



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2018-2019**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am constantly amazed at the superb work that our teams are doing to inspire and train the next generation of young leaders in the DRC - helping them to reach their full potential. I commend this Annual Report to you, because it is full of stories of change. These stories show that our work, though small-scale at the moment, is having a massive impact - far beyond individual lives, but into families, communities and entire villages. One of the greatest privileges I have is to hear first-hand the stories of how big an impact a small grass-roots organisation can truly have. Lives are being changed and it just keeps on growing. With your help, we can do even more, so thank you for all your support over the last 12 months.

Steve Bowington

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I think this year might have been the most exciting year so far for The Congo Tree. Starting the year by celebrating 5 years of programmes and nearly 500 young leaders trained and journeying with us was such an encouragement and catalyst to look towards what more we can do in the next 5 years! And we started immediately, with the introduction of the Tree of Life as a low-level trauma therapy approach to support our young leaders and by expanding WYLD into a new rural location. Our DRC Team are absolutely outstanding in how they model all that we teach about leadership, and they continually inspire me, in addition to all the young people in their care. What I hope that you will find in this report is proof of what we hopefully already know: that young people are truly amazing. They are passionate and compassionate, intelligent and capable, enterprising and creative; and with the right equipping and support, they will become young leaders that really can be a part of the story of changing their world.



Heidi Bentley

A MESSAGE FROM DRC



Our DRC Team, left to right: Sage, Lydia, Olivier and Medi

In DRC, our team (pictured) has continued to be led by Medi Baden. He has been supported by the DRC Team; Belydia Kisendo (Operations Officer), Sage Dunia (Participation and Mentoring Officer), Christian Muteke and Olivier Simweray (Engagement Interns), as well as a fabulous team of Facilitators.

“The word 'impossible' no longer exists in our dictionary”

"The year 2018-19 was a year where, together with the young people of The Congo Tree, we changed the world for the youth of the Democratic Republic of Congo with many activities carried out in the province of North Kivu. Up to the end of March 2019, our programme has been successful in reaching more than 650 young people with positive impacts in the community and many success stories. We have established firm foundations of change in these young people to improve their level of confidence, self-esteem and, above all, a better vision for this country - especially for youth like themselves. We know that this youth is today's hope and now is the time to act for change. The word 'impossible' no longer exists in our dictionary because we believe in ourselves and we can be part of the story and the history of this great country, and the world! Big thanks to all the supporters around the world, our Board of Trustees, our Facilitators and all the young people who got involved for this year to be even better than the previous."

Medi Mnyisa

THE UK TEAM

Our 2018-19 Board of Trustees were Steve Bavington, Jane Searle, Hebdavi Kyeya, Amy Cummings, Sarah Patel, Zsuzsanna Jakabfi and Heidi Bentley. Ben Bartlett was appointed to join us in March 2019.

We said goodbye and a huge “thank you” to both Beki McLoughlin and Katie Maclachlan from our UK Team during the year, handing the reins over to Harmony Ngwamah and Philippa Walusimbi.



"The stories that we share on our platforms reflect the nature of our work which is about enabling young people to be agents of change rather than telling them what to do. As a volunteer, I feel that I have the support needed to make a meaningful contribution to our work." - Harmony, UK Team

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5 YEARS OF THE CONGO TREE



Board of Trustees at event from left to right: Zsuzsanna Jakabfi, Heidi Bentley, Sarah Patel, Hebdavi Kyeya, Jane Searle, and Steve Bavington.



In April 2018, we were overjoyed to reach the milestone of 5 years of youth development in DRC, knowing that we had worked with almost 500 young leaders in that time! We celebrated together in Goma, DRC and in Birmingham, UK with friends and supporters. In Birmingham, we were privileged to hear our Co-Founder and Trustee Hebdavi share our story and some of the amazing impact we have seen in DRC, inspiring and encouraging us to look towards the next 5 years!



THE WYLD PROGRAMME

The World Youth Leadership Development (WYLD) Programme is a year-long course dedicated to inspiring, equipping and supporting young people by providing them with the transferable life skills necessary to become leaders, peace-makers and active contributors to their local community.

This year, we continued to run programmes in Goma and Masisi, and extended our reach with the first WYLD programme in Rutshuru. We continued our partnership with HEAL Africa and the schools enrolled in 'Projet Ecole'. We were able to celebrate with **174 young people** who took part in the WYLD Programme during the year.

Our young people are fully committed to The Congo Tree, to their WYLD programme, and to each other; mentoring has created a bridge and an informal platform between young people from different ethnic groups and backgrounds, particularly in Rutshuru and Masisi; two areas still coping with active violence and conflict, as well as dealing with their respective histories. Through the WYLD programme, young people learn to know each other as valued individuals, and as part of a team. They share their perspectives, listening to other points of view and learning from each other. In these conversations and in the neutral space created by our team, the young people we work with are beginning to understand and safely confront their histories, and agree to live together in a peaceful way. Together, they meet the challenges to fight for a better life and discover the huge and positive impact they can have on building a better world, for them and others.



THE WYLD PROGRAMME

TREE OF LIFE

As part of our overall programme development, informed particularly by our expanding work in rural areas, we wanted to find a way to support young people dealing with trauma.

The Tree of Life is a narrative therapy programme aimed at helping people deal with past trauma and move on with a better sense of identity, increased resilience and hope. The young people are able to use their personal tree as a way to get to know their mentors, and develop their understanding of the Forest of Life within their new teams on the WYLD programme.

The Tree of Life has proved to be a wonderful way for the young leaders to explore their origins and think about how to encourage peaceful coexistence in their communities. It was a great experience for our mentors and mentees and noticeably improved initial conversations in the mentoring relationships.



There is more information on The Tree of Life approach at: www.dulwichcentre.com.au/the-tree-of-life/

THE WYLD PROGRAMME

RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS

In December the DRC Team supported our young leaders and alumni in doing their WYLD Random Act of Kindness challenge. This year, our young leaders decided their act of kindness would be to deliver food to 75 children in a local orphanage. They raised all the money they needed themselves, and then got to spend time with the children, having fun and playing games.



THE WYLD PROGRAMME

The WYLD programme helps young people to develop the five recognised transferable life and leadership skills: communication, creativity, problem-solving, entrepreneurial capability and leadership with integrity.

91%

Said they enjoyed every aspect of the programme.



99%

Said that the quality of learning was good or excellent.



81%

Said their level of knowledge developed during the WYLD programme a good or vast amount over the year.



THE WYLD PROGRAMME



80%

Said their capacity to resolve problems improved to a good or vast amount.

88%

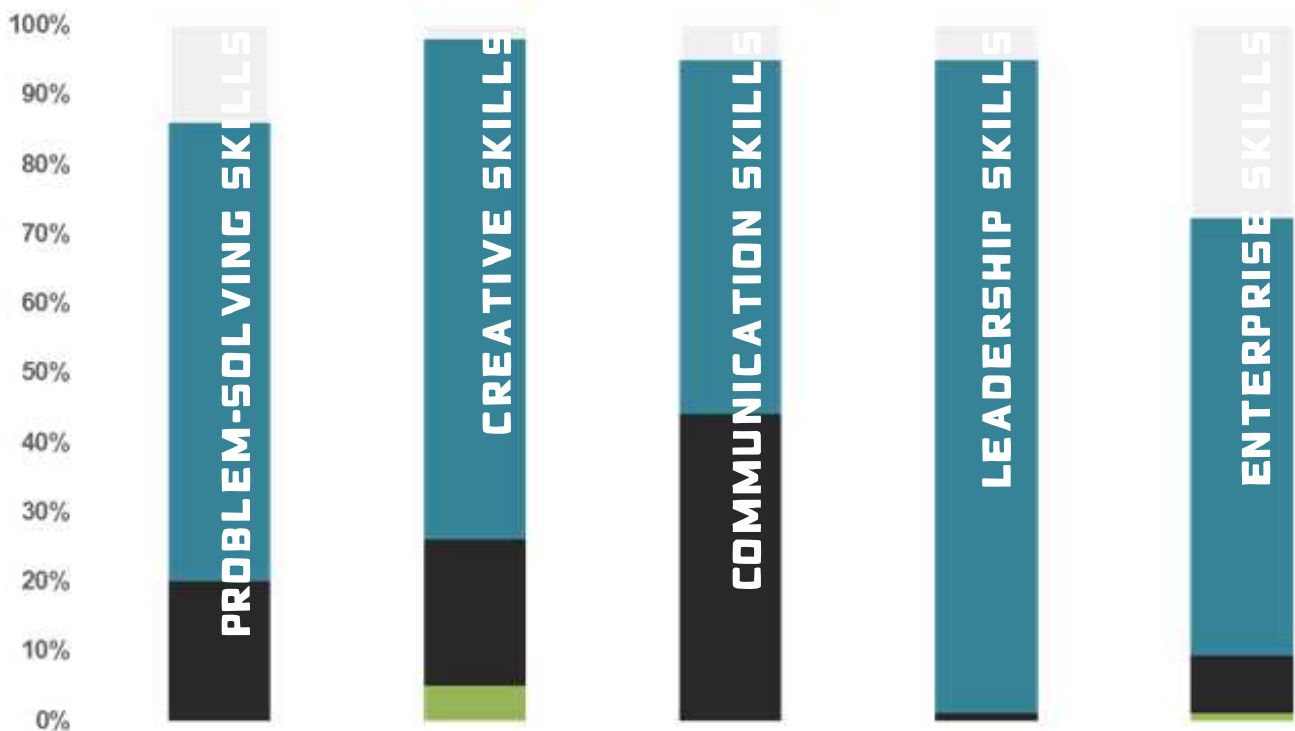
Said their capacity to be entrepreneurial improved to a good or vast amount.

94%

Said their leadership skills improved to a good amount.

Q. HOW MUCH DO YOU THINK YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS HAVE IMPROVED THROUGH YOUR TIME WITH THE CONGO TREE?

■ NONE ■ A LITTLE ■ SOMEWHAT ■ GOOD ■ VAST



MENTORING

Every participant in our WYLD Programme is put into a mentoring pair, either as a mentor or mentee dependent on their age, experience and capacities. They agree to meet for at least one hour of mentoring time a month, although the majority of our young people meet together far more than that!

Overall, 87 Young Leaders were mentored by 87 Leader Mentors in our various programmes over the course of the year.



"Personally mentoring helped me a lot with my self-awareness, because when you have someone who sees you as a role model, it pushes you to do the best you can. And that pushes you to discover yourself and know yourself more fully. When you have a problem, the challenge also pushes you to know that you are able to do better.

Understand that mentoring takes time. It is a price that must be paid [to bring about change in both the mentor and mentee]; including certain abilities such as active listening, understanding and tolerance.

Our goals were spiritually, intellectually and socially structured. Among these goals, we are working on the whole person at the same time and we hope everyone will see success before the end of our mentoring program. I believe that the mentoring programme will help the Congolese nation in the fight for peace and national development. "

Emmanuel, Leader Mentor

100%

Intend to stay in contact with their mentor or mentee after graduation.

82%

Met up for at least one hour every month!

PARTNERSHIPS

HEAL AFRICA



We have been working in partnership with HEAL Africa delivering the WYLD Programme to 30 young people in their CAP programme. All the young people in CAP have been significantly impacted by HIV and Aids in one or more ways. One of the most profound lessons was learning about identity, a topic that many of them struggle with as they feel that they're not helpful to the community due to their experience or medical situation. This lesson however gave hope to these young people and showed them that they can accomplish great things for the country and their families.

PROJET ECOLE



60

STUDENTS

In two schools in Goma, 60 students learnt about what leadership is and how they can exercise their individual leadership skills, and about the importance of positive influence. They promised the team that they would start being a positive influence not just in class but also at home. We were privileged to see the change in behaviour on the part of these young people, as they developed their abilities and personality over the course of the year. The impact was so noticeable in the school environment that the teachers requested The Congo Tree's continued presence, and even started attending WYLD sessions themselves! It was also recognised in homes, with many parents sharing stories of their transformed young people at the end-of-year graduation event.

SOCIAL ACTION AND ENTERPRISE

The Congo Tree provides each team of young people on the WYLD programme \$100 for the development and delivery of a social benefit project that they design and run. This 'Be Part of the Story Challenge' has three main aims:

- To inspire young people to be a part of changing society from within by modelling what it is to work creatively together for peace, with integrity and for the benefit of their team and the wider community,
- To be a safe space for developing skills and building resilience through the learning around success and failure, and how to support each other in this,
- To be able to support themselves and their families, to practice their skills and create opportunities for future employment.



Popcorn

One group of young people initiated a project that began with the sale of popcorn commonly known as TUSKA, a project that was supported with \$75 from The Congo Tree. Each member of the group will have to repay \$21 a month and to allow the group to make \$147 a month and buy a sewing machine, which in the long run will allow them to open a professional tailoring and sewing center.



Sheep

Another group of young leaders were given \$100 by The Congo Tree, with which they were able to purchase two sheep, which they wanted to breed. After 3 months, they hope to see their sheep give birth to 4 lambs. In a year, they hope to have a total of 8 sheep and thus think about expanding their sheep farm, or to start another productive activity and thus expand their influence in the community.

"We say thank you to The Congo tree, because through their training and their funding, we the young people of Masisi, will be agents of change and role models for several young people ... Long live The Congo Tree and may its actions extend throughout the DRC." - Willy - Facilitator, Masisi

SOCIAL ACTION AND ENTERPRISE

One group initiated a project called 'Tuinuke Pamoja' which translates to 'Rise Up Together'. This project was aimed at the financial strengthening of vulnerable women with small businesses in the informal sector in the city of Goma.



Ms. Riziki was able to benefit from \$40 to strengthen her business of selling hats. Every week she repaid \$2.5 for 6 months. Today she has already made 11 repayments, a total of \$27.5. At her point of sale, she also braids other women's hair, and that allows her to make the repayments and also to save a small amount.

Kithima was given \$20. She began by selling shoes on the side of the road, and sent the money she made to care for her three little sisters as well as their parents who live in the village of Katana in South Kivu. With this increase in capital, she repays \$4.5 per month and has made enough to open her own small shop, selling much more than shoes!



FACILITATORS

98%

of our graduates rated our facilitators as good or excellent.



For us to organize our WYLD programme training sessions with the young people in all locations, we need a strong team of facilitators with a good understanding and knowledge of the programme, as well as excellent communication skills. Our team consists of 15 facilitators, all graduates of the WYLD programme who undertake training with us and then volunteer for us. Their responsibility is to facilitate the training sessions but also the monthly meetings. Each facilitator must develop sessions to make the learning easy and engaging. Each year, each facilitator must co-facilitate at least 5 sessions, whether it is part of the WYLD training, monthly meetings or Projet Ecole. This is around **40 hours of volunteer work per year, per facilitator!**

"I always like to share with others, exchange my ideas, give my point of view. But I did not always have these opportunities and then here is The Congo Tree giving me the chance to speak especially with young people, speaking hope to today, for our country. I am very proud to be part of the story in a lot of the lives of these young people because I help them by my facilitation. It's a source of pride for me to become a facilitator, especially for a major programme like WYLD. We must always go forward."

Safi Shizune - Facilitator, HEAL Africa

We run training for all our facilitators and then give them 6 months where they are encouraged to practice and develop their skills, with feedback given by the participants and DRC Team. Our Facilitators have developed really great ways of communicating and passing on knowledge, inspiring our young people with passion, information and their own experience of learning.

"Being a Facilitator within The Congo Tree is a wonderful experience for me in my journey of learning. I am developing my public speaking but also my self-esteem because I have to be in front of young people. Today I do not have any more frustration because it is now a passion for me."

Yve Bahati - Facilitator, Rutshuru

ALUMNI



ANNE-MARIE

"After the first weekend of training, I realised that I can influence my friends positively, not just with big actions; even the smallest actions can encourage those that want to change.

More and more, the training sessions challenged my thoughts and my worldview; my fears turned into determination and opportunity to achieve my dreams.

This programme is very important to me because it allows me to support others and raise their level of thinking, so we can all move forward. The love and affection that I cannot have at home, I find it with friends, and my duty is to support others who are in the same situation as me."

ALUMNI



CEDRIC

"Since August 2018, I started volunteering as a Facilitator and sincerely life has not remained the same, I saw radical changes every day. I have seen my circle of influence expand, now I have learned to trust myself, I have developed the confidence to express myself in public; being in a group is something I no longer to fear and besides I am even the coordinator of our project to support vulnerable women. My leadership is strengthened now I feel my skills have expanded and I am flourishing.

The Congo Tree raised my self-esteem. I realised that I have potential and that I also had something to offer to the world, something to offer my society for change and radical development."

ALUMNI



PAISIBLE

"If I were to talk about the lessons that shaped me most, I would talk about them all but focus especially on images of leadership developed through some basic notions, like the theory of the sandwich method in terms of giving constructive feedback, the discovery of the 'star zone', and public speaking. As well as the games commonly called icebreakers, the great responsibility that The Congo Tree gave me was to be able to actively observe and support one of the young mentees in my group for a whole year. Personally, this allowed me to totally integrate in my community and I would say that it is with The Congo Tree that I learned to get much closer to others, regardless of their background or their gender and so on."

FUNDRAISING AND RAISING AWARENESS



This year we held and took part in multiple events across the UK and DRC:

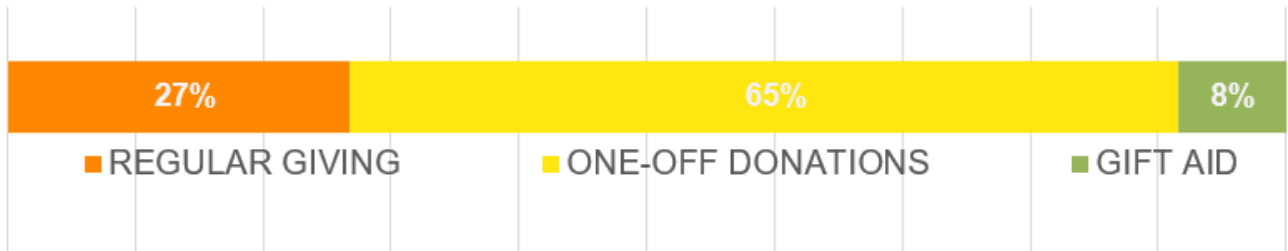
- Amani Festival, Goma
- Pamoja Kwa Amani Festival, Sake
- Trustee Sarah Patel ran a marathon for us in Birmingham
- UK Supporters events in London and Birmingham

We want to send a big **'thank you'** to our partners, supporters and friends.



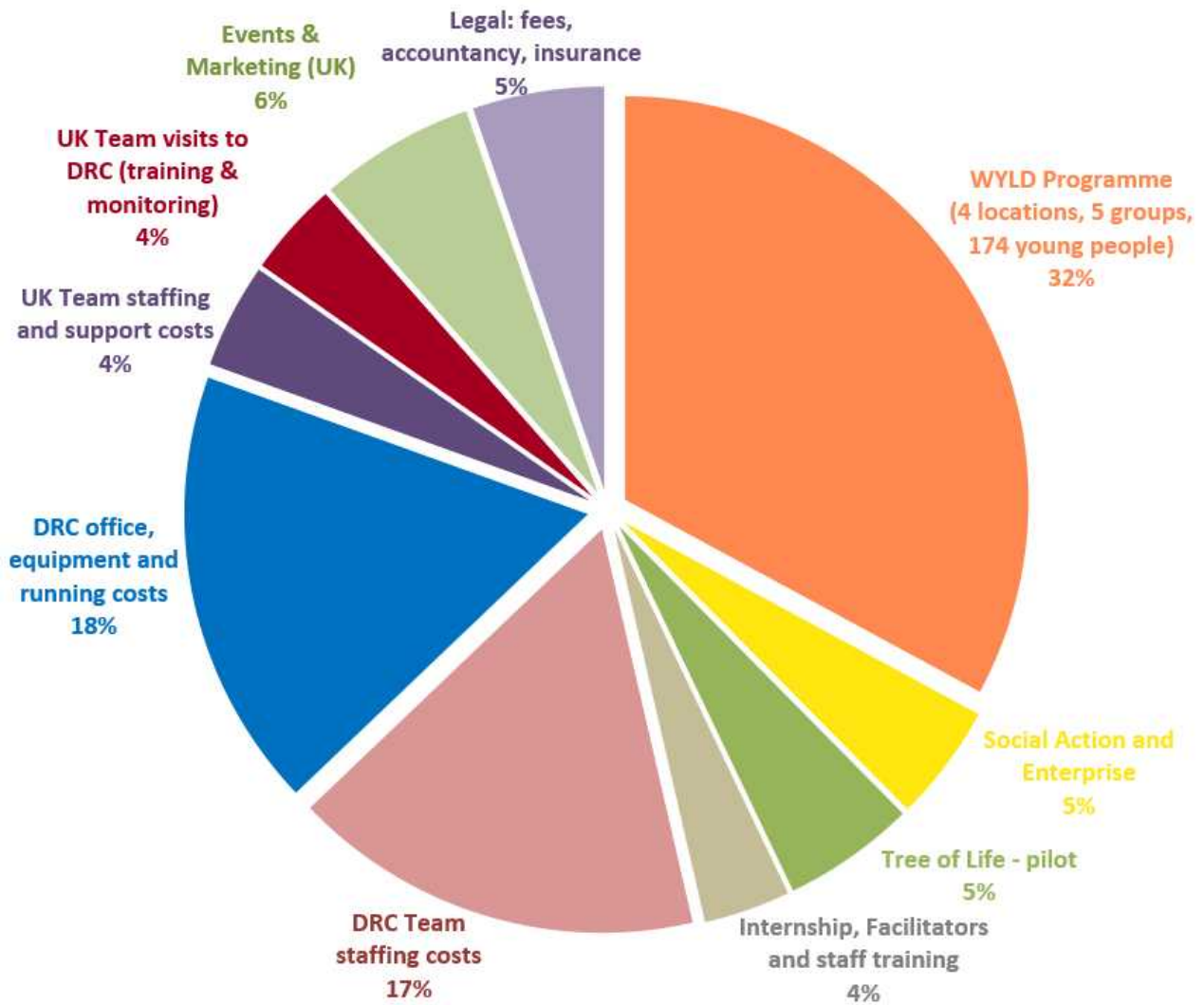
FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME



Total Income: **£30,070**

EXPENDITURE



Total Expenditure: **£23,710**

*final figures subject to independent financial verification: accounts due December 2019

STRATEGIC REPORT: ACHIEVEMENTS

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

OUR AIMS 2018-2019:

Aim #1: Urban WYLD

→ 1 group of 28 young people graduated their programme in April as another 28 began their WYLD journey, and a further group of 28 began in August. Our partnership with HEAL Africa enabled 30 young people to do the WYLD programme, graduating in March. Our DRC Team are exploring other local partnerships for future expansion and equipping of others.

Aim #2: Rural WYLD

→ Our first Rutshuru programme began in November with 14 young people.

→ In Masisi, 14 young leaders graduated from their programme at the end of November and a new group of 14 began their WYLD journey.

Aim #3: 'The Treehouse'

→ After months of searching and saving, we moved into a new compound in February 2019. The Treehouse compound is big enough for our office, a prayer/reflection room, an enterprise/creative hub, and to run all of our monthly meeting and non-overnight training sessions. We have employed a cleaner/gardener - a YP from our programme.

Aim #4: DRC INGO Registration

→ We are continuing to work with the local authorities to ensure we are compliant with our registration status and remain completely up-to-date.

STRATEGIC REPORT: ACHIEVEMENTS

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

OUR AIMS 2018-2019:

Aim #5: WYLD programme and mentoring development.

→ In April, we were able to introduce the Tree of Life programme to our DRC Team, with support from Anna Galloway and Michelle Smith, who ran our training, and Chris Ballin. Both the training and the programme were very well received by facilitators and young people: since then, the team have facilitated it twice and noted a marked improvement in the speed and depth that mentoring relationships develop. Now the team are looking at how to revise the mentoring scheme with Tree of Life as a permanent starting point, with Michelle a key support in Goma, and Anna in the UK.

Aim #6: Social Action Projects.

→ Projet Ecole began again in Oct 2018 in 2 Goma schools and our return has been very well received. Social Action projects from our graduating groups of young leaders have been completed well, with learning and impact recorded, and new group projects seem to be developing well in all locations.

Aim #7: Creative enterprise.

→ Social Action projects in Masisi and Rutshuru have a particularly enterprising nature during this year, enabling the young people to support themselves, their families and communities.

→ In Goma, the DRC Team have been supporting a number of young people in their private enterprises, with mentoring and training. The Tree House is already being used for many activities and as a start-up hub to support this.

THE TREE HOUSE

In February we finally moved into 'The Treehouse' – our new Headquarters in Goma. There is nowhere else quite like it in the city; a place for young people to safely gather and come together socially. This is our base for monthly meetings, training sessions, and other events that the young people are passionate about. It is also a space where young people can develop new enterprise ideas, meet for mentoring and access support from our DRC Team.



#BEPARTOFTHESTORY

We couldn't do any of what reported on without the amazing financial support of generous people - thank you to everyone who has given to us in 2018-2019!



Come and be WYLD with us and support a place on a WYLD programme for only **£100 / \$120** or **£8 / \$10 per month!**

Alternatively, you could support an Intern for £30 / \$40 per month...

www.thecongotree.org.uk/donate

And there are loads of other ways that you can get involved!

- Volunteer with the UK Team
- Get sponsored
- Host us or run a Fundraiser for us
- Support a young entrepreneur or team with a specific social action / creative enterprise project
- Gifts in kind

**If you're interested in finding out more, please contact us at:
hello@thecongotree.org.uk**



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