

# Campaign Magazine



ITAKA  
ESCOLAPIOS

**Piarist Solidarity  
Campaign**

> PROGRAM 2018/19

This year, the Piarist solidarity campaign is taking on a new and exciting challenge: we are turning our attention and efforts to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country in the heart of Africa that embodies, perhaps more so than any other, the strength, wealth and dreams of the entire continent, but also its severe problems and its injustices.



**T**he Piarists reached Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2014 in order to bring to this corner of the world the educational, social and pastoral mission initiated by Calasanz, which is so very crucial here. The mission's presence starts out small (in the capital Kinshasa and in Kikonka), although it is set to bring about great results, and will be spread to other places in the country. Nowadays, Pious Schools within the DRC are part of **a Piarist province of Central Africa**, together with Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, countries that, in themselves, are experiencing a growth dynamic in the mission, and in which Itaka-Escolapios has also long been present, accompanying this process and boosting numerous projects.

Due to this, it is now necessary to give a strong supportive impulse to the mission in the Congo and this campaign is a great opportunity for doing so. We want to raise awareness around the important work that the Piarists are already doing in this country, and also

## To the rhythm of Congo

around the plans for this work to grow in the future. However, this will only be possible if we can count on the support of those who feel co-responsible for this great task.

The Piarist mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes place under **a particularly difficult context**, because of the great political instability and the persistence of severe shortages

for the majority of its population. It is precisely for this reason that the need for this work to be done is so great.

Nevertheless, the reality of the DRC does not, fortunately, come down to just this. The DRC possesses great cultural and human potential owing to those who aspire to create a better future; one which must be built on a foundation of education. As a prime example of how much it can teach to the world we have the rhythm of their music, a language which can so easily cross borders and connect people, communities, and more.

True to the motto of this program, the solidarity campaign places the challenges and needs of the Piarist mission in the DRC **IN YOUR HANDS** (or in our hands), and, with it, the dreams of so many children and young people, who are the real protagonists of our projects there. So, thanks to the participation and solidarity of the entire Itaka-Escolapios network, both boys and girls can have, **in their hands, the future they deserve.**





DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF THE

# Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa, with an area of 1,457,363,994 square miles and 26 provinces. It borders nine other countries in Africa. The last census was taken 35 years ago. It is estimated that the current population stands at 77.8 million inhabitants of which more than 34 million are under 18 years old. French, the official language, shares the status of national language with four other Bantu languages: Lingala, Kikongo, Swahili and Tshiluba.

## THANKS

### Thanks for the effort

We would like to take advantage this campaign magazine to thank the students, teachers, administrative staff and school services, families, volunteers and the Calasanz Movement for their efforts in helping the Itaka-Escolapios solidarity network to send over €210,000 to Senegal which will go towards improving the quality of education throughout its five boarding schools, thanks to the campaign Senegal's Treasure.

## BIODIVERSITY, WATER and SUBSOIL, its great resources.

The DRC is considered to be the country with the fifth greatest biodiversity in the world, and the first in terms of its great variety of mammals and birds. Half of the Congolese territory, an area of 0,17 million square miles, is covered with forests. This represents almost 62% of its national territory, and 10% of the world's tropical forest reserves. It is, therefore, the second largest tropical forest on the planet after the Amazon.

The Congo River is the eighth longest river in the world and the second largest. It is also considered to be the deepest, reaching depths of up to 722 feet. As a navigable river it is one of the backbones for the transit of trade.

D.R Congo is a mosaic of mineral products: diamonds, copper, cobalt, gold, zinc and coltan that are exported rough, generating little and poorly paid employment in the country and, in contrast, many jobs abroad.

## Despite being a country rich in biodiversity and natural resources...

Since the country became independent, a succession of political crises have hindered its development. The most recent of these started at the end of 2016 with the suspension of elections by President Joseph Kabila. Kaliba's non-voted permanence in office and the armed conflict in the east of the country, in the Kasai region, cause serious economic instability and soaring difficulties in the popula-



tion's living conditions. More than 1.7 million people have been displaced from their homes, of which approximately 40% are women and girls.

The DRC is ranked 176 of the 188 countries that are classified by the United Nations Human Development Index according to Health, Education and Economics. 87.7% of its population lives below the poverty line (US\$1.25 dollars per day). Around 44% of women have no income.

The child mortality rate for children under five years old has decreased worldwide by almost 50% over the last thirty years, while in the DRC the rate remains at 94 deaths per thousand births. Chronic malnutrition affects more than 2 million young children and compromises their development.

In the DRC, a vast number of children live on the streets, and are exposed to innumerable dangers. It is estimated that in Kinshasa there are 20,000 children living on the street, of which 26% are girls.

Regarding education, the State covers just 22% of its cost. As such, families have to shoulder the rest, in a social context marked by unemployment and a low standard of living. 80% of children attend primary school. However, this percentage decreases as they grow older, dropping to 50% for boys and 47% for girls (40% of girls get married under the age of 18 and quit school).

The situation of women and young girls is particularly alarming. 27% of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are, or have been, pregnant, of which the vast majority are unwanted pregnancies (and of which 20% are as a result of sexual abuse) and 55% of these girls suffer some kind of abuse from their partners. Violence towards girls, both physical and psychological, is a very real hurdle for their development, which also greatly hinders the progression of the country itself.



## MUSIC

### To the Rhythm of Congo

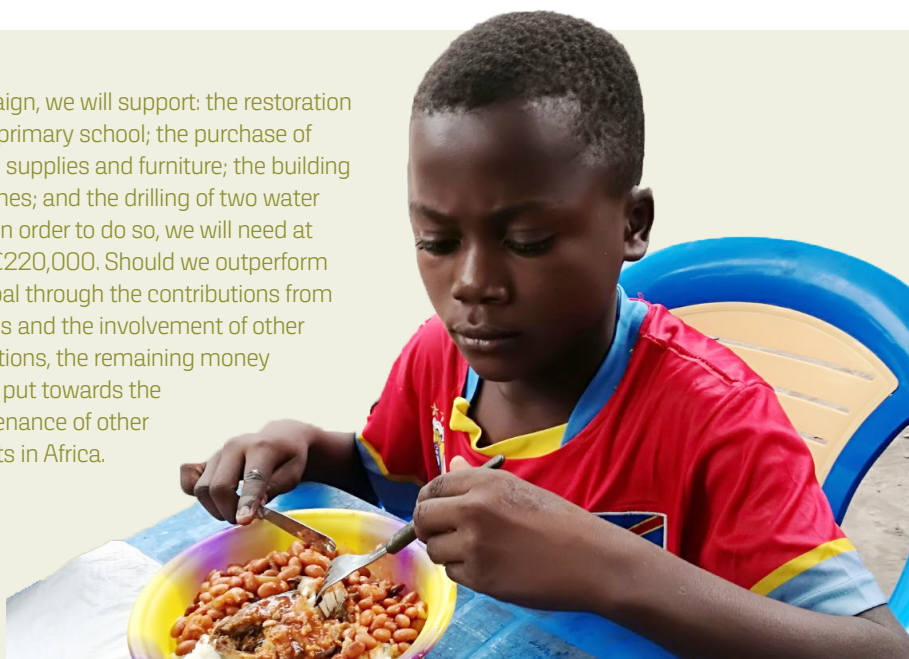
For decades, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has spread its music to the rest of the African continent. The linguistic diversity of the DRC is the main source of inspiration for many musicians in the country. The main musical exponent that makes the whole continent dance is the soukous, a popular dance music genre. It emerged in the 60s in the current Congo Kinshasa and Congo Brazzaville. It is an African version of the Cuban "rumba". Nowadays, the ndombolo, an adapted rhythm of the soukous genre, is enjoying great popularity. The biggest exponent of this rhythm is the Congolese superstar Faly Ipupa, as well as international celebrities such as rappers Maitre Gims or Yousoupha. In addition, there are many Congolese bands and singers whose rhythm goes beyond borders: Ferre Gola, JB mpiana, Werrason, Fabregas, Koffi Olomide, and Bill Clinton, among others.

## BUDGET

More than 65 Piarist schools from different countries will take part in the solidarity campaign "To the Rhythm of Congo". These countries are Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Spain, the Philippines, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, India, Indonesia, the Dominican Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal.

The campaign will help maintain the work of the Itaka-Escolapios network in DR Congo, stressing the importance of the improvement of education through their projects in the conurbation of Kikonka. Through this

campaign, we will support: the restoration of the primary school; the purchase of school supplies and furniture; the building of latrines; and the drilling of two water wells. In order to do so, we will need at least €220,000. Should we outperform this goal through the contributions from schools and the involvement of other institutions, the remaining money will be put towards the maintenance of other projects in Africa.





# Piarists

IN THE DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Piarists arrived to Kinshasa in November 2014, under the protection of the Piarist province of Central Africa. Three Piarists created the first community, located in Lemba. They currently have two communities, one located in the capital and the other one 62 miles (100km) to the south, in Kikonka.

## STREET CHILDREN

The Pious School focuses its activities on street children, helping around twenty children aged from 6 to 14. All of them are provided with schooling and are guaranteed food. The ultimate goal is to return them to their families wherever possible.

## Kikonka

In Kikonka, a conurbation of 15,000 inhabitants located near the town of Kisantu, Piarists run a parish and three Diocesan schools. Moreover, they have launched a program for women's training and empowerment. The campaign of the Itaka-Escolapios solidarity network is to promote three specific activities: guaranteeing people's access to water, renovating the Kikonka Primary School in order to create an effective and dignified class experience, and taking part in the process of training and empowerment of a group of 60 women.

## WATER

Since there are no wells in Kikonka, the vast majority of its population collect



water from small streams nearby. Due to this there is an elevated rate of infectious diseases, especially in children, such as diarrhea, cholera and typhoid fever, among others. The goal is to drill two water wells so that the primary school and five "neighborhoods" of the town will have access to drinking water.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

The primary school located next to San Pedro Parish Church serves a total of 885 children and 16 teachers. It is property of the Diocese of Kisantu. The building is extremely run down, the doors and windows are broken, the roof is no longer waterproof and has fallen through in some areas, the floors are cracked and the walls are unpainted, not to mention the need to build new toilet facilities, purchase school supplies and furnish the facilities.

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND TRAINING

The Piarists are aware of the situation in which women from the DRC live. As a result, they have launched an empowerment program for women in Kikonka together with a catholic female congregation known as *Misioneras Cruzadas de la Iglesia* (Congregation of the Missionary Crusaders of the Church). In an area where there were no training centers for women, this program offers an opportunity for 60 women from the conurbation. During the school year, they will be taught several modules: French literacy, elementary agriculture, sewing, dyeing, and health (reproductive health, waterborne diseases, children's health, etc.).



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