

BILEMBO

Nous n'héritons pas la terre de nos ancêtres
nous la empruntons à nos enfants
"Proverbe de saint Augustin"

Représentation
Thématique
environnementale
- Eau
- Air
- Terre
- Feu

TEXAF

03

Corporate social
responsibility

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The TEXAF group supports development projects in the DRC that are not necessarily directly connected to its corporate purpose.

In a spirit of full transparency, in 2012 the TEXAF Board of Directors proposed that the budget allocated to all projects be submitted to the General Meeting.

Every year it reports on the impacts of the group's efforts in this area, which are not necessarily financial in nature.

In 2018 the group supported the same five projects that it has supported for several years now.

- The goal of the first, Yema Yema, is to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Lodja and surroundings in Sankuru. Badly hit by successive wars and pillaging, the area suffers from high unemployment and the accompanying ills (including malnutrition and violence). The project is headed by Pierre-Albert Nguelié and Béatrice Yseboodt, and is primarily focused on education and training.
- The second project works to improve health care in DRC, particularly the care of children with serious but curable pathologies through surgery and medical treatment. This project is run by CHIRPA, a NGO formed by Chaîne de l'Espoir Belgique, Chaîne de l'Espoir RD Congo and Espoir de Vie.
- The goal of COMEQUI, the third project, is to give farmers in Kivu the means to start up sustainable development activities to increase their income and meet the needs of their family (sending their children to school and paying for health care).
- In the fourth project, Ndako Ya Biso, the group supports the work of Jean-Pierre Godding sj. for street children in the Ngaba district of Kinshasa.
- Lastly, the group is the head sponsor of Kinshasa's main cultural center, Espace Texaf Bilembo, which aims to draw attention to contemporary Congolese artists through temporary exhibitions and to hold workshops for 12-18-year-olds to teach them about their roots (Bilembo is a Lingala word that carries this connotation), the country's agricultural resources and the challenges involved in sustainable development.
- TEXAF and its majority shareholder have also decided to support the Royal Museum for Central Africa (Africa Museum), which re-opened at the end of 2018 to great international success. TEXAF is donating EUR 30 k per year for three years. The group is specifically sponsor of an AfricaTube room, a digital platform by and for young people to present African cyberspace as a place of creation and exchange without boundaries.



Run by young vloggers, the AfricaTube centre turns the spotlight on the digital Africa of today.

Comequi - 10 years of support for coffee growers

www.comequi.org

"The enthusiasm never wanes," the tone is given at Comequi, the charity recently celebrated its first 10 years. Since its formation, the Belgian non-profit organization has been providing rural inhabitants on the banks of Kivu lake with the means to start up sustainable development activities in order to increase their income and improve their quality of life. With success.

This does not affect the work of Comequi in any way. *"After ten years, we remain convinced of the relevance of our mission,"* says chairman Thierry Beauvois. *"The projects change, some of them are reoriented, but they retain their impact on the target population."*

The same goes for the support for coffee growers. Located at altitude, with a warm and humid climate, the region of Kivu in DRC has the ideal conditions for the production of high-quality arabica coffee.

This is the basis of the NGO's activities, which is to encourage small coffee farmers to work their land and build small cleaning stations in the vicinity, which they co-finance. This is done on best practice principles in partnership with local specialists and agricultural cooperatives. Thierry Beauvois explains that there are various aims. *"It will reduce the exhausting distances to be walked, speed up transport and so improve the quality and raise the price producers receive."*



Coffee cleaning station seen from below.

Other signs of improvement are noticeable at the coffee academy. Opened in 2017, it saw increased attendance in 2018.

While coffee production is at the heart of the NGO, beekeepers are not left behind. A good number of them, mostly coffee growers, follow annual training courses run by a Comequi volunteer and experts in honey production from local charities. The goal is to boost their unproductive apiaries and set up new ones. This has already resulted in a significant increase in the quantity of honey produced, by a factor of 10 for trained beekeepers, which have seen their income rise as a consequence.

The move from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture that is able to feed local markets has brought additional sources of financing. The consequence is the organization of community fields and mechanization. *“Thirty farmer associations and eight schools for some 40 hectares currently benefit from the assistance of our agronomist and a tractor for ploughing. They pay for the fuel and the tractor driver themselves.”* Among others, the associations help vulnerable women to take control of their future together and increase their income so that they can meet the needs of their children.

A win-win partnership

Comequi also has an impact by investing in socio-pedagogic training for local people.

The creation of 1 ha kitchen gardens at the eight schools is worthy of note. At first sight, 1 ha does not seem to be much, but it is hugely symbolic and a godsend for people on the ground. It is both a source of fruit and vegetables for households and school canteens, and a way for families to earn the funds they need to pay school fees. It is also a way of spreading knowledge about growing and harvesting crops.

The NGO is not resting on its laurels, having announced its intention to build three new classrooms at the primary school in Kisinji. The parents will provide the labor, while Comequi will bring the technical knowhow. *“Our support must be demanding concerning the participation and engagement of the community to ensure the project stands on its own two feet.”*

Another idea that is gaining ground is a plantation of drumstick trees (dietary supplement) and sweet wormwood (which is used to fight malaria). The initiative will be integrated into the kitchen gardens and directly linked to the local associations. A partnership is ongoing with IDAY, an international charity that builds constructive dialogue with the local authorities.

After the success of the library at a secondary school in Minerva, which is home to more than 12,000 books, a new toy library opened in 2018. The aim is to entertain and stimulate children with educational and creative toys. Comequi has also set up eight mini-libraries at partner primary schools.



A sorter at the coffee station.

Chirpa - More welcoming hospitals

www.chirpa.org

For Bob Lubamba, the manager of Chirpa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, "the synergies between the various partner hospitals have been strengthened in 2018." A rewarding partnership that was followed by structural work at various Congolese clinics. The shared goal was improving the treatment of children with pathologies that require special care.

The founding principles of Chirpa must also be remembered. For more than 10 years, the NGO CHIRPA (Chirurgie Pédiatrique en Afrique) has been helping Congolese pediatricians save children with heart or urological deformities.

A hundred children travelled abroad for surgery with the help of Chaine de l'Espoir-Belgique. A hundred children benefited from palliative or reparatory surgery in Congo, through international missions in association with Congolese doctors.

Everyone hopes that such surgery can be done locally by Congolese surgeons from now on. With that in mind, CHIRPA is also working on transferring skills between the Belgian and Congolese teams, as well as support for a new pediatric surgery and palliative care pavilion at the Ngaliema Clinic in Kinshasa, which is funded by the Congolese government and the former First Lady.

"For several years, the Ngaliema Clinic has hosted regular work meetings of the DR Congo hospital platform, which has 30 members. These meetings are a chance to share trainings and best practice in care management and quality," says Bob Lubamba, of the NGO, one of the founder members.

In 2018 Chirpa partnered with several NGOs, including ULB-Coopération, to provide financing to member hospitals for specific projects aimed at improving the treatment of children with pathologies that require special care.



More than a hundred children have been operated on in DRC.



The synergies and partnerships between “advanced” hospitals such the Ngaliema Clinic and “less advanced” hospitals in pediatric care enable the spread of expertise and training that benefits a growing number of children. Four pediatric projects benefited from this funding in 2018.

At the Kalembelembe national pediatric hospital in Kinshasa, work has been done in the neonatal department, after a fire in 2017 drastically reduced capacity. *“The department’s electrical power system was made secure, the facilities renovated and part of the damaged furniture replaced,”* says Bob Lubamba.

Across the provinces

The Ngaliema Clinic has benefited from support to start work on separating Box III of the neonatal department, which will reduce the risk of infection among the especially vulnerable patients housed there. The project has also been supported by the Clinic’s risk prevention and management unit, whose manager did a period of work experience in Belgium.

At Bominenge General Hospital in Equator province, major changes have been made to ensure that children are treated in a sanitary area in a decent pediatric department. As the Chirpa managers explains: *“Their pediatric department was housed in an old kitchen, so the sanitary conditions were extremely poor and there was a high risk of infection.”* Work has been done on the shell, the roof and the wall and floor coverings.

Last but not least, in December 2018 the Mbuji-Mayi Pediatric Clinic in Kasai launched a classroom-based and practical training program for its pediatric staff and ten doctors from other health training courses in the area for the screening and treatment of infant heart malformations. Most of the activities will be held in 2019.





TEXAF BILEMBO – 365 days at Texaf Bilembo

www.texaf-bilembo.org

Dynamism, creativity and education were the daily drivers at Texaf Bilembo in 2018. The contemporary art and cultural center in the Utexafrica compound continues to set its own agenda with a diverse mix of never-before seen activities. A look at last year's standout events with co-founder Chantal Tombu.

The first will be the exhibition "Les derniers bois de Belges". The celebrated Congolese sculptor Hassan Tshamala, whose adze, gouge and chisel have infused the almost century-old trees that line the main avenues of Kinshasa with life again. The general public love the way these trees stumps have been transformed into works of art.

Five other exhibitions, all of them attractive, have been just as successful. It all started with "Libres Pensées" by Francis Mampuya, a major name on the Kinshasa art scene, which ran between April and May 2018. "Francis Mampuya is a powerful architect of peace, construction and reconstruction, who has forged a plastic vocabulary with a strong identity."

In June, the nomadic artist Eliane Candido invited visitors on voyages in an intimate exhibition. His brushwork expresses the emotions experienced on her various journeys.

Sharing is also the theme of the series of canvases of "Génération Wewa", including the illustrations proposed in July referring to the daily life of the Wewa, the motorbike taxis that have clogged up the arteries of the Congolese capital.

This was followed by Dolino's exhibition in September. He is one of the leading lights of Brazilian modernism and his talent was recognized on the occasion of the 196th anniversary of the country's independence.

In November the center also hosted the series work of Babanzanga. "The hyper-realism artist tirelessly sculpts the face of his daughter and wife in light and shadow with very lively, contrasting accessories."

Dancing, painting and theater punctuated the daily life of Texaf Bilembo in April. Not least the impressive festival of dance, which honored several Congolese choreographers, including Jacques Bana Yanga and the Sadi dance company. Not forgetting the private viewing, "Regard/Tasty Bites", of the drawings and paintings of two French artists, Amandine and Colombe. And the stage piece by Attacha



Children from the compound at the Bana Congo meeting.



Visiting with Chantal Tombu.



The Kin'Art Studio is home to a Congolese artist collective.

Machini, inspired by Alain Huart's novel "Kivu l'espoir", which tells the touching story of a child soldier and the young woman who he saved from gang-rape. *"An astonishing piece of realism and topicality that won the hearts of an audience made up of students and professionals."*

Totally new, sometimes even unusual, activities were launched. One of them was "Bo Bazar", a new type of market that was set up at Texaf Bilembo in May 2018, where the exhibitors offered everything imaginable.

A Belgo-Congolese week

The first annual young talents competition was held a month later with the support of CFAO. It was open to Congolese artists younger than 30 in various disciplines. As well as promising a \$2500 prize to the winner, the competition was a perfect opportunity for budding artists to showcase their talent.

"Another of the year's major events was the first edition of Belgian Week in Kinshasa, organized by the Belgo-Congolese-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce and held at Texaf Bilembo in October 2018."

The aim was to celebrate the partnership between Belgium and Congo in various fields: the business world, the environment, sustainable development, culture, education and Belgian cooperation. The various gatherings and conferences were attended by 800 people.

The NGO Bana Congo had quite an emotional impact on the attendees. These talented youngsters, aged 8-17, traveled from the remote community of Nioki in Mai-Ndombe province for the first time to take the stage in Kinshasa. After enjoying their performance, the audience watched a film showing the experience of these children, as malnutrition patients at Nioki hospital and victims of social discrimination, before meeting Tânia Trindade. The artist shared her musical knowledge with them and helped them develop their self-confidence through singing.

Before ringing in the New Year, the Café des Artistes hosted Michèle Van Vlaesselaer's "Vitrail – Rencontre sous le ficus", a book signing session by the author Barly Baruti and the humorist Kash.



Pierre-Albert Nguielele speaks with students at ISC Lodja.



Sankuru Yema-Yema - An Haute École in Lodja

Pierre-Albert Nguielele is positive about the achievements of Yema Yema, the non-profit organization he runs, in 2018. Based in Sankuru, Yema Yema promotes the independence of the region's inhabitants, particularly through training. One of the biggest achievements was the opening of a commercial school in association with the local government.

The students in Lodja, Sankuru are now able to follow higher education courses in accounting, marketing, human resource management and executive secretaryship. The new "Haute École de commerce" offers a range of courses to help students build a better future for themselves.

Yema Yema plays a central role in the project alongside the local authorities. "It's a big advancement," says Pierre-Albert Nguielele, who is unable to hide his delight when mentioning the 90 graduates. He hopes their journey will serve as a model for others. "We don't want to break any records, we just want to give people a sense of responsibility and awareness," he adds.

There is a clear reference to this in the name of the NGO, Yema Yema, which means "bit by bit". He set up Yema Yema 12 years ago with his wife Béatrice. "After our studies we had a shared desire to help the people of the DRC, starting in Lodja, where I come from."

It was a bold gamble, given the location of this town in Sankuru, the former province of Kasai Oriental. Lodja is in the sticks in the middle of the DRC. It is not exactly easily accessible. And the living conditions of the local population are not made easier by issues affecting the availability of electrical power and drinking water. That said, Pierre-Albert and Béatrice Nguielele refuse to be deterred, using the needs of inhabitants as a roadmap.

Bad luck, good heart

There was a clear need for education, which has led to work starting on the construction of a nursery and primary school. "Petit d'Homme". More and more children are enrolling in this school. In 2018 there were 180 on the roll. As for their older brothers and sisters, the population has fallen, as 140 students are enrolled at the "Pierre et Béa" lycée. This is due to many parents moving to the town of Lusambo for work.

But what about the mothers? Mums are not forgotten, as a special training course has been set up just for them, and paradoxically, it's where the chatter is loudest. Pierre-Albert has fun imitating their jubilation at every word correctly pronounced on this literacy course. It shows that all achievements are equally savored at Yema Yema. Twenty-five of the 30 mothers have earned a certificate.

Farming, another sector supported by the association, has again been taken up by the inhabitants of this agricultural region, after having been given up out of a sense of shame.

"We have always worked the land with Béatrice to show people that it can help feed them. We started by growing napa cabbage, which earned us a capital of sixty dollars, the equivalent of two months' wages here, and we invested it in rabbit breeding, which continues to this day," he explains. He also recalls *"the working relationship with Texaf, one of our loyal partners, to restart the growing of rice and rubber."*

In 2018 Yema Yema could also pride itself on growing its own cacao. This has already given him ideas about making his own biscuits, which we look forward to trying.

2018 was also a satisfying year in terms of health, with the opening of the "diabetes center". It's a place where the disease is demystified. *"We talk about all the problems faced by diabetics, day-to-day difficulties, how to adopt the right diet, based on the knowledge of a dietician."*

It has to be said that whenever Yema Yema tries to contribute, whatever the topic, the inhabitants never fail to be enthusiastic. That's who Pierre-Albert Nguelele credits with the achievements in 2018.



Pierre-Albert and Béatrice on a visit to the village.

Ndako Ya Biso - The golden shoes of Ngaba

www.stretchchildrenofkinshasa.com

They don't need boots with studs: they play on sand not grass. The boys of Ndako Ya Biso have plenty of opportunities to play football. And while the facilities are minimal, there is plenty of enthusiasm to make up for that. "You have to let them find their children's spirits," says Jean-Pierre Godding sj., who heads the charity. Since 2004 he has been working hard to give these youngsters back their self-confidence ahead of a family reunion, based on recreational activities and learning.

Ndako Ya Biso (Our House in Lingala), an initiative of the Chemin Neuf Community, has undoubtedly helped a large number of street children over the past 15 years. Fifty or some children continue to use the various reception centers close the Ngaba roundabout, a popular municipality of Kinshasa. The alarming situation of street children demands an explanation.

"Most of these children find themselves on the street because there is no food at home. They thought they could go out and beg or sell water. But they never went home. To be honest, no one misses them," Brother Jean-Pierre Godding sj. laments. *"Others have quite simply been driven out of their home, deemed to be wizards responsible for all the ills in the household."*

About forty people and voluntary assistants try to give them back their self-confidence at Ndako Ya Biso. The staff members - social educators, psychologists, legal experts and nurses - put together plans to achieve this.

They start by meeting the basic needs of the newcomers. The reception centers offer various services, including a dormitory, a refectory where meals are served every day and bathroom facilities. They also provide medical care, remedial schooling and even literacy classes.

The charity also runs recreational activities and fun learning sessions. This gives the children the chance to rediscover their innocence. Including football sessions when the boys show off their hot-shot skills. The girls are able to express their creativity in sewing bees. There are also trips outside to discover the natural richness of the DRC.



Activities to banish thoughts of the street violence.





"We try to increase the number of these activities, because we notice that they enable the children to loosen up and tell us about how they felt when they were abandoned to their lot." The stories that come out of them are often unbearable, but they are necessary to bring families back together.

This tallies with the charity's philosophy, which is to return the children to the bosom of their (extended) family. *"If they are rejected, one hopes there is an uncle or an aunt they can rely on."* In 2018, 256 children were reunited with their family, compared with 209 in 2016. While the results are encouraging, they are preceded by a long process that is never easy. First the children need to learn to trust again, they are interviewed, investigations are made and, after mediation, families are reunited.

Hope in figures

The next step is to give the families the tools they need to get themselves back on track and escape extreme poverty. While it has little in the way of financial resources, the charity works hard to keep an eye on children after they return to their family, to ensure they continue to go to school or college, depending on their age. The figures given by Jean-Pierre Godding sj. are a source of hope.

In 2018, 614 children reunited with their family over the past three years were taking classes in about fifty different schools. They are split between 378 boys and 236 girls, with 409 of them attending primary school and 205 secondary school.

One hundred ninety-five children were enrolled in vocational training in 2018, 109 of them aged over 18 and 86 aged 15-18. Forty-four occupational insertion kits were handed out.

We also note that the number of microcredits given to the guardians of reunified children in 2018, not including one-off grants, was 231, compared with 228 in 2017, which corresponds to almost 20 per month, with an average grant of \$57. Forty rental guarantees were also granted to families in 2018 to help them find a better place to live (compared with 42 in 2016 and 26 in 2017), which corresponds to more than three per month.

"Each family reunification is a battle and a source of hope. A pathway to peace and the future for both the child and the family," says Brother Godding sj.



www.texaf.be