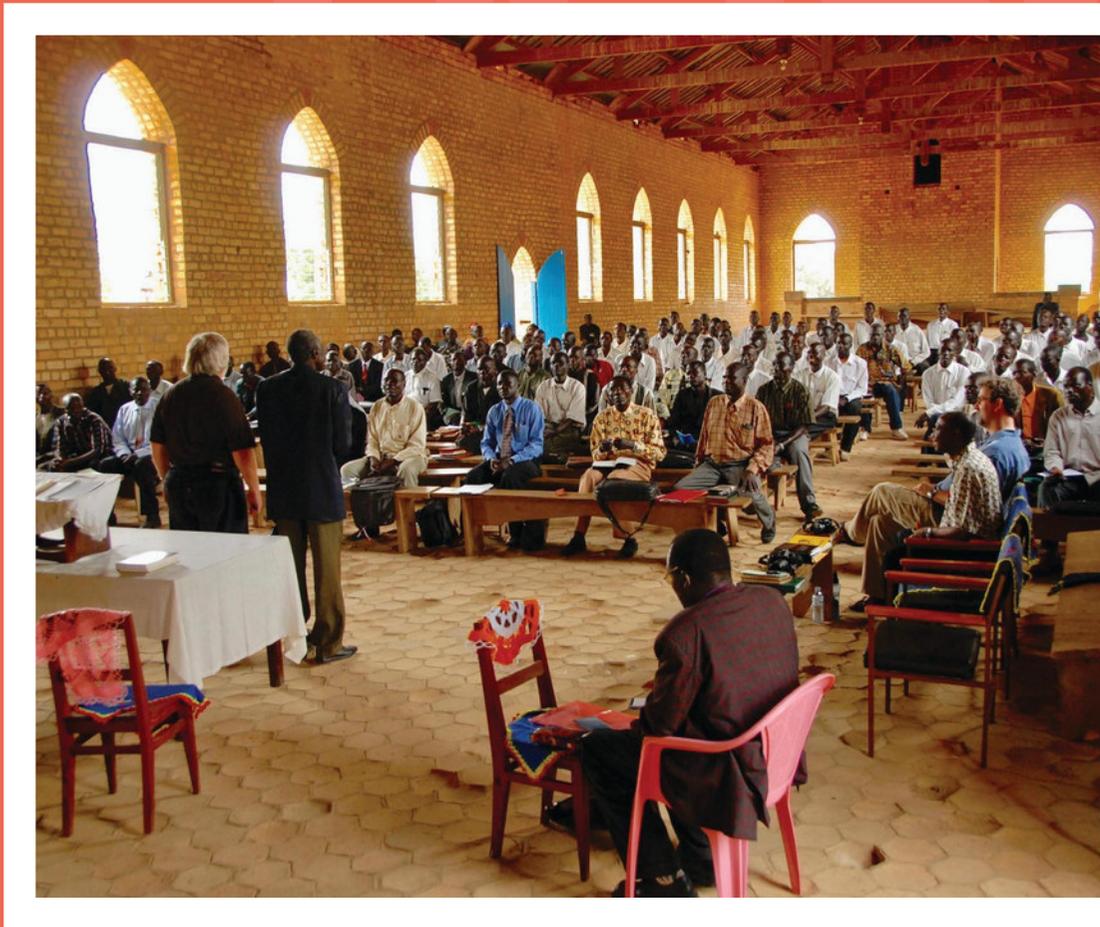
I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth;  
do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.



## CHAPTER 1

# BEGINNINGS



*The Vision that Sparked a*  
**MOVEMENT**





*Early Years*

# PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE



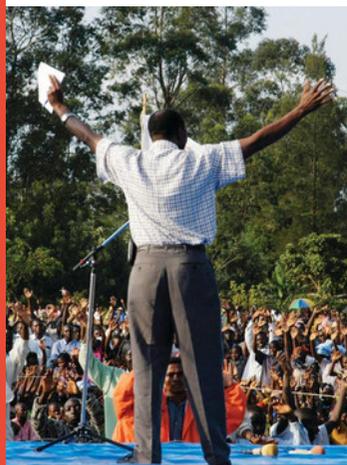


# Timeline

## OUR JOURNEY

### 2003

David and Kaswera Kasali, along with friends from the US, begin leading pastor workshops through the Church Renewal program. This would lay the foundation for the Congo Initiative.



### 2007

Congo Initiative launches its flagship program, Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo (UCBC), a four-year university with triadic training: academic excellence, a work program, and service-learning. Eighty-five students enrolled in the first year.



### 2005

The Kasalis gathered with Congolese leaders, pastors, and thinkers for three days and worked to understand what had happened to their country. They listened to stories of cultural fragmentation, exploitation, anger, suffering, and grief, mixed with those of heroic intervention, care, and compassion. From this, Congo Initiative was born — a vision anchored in impassioned lament, contextual examination, indigenous ownership, and the extraordinary vision of women and men with a personal commitment to a transformed future. It is a process, continuously reengaged and updated, that guides and informs CI's ethos and work.



The Kasalis, along with partners from the US—individuals, churches, and foundations—form and establish Congo Initiative USA as a nonprofit organization.



## 2010–2015

Multiple centers, now known as CI-UCBC community engagement initiatives, now operate and respond to local needs.

- Holistic Family Development and La Charité Bilingue du Congo
- Justice Initiative
- ABC Primary School
- Sharing the Land (now known as Natural Resource Governance)
- Bethesda Counseling Center



## 2011

UCBC holds its first graduation ceremony.

## 2016

We launch the Advanced Studies Program (ASP) to equip staff and alumni with Master's/PhDs and strengthen our faculty.



## 2017

UCBC celebrates 10 years.



## 2018

Ebola outbreak and insecurity relocate UCBC activities to a property in the center of Beni.



Dr. Honoré Bunduki was installed as rector of UCBC.

## 2020

COVID pandemic hits the globe, disrupting programs for a period of time.



## 2024

We celebrate a remarkable milestone—UCBC's 1,000 graduates.



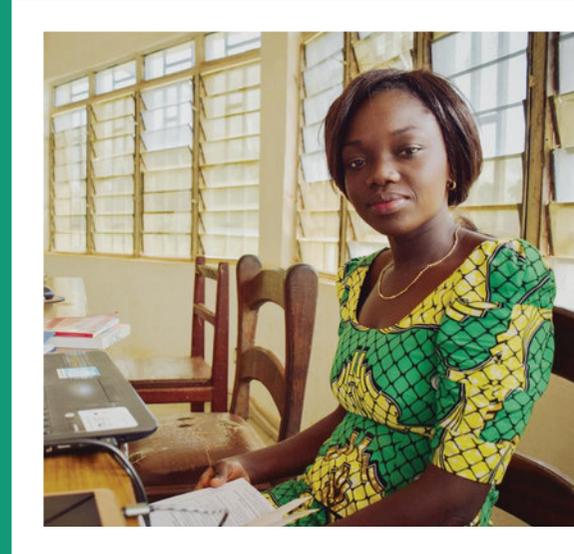
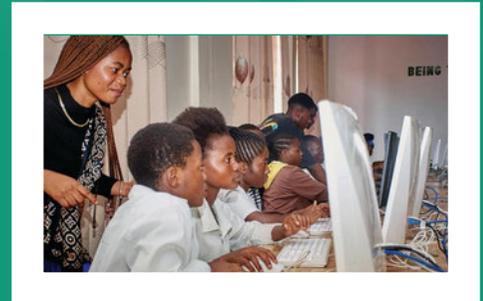
## 2025

Congo Initiative USA celebrates 20th anniversary; UCBC holds its 15th graduation; Dr. David Kasali receives the honor of President Emeritus.



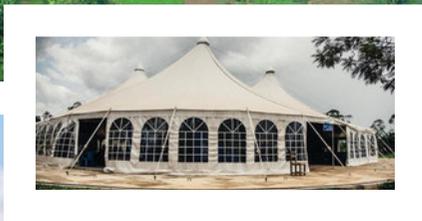
## CHAPTER 2

# TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION



*Creating Spaces of*  
**TRANSFORMATION**





*Equipping*  
**CHANGEMAKERS**





**BEING TRANSFORMED TO TRANSFORM...**



**HOLISTIC EDUCATION | UNSHAKEABLE FAITH | RADICAL HOPE | SERVICE-CENTERED LEADERSHIP**

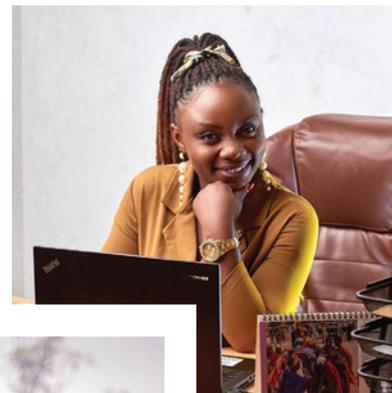
*Living Out Faith in*  
**COMMUNITY**





*Breaking*  
**BARRIERS**

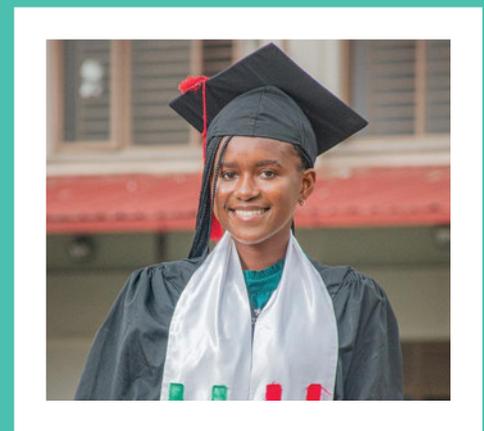
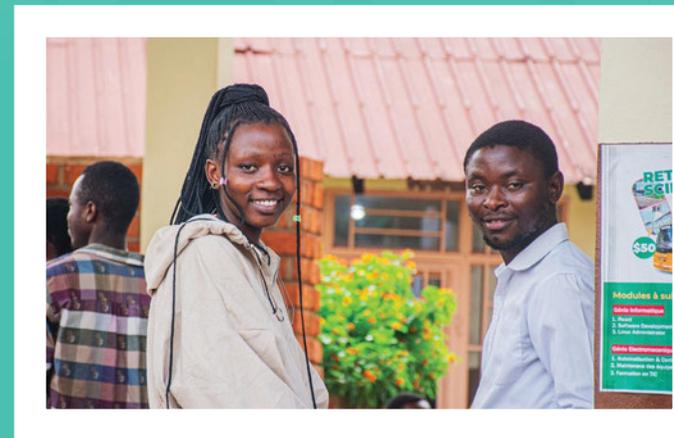




AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICES  
PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY  
ADVANCING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

## CHAPTER 3

# FACES OF CHANGE



# The Heart of UCBC

“

UCBC offered me a diverse learning environment where students are exposed to different cultures, nationalities, and perspectives. This forced me to adopt an open and tolerant mindset, develop my intercultural sensitivity, and interact with people from different backgrounds.



Laetitia Ntumba '13

”



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### From Trauma to Transformation

**Archip Lobo '14** faced immeasurable trauma as a young man, witnessing atrocities committed by an armed group against his family members. Archip was greatly affected by these tragedies, and they catalyzed his passion to seek the healing and renewal of his country. He pressed on with resilience and found hope by being equipped to “be the change” in Congo through his studies and engagement with the community at UCBC. He shares, “I was lost when I was young. I didn’t have any hope for the future that the DRC could change one day. But when I came to UCBC, I started to have hope, new skills, and I can see that the DRC can change and

we can develop this country...[To do so], we need strong leaders who are transformed [themselves] and are not corrupted.”

Archip studied organizational communication at UCBC and graduated in 2014. He is now the co-founder of Nuru, a scaling solar mini grid company in Congo. With less than 20% of the DRC’s population having access to energy, Nuru’s innovative approach aims at connecting millions to power. Nuru launched Congo’s first mini grid in 2017 and now owns a 1.3 MW solar hybrid site in Goma, the largest such site in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2022, Nuru won the Africa Solar

Industry Association’s (AFSIA) “Mini-grid Project of the Year” award. In 2023, Nuru secured \$40 million to expand its metrogrids in eastern Congo and is collaborating with UCBC to update the campus solar panel system, ensuring students have access to reliable and sustainable power as they pursue their education.



Archip Lobo '14

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### Empowering Change

**Adelphine Angemito '13**, Gender Equity and Advocacy Officer at UCBC, is focused on empowering women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to change the world. Based in Beni – a region deeply affected by a decade of conflict – Adelphine works at the intersection of education, faith, and gender equality.

She explains that in conflict zones, “women are the most affected. There are so many difficulties that they are going through but in general they are facing sexual and gender-based violence.” Though such violence has long shadowed life in Beni, Adelphine responds not with hopelessness, but with unwavering resolve.

She looks at empowerment not as something that you give to someone, but as something you help others discover in themselves. This philosophy shapes her efforts to close the gender gap in a society where women have historically been left behind. By helping women see their own potential, she believes they can redefine leadership and reshape communities.

Her vision for the DRC is one where men and women compete and collaborate on equal footing. “My greatest hope is to see women very engaged in work ... in leadership positions,” she said, stressing the importance of self-empowerment.

For Adelphine, the fight for equality is also a call to courage. “We [women] can’t continue to look at ourselves as vulnerable,” she insists. “It’s time to leave our comfort zone, to see beyond our limit and to say, I can do it.”

Her conviction is simple but profound: when women choose to believe in their own strength, they don’t just change their own lives, they change the world.



**Adelphine Angemito '13**

“

When you see challenges, you identify them, and then ask, ‘What can I do to address these problems?’ This is something I learned at UCBC.



**Dieudonné Agaba '15**

”



“

I dream of a Congo in which youth are actors not observers. I want to be one of these actors and use my knowledge to help those in need.



**Anuarite Mathe Kahambu '19**

”

# IMPACT

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1080**

UCBC  
Alumni

**100%**

Students Receive  
Financial Aid

**53**

Students Enrolled  
in New Master's  
Programs

**636**

Undergraduate  
Students Currently  
Enrolled at UCBC

**1,000**

Primary School  
Students

**47%**

Students  
Are Female

**50,000+**

People Impacted by Community  
Engagement Initiatives

*\*Numbers based on 2025 data*



## CHAPTER 4

# MORE THAN A UNIVERSITY: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE



From the start, Congo Initiative has believed that real change grows from the local community. Lasting transformation happens when people with lived experience lead the way and create solutions that fit their context. Through UCBC, we remain committed to this vision—because at its best, a university doesn't just educate students; it also serves and strengthens the communities around it. By connecting our programs with hands-on community engagement, we meet local needs while giving students meaningful opportunities through service learning, research, and internships.

## Community Engagement Initiatives

- Bethesda Counseling Center
- Justice Initiative
- Primary & Secondary Education
- Vocational and Literacy Training
- Natural Resource Governance (Sharing the Land)
- Neema-Wakisha (Entrepreneurship)
- Women's Rights and Advocacy
- Church Renewal and Global Mission

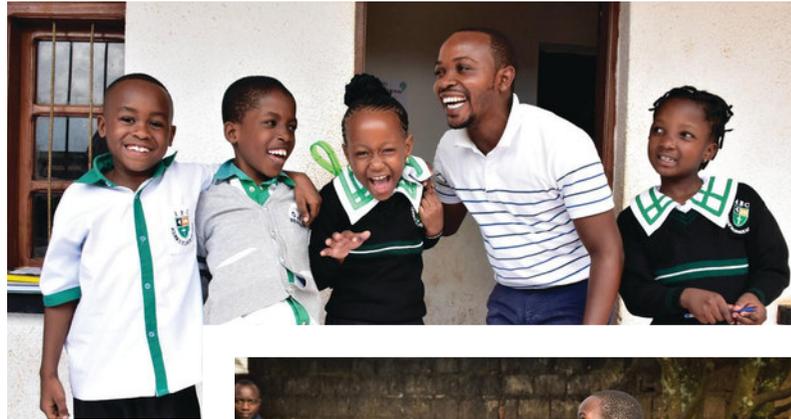
## Bethesda Counseling Center



## Justice Initiative



## Primary Education



## Vocational and Literacy Training



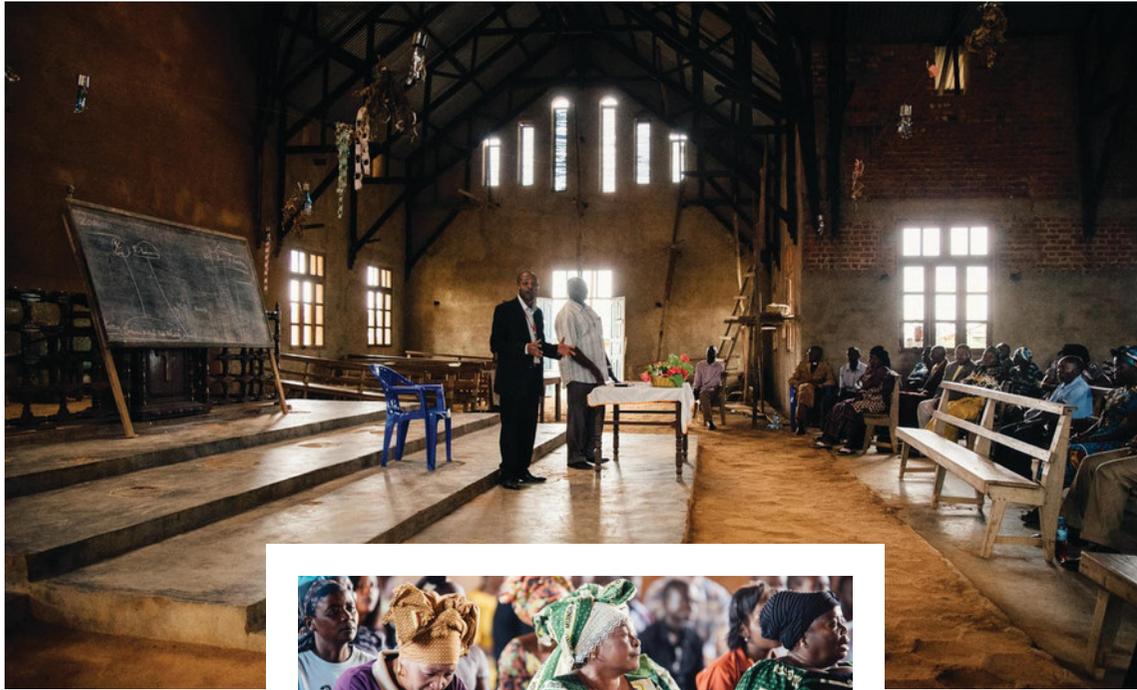
## Natural Resource Governance (Sharing the Land)



# Neema-Wakisha (Entrepreneurship)



## Church Renewal and Global Mission



## CHAPTER 5

# TUKO PAMOJA - TOGETHER WE ARE

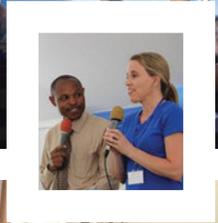




*Tuko Pamoja:*

# TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER





## CHAPTER 6

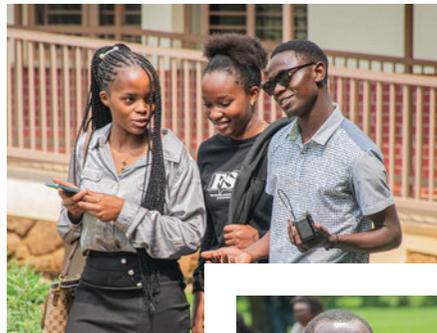
# LOOKING AHEAD: THE NEXT CHAPTER



*A Vision for the*  
**NEXT 20 YEARS**







As we celebrate twenty years of God’s faithfulness, we are reminded that Congo Initiative’s story is not only about what has been accomplished, but about what is still unfolding. The seeds planted two decades ago—vision, courage, and hope—have given rise to a new generation of resilient Congolese changemakers who embody transformation, creativity, and service.

Looking ahead, our vision remains bold yet grounded: to deepen impact through education that transforms communities, to strengthen the capacity of our local and global teams, and to expand opportunities for sustainable development that honors both people and creation.

The challenges facing the Democratic Republic of Congo remain immense, but so does the potential. We believe the next twenty years will be defined by a renewed commitment to partnership, innovation, and resilience—building from within rather than depending from without.

Our prayer is that Congo Initiative - Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo will continue to be a place where faith and learning meet, where hope takes tangible form, and where communities flourish. Together with our global partners, we look forward to a future where transformation multiplies across generations—a future where the story of Congo is one of peace, restoration, justice, and lasting change.

**Justin Hubbard**  
Executive Director  
Congo Initiative USA

**Dr. Honoré Bunduki**  
Rector  
Congo Initiative  
Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

The work we do is only possible because of the global friends and partners invested in our work. From the donation of time, talents, and resources, to our unity in prayer, our partners are making a difference in the lives of women, men, and children in Congo.



CONGO INITIATIVE

*Transformed to*  
**TRANSFORM**



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