

# DRC *in Focus*



## Volunteers for Sustainable development

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# Editorial

Volunteering, an essential link in sustainable development!

Dear readers,

Action for sustainable development is not just a choice, it's a state of mind and it's embodied in volunteering: making a commitment for a better world!

Volunteering is the engine of mobilization. Volunteers play a role in laying down solid foundations for the protection of the environment by providing citizens and communities with the opportunity to act at the grass roots level to address environmental challenges. Two cases studies: Akiko Furuya, United Nations Volunteer (UN Volunteers), is supporting the Congolese Government in the promotion of renewable energies. While Georgia Malinsky, another UN Volunteer, is very active in raising awareness about the environment and green initiatives in the United Nations Mission for Stabilization in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO). Local initiatives are also underway such as the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons (CRSM), which contributes to strengthening the resilience of communities weakened by conflict in North Kivu.

But to promote sustainable development, just taking an interest in the environment is not enough. Creating equal opportunities is also key. UN Volunteers, MONUSCO staff and medical students have come to understand this through their work with the children at Happy Home orphanage in Kamina. Here again, this initiative demonstrates the transformative power of volunteer action on community life.

In conclusion, we round out this issue of *DRC in Focus* with a progress report on the National Volunteer Policy, which aims to keep better track of volunteer action in issues of peace and development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Happy reading!



Credit: Akiko Furuya

Akiko Furuya is a UNV Counsellor in Questions on the Environment and Climate Change. Assigned to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kinshasa, Akiko assists the Government in developing a national strategy for the promotion of renewable energies, notably through the use of improved stoves and micro hydropower. "I am, among other things, responsible for the analysis and planning of renewable energy projects with the government. I also contribute to obtaining funding for the implementation of the national strategy which will start in the coming months," she explains.

With its abundant water resources, the DRC has huge potential in hydroelectric energy. According to Statistics1, the Congo could produce an estimated 100,000 megawatts of hydro-electricity, or nearly 13% of the potential exploitable global hydropower. Only 2.6% of this potential hydropower is already operating in the DRC.

AKIKO FURUYA

UNV CONSULTANT IN QUESTIONS  
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*Akiko Furuya (left) meets the beneficiaries of the pilot project “Support for the protection of the environment through experimentation and dissemination of improved stoves in central Kindu and periphery”, Maniema, in August 2013.*

## “Renewable energies: a vector for sustainable development in the DRC” Akiko Furuya

In addition, 94.5% of the energy consumed in the DRC derives from biomass, “which indicates that most of the population is using wood for fuel. This is also one of the main causes of deforestation and soil degradation in the country,” says Akiko.

“The use of improved stoves could reduce the need in households for biomass, and thus the consumption of wood thanks to a significant improvement in energy efficiency, which in turn has a positive effect on the environment”, continues the volunteer.

Arriving in July 2012, the Japanese national with a degree in economics and global environmental management worked on reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the framework of the Kyoto protocol before becoming a UN Volunteer.

“Becoming a UN Volunteer has given me the opportunity to share my skills and my passion for renewable energy, and in so doing, I can contribute to the sustainable development of the least developed countries. In addition to my support for a national strategy for the promotion of renewable energies, I think I have contributed to strengthening the Congolese Government’s commitment to sustainable energy, including taking part in the global initiative for Sustainable Energy For All and acquiring tools such as an inventory of sustainable energy sources in the DRC.”

1 National Report “Sustainable Energy for All in 2030,” National program and strategy on [http://www.cd.undp.org/content/dam/dem\\_rep\\_congo/docs/eenv/UNDP-CD-RAPPORT-ENERGIE-DURBALE-POUR-TOUS-HORIZON-2030.pdf](http://www.cd.undp.org/content/dam/dem_rep_congo/docs/eenv/UNDP-CD-RAPPORT-ENERGIE-DURBALE-POUR-TOUS-HORIZON-2030.pdf)

2 Initiative launched by the Secretary General of the United Nations in September 2012. The objective is to supply access to energy for all, to double energy efficiency and to double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030.

*On June 20 2014, displaced and local communities of Bulengo participated together in an activity to raise awareness about the environment.*



Credit: Maryse Boulanger

## Campaign to raise environmental awareness in Goma

On World Environment Day, celebrated internationally on June 5, UN Volunteers held an event to raise awareness about recycling and reforestation where they recycled paper from MONUSCO and made briquettes from biomass.

The month of June 2014 was marked by a series of activities on the theme of the “environment and eco-citizenship”. The campaign, organized in partnership with the Environment Section of MONUSCO and the Committee for Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons (CRMS), had two parts – recycling educational activities and fund raising within MONUSCO. There was also an activity to raise awareness about the role of trees and the use of improved stoves among local and displaced communities in Bulengo-Lac Vert region. (North Kivu).

### “Greening MONUSCO - 1kg paper + 1 USD = a tree!”

On June 5 and 6 2014, the staff of MONUSCO collected 78.5 kg of paper for the manufacture of biomass briquettes to use in improved stoves and collected US \$500, a sum used to underwrite the purchase of 450 tree shoots.

“To ensure that MONUSCO’s peacekeeping efforts have a durable and positive impact, the organization is anxious to alleviate its ecological footprint. Involving staff in the green initiatives of the mission, such as recycling paper, is essential if we are to achieve tangible results. This is why, in launching the operation “Greening MONUSCO: 1 kg of recycled paper + 1 USD = 1 tree” we want to educate and encourage staff to adopt simple gestures that respect the environment, including paper consumption,” said Georgia Malinsky, UNV Environment Officer. The MONUSCO peacekeeping operations produce large amounts of solid and liquid waste which, if not dealt with properly, put pressure on natural resources, the local population and the environment.

### Planting trees for a better future

On Friday June 14, the awareness raising activities among local and displaced communities in Bulengo featured a play on the theme of trees and

issues of reforestation, a demonstration of the use of biomass briquettes and improved stoves and the planting of 450 trees shoots (grevilleas and fruit trees).

During the morning, participants in the activity were encouraged to protect their environment: "Before I did not understand the value of trees! Now that I understand why it is important to protect our trees, I'll try not to cut them down. We destroyed the forest now we have to rebuild it. And I think we need to pass this message on to our children to protect the environment," explained Waboshi, a displaced person.

The search for firewood is often a major source of concern that may be the cause of conflicts between the local population and displaced people. In Bulengo, the arrival of internally displaced persons has resulted in the virtual disappearance of forests and subsequent soil depletion.

"Today we have not only educated the communities of Bulengo to take care of their trees but also to use paper briquettes instead of charcoal for cooking food," said Vianney Karamba, Coordinator of the CRSM. In addition to the positive impact on the environment, the use of briquettes in households has beneficial effects; particularly the reduction of cooking time and time spent collecting firewood. It also reduces the amount of household income spent on fuel and the exposure of women to sexual violence during the course of searching for wood.

Within three years, the trees planted that day are expected to improve the quality of the soil, and consequently the quality of life of the community, thanks to a higher crop yield.



## GREENING MONUSCO? by the numbers

- **500 USD**
- **78,5 KG of paper** collected at MONUSCO Goma on June 5 and 6.
- **103 STAFF members of MONUSCO** contributed to the campaign either with paper or monetary donations.
- **6 UN Volunteers** were involved in organizing the campaign.
- **400 GREVILLEAS**
- **50 FRUIT TREES**
- **3 M<sup>3</sup> of COMPOST** bought and planted on June 20 thanks to funds collected on June 5 and 6.
- **3840 PAPER BRIQUETTES**, made from paper collected.
- **80 MEMBERS of the local and displaced community** participated in the activities at Bulengo.

*From June 27 to 30 2014, volunteers from the UN joined forces with MONUSCO staff and students from the medical faculty at Kamina to rehabilitate the Happy Home orphanage.*



## The staff of MONUSCO roll up their sleeves to help orphans.

The UN Volunteers at Kamina set themselves a goal: to help the children of the Happy Home orphanage. With financial support from the UNV programme through the Initiatives for Peace and Development, the UN Volunteers have undertaken to make an autonomous and sustainable orphanage. As Claire Chantale Wokssu a UNV Logistician points out, this is just the beginning of a long process: "Our aim is for the orphanage to operate independently without external assistance. At the moment, we contribute money every month to buy them food. Ultimately, we want to develop an income generating activity, such as making mud bricks for construction so that the orphanage can be self-financing and run without outside assistance."

Because they had to start somewhere, the UN Volunteers concentrated their efforts on renovating the buildings. Providing improved accommodation has become a priority in order to protect the 48 orphans from the cold, mosquitoes, disease and unsanitary conditions.

The entire staff of MONUSCO in Kamina were involved in this project: "through their ideas, their donations, and their participation in construction, absolutely everyone contributed to making this

dream a reality," said Claire Chantal.

Take the Engineering Team from MONUSCO Kamina who volunteered for the structural work: "We were challenged by the state of the orphanage, said Fiston. As a Congolese and a father, we cannot let these children live in these conditions. It is our responsibility to ensure that these children have a roof under which they can sleep peacefully. We also need to educate our colleagues and fellow citizens about the plight of these children so they will join our efforts."

After four days of work, volunteers came to the end of the renovation: the walls were stripped and plastered and a new roof was added! The next step – making an enclosure for raising small livestock. Father Placide, Co-Head of the Orphanage with Sister Anuarite welcomed this initiative "which gave back smiles and hope to the children. This means a lot for them to see that people are involved and spend time with them."



*Volunteers from NVS regularly conduct field visits to assist members of local associations in their development activities.*

## Coming soon, a national volunteer policy in DRC

By Flavien Munzuluba Kinier

National Secretary of Volunteering

Supported by UNV, the Ministry of Planning, through the National Secretariat of Volunteering (NVS) was given the objective of providing the country with a National Volunteer Policy (NVP). This policy will give more visibility to civic engagement while providing agents of development with a common legal framework and tools to mobilize volunteers.

The Okapi Salon at the Venus Hotel in Kinshasa/Gombe was the venue for a workshop from May 20-22 2014 devoted to the finalization of a document on the NVS in DRC. In all, 60 delegates from civil society, the private and the public sector from the provinces and Kinshasa took part in this workshop organized by UNDP under the patronage of the Minister of Planning and Implementation of the Revolution of modernity, Celestin Vunabandi.

The objectives assigned to the workshop were to gather the views of civil society on the existing document; enrich the strategic axes identified with regard to the challenges that underlie the work of a civil society, in particular, challenges related to youth engagement, citizenship and volunteering; define the scope of the results of the policy on the basis of various experiences of stakeholders; and develop an advocacy plan to support the validation of the document by the Congolese Government.

This workshop is an important step

in a long process, which began on December 5, 2012 when the Minister of Planning, to mark the celebration of International Volunteers Day, announced his determination to reinvigorate volunteerism in DRC by the creation of a NVS.

As outlined by the Minister of Planning, this policy will aim to define "the guidelines and principles for all those involved so that they speak the same language and act in a coherent and integrated way."

The vision developed by the NVP, is that men and women will work freely and selflessly for peace and in the fight against poverty thanks to an established culture of service, responsibility and mutual benefits.

# A DAY IN LIFE OF DRC

## Independence Cha Cha

*"We got independence/ Finally we are free/ We've made it to  
The Round Table / Long live the independence we won".*

On June 30 1960, "Independence Cha Cha" became the first African Jazz tune on the soundtrack for the Congo's road to independence. Composed and recorded in the fringes of Belgian-Congolese Round Table, the piece comments to a Congolese rumba rhythm on the discussions and conclusions of the round table held

a few months earlier. From January 20 to February 20 1960, a meeting took place in Brussels between Congolese political representatives and chiefs on one side and Belgian public and economic administrators on the other to negotiate the transition of the colony to a future independent state. Independence was proclaimed on June 30 of the same year.

"Independence Cha Cha" is a call to unity in the independent Congo, both by using a combination of the main languages of the Belgian Congo, Tshiluba, Lingala and Kicongo, and by calling for unity between the different Congolese political factions. Millions of Congolese would learn about the independence of their country from the chorus of this song, which was widely broadcast on Radio Congo Belge's airwaves.

