

Democratic Republic of Congo

Capital: Kinshasa
Population: 64,703,617 h
Adult literacy: 67%
Life expectancy: 46 years



Study takes work

Something is changing in the Democratic Republic of Congo

In the city of Kinshasa, 30 km from the city center, lies the neighborhood of Kimbanseke, one of the poorest and most crowded neighborhoods of the city. Its infrastructure for water, electricity, sanitation and communications is in extremely bad shape.



A young 12 year old girl, Fuatu Pidisi, lives in this neighborhood. Earlier this year she began her first year of studies, including a course in dressmaking, at Mère Thérèse Titos College.

She is a quiet, respectful and well behaved young woman, who loves to study and is determined to be promoted at the end of the school year.

She is the fifth in a family of 8 children. Since the loss of her father a few years ago, her mother is the principal support for the family, selling peanuts and a vegetable called «Fumbua» [a type of wild spinach], well appreciated by Westerners among the local population.

Fuatu sells chikuanga (fermented cassava flour wrapped in banana leaves, ready for carry out) to pay for her studies and to avoid the need to beg.

Fuatu Pidisi is one of the 310 youths between 14 and 28 years old studying in the Dressmaking and Design Training Program at the MèreThérèse Titos College.

The curriculum is not limited to teaching tailoring; other classes are included to assure a comprehensive education. An important goal is to help students to become self-sufficient, conscious of their own lives, work and contribution to society.

The school is administered by the Sisters of the Congregation of Saint Dominic, present in Kinshasa since 1995, and in the D. R. of the Congo since 1972. The community is composed 4 sisters who are directly involved in the school. Nineteen Congolese colleagues work with them in the program as teachers and administrators.

The facility includes a nursery school for 70 children and an elementary program for 110 in grades 1 through 3.

The students pay only a small portion of the tuition. It is assumed that virtually all students have jobs of some kind.

The program at the upper level of the College is of 5 years duration. Fuatu Pidisi's class will be the 14th class to graduate since the sisters began the program.

A large number who have finished the program are now working and some have their own workshops. Others have formed associations, where they share the profits.

At an early age they themselves are beginning to realize that now a significant part of their lives depends upon what they decide to do. In the case of Fuatu, as in the case of many like her, they are capable of sacrificing their free time and things whimsical in order to be able to study.



You can change your world

What do you do in your free time? What do you get involved in? Some people can not afford free time because there are many basic economic needs that must be met,.. but what about you? Can you make a gift of a few hours of your week to someone who needs your help?

Make up your mind to work with a social organization at your children's school, or perhaps at a nursing home, etc. Make a gift of your talents to the service of others.

Prayer: «Believe My works, and you shall know that the Father is in Me and I in Him»

Lord, I still have misgivings. No one questions that You existed, but, were You God incarnate? I want to believe you but it's with a wary eye that I scrutinize your works. On seeing, I can't deny -- You definitely stood history on its head. You transformed what it means to be human. Without a doubt, You are God