

# MWENDO Congo

Working together for health,  
education and peace in the DRC

Newsletter – February 2016

## Tremendous work in 2015... and looking ahead

As we enter 2016 it's a good time to look back on what we have accomplished and look ahead to the new year. Mwendo Congo started in 2014 as an informal group inspired by Pastor Kubisa and Dr. Edwige's work for education, health, and peace in the war-torn eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We began by giving presentations and holding educational meetings. Then in early 2015 we became Mwendo Congo and registered as a non-profit organization.

The board has been setting up financial systems and organizational best practices, and two working groups have completed successful fundraising campaigns. The hard work and generosity of many have already had a large impact! In 2015 we raised over \$35,000, including \$5,000 for a project with our partner Let Africa Live and \$8,000 for purchase of land for a hospital on Idjwi Island by our partner Idjwi Initiative. In 2016 we are committed to continuing our investment in education and health through our partners in the DRC. As our capacity grows and with your contributions, we will be able to pursue more ambitious and impactful projects this coming year.

As we continue to grow, the board is especially committed to engaging and expanding our broad network in a variety of ways. We plan a quarterly newsletter, bi-annual all-member gatherings, and regular, open board meetings. Most important, we invite you to use your talents and get involved in any way you can (see sidebar). Every step of the way, we learn, organize and celebrate together!

We are excited about how we will grow and what we will accomplish in 2016. Thank you all so much for your support, engagement, and generous donations. You are a vital part of the Mwendo Congo community!

*Peder Garnaas Halvorson, board chair*



*"On our trip to Eastern Congo, we heard women's stories about the dire health needs on Idjwi Island. Their strength inspires me to partner in the building of a hospital." Liz Andress, board member*

## Get involved! – Current opportunities:

- Attend monthly board meetings – first Sunday of the month, 1pm, Grace Univ. Lutheran, Peace Chapel ([location info](#))
- Serve as Communications intern / volunteer (web, print)
- Invite Mwendo Congo speakers to give presentations
- Provide expertise in grant seeking
- Host a fundraising house party
- Help with health and education project fundraisers
- Create your own fundraising activity and contribute proceeds

Contact us with questions and interest.  
Join this great work!

## 2015 Financial Report (unaudited)

Beginning balance	\$3,956
Total donations	\$35,435
Grants made*	\$5,000
Expenses (fiscal sponsor fees + misc.)	\$1,922
Ending balance (12/31/15)	\$32,469

*(\$8,000 grant for Idjwi land was transferred to DRC in Jan. 2016)*

Mwendo Congo

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Peder GH, board chair, 651-230-6552

Newsletter editor: Elizabeth Andress

## Building Hope through Education

Last summer Mwendo Congo raised \$5,000 to purchase sewing machines for 10 graduates of our partner organization, Let Africa Live's (LAV) tailor program. Marceline, one of the recipients, had this to say: "I am becoming a solution for the tailoring needs in my community. Mwendo Congo, with its partner Let Africa Live, is serving those who are vulnerable, those who have been abandoned to their suffering." Kubisa Muzenende (LAV Founder & Director) adds: "We thank the people of Minnesota who are responding to the needs of the vulnerable in the DRC. Your help brings a rapid and significant response to the suffering of those in need."

We're almost halfway to our next goal of raising \$51,000 for Project SHE - Safe Housing For Education - for twenty female students at LAV and their children. "It inspired me to see how the students and staff at LAV embody hope for the future of the DRC through education. There is much Mwendo Congo can do to both support and learn from our partners at LAV." - Amy Chatelaine, Education Working Group Co-chair.

Join us for the next house party fundraiser on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 3:30 - 5:00pm, hosted by Jim McKenzie and Patti Lazarus. RSVP to james.mckenzie@email.und.edu and you'll receive the address & directions.

Visit [mwendocongo.org/education](http://mwendocongo.org/education) to read Marceline's full story, for Amy's reflections on her visit to DRC, and to learn more about Project SHE.

## Joyful Partnerships for Health on Idjwi

Mwendo Congo's health care mission is to **facilitate access to health care for the communities of South Idjwi Island, with special programs for women and children.**

We are blessed to partner with a team of highly skilled, strategic and compassionate leaders in the DRC who have recently formed a Congolese non-profit volunteer organization called the Idjwi Initiative.

In 2015, Mwendo Congo celebrated the completion of the first, and foundational, health-related goal - the purchase of land upon which the South Idjwi Island hospital will be built. In August, representatives of Mwendo Congo were present for the blessing of the land, and in January, a "Celebration of the Land Dinner" was held in Minnesota to honor the *Founders and Stakeholders* who made donations toward the purchase of the land.



For 2016, we are committed to raising the money necessary for the next step - a perimeter wall around the land. This will be a 7-foot wall with two gates, and will cost \$25,000. Contributors to this project will be honored as "Gate Openers." More information on this project can be found at [mwendocongo.org/health](http://mwendocongo.org/health).

## How to give - three options

*Donors have asked how to maximize their giving. Choose the option best for you. All amounts welcome!*

Donation Option	How to Give	Tax Exemption	Amount to Project
Mwendo Congo	Write check to Mwendo Congo	No	100%
Social Good	Write check to Social Good	Yes	93%*
Paypal	<a href="http://mwendocongo.org/donate">mwendocongo.org/donate</a>	Yes	90%*

*\* Our fiscal sponsor for tax-deductibility charges a fee on each donation, and an additional fee for PayPal. (Mwendo Congo will apply for its own 501c3 status in 2016.)*

- **Designate** Health, Education or General on **all** donations.
- **Mail all checks** to Keira Kim, Treasurer, 7220 Chicago Ave. S., Richfield, MN 55423. **THANK YOU!**