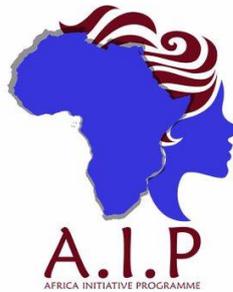




Rapport ANNUEL 2019

African Initiative Programme



Africa Initiative Programme

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Message from the founder



Brigitte Mutambala Mapendo, Founder of AIP and President of the Board of Directors.

On behalf of youth most especially young women/girls who benefit from its activities, AIP would like to express its gratitude to all those who have contributed to the advancement of the organisation.

AIP also extends sincere thanks to the partners and donors who have provided financial support to the various projects implemented in 2019.

Today, AIP is pleased to present its 2019 annual report.

This annual report is a summary of actions carried out in the field by AIP for the benefit of youth and most particularly young women and girls. It is important to start by recalling that in order to best meet the needs of young people; the work of AIP is based on exchanges and dialogues undertaken with them, in particular young girls/women across the Democratic Republic of Congo. (DRC).

Despite the complexity of the political and security situation in the country, this year was rich in activities. In total, we were able to reach more than 3,000 young people, 2,000 of whom are young girls / women.

Africa Initiative Programme

Created in 1998, AIP works to strengthen the self-management of grass-roots communities. It places particular emphasis on women and girls with a view to promoting democracy, human rights and good governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo through these social categories.

AIP is dedicated to the empowerment of a generation of young people most specific young women/Girls and aims at equipping them to become authentic and daring leaders in their respective living environments in the community: schools, university, associations, professional or business environments, etc.

Moreover, AIP aims at inspiring a generation of young leaders to become pioneers and vectors of positive and qualitative change in their communities.

AIP is registered in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and is authorized by the Ministry of Justice to operate throughout the Congolese territory (letter N ° JUST.G.S. / 20/821/2003). Thus, besides activities undertaken in Kinshasa where its head office is located, AIP focused, in early 20's, on peace-building training of several stakeholders of the violent inter-ethnic conflict in Ituri province, in north-eastern DRC. Some of the training sessions, carried under the sponsorship of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the DRC, MONUC, targeted the members of the Interim Special Assembly, the governing body of the province of Ituri at the time of crisis.

Vision

Congolese youth mostly women and girls leading from the front in every field

Missions

To promote and defend young people's rights most especially women and girls' rights and empower the Congolese youth to participate in the development of their country and consequently radiate through Africa.

AIP intervenes in four thematic areas:

- Women/girls Empowerment and;
- Fight against gender-based violence (GBV)
- Peace
- Environment and climate justice

Provinces of intervention :

Kinshasa, North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri

Women's Context in the Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC)

The DRC has ratified conventions and protocols which describe the state's obligations to ensure the security, justice and political participation of women. These texts require the state to take all necessary measures to eliminate discriminatory customs and gender stereotypes. The DRC has adopted laws to guarantee the rights of women. However, women continue to be victims of discriminatory laws, policies, cultures and practices. These affect the role and status of women in society. The persistence of these inequalities increases the vulnerability of women.¹

● Education

The DRC has ratified conventions and protocols which describe the State's obligations for a free education - at least at primary level - and non-discriminatory.

However, enrollment rates are falling. Despite their legal rights, many girls are deprived of school, notably because of school fees, the priority given to boys, early or forced marriage, pregnancy, sexual harassment, HIV / AIDS or still armed conflicts.

Even when children have access to schooling, education is often of poor quality, with inadequate infrastructure and almost non-existent teaching aids. The education system suffers from a lack of qualified teachers at all levels. Even when they are qualified, they suffer from low remuneration, thus contributing to a favorable environment for corruption. In order for children to have access to education, parents are obliged to pay additional costs, such as taking care of teachers, which jeopardizes the pursuit of studies, especially for girls.

It should be noted that formal education is not the only one that plays a role in the integral development of women. Informal education, which includes the family and its social environment, plays a key role in building a woman's identity. However, the precariousness of the family unit as well as the persistence of certain traditional practices in society do not favor the promotion of the status of women. economic and community integration

● Security

The issue of respect for human rights is part of human security. In the DRC, insecurity issues linked to armed conflicts, banditry and organized crime, those related to poverty, such as food insecurity and lack of access to basic social services particularly affect vulnerable groups, especially women. Many women continue to experience domestic violence, sexual violence, harassment, economic insecurity, including exclusion from inheritance, and other forms of gender-based violence. In the east of the country, the situation is particularly worrying. Women are often the victims of abuse, massive and systematic sexual violence, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced prostitution and mutilation. These violations are committed by members of armed groups, certain members of the security forces and an increasing number of civilians. In addition, women are rarely invited to negotiations in peace processes or involved in security decision-making.

● Justice

Despite the existence of innovative legal texts in the protection of women's rights, women still face a number of challenges, such as: ignorance of their rights, dysfunction of the judiciary, lack of - popularization of legal texts with judicial personnel, impunity, geographic remoteness of jurisdictions, high legal costs, fear of reprisals by the perpetrators of their crimes or their families, the slowness of judicial procedures, traditions and the lack of reparation for the victims. The consequence of this situation is that the woman is discouraged and no longer goes to court. This situation does not call on the judicial staff for the stricter application of the laws protecting women and girls, in order to combat certain harmful practices, including early marriage. Women's rights are not fully respected, not least because of inadequate legal measures.

● Economic empowerment and community integration

women continue to be victims of discriminatory laws, policies, cultures and practices. These preconceptions affect the role and status of women in society. The persistence of these inequalities influences the empowerment and community integration of women.

¹<https://www.un.org/french/womenwatch/followup/beijing5/session/fiche11.html>

Access to and control of resources by women remains weak despite the fact that a significant number of households owe their survival to women who have become the main providers of livelihoods. However, the considerable and indisputable contribution of women to the survival of households does not give the opportunity to be capitalized in formal economic circuits.

In reality, Congolese women are assimilated to vulnerable groups and are generally excluded from the sphere of decision-making, both at family and community level. Women and girls are often reduced to reproductive function and domestic work, and are victims of gender inequality and violence.

Economic empowerment and community integration of women, while worrying, receive little attention from politicians and donors.

● **Political participation**

The absence of laws defining and guaranteeing gender parity hinders the participation of women in politics. Furthermore, women's participation in public and political life remains very limited. The major challenges in the DRC remain law enforcement as well as existing mechanisms. Furthermore, insufficient legal protection, social and cultural differentiation of the sexes deeply rooted in the family and the community, as well as discrimination in education and access to employment continue to considerably hamper the participation of women to political life. The lack of confidence and the low cohesion between women politicians and those of civil society prevent the implementation of strategies promoting better promotion and greater political participation of women.

● **Women and the environment**

The promotion of Environment and climate justice is still a new concept in the democratic republic of Congo thus few organisations and entities work in this field. As in other fields, the participation of women in the formulation, planning and execution of environmental policies continues to be low, even though the international community has recognized that there can be no sustainable development without the full participation of women.

Women have an important role to play in preserving the environment and natural resources and in promoting sustainable development. For example, the primary responsibility for providing for the household rests with women, who largely determine consumer trends. Women therefore have a fundamental role to play in adopting sustainable and ecologically rational modes of consumption, management of natural resources and production.

It is in view of the above that AIP held a consultation with the youth in the DRC and young women in the late 2018 at the wake of elections and crafted its 2019 plan.

In 2019 AIP mainly determined that its work will be on the fight against sexual violence in schools, the fight against gender based violence in homes, the promotion of youth empowerment most especially young orphaned girls and girls living in the streets. AIP also worked on the promotion of clean environment as it affects the population not only in the capital city of Kinshasa but also in different provinces of the country; and lastly AIP worked on promoting young girls mentorship by women who have succeeded in different fields of work. AIP decided to intervene and contribute to the many efforts put in place to change not only women's situation but also young men's situation in regards to their considerations of women and girls. AIP focalised its efforts in working with the youth to better prepare them for the future as AIP believes that if better instructions and guidance is provided to the youth then there is hope that not only women's situation will improve but also the development of the country as a whole.

Women’s week

With the aim of promoting young women and Girls participation in politics, science and technology, environmental justice and other fields, AIP organized an exchange of experience between young women and different leaders in the above stated fields and more.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a country with major challenges in every sector of life. Out of its population estimated at 85 million people, 52% are women². Among them are casual workers, agriculturalists, professionals, entrepreneurs, activists, politicians, business executives, etc.

On March 8 of each year, the world celebrates the international Women's Day, offering an opportunity to women to make their voices heard on a number of issues related to their rights as human beings representing more than half of humanity. It is therefore within these frameworks that AIP supports Congolese women to assert their rightful place within the Congolese society, as they harmoniously with their male counterparts to achieve united nations-proclaimed sustainable development goals (SDG)

As AIP confronts the above challenge, some of the following questions have kept on arising: How do fast progresses in science and information technology and the related changing legal frameworks affect women in general, and those working in these sectors? How can AIP contribute to achieving balance on the participation of women and men in community development while maintaining family harmony? How do women professionals manage to steadfast and succeed in their respective field of work, mostly male-dominated? How would it be possible to capitalize the experience of all such women to benefit the younger generations?



Women’s week at the Carter Center, Christelle Vuanga a parliamentarian talking about her experience as a young women politician to inspire young women.

In order to respond to these questions and set the ground eventual actions, AIP held, in collaboration with Buswe Institute, a women’s week in Kinshasa from 1 to 5 April 2019. Women hailing from different professional backgrounds, including politics, science and technology, environmental justice, etc., and some so-called ‘men reserved fields’ were convened to reflection sessions and other outreach activities. The objectives pursued were threefold:

1. To strengthen the visibility and promote women’s actions in different fields,
2. To establish a framework for exchange/discussion on the situation of women in the different fields in the Congolese society and,
3. To promote female role models for the emulation by the younger generations.

Women professionals in different fields shared their experiences with the audience, including the challenges they have had to face to rise to the top. Besides, young girls and young women who own small businesses did also take to the floor to present and market their products to the public. Though limited in scope, this gathering offered a perfect platform for the women-driven start-ups and businesses to position themselves for future success that would, hopefully, help them secure their independence and self-empower women.



Women’s week at the Carter Center, Christelle Vuanga at a young girl entrepreneur table buying crafts.

Through this activity, more than 200 young girls were inspired to venture into so-called “men’s reserved” fields, as they benefited from the experiences and encouragements from the different speakers who took to the floor.

² <https://www.peacewomen.org/content/gender-inequality-and-social-institutions-dr-congo>

More than 300 youth participated in this activity and were able to mingle with some prominent Congolese personalities who were present as invitees. Some of the young women present greatly appreciated the opportunity to come close, interact and directly ask questions to some of the invited personalities they had always admire from afar. As a result of this conference young girls have asked AIP to set up mentorship programs in the different fields so as to be guided and oriented for their success. AIP is mobilising resources so as to implement this activity.



Women's week at the Carter Center.
(From left to Right) Mamitsho Pontschi, the first young women pilot, Juvenal Munobu, a parliament and Noushka Samba an activist sharing their experiences and encouraging young girls to follow their dreams.

Young women and Girl's empowerment

AIP organized training from 21st to 25th of October 2109 on Income Generating Activities for 20 young street mothers and orphaned girls.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 179 out of 189 on the 2019 development index issued by the United nations' development program (UNDP)³. About 70% of its population live below the poverty line, surviving on less than two dollars a day. The country's gross national income per capita is \$ 800 a year. The poverty environment has contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS. The number of children orphaned by this pandemic are estimated at 930 000⁴ Many of them end up as street children, further reinforcing the vicious circle of poverty and infection chain.

In order to assist young orphans turned into street children and potential violent gang members for lack of family support or social safety net, AIP implemented a project "*Contribution to the empowerment of street girls and orphans in Kinshasa through income-generating activities*". The implementation of this project was made possible thanks to the funding received from THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF KINSHASA.



Training in Income Generative Activities for young girls orphans.

Through this project, AIP was able to train more than 20 young girls on income generative activities. Thanks to their new skills, 80 percent of the trained girls are now able to take care of themselves and 50 percent of them got out of the streets in the months that followed.

By empowering these vulnerable girls, this project managed to set a tone and provide an experience that can and should be capitalized to reach even more girls trapped in this situation, should AIP get to mobilize the necessary resources. Ultimately, this helped and can help a larger scale, lifting these vulnerable girls from negative coping mechanisms they are fully engaged in, for lack of alternatives.

³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>
⁴ <https://www.humanium.org/en/democratic-republic-congo/>



Training in Income Generative Activities for 20 young girls orphans.

Fighting sexual violence in schools

AIP works to fight against all forms of gender based violence in schools and other settings.

Though statistics are clearly lacking at the moment, there is however growing evidence showing that misuse or rather the malicious use of social media by young people in the school environment significantly contributes to girls' wastage or dropout. For unknown reasons, some individuals do blackmail some girls by divulging intimate images and / or sound elements on them, thus durably attempting to their dignity and smearing their personality. Without psychosocial support or appropriate counselling, many of the victims end up dropping out of school because they cannot bear the weight of shame and stigmatization. This is quite an insidious and silent scourge going on in school environments.

In 2018, some such cases were reported at the Shaumba High School in Kinshasa. In the second half of 2019, there was another case that hit the headlines in the city of Kinshasa about a gang rape of a 13-year-old girl by classmates whose photos were widely shared on social media. Unable to bear the brunt of the stigma at school and in the community, the whole family had to relocate elsewhere to give themselves the chance to rebuild psychologically. AIP was able to assist the girl survivor, her sibling and her mother by providing psychological and judicial support. As a result the girl and her sister have recovered and have gone back to school. In view of the above, including the likelihood of many unreported cases, and considering the risk of seeing this scourge escalate in the school environment of the DRC, AIP continues to engage all concerned stakeholders (girls, boys, parents, state officials, etc.)



AIP's youth protesting against all sorts of violence done against girls/women.

to ensure girls are fully protected and their rights upheld. This includes education or raising awareness on girls' rights, morally arming them to denounce abuses, as well as providing holistic care to the survivors, which includes referral for medical attention, if necessary, provision of psychosocial support, and accompaniment of judicial redress, among other things. To start this programme activity in 2019, AIP randomly visited 3 high schools in Kinshasa where more than 400 youth were sensitized on girls' rights and protection to prevent school dropout. Through this activity, AIP is contributing to the fight against school dropout by girls.



Girls rose in a movement for the claim of their rights they mobilized themselves to go to court to support the girl who had been raped by 13 boys in a local school in Kinshasa.

Promotion of a clean environment

AIP organises activities on the promotion of clean environment not only in the schools but also in the communities amongst youths.

Kinshasa is a city of some twelve million, sprawling across the southern edge of the mighty Congo river. It is the capital of the DRC, one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 of just \$800⁵. Apart from the upscale central district of Gombe where there is some basic garbage collection organized, the rest of the city is marred in open dumping sites, legal and illegal, rivers and drainage filled with all sorts of wastes. Meanwhile, the evidence of harm caused by poor waste management is widespread. Not a single rainy would elapse without causing landslide and killing people across the city, most likely because of clogged drainage.

For this reason, AIP is working to sensitize the population and most especially the youth on waste management and the necessity of maintaining a clean environment as it directly influences the health of local community members. AIP believes that both the community and the government should join hands in tackling the issue of waste management in Kinshasa. Though not yet fully resourced in terms of equipment and finances, AIP decided to provide its contribution in this regard. Hence, visits were conducted in five (5) schools and universities to sensitize the youth on this important issues. On these occasions, AIP donated dustbins to schools that were visited; thus providing the students with basic tools to start practising, at school level, what they have been sensitized about.



Awareness raising on waste management in a school in Kinshasa.

AIP is set to pursue its efforts on environmental awareness towards all relevant stakeholders as well as advocacy for environment-friendly policies by government at all levels.

⁵ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>



AIP's needs assessment and capacity building conducted by the Carter Centre

The Carter Center conducted AIPs technical needs assessment in 2019, during the evaluation they assessed the following:

- AIP's knowledge of the concepts and principles of governance and democracy;
- AIP's understanding of the gender concept and interest in women's political participation;
- AIP's knowledge of the principles and importance of reporting;
- AIP's mastery in identifying themes, formulating objectives, identifying targets, developing the message and action plan for advocacy;
- AIP's mastery of monitoring and evaluation techniques of an advocacy action;
- AIP's advocacy actions;
- AIP's knowledge of the principles of non-violence and organizational communication;
- AIP's knowledge of the electoral process and criteria for credible election.

After the assessment, AIP benefited from different training such as:

- Capacity building on good governance and democracy.
- Capacity building on basic concepts on human rights.
- Capacity building on citizenship and political participation of young people.
- Capacity building on gender and political participation of women.
- Capacity building on reporting.
- Capacity building on advocacy.
- Capacity building on non-violent communication.
- Capacity building on the electoral process.

After the assessment, the Carter Centre provided different recommendations such as:

- ✓ To re-organise the internal structure of the organisation
- ✓ AIP to be trained on governance and democracy
- ✓ AIP to be trained on report writing and on non-violence communication.

The Carter Center assisted AIP in making internal changes and trained AIP on the above topics to strengthen its capacity and its interventions.

The assessment helped AIP reorganise its internal structures and reinforce its interventions on the ground in the communities.

Resource Mobilisation

AIP participated in different meetings to mobilise resources and to present its activities as a result The American School of Kinshasa funded AIP's activities. The USA embassy in the DRC provided a space to organise different activities and the embassy continued inviting AIP to its different activities.



AIP, represented by Mme Babunga Nyota at the USA Ambassadors's house to talk about violence done to girls in the DRC.



AIP represented by Mme Babunga Nyota at the American space presenting its activities close to the American Ambassador and his wife.



AIP represented by Mme Babunga Nyota, Phillomene Tshilomba, and Andrea at the American School of Kinshasa during a fund raising event organised by the school in AIP's favour to support its activities.



AIP represented by Mme Babunga Nyota at the American AMBosodor's house with the Actress Ms Ashley Judd and Mme Kartherin Odimba of the UNwomen.

UJUZI

Uvira is a city and a sub-provincial administrative entity in the South Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It also doubles as the chief town of the chiefdom of the Bavira people. Like many other areas of eastern DRC, Uvira had also had its fair share of war consequences, including destruction of basic social infrastructures like water points, schools, markets, places of worship, disbanded families, child soldiers, orphans, etc. Besides, pre-war structural poverty which was deepened by two successive civil wars (1996 -1997, and 1998-2001) led to a very high school dropout in the entire affected area. Many children, born out of rape, unwanted pregnancies or simply from highly vulnerable families, ended up in the streets.

In response, the UJUZI project was set up to help support the education of the war-affected children. Thus, Ujuzi school was created in since (1987) but was handed to AIP in 2018 in Uvira. In 2019, the scholl had 349 students enrolled, with the majority (65%) hailing from poor and underprivileged social categories described above. The community around the school, not so better off as well, is also benefiting by sending their children to this school. About 20 % of students in these schools are orpherns whose parents were madered during the different conflicts that have affected the country.

However, the school facility happens to be in deplorable conditions: lack of school furniture and other basic equipment, lack of proper toilet facilities, shattered fixture and fittings, etc. There is therefore a need to rehabilitate and renovate the school to create conducive learning



conditions for children who already have a difficult past.

After a needs assessment conducted at end of the year 2019 it was evident that the school has a great number of needs:

Books, desks, and other school materials.

When handed to AIP in 2019, the school was in a bad condition thus for the full rehabilitation of the school an amount of 20000 USD is required.

At the end of 2019, AIP managed to raises 2000 dollars, from the contributions of well wishers, to renovate some of the facilities of the school.

AIP intends to continue with the rehabilitation as soon as necessary funds are secured.



Ujuzi before rehabilitation.



Ujuzi after rehabilitation



Ujuzi students in front of their school.



Ujuzi students in their classes, Kindergarten and primary school.

