

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



THE DRC IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST FRAGILE STATES. SINCE 1999, SIX MILLION PEOPLE HAVE DIED AS A DIRECT OR INDIRECT RESULT OF THE ONGOING CIVIL CONFLICT.

The extreme insecurity experienced by families and communities on a continuing basis leads to displacement, hunger, and the breakdown of basic health services. The best and bravest work of community development can be undone in just a few moments of violent destruction.

"I don't remember a time when I saw peace," one community worker said. "I [only] hear about that time from my grandfathers."

The reality of good sustainable development work is that it is hard, it is long-term, and the forces ranged against you can seem overwhelming. Yet the wonder is not that the work is so hard, but that so many have the courage to embark upon it.

Over the next four years, you are invited, through the World Development Appeal, to travel this hard road in solidarity with our partners in fragile states like the DRC. We invite you to learn more about the need for resilience over time, in the work of sustainable development. We invite you to listen to our partners as they speak about both pain and celebration. We want you to hear how voices raised for gender justice are absolutely critical to development work in fragile states, both for women and for men. And we invite you to stand in solidarity with our partners as they imagine, and continue to build, a different future.

HOW CAN I HELP?



LEARN

Please use the resources provided by World Development, available online at www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development. Find out more and learn how beautiful it is when women and men work together to bring the hopes they share for their community to fruition, and how the voices of women who have suffered the most can turn that suffering to greater dignity for all.

PRAY

Prayer is a vital activity in the communities where Tearfund and Christian Aid work and partner. Use the information available through this World Development Appeal to pray knowledgeably for their work and the people involved.

GIVE

The 2017 World Development Appeal highlights partner communities in the DRC, with a secondary focus on Zimbabwe (see web page). The emphasis is on the long-term challenges and resilience needed for good and sustainable development in fragile states, with a particular focus on the importance of gender justice. Your giving will enable organisations like Action Entraide to support some of the world's poorest people, building a future for them in some of the hardest places in the world to be a woman, and to be poor.

For further information:

World Development, Assembly Buildings, Belfast BT1 6DW
www.presbyterianireland.org/world-development
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104483)
Registered Charity in the Republic of Ireland (20015695)



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CHURCH IN IRELAND

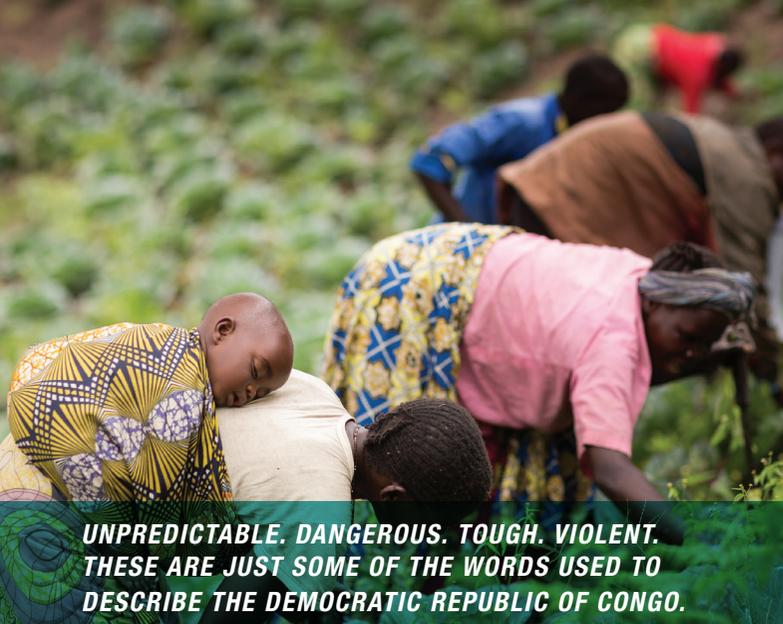
A beautiful idea:

WOMEN'S VOICES IN FRAGILE STATES

World Development Appeal 2017



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**UNPREDICTABLE. DANGEROUS. TOUGH. VIOLENT.
THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE WORDS USED TO
DESCRIBE THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.**

“When I think, I feel too bad,” one woman said. “If I keep on thinking, I might die of that.”

According to Tearfund statistics, there are 3.7 million internally displaced people in the DRC. Violence against civilians includes forced abduction, mass execution, and rape. The DRC is one of the world’s most dangerous places to be a woman, and one of the most difficult places to be poor.

Yet across this vast and beautiful land, the size of western Europe, and with no infrastructure or civil society to back them up, women and men are still finding ways to become mentors for peace and agents for change in their local communities. Here are some of their stories.



**“THE SELF-HELP
GROUP IS
beautiful.”**



“Beautiful!” one woman says. “The self-help group is beautiful.”

Not so long ago, if a pregnant woman living in her village near Bunia experienced complications and needed hospital care, her chances of reaching the hospital in time were poor. The hospital was only accessible by motorbike taxi, and taxis had to be ordered and paid for. The roads are rough and so drivers have to travel slowly. Many women didn’t reach the hospital in time.

The beautiful idea, however, was a travel fund, started by the women themselves with a small weekly contribution from each. As greater demands were made on the fund, Tearfund partner Action Entraide stepped in and assisted the women in developing a market garden, whose profits are returned to the travel fund. Started by women, the fund is now also supported by the men, and their story is told in our first video.

In the second video you will hear **Hope’s story**, and you may find it **suitable only for adult viewing**. In the film, Hope tells the traumatic story of being taken from her home and gang raped when she was in her fourth year of high school. She survived and was rescued and given medical care, but for a long time she was hardly able to eat. She talks about feeling a deep sense of shame and wanting only to leave the country.

With the support of her family and friends, however, she eventually returned to school, and later entered university. She speaks movingly of how important it was for her to be in a place that valued women and had formal structures in place to encourage hearing women’s voices. Hope now works in a counselling centre and understands that in some ways her voice and her story have become her ministry. She speaks movingly of her faith, of the church’s own need to hear voices like hers, and of her conviction that suffering is never the last word.

Hope is back in church, *singing*.

