

Hood College Davis Peace Project
Fight Poverty, Empower Rural Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo

By Jonathan Musubao (UWC-USA '19, Hood College '23)

Date of Project: May 23- June 10, 2022.

City of Project: Kinshasa, The Democratic Republic of Congo.

Advisor: Dr. Sang Kim

Project Background

Gender disparity is both a moral and social concern, as well as a significant economic challenge. Poverty affects women and girls disproportionately, and many have little or no participation in the decisions that influence their life. They often have less food, acquire less education, and suffer disproportionately from inadequate sanitation. Many people have little or no money, which makes them reliant on others. Empowering people may help to eradicate poverty by allowing them to be more self-sufficient in terms of their skills and abilities, which they may use to support their families. Poverty increases when people are unable to care for their children and relatives; as a result, an empowered individual can save many lives.

According to the United Nations, the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo are suffering from the impact of one of the most complex and longest humanitarian crises, a country grappling with the aftermath of conflicts, epidemics such as Ebola, and natural disasters that have driven people out of their homes, nearly 20 million people are food insecure. Acute malnutrition affects almost 3 million children. In DRC, less than 3% of women own agricultural land.

Plan and Objectives

Fight Poverty, Empower Rural Women in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a project initiated by GlobalGiving, a nonprofit organization that assists other organizations by linking them with individuals and businesses. One of their goals is to create a suitable web-based environment for youth communication and to create an appropriate place for them to communicate mutual issues and propose answers. Families in many rural communities rely on agriculture to feed themselves as well as earn a living. Women make up over half of the agricultural laborers worldwide, but barely a fifth of landowners.

Improving the productivity of women farmers is therefore critical not just to strengthen their ability to financially support themselves and their families, but also to feed the family from the produce.

Women's rights to land and other property (including through inheritance) are such a vital aspect of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls that it has been listed as a target.

The DRC relies primarily on rain-fed agriculture, which is dominated by food crops. Despite the abundance of irrigation prospects, only 13,500 ha of sugar cane and rice are irrigated out of a total of 4 million ha. Agriculture takes up only 10% of the useable agricultural land, with only 3% being farmed and the remainder (7%) being utilized for grazing. Soil productivity is also low. Indeed, due to a reduction in government funding and a lack of private capital, very little money is spent on crops (due to lack of fertilizers, quality seeds, and plant-care goods). In the DRC, there are two forms of livestock-producing farming. Traditional farming, especially of small livestock (goats, sheep, and pigs), is the first and most common. The animals are bred in a filthy environment with no shelter or veterinary treatment. The second is modern intensive farming, which is practiced by missionaries as well as a few private farms. The animals are housed and fed properly, as well as receiving veterinary treatment.

For this particular project, about twenty disadvantaged rural women will be connected with banks to start with farming companies and create long-term jobs for themselves and their peers as part of this project. Although the areas these women live in are not the best, the help of Bertille Dunda, the AgroMwinda project leader, who I have been in contact with throughout this project planning, has mentioned that the farm needs to be amplified, one of their projects is to add different kinds of animals such as chicken, goats, and pigs in order to help more rural women to be employed. Additionally, there is a need for good types of equipment for the veterinary treatment of animals. I want to invest the money into helping buy new animals, and getting the equipment for veterinary care. I'm eager to do this project because it will reduce women's unemployment in DRC, and it will push other NGOs, the government, and different companies to act more into disadvantaged rural women's lives, and value them more. Training in

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capacity building, life skills, technology, and agribusiness (food production and processing, beekeeping, goat farming, organic manure, dairy, and so on) would be provided to increase their self-confidence, livelihood growth, and empowerment.

Women's confidence, solidarity, social awareness, comprehension, and leadership characteristics will all benefit from this institution. The major concerns that will be able to reduce poverty are skill development, capability enhancement, and development of their living standard and livelihood. Villagers will be better educated about business, and foundation education for girls and women will be implemented. The future impact is that there will be a decrease in the number of women living in extreme poverty. Poor rural women will have a better quality of life and a better livelihood as a result of AgroMwinda's support, which will help to boost women's social and economic empowerment. That is what I call a project that promotes peace.

Detailed Plan of the Summer

Dates	Statement
May 20	Arrive to Kinshasa, DRC
May 23	Meeting Bertille Dunda at 2 PM to make at the AgroMwinda office.
May 24-26	Leaving at 9 AM to go purchase the essential equipment and Veterinary materials at the veterinary professional pharmacy about 3hours away from Kinshasa, and bring them to stock them in AgroMwinda Office.
May 27-31	Travel to Maluku, the project village county to meet the project's women.
June 1-2	Education Day 1: Talking to them about what they will be doing on the farm Education Day 2: More details about the work and how to use the materials
June 3	Purchasing their work clothes with and printing the project's name on them.
June 4-6	Drive about 4hours away to another farm to purchase all the animals and bring them to Maluku
June 7-9	Feed the animals with the women so they can practice their work and start planting different foods with them.
June 10	Travel Back to Kinshasa city to collect all the receipts and do the aftermath of the budget.

Project Relationship with my Majors

As an Accounting and Economics double-major, this project relates in many ways to both majors because economic growth has little effect on income disparity, it teaches me how to use the money efficiently, and alleviate poverty. Also, economic growth tends to improve incomes for all members of society, even the poor because income patterns are largely stable over time. This project will definitely solve one of the big problems that economics tries to resolve. This project promotes peace and is a benefit to the wellbeing of women, which contributes to the economic development of the country.

Project Website: <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/congo-reliable-energy-and-sustainable-planet-fund/>