



**NON-VIOLENCE, DEMOCRACY
AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**
IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO



**Development
and Peace**

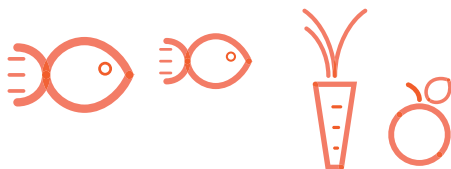
CARITAS CANADA

PROMOTING THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

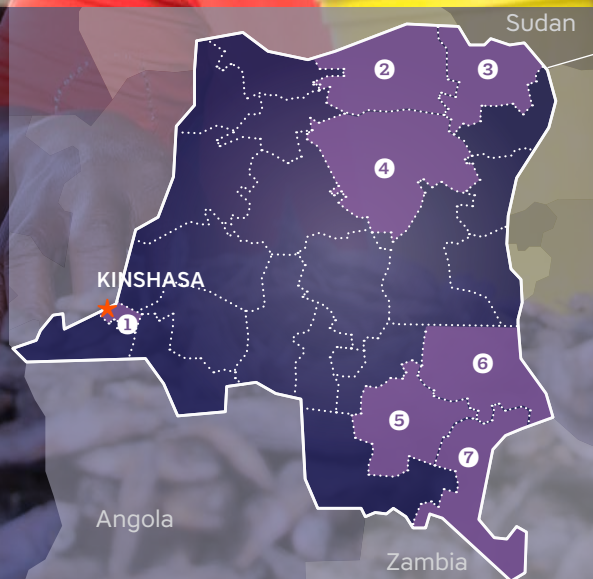
In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (RDC), Development and Peace works to promote the economic empowerment of women, which improves the living conditions of families. In Kalebuka, a neighborhood of Lubumbashi, and in the city of Kasenga, both located in the Province of Katanga in the south-eastern part of the country, the organization has supported the construction of two public covered markets. Modern and up to sanitary standards, women can sell fresh produce every day of the year in order to boost their income at these markets.

BRINGING COMMUNITIES CLOSER TO LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Setting up these public markets has also helped bring people closer to their locally elected officials. In addition to having participated in the construction of the markets, communities are now their primary managers. Management committees have been established in order to ensure permanent dialogue between elected officials and communities so as to maximize public revenue, promote participatory management, improve governance, and ensure the sustainable development of the municipalities concerned.



At the market in Kasenga, women primarily sell fish, but also corn, sweet potatoes or even cassava. "We used to conduct our business in poor conditions. We sold our fish and vegetables on the side of the main road, which caused many accidents. Today, this new market is everything to us. It enables us to increase our revenues while protecting us from accidents and bad weather," says a fish seller at Kasenga's new covered market, which was built with the support of Development and Peace.



The Democratic Republic of the Congo

Provinces where communities have been educated on issues of democracy, non-violence and citizen participation thanks to the support of Development and Peace.

- 1 Kinshasa
- 2 Bas-Uele
- 3 Haut-Uele
- 4 Tshopo
- 5 Haut-Lomami
- 6 Tanganyika
- 7 Haut-Katanga

“In the past, we the women of the village of Mbalaka did not know our rights.

However, listening to RCK has opened our eyes. For example, rape is no longer a taboo subject in our community. Today, when a young girl is raped, we no longer try to work things out amicably between the two families, like in the past. We go directly to the police and seek justice.”

Cécile Kazadi, RCK listener and member of the Mbalaka listeners' club-in, Likasi.



COMMUNITY RADIO NETWORKS AS VEHICLES FOR PEACE

RCK and RACOR are also among the best sources of information available to Congolese people in rural areas. In fact, few villagers have electricity, let alone internet access. Radio is very popular among families, both in cities and in villages. Programs are hosted in various national and local languages (Swahili, Tshiluba, Kiluba, Lingala, etc.) and reach millions of Congolese, even in the most remote villages, in order to promote peace and democracy.

Wherever community radio is broadcast, people come together to listen in small groups. Listeners' clubs form spontaneously, which in turn leads to reflection groups that discuss the topics broadcast, such as a new agricultural technique or questionable traditional practices. Community radio plays the role of path-finder for the population, who are then better equipped to recognize and combat injustices.

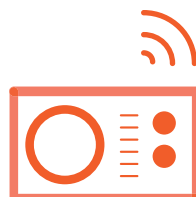
HUMAN DIGNITY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

For over ten years, Development and Peace has been supporting the RACOR community radio network in Orientale Province and the RCK network in Katanga Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Both of these regions hold a wealth of natural resources, yet local populations suffer from conflict and corruption rather than enjoying the benefits of this wealth.

For the millions of RCK listeners, including those in the most remote areas of the country, access to information plays an essential role in enhancing their collective dignity as full-fledged citizens and in helping them be agents of their own development. From the start, these radio networks have, among other things, contributed to encouraging massive and non-violent participation in elections, improving education for girls, increasing social cohesion, and boosting agricultural production.

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE SUPPORTS THE RCK AND RACOR COMMUNITY RADIO NETWORKS

- 7** community radio stations
- 3.5** million regular listeners
- 50** hosted programs in 8 national and local languages



Listeners' clubs help the radio networks operate by providing structured support for their programming, management and financing. Thanks to extensive organizational work, listeners' clubs can function as local development committees that initiate livestock or even textile manufacturing projects, just to name two examples.



THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, A NATION OF MANY CONTRADICTIONS

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the third largest country in Africa. Its area of 2.3 million square kilometres is equivalent to the provinces of Quebec and Ontario put together. The population is made up of more than 400 ethnic groups, and more than half of its 70 million inhabitants are under the age of 20.

The DRC is one of the richest countries in natural resources in Africa and the world (wood, water, land, copper, coltan, diamonds, iron, gold, etc.) However, far from benefiting the local population, the nation's mineral resources, forests and fertile land are instead causing it misfortune. The DRC has witnessed terrible violence during the past 10 years, as various factions seek to seize political power and exercise control over these vast natural resources. Various armed groups have been fighting for decades, making the civilian population, including women, the primary victims.



Development and Peace has been working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the end of the 1970s. The organization initiates projects to foster greater citizen participation and to strengthen democracy by setting up civic education activities or creating spaces for dialogue and collaboration between communities and their locally elected officials. The projects are also designed to help certain communities benefit from the exploitation of mineral resources and boost the income of women and youth, who are among the nation's most vulnerable people.



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