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## *TUBA Kwilu Newsletter*

### *September 2021*

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Greetings!

Gola! Strength be to you in these difficult and uncertain times. As circumstances change, our approach to living and working in DRC has been as fluid as the river on which we live. For the moment, notions of development through agriculture have turned to subsistence and survival for a people in the midst of humanitarian crisis.

#### **BRIEF: CURRENT SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

##### **Covid-19 and Social Impact**

The spread of COVID-19 has exacerbated the emergency situation the country has been experiencing for decades. Political instability, recurrent armed conflicts in Eastern Congo, severe food insecurity and malnutrition, coupled with the impact of the pandemic, have contributed to a significant increase in the number of people in need of assistance.

Statistics released for DRC on August 20, 2021 show 54,009 confirmed cases of Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic. The accuracy of this number is in question due to the fact that testing kits are not available in most of the country.

The vaccination campaign began with the Astra Zeneca vaccine in March 2021, then was stopped on July 10, 2021 for lack of vaccine. The campaign resumed on Tuesday August 17. However DRC has only received a batch of 51,000 doses of the cited vaccine for an estimated population of 103 million inhabitants. Note: only around 81,910 people (0.8% of the total population) have been vaccinated in 13 of the 26 provinces in the DRC.

This COVID-19 crisis and the measures taken against it have affected the country's economic growth, reducing the livelihood opportunities of poor households, especially in urban centers. As of July 2021, 71% of companies experienced a significant drop in their income (Fédération des Entreprises du Congo ( [FEC](#) ), in collaboration with the Fund for Financial Inclusion).

##### **Food Security**

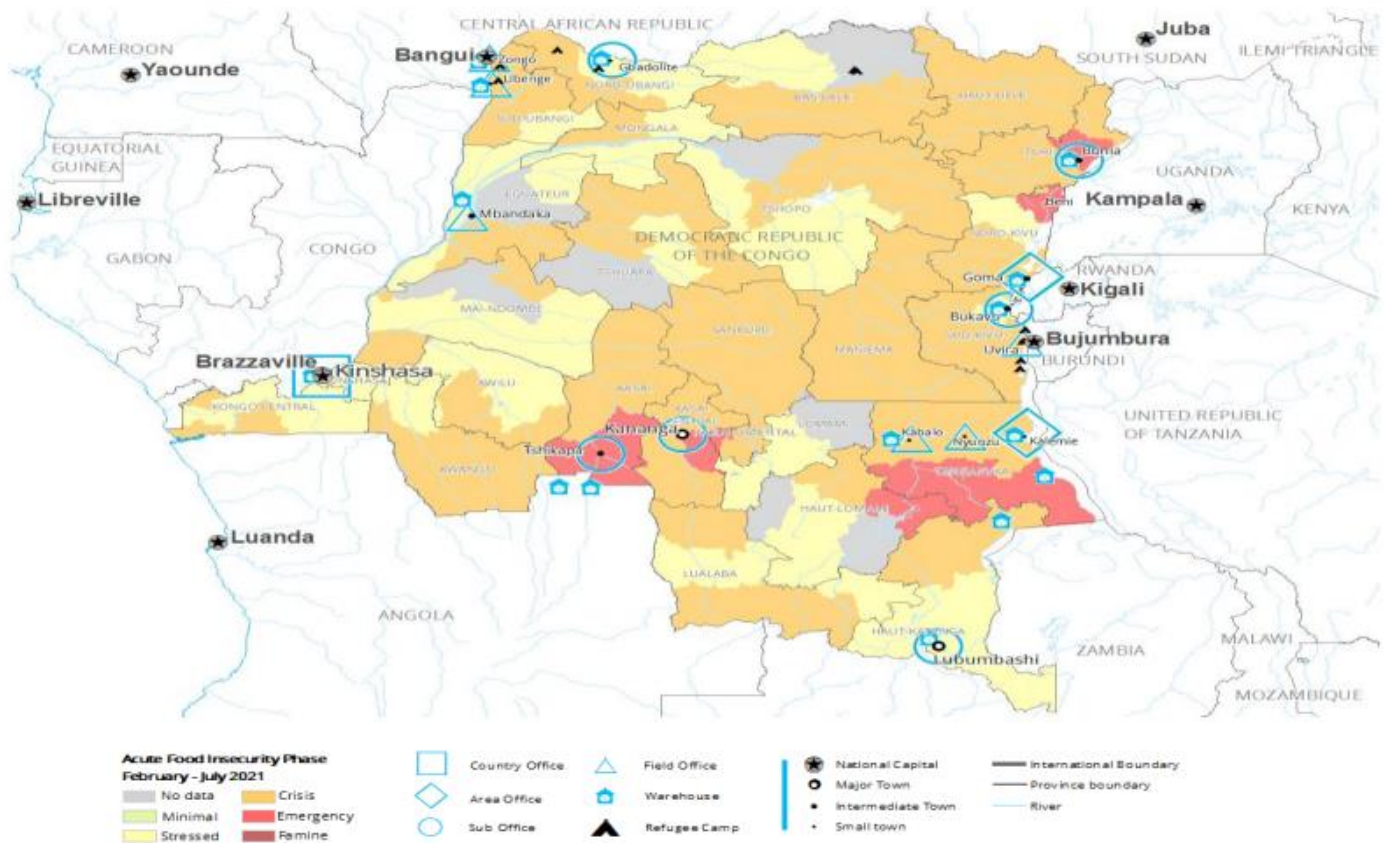
The food security situation in DRC has been problematic for several years due to conflict, epidemics, and other factors. The pandemic has disproportionately impacted the most economically vulnerable people with rising food prices and disruption to livelihoods.

DR Congo, according to the UNWFP (United Nations World Food Program) latest report:

- As of July 2021-- **42 million people** currently have insufficient food consumption across DRC, marking an increase of 7.1 million people in just three months.
- Half of the population (some 53 million people) reports challenges accessing markets, with lack of money cited as the top barrier.



- 4.7 million people countrywide required assistance to prevent and treat acute malnutrition in 2020. (USAID 2020).
- Nearly 2 million children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) (weight-for-height < -3 z-score), which accounts for 12 percent of SAM cases in the world.
- 42 percent of children are stunted



## 2021 Environmental Disaster & Pestilence

The eruption of the Mount Nyiragongo volcano in Goma, North Kivu Province, on May 22, 2021, led to the displacement of over 500,000 individuals to the surroundings areas of Goma, Sake, Minova, Kiwanja in Rutshuru, Bukavu as well as to Rwanda.

- Local authorities have registered 23,045 individuals (4,609 households) who lost their house or land during the volcano eruption in Goma, North Kivu province.
- Among those, 22,395 individuals lost their home or had them heavily damaged by the earthquakes that followed the eruption, while 650 lost their fields, destroyed by the lava.



- Many displaced persons who live in host families live overcrowded spaces with poor sanitary infrastructures. This exposes the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera, but also increases the risk of sexual violence as women have to walk long distances to access drinkable water.
- Due to the poor living conditions, women and children are particularly exposed to negative coping mechanisms such as survival sex while children are at risk of economic exploitation
- In Rutshuru Territory, attacks by armed groups have increased the risks of human rights violations for displaced persons, including those who fled the volcano eruption.

August 2021: Toxic products accidentally spilled into the tributaries of the Tshikapa and Kasai rivers and have polluted the waters and destroyed the ichthyological fauna.

- The water pollution is thought to be from Catoca, a diamond processing mine located in Angola. Water pollution and the destruction of aquatic fauna affects the populations living around the localities of Ilebo, Dibaya, Lubwe and the villages along these rivers and their tributaries.
- Fishing activities constituting one of the means of existence for residents are prohibited on the Kasai and Tshikapa rivers by the local authorities.
- The riparian population has been urged to refrain from drinking or using the waters of these rivers and not to consume dead fish from these rivers until further notice.
- PRONANUT (National Nutrition Program) believes that this situation could exacerbate the already high prevalence of malnutrition in this area, given that fish are the main source of animal protein in these localities.
- These polluted waterways flow into the Congo River. All peoples depending on the waters of the Congo River will be affected, including the 17million+ living in Kinshasa.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Peste de petits ruminants (PPR), was declared on August 16, 2021 in the territories of Kailo and Pangi in the province of Maniema and in the territories of Luiza, Dimbelenge and Dibaya in the province of Kasai Central.

- PPR affects goats, sheep, and some wild relatives of domesticated small ruminants, as well as camels. It is characterized by severe morbidity and mortality rates.
- Local authorities estimate that this epizootic has caused the loss of thousands of animals in a context where the availability of vaccines is lacking.
- Goats are a primary source of animal protein in many areas of Congo.
- This situation could have an impact on the household economy in these territories because small ruminants like goats are considered as financial security.

### **Agriculture/Nutrition/Development**

Agriculture accounts for 43 percent of the country's GDP, and 80 percent of the rural population works in the agriculture sector. Yet the sector is unable to generate sufficient income, sustainable employment, and food to meet the country's needs.

- Production, particularly of food crops, will need to increase by 60 percent in the coming years in order to keep pace with population growth.



- While the vast availability of land creates the potential for DRC to develop a secure and sustainable agricultural economy, the displacement of households due to ongoing insecurity has caused farmers to miss planting seasons and led to depleted livestock herds.
- Conflict has also reduced access to markets (WFP 2016).
- As many as 72 percent of farmers and small-scale agricultural entrepreneurs are women, yet they own less than 10 percent of the land
- Only 2 percent of women have access to credit from financial institutions.

### **Plight of Congolese**

- With a current population of 89.6 million, DRC is projected to be the eighth most populous country in the world by 2050, with the population swelling to 212 million.
- As a result of economic hardship and the political situation, DRC has approximately 5.5 million internally displaced persons, which is the highest number of any country in Africa (OCHA 2020).
- 45 percent of people live in urban areas (PRB 2020).
- Nearly half (46 percent) of the population is under 15 years old
- DRC remains among the poorest countries in the world with an estimated 56 percent of the population living on less than US\$1.90 per day (Sachs et al. 2019).

### **REVIEW OF TUBA ACTIVITIES**

Our purpose in moving to DRC has, in part, turned to crisis management. TUBA's team of managers and administrators in Kikwit—each of whom have worked tirelessly—fell victim to increasing pressures of poverty exacerbated by the pandemic. TUBA provided a monetary stipend for each as funds were made available. Funds were also used for life-saving medical intervention, as well as for burial expenses for several of the team family members.

We persistence in meeting with government officials, civil society organizations, and faith leaders in order to seek funding for our various projects. Though funding continues to elude us, we are creating and strengthening relationships and networks that are invaluable. The present situation challenges us to use our intellect, creativity, and resources in new and innovative ways.

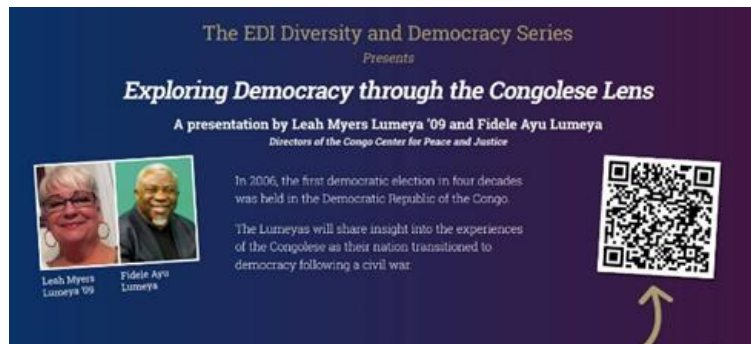
### **TUBA: Media & Educational Opportunities**

- Sango Malamu TV & Radio. TUBA continued as the advisor for new programming highlighting projects of Peace & Development in DRC. Fidele represented TUBA in four/45 minute interviews conducted by Pastor Vivian which aired on tv over several months (2020-2021).
- Sango Malamu TV & Radio often broadcast Fidele's music and music videos.
- Radio Okapi—Radio Okapi is a broadcast radio station created by the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), providing news and Information. Fidele has been interviewed several times for various issues concerning the work of TUBA, as well as consulting on current political issues. Most recently he discussed his research-- The Yedu Yedu or Mbala Repairing Justice—in an interview with JM Matwaki

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In July, Fidele presented his research on the Mbala traditional justice system known as Yedu Yedu, a precursor of the modern restorative justice movement.





**FIDELE LUMEYA**

- Professeur, Chercheur, Analyste et Auteur
- Co-Mentor de l'état Complexes (Programme Paix)
- Maître de conférences en analyse de conflits (Eastern Mennonite University)

**LA JUSTICE RÉPARATRICE: PAN-  
AFRICANITÉ,  
UNIVERSALITÉ ET  
INTERSECTIONNALITÉ**

**29 JUILLET DE 15H À 17H (UTC+1)**

**THÈME**

Cette conférence fournit une exploration identitaire de la Justice Réparatrice prenant en compte sa triple dimension, notamment sa pan-africanité, son universalité et son intersectionnalité. Un examen critique des valeurs, des principes et des pratiques de la Justice Réparatrice offre une occasion unique d'explorer sa philosophie sous diverses perspectives. Le cadre contextuel, qui est notre principal point de départ, est la vision du monde Africain en général, et Congolais en particulier. Cela est indispensable afin que les communautés puissent définir ses mécanismes, ses processus, ses principes et ses théories. De plus, l'application de ce type de justice dans les contextes africains s'étend dans de multiples domaines et mouvements, y compris la justice raciale, la guérison des traumatismes, l'éducation, le développement des jeunes et la justice transitionnelle.

**INSCRIPTION**

Dès votre inscription nous vous enverrons un article qui accompagne le thème de la conférence

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Together we presented “Exploring Democracy through the Congolese Lens” at Juniata College, PA. USA, via Zoom. We were also guest lecturers at Juniata during the Spring Semester (via Zoom) for several class sessions including *Gender Issues in DRC*, *Restorative Justice in DRC*, and *The Other Global Pandemic: Interpersonal Violence Against Women*.

### TUBA As the Implementing Agency For Various Donors

March & May 2021. On two occasions agricultural tools and seeds were donated by FAO--the United Nations Food Administration Organization—TUBA was the implementing partner for transporting and distributing in Kikwit.





The majority of people working in agriculture are women. We deeply regret our inability to acquire the funding needed this year to continue to employ them on our farms. It is our hope that funding will again be made available in 2022. In the meantime, we have made available to the people who have worked for/with us in the past, 25 hectares (61+ acres) of cleared land for lease. The lease cost per season is very minimal (equivalent to a couple dollars)—only enough to pay the overseer and make the lease contract binding. The leased land can be used to grow crops for their own/family use, and for market.

TUBA donated to the workers/lessees 340 kilo of quality corn and soy seeds that had been produced in the prior season.



TUBA implemented a project (with designated funds through private donors) to build a medical clinic. TUBA donated part of the land--formally known as Farm: Kikwit 4--for use in building the medical clinic. It is strategically located in a quickly growing area on the outskirts of Kikwit, in close proximity to a well-established school of nursing. Ground was broken in April 2021.

Millions of children and adults across the DR Congo spend their days in school buildings. Many of these buildings are in dire need of repair or replacement. Students need a safe, healthy environment in which to learn & thrive.





In partnership with donor, Lumeya International Ministry, and with the MB parishes in Kafumba and Malela, TUBA is the implementing agent for a staged project to improve the school environment in both Kafumba & Malela.

Project name: **Building a Safe and Healthy School Environment**

- Stage 1: Provide desks for every child in primary and secondary school in Kafumba and Malela

Currently, students sit on the dirt floor, or on wooden poles. They sit with backs bent as they write on the floor or with a tablet balanced on the pole before them.... all day long.

Cost: \$50-60/ desk (2-3 students per desk)  
Number: 600 desks  
Total Cost: \$30,000



- Stage 2: Erect a common/community building in Malela.

This will provide a secured area to store the desks when not in use. It will also provide an area for school assemblies & meetings, vocational classes for older students, and community and church functions.

The frame/poles of the building and roof are complete. Corrugated metal has been applied to the sides of the building.



Corrugated metal roofing is nearly complete—only a few pieces to go!



- Stage 3: Repair and/or replace school buildings.

Currently, students meet in buildings that are collapsing around them. There is no running water, no bathroom facilities for girls & boys, no source of reliable electricity, no internet connection.

TUBA has submitted this project to additional funding agencies.

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- Stage 4: Provide books and materials for students.

A large number of students complete the entire 12 years of schooling without ever having a textbook, or access to any book. Information is written on a blackboard and students copy it and take notes.

### TUBA: Consulting Partner and Networking Agent



Dec 10, 2020. We were invited to a capacity building event concerning the topic of Democracy and Peace, particularly focusing on the Mapping Project. The program was organized by our partners—ECC Peace & Justice Commission—and the Catholic Church, sponsored by the Swiss Embassy. TUBA presented our perspective on issues of peace, restorative justice, trauma education, and healing in Congo.

June/July/August: We met with Dr. & Linda & Pakisa at the nearly completed Mama Makeka House of Hope, in Kinsuka Pompage, Kinshasa, DRC. The building is extraordinary! There are guest rooms for overnight stays, 2 conference rooms, a library, and 5 balconies with great views of the Congo River. We spent several hours during a few visits discussing our dreams and visions for Congo.



We had the privilege of hosting Pastor Garry Prieb, in our home during the month of August. He is seen here greeting his old friend, Dr. Pakisa. Garry, through his family's foundation, provides many benefits to the MB Church in DRC: scholarships for MB students studying missiology and theology; funds for MB Church office administration and evangelism; and Bible distribution through direct & indirect channels. TUBA monitors the implementation of these projects.



Pastor Jack (seen here with Leah, Fidele, Jack, Garry) is the recipient of some of the Bibles. Pastor Jack works with, and distributes Bibles to demobilized, ex-combatants in Eastern Congo.



In December 2020, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) announced the dissolution of the National Assembly. On 15 February 2021, President Tshisekedi appointed his prime minister, Sama Lukonde Kyenge, to head a government of the new Union Sacrée de la Nation (USN) coalition. In the process, the President changed all of the Cabinet Ministers, and changed the roles and responsibilities of some. Though our partnerships remain, the players have changed. The new Ministers began taking office in June 2021.

We met with the new Minister of Social Affairs in July.

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TUBA joined the Masinga Foundation as a consulting partner in June. The founders are members of the Congolese diaspora living in the US. They desire to open a clinic/pharmacy that addresses both physical and mental well-being.

Rev. Dr. & Mrs. Mulleur share their home with children in need of a safe place to live and to be part of a family. Currently they support 20+ children. Several support staff help with laundry, cooking, cleaning, and sharing love.

The Mulleur family depends on the generosity of independent donors.



Expressed needs include:

- Tuition for school. Many of the children attend school but a few still need funding.
- Money to repair a foundation wall that is falling away & creating a hazard.

The Mulleurs are very innovative and practical. They had a well drilled on their property in order to assure that the children have clean water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. They sell water to people in the neighborhood in order to buy fuel for the generator. This model could be used in many other locations.



Funders of agricultural projects are beginning to focus on ideas that take them from start to finish: produce-transform-transport-market. We went on a field trip to a new facility that transforms corn into meal/flour.

This type of transformative processing plant is included in the larger agricultural projects that we have submitted.





## RECOGNIZING FRAGILITY/MOVING TOWARD PEACE

- *The UN has addressing fragility, conflict, and violence as strategic priorities.*
- *Conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs.*

Fragility describes the state of nearly everything at this time. The invisible line that distinguishes intact from shattered is nearing imperceptibility on so many fronts—hungry/starving, sick/dying, conflict/peace. When in the state of fragility, conflict escalates to violence with only the slightest provocation.

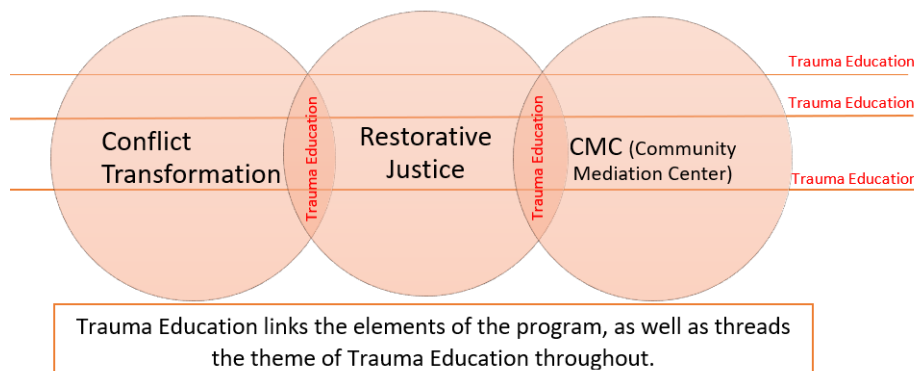
- *COVID-19 pandemic adds even greater stress, threatening to reverse decades of advancements in poverty reduction and development.*

The current pandemic—in countries already overwhelmed with disease, confusion, and hunger—creates an atmosphere of hopelessness and despair.

- *In his remarks, the former President of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajcak said “the international community has a major role to play [to help countries build and sustain peace]. But this should come in the form of support not direction”. He added “efforts to build and sustain peace must be nationally-driven if they are to succeed.” Preventing conflict to happen in the first place is the key to maintaining peaceful societies. This includes supporting mediation programs planned by national actors rather than designed missions from the Security Council.*

Most of the programs for peace and sustainable development in DRC have been modeled after those successfully used in Western culture. Hundreds of training hours, and millions of dollars are poured into these capacity building programs, yet, after 50 + years DRC remains largely underdeveloped, and a third of the country is still plagued by rebel militia. It is time to try something different.

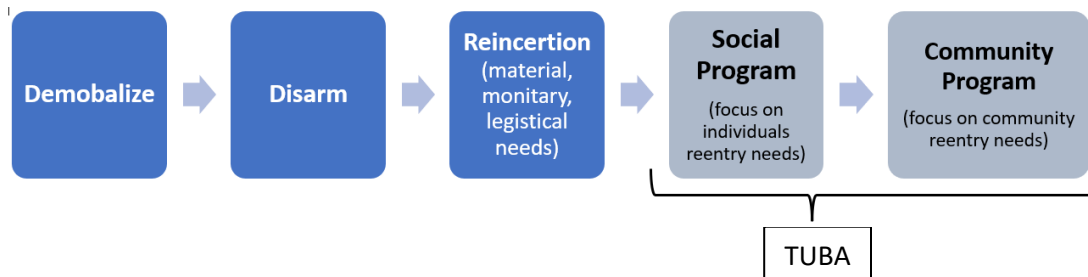
In this environment of fragility the only chance there is to lasting peace and development lies in the lessons of traditional society/culture; the assistance of competent and skilled experts in the fields of conflict resolution, restorative justice, and traumatic stress studies; and the willingness of Congolese government, civil society, and faith communities to guide, direct, and run the programs. We have developed a program of Conflict Transformation linked to Restorative/Transformative Justice through Trauma Education; then taking it to the next step of establishing Community Mediation Centers.





The Community Mediation Centers (CMC) are modeled after the tradition of meeting with the chief and elders under the tree in the center of each village in order to resolve conflicts. CMCs will be established in cooperation with local chiefs, police, and other interested parties. Decisions requiring restorative justice will be made with every effort to restore individual/family/community ties (Ubuntu). A Mended Mentor program will be established to offer peer support to those suffering the effects of trauma. TUBA will run train-the-trainers programs in each region. We will also conduct continuing education classes throughout the year to support the staff of CMCs to increase their knowledge and ability. CMCs will be staffed by local Congolese people who have completed all of the necessary training.

The Congolese government has recently taken thoughtful, logical steps to bring a lasting peace to the Eastern areas of the country still living in conflict. As we continue the work of establishing partnerships—government, civil society, faith communities—it is our intention to replicate the CMC program throughout Congo, including areas currently involved in the dissolution of armed militia groups. Our expertise does not include the first two stages, but perhaps the third—by distributing materials needed for the disarmed persons to reestablish themselves. The CMC program fits perfectly into the last two stages as preparing communities, restoring community relationships, monitoring conflict, and addressing trauma will be vital to success.



- *Growing food is recognized as a tool to advance recovery, and to encourage a peaceful co-existence between ethnic groups.*

Agriculture will continue to play a significant role in TUBA's programs. The knowledge, expertise, and networking acquired over the 3 years of our involvement will be helpful on the road to establishing peaceful communities.

## IN CONCLUSION

We are grateful to have the love and support of so many. It is only through the generosity of family, friends, and various faith communities that we can be in Congo. Thank you for your kindness and love.

As we begin our third year living in Kinshasa our purpose has become more clear. The search for funding in DRC is exhausting, but a very necessary part of the work. Our intention is to continue to pursue every possibility of acquiring funding from the government and other entities working within DRC. Our network of possibilities and promises has expanded largely, but has not yet produced actual funds.

Next year—Spring 2022—I (Leah Renee) plan to travel to the US in order to raise interest in the situation in DRC, and to raise funds needed for us to continue the work. A letter of introduction and a tentative/first draft schedule will soon follow this newsletter. I plan to cover areas on both the East Coast & the West Coast. We very much appreciate your help

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in identifying people/ organizations/ groups that may be interested in getting involved. I hope to include the display and sale of my photography and art pieces during the tour. This fundraising tour cannot and will not be successful without you.

We close with a heart full of love and gratitude for all we have experienced and been given. Thank you.

Peace & Love Be Yours,

Leah & Fidele Lumeya

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons/daughters/offspring of God.—Matt. 5:9*