



THE CONGO TREE

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

176 YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINED



88 LEADER MENTORS
88 YOUNG LEADERS

84%

**SAID THEIR CAPACITY TO
RESOLVE PROBLEMS HAD
IMPROVED A GOOD OR
GREAT AMOUNT**

94%

**SAID THEIR LEADERSHIP
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
HAD IMPROVED A GOOD
OR GREAT AMOUNT**

99%

**SAID THAT THE QUALITY
OF LEARNING WAS GOOD
OR EXCELLENT**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This year, it was a delight to see first-hand the excellent work of The Congo Tree Interns and volunteer Facilitators during my first trip to Goma for the annual celebration and graduation event in September 2016. As you will see in this short report, the team in DRC have really taken great initiative as they have pushed the work forward in terms of numbers and effectiveness.

The training materials have been tailored, and new opportunities have opened up for the work - in particular through *Projet Ecole*, which benefited 120 students across 4 schools in Goma (see page 7).

What you will see is that the potential for change is vast, with relatively small investments reaping huge returns for the young people, their families, and the wider community. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I'd like to thank you for your support of this excellent work, over the last year, and into the future.

Steve

THE CONGO TREE TEAM

Our 2016-17 Board of Trustees were Steve Bavington, Jane Searle, Dave Holt, Hebdavi Kyeya, Amy Cummings and Heidi Bentley. Our UK Team is Beki Ferenczy and Katie Maclachlan, who have been supported by several other wonderful volunteers at our UK events during the year.

In DRC, Medi Baden continued in his role of Team Leader, supported by Fidele Muhanga as Finance Officer and four amazing interns: Baby Kitambala (Engagement), Gloria Bauma (Programmes), Lydia Kisendo (Operations), and Espoir Bindu (Participation).

We were also blessed to be able to rent our first office space in Goma, DRC: a room within a compound with other local non-governmental organisations.





WORLD YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our WYLD Programme equips young people with transferable life and leadership skills, increasing their resilience, adaptability and employability. This year, **56** young people started our Goma-based programme, and a further **120** within our adapted schools programme – *Projet Ecole*.

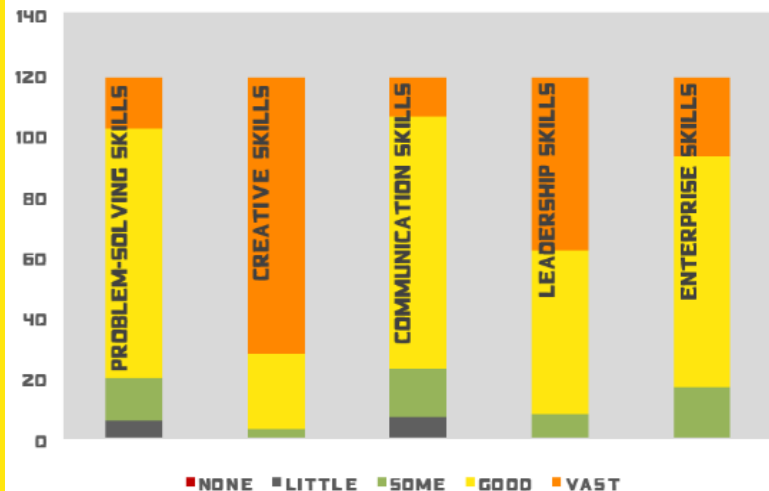
We are training young people in 5 specific transferable skills: communication, creativity, problem-solving, entrepreneurial capability and leadership with integrity. At their graduation, this is what these graduates (those who had participated in 80% or more of the programme) told us about their experience of the WYLD programme:

99%

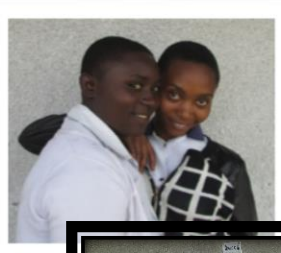
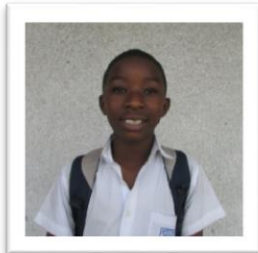
SAID THAT THE QUALITY
OF LEARNING WAS GOOD
OR EXCELLENT

95%

SAID THAT THE CONTENT
OF THE PROGRAMME WAS
GOOD OR EXCELLENT



Q: HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS HAVE IMPROVED THROUGH YOUR TIME WITH THE CONGO TREE (COLLECTED IN SEPTEMBER 2017 AT THEIR GRADUATION)



PROJET ECOLE



What began as a social action project idea from some of our youth has developed into an adapted WYLD programme, run this year in **4 schools** in Goma with **120 students!**

Projet Ecole attempts to use training and mentoring to tackle some of the reasons that young people do not complete secondary school in DRC. Whilst our DRC team developed their large-group facilitation skills, we had teachers and parents asking if they could also take part in the training, having seen such a remarkable change in their young people. One teacher became an honorary graduate and shared his experience with our guests at the gradation event:

"We want to say a big thank you to The Congo Tree because since last year we have felt the positive impact from the different training sessions... it is transforming the Congolese youth who are without hope and struggling with self-discipline. Today, I can personally witness to the success of the training for them because they react differently now. This training has broadened the views of so many young people."

55 HOURS



AVERAGE AMOUNT OF
TRAINING FOR EVERY
YOUNG PERSON





"Being mentored is one of the greatest experiences. I discovered someone who encouraged me to move forward, who gave me hope and confidence in myself. My mentor is like a big brother."

MENTORING

"The greatest good that you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own" – Benjamin Disraeli.

Every one of our **88** Young Leaders is paired with a Leader Mentor – a peer who has a little more life experience, mentoring training, and some time to give to support that Young Leader on their year with The Congo Tree, and often beyond.

Checking in with them at the end of the programme revealed that our young people were greatly satisfied with their experience of mentoring – both the Young Leaders and Mentors. Each one was able to express positive impacts in their lives, including the development of strong relationships and that they wanted to continue to be inspired and inspire others.



56%

MET UP FOR AN HOUR
EVERY WEEK, OR MORE!



**12+ HOURS OF
MENTORING FOR EVERY
YOUNG LEADER**

100%

**INTEND TO STAY IN CONTACT
WITH THEIR MENTOR OR
MENTEE AFTER GRADUATION**



SOCIAL ACTION AND ENTERPRISE

We supported 3 youth designed and led social action projects from our WYLD challenge, each group receiving \$100 to put their project in action: from this, 5 fathers have bikes to transport water, 5 mothers who are HIV+ were given loans to start small businesses and a group of families were given chickens to breed. Including their families, these projects have supported 120 of the poorest people in the communities that our young people live in.



Visiting the fish-pond project in Masisi, set up in 2014, we discovered that the young leaders were now about to catch and sell enough fish to support all 4 group members to continue with their education. Due to the success of the project and their eagerness to develop the business, we gave a further grant to help them expand the project; the pond is now triple the original size!

Supporting our partners *BADEN Developpement* and *Rally International*, the 'Children for Peace' summer school ran in two locations in Goma in August: our team trained the volunteers and supported during the summer when over 800 children attended and learnt that "peace was in their hands" through creative and sports activities.



**equipping
inspiring
supporting
young leaders**

94%

**OF GRADUATES RATED
OUR FACILITATORS AS
GOOD OR EXCELLENT**



“When I facilitate lessons, it gives me the great advantage to understand twice as much because I get to learn it all again. Also through being a facilitator, automatically my capacity has increased and I’m now not afraid to speak out when I need to”

FACILITATORS

We have an amazing team of 15 Facilitators. All of these Facilitators are young people that have been through the WYLD programme and now volunteer their time to equip others. And they are really good at what they do!

Each Facilitator must undertake in-house training with The Congo Tree, and then spends 3 to 6 months practicing facilitation within monthly meetings and *Projet Ecole*, with the support of a more experienced Facilitator. When they are ready, it’s time to put on their yellow t-shirt and become officially part of the team!

Just like our interns, our Facilitators have the opportunity to work towards a professional qualification with us, through *GULL (the Global University of Lifelong Learning)*.



24 HOURS



**AVERAGE AMOUNT OF
VOLUNTEERING BY
OUR FACILITATORS
EACH YEAR**

ALUMNI

With around 250 graduates from our programmes in the last 3 years, we are proud that so many alumni attend our graduation events, keep in touch, and tell us stories of how being a part of The Congo Tree has changed their lives, and of those around them. Here are three stories from this year:



Julien has a job in a bank in Goma. He credited The Congo Tree with helping to improve his communication skills so that he did well in his interview. Within 6 months, he was offered a promotion – his boss told him that it was because of his leadership style and ability to work so well with others – skills that Julien says he developed whilst being part of The Congo Tree.

Laetitia is the Vice-President in charge of the protection and participation of children in the Children's Parliament in North-Kivu. Through her roles with the Children's Parliament, Laetitia gives her time and energy to serving marginalised children, protecting them, being a voice for them, and making sure their rights are respected. She says, **"The Congo Tree helped me discover my talent, the potential that was hidden in me and now I know how to carry out my roles and duties in the best way."**



Amani* lives in Masisi and, having been a child soldier, he says that his experience of the WYLD programme supported him to continue to turn his life around. He is now the elected spokesperson for all the students in his school. In his spare time, he assembles young people together from different tribes for activities that look at how they can live more peacefully together. He told us, ***"In 2014, I received training from The Congo Tree team and this was a new starting point in my life because I finally understood who I was and how I should behave with others as community... Thanks***

to The Congo Tree, I discovered that I was a leader and that I needed to be a useful young man for my village. My character was no longer based on what others said about me but on the skills that I had discovered in me."

FINANCE REPORT

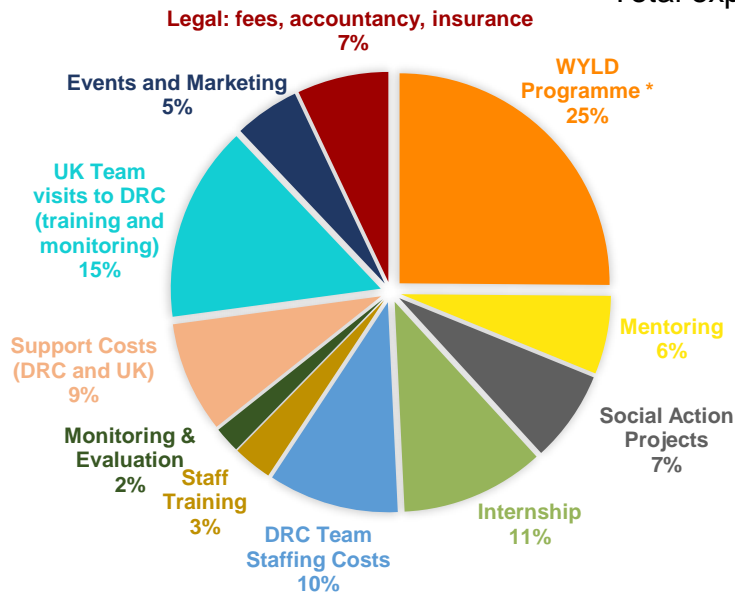
INCOME

Total income: £14, 862



EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure: £18,102



The Congo Tree is committed to being a good steward of our donor’s money, using the gifts we receive in the best possible way – that’s why we can happily say that over **80%** of our income is given directly to our charitable activities in DRC (including allocated support costs).

We are hugely thankful for the more than **1200 volunteer hours** given by our DRC and UK Teams over the year, which enabled us to spend close to £15,000 directly on programmes to inspire, equip and support young people in the DRC.

* Our March / April 2016 WYLD programme in Goma was paid for by funds allocated in the previous financial year, and therefore are not included here.

STRATEGIC REPORT: ACHIEVEMENTS

VISION: *To inspire, equip and support young leaders in the DRC.*

OUR AIMS 2016-2017:

Aim #1: Urban WYLD - to train at least 56 young people in Goma

→ We trained 56 young people, creating 2 new groups in Goma as part of our regular WYLD programmes.

Aim #2: Rural WYLD - to train a new group in Masisi

→ Unfortunately, the security situation in Masisi made training impossible. However, we were able to get back on a monitoring trip in February and, as the area is now calmer, a training is planned for later in 2017.

Aim #3: To expand our schools project in Goma

→ After the huge success of our Projet Ecole pilot, we expanded from 2 into 4 secondary schools, running our WYLD programme with 120 students and 4 teachers. Feedback from the school's governors, teaching staff and parents was hugely positive, with some asking if they could also take part in the programme.

Aim #4: To serve at least 500 community members through youth-led social action and enterprise projects

→ At least 800 children attended the 'Children For Peace' Summer school project in Goma in August 2016. Working in conjunction with partners *BADEN Developpement* and *Rally International*, this project was led by Baby Kitambala and supported by 15 volunteers from The Congo Tree.

→ Our youth led social action projects benefitted approximately 120 people.

→ We supported the expansion of the successful fish pond business in Masisi.

Aim #5: To increase our DRC team and find an office space

→ This year, we increased internship opportunities and created the roles of Team Leader and Finance Officer, bringing our DRC Team to 6 people.

→ We trained a further 10 Facilitators.

→ We also moved into an office space in a shared compound, giving our team a place to work and meet.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

→ 81 young people graduated after completing their 1 year as part of The Congo Tree (having started with us in 2015) and joined our alumni.

→ The creation of the 'Be Part of the Story' family of organisations.

→ We welcomed our Chair of the Board to Goma for the first time.

→ We ran a bespoke training day on Relationships and Sexual Health for 35 young people.



#BEPARTOFTHESTORY

Be Part of the Story is a family of Christian organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, brought together by The Congo Tree in December 2016. We believe that all individuals and groups have a part to play in the story of life, in God's story, and we are excited to play our part! We know that we can go further together, so we are committed to each other to work alongside each other for the best of ourselves, our loved ones and our communities.

As part of this journey together, we are proposing to host an annual **#bepartofthestory** event – a non-denominational worship and commissioning event for young people. It will be an opportunity for young leaders to hear testimonies and stories about what it's like being part of God's story from other young people around the world.

We would like to thank that family for their support over the year.



TRANSFORMATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

