

# Vermont Ibutwa Initiative's (VIBI) Evaluation Mission Report in South Kivu Province of the D.R. Congo



Map 2. South Kivu, showing its territoires, collectivités and main towns

## **Mission Duration: August 2- 24, 2015**

### **Introduction**

The Vermont Ibutwa Initiative is a non-profit organization founded in May 2011 by Mr. Cleophas Mukeba and other concerned citizens of Vermont. It seeks to contribute to the rebirth of women victims of gender-based violence in South Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by addressing their physical, psychosocial and economic needs.

In August 2015 Ibutwa founder Mr, Cleophas Mukeba, travelled to the DRC to conduct an assessment of Ibutwa's projects and to honor VIBI's first field staff. Ibutwa is grateful to Katherine for the generous support that made this trip possible. While in the Congo he launched a new sustainable livelihood project (Dadah's Project) in the village of Uvira and visited the existing pig project in the village of Kamanyola. He also initiated partnership collaborations with some local organizations and met with local authorities. There is an urgent need to strengthen Ibutwa's operation capacity by expanding existing programs. This report is organized in the following sections:

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## 1. Vermont Ibutwa Initiative's History

The Vermont Ibutwa Initiative (Ibutwa) was founded in May 2011 in Burlington, Vermont by Mr. Cleoplace Mukeba, members of the Congolese Diaspora and other concerned citizens in Vermont. The organization is dedicated to improving the lives of women and children in the province of South Kivu<sup>1</sup> in D.R. Congo. As the result of ongoing civil war and conflict over control of mineral resources, the eastern part of the D.R. Congo has been the site of arguably the worst and most widespread scourge of sexual gender-based violence in the world.

Ibutwa strives to help victims recover from rape and its consequences, and to empower them to become self-reliant. The organization pays for their childrens' education and family healthcare, and now it is assisting with interest free loans to start revenue generating activity (RGA). Ibutwa has covered school fees, uniforms, and supplies for 110 children and medical expenses for 33 families.

Ibutwa operates in two villages, Uvira, where we support 25 women and further to the north, Kamanyola, where we support 8 women. Ibutwa's first two employees were Dadah Amuli Wabilindile and Kangele Bin Kazembe who were hired as medical supervisor and community building manager respectively. Tragically, Dadah died in childbirth in 2015, and Kangele was asked to expand his activities to include medical supervision and community building work. In addition, Ibutwa has hired the following additional full and part-time staff: Jolie Kangele Mazambi as Dadah's replacement, Pelagie Missasa a consultant in the sustainable livelihood project and Domitile Kyanga as consultant in the new AVEC (microlending) program. Patrick Bulumba Murhula is a focal point person in

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<sup>1</sup> South Kivu has a total area of 65 070 Km<sup>2</sup> (25 120 sq mi) and Bukavu is its capital city. The province borders Kivu Lake to the North East and Tanganyika Lake to the South East; North Kivu to the North, Maniema to the West and Katanga to the South. It shares its borders with the countries of Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania in the East. It is composed of seven territories that are Fizi, Kabare, Kalehe, Mwenga, Shabunda, Uvira and Walungu.

Kamanyola; he will help women keep their hospital appointments and also act as a school liaison to all children sponsored by Ibutwa. Patrick may also take on community garden supervision.

During a previous field visit in June of 2012, the women requested assistance in what they identified as the most pressing issues for them. These issues created the first two areas of Ibutwa's programs: first, providing assistance for health care and the women's children's education and health care and second empowering women through revenue generating activities. Ibutwa encourages women to work hard and support each other, and to live like a family.

## **2. Microcredit Scheme in Uvira**

After giving medical and psychosocial aid, and taking care of the schooling of the children, VIBI-IBUTWA wants to make its beneficiaries more autonomous and responsible before it transfer financial support to new beneficiaries. To accomplish this, it intends to support the revenue-generating activities proposed by 23 women themselves from Uvira district. This individual project includes: raising goats; the sale of food, such as fritters, peanuts, beans, manioc flour and corn flour; and of items such as second-hand garments and wax,.

Before granting them reimbursable interest-free microcredit loans, Ibutwa had to analyze these different activities and show all the attendant risks so as to predict the feasibility of each activity and estimate the yield or benefit for each one. Our objective is for this activity to have a positive impact in the life of the participants and to give them a secure future. Therefore from the beginning to the end of this program, we are monitoring how well they are able to meet their needs in health care, food, and the schooling of their children, which will eventually allow VIBI-IBUTWA to transfer aid to help other beneficiaries.

On behalf of Ibutwa Pelagie<sup>2</sup> laid out the terms of agreement and signed a contract with each woman before she began training them. The agreement called

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<sup>2</sup> Pelagie is a graduate of the school of Management in Lubumbashi in Katanga/Shaba province. She has a lot of experience training women in the area of Revenue Generating Activities with international organizations such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC)/Bukavu, Arche d'Alliance, and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

for two days of training for RGAs for Dadah's Project and a six-month follow up mechanism. Pelagie is being paid a \$50 monthly stipend, and her transportation costs for visiting Ibutwa women will be covered by Ibutwa. In the agreement, Pelagie will be visiting women in their working places and helping each of them set up an account with a local Credit Union. The account will serve as an individual saving account in which there is a designated fund for Ibutwa repayment.

The training module is divided into two major parts.

- The first part addresses deciding which type of business one should start, where to purchase the product or materials and where to sell finished products, how to set prices and how to talk to customers, and how to grow the business.
- The second part deals with money management, and accumulating savings.

At the Coordinator's suggestion for the women's safety, Ibutwa decided to vary the times of fund distribution to avoid any leak of information to outsiders. Before distribution of her funds, each Ibutwa woman signed a contract translated into Swahili. For those who couldn't read, the Ibutwa field coordinator read the contract out loud. The total fund, which Cleoplace distributed to women participants, was around seven thousand American dollars. Photos of most contracts are found in the Ibutwa Facebook public page [www.facebook.com/Ibutwa](http://www.facebook.com/Ibutwa).

### **3. Livelihood Project in Kamanyola**

A pig project in Kamanyola village was launched, again with the goal to make women self sufficient and autonomous in the near future. The training took two days, and covers elements including:

- The importance of pig-raising
- Different types of pig-raising
- Feeding of pigs

In total five participants each received two containers with a pair of pigs, a male and female. A pigpen was built; and medications and pig food were purchased. Ibutwa spent more than a thousand dollars to launch the project.

The Coordinator visited the project, with staff from Uvira. Before he introduced the delegation from Uvira, he asked the group to stand for a minute of silence to honor Dadah's life. He then introduced Pelagie and Jolie, and himself. Cleophace told the women that he brought greetings from the women in the USA. He shared his refugee life experience, the reason for creating Ibutwa, and where the organization is now. Cleophace again encouraged women in Kamanyola to work hard and become independent, so that Ibutwa helps other women. As he did in Uvira, Cleophace encouraged women to ask questions and he also promised to privately speak with any of them during his time there.

Jolie asked women to work with her in good collaboration. Pelagie briefly introduced herself to women and told women the reason why she came. Pelagie trained the Kamanyola women for just four hours. This is a small group of five women who raise pigs. Her training was focused on the second part of the module material, money management, as the women already manage going business.

### **3.1 Needs In Kamanyola**

Women in Kamanyola thank Ibutwa for supporting them with medical assistance, their children's education and the sustainable livelihood project of animal raising. The Kamanyola women unanimously expressed the desire to work with Bulumba Murhula Patrick. Patrick is a graduate of a school of Rural Development in Bukavu. He has been helping Ibutwa women without any formal contract with Ibutwa. Cleophace told women in Kamanyola that he would recommend their desire to the Board for approval in the U.S. Patrick would work as a focal person in Kamanyola. He will help women understand how to use their medication, visit with schools where our participants' children learn and also help women give medication and food to the pigs.

The five Kamanyola participants, each implored the Ibutwa delegation to help them obtain property of their own, saying:

- *Our landlords are jealous because of our animals. They see that our lives won't be the same again and they have started kicking us out. A*

*participant by the name of Gisele said that she works in her landlord's field four times a month as her mode of rental payment. Her two pigs, which were about to farrow 12 piglets, were poisoned.*

- *If Ibutwa acquires its own space and builds a modest pigpen and a few rooms, we will be able to live there and care for our pigs.*

Cleoplace met Dr. Christophe Kyembwa who is a Director of Saint Joseph Hospital in Kamanyola and Sister Melanie Kibukila who is the Administrator General of Saint Joseph Hospital. Dr. Christophe welcomed the Ibutwa delegation and he has offered us a space to conduct business. Cleoplace thanks Dr. Christophe and Sister Melanie for their support. Ibutwa women report that they have been treated with respect and dignity whenever they show up to the hospital for treatment. Women said that when they introduced themselves as Maman Ibutwa, Dr. Christophe has directly received them and treated them with no delay.

Cleoplace also had a private conversation with Dr. Christophe, who brought up the challenges faced by HIV positive women. He wants Ibutwa to help those women because they are suffering with their children. Cleoplace told Dr. Christophe that Ibutwa has been working hard to find funding that would support this work. Dr. Christophe also asked if Ibutwa could facilitate a scholarship so that he can come to the USA for more specialization in his field of Gynecology.

In Kamanyola, Ibutwa women were also trained, but more emphasis was on the second part of the module financial management. It was different in Kamanyola because women were already in the business of raising animals, as opposed to Uvira, where women would be choosing new and different types activities. Ibutwa should also consider retaining a veterinarian for services in Kamanyola.

#### **4. Building Local Partnership**

##### **4.1 *Uvira Dioceses and Caritas International***

Cleoplace met with the Diocese of Uvira's Bishop, Mgr. Sebastien Joseph Muyengo Mulombe on August 8 in his office. The diocese covers the territories of Fizi, Uvira, Mwenga and Shabunda. The goal of meeting with Mgr. Muyengo was

to create a partnership between Ibutwa and Caritas<sup>3</sup>. In 2014 Mgr. Muyengo published a book entitled *Au Pays de L'Or et du Sang (French)*, or *In a Country of Gold and Blood*. Cleophace introduced himself to Mgr. Muyengo by telling him that he was currently reading his book. Mgr. Muyengo was happy to hear about Ibutwa's program and he encouraged continuing to care for the vulnerable in the society. Mgr. Muyengo said his book is a reflection of many problems the country is going through. The Bishop agreed to put Ibutwa (via Kangele) in contact with the Director of Caritas Uvira who was in Bukavu. Cleophace also summarized Ibutwa's mission in South Kivu to Mgr. Muyengo. The Bishop also has recommended that Ibutwa expand its mission in Baraka<sup>4</sup> and in the territory of Mwenga.

#### **4.2 Panzi Hospital Foundation**

Cleophace met Dr. Denis Mukwege in his office at Panzi Hospital and thanked him for his twenty years of leadership on the issue of gender based and sexual violence. In his 2012 trip to D.R. Congo, Cleophace had an opportunity to talk to Dr. Mukwege about Ibutwa, and Cleophace shared his 2012 report. The goal of this visit was to discuss partnering with Panzi and working together in specific areas. Cleophace proposed that Dr. Mukwege refer to Ibutwa some of the women who were treated at his hospital who live in the Plain of Ruzizi, so that Ibutwa can include them in its program. Dr. Mukwege suggested a different approach and proposed that Ibutwa should identify the victims from the Plain of Ruzizi, and refer them to Panzi for free treatment. It will be easier for Ibutwa to continue to work with that group because Ibutwa selected them.

Cleophace also requested that Dr. Mukwege connect Ibutwa with organizations that could fund Ibutwa's proposed Women's Center in Uvira. He agreed to look for an organization that might be willing to fund such a project, and he recommended that Ibutwa describe the project and submit it to him.

After he had addressed these two main points on the agenda, Cleophace

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<sup>3</sup> Caritas's mission is summarized in this theme: *Towards a civilization of love*

Caritas Internationalis reflects the social mission and core values of the Catholic Church. We believe in dignity, solidarity and stewardship on behalf of the world's most vulnerable people

<sup>4</sup> Baraka is situated in the territory of Fizi



asked Dr. Mukwege what he meant when he said that “ Congo is sick and needs treatment” in his speech to the European Union Parliament in November, 2014. He said that what Ibutwa is doing --in Kamanyola providing funds for animal raising and in Uvira providing microfinance fund for women-- was exactly what he meant. Ibutwa is treating that sickness, he added. Dr. Mukwege said that every Congolese wherever he or she might be should find a way to help our country.

#### ***4.3 Sidem***

Ibutwa delegation met with ADRA’s delegation in Bukavu. Cleoplace presented Ibutwa’s goals and mission and has asked for a partnership. The meeting lasted about half an hour and ADRA agreed to work together. Kangele will continue fostering the new partnership and propose in the future a project for funding. Due to the faith of the organization’s members, ADRA delegation showed reticence to the expansion of the pig project, but agreed to collaborate on a community garden project.

#### ***4.4 Vice Governor***

In Bukavu, the Ibuwa delegation met with South Kivu Vice Governor Dr. Kalonda Mbula. The mission service was focused on two goals; getting a second authorization document from the Governor’s office, and acquiring a piece of land for a community garden. The Vice Governor promised that as soon as the sought document was delivered, he was also going to write to the services of land registration of Uvira and Fizi to ask them to officially grant Ibutwa the land as a recognized and useful association to the nation. As the authorization is still not released, it is premature to deliver this letter. But he assured Ibutwa that that he will honor his promise in the future.

### **5. In Memoriam of Daddah, Ibutwa’s First Coordinator**

The purpose of Cleoplace’s trip to Congo had a moral imperative, which was honoring Amuli Dadah’s life. Dadah passed away due to health problems on April 19

of this year. Her passing plunged Ibutwa into a very long transition from April to August until Cleoplace's arrival to ensure all programs were operational. This required hiring a new field coordinator and consultants to strengthen operational capacity. On a personal level, Cleoplace visited Dadah's grave and spent time with Carpe (Dadah's husband). In honor of her work, Ibutwa decided to bring in Dadah's children into sponsorship within Ibutwa's education program.

## 6. Travel Budget

This report was made possible through a generous donation of \$6500 to fund Mr. Cleoplace Mukeba's trip to D.R. Congo. The fund covered different items, which are described in the listing below:

- **Visas:** multiple entry visas for DR Congo and Burundi (including postage): \$350
- **Round-trip flight:** Burlington – Burundi: \$2000
- **Hotel:** in Bujumbura, Uvira and Bukavu \$1500
- **Meals:** locally and at hotels \$1500
- **Video:** Cameraman and photographer: \$200
- **Hospitality:** help for local needs; \$500
- **Phone chip:** to make local calls: \$25
- **Emergency Funds:** \$615

## 7. Strengthening Ibutwa's Capacity

On arrival in Burundi on August 2, Floribert Kazinguvu Kasirusiru welcomed Cleoplace at Burundi International Airport. Floribert is Cleoplace's good personal friend of many years and he is also a founder and executive director of another small non-profit organization, "Fondation Chirezi". Floribert not only welcomed and drove him up to Congo, but he also offered his vehicle for local transportation for the rest of Cleoplace's time in Congo. Despite his limited time, Floribert made many arrangements to smooth Cleoplace's stay in the Congo.

To strengthen Ibutwa's capacity on the ground, I spoke to Domitile M.Kyanga

who works with a local international organization: ZOA<sup>5</sup> to come and train Ibutwa's two field staff in a new program called AVEC. This program was initiated to fight poverty among vulnerable populations. In French it stands for Associations Villageoises d'Epargne et Credit (AVEC) and the English translation is Village Saving and Lending Association. The goal is to improve access to financial services through local saving which could create revenue-generating activity to respond to the most urgent need in vulnerable population and poor families.

## 8.Recommendations

After direct observation, private conversations with participants, and exchange with Ibutwa field staff, Ibutwa recommends the following projects. Each project is an expansion of an existing one, and for Ibutwa's success these projects should be funded separately.

- **Pig Project and Community Garden:** Ibutwa should buy its own land, which will serve as a community garden. On that land Ibutwa could build a modern pigpen with a water supply. Ibutwa should build four two-room houses. These houses will serve as housing for families and their livestock. In two years the women should be expected to be able to rent their own space and move on. A veterinarian advised that Ibutwa could not raise pigs without a field and water nearby. Agricultural products will help to feed pigs. A full proposal will need to be developed for this project.
  
- **Transportation:** Ibutwa needs two kinds of transportation. The first is a small motorcycle with three wheels called a Bajaji. The Bajaji would serve as local transportation for participants and field staff. It would cut the cost of sending transportation money. With its own Bajaji, Ibutwa but would be able to save about \$270/month.

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<sup>5</sup> ZOA was founded in 1973 in The Netherlands. The three letters ZOA are the abbreviation of the Dutch translation of South East Asia, the area where the organisation started its initial activities.

Secondly, Ibutwa needs a medium truck for its agricultural and pig projects. The cost is around \$18,000. The truck would not only serve the project but it would be able to earn income through outside jobs.

- **HIV-Positive Women or Action Hope For Life:** This group has asked for Ibutwa for help with many needs, ranging from a second medication which goes with Anti-Retro Viral drugs (ARVs), to education of their children, transportation and food. After speaking with the members of their committee, Ibutwa proposes to do the following:
  - Rent three acres of land, pay for a machine to cultivate the land for the first time, and provide corns and soja seeds.
  - Help them access the second medication, which the Congolese government does not provide.

The Coordinator will soon submit a detailed proposal for both the agricultural project and access to medication.

- **Women Center/Trauma Center-- A Community Women Center:**  
A major long-term goal of Ibutwa is to establish a women's center, which will serve not only Ibutwa women, but also all vulnerable women. The center will house all Ibutwa programs. Different sections could serve as pharmacy, counseling room, small library and a research laboratory, which would enable gathering data for all cases of victims of sexual violence.
  - Ibutwa should start acquiring a space (purchase land) where the center will be built. This is very important.
  - It must be in the city of Uvira because of its geographical position.

Although the needs of the women and families we serve are great, these are the highest priorities, as identified through on-the-ground observation and direct discussion with the women themselves. Ibutwa looks forward to working to find the resources to support our existing and future programs, and sees visits such as the one detailed in this report as integral to the organization's ability to effectively serve its clients. The organization is grateful to the funder of this evaluation mission and to our all partners for our continuing work.

**Prepared and presented by VIBI Executive Director Cleoplace Mukeba**

**Copy to:**

**Ibutwa partners includes**

- Saint Michael's College
- The UCC First Congregational Church of Burlington
- Champlain College
- Serena Foundation
- Unitarian Church of Burlington
- Individuals and other partners