

What is 'ASDIG'?

In response to the ever-increasing numbers of victims of rape, Claudaline Mukaniirwa, a pastor's wife in Goma, in the diocese of Bukavu, DRC, formed **Action Salulaire pour le Développement Intégral de Goma (ASDIG)**, a registered NGO, in 2007. This was funded from profits from her small tailoring business; the aim was to bring hope to rape victims by teaching them tailoring and dress making skills.

Thus began Project '**Hope**'. Later she began feeding many malnourished children – the product of the rape pandemic. In 2010 she started a school, '**Tumaini**', for the poorest unschooled children. Later she started a separate agricultural initiative in Kalehe – '**Stand Up Women**'. These projects are based in the area of Lake Kivu, in the eastern part of the DRC.

Project Hope

Project 'Hope' is centred around a small compound in Keshero, some 10km outside Goma, which is owned by Claudaline and her late husband, Désiré. The initial aim was to feed and school some 250 children and run 6-month tailoring courses for vulnerable women.



The school, **Tumaini**, is run by a director and a number of teachers, a chaplain and nursery staff. A project manager has recently been appointed.

Teachers are paid \$60 a month when money is available (which it often isn't). Some of the original children have recently graduated from the primary school; the ASDIG trustees decided to embark on secondary schooling in the compound (for about 100 children). A nurse comes once a week (voluntarily). A medical technician also attempts to identify and treat the various health needs (malnutrition, HIV, TB, malaria etc).

In 2018 ASDIG was able to acquire a further nearby school, '**Neema**', which now functions as another combined primary and secondary school for 700 children. As part of **Project**

'Hope', significant development work was started at 'Neema' in 2019, including more classrooms and latrines.

The dressmaking courses are run in a small room in the compound - and also in another centre in Goma. So far over 1000 women have completed the dressmaking course.



Stand Up Women

The agricultural initiative **'Stand Up Women!'** provides an income-generating opportunity for 825 women in Kalehe to farm cassava, ground nuts, pigs, goats and chickens. Hoes, spades, rakes and machetes are all provided.

A local agricultural specialist supports the project (voluntarily). Again, a project manager has been recruited. A micro-finance project has recently been started up.

Stand Up Women aims to give some financial independence to women, to improve the living standards of their families and to provide education, farming skills and effective farming techniques in areas of need.

Future Needs

The needs are huge: salaries for teachers, instructors and supervisors; building materials and workers; sewing machines; food and recreational materials for the children; IT equipment; agricultural equipment and materials; and so on.

The **ASDIG** trustees also have exciting plans for future development projects, such as fish farming, beekeeping, literacy and potable water programmes.

The IAF Response

The India Africa Foundation, along with a small number of other charities and churches, is supporting **Project 'Hope'** in the Lake Kivu area of DRC.

To date we have made several visits to **Project 'Hope'** and have provided desks and chairs, grinding mills, sewing machines, funding for a micro-finance project, as well as finance for new classrooms and latrines.

Contributions to teachers' salaries have also been made. But we need more significant and sustainable support to help us bring help to the helpless of DRC.

Bishop Désiré - Obituary



“The world has forgotten the Congo. We need the world to remember.” – Désiré Mukaniwa

On Saturday 11 July 2020 came the devastating news from DRC that Bishop Désiré Mukaniwa had died, having been unwell for some 2 weeks with COVID 19.

Just a few hours before his passing, he declared ‘Jesus is alive ... the tomb is empty’.

‘In the middle of the Ebola pandemic he brought hope in a place many wrote off as hopeless. Now a second pandemic, COVID-19, has killed Anglican Bishop Désiré Mukaniwa, of Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’ wrote John Sandeman, ‘Eternity’ Editor-in-Chief.

Malcolm Richards, Bishop for International Relations in Sydney, wrote: ‘With degrees in theology and development studies, Désiré combined his love for evangelism with a concern for the marginalised in Congolese society – the poorest of the poor – widows, orphans and victims of rape in war.’

‘The joy and dedication he brought to his work in [the] context of disease, civil war, poverty and building [a] new diocese was astonishing and inspiring’ tweeted Canadian Anglican writer Jesse Zink.

He leaves his wife Claudaline and 4 children. Claudaline has committed to continue the work amongst the victims of abuse and poverty.

Bishop Désiré was born on 22 August 1968 in Kalehe, South Kivu. In 1997, he graduated from the Anglican University of Congo. Ten years later he studied at the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey, Switzerland, earning a post-graduate degree in ecumenical studies. Bishop Désiré was the first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of North Kivu from 2016.

