Dear Friends and Partners,

As we celebrate our 10-year anniversary, I’m thrilled to share with you our 2016 Annual Report and to reveal the results of our year-long rebrand project. One year ago we began a journey of seeking to better understand who we are and how to communicate that in clear and compelling ways. A team of Congo Initiative (CI) employees and board members from three continents worked with our fantastic consultants to bring cohesiveness to CI’s story and help every stakeholder (including you!) tell that story in fresh ways.

The process involved conversations with employees, board members, our Congolese community, and our global network of friends and supporters on how they understand and talk about CI, and how we could improve our communication with all our constituents.

Based on this feedback, our team worked together to identify our “voice” and design a strategy and visual story that clearly speak to who we are – a Congolese-led, global organization committed to Christ-centered transformation of lives and a flourishing Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our vision is simple. Live by faith and with confidence. Work hard for the common good. Forgive and be forgiven. Do not dwell in the past or conform to the pattern of the world. Do something new and be transformed by renewing your mind.

Empowered by this vision, Congo Initiative educates ethical leaders who have integrity; invests in a sustainable vibrant Congolese society; and develops grassroots initiatives for peace, hope, and justice. In this vision, we are together—being transformed to transform.

Congo Initiative is an envisioned community of Christ-centered Congolese leaders and global partners united for the transformation of lives and a flourishing Democratic Republic of Congo.

Thank you for your support, encouragement, and prayers during the last year. I trust that this report illustrates some of the impact you have made on the people of eastern Congo. Your generous giving is a bold investment in the hope we share—that our next 10 years will bring greater peace and justice for Congo, even as we ourselves are transformed along the way.

Celebrating God’s faithfulness,

Cullen Rodgers-Gates
President and Executive Director
Congo Initiative USA
SHARING THE LAND

Sharing the Land (STL) uses GIS and GPS technology to create maps that address land rights and property disputes in Congolese communities and neighborhoods. These maps have already benefited 4,638 households, and lay the foundation for impacting up to 1 million people. STL’s Program Manager, Archip Lobo (below) represented STL at the Higher Education Solutions Network’s TechCon 2016 conference in Boston, co-hosted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and USAID. The conference offered an opportunity to share the impact STL is making in the effort to promote land rights and reduce land conflicts in eastern Congo.

AGRIBUSINESS

Through the Integrated Research Institute (IRI), we are improving research capacity and the quality of agribusiness education. This was the first year to introduce an agribusiness curriculum into the Economics department, and 102 students participated in UCBC’s demonstration farm.

The center also mapped coffee producing areas and wash stations, joining for the global effort to revitalize Congo’s coffee industry.

CREATION CARE

In addition to promoting environmental sustainability on campus and in local high schools, our Creation Care initiatives included a week in June dedicated to caring for the environment. The event featured presentations on climate change and COP21, an international conference and agreement on climate change. Thanks to some visionary supporters, we are advancing our creation care emphasis through a new staff position to lead institution-wide sustainability measures; advanced training in the field, and support for alumni-led business start ups that prioritize environmental stewardship.

JUSTICE INITIATIVES

The Christian Lawyers Fellowship continued its monthly meetings in three regional cities (Beni, Bunia, and Butembo) to discuss challenges in the legal system and receive special training. More than 260 legal professionals attended these meetings. We’re thrilled that half of the practicing bar in Beni (around 50 lawyers) are actively involved!

One significant success is the growing influence of jurists involved with this initiative. The response of courts and prosecutors in the region to rape and gender-based violence is improving. To hear of systemic change taking place (even if only in attitude and discourse at first) provides hope and confidence for similar outcomes when facing corruption within the legal system, land rights, and more.

Additionally, the Fellowship published the second volume of the magazine Christian Lawyers and distributed 1,500 copies. This volume shared inspiring testimonies of legal professionals working to advance justice for vulnerable populations in Congo.

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

We added 3000 books and learning resources to UCBC and our primary school libraries. We also implemented cataloging, research, and evaluation practices, making UCBC’s library one of the premier research institutions in the region.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

UCBC’s student-led group, Women’s Voices, continues to play a crucial role in facilitating discussions at UCBC (and beyond) about gender equality and discrimination. In collaboration with the UN’s International Women’s Day theme “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality,” the group organized an event attended by 50 women on “Equal Opportunities between Men and Women for Transforming the Nation.”

14 women in Beni participated in vocational training and counseling activities. They also completed a 7-month apprenticeship program in sewing handbags and clothes.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

LA CHARITÉ PRIMARY SCHOOL

208 students enrolled and completed the year.
93% of students succeeded in their end-of-year exams.

ACADÉMIE BILINGUE DU CONGO

39 students enrolled and we added a 2nd grade.
10 teachers and staff employed.

UNIVERSITÉ CHRÉTIENNE BILINGUE DU CONGO

79 new students
32 permanent faculty
433 total alumni

UCBC welcomed 79 new students in the 2015-16 academic year. In addition to their academic studies, students participated in more than 10 service-learning projects and 62 hours of work program activities that benefited local high schools, businesses, churches, and the UCBC campus.

UCBC also opened a new Law program, with eight students currently enrolled. We’re hopeful these brave students will have a lasting impact on the Congolese legal system and justice issues. Special thanks to those of you who generously helped us launch this program.

79 new students
32 permanent faculty
433 total alumni

We now have 32 permanent faculty at UCBC. These faculty are supported by our new Office for Faculty Development & Bilingual Affairs (FDBA), which is spearheading a strategic initiative to credential 25 full-time faculty members with advanced degrees by 2025. FDBA staff also lead the way in cultivating a robust, institutional bilingual culture, strengthening our English language program, and increasing the number of courses across the curriculum that use English as the medium of instruction.

UCBC celebrated 80 new graduates in 2016. These alumni leave equipped and empowered to serve their communities. They will work in various sectors across the region - from local businesses and banks, to churches and NGOs, to government and universities. These are the agents of change benefiting from your support.

“UCBC is vital to the Congolese community because young transformed leaders are being holistically trained here and the Congolese society needs these kind of leaders.”
– Vivian Bwirabuli (13’)

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“See, I am doing a new thing!”
Isaiah 43:18
ALUMNI AFFAIRS

UCBC’s Development & Partnership team formed a UCBC Alumni Association, which organized two official local gatherings and began networking with alumni around the world. This association encourages alumni as they move beyond UCBC and lays a foundation to give back to the university.

SPACES OF HOPE

Four classrooms with the capacity to host 90 students (each) were completed as part of the University Chapel and Community Center (UCCC). Additionally, Hope Chapel tent was raised to serve as a gathering space for the university and local community while the UCCC is under construction.

HEALING & RESTORATION

The Center for Church Renewal and Global Mission held three training sessions on church leadership and 47 workshops on Healing the Wounds of Ethnic Conflict, including one for 700 people who were impacted by killings in Beni territory.

UCBC’s Department of Theology launched the Bethesda Counseling Center to bring hope, healing, and restoration to wounded communities. The Center equips faculty, staff, and church leaders in grief and trauma counseling.

FINANCIALS

CONGO INITIATIVE USA

2016 Revenue: $1,066,967

2016 Expenses: $1,376,795*

- Individuals ($614,122)
- Church Partners ($272,576)
- Foundations & Trusts ($154,900)
- Other ($25,369)

- Programs ($1,199,147)
- Fundraising ($79,203)
- Administration ($98,445)

*Includes $358,789 for campus development that was paid for with funds received prior to 2016.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SACRIFICAL SUPPORT THAT MAKES ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE!