

QCP NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024



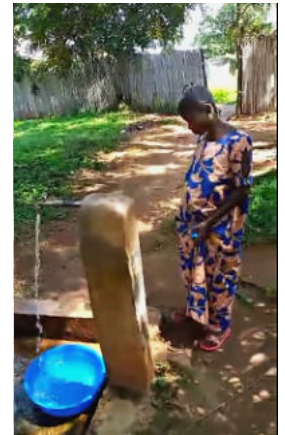
For peace, health, education
and the relief of poverty

www.quakercongo.org.uk

Facebook - Quaker Congo Partnership

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"WE USED TO DIE FROM TYPHOID AND CHOLERA" The need for clean water



"A few years ago, people here used to die from typhoid & cholera. There was no clean water in our village of Abeka. Women and children had to walk miles every day to fetch dirty water from Lake Tanganyika. Sometimes they were attacked on the way. People drank the dirty lake water and washed in it. Many people became ill from water-borne diseases and went to the hospital and died. Then the Quaker Congo Partnership helped us to pipe clean water down from the hill-side to our village. Now we can drink safely. We can wash with sinks and showers. We can use toilets. And cases of water-borne disease dropped by 95%. Our lives have improved a lot." Abeka now has clean water. But the neighbouring village, Mukwezi, still has access only to dirty water and the villagers continue to suffer from its effects. We recently received a grant from a Quaker Local Meeting that improved our funding position dramatically. Now we can finalise the design and update the project estimate to current costs.

QCP still needs your help to extend the pipeline from Abeka and bring clean water to Mukwezi. Here is a video made from short WhatsApp clips sent by our partners in the DRC. Please watch it to learn more: bit.ly/QCPWaterAppealVideo

DONATIONS

Projects cost over £40,000 a year. Please support us to address inequalities between global north and south. We can always do more and our partners are keen to develop the work.

Donate online

- Donate to the Water Appeal at: bit.ly/QCPWaterAppealDonate
- Donate to our other projects at: quakercongo.org.uk

Donate by post

- Mark donation with the name of the project - e.g. **Water Appeal 2024 - or General Purpose**
- Cheques should be made out to: **Quaker Congo Partnership UK**
- Send your donation or CAF vouchers to the Treasurer at:
2 Hurst Royd, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8HY



Registered Charity Number: 1159781

ABEKA HOSPITAL AND HEALTH

Improving health - prevention is better than cure

The hospital continues to provide an in-patient and out-patient service. Malaria, and associated severe anaemia, remains the single largest reason for attendance / admission. The hospital also undertakes minor and major surgery, including Caesarian Sections. Around 50-60 births per month take place at the hospital, about 40% of which are complicated by obstructed labour. Around half of those with obstructed labour, ie approximately 20% of total births at the hospital, require Caesarian Section.

The limited clinical staffing at the hospital means a doctor may have to both conduct surgery, and simultaneously supervise anaesthesia, a combination that has potential serious difficulties for both doctor and patient. The medical staff had appealed to QCP for support to train a nurse anaesthetist to help overcome this problem. We are grateful to have secured 75% of the funding for this from the C B and H H Taylor Trust. Together with other donations, the full amount required of £1500 has now been transferred to the hospital. The nurse will receive 3 months residential training at the Government General Hospital in Uvira.



The hospital 4WD Land Cruiser ambulance had been unserviceable for several years. Alternative use of a motorcycle ambulance had proved unsatisfactory. Thanks to a generous donor, the Land Cruiser has undergone a major restoration and is back in use. The transformation, at a workshop in Bujumbura in neighbouring Burundi, is a testament to the mechanics' skills.

Although the hospital raises income from modest fees from those who can pay, many patients cannot, and the balance of the running costs are borne by QCP, and to a lesser extent by a small government subsidy. As around 50% of QCP support to CEEACO historically goes to the hospital this means we are limited in meeting all the hospital needs, as well as supporting the other CEEACO projects (which also have indirect health benefits!). This poses a difficult prioritisation challenge for CEEACO as well as QCP, as we have limited capacity to raise funding above current levels.

The hospital's ultrasound machine is particularly useful for managing pregnancies but also, in the absence of an Xray machine, a helpful tool in the diagnosis of a range of other conditions. The machine had stopped working and a repair at the government hospital was short lived. £2,000 has been transferred to CEEACO for a replacement ultrasound machine.

QCP has also paid for a router to provide internet access and help with communication at the hospital.

ACTION FOR WOMEN'S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

The AWID projects give women skills and resources to improve their livelihood by providing seed grants to women's groups for income generation and training in literacy, numeracy and technical skills.

Projects are: Soap-making, tailoring, dress-making and agriculture

Women's Literacy and Numeracy group

In May 2023, AWID launched the first 3 month phase of innovative Literacy and Numeracy training for disadvantaged women in the Abeka area. Enthusiastic women's groups learned theory and applied practical skills in using weights, measures, calculation etc, based in the workplace. The training was combined with skills training for income generation. Attendance was high and participants were dedicated, with around 22 women training in soap-making, 12 in tailoring sewing and around 20 in agriculture.

Benefits of literacy and numeracy education are immediately applicable, at all stages of income generation. The groups applied the learning to production processes, e.g. extending the range of nutritional crops in agriculture; and in empowering women in negotiation and pricing of products, such as marketing of tailored items, soap, crops produced, etc.

Many of the participants had missed the chance to go to school from an early age. In 2022, AWID identified an urgent need for basic literacy and numeracy education and QCP UK raised around £4,000, thanks to Kingston Friends Trusts. In October 2023, the second 3 month phase of training began, and participants will receive certification in both their vocational skills and in basic Literacy & Numeracy.

Soap production group

The soap-making group started from scratch in 2020, following QCP fundraising in the UK. Building on three years of hard work and commitment, they delivered 3 innovative training sessions from May to August 2023, combining Literacy and Numeracy training with soap production. The theory of numeracy was applied to weighing and measuring production materials, the precise measurement of soap cubes for sale and distribution, the calculations of costs, pricing, etc. This training is currently ongoing.

The Soap Production group also joined together with the Agriculture and Food group to provide a range of vital items to marginalized elderly neighbours, see Special Activity October 2023 on the next page.



Women's Tailoring and Sewing group

With 6 new trainees, the Tailoring and Sewing group continues to maximise the benefits of receiving 3 new treadle sewing machines and spare parts in 2022. Under the guidance of the established tailors, the trainees have learned to make 4 of the 6 beautiful models produced in the workshop, and will go on to gain the skills needed for the final 2 models. They will receive certification of training. The sewing group is seeking new premises to extend their activities.

Agriculture and Food group

Women and young people in the Agriculture and Food production groups continue the work they started in 2021 on 2 fields in the Abeka and Kikongo area. Thanks to donations for irrigation, tools and seeds from individuals and The World Day of Prayer in 2023, they produced tomatoes, cassava, cabbages, amaranthes and aubergines. Work to maintain irrigation during drought and mitigate flooding during rains is ongoing. A small herd of goats and kids have thrived and plans are developing to improve the propagation of seedlings and to plant citrus trees for the longer term.



The vital need for improved nutrition is ongoing and pervasive. Malnutrition in children under 5 is a serious concern, with the local hospital reporting a range of curable conditions, including malnutrition, diarrhoeal diseases and malaria. Many of the health and well-being issues faced in the district can be improved through better nutrition.

Special Activity October 2023

Following the cassava harvest and its processing into flour, the AWID groups invited a dozen elderly villagers from Katongo and Kikongo to gather together and gifts were distributed totalling 50kgs of cassava flour, 15 kgs of cooking salt and 24 cubes of laundry soap. The elderly people involved are living in particularly difficult conditions, suffering from food poverty and lack of care and accommodation.

QCP AWID is seeking funding to improve the field irrigation piping, to provide a more reliable system and avoid the loss of many months of work when crops die from drought in the field. Donations to these activities are welcome and small contributions make an immense difference to lives of the most disadvantaged families. If you wish to donate to a specific project, please write its name - e.g. AWID AGRICULTURE - in the message box on the website, on your cheque or on the bank transfer form. See Donations on the front page.



SECURITY SITUATION IN THE EASTERN DRC

The security situation is deteriorating especially around Goma, but does impact the town of Uvira. In February 2024 the M23 rebel group seized the town of Nyanzale, in the country's east, in an attack that killed at least 15 people and displaced thousands. The violence in embattled North Kivu province has worsened as M23 increases its pressure on the main city of Goma. Hundreds of thousands of people are arriving in Goma in hope of finding food, water and shelter. This situation is expected to worsen when United Nations peacekeepers withdraw from the country at the end of this year. <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/inside-story/2024/2/26/democratic-republic-of-congo-is-facing-a-humanitarian-crisis>

CENTRE FOR EDUCATION, PEACE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT (CEPAP)

The CEPAP project is building peace, working with young people, preventing sexual violence and providing one to one psychological support.

There is an enthusiastic and committed team working for peace led by Isaac Saidi. There has been a lot of work since our last newsletter mainly with young people. Isaac says this work requires patience, perseverance, determination to act and a big heart because the journey to reach a summit that makes a difference is not without difficulties.

Their ongoing activities are support to Youth Peace Committees, Clubs Amis des Filles and counselling in the hospital in Abeka. They have set up a Youth Peace Council. In the last year they have ran an event to raise awareness about those who are targeted as they are assumed to be witches; they would like to do another. Another initiative is to train women to be teachers as there are very few female teachers. QCP has sent money for the next stage of their training.

Here are more details of the work:

Clubs Amis des Filles (School clubs to support girls)

There are now clubs in many schools which are engaged in the fight against sexual harassment. It is a system to prevent sexual violence in secondary schools. Cases of sexual violence are reported, denounced and the victims are supported. The presence of the clubs in the schools has reduced sexual violence by male teachers and students.

These Friends of Girls clubs are helped by a supervising teacher and are recognised and supported by the Ministry of National Education through the Provincial Educational Sub-Division.

Counselling

Experienced counsellors offer psychological assistance to patients at the hospital in Abeka. This service has been endorsed by managers of the Nundu health zone. They have helped more patients with a relief of their suffering and bring hope for recovery.

Election observers

CEEACO provided several election observers during the presidential election at the end of 2023.

They said, "Our participation in election observation activities makes us a living and credible organization with regard to the Congolese government through its national structure, the CENI. CEPAP feels proud of the best collaboration with the CENI."



Exchange visit to Uvira

In September 10 young people from the peace committees and the Clubs Amis des Filles had an exchange visit with ten young people from Uvira. The aim was to share experiences and learn from each other and so find different ways to prevent sexual violence and to organise action.

In Uvira there is better access to the internet and the group use radio to publicise their work, however 'The thirst to hear the talents and values of other young people was quenched, and useful conclusions were drawn from both groups. They realised that they were all doing worthwhile work for peace and equality. Friendships were made between the groups and their commitment was strengthened.



Training of women as teachers

The first phase took place on 14th September with the collaboration of the Ministry of National Education. The next phase is accelerated training for graduated girls/women: 20 participants with 3 facilitators from the Ministry. The cost is \$2,850 which we have sent to CEEACO.

Improved mobile phones

Money for the purchase of nine Motorola phones for the CEPAP team was sent in July. They were given to the team during their team meeting on August 5th. Two members of team reported on the benefits on 22nd August. Christophine Nyassa who works with women says the new phones are cheaper and more reliable than Android phones and she can send a message to the whole team at the same time. Byamungu Mulilikwa, the counsellor, says that Motorolas are much better as the signal for Android didn't reach all parts of the village. It helps with communication when there is bad weather and travel isn't possible.



QCP ONLINE

- **Website** quakercongo.org.uk
- **Youtube** [Quaker Congo Partnership UK
bit.ly/QCP-YouTube](https://bit.ly/QCP-YouTube)
- **Facebook** [Quaker Congo Partnership
bit.ly/QCP-Facebook](https://bit.ly/QCP-Facebook)
- **email** quakercongo@gmail.com

PEACE INITIATIVES

Quaker Peace Network Africa held a conference in Burundi in October. Isaac was able to attend.

23 young people, from youth peace groups in communities and schools, took part in a basic Turning the Tide (TTT) course which was held from 6-8 February in Uvira. It was funded through a grant from Quaker Peace and Social Witness. The training helped participants to analyse the root causes of different community challenges. It encouraged and enhanced the power to think and act as a team in order and plan strategically to achieve change. Two groups of young people will be set up - one in the territory of Fizi and the other in Uvira. They will be responsible for developing the TTT approach in their communities. There is a hope for longer training in the future, especially to Train the Trainers.



Youth Peace committees

There is a network of youth peace committees in the middle and high plateaux. Young people from different communities talk to each other about their futures and plan meetings to raise awareness about non-violence. Instead of being "Spectators" they are now actors for building peace.



Youth Peace Council

The youth peace council brings together members of youth peace committees and Clubs Amis des Filles to help with learning and coordination. They aspire to be role models for others in their communities. They hope that by having a single organisation they can lobby and influence other agencies and authorities. They have identified climate justice and environmental work as projects for the future.

Awareness of prejudice about witches

Following a workshop on this there is now a local committee in the North which monitors and studies cases of murder against people presumed to be witches in the South. QCP has paid \$1,070 so that 50 people can take part in a 2nd phase of this project to dispel rumours against people presumed to be witches.

Football for peace

The Banyamulenge people are related to the Tutsi people of Rwanda. The colonial authorities portrayed them as “newcomers” while other ethnic groups in Eastern Congo - such as the Babembe and Banyindu - were considered as “native”. This has led to continued discrimination and violence against the Banyamulenge. Therefore the middle plateau peace committee organised a football match between young members of the Banyamulenge community and the Babembe and Banyindu communities, in order to foster better understanding between them. The match took place in the village of Bibokoboko in the Fizi Territory of South Kivu Province and the final score was 2-0 in favour of the Banyamulenge.



At the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations, the DRC national team beat Egypt and Guinea to make it to the semi-finals of the competition. Unfortunately they were beaten 1-0 by Ivory Coast.

THANK YOU TO A LONGSTANDING TRUSTEE

In December 2023, Margaret Gregory came to the end of her long term of service as a Trustee of QCP.



Margaret first visited Abeka in 2014 with her husband, Andrew, and the photos he took then have been very useful since, especially in relation to bringing clean water to the village.

They were shown round the hospital on a Saturday when a mother was in labour. The baby was born overnight and the next morning there was an early knock on their door. They were asked to go and admire the new arrival who, they were told, was going to be named Marguerite.

Margaret said, “I will be happy to continue as a resource for memory and to help in any way. It has been an amazing part of my retirement and extended my view of the world”.

We thank her warmly for her long service to QCP as Trustee and as Clerk.

QUAKER CONGO PARTNERSHIP

2 Hurst Royd, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8HY

GIFT AID DECLARATION

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ _____

and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Quaker Congo Partnership UK.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Full Home address

Postcode _____ Date _____

We like to send a newsletter to donors about three times a year, by email if possible. If you would like to receive this, please give your email address:

Email: _____

Please notify the charity if you:

- * want to cancel this declaration
- * change your name or home address
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If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Standing Order

If you bank online, set up your Standing Order there and send us the details.
Otherwise, please complete this form.

New Standing Order Instruction

Name of Bank

Account Sort Code ___ __ ___

Account Number ___ __ ___

Account Name

Beneficiary Quaker Congo Partnership UK

Beneficiary Sort Code 08 – 92 – 99

Beneficiary Account Number 65725825

Reference (inserted by QCP UK)

Amount: £ Amount in words

Each (month/quarter/year) on ___ __ / ___ __

From date of first payment ___ __ / ___ __ / ___ __

Payment to be made until further notice

Signed

Date ___ __ / ___ __ / ___ __

TO RAISE AWARENESS OF OUR WORK

A slide show of our projects is available

One of our trustees, Catherine Putz, has made a slideshow of the work of the Quaker Congo Partnership. If you would like to raise awareness of the work of QCP, perhaps to aid in fundraising, then please contact Catherine on 0778 306 0088 for details.

Shows can be arranged specifically for a meeting or a group.

