THE ECHO FOUNDATION

presents

“Justice Is Not Negotiable”
Dr. Denis Mukwege & The Panzi Hospital

2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

THE ECHO FOUNDATION
1125 E. Morehead St., Suite 101
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-347-3844 | www.echofoundation.org
www.echocongoproject.org
WARNING

This curriculum contains sensitive material about the subject of sexual violence which may be disturbing to students and adults alike. Some of the information may trigger memories of past or current sexual trauma and may require attention. Please note, on Page 345, is a list of resources for your consideration and referral.

Inspired by Dr. Denis Mukwege’s relentless commitment to healing the victims of sexual violence, not only as a surgeon who repairs flesh, but as a human being who approaches medicine from a holistic perspective by responding to the psycho-social wounds with compassionate care. The Echo Foundation devotes this year’s study to the power of the human spirit. Through the work of the Panzi Hospital, the City of Joy, and the Panzi Foundation, students across the globe learn from Dr. Mukwege’s unwavering example to care for those in need; every hour, every day.

In these turbulent times when we are often alienated one from another by extremism and violence, where is the space for the human soul? How do we nurture the next generation of leaders so that we may create a powerful force for good in the midst of poverty, war, famine, and anguish? What is our collective obligation to create a compassionate world that honors and includes us all?

Developed by Echo student interns, this curriculum offers educators and students alike a tool for learning about the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege, his life, and work. Added to this, we take a look at gender issues and the culture of sexual violence in our society today. In the third section of our curriculum, we investigate global responsibility and the duty to protect when we witness injustice.

We thank the Panzi Foundation for their partnership, through which we develop a connection to the women, men, and children of the Democratic Republic of Congo whose lives have been uplifted by the remarkable work of Dr. Mukwege.

To the Teachers, I wish you inspired hours with your students; young people who see the meadow with no fences, where anything is possible. Please accept my whole-hearted gratitude for your commitment to shaping the next generation into compassionate and informed leaders for tomorrow.

With wishes for a rewarding year,

Stephanie G. Ansaldo, President
The Echo Foundation
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

presents

“Justice Is Not Negotiable”
Dr. Denis Mukwege & The Panzi Hospital

Humanity’s Day
January 28, 2020
Hosted at
South Mecklenburg High School
8900 Park Road
Charlotte, North Carolina

Student Dialogue
February 26, 2020
Hosted at
Hough High School
12420 Bailey Road
Cornelius, North Carolina
When we walked into the internship orientation on June 4th, we had no idea how much this project would educate, transform, and inspire us this summer. Over the course of two months, we had the amazing opportunity to research and collect a number of texts, graphs, photos, videos, and activities. We narrowed down the resources we found to create a curriculum that impacts students and inspires positive change in our communities. Reading the speeches and accounts of Dr. Mukwege, we were in awe at the incredible activism and work he has done.

The use of rape and sexual violence as a tool of war so often goes unspoken. The shame accompanying victims of these crimes prevents them from speaking out, and when they do, their voices are so often silenced. We hope this curriculum will inspire dialogue among students about these topics that are often unaddressed. We want to share the stories of the women in the Democratic Republic of Congo who have been brutally injured. We want to share the stories of the children and men in the Congo who have also been affected by the wars, political turmoil, and kleptocracy. We want to share the stories of survivors worldwide who have been brave enough to speak out against injustice and the culture that perpetuates violence and toxic masculinity. We want to share all of these stories, and we want you to share yours. Whether it’s feeling objectified by being catcalled as you walk down the street, hearing a discriminatory or degrading joke, or reading a news story about rape and realizing something isn’t right, speak out.

In order to make a change, we need to talk about these topics, even when it’s difficult, and especially when it’s difficult. That being said, we know the stories and subjects in this curriculum are very sensitive and can be distressing. We’ve made an effort to present the information in the most unbiased and empathic way possible.

The topic of sexual violence doesn’t just affect women, it affects all of humanity. Rape as a weapon of war destroys communities, tears at the social fabric that connects people to one another, and terrorizes populations. We, as students and youth, are the next generation. We will be the next political leaders, the next teachers, the next fathers and mothers. We are this world’s future, and we have the power to create the world we want to live in.

We’d like to thank Dr. John Cox, Mary Margaret Martin, Emily Houpt, Kayla Campion, Stacey Schanzlin, and Sarah Richman for their assistance in creating this curriculum.

With hope,

Alli Burt Matt Grady Emily Scheppegrell Jordan Schuler
Providence Day South Meck Goucher College UMichigan
Table of Contents

Curriculum Alignment with North Carolina Course of Study ............................................................. 8

I. Dr. Denis Mukwege: Surgeon, Activist, Visionary ......................................................................... 15
   A. Dr. Denis Mukwege, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
      1. “Dr. Denis Mukwege” ................................................................................................. 16
      2. “Denis Mukwege Nobel Lecture”
   B. Panzi Hospital & Foundation: DRC & USA
      1. “Foreword” – Holistic Care Handbook ......................................................................... 25
      2. “What We Do”
      4. “The Panzi Model”
   C. City of Joy
      1. “Fighting Congo’s Ills with Education and an Army of Women” ............................... 46
      2. “14th Class Graduates from the City of Joy”
   D. Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation: Europe
      1. “What We Do” ............................................................................................................. 51
   E. Discussion Questions ............................................................................................................. 52

II. Sexual Violence as a Tool of War in the DRC ............................................................................. 53
   A. Gender Roles in the DRC
      1. “The Culture of Women” ............................................................................................. 54
      2. “In Congo, ‘Educating Girls is Educating a Nation’”
      3. “Girls’ Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”
   B. Rape as a Tool of War
      1. “The Root Causes of Sexual Violence in the DRC” ...................................................... 60
      2. “Rape as a Weapon of War”
      3. Why Do Soldiers Rape?
      5. “Care-Seeking Behavior by Survivors of Sexual Assault in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”
   C. Responses & Proposals for Change
      1. “Women’s Groups in the DRC are Demanding Justice” ............................................. 75
      2. “Fighting Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo”
   D. Discussion Questions ............................................................................................................. 85
III. The Democratic Republic of the Congo – From Then to Now.................................87
   A. History
      1. “Democratic Republic of Congo Profile – Timeline”............................... 88
      2. “Chapter Two: The Story of the Kongo Kingdom” – Congo Stories
      3. “A New Congo Crisis?”
   B. Mining, Natural Resources, Technology, & Conflict
      1. “Paradise Papers Research Raises Questions Over Glencore’s $440m Congo Discount”................................................................................................................. 107
      2. “The Dark Side of Electric Cars”
      3. “Progress and Challenges on Conflict Minerals: Facts on Dodd-Frank 1502”
      4. “Does Artisanal Mining Increase the Risk of Sexual Violence?”
   C. Current Affairs
      1. “Democratic Republic of Congo: Events 2018” ............................................. 121
      2. “Understanding the DRC’s Presidential Elections”
      3. “‘Terrifying’ Ebola Epidemic Out of Control in DRC, Say Experts”
      4. “ISIS, After Laying Groundwork, Gains Toehold in Congo”
      5. “Human Trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo”
      6. “Girls in the DRC Are Choosing to be Child Soldiers to Escape Poverty”
   D. Discussion Questions.........................................................................................141

IV. Congolese Culture..................................................................................................143
   A. Religion
      1. “DR Congo – Religion”.............................................................................. 144
   B. Environment & Wildlife
      1. “USAID: DRC Environment”......................................................................147
      2. “In Congo, a Climb to the Mouth of Hell”
   C. Sports
      1. “The Healing Powers of Football in the DRC” ............................................154
   D. Music & Art
      1. “Music of Congo”....................................................................................... 161
      2. “Exploring a Century of Art from Congo”
   E. Fashion & Textiles
      1. “A Great African Kingdom Tells its History in Fabulous Royal Clothes” ................................................................................................................................. 167
      2. “The Fashion Cult Cut from a Different Cloth”
      3. “DRC Artisans, Merchants Turn Distinctive Traditional Cloth into a Banner of Contemporary Fashion”
V. The DRC & The International Community

A. US/DRC Bilateral Relations
   1. “US Relations with Democratic Republic of Congo” ................................. 179
   3. “How Washington Got on Board with Congo’s Rigged Election”

B. Mexico City Policy (Global Gag Rule) & Women’s Health
   1. A Note From The Echo Foundation.............................................................. 186

C. International Actors & The DRC
   1. “Responsibility to Protect” ........................................................................ 192
   3. “Congo: Why UN Peacebuilders Have a Credibility Problem”
   4. “Congo to EU: Mind Your Own Business”
   5. “Democratic Republic of Congo” (ICC)

D. International Responses to Sexual Violence in the DRC
   1. “High Level Dialogue in Combatting Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo” ............................ 214
   2. “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Fact Sheet”

E. Human Geography as it Relates to the DRC
   1. “Democratic Republic of the Congo: A Migration History Marked by Crises and Restrictions” ........................................ 218
   3. “In Burundi, a Mass Wedding Celebration for DRC Refugees”
   4. “Portland, Maine, Turns ‘Crisis’ to ‘Opportunity’ for African Migrants”
   5. “Belgium Elects Nation’s First Black Mayor, a Congolese Immigrant”
   6. “Belgium’s Africa Museum Had a Racist Image, Can It Change That?”

F. Discussion Questions ....................................................................................... 240
VI. Global Sexual Violence

A. Sexual Violence Around the World
   1. “Women in Global Conflict”
   2. “Sexual Harassment: How it Stands Around the World”

B. Toxic Masculinity & Sexist Language
   1. “What is Toxic Masculinity?”
   2. “Fight to End Rape in War Must Begin in Peacetime: Mukwege”
   3. “Challenging Toxic Masculinity in Schools and Society”
   4. “Foundations of Sexual Violence”

C. Rape Culture
   1. “Rape Culture is Real”
   2. “When Pop Culture Sells Dangerous Myths About Romance”
   3. “Here’s The Powerful Letter The Stanford Victim Read To Her Attacker”

D. Discussion Questions

VII. Activism

A. Activism Against Sexual Violence Around the World
   1. “Ask an Activist: What are the Most Important Lessons Learned on Sexual Harassment in this Last Year of Activism?”
   2. “Women Activists in the DRC Show How Effective Alliances Can be Forged”
   3. “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women”
   4. “A Wave of Women Fighting Rape Across Europe”
   5. “New Wave of Student Activism Presses Colleges on Sexual Assault”

B. Social Media Activism
   1. “Six Activists Who Are Using Social Media for Change Offline”
   2. “Four Ways Social Media is Redefining Activism”
   3. “Why Social Media Isn’t the Revolutionary Tool it Appears to be”
   4. “The Movement of #MeToo”

C. Challenges of Speaking Out
   1. “TIME Person of the Year 2017: The Silence Breakers”

D. Local Activism: Get Involved in Charlotte, North Carolina
   1. “About: North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA)”
   2. “About Us: Charlotte Women’s March”

E. Discussion Questions
ADDENDUM

A. Interviews ....................................................................................................................................321
   A. Adam Hochschild, Author, *King Leopold’s Ghost*
   B. Dr. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, Professor of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

A. Classroom Activities ................................................................................................................334
   A. Addressing Sexual Violence as a Tool of War (Chapter 2)
   B. The Power to Write History: Evaluating Diverse Perspectives (Chapter 3)
   C. Conflict Minerals: A Product of Modern-Day Slavery (Chapter 3)
   D. What Makes a Democracy? (Chapter 3)
   E. “The Danger of a Single Story” (Chapter 4)
   F. The Great Statues Debate (Chapter 5)
   G. Toxic Masculinity, Rape Culture, & Pop Culture (Chapter 6)
   H. The Role of Social Media Activism (Chapter 7)
   I. Cathartic Narrative

III. References ..................................................................................................................................345
   A. Sensitive Content Warning & Resources
   B. Further Reading
   C. Filmography
   D. Bibliography

IV. Appendix ......................................................................................................................................359
   A. 2019-2020 Footsteps Global Initiative Application
   B. About The Echo Foundation
Alignment with NC Standard Course of Study

This alignment guide serves as a resource for teachers and faculty working within North Carolina Public Schools and planning to attend Echo’s annual Student Dialogue. In preparation for the dialogue, we ask that teachers familiarize their students with the curriculum on the work of Dr. Denis Mukwege. In collaboration with CMS, we at Echo have put together a list of State Essential Standards from the State Board of Education that the curriculum addresses in various courses and subjects. We would like to thank CMS Social Studies Specialist Mary Margaret Martin for her contributions in aligning this curriculum with NC Standards.

Standard alignment for AP Courses, such as AP European History, AP World History, AP Environmental Science, and AP Human Geography, are located on our website at www.echocongoproject.com.

We hope this resource will allow teachers to integrate the pressing issues of sexual violence and global activism into their coursework and inspire positive change in our students.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. **World History, WH.H.5.3** - Analyze colonization in terms of the desire for access to resources and markets as well as the consequences on indigenous cultures, population, and environment (e.g., commercial revolution, Columbian exchange, religious conversion, spread of Christianity, spread of disease, spread of technology, conquistadors, slave trade, encomienda system, enslavement of indigenous people, mixing of populations, etc.).

2. **World History, WH.H.7.1** - Evaluate key turning points of the modern era in terms of their lasting impact (e.g., conflicts, documents, policies, movements, etc.).

3. **World History, WH.H.7.3** - Analyze economic and political rivalries, ethnic and regional conflicts, and nationalism and imperialism as underlying causes of war (e.g., WWI, Russian Revolution, WWII).

4. **World History, WH.H.8.6** - Explain how liberal democracy, private enterprise and human rights movements have reshaped political, economic and social life in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Soviet Union and the United States (e.g., U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, end of Cold War, apartheid, perestroika, glasnost, etc.).

5. **American History AH2.H3.4**: “Analyze voluntary and involuntary immigration trends since Reconstruction in terms of causes, regions of origin and destination, cultural contributions, and public and governmental response (e.g., new immigrants, port of entry, ethnic neighborhoods, settlement houses, immigration restrictions, etc.).
6. **American History AH2.H.4.4:** “Analyze the cultural conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., nativism, Back to Africa movement, modernism, fundamentalism, black power movement, women’s movement, counterculture, Wilmington Race Riots, etc.)”

7. **American History AH2.H.6.1:** “Explain how national economic and political interests helped set the direction of United States foreign policy since Reconstruction (e.g., new markets, isolationism, neutrality, containment, homeland security, etc.)”

8. **American History AH2.H.8.3:** “Evaluate the extent to which a variety of groups and individuals have had the opportunity to attain their perception of the “American Dream” since Reconstruction (e.g., immigrants, Flappers, Rosie the Riveter, GIs, blue collar worker, white collar worker, etc.)

9. **Sociology 12.H.1.4:** “Evaluate various sociological research studies and methods in terms of sampling techniques, bias, validity, reliability, applicability, and ethics.”

10. **Sociology 12.C.1.2:** “Exemplify various subcultures and how they distinguish themselves from the larger culture.”

11. **Sociology 12.C.2.3:** “Explain the impact of social organizations (such as families), social structures (such as marriage) and social institutions (such as schools) on individuals and groups within society.”

12. **Sociology 12.C.2.4:** “Compare the formal and informal social organizations, structures, and institutions of the United States with global societies.”

13. **Sociology 12.C.3.1:** “Analyze several sociological theories related to conformity and deviance according to the different theoretical perspectives.”

14. **Sociology 12.C.3.2:** “Analyze the development of conformity to standards in American society and how deviance develops in individuals or groups.”

15. **Sociology 12.C.3.3:** “Analyze the ways in which society uses social control to discourage deviant behavior.”

16. **Sociology 12.C.3.4:** “Analyze countercultures in terms of their development and influence in society.”
17. Sociology 12.C.4.1: “Analyze the theoretical development of perspectives on social problems related to inequalities and stratification.”

18. Sociology 12.C.4.2: “Analyze how individuals and groups respond to and resolve issues of discrimination.”

19. Sociology 12.C.4.3: “Analyze how social inequalities and stratifications are perpetuated by social institutions.”


22. Sociology 12.C.5.3: “Analyze social change in terms of the influences of governmental policy and laws.”

23. Sociology 12.C.5.4: “Analyze social change in terms of the influences of war and conflict.”

24. Sociology 12.C.5.5: “Analyze social change in terms of the influences of economic trends and choices.”

25. Sociology 12.C.5.6: “Use sociological perspectives on societal change to predict social issues and problems.”

26. Geography 12.G.1.1: “Use geographic data and visual representations to interpret spatial relationships and draw conclusions about observed phenomena.”

27. Geography 12.G.2.1: “Interpret the origin and processes of globalization using historical and geographical perspectives.”


29. Geography 12.G.2.3: “Analyze how various technological and informational revolutions have encouraged and impacted globalization.”

30. Geography 12.G.2.4: “Evaluate the extent to which certain historic/geographic factors encouraged and impacted globalization.”
31. **Geography 12.G.3.1:** “Compare the physical environments and the effects of globalization on the climate, natural resources, and species of various places.”

32. **Geography 12.G.3.2:** “Analyze the relationship between sustainability and natural resource depletion in terms of economic growth and development.”

33. **Geography 12.G.3.4:** “Evaluate the extent to which preservation and conservation efforts impact local, national, and global economies.”

34. **Geography 12.G.4.2:** “Analyze how globalization has created religious and ethnic conflicts.”

35. **Geography 12.G.4.3:** “Analyze localism and ways cultural groups maintain their distinct cultural characteristics.”

36. **Geography 12.G.4.4:** “Analyze the impact of globalization on population migration and demographic transition.”

37. **Geography 12.G.4.6:** “Evaluate the impact of globalization on the organization and success of social and human rights movements.”

38. **Geography 12.G.5.1:** “Analyze transnational corporations in terms of their role in the globalization process.”

39. **Geography 12.G.5.3:** “Analyze global trade patterns in terms of natural, human, and capital resource flows.”

40. **Geography 12.G.5.4:** “Evaluate the effects of economic growth on people and places in terms of costs and benefits.”

41. **Geography 12.G.5.5:** “Evaluate economic protectionism in terms of costs and benefits.”

42. **Geography 12.G.6.1:** “Evaluate the extent to which the political system of a place impacts its involvement in the global economy.”

43. **Geography 12.G.6.2:** “Analyze the relationship between political sovereignty and globalization.”
44. **Geography 12.G.6.4:** “Analyze international nongovernmental organizations in terms of their purpose and contributions.”

45. **Geography 12.G.6.5:** “Analyze international treaties, charters, and agreements in terms of their purpose and effects on various places.”

46. **Geography 12.G.6.6:** “Explain the impact of Western values such as democracy, individual rights, and capitalism on various places.”

47. **Civics & Economics, CE.C&G.4.1** - Compare citizenship in the American constitutional democracy to membership in other types of governments (e.g., right to privacy, civil rights, responsibilities, political rights, right to due process, equal protection under the law, participation, freedom, etc.).

48. **Civil Rights 12.H.4.1:** “Analyze the use of intimidation, coercion, and violence by individuals and groups in impeding the development of freedom and equality.”

49. **Civil Rights 12.H.4.2:** “Analyze the use of power and authority by community, business, and government leaders to deny freedom and equality.”

50. **Civil Rights 12.H.6.1:** “Analyze how industrial development impacted both the freedom and equality of workers and consumers.”

51. **Civil Rights 12.H.6.3:** “Evaluate how the implementation of theories and programs in the name of science affected the development of freedom and equality.”

52. **Civil Rights 12.C.2.2:** “Analyze the relationship between American and international movements for freedom and equality, in terms of their origins, factors, and influences.”

53. **Civil Rights 12.C.2.3:** “Analyze how other countries, societies, and international leaders and groups have interpreted and used the values expressed in the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution.”

**MATH**

1. **Reasoning NC.ECS.M1.A-REI.10:** “Understand that a graph represents the solutions to an equation. Interpret a point on a graph.”

2. **Interpreting Functions NC.ECS.M1.F-IF.9:** “Given two graphs of linear functions, compare the rates of change and initial values.”
3. Statistics and Probability NC.ECS.M1.S-ID2: “Interpret general trends on a graph or chart (more, less, increasing, decreasing.)”

**SCIENCE**

1. Earth/Environmental Science EEn.2.6.3: “Analyze the impact human activities have on global climate change (such as burning hydrocarbons, greenhouse effect, and deforestation).”

2. Earth/Environmental Science EEn.2.8.1: “Evaluate alternative energy technologies for use in North Carolina.”

3. Earth/Environmental Science EEn.2.8.2: “Critique conventional and sustainable agriculture and aquaculture practices in terms of their environmental impacts.”

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS**

1. Reading Language RL.9-10.1: “Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.”

2. Reading Language RL.K.4: “With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about words in a text that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.”

3. Reading Language RL.11-12.4: “Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly engaging.”

4. Reading Language RL.11-12.9: “Analyze how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics and compare the approaches the authors take.”

5. Reading Language RL.11-12.3: “Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.”

6. Reading Language RL 11-12.5: “Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.”
7. **Reading Language RL 11-12.6:** “Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, and/or persuasiveness of the text.”

8. **Speaking and Listening SL.11-12.1:** “Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.”

9. **Speaking and Listening SL.11-12.2:** “Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to make informed decisions and solve problems evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.”

10. **Speaking and Listening SL.11-12.3:** “Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.”
Chapter 1: Dr. Denis Mukwege: Surgeon, Activist, Visionary

Dr. Denis Mukwege has made an incredible impact on tens of thousands of women’s lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo. His commitment to empowering the victims of sexual violence in the Congo has saved thousands of lives. His approach reaches beyond the medical sphere, as he puts holistic healing principles into practice to help victims deal with the psychological impact of the abuse. Dr. Mukwege and Eve Ensler’s City of Joy provides survivors a safe place to recover and teaches them invaluable skills that enable them to be powerful members of their community when they return home. Dr. Mukwege has dedicated his life to his vision of hope, working tirelessly as an activist on a local, national, and international scale.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. Dr. Denis Mukwege, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
   “Dr. Denis Mukwege”
   “Denis Mukwege Nobel Lecture”

B. Panzi Hospital & Foundation: DRC & USA
   “Foreword” – Holistic Care Handbook
   “What We Do”
   “Chapter 3: The Holistic Approach” – Holistic Care Handbook
   “The Panzi Model”
   “Chapter 6: Impact”- Holistic Care Handbook
   “Women Left for Dead – and the Man Who’s Saving Them”

C. City of Joy
   “Fighting Congo’s Ills with Education and an Army of Women”
   “14th Class Graduates from the City of Joy”

D. Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation: Europe
   “What We Do”

E. Discussion Questions
Dr. Denis Mukwege

The Panzi Foundation
2018
https://www.panzifoundation.org/dr-denis-mukwege

Dr. Denis Mukwege is a world-renowned gynecological surgeon who is the founder and medical director of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). As a young child, Dr. Mukwege accompanied his father, a Pentecostal pastor, while visiting sick members of the community. This later inspired him to become a doctor. The Swedish Pentecostal mission helped support him in his medical studies. He decided to specialize in gynecology and obstetrics after observing that female patients at Lemera Hospital suffered from insufficient medical care, which caused complications during their deliveries.

He founded the hospital in 1999 as a clinic for gynecological and obstetric care, and expected to be working on issues of maternal health. Since 1999, however, Dr. Mukwege and his staff have helped to care for more than 50,000 survivors of sexual violence. The hospital not only treats survivors with physical wounds, but also provides legal, and psycho-social services to its patients. Even patients who cannot afford post-rape medical care are treated without charge at Panzi Hospital.

Dr. Mukwege has been fearless in his efforts to increase protections for women and to advocate that those responsible for sexual violence be brought to justice, including the Congolese government and militia groups laying siege to eastern DRC.

In October 2012, Dr. Mukwege was violently attacked and his family was held at gunpoint at his home in an assassination attempt. Joseph Bizimana, his trusted friend and security guard, was killed. The attack came several weeks after Dr. Mukwege denounced the country’s 16-year-long conflict and called for those responsible to be brought to justice during a speech at the United Nations. After this attack, Dr. Mukwege and his family fled the country for his safety, but his
many Congolese patients and colleagues urged him to resume his life-saving work at Panzi Hospital. He returned to the hospital in January 2013 and was celebrated by crowds of people ecstatic to have him home. During this difficult period, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) worked in close coordination with Dr. Mukwege and colleagues at risk in DRC to mobilize a global campaign to advocate for and protect individuals working on the front lines helping survivors of mass atrocities and prosecuting perpetrators of these mass crimes.

Dr. Mukwege is also on the advisory committee for the International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict. He has been the recipient of numerous awards worldwide, including the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize, for his advocacy against sexual violence as a weapon of war and for his outstanding services to survivors of rape.

Honors and Awards include:

- Nobel Peace Prize Laureate with co-recipient Nadia Murad (2018)
- Named to the Top 50 World's Greatest Leaders, Fortune Magazine (2016)
- Seoul Peace Prize Laureate (2016)
- Named an Icon on the TIME 100 Most Influential People in the World List (2016)
- Freedom From Want Award, from the Roosevelt Foundation (2016)
- Renfield Foundation Award for Global Women's Health, University of Pennsylvania Nursing School (2016)
- Champion for Peace, from Women for Women International (2015)
- Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, from the European Parliament (2014)
- Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention (2013)
- Human Rights First Award (2013)
- Right Livelihood Award (2013)
- Clinton Global Citizen Award (2011)
- King Baudouin International Development Prize (2011)
- University of Michigan Raoul Wallenberg Medal (2010)
- Olof Palme Prize (2009)
- UN Human Rights Prize (2008)
In the tragic night of 6 October 1996, rebels attacked our hospital in Lemera, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC). More than thirty people were killed. Patients were slaughtered in their beds point blank. Unable to flee, the staff were killed in cold blood.

I could not have imagined that it was only the beginning.

Forced to leave Lemera in 1999, we set up the Panzi hospital in Bukavu where I still work as an obstetrician-gynaecologist today.

The first patient admitted was a rape victim who had been shot in her genitals.

The macabre violence knew no limit.

Sadly, this violence has never stopped.

One day like any other, the hospital received a phone call.
At the other end of the line, a colleague in tears implored: “Please send us an ambulance fast. Please hurry”
So we sent an ambulance, as we normally do.

Two hours later, the ambulance returned.
Inside was a little girl about eighteen months old. She was bleeding profusely and was immediately taken to the operating room.

When I arrived, all the nurses were sobbing. The baby’s bladder, genitals and rectum were severely injured.

By the penetration of an adult.
We prayed in silence: my God, tell us what we are seeing isn’t true.
Tell us it’s a bad dream.
Tell us when we wake up, everything will be alright.

But it was not a bad dream.
It was the reality.
It has become our new reality in the DRC.

When another baby arrived, I realized that the problem could not be solved in the operating room, but that we had to combat the root causes of these atrocities.

I decided to travel to the village of Kavumu to talk to the men: why don’t you protect your babies, your daughters, your wives? And where are the authorities?

To my surprise, the villagers knew the suspect. Everyone was afraid of him, since he was a member of the provincial Parliament and enjoyed absolute power over the population.

For several months, his militia has been terrorising the whole village. It had instilled fear by killing a human rights defender who had had the courage to report the facts. The deputy got away with no consequences. His parliamentary immunity enabled him to abuse with impunity.

The two babies were followed by several dozens of other raped children.

When the forty-eighth victim arrived, we were desperate.
With other human rights defenders, we went to a military court. At last, the rapes were prosecuted and judged as crimes against humanity.

The rapes of babies in Kavumu stopped.
And so did the calls to Panzi hospital.
But these babies’ psychological, sexual and reproductive health is severely impaired.

What happened in Kavumu and what is still going on in many other places in Congo, such as the rapes and massacres in Béni and Kasaï, was made possible by the absence of the rule of law, the collapse of traditional values and the reign of impunity, particularly for those in power.

Rape, massacres, torture, widespread insecurity and a flagrant lack of education create a spiral of unprecedented violence.

The human cost of this perverted, organized chaos has been hundreds of thousands of women raped, over 4 million people displaced within the country and the loss of 6 million human lives. Imagine, the equivalent of the entire population of Denmark decimated.

United Nations peacekeepers and experts have not been spared, either. Several of them have been killed on duty. Today, the United Nations Mission is still in the DRC to prevent the situation from degenerating further.

We are grateful to them.

However, despite their efforts, this human tragedy will continue if those responsible are not prosecuted. Only the fight against impunity can break the spiral of violence.

We all have the power to change the course of history when the beliefs we are fighting for are right.
Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Distinguished members of the Nobel Committee, dear Madam Nadia Murad, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of peace,

It is in the name of the Congolese people that I accept the Nobel Peace Prize. It is to all victims of sexual violence across the world that I dedicate this prize.

It is with humility that I come before you to raise the voice of the victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts and the hopes of my compatriots.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who, over the years, has supported our battle. I am thinking, in particular, of the organizations and institutions of friendly countries, my colleagues, my family and my dear wife Madeleine.

My name is Denis Mukwege. I come from one of the richest countries on the planet. Yet the people of my country are among the poorest of the world.

The troubling reality is that the abundance of our natural resources – gold, coltan, cobalt and other strategic minerals – is the root cause of war, extreme violence and abject poverty.

We love nice cars, jewellery and gadgets. I have a smartphone myself. These items contain minerals found in our country. Often mined in inhuman conditions by young children, victims of intimidation and sexual violence.

When you drive your electric car; when you use your smart phone or admire your jewellery, take a minute to reflect on the human cost of manufacturing these objects.

As consumers, let us at least insist that these products are manufactured with respect for human dignity.

Turning a blind eye to this tragedy is being complicit.

It’s not just perpetrators of violence who are responsible for their crimes, it is also those who choose to look the other way.

My country is being systematically looted with the complicity of people claiming to be our leaders. Looted for their power, their wealth and their glory. Looted at the expense of millions of innocent men, women and children abandoned in extreme poverty. While the profits from our minerals end up in the pockets of a predatory oligarchy.

For twenty years now, day after day, at Panzi hospital, I have seen the harrowing consequences of the country’s gross mismanagement.

Babies, girls, young women, mothers, grandmothers, and also men and boys, cruelly raped, often publicly and collectively, by inserting burning plastic or sharp objects in their genitals.

I’ll spare you the details.

The Congolese people have been humiliated, abused and massacred for more than two decades in plain sight of the international community.
Today, with access to the most powerful communication technology ever, no one can say: “I didn’t know”.

__

With this Nobel Peace Prize, I call on the world to be a witness and I urge you to join us in order to put an end to this suffering that shames our common humanity.

The people of my country desperately need peace.

But:

How to build peace on mass graves?
How to build peace without truth nor reconciliation?
How to build peace without justice nor reparation?

As I speak to you, a report is gathering mold in an office drawer in New York. It was drafted following a professional investigation into war crimes and human rights violations perpetrated in Congo. This investigation explicitly names the victims, the places and the dates, but leaves the perpetrators nameless.

This Mapping Report by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights describes no fewer than 617 war crimes and crimes against humanity and perhaps even crimes of genocide.

What is the world waiting for before taking this into account? There is no lasting peace without justice. Yet, justice in not negotiable.

Let us have the courage to take a critical and impartial look at what has been going on for too long in the Great Lakes Region.

Let us have the courage to reveal the names of the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity to prevent them from continuing to plague the region.

Let us have the courage to recognize our past mistakes.

Let us have the courage to tell the truth, to remember and commemorate.

Dear Congolese compatriots, let us have the courage to take our destiny in our own hands. Let us build peace, build our country’s future, and together build a better future for Africa. No one else will do it for us.

__

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of peace,

The picture I have painted for you depicts a dark reality.
But let me tell you Sarah’s story.

Sarah was referred to the hospital in critical condition. An armed group had attacked her village, massacred her whole family, and had left her alone.

Sarah was taken to the forest as a hostage, and tied to a tree. Naked. Sarah was gang-raped every day until she lost consciousness.
The aim of these rapes used as a weapon of war is to destroy the victim, her family and her community. In short, to destroy the social fabric.

When she arrived at the hospital, Sarah could not walk or even stand on her feet. She could not control her bladder nor her bowels.

Because of the seriousness of her genital, urinary and digestive injuries coupled with an infection, no one could imagine her one day being able to get back on her feet.

Yet, with each passing day, the desire to continue to live sparkled in Sarah’s eyes. Every passing day, it was she who encouraged the medical staff not to lose hope.

Today, Sarah is a beautiful, smiling, strong and charming woman.

Sarah has committed herself to helping people who have survived a history like hers.

Sarah received fifty US dollars, a grant our Dorcas transit house gives to women who are ready to rebuild their lives socio-economically.

Today, Sarah runs her small business. She has bought a plot of land. The Panzi Foundation has helped her with sheeting to make a roof. She has built a little house. She is independent and proud.

Her experience shows that, no matter how difficult and hopeless the situation, with determination there is always hope at the end of the tunnel.

If a woman like Sarah does not give up, who are we to do so?

This is Sarah’s story. Sarah is Congolese. But there are Sarahs in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Bosnia, Myanmar, Iraq and many other conflict-riven countries in the world.

—

At Panzi, our holistic care programme – which includes medical, psychological, socio-economic and legal support – shows that even if the road to recovery is long and difficult, victims have the potential to turn their suffering into power.

They can become agents of positive change in society. This is the case already at City of Joy, our rehabilitation centre in Bukavu where women receive support to regain control of their destiny.

However, they cannot succeed on their own and our role is to listen to them, as today we listen to Madam Nadia Murad.

Dear Nadia, your courage, your audacity, your ability to give us hope, are a source of inspiration for the entire world and for me personally.

—

The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to us today will be of value only if it leads to concrete change in the lives of victims of sexual violence all over the world and the restoration of peace in our countries.

So, what can we do?
What can you do?
First, it is incumbent upon all of us to act in this direction.

Taking action is a choice.

It is a choice:

– whether or not we stop violence against women,
– whether or not we create a positive masculinity which promotes gender equality, in times of peace and in times of war.

It is a choice:

– whether or not to support a woman,
– whether or not to protect her,
– whether or not to defend her rights,
– whether or not to fight on her side in countries ravaged by conflict.

It is a choice: whether or not to build peace in the countries in conflict.

Taking action means saying ‘no’ to indifference.

If there is a war to be waged, it is the war against the indifference which is eating away at our societies.

Second, we are all indebted to these women and their loved-ones and we must all take ownership of this fight; including states by ceasing to welcome leaders who have tolerated, or worse, used sexual violence to take power.

States must stop welcoming them by rolling out the red carpet, and instead draw a red line against the use of rape as a weapon of war.

This red line would consist of imposing economic and political sanctions on these leaders and taking them to court.

Doing the right thing is not hard. It is a matter of political will.

Third, we must acknowledge the suffering of the survivors of all acts of violence against women in armed conflicts and support their holistic recovery process.

I insist on reparations: the measures that give survivors compensation and satisfaction and enable them to start a new life. It is a human right.

I call on States to support the initiative to create a Global Fund for reparations for victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

Fourth, on behalf of all widows, all widowers and orphans of the massacres committed in the DRC and all Congolese in love with peace, I call on the international community to finally consider the “Mapping Project report” and its recommendations.

May justice prevail.

This would allow the Congolese people to weep for their loved-ones, to mourn their dead, to forgive their torturers, to overcome their suffering and finally to project themselves into a serene future.
Finally, after twenty years of bloodshed, rape and massive population displacements, the Congolese people are desperately awaiting implementation of the responsibility to protect the civilian population when their government cannot or does not want to do so. The people are waiting to explore the path to a lasting peace.

To achieve peace, there has to be adherence to the principle of free, transparent, credible and peaceful elections.

“People of the Congo, let us get to work!” Let’s build a State at the heart of Africa where the government serves its people. A State under the rule of law, capable of bringing lasting and harmonious development not just of the DRC but of the whole of Africa, where all political, economic and social actions will be based on a people-centred approach to restore human dignity of all citizens.

Your Majesties, Distinguished Members of the Nobel Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of peace,

The challenge is clear. It is within our reach.

For all Sarahs, for all women, for all men and children of Congo, I call upon you not only to award this Nobel Peace Prize to my country’s people, but to stand up and together say loudly: “The violence in the DRC, it’s enough! Enough is enough! Peace, now!”

Thank you.
Holistic Healing Handbook

Forword

When I decided to become a doctor, my hope was simply to improve maternal and infant health in my country. That is why I chose gynaecology. I did not set out to repair fistulas, or start a foundation, or be an activist. I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to care for people in need.

That was until the war. The conflict began in 1996. I founded Panzi General Referral Hospital shortly after with the intention to provide maternal care. But the first patients we treated were women and girls with extreme gynaecological injuries. As the number of life-threatening cases began to increase, and patients gradually started to reveal what had happened to them, I realised that the conflict was defined by a seemingly invisible weapon: sexual violence. Rape was employed as a weapon of war to dehumanise individuals, families and communities. Thus, we did not have a choice. My team and I began to care for as many victims of rape and sexual violence as we did new mothers and their babies.

We provided complete, high quality medical care to each victim who came to us. And our protocol was the same for the first few years. One day however, an elderly woman was admitted into the hospital, and she changed everything. This woman had been violently raped and was left with severe medical complications. Fortunately, we were able to operate and repair her physical injuries. As time passed however, it became clear medical care was not enough. Though her body began to heal, she remained immobilised in her bed – not wanting to move, speak or eat. We came to learn that this woman, a grandmother, had been raped in front of her entire family. She felt immense shame and social stigma from this experience – so much so that the repair of her body was seemingly insignificant without addressing her other needs.

Experiences like this opened our eyes to the need for a more holistic approach to the care for victims of sexual violence. As a result of extreme sexual violence, not only are the bodies of victims destroyed, but their spirits are broken, relationships with loved ones are troubled, and their capacity to carry out livelihood activities is substantially reduced. We realised that in order to enable victims of sexual violence to fully heal, these issues need to be addressed as well. This is the reason we created the Panzi Foundation DRC. With the support of the foundation, the hospital is able to complement its health services with additional programmes that not only address the comprehensive needs of survivors, but also guide them through the long and challenging process of healing.

Faced with the terrible harm caused by sexual violence on a daily basis, year in year out, we were persuaded to do more: to use our knowledge and experiences to facilitate change, to speak out about injustices, to demand accountability and end impunity, to fight against stigma, and to
challenge the norms that breed violence. It is through a continuous process of learning, listening to survivors, and adapting care to the changing circumstances in Eastern DRC that we have created the Panzi Model. We hope that by documenting this model, others will learn from our experiences and subsequently, victims around the world will have access to holistic care. Our utmost goal is a world where both victims and society benefit from the provision of holistic care, and ultimately, there is an end to the use of rape as a weapon of war.
The Panzi Foundation

What We Do

Dr. Denis Mukwege, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, founded Panzi Hospital in 1999 as a response to the devastating war that surrounded his community in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The hospital now serves a population of 400,000 as the General Reference Hospital for the Ibanda Health Zone in DRC, with a full range of health services.

As a direct outcome of the war, maternal mortality was on the rise. The safety of all women and girls were being impacted by brutal forces that ravaged their bodies in unimaginable ways. Dr. Mukwege’s first patient was a survivor of rape, whose reproductive organs had been brutally destroyed. As violence against women and girls escalated dramatically in the context of Congo’s wars, Dr. Mukwege and the staff of Panzi Hospital dedicated significant resources to treating women with fistula and other complex gynecological injuries – both traumatic and obstetric.

Panzi Hospital has earned a world-renowned reputation for its best-in-class service treating survivors of sexual violence and complex gynecological injuries. Its impact on the lives of women and girls, and on the broader communities in which they live, runs much deeper. Our holistic model of care provides patients with services that meet the full spectrum of their needs: physical recovery, psychosocial and emotional support, community reintegration and legal assistance.

In addition, we are making strategic investments in local, Congolese civil society organizations, building their capacity to address the root causes of violence and rebuild Congolese communities on principles of human rights and gender equality.

To support Panzi Hospital’s holistic model of care, Dr. Mukwege formed two Foundations: Panzi Foundation DRC and Panzi Foundation USA. While separate legal entities, the two Foundations and the Hospital operate in lock-step to fund and implement critical programs serving survivors of sexual violence and the broader community surrounding Panzi. Panzi Foundation USA raises awareness about the challenges in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, engages in strategic advocacy to address the root causes of violence, and makes key investments at Panzi Hospital to heal women and restore lives.
Chapter 3: The Holistic Approach

Holistic Healing Handbook
Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation
2019
https://www.mukwegefoundation.org
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

The holistic approach to survivor care focuses on the needs of survivors in their entirety, recognising that these needs are interdependent. In dealing with survivors of sexual violence in particular, it is clear that for the body to heal, or for a patient to feel mentally strong enough to undergo complex surgery, psychological needs must be addressed. Furthermore, in order to fully heal psychologically, concerns about livelihood and financial security must be alleviated. Similarly, seeking justice, and bearing with the often painful processes of police reporting and testifying in court, for most victims is only possible with a strong support network.

For these reasons, Panzi’s One-Stop Centre includes four pillars for medical, psychological, legal, and socioeconomic support. Through these pillars, Panzi aims to address the full spectrum of survivors’ needs for recovery and healing, and enable them to rebuild their lives and reintegrate in their communities.

In adopting a holistic approach, Panzi uses its experience, knowledge and data to advocate for change and to challenge systems that perpetuate or allow sexual violence to be committed.

One-Stop Centres

One-Stop Centres represent one approach to the implementation of the four pillars of the holistic approach. The idea behind a One-Stop Centre is to provide all of the key components of holistic care within a single system. Ideally, these services, are accessible either under one roof or through one entry point. It is important that these services operate in close proximity to one another. In other words, the different service areas coordinate, collaborate, and depend on one another to provide care within a single system.

The One-Stop Centre is not a static concept. In some scenarios, the integration of all services might be possible under one roof, or within one facility. In others, different services may be offered through close partnerships with other programmes or organisations in the area. In any case, these services should be strongly linked to a hospital, whether they are offered by one organisation or by closely associated organisations.

The implementation of a One-Stop Centre must recognise and adapt to the changing environment and patterns in sexual and gender-based violence. For example, at Panzi, the services are developed to address the needs of victims of extremely brutal forms of sexual violence. For most survivors, the main entry point for support is, therefore, medical care. In other scenarios and contexts, however, the main entry point to access services might be different. For example, in
situations where domestic violence or child marriages are more common, legal and/or psychological services may serve as the main entry point(s).

**The Panzi Model: all services integrated into a health structure**

This handbook describes the One-Stop Centre at Panzi Hospital, which we sometimes refer to as the Panzi Model. While there are many interpretations of holistic approaches and One-Stop Centres, the Panzi Model provides a thorough case study of a successful implementation.

Unique to the Panzi Model is that services to victims of sexual violence are integrated into the health structure, specifically, the reproductive health services. This means, at Panzi, survivors of sexual violence are treated alongside other patients suffering complex gynaecological injuries, such as those related to obstructed childbirth. Integrating services for survivors of sexual violence into existing structures lowers the threshold for them to access a range of services and is shown to prevent stigmatisation. Additionally, the integration of the One-Stop Centre into a pre-existing healthcare system helps to ensure the sustainability of the programme post-conflict.

The structure of the holistic approach at Panzi is illustrated in the image below. In addition to the four pillars, compassionate care and evidence-based programming are considered by Panzi as the foundation of the entire system. Finally, advocacy unifies the four services in the ultimate cause to change society at large and end the use of rape as a weapon of war.

---

Photo from *Holistic Care Handbook*
Panzi Hospital and Foundation’s world-renowned four-pillar holistic healing model works to meet the full spectrum of needs for survivors of sexualized violence, women who have suffered complex gynecological injuries, and vulnerable populations throughout South Kivu. We create a safe and healing space that supports not only women’s physical healing, but fosters their emotional recovery, helps to rebuild their livelihoods and contributes to the long-term, sustainable restoration of their communities.

The Panzi Hospital and Foundations family has provided compassionate, healing support to more than 85,000 women and girls, over 50,000 of whom have been survivors of sexualized violence.

40% - 60% of women treated at Panzi Hospital are unable to return to their homes after medical treatment, because of the extent of their injuries, ongoing violence, or, most often, the deep stigma associated with sexual violence and fistula. These women continue along their healing journey at Maison Dorcas, our innovative after-care center and community center. Our four-pillar holistic healing model includes physical care, psychosocial support, community reintegration services, and legal assistance.

Physical Care: World-Class Medical Treatment

At Panzi, survivors of sexual violence have access to world-class medical services. With 370 skilled and dedicated doctors, nurses, and support staff, using modern equipment not found in other Congolese hospitals, Panzi offers the best, and often only, opportunity for medical care in the region. Close to 18,000 consultations are conducted each year at the hospital and its rural outreach clinics. The hospital has 450 beds, 250 of which are dedicated to survivors of sexual violence and women in need of complex gynecological care.

The hospital is located 8 kilometers from the center of Bukavu in the eastern DRC. It is the recognized General Reference Hospital for the Ibanda Health Zone, serving a population of over 400,000, and accepts patients from throughout the region. Over the years, the hospital has expanded its services in response to the needs of the population, with departments of General Internal Medicine, Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics, and Pediatrics. Panzi also hosts outpatient services such as family medicine clinics, ear, nose and throat (ENT), a dental clinic, an optometrist; a radiology unit; and a cervical cancer screening program.

Panzi Foundation is deeply grateful to Panzi Hospital's many dedicated partners, who provide critical support for its physical healing services. While Panzi Foundation was originally founded to meet the needs of women and girls beyond physical treatment, where necessary, we work to fill in funding gaps for this front-line service.
HEALING SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND COMPLEX INJURIES

Panzi Hospital is world-renowned for its best-in-class services treating survivors of sexualized violence and complex gynecological injuries. Each woman works with our doctors and clinicians to create a tailor-made healing pathway, including both physical and psychological treatment options.

From her first moments, each patient works closely with a social assistant to ensure her treatment meets the full spectrum of her physical and initial psychological needs. For those patients able to return to their home communities, our staff accompanies them home and offers mediation and counseling to support each woman’s successful reintegration.

In 2015, Panzi Hospital (not including its rural clinics) saw 2533 women with complex gynecological injuries resulting not only from the brutal rape that has characterized Congo’s two decades of war, but from prolonged, obstructed, and complicated births in areas where access to quality maternal care is a massive challenge (1877 of the 2533 women were survivors of rape). We believe that all women deserve access to healing services, and accept women into our Survivors of Sexualized Violence (SSV) program based on their injuries, not based on how those injuries were sustained.

Psychosocial Support: Groundbreaking Therapeutic Program

When the first survivors arrived at Panzi Hospital in 1999, Dr. Mukwege and the Panzi staff realized immediately that physical healing would not be enough. Many survivors do not immediately have the emotional strength to withstand the rigorous, complex physical recovery process, often requiring multiple surgeries over an extended period. The front-line of treatment at Panzi, therefore, is psychological.

A woman first arriving at Panzi meets immediately with a social assistant, who provides an initial assessment and begins working with the woman and our psychological unit to address her most urgent needs. It is only after each woman is assessed to be emotionally resilient enough to undergo treatment that she is cleared for surgery.
Survivors have continued access to psychosocial support, including group therapy and groundbreaking innovations like our Music Therapy program, through the programs at our after-care center, Maison Dorcas. Here, survivors and vulnerable community members join to chart forward their healing paths – not in isolation, but together. Working side-by-side with women from the community helps to break down stigma and social barriers, bolstering each woman’s support network and strengthening her further.

HEALING THROUGH MUSIC

Our innovative new Music Therapy Program, implemented in partnership with the Panzi Foundation DRC staff at Maison Dorcas and Make Music Matter, and with support from the Humanitarian Innovation Fund, is helping survivors, vulnerable women, children and Panzi staff use the healing power of music to recover from traumatic past experiences.

Legal Assistance: Pioneering the Pursuit of Justice

Enhancing women’s rights through legal assistance and representation, as well as providing forensic evidence and strengthening local capacities to prevent and monitor abuses, is critical to restoring balance and ensuring protection for survivors and their communities. The Panzi Legal Clinic helps file hundreds of complaints per year linked to sexual and gender-based violence and supports survivors with reparations kits.
The Panzi Legal Clinic works with vulnerable women and survivors of sexual violence throughout Bukavu and, through its rural clinics, in the territories of Kabare, Kalehe, and Walungu as well, increasing the number of successful prosecutions in each. The rural clinics also play a key role in referring women in need of emergency medical care to Panzi Hospital, and referring relevant cases to our Maison Dorcas after-care center for safe shelter, support, and community reintegration services.

The Legal Clinic’s robust and dynamic public awareness initiatives have contributed to greater awareness and understanding of human rights issues and, in particular, women’s rights as enshrined by Congolese and international law, throughout the rural territories. Through persistent advocacy, our legal teams have also made significant progress in working with judicial authorities to reduce the duration of time it takes to close a case and obtain judgement. Through meetings and one-on-one targeted discussions with legal administrators and authorities, Panzi has cut time to process certain cases in half from six to three months, and some sexual violence cases now take as little as two months.

**Education and Advocacy: Addressing the Root Causes of Violence**

We must work to stem the tide of survivors arriving at our doorsteps each day by healing not only individual bodies, spirits, and lives, but the families, communities, and nation in which they live.

Civil society in Congo has grown into a powerful and inspiring force, capable of creating significant and positive change. Our Panzi team works to strengthen civil society further and address the root issues driving violence and conflict in Congo.

**IN CONGO**

Panzi’s innovative Badilika (Change) Program works to increase the accountability of the Congolese government and local authorities to protect human rights, reduce women’s vulnerability, and practice good governance. By making critical investments in local, Congolese civil society organizations and providing technical support and trainings, our Badilika staff is working to ensure that all Congolese citizens are aware of their rights, their responsibilities, and the accountability they should be able to expect from their leaders. Our team has worked with more than 750 grassroots civil society organizations in the provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu, and Maniema. Building and supporting coalitions, Panzi is building civil society’s capacity to address the root causes of violence and rebuild Congolese communities on principles of human rights and gender equality.

Organizations supported through Badilika are making real advances in their own communities. One has shut down brothels complicit in the recruitment of young girls in to prostitution, and is launching a class-action lawsuit to win restitution for vulnerable families whose homes were demolished without due compensation.
INTERNATIONALLY

Dr. Mukwege is committed to using his international platform to bring the voices of women, vulnerable communities, and civil society leaders to the halls of international power. We hold high-level meetings with dignitaries such as US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, and members of the US National Security Council at the White House. These meetings allow us to ensure that Congolese voices are at the forefront of the policy conversation.

Innovations in the Field: Groundbreaking Treatments and Research

Panzi is committed to finding integrating and innovating on the best, most effective treatments for our holistic healing model. We implement groundbreaking new techniques, and back up our work with the research necessary to evaluate, iterate, and continue our innovation.

DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

A joint initiative between our partners at Panzi Foundation DRC and the Evangelical University in Africa (UAE), the International Center for Advanced Research and Training (ICART) aims to improve research capacity at Panzi by training physicians and staff on research methods, conducting ethical research on human subjects, management and analysis, scientific writing and presentations, and publication. Staff and faculty are gaining the skills necessary to become strong voices and leaders in the international research community, addressing the needs and future direction of DRC with data-driven, evidence-based recommendations for both the policy and philanthropic communities.
Chapter 6: Impact

Holistic Healing Handbook
Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation
2019
https://www.mukwegefoundation.org

The Panzi Model provides a pathway to heal victims and enable them to achieve a healthy life. Central to the process is the view that every woman, and man, can emerge strong. By recognising the tremendous injuries of victims, and then translating this pain into power, it is possible to achieve real change at the level of not only the individual, but also the society. Through holistic care, victims are transformed into survivors, and survivors are empowered to become agents of change within their own communities.

The holistic approach generates beneficial outcomes at three different levels. At the individual level, this includes the enhancement of survivors’ wellbeing, and the encouragement for other victims to seek care. At the care system level, benefits include programme sustainability and cost-effectiveness. And finally, at the societal level, this includes the promotion of communities where sexual violence is no longer tolerated and perpetrators are held accountable.

Individual Level

Enhance Survivors’ Wellbeing

According to evaluations of holistic care services, one of the foremost positive findings is that patients perceive the services as both respectful and dignified. Applying the holistic approach can help sensitise and inform the professionals of the various disciplines (medical, legal, psychological, and socioeconomic) about the interconnected needs of victims, as well as the complexity of the causes and consequences of sexual and gender-based violence in general. It increases their ability to treat survivors with respect and helps ensure a welcoming environment. Respectful and dignified treatment by service providers helps to improve corresponding outcomes, such as psychological wellbeing and overall satisfaction with treatment.

“Because of the holistic nature of our work, staff feels more engaged in this topic. You can no longer look away from the complexity of the problems. You are really aware of the dramatic consequences, the consequences on mental health and on the lives of survivors, in connection with others in their communities. You are no longer just a doctor.” -Doctor at Panzi Hospital:

The benefits of accessing multiple services are exponentially higher than the benefits of accessing one service alone.

For example, the extent to which patients will recover physically is often influenced by their psychological state. Similarly, psychological wellbeing may influence one’s ability to successfully participate in socioeconomic activities. Mental health is often positively affected by access to justice, as favorable experiences with the legal system have been shown to have a positive impact on survivors’ psychological wellbeing. Finally, gaining economic autonomy
promotes both mental and physical recovery. In other words, the outcome of each separate service is amplified when combined with the other services.

*Encourage Survivors to Seek Care*

Numerous studies have shown that victims of sexual and gender-based violence, who often face stigmatisation related to the crime, do not seek help for the abuses they suffer. Those who do decide to seek help however, rarely access more than one service, especially if these services are not interconnected and the procedures for accessing them are complicated.

Although there are victims who will never reach out to access care, for those who do seek help, having multiple services at one location is a tangible benefit. Evidence suggests that linking medical and legal services increases survivors’ willingness to prosecute their perpetrator. This is particularly effective because there is minimal stigma attached to entering a health centre, and health services are often the first entry point for survivors of sexual violence (as well as other types of gender-based violence). Thus, the use of health facilities as an entry point for victims has been found to be an effective option for enhancing accessibility to all services.

**Care System Level**

*Foster Program Sustainability*

Particularly in conflict zones, there is a need for a sustainable system of survivor care. Humanitarian agencies that set up services during conflict are likely to leave when funding runs out, or when humanitarian access is restricted, leaving the services without the proper resources to survive. For this reason, a more sustainable solution is to integrate holistic services into existing public health systems.

In order to do this, donor support is crucial. However, when holistic services are integrated into existing health systems, opportunities for local funding could also be mobilised, in addition to initial donor contributions. Where possible, local support should be encouraged by appointing government officials to assist and oversee the programmes, most notably from the Ministry of Health (or the equivalent agency in the country).

*Increase Cost-Effectiveness*

Offering all services in one place – through the establishment of a One-Stop Centre – allows professionals to work together and respond to survivors’ needs in a more coordinated, timely, and effective way.

Integrating the four pillars of the holistic approach within a health facility, when done effectively, can reduce the costs of infrastructure, support services (i.e. the use of translators, and support staff), administration (i.e. databases), and logistics. Furthermore, offering services that reinforce one another creates a virtuous cycle that increases effectiveness and efficiency, as fewer resources need to be allocated for each service. In this way, the care system itself is a beneficiary of the holistic approach.
Societal Level

Promote Societal Change

Providing holistic care to survivors of sexual violence generates benefits to society at large. First, the empowerment of survivors decreases their vulnerability to further violence. Second, offering services to survivors encourages them to break the silence and speak out, which helps to increase awareness of the consequences of these offenses within the wider community. Legal action decreases impunity and increases the likelihood of deterrence.

When the wellbeing and resilience of survivors improves, they are most likely to stand up for their rights. As victims transform into agents of change, they often increase their participation in decision-making processes within their households and their communities.

Finally, the provision of holistic care in combination with a thorough documentation of the systemic use of rape as a weapon of war provides the basis to advocate for change. Ensuring that sexual violence is not tolerated, at both the community and society levels, requires addressing the problem at its roots, by challenging gender norms, enforcing law reforms (and the application of the law), and creating protection measures for survivors – all of which is encouraged and often provided by holistic care systems like the One-Stop Centre at Panzi.
I have just returned from hell. I am trying for the life of me to figure out how to communicate what I have seen and heard in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. How do I convey these stories of atrocities without your shutting down, quickly turning the page or feeling too disturbed?

How do I tell you of girls as young as nine raped by gangs of soldiers, of women whose insides were blown apart by rifle blasts and whose bodies now leak uncontrollable streams of urine and feces?

This journey was a departure for me. It began with a man, Dr. Denis Mukwege, and a conversation we had in New York City in December 2006, when he came to speak about his work helping women at Panzi Hospital in Bukavu. It began with my rusty French and his limited English. It began with the quiet anguish in his bloodshot eyes, eyes that seemed to me to be bleeding from the horrors he’d witnessed.
Something happened in this conversation that compelled me to go halfway around the world to visit the doctor, this holy man who was sewing up women as fast as the mad militiamen could rip them apart.

I am going to tell the stories of the patients he saves so that the faceless, generic, raped women of war become Alfonsine and Nadine—women with names and memories and dreams. I am going to ask you to stay with me, to open your hearts, to be as outraged and nauseated as I felt sitting in Panzi Hospital in faraway Bukavu.

Before I went to the Congo, I'd spent the past 10 years working on V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls. I'd traveled to the rape mines of the world, places like Bosnia, Afghanistan and Haiti, where rape has been used as a tool of war. But nothing I ever experienced felt as ghastly, terrifying and complete as the sexual torture and attempted destruction of the female species here. It is not too strong to call this a femicide, to say that the future of the Congo's women is in serious jeopardy.

I learned from my trip that there are men who take their sorrow and helplessness and destroy women's bodies—and there are others with the same feelings who devote their lives to healing and serving. I do not know all the reasons men end up in one or the other of these groups, but I do know that one good man can create many more. One good man can inspire other men to ache for women, to fight for them and protect them. One good man can win the trust of a community of raped women—and in doing so, keep their faith in humanity alive.

Dr. Mukwege picks me up at 6:30 A.M. It is a lush, clean morning. Eastern Congo, where Panzi Hospital is located, is wildly fertile. You can almost hear the vegetation growing. There are banana trees and cartoon-colored birds. And there is Lake Kivu, a vast body of water that contains enough methane to power a good portion of the sub-Sahara—yet the city of Bukavu on its banks has only sporadic electricity. This is a theme in the Congo. There are more natural resources than almost anywhere else on the planet, yet 80 percent of the people make less than a dollar a day. More rain falls than one can imagine, but for millions, clean drinking water is scarce. The earth is gorgeously abundant, and yet almost one third of the population is starving.

As we drive along the semblance of road, the doctor tells me how different things were when he was a child. "In the sixties 50,000 people lived here in Bukavu. It was a relaxed place. There were rich people who had speedy boats in the lakes. There were gorillas in the mountains." Now there are at least a million displaced Congoleses, many of whom arrive in the city daily, fleeing the numerous armed groups that have ravaged the countryside since fighting erupted in 1996. What started as a civil war to overthrow dictator Mobutu Sese Seko soon became "Africa's first world war," as observers have called it, with soldiers from neighboring countries joining in the mayhem. The troops have various agendas: Many are fighting for control of the region's extraordinary mineral wealth. Others are out to grab whatever they can get.

But you have to go back further than 1996 to understand what is going on in the Congo today. This country has been tortured for more than 120 years, beginning with King Leopold II of Belgium, who "acquired" the Congo and, between 1885 and 1908, exterminated an estimated 10 million people, about half the population. The violent consequences of genocide and colonialism have had a profound impact on the psyche of the Congoleses. Despite a 2003 peace agreement and recent elections, armed groups continue to terrorize the eastern half of the country. Overall
the war has left nearly 4 million people dead—more than in any other conflict since World War II—and resulted in the rape of hundreds of thousands of women and girls.

In Bukavu, the people escaping the fighting walk from early morning to late at night. They walk and walk, searching for a way to buy or sell a tomato, or for a banana for their baby. It is a relentless river of humans, anxious and hungry. "People used to eat three meals a day," says Dr. Mukwege. "Now they are lucky to eat one."

Everyone knows the doctor, an ob-gyn. He waves and stops to inquire about this person's health, that person's mother. Most doctors, teachers and lawyers fled the Congo after the wars started. It never occurred to Dr. Mukwege to leave his people at their most desperate hour.

He first became aware of the epidemic of rape in 1996. "I saw women who had been raped in an extremely barbaric way," he recalls. "First, the women were raped in front of their children, their husbands and neighbors. Second, the rapes were done by many men at the same time. Third, not only were the women raped, but their vaginas were mutilated with guns and sticks. These situations show that sex was being used as a weapon that is cheap.

"When rape is done in front of your family," he continues, "it destroys everyone. I have seen men suffer who watched their wives raped; they are not mentally stable anymore. The children are in even worse condition. Most of the time, when a woman suffers this much violence, she is not able to bear children afterward. Clearly these rapes are not done to satisfy any sexual desire but to destroy the soul. The whole family and community are broken."

We arrive at Panzi Hospital, a spread-out complex of about a dozen buildings. Eight years ago Dr. Mukwege created a special maternity ward here with an operating room. Panzi as a whole has 334 beds, 250 of which now hold female victims of sexual violence. The hospital and its surrounding property have become, essentially, a village of raped women. The grounds are overwhelmed with children and hunger and need. Every day at least two children here die from malnutrition. Then there are the many problems that result from severe trauma: women with nightmares and insomnia, women rejected by their husbands, women who have no interest in nurturing the babies of their rapists, women and children with nowhere to go.

It is early morning, and the hospital courtyard has been transformed into a temporary church. Women dressed in their most colorful, or perhaps only, pagne (a six-yard piece of brightly patterned cloth that can be wrapped into a dress or skirt) sit waiting for the doctor to arrive and lead the prayer service that begins each day. A dedicated staff of female nurses and social workers are there as well, dressed in their starched white jackets. There is singing, a combination of Pentecostal calls and Swahili rhythms, Sunday-morning voices calling up Jesus.

This morning service is a kind of daily gathering of strength and unity. When the women sing, everything else seems to disappear. They are with the sun, the sky, the drums, each other. They are alive in their bodies, momentarily safe and free.
As they sing, Dr. Mukwege tells me stories about the women in the chorus. Many were naked when they arrived, or starving. Many were so badly damaged he is amazed they are singing at all. He takes enormous pride in their recovery. "I will never be ashamed," the women sing. "God gave me a new heart that I can be very strong."

"At the beginning I used to hear patients' stories," Dr. Mukwege tells me. "Now I abstain." I soon understand why. I meet Nadine (like others in this story, she agreed to be photographed, but asked that her name be changed, as she could be subject to reprisals for speaking out), who tells me a tale so horrendous it will haunt me for years to come.

When we begin talking, Nadine seems utterly disassociated from her surroundings—far away. "I'm 29," she begins. "I am from the village of Nindja. Normally there was insecurity in our area. We would hide many nights in the bush. The soldiers found us there. They killed our village chief and his children. We were 50 women. I was with my three children and my older brother; they told him to have sex with me. He refused, so they cut his head and he died."

Nadine's body is trembling. It is hard to believe these words are coming out of a woman who is still alive and breathing. She tells me how one of the soldiers forced her to drink his urine and eat his feces, how the soldiers killed 10 of her friends and then murdered her children: her four-year-old and two-year-old boys and her one-year-old girl. "They flung my baby's body on the ground like she was garbage," Nadine says. "One after another they raped me. From that my vagina and anus were ripped apart."

Nadine holds onto my hand as if she were drowning in a tsunami of memory. As devastated as she is, it is clear that she needs to be telling this story, needs me to listen to what she is saying. She closes her eyes and says something I cannot believe I'm hearing. "One of the soldiers cut open a pregnant woman," she says. "It was a mature baby and they killed it. They cooked it and forced us to eat it."

Incredibly, Nadine was the only one of the 50 women to escape. "When I got away from the soldiers, there was a man passing. He said, What is that bad smell?" It was me; because of my wounds, I couldn't control my urine or feces. I explained what had happened. The man wept right there. He and some others brought me to the Panzi Hospital."

She stops. Neither of us has breathed. Nadine looks at me, longing for me to make sense of what she's related. She says, "When I got here I had no hope. But this hospital helped me so much. Whenever I thought about what happened, I became mad. I believed I would lose my mind. I asked God to kill me. Dr. Mukwege told me: Maybe God didn't want me to lose my life."

Nadine later tells me that the doctor was right. As she fled the slaughter, she says, she saw an infant lying on the ground next to her slain parents. Nadine rescued the girl; now having a child to care for gives her reason to keep going. "I can't go back to my village. It's too dangerous. But if I had a place to live I could go to school. I lost my children but I'm raising this child as my own. This girl is my future."

I stay for a week at Panzi. Women line up to tell me their stories. They come into the interview numb, distant, glazed over, dead. They leave alive, grateful, empowered. I begin to understand that the deepest wound for them is the sense that they have been forgotten, that they are invisible and that their suffering has no meaning. The simple act of listening to them has enormous impact. The slightest touch or kindness restores their faith and energy. The strength of these
women is remarkable, as is their unparalleled resiliency. Dr. Mukwege tells me I need to meet Alfonsine (her name also has been changed). "Her story really touched me," he says. "Her body, her case is the worst I have ever seen, but she has given us all courage."

Alfonsine is thin and poised, profoundly calm. She tells me she was walking through the forest when she encountered a lone soldier. "He followed me and then forced me to lie down. He said he would kill me. I struggled with him hard; it went on for a long time. Then he went for his rifle, pressed it on the outside of my vagina and shot his entire cartridge into me. I just heard the voice of bullets. My clothes were glued to me with blood. I passed out."

Dr. Mukwege tells me, "I never saw such destruction. Her colon, bladder, vagina and rectum were basically gone. She had lost her mind. I was sure she wouldn't make it. I rebuilt her bladder. Sometimes you don't even know where you are going. There's no map. I operated on her six times, and then I sent her to Ethiopia so they could heal the incontinence problem, and they did."

"I was in bed when I first met Dr. Mukwege," Alfonsine says. "He caressed my face. I lived at Panzi for six months. He helped me spiritually. He showed me how many times God makes miracles. He built me up morally."

I look at Alfonsine's petite body and imagine the scars beneath her humble white clothes. I imagine the reconstructed flesh, the agony she experienced after being shot. I listen carefully. I cannot detect a drop of bitterness or any desire for revenge. Instead, her attention is fixed on transforming the future. She tells me with great pride, "I am now studying to be a nurse. My first choice is to work at Panzi. It was the nurses who nurtured me day after day, who loved me back into living."

Alfonsine has ambitions that go beyond Panzi: "I feel like a big person in my community; I can do something for my people. Women must lead our country. They know the way."

Every day about a dozen new women arrive at Panzi Hospital. Most come for surgery to repair a fistula, a rip in their internal tissue. There are two types of fistulas seen here: One is the aftermath of brutal rape, the other the result of birth complications, something that could be prevented if there were adequate maternity health care. These obstetric fistulas are the result of abnormal tearing during the birth process. Many occur when women flee the militias while they are in labor; there is no time to give birth, and the baby dies inside. The women who make it here are the lucky ones. They limp on homemade canes made from tree branches; they trudge slowly in deep pain. Some have walked 40 miles. Because it takes so long to get to the hospital, women have no chance to receive the anti-HIV medications that must be taken within 48 hours after rape. Health experts fear that in a few years, there will be an explosion of AIDS in the Congo.
Dr. Mukwege was once the only doctor at Panzi Hospital able to perform fistula surgery; now he has trained four others. The hospital does 1,000 such operations a year.

I sit in on a typical operation in a clean, safe, but seriously underequipped operating room (nurses use torn pieces of a green dressing gown to tie the woman's ankles to the stirrups). I am able to see the fistula—a hole in the tissue between the woman's vaginal wall and bladder. A hole in her body. A hole in her soul. A hole where her confidence, her esteem, her spirit, her light, her urine leak out.

Because of the prevalence of fistulas, the Panzi complex is soaked in urine. The smell pervades everything. Pee spills out of women in a huge, dirt-floored hangarlike space where hundreds sit all day. Pee spills out in classrooms, leaving puddles on the floor. The women are always wet. Their legs chafe and their skin burns. There are many little girls in pee-stained dresses roaming around Panzi; shy and ashamed, they, too, are victims of rape. The week of my visit, a state agency had turned off the water for the hospital after billing Panzi $70,000 (an insane amount by Congolese standards) because it heard that the hospital, which is private, was receiving money from the West. Staff had to bring in buckets of water from the surrounding neighborhood. To have hundreds of women with fistula-caused incontinence and no water seemed like a crime upon a crime.

I can't help wondering what happened in Dr. Mukwege's life that compelled him to work here, sometimes 14 hours a day. "I was born in Bukavu on March 1, 1955," he tells me. "During my young age my mother was suffering with asthma. In the night when she became ill, I was the one who would go and look for a nurse or bring her medication. We all thought she would die. Even now, each birthday she celebrates, I am so happy to see her alive.

"My father was a pastor. He was very gentle, very human. From him I got the caring to treat patients. When we would go and visit sick people together, he would pray. I would ask, Why can't you give them tablets or prescriptions?" He said, I am not a doctor.' I decided then that prayer is not enough. People must take things into their own hands. Asking God does not change anything. He gives us the ability to say yes or no. You must use your hands, your mind. When I receive women here who are hungry, I can't say, God bless you.' I have to give them something to eat. When someone is suffering, I can't tell her about God, I have to treat her pain. You can't hide yourself in religion. Not a solution."

Dr. Mukwege began as a general practitioner, focusing on pediatrics. When he worked in a clinic in Lemera, a village south of Bukavu, he saw dreadful things happening in maternity. "Women were coming in bleeding day after day, many with severe infections. A woman had a baby and carried it dead in her vagina for a week. It was terrible. This helped me make a total engagement in a new career."

He went back to school to study gynecology in Angers, France, and then returned to Lemera to train the staff in obstetrics and gynecology. After he moved to Bukavu he created a special maternity ward at Panzi. Women who were victims of extreme sexual violence began to arrive. The number grew every day.

Who was—and is—raping the women? The better question might be, who isn't?

The perpetrators include the Interahamwe, the Hutu fighters who fled neighboring Rwanda in 1994 after committing genocide there; the Congolese army; a loose assortment of armed
civilians; even U.N. peacekeepers. Christine Schuler Deschryver, who works for a German aid organization and is a fierce advocate for Panzi Hospital and Congolese women, says, "All of them are raping women. It is a country sport. Any person in uniform is an enemy to women."

Many women do not even report the violations, because they are afraid of rejection by their husbands and families. Although there are laws against rape in the Congo, if a woman reports her rape and her rapist is arrested, he can pay his way out and come back and rape her again. Or murder her.

Dr. Mukwege, in contrast, is motivating a different kind of healing army. I speak with a hospital employee named Bonane. "I was in Uganda," he says. "I saw the doctor on TV. He was explaining the atrocities. I realized these are my mothers and sisters. I was so inspired, I came here to work with him."

Dr. Mukwege is married with five children, but his brother, Herman, tells me his family doesn't see him much because his devotion to the women has consumed his life. Although the doctor's energy never flags, I notice an underlying exhaustion in his face and his being, a sleepless despair that comes from dwelling constantly amid violence and cruelty. He says to me, "When you rape a woman, you destroy life and you destroy your own life. Animals don't do this. When a pigeon has sex with another pigeon, it is kind. I am wondering how man has the power of such destruction."

And yet, the status of women in the Congo was dismal long before the wars started. The women work all day in the field and market, carrying the Congo on their backs (sometimes up to 200 pounds in bags strapped to their foreheads). They prepare the dinner, wash the clothes, clean the house, take care of the children, have mandatory sex with their husbands. They have no power, no rights and no value. Many women I talk to ask why I am "wasting my time" with them.

I interview a man who is the keeper of a gorilla preserve. He tells me that when dangerous militias began staking out territory in the park, he went to their commanders and asked if their soldiers would work with him to protect the gorillas. In the end they all agreed. I ask him why he didn't feel compelled to do the same for the women. The question surprised him. He had no answer.

I ask the doctor about the Congo's leader, Joseph Kabila, who in November 2006 became the country's first democratically elected president in 46 years and promised to be the "craftsman of peace." Are things getting better?

Dr. Mukwege sighs. "Kabila," he says, "has done nothing. The fighting here in the east has not stopped. During 2004 my life was threatened; I got phone calls warning me to stop my work or die. The calls have ceased, but it is still very dangerous.

"Visitors come from the international community," he continues. "They eat sandwiches and cry, but they do not come back with help. Even President Kabila has never put his foot here. His wife was here. She wept, but she has done nothing."

UNICEF, ECHO (the humanitarian aid office of the European Commission) and PMU (a Swedish humanitarian organization) are the major supporters of Panzi. Although the hospital can always use more money, the real need is for a political response to the violence. Barring that, Dr. Mukwege would at least like to get real protection for the women once they leave the hospital. "I
patch them up and send them back home," he says, "but there is no guarantee they will not be raped again. There have been several cases where women have come back a second time, more destroyed than the first."

On my last day, the doctor asks me if I will lead some exercises for the women that will help alleviate their trauma. We go to the hangarlike building where 250 depressed and sick women are waiting. We begin with breathing. Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Then we attach a noise to the breath. Other noises follow. One after another, noise after noise. Then we attach a movement. There is stomping. There is punching. There is mad waving of arms. The women are up on their feet, screaming, releasing guttural sounds of sorrow, rage, terror. In a matter of minutes, I watch them go from broken, mute women to wild, laughing, ferocious beings.

In the midst of this energy, Dr. Mukwege challenges the women to a dance contest. Celebration and power explode from their bodies. A part of each woman is fierce, unbreakable. No one has killed their spirits. The doctor whispers to me, "When I see this joy, this life in the women, I know why I must come back here every day."

The women's frenzy builds and builds. They dance in the hot African sun. They dance in the open road. They literally dance us up a steep hill, hundreds of women and children moving in a single, radiant feminine mass.

If 250 women who have been raped, torn, starved and tortured can find the strength to dance us up a mountain, surely the rest of us can find the resources and will to guarantee their future.

_Eve Ensler is a playwright, an activist and the founder of V-Day. Her latest book is Insecure at Last._
Fighting Congo’s Ills with Education and an Army of Women

*The New York Times*
Jeffrey Gettleman
February 7, 2011
https://www.nytimes.com/

BUKAVU, Democratic Republic of Congo -- Eve Ensler has an audacious plan.

For years, diplomats, aid workers, academics and government officials here have been vexed almost to the point of paralysis about how to attack this country's staggering problem of sexual violence, in which hundreds of thousands of women have been raped, many quite sadistically, by the various armed groups who haunt the hills of eastern Congo.

Sending in more troops has compounded the problem. United Nations peacekeepers have failed to stop it. Would reforming the Congolese military work? Building up the Congolese state? Pushing harder to regulate so-called conflict minerals to starve the rebels of an income?

For Ms. Ensler, the feminist playwright who wrote “The Vagina Monologues” and who has worked closely with Congolese women, the answer was simple.

"You build an army of women," she said. "And when you have enough women in power, they take over the government and they make different decisions. You'll see. They'll say 'Uh-uh, we're not taking this any longer,' and they'll put an end to this rape problem fast."

Over the weekend, Ms. Ensler took the first step toward building this army: the opening of a base here in Bukavu called City of Joy.

The gleaming new compound of brick homes, big classrooms, courtyards and verandas will be a campus where small groups of Congolese women, most of them rape victims, will be groomed to become leaders in their communities so they can eventually rise up and, Ms. Ensler hopes, change the sclerotic politics of this country. They will take courses in self-defense, computers and human rights; learn trades and farming; try to exorcise their traumas with therapy sessions and dance; and then return to their home villages to empower others.

The center, built partly by the hands of the women themselves, cost around $1 million. Unicef contributed a substantial amount, and the rest was raised from foundations and private donors by Ms. Ensler's advocacy group, V-Day. Google is donating a computer center.

It is a gutsy concept, to invest this heavily in a small group of mostly illiterate women -- about 180 leadership recruits per year -- in the hope that they will catalyze social change.

But Ms. Ensler has faced long odds before, encouraging rape victims in Afghanistan, Bosnia and other war zones to speak out and become leaders.

"This could be a turning point," said Stephen Lewis, a former Unicef official whose private foundation is helping City of Joy. "There's been growing international concern about what's
happening in Congo, but up until now that hasn't amounted to anything on the ground. Maybe this is the moment where women on the ground show they can turn this around."

Eastern Congo is one of the poorest and most dysfunctional places on earth, but it is also one of the most beautiful, a land of sculptured green mountains and deep, clear lakes and trees upon trees. It is teeming with riches: gold, diamonds, timber, copper, tin and more. And though the people here, especially the women, have been brutally abused for years -- many have had assault rifles thrust inside them, others raped with chunks of wood and left incontinent and sterile for life -- their spirits have hardly been crushed.

When City of Joy officially opened Friday, hundreds of women, most of them rape victims, thumped on drums and sang at the top of their lungs. They wore black T-shirts that read, "Stop the rape of our most precious resource." It seemed that the army of women Ms. Ensler envisioned was mustering in front of her eyes. Some even danced with the shovels and cement-encrusted trowels that they used to build the City of Joy.

It was an upbeat moment in a country that has had few. The legacy of brutality and exploitation goes back to the 1880s, when King Leopold II of Belgium claimed Congo as a colony and essentially enslaved the population to obtain piles of ivory and rubber.

In the mid-1990s, the country sank to new depths when a civil war broke out and neighboring nations jumped in, arming this or that rebel group in order to get their hands on this or that gold or diamond mine. Millions died. Although the other African armies eventually withdrew, many of the rebel groups never disbanded, exploiting the fact that Congo is incredibly large and the state incredibly weak.

These armed groups have to a striking degree vented their rage against women. Sadistic rape -- sometimes of men and boys as well -- has become a distinctive feature of the violence here, sometimes to terrorize civilians, sometimes for no apparent strategic purpose.

Draw a line in almost any direction from Bukavu and you will hit a village where countless women have been brutalized.

Just last month, in the nearby town of Fizi, dozens of women were raped by Congolese Army soldiers. Congolese authorities took the unusual step of arresting some of the officers involved, including a colonel, but few really believe that will make a difference. The United Nations has an enormous peacekeeping operation in Congo, but even villages near the peacekeepers' bases have been hit.

The government, which has done little to address the problem, sent a high-level delegation to the opening of City of Joy. As the dignitaries arrived, hundreds of children lined the road, their toes squishing in the mud. Police officers patrolled with rusty rifles and ill-fitting helmets sitting crookedly on their heads. Pakistani peacekeepers stood in their jeeps, fingers on the trigger.

Ms. Ensler came up with the idea for the center about three years ago after hearing from Congolese women that they wanted a safe place where they could learn skills. While some of the center's alumnae will return to their villages, others will carry out the mission in other ways.

"I don't want to go back to my village and get raped again," said Jane Mukoninwa, who had been gang-raped twice and will be in the first class of leadership recruits. "I want to learn to read and write so I can stay in Bukavu."
She added: "I'm angry. And if I can get some skills, I can be an advocate."

On Saturday, the women gave Ms. Ensler a spirited send-off. They surprised her with a gift they bought, a wooden carving of a mother and child, and pressed around her, dancing.

They sang: "Why did you accept to carry us? We will never leave you to the end."

Ms. Ensler wiped the tears from her eyes.
On Thursday, 19 December, City of Joy graduated 87 women of the 14th class. These women join 1117 others to make a network of 1204 graduates of City of Joy in the Congo. In a moment of pride, the day was unique in the life of each graduate as it marks the celebration of the coming back to her body after being a victim and survivor in her community and a leader through therapy and leadership training at the transformative City of Joy center.

The performance made by the graduates during the ceremony reflected how they were traumatized and stigmatized in communities of broken down values, fragmented principles, violated laws, and more. But the graduation day called the participants’ attention to the holistic beauty of the moment of celebrating graduates’ renaissance at City of Joy and their victorious entrance in their communities as change makers.

It is only six months in which miracles have been made in the life of each resident of City of Joy. It is only six months of love since women entered the gate of City of Joy for the first time fearing their solitude created by men -known and unknown- who destroyed them and made them feel insecure in their bodies.

It is only six months ago when brave, determined women began to build up their lives on a daily basis. It is six months ago when women met in a community of sisterhood and with people who took their problem to heart.

Six months have passed since 87 women felt that the peak of achievement and the new wind of revolution waited for them. And on their graduation the new wind has taken them fully alive to
their communities to lead and tell other women to protect their most precious resources, their vaginas.

The celebration and testimonies during the graduation proved that there is pride in the eyes of graduates, there is hope in their hearts and there are plans for glory, revolution, and change in their minds. They have demonstrated it through theater and humor.

Graduates acknowledged that they are in a world of interminable wars, in a country of corruption, hegemony, patriarchy and famine amidst incomparable wealth. But they have been privileged to spend six months in a place where they have known their rights and have been equipped with skills to be economically independent and demand their rights when they are violated.

To cite the declarations of graduates, many of them said that nothing will replace their focus on the vision they have to become free and independent in their communities. Nothing will prevent them from helping other women know and demand their rights. Nothing will stop them talking about women’s liberation from retrograde ways and customs, hegemonic masculinity, and the subordination of women. Nothing will prevent them from making their ideas flourish and benefit their families and communities. Nothing will take away the need to change paradigms and any beliefs which undervalue women. Nothing will replace the need to aim higher, to live their dreams, to be proud and courageous in the face of adversity because they want to be “the change they want to see”.

87 women have joined their villages after making strong relationships at the City of Joy. The staff and graduates will remain close and will continue rising for women’s rights. They will keep denouncing any violation of the rights of women. This rising will be made a way of life in their families and communities.

We thank V-Day,

We thank Eve Ensler,

We thank all our V-friends,

For having believed in the City of Joy program and for having been the wind behind our backs to help women survivors of gender violence heal and build their future.

In solidarity!

The Echo Foundation
Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation
What We Do

Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation
https://www.mukwegefoundation.org/

We make a difference for people affected by wartime sexual violence around the world. We support survivors and use national and international advocacy to achieve lasting, systemic change.

How we make a difference…

Connect Survivors in a Movement

We support women from 14 different countries from all continents to join forces. Together they are building a global network that connects survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

By speaking out, they draw attention to the use of rape as a weapon of war and demand the changes necessary to end the violence and achieve justice.

Holistic Care for Survivors Worldwide

Survivors of sexual violence in conflict need more than medical care. Dr Denis Mukwege and his team at Panzi Hospital have pioneered a holistic approach which combines medical, psychological, legal and socio-economic support.

Together with Panzi, we work to implement the holistic model in different parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and in other countries affected by war.

A Global Reparations System for Survivors

Reparations are an effective tool to provide justice and support survivors and communities. We work with governments worldwide to establish an international reparations system for conflict-related sexual violence.

We envision the International Reparations Initiative as a very direct way to make reparative justice a reality and change the lives of individuals, families and communities worldwide.

Ensure Accountability for Sexual Violence

States have a legal and moral responsibility to protect their citizens and ensure perpetrators are held to account. So far, however, the international community is lacking behind its commitments.

We bring like-minded governments together to inspire joint action, for example through monitoring and the systematic use of sanctions.
Chapter 1 Discussion Questions

Dr. Denis Mukwege

1. Why do you think Dr. Mukwege has chosen to devote his life to this mission?
2. How does an activist like Dr. Mukwege balance his desire to serve while protecting the safety and needs of him and his family?
3. In his Nobel Lecture, Dr. Mukwege states that, “Doing the right thing is not hard. It is a matter of political will.” Are there examples in the Congo, elsewhere, or in history where you believe political will and doing the right thing were at odds?
4. How do you think Dr. Mukwege’s work impacts the culture of sexual violence in the DRC?

Panzi Hospital & Foundation

1. Dr. Mukwege says that “Holistic Care not only heals victims, but it heals society at large as well.” How much of an impact do you think holistic care has on communities, and in what ways?
2. Why is each pillar of the Panzi Model essential for its effectiveness in treating victims of sexual violence? Would Panzi still be able to provide effective care without any of these pillars?
3. How could medical treatment centers around the world better adopt the standards of holistic healing?

City of Joy

1. How does the “City of Joy” and the “Army of Women” Eve Ensler mentions show the strength of Congolese rape survivors? How does the graduation of women from the City of Joy show reflect strength?
2. How does V-Day raise awareness about sexual violence in the DRC? Why is it important that we continue to support movements like V-Day in the fight for equal rights?
3. Why is empowering sexual violence victims to become leaders in their communities important to ending the greater problem of sexual violence?

Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation

1. Why is it valuable that the Mukwege Foundation works to connect survivors in a global movement?
2. The Mukwege Foundations seeks to “ensure accountability for sexual violence.” In what ways are perpetrators of sexual violence (in both the DRC and globally) not being held accountable for their actions?
Chapter 2: Sexual Violence as a Tool of War in the DRC

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rape has been used as a tool of war to destroy individuals, families, and communities. Victims must cope with not only physical trauma, but often the trauma of rejection by their loved ones. However, to call the DRC the “worst place in the world to be a woman” would be misleading. Despite facing hardships, the voices of Congolese women are strong in demanding justice. They hold out hope that there will not only be structural reform, but educational and cultural reform as well. Too often, we glance over the unattractive parts of our world. But in doing so, we often ignore those that need our attention most. We hope that this chapter helps to raise awareness about a longstanding problem in need of a swift solution.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. Gender Roles in the DRC
   “The Culture of Women”
   “In Congo, ‘Educating Girls is Educating a Nation’”
   “Girls’ Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”

B. Rape as a Tool of War
   “The Root Causes of Sexual Violence in the DRC”
   “Rape as a Weapon of War”
   Why Do Soldiers Rape?
   “Forgotten Women: What does the Future Hold for the Country that ‘Never Turned the Page of Conflict?’”
   “Care-Seeking Behavior by Survivors of Sexual Assault in the Democratic Republic of the Congo”

C. Responses & Proposals for Change
   “Women’s Groups in the DRC are Demanding Justice”
   “Fighting Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo”
   “Democratic Republic of Congo: Ending Impunity for Sexual Violence”

D. Discussion Questions
In the DRC women are largely responsible for agricultural production and completely responsible for all domestic work – including water fetching, firewood gathering, food processing and preparation. In spite of the critical role they play in sustaining their communities, women are often treated as inferior and are largely excluded from community decision-making. These perceptions have perpetuated a cycle of economic, social, and political exclusion of women from decision-making positions and an ability to protect their basic needs.

However, amid the horrors of war, rape, disease, and displacement that have ravaged the country for more than a decade, women are seeking to rebuild their lives and now have a range of opportunities for support. The new constitution, adopted in 2005, commits itself to improving the representation of women in all levels of government and while proportionally underrepresented, there are female elected officials. In addition, international initiatives to build economic capacity amongst women have been ongoing since the first free elections in 2006 and organizations have begun to create safe spaces for women to come together to identify and discuss obstacles to their becoming equal, active members of society. Local women’s groups have started mediation programs and public awareness campaigns urging communities to embrace rather than shun rape survivors. Elderly women are performing traditional rites to help rape victims cope with trauma and to encourage family members to accept them. Some fistula victims are pooling their funds to help one another undergo reparative surgery and “listening centers” allow women to meet others who have endured similar traumas. Women’s organizations are fanning out into the countryside to educate women and their husbands about women’s rights, bringing opportunities for change and a new direction.
In Congo, "Educating Girls is Educating a Nation"

International Rescue Committee
July 22, 2014
www.rescue-uk.org

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, girls lacking in educational opportunities are at risk of early marriage and pregnancy, which is reinforcing cycles of poverty and hindering the country’s development. The International Rescue Committee is mounting a systematic effort to ensure girls are enrolled and succeeding in Congo’s classrooms, so they can take control of their futures through education, and contribute toward the development of their communities.

Growing up in rural Bandundu Province in western Democratic Republic of Congo, Belbiche had lost both of her parents to malaria by the time she was eight years old.

“I dropped out of school and started working in the fields,” she says. “When I saved money from selling my produce, the boys would be sent to school.”

Belbiche’s story is common across the country. When parents can afford school fees, they favour sending their boys to school over girls. The financial gains their parents might get in the short term – by saving money on school fees or by receiving a dowry through marrying off their girls – are lost in the long term. Girls who marry early, become pregnant at a young age, and struggle to raise their own families in areas where there is limited access to health care and education – and the cycle of poverty is often reinforced.

Investing in girls is proven to be one of the most potent ways to fight poverty. Thanks to a new scholarship programme* led by the International Rescue Committee and funded by UK aid, Belbiche is now back in school. But 3.8 million girls between the ages of five and 17 in Congo do not have her opportunity.
“Girls want to be useful in society,” Belbiche says, “not stuck at home living in these conditions, like my friends. I hope to become a teacher so I can give other girls this opportunity.”

Belbiche’s classmate, Elise, also lost her parents before she turned 10. She is now the primary care giver in her family. She wakes up at 5am to do housework and prepare food for her 3 siblings whom she leaves with her neighbours during the day so she can go to school.

Elise is also a student in the Vas-Y-Fille project. She has to walk two hours to get to school in the morning but is grateful for the opportunity which is denied to so many of her peers.

Despite crucial reforms by the ministry of education, which includes doubling the percentage of the national budget devoted to education (from 6.5 percent to 13.8 percent), change is coming slowly to Congo. In principle, primary education is free, but in practice underfunded schools request fees from students to cover the cost of equipment and staff, many of whom are not paid on time, if at all.

According to a recent baseline evaluation by the IRC, conducted in partnership with University of Massachusetts–Amherst, many parents cannot afford school fees for girls. Girls who do manage to attend school are handicapped by poor-quality teaching and a lack of resources—they are often the last to receive pens and books. As a result, 50 percent of young and adolescent girls scored zero on four of five early-grade reading-assessment tests.

One of the main reasons for low educational attainment and high dropout rates among girls in Congo is because their needs are not met in the classroom. Most rural schools are not equipped with basic learning materials, toilets, or adequate shelter and protection for both boys and girls. Vulnerable girls in these schools are the most at risk, and most likely to drop out.

“When I started working here a few years ago, parents would only send their boys to school,” explains Arlette, an IRC community mobiliser working in Kapalo in Katanga Province in southeastern Congo. “Girls would be married off early, sometimes as young as 11 or 12 years old, and start having many children, who are seen locally as a sign of wealth. But the cycle of poverty would continue.”

Without access to education, girls work to provide for their families. Photo Credit International Rescue Committee
Arlette maintains that change is possible. “Parents understand the eventual economic return and benefit of sending girls to school,” she says. “They just need to be supported so they can send their girls to school.”

“This is not just a cultural problem,” adds Rose, a mother of six who is working with Arlette to create a village savings and loan association to fund girls’ education in their community. “I want my daughter to have the opportunity that I didn’t have, to learn and to create the future she wants, but we lack the financial means.”

Ensuring girls are enrolled and stay in school is only the first step. Quality teaching is essential to make sure girls complete school and succeed afterward.

Sylvie Lumwe, a teacher in Katanga, recently received training as part of an IRC project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). “Thanks to my training, I’m more aware of the barriers set against girls,” says Sylvie. “I now actively encourage and support girls to excel in the classroom, and work to convince parents that keeping their girls in school is a good economic investment.” She knows firsthand how hard it is to stay in school: when she finished her university degree, she returned home to help young girls to do the same.

Girls continue to face enormous challenges in Congo, with safety concerns, cultural bias and poverty working in consort to prevent parents from sending girls to school. But all of these barriers are surmountable. By extending access to free education, sufficiently allocating resources to rural school so teachers are paid, and training more teachers – especially female teachers – girls have a greater chance. Those who do are better prepared to end the cycles of illiteracy and poverty blighting their communities.

*Funded by UK aid, the IRC is leading the VAS-Y Fille! project, with partners Save the Children and Catholic Relief Services to improve access to education for more than 137,000 girls in five provinces of DRC where girls’ enrollment, learning and completion are the lowest.

**The IRC and girls**

Working in more than 40 countries and 22 U.S. cities, the IRC helps girls acquire knowledge, skills and confidence. We know that when crisis strikes, women and girls are the first to be harmed, the first to be marginalized, the first to be forgotten. They are also the first to take their families to safety, the first to unite, the first to rebuild.
During the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), from 1998 to 2003, more than 5.2 million children did not receive an education. Although the situation has improved since then, the legacy of the war remains, especially its effect on the female population. In 2012, it was reported that approximately 62.92 percent of female youth aged 15 years and older were literate compared to an 87.91 percent literacy rate for young males.

**Factors Impacting Girls Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**The overarching traditional outlook about the role of females in society:** Many families believe that girls have a responsibility at home, while boys should work outside as the main breadwinners. This thinking leads people to discredit education as an important part of girls’ lives, whereas boys are encouraged to attend schools.

**Poverty:** According to the World Bank, although the poverty rate in the DRC declined from 71 percent to 64 percent between 2005 and 2012, the country still remains one the poorest countries in the world with a ranking of at 176 out of 187 countries per the United Nation’s 2015 Human Development Index. As a result of high levels of poverty, many girls take up jobs to support their families.
Opportunities in armed groups: About 30 to 40 percent of children in the armed groups are girls. Girls are often lured into joining local militias because of enticing factors like wages. However, the NGO Child Soldiers International interviewed over 200 female former child soldiers, who reported that instead of finding opportunities within these groups, they were drugged, raped or forced to commit crimes. For those who are able to escape, they attempt to matriculate into school but are unable to because of the stigma associated with the former sexual relationships between the girls and male soldiers. The same girls who were interviewed cited how they were called “prostitutes” and “HIV carriers” by schools and were not allowed to enroll.

Solutions
To resolve the issue of lack of girls’ education in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the nation is reforming its system so that more children are able to pursue an education. For example, the DRC has increased its education budget from 7.9 percent in 2012 to 14.7 percent in 2015. In addition, the government has received a $100 million grant from the Global Partnership for Education to continue its efforts. Moreover, USAID and the United Kingdom Department for International Development have funded a five-year education program that focuses on reading outcomes in the DRC. It is the largest implemented education program in the DRC and plans to improve the reading outcomes of 1.5 million grades 1-4 students.

Furthermore, USAID has worked to create safe school environments, especially for girls, by training teachers and administrators on how to assess safety and security at the school. Through this, girls will not have to fear for their safety, the lack of which also caused them to join militias.

The results of these actions are clear in the numbers. In 2016, UNESCO reported that approximately 66.5 percent of females aged 15 years and older were literate. Although a small increase, this is still an improvement from 2012.

Girls’ education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has faced many obstacles. However, the country is combating this crisis and ensuring that all children are provided with this opportunity, an action that other underdeveloped countries should follow.

From Congo Stories by John Prendergast and Fidel Bafilemba with photographs by Ryan Gosling (Page 163).
The Root Causes of Sexual Violence in the DRC

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
July 23, 2013
https://www.wilpf.org/

The widespread sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is well known. But most often the phenomenon is oversimplified by linking it solely to the armed conflict and arguing it is limited to the regions in conflict. The appalling truth is that this scourge is today widespread in the whole territory.

A different vision on women in the DRC

Last week, we organised a side-event called A different vision on women in the DRC. You may ask why we decided to name the event a different vision on women in the DRC? This was to challenge this oversimplification. Why? Because we don’t believe that the subject can be reduced to a sole cause. Sexual violence is a complex topic caused by many factors.

Panelists talked about the root causes of sexual violence in the DRC

Our panelists came from the DRC and using their different life experience, they touched upon a wide variety of factors that are at the root causes of this violence. From militarization, small arms flow and ethnicity, to age and economic dependence, all factors addressed need to be taken into account when preventing and responding to sexual violence.

Panelist Annie Matundu Mbambi, president of WILPF DRC, denounced the role of militarization and arms in spreading of sexual violence in the DRC. One striking example is that according to survivors perpetrators always have an arm (small arm or light weapon) when assaulting their victims.

Panelist Faida Chiroy, gender expert at the Ligue Nationale des Associations Autochtones Pygmés de Congo (Linapyco)), conveyed a message touching on the discrimination against indigenous pygmy people. Imelde Sabushimike from Burundi spoke on behalf of Faida Chiroy. She said that indigenous pygmy women have to face multiple discriminations. According to Faida Chiroy, pygmy people living in the forest are deprived from their land, which puts them in a very vulnerable situation and contributes to their exposure to sexual violence, in this context especially by armed groups. She called for a better representation of indigenous pygmy women.
in the decision process as part of the solution to prevent sexual violence imposed on pygmy women.

22 years old panelist Priscillia Magamba, a young women working for the Young Women Christian Association in DRC, reminded the role that young women can have in the peace process. Her personal story is an example for young women and girls in the DRC. She participates in a programme that aims to prevent sexual violence. The programme promotes awareness and provides assistance to survivors. It also encourages victims to initiate legal proceedings against perpetrators to end impunity. Survivors are subject to extreme vulnerability as they are marginalized by the society; as a result, young women face a high illiteracy rate. She promoted the development of young women leadership in the DRC.

But of course, like anywhere else in the world, gender inequality and economic dependency plays a definite role in the incidence of sexual violence. Panelist Delphine Brun, expert for the Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), used a diagram that spoke for itself and highlighted that inequality starts in the inequitable sharing of workload between men and women, women working almost twice as many hours a day as men. In many cases, the tasks taken up by women such as going to the forest to get wood puts them at great risk of rape, but gender inequality in the household means that the share of task is not revisited regardless of this danger. She argued that gender inequality in all areas promotes a context propitious to sexual violence.

From Congo Stories by John Prendergast and Fidel Bafilemba with pictures by Ryan Gosling (Page 101).
Rape as a Weapon of War

Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation
https://www.mukwegefoundation.org/

Throughout history, belligerent parties have been using rape as a tool to punish, terrorize and destroy populations. In some cases, armies, rebel groups and terrorist organisations employ sexual violence as a strategy to pursue their objectives. In other cases, commanders allow their soldiers to rape women and girls as a form of reward. Sexual violence during wartime is often committed in public and by several attackers. It includes gang rape and attacks with objects and weapons, which are inserted in the victims’ vagina or anus. Conflict-related sexual violence takes different forms, such as sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and sexual torture.

Wartime rape affects both, men and women. Men can be victims, and women can be perpetrators.

Under international law, conflict-related sexual violence are characterised as war crimes and crimes against humanity. When it is committed with the intend to destroy a population, such as during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, systematic sexual violence can amount to genocide.

Refugees during the war in Kosovo, where rape was widespread. Photo: UN-Photo/UNHCR/R LeMoyne

Why is rape used as a weapon of war?
Rape is rarely the result of uncontrolled sexual desire, but rather a way to exert power and instil fear in victims and their community.
United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 states that, sexual violence is “a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or an ethnic group.”

Rape is used to demoralize and destabilize entire communities. It destroys the cohesion of families and societies, for example when village chiefs are raped in public or sons are forced to rape their mother.

Sexual violence is also used to obtain information, for example as a method of torture in detention centres. During periods of genocide and ethnic cleansing, sexual violence is used to systematically attack the lineage of a group, for example by impregnating or sterilising women.

**Sexual violence and terrorism**

In recent years, extremist groups increasingly employed sexual violence as a tactic of terror to achieve their goals. In Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) used the sale of women and girls into sexual slavery to raise funds. In particular, members of the Yazidi religious minority in Northern Iraq have been subject to systematic rape and sexual slavery. Some terrorist groups use rape and sexual slavery as a means to attract and retain fighters.

**Rape as a weapon of war: a global problem**

Sexual violence is a feature of conflicts around the world. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the rape and sexual violence has been prevalent for two decades. During the civil war, sexual violence has been utilised as a cheap weapon of war. Despite the high prevalence and protracted use in history, sexual violence is not an inevitable aspect of war. Rape never happens accidentally. It is a choice to employ or tolerate it, and, therefore, it can be stopped.
Why Do Soldiers Rape?

From *International Studies Quarterly*
By Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern
2009
https://academic.oup.com/isq
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

The soldiers explained that the most common type of rape is a result of lust/sexual needs and desire, *viol ya posa*. While the soldiers portrayed women’s sexuality as driven by economic need/opportunism rather than physical needs, men were described as having unequivocal physical sexual needs. Furthermore, the texts tell us that the particular circumstances of being a soldier in the FARDC provides the context where soldiers are “forced” to rape instead of engaging in the more “normal” sexual behaviors organized through civilian life. Hence, according to this line of reasoning, a man cannot be without sex for any sustained time; it is “somewhat unavoidable” that a man—who in any way is denied sex—eventually will take a woman by force. “Lust” rapes occur, they explained, because a man must release sexual tension. In a discussion with three FARDC colonels, they explained rape in the following ways:

**Male Lt. Col. A:** Rape is a problem of organization of society…. If there is not a lot of poverty and suffering you will not see a lot of rape. If the soldiers have their money, he can go out, see a woman, buy her a soda and (…) And it is also about organization. For us, for example, they send you on a mission and maybe you do not have leave for a long time, one year without leave. That is not normal. You have to have leave: some go and after three months another one comes, like that. Then the soldier can go home for a bit, sees his normal friends, family, and his wife/woman [mwasi na ye]. It is a problem of organization. But secondly, it is a problem of suffering/poverty [pasi]. A soldier, if he has no possibilities, no money so that he can go the normal way [voie normal]… if he has nothing in his pocket, he cannot eat or drink his coke, he has nothing to give to a woman—he will take her by force. He will take a woman by force. Physically, men have needs. He cannot go a long time without being with a woman. It is very difficult to stop him…. So a soldier needs a bit of money on his pocket, and he needs to have leave. If that would happen it would reduce the rapes a lot.

**Male Col. B:** Yes, especially for those in combat situations

**Male Lt. Col. A:** Yes especially for those in combat. Because if you look at it, it mostly happens in war. It is mostly those in combat situations who rape. In normal life, you don’t see it much.

Col. A stipulated that “rape is a problem of the organization of society,” explaining that if there is no poverty and suffering, then there will be less rapes. Furthermore, if the organization of the (military) in society allowed for a soldier to have leave and relieve his sexual needs in the “normal” way, then there would be no need for taking a woman by force. He thus linked the instance of rape directly to the poor distribution of resources and organization of the military. He also distinguished between normal life and the life of combat which lies outside “normal” life. He presented combat as a suspended state in which “normal” societal solutions governing men’s natural needs no longer exist. Inhabiting the subject position of provider who receives “love” and regularly relieves his natural sexual tension is impossible in the zone of poorly organized combat; similarly the soldier must seek sexual satisfaction if he is to be able to stay in this zone and perform his duties.
Women soldiers also tended to reproduce prevailing constructions of masculinity when speaking of sexuality and rape (of civilian women). It should be noted that rape, according to the women soldiers interviewed, does not constitute a big problem within the army. They explained that while women soldiers frequently are subject to sexual harassment, the rape of female soldiers is quite rare. They also repeatedly (and even defended) male soldiers’ right to satisfy their sexual needs, and linked the instance of rape with the lack of “normal” relations, which are dependent on the male being economically solvent and enjoying regular access to women so as to relieve his sexual tension.

**Female Major A:** If they want the work of soldiers to work/be good/end indiscipline [soki balingi mosala ya soldat ebonga], they have to give the [financial] possibilities. If a soldier has his money, he will think “let’s go and look for a woman and give her money so that I can be satisfied.” The normal way, the official way. But if he does not have money, he will look for an easier road, to get it for free. Then he has to wear a uniform to get a woman. Because, if you are to have a woman, what do you need? You need money.

**Female Major B:** Amen

**Female Major A:** If you like a woman you give her, her 1000 FC [2 USD]. Just look at the Zimbabweans when they were here, all the women were following them, because they had money—dollars. So, the way our soldiers are raping, it is because of lack of money. Maybe he has not been with a woman for 3–4 months and has no money on his pockets. What is he supposed to do?

These accounts underscore how sexuality, money and gifts were intimately linked in discourses of sexuality in the army—both among men and women. As one male corporal explained, “Sex and money go hand in hand. If you have no money, you will have no sex.” Implied in this linkage lie further connections between having resources, acting as a “normal” heterosexual man, who needs to have sex, and being a (self) respected provider—which, the soldiers also explained, the circumstances in the armed forces prohibit. The “rape” ensuing, although perhaps unfortunate, is written as not morally wrong, and the “rapist” is exonerated from any crime other than, perhaps, being a victim of circumstance.

While the intimate relation between sex and money can be found in the Congolese society at large, it is important to underscore that the “normalization” of rape as it is reflected here emerges in relation to the ways in which the soldiers reconfigure discourses of sexuality and masculinity in relation to their position in the military institution. In this sense, they recast that which in “normal” circumstances is “abnormal” (i.e., sex by force) as “normalized” in the military setting through discourses of disempowerment and unfulfilled masculinity. The idea that a man, “if he is suffering or deprived of having sex the normal way,” in some sense “has the right to rape,” is arguably constructed within the armed forces through the ways in which power and the lack thereof become uniquely entwined. It is through this normalizing reasoning that rape becomes a possible performative act of masculinity.

**Viol Cruel ⁄ Mabe:** “Evil” Rapes

The soldiers are seemingly clear in their depictions of “evil” rapes (viol cruel or viol ya mabe) as different from the “normal” rapes described above. “Evil” rape, they explained, stems from a sense of moral disengagement that accompanies the climate of warring and violence in which they have been living; previously unthinkable behavior becomes conceivable and even dedramatized through the process of dehumanizing and “normalization” of violence.
and killing. In this sense, the reasons the soldiers give to their actions also resonate with the notion, explained above, that violence seems to create its own momentum and construct its own moral economy. The soldiers deemed this rape as “evil” because of the level of brutality and, most importantly, because of the intentions behind the act. “Evil” rapes are the particularly brutal acts of sexual violence, involving mutilations and sometimes the subsequent killing of victims. “Evil rapes” are often motivated by “a wish to humiliate the dignity of people,” or “to sully people”—a sentiment that also resonates with some aspects of Enloe’s (2000) depiction of “national security rape” and even “mass rape,” yet seemingly without reference to any (in)security discourse or explicit notions of Othering along the lines usually drawn through identity politics.

Male soldier B: There are different kinds of rape. Some rapes are about lust. But some are criminal. Well all are forbidden. It is bad [ezali mabe]. You cannot be with a woman without her consent. Even in the house. Also in the house, if your woman does not want to, you cannot force her. But in the sense that I am talking now, that rape is in two sorts, what do I mean? Because if it is only lust, then why do you sometimes kill her? Also if it is about lust, you will use the organ that you have. Why would you put a stick in her? We see that a lot. It is happening a lot in the East, in Kalemie. That is not about lust. It is not about the physical needs [posa ya nzoto]. That is from a need to destroy, to destroy the dignity, the human dignity of a person […] rapes is committed at both these levels. It is also about lust—it is like if you are hungry—it is the same with the body/sexual needs. And if you have the possibility—you are also stronger than women, it can happen. But it is bad [ezali mabe].

Male soldier C: The way that some rape, the women … They rape them, that is not lust, that is to sully them [kosalir bango], it is not lust.

Here we can see how the soldiers distinguish between how rape is committed at “both these levels”: the one being primarily about sexual needs and the other about the need to destroy. While the soldiers were clear in their delineations about what makes “evil” rapes evil, “lust” rapes and “evil” rapes seem to intermesh when they explained how rape, poverty, frustration, power (having a “gun”), and the “craziness” of war are “all connected.” In the following interchange, the soldiers underscored that sexual violence was not only an expression of unfulfilled sexual need. Here rape was primarily a result of frustrations and anger that follows from poverty and neglect:

Male Cpl. A: We soldiers commit rape, why do we commit rapes? Poverty/suffering [pasi]. When we are not paid, or not paid at all. We are hungry. And I have a gun. In my house my wife does not love me anymore [mwasi alingaka ngai lisusu te]. I also have a wish to have a good life like you [nakoma bien lokola yo].

Maria E-B: But that is a different thing, no? I asked about rape, not stealing [vol/viol].

Male Cpl. A: I understand, I understand. I am getting to it. I am not finished yet. Rape, what is that? It is connected to all that—stealing, killing, it is all in that [ezali nionso na cadre wana].

Maria E-B: So, it is anger [kanda] then or what?

Male Cpl. A: Yes, it is anger [kanda], it is creating, the suffering [pasi] is creating (…) You feel you have to do something bad, you mix it all: sabotage, women, stealing, rip the clothes off, killing.

Male Cpl. B: You have sex and then you kill her, if the anger is too strong [soki kanda eleki, obomi ye].
Male Cpl. A: It is suffering [pasi] which makes us rape. Suffering. If I wake up in the morning and I am fine, I have something to eat, my wife loves me [mwasi alingaka ngai], will I then do things like that? No. But now, today we are hungry, yesterday I was hungry, tomorrow I will be hungry. They, the leaders'/superiors [bamikonzi] are cheating us. We don’t have anything.

The soldiers thus situated rape in a “general wish to destroy” that arises from “suffering” and “frustrations.” In the soldier’s narratives, poverty, and the general feeling of neglect (including “not being loved” by one’s wife and being “cheated” by superiors) and frustration play an important role in explaining—even partly excusing—this kind of sexual violence. Failed notions of “the provider” and “the sexually potent fighter” thus haunt the “sense” made of rape here.

Furthermore, in developing their explanations of sexual violence committed against the civilian population, the soldiers often focused on “the spirit and craziness of war” and the use of drugs. One soldier described the effects of war in the following way:

“War is crazy, it destroys the minds of people [ezali kobebisa mitu ya bato]. Some people just go crazy [bakomi liboma]. Rape is a result of that too, especially the bad rapes. It gets too much…. Also, a lot is because of drugs. If you take drugs, drink, or other things—it is not good. And many, many … most take drugs.”

This explanation resonates with more generalized notions of warfare and the psychological trauma that afflict many soldiers in diverse situations. This soldier seems to imply that violence, rape, etc., becomes an outlet for the “spirit” of war, alluding to how warring is an unnatural and extreme state which precipitates “going crazy” and “bad rapes.” The reasons for the violence, he tells us, lie outside of the soldiers’ “normal” character; instead, violence is induced by drugs and the craziness of war which “destroys” the otherwise healthy “minds of people” and, we would add, disallows the fulfillment of their supposed role as men.
Forgotten Women: What Does the Future Hold for the Country That ‘Never Turned the Page of Conflict’

From Independent
By Lucy Anna Gray
June 3, 2019
https://www.independent.co.uk/

They call it “la chosification de la femme” in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Reducing a woman to a thing.
The central African nation has been decimated by conflict. It’s a country that’s been torn apart by warfare and power struggles, where millions live in poverty. A culture of violence has bled into a culture of sexual violence, with DRC having one of the highest rape rates in the world.

But this nation is so much more than “the heart of darkness” or “the rape capital of the world”. It is a country rich in resources, with a population resilient despite decades of unimaginable trauma. In the wake of last year’s “peaceful” elections, and the most recent Nobel Peace prize going to a doctor who treats survivors of sexual violence, is there new hope for DRC?

Approximately 1,000 people were killed in the infamous 1998 Kasika massacre carried out by rebel forces. Kasika is a small jungle village near the Rwandan border, and is highly vulnerable to violence because it lies on the road to a gold mine. There is constant conflict over the country’s immense natural resources, with DRC’s mineral wealth worth an estimated $24 trillion (£19 trillion).

We spoke to several women who are victims of sexual violence during the massacre, and whose daily struggles are symptomatic of the wider issues being faced by women today.

Manyumba, 46, was one of many people taken during the 90s. “I was kidnapped while in refuge in the forest during the conflict ... I was raped by 17 rebels.” Along with her husband, three of her children died in the forest. When Manyumba was captured, she was forced to live alongside her kidnapper. After three months of imprisonment, she eventually managed to escape while going to the river to fetch water and do laundry.
Mombo, another war widow with seven children, was also held captive in the forest in 1998. She was beaten, raped and tied naked to a tree for two days. “I still think about what happened every day.” Since then, she has been expelled by her husband’s family.

The trauma of these attacks has had a lasting effect of thousands of Congolese women. Dr. Denis Mukwege won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 along with Nadia Murad, an Iraqi Yazidi woman who was held captive by Isis. He actually found out he won the prize while performing surgery in Bukavu. Dr Mukwege – known as “Doctor Miracle” – is a Congolese gynaecologist and pastor who has been treating victims of sexual violence for decades.

“The effects of sexual violence leave deep scars on the hearts and souls of survivors,” Dr Mukwege says. “And unfortunately, these scars are often deepened by crippling social stigma associated with sexual violence.”

This stigma can often lead to women being shunned, as Esther Dingemans, director of the Mukwege Foundation, explains: “Women are often rejected by their husbands – who are also severely traumatised having watched it, and feel as though they failed in their masculine role of protecting their wife.”

Mashozi is one such woman. After being kidnapped and violently assaulted during the Kasika massacre, her husband left her – and their three children – because she had been raped. “My husband’s relatives see me as a curse on the family,” she says.

Due to the violent nature of the assaults, women often suffer physical problems for years after. Dr Mukwege, has seen many such cases among the tens of thousands of women he has treated.

“Physically, severe damage is often done by foreign objects and sharp weapons,” Dr Mukwege says. “Survivors can have trauma to their genitals and reproductive systems, including fistula and organ damage as well as other injuries, from burns and lacerations to bullet wounds.”

Mashozi, 40, was operated on at Dr Mukwege’s Panzi foundation for obstetric fistula – which is linked to the problem of obstructed labour. Since then she has lost three children through C-section delivery. “Any time I conceive, the children are born but die after one month. I am currently coming from hospital after losing my third unborn child.”

It is not just adult women being treated in DRC. Approximately 30 per cent of the victims who seek care at Panzi Hospital are under 18, Dr Mukwege says, and “as many of these survivors’ bodies are quite small, they often suffer greatly”. The Panzi foundation has treated children as young as six months old.

“I came to realise that the patients who were coming in to be treated for complications related to sexual violence were actually the children of survivors I had treated only a few years prior,” Dr Mukwege says. “Now, we are beginning to see the grandchildren of those original survivors.

“Sexual violence in DRC targets no one – it is blind. It is systematic. It affects each and every generation – regardless of age, clothes, economic status, religion, or any other factor ... This must stop. We must find a way to free the next generations from the cycle of sexual violence.”
The second Congo war ended in 2003, yet more than half of women have experienced physical violence. More than a quarter in the last year, and 16 per cent of women experienced sexual violence in 2017.

As the power struggle for resources and land continues, so does conflict. Rape is often used as a way to control both individuals and whole communities. Kris Berwouts, an independent analyst on conflict in Central Africa, gives a clearer picture of the current landscape.

“Events in Congo, especially in the eastern provinces, have resulted in a culture of violence becoming a state of lawlessness and total impunity, where justice has ceased to exist.”

Mr Berwouts says the systemic problem of rape in Central Africa does not “find its roots” in the civilwars of the late twentieth century, rather he attributes it to three phrases.

The first, as a “gruesome offshoot of the conflict, part of the right of the victor ... ‘La chosification de la femme’, as they call it in Congo, the crime of reducing a woman to a thing.” In the second phase, rape has become a tool with which to break a community, and “strike it in its most intimate and most vulnerable part: its womb”.

In the third, and perhaps most alarming phase, is the idea of rape as “the only form of human rights violation that does not diminish”.

As seen in DRC, the “damage caused by sexual violence does not stop with a peace agreement or a ceasefire”. So although the perpetrator may not be in uniform, sexual violence is still rife. “This means that sexual violence penetrates the values and the culture, and that the ‘thingification’ of woman is a very hard process to reverse.”

Although a general election in December 2018 was the first peaceful transition of power since 1960, Mr Berwouts claims it is perhaps too soon to claim a democratic victory over the deep-rooted culture of violence. There are more than 100 different armed groups active in eastern DRC alone, and 4.5 million people remain displaced within the country. “Congo has been declared much too soon a post-conflict environment,” Mr Berwouts says. “The country never turned the page of conflict.”

Dr Mukwege, who has treated women both in wartime and out, echoes these sentiments. “When a country has been in the midst of conflict for as long as the DRC has, the so-called end of war looks much less like a period and much more like an ellipsis. There is no noticeable end to conflict for those who live within it. The battlefield seeps into communities, families, bodies and lifetimes without discretion.”
Conflict may continue, but gradual change is happening, particularly for Congolese women.

Despite the disputed outcome of the 2018 election, Wabiwa, a rape victim from the Kasika massacre, sees hope in their new government. “With the new government in place, I hope there will be change because everything seems to be working well, no more rebels groups or gun fighting,” she says.

According to Awa Ndiaye Seek, the UNWomen representative in DRC, women are increasingly speaking out about their experiences, seeking change for future generations. “More and more women are coming together to try and challenge the wrongs, to challenge patriarchy,” Ms Ndiaye Seek says.

Since the election, gender has increasingly been part of DRC’s political agenda, from the new president Félix Tshisekedi and his wife talking openly about women’s issues to having a female speaker of the house.

“We are not naive, we know that very often when people come and are not convinced at the beginning they try to use gender to advance their own agenda. But we are being as opportunistic as we can by playing the same game,” Ms Ndiaye Seek says.

Organisations on a local level are also having a huge impact. For example, the Mukwege Foundation has helped connect more than 1,000 survivors to speak out about what has happened to them, and is making a short fiction movie to challenge stigma in the community.

“After 20 years of rape there are women who are taking things into their own hands and trying to make change,” Esther Dingemans, director of the foundation, says.

The women we spoke to in Kasika are beginning the difficult process of overcoming their past. All of them – among more than 98,732 others – are part of the Women for Women International project in DRC, which offers sessions in health, legal rights, numeracy, basic business management and more.

“Women learning how to save money is essential to escape the cycle of poverty and discuss different ways to save. We also encourage women to pool their knowledge, skills and resources,” WFWI DRC director Abdoulaye Toure says.

Along with training, the women receive $10 a month, which can be the difference between sending a child to school or not, paying that month’s rent or not, and is often the first time many of them have had control of their own money.

“God gave us a golden opportunity to be part of [the] WFWI program,” Mashozi says. “The knowledge acquired should help us to be autonomous and stop being dependent. The loan I have taken will help me to develop a small business.”

Hearing these women is key to DRC’s development, but they are not alone. The country is seeing an exceptional engagement from men and boys on the ongoing issue of sexual violence.
“This is not only a women’s fight,” Ms Ndiaya Seek says. The UN’s HeForShe project, which aims to engage men globally in women’s rights, has been hugely successful in DRC. “We have become number three in the world in the number of men who have joined the campaign ... men have told me they want to become number one in the world by the end of the year.”

“For many years we have named and shamed the Congolese men who went the wrong way. It’s time that we raise and praise the men and boys of this country who try to do the right thing, and maybe by insisting on positive masculinity we will show the right example we want people to follow.”

It takes years, decades, to change ingrained attitudes. As Dr Mukwege says, “there are generations of men who have been taught that extreme violence is the only way ... These attitudes and scars do not disappear with the declaration of a so-called end.”

“Patriarchy and toxic masculinity fuel everything from the wage gap to sexual violence in conflict,” Dr Mukwege adds. “Ignoring the link between the two will be fatal for the future of gender equality. It is not up to Africa and Congo to change gender relations, it is up to each and every one of us, from Boston to Bukavu.”

Speaking with victims, activists, political analysts, a similar message rings out: it may take time, but people are ready for change.

“The Congolese people are resilient, courageous, innovative and unbelievably hopeful given the circumstances,” Dr Mukwege says. “I believe in them. I believe in their will and I believe in their faith. The people of DRC deserve a bright future.”
Evidence suggests that gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, increases during times of conflict. Sexual violence in conflict can result from breakdowns in normal community organization and be used to systematically weaken populations, accelerate ethnic cleansing, and stake claims to particular territories and peoples.

Since 1996, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been plagued by war, characterized by extreme violence, population displacement, and the collapse of already weak infrastructures. Sexual violence continues to be used as a tactic of war in the DRC, and such violence is worsening in terms of severity and number. A range of negative health outcomes are associated with gender-based violence against women, including physical injuries, traumatic fistulas, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and psychological trauma.

It is estimated that fewer than half of Congolese women who experience sexual violence are able to access health centers, and even fewer do so in a timely manner. Lack of access to and awareness of available services were identified as the main barriers to Congolese women receiving timely care.

Methods

In February 2008, we conducted a multistage cluster sample survey of the villages in the Kasongo health zone. We used Ministry of Health population and household estimates to design the survey. We used probability proportional to size to select 25 clusters, from which 25 households were selected via systematic sampling. Within each household, 1 woman of reproductive age (15–49 years) was selected from among all eligible women, for a sample of 607 women. We asked these women about their exposure to violence by perpetrators outside the family during (1996–2003) and after (2004–present) the civil war. We also asked them what health services they had sought following any exposure to violence. Base sampling weights, inversely proportional to the probability of selection, were applied to the data to reflect the population within Kasongo health zone.

We also collected data from facility assessments of all 21 public health facilities in Kasongo health zone in November 2007. Interviews, observation, and clinical record review were used to assess each facility's general infrastructure, reproductive health services (including services for survivors of sexual violence), and infection-prevention environment.
**Results**

Sexual violence (defined here as improper sexual comments; being stripped of clothing; unwanted kissing or touching; or being forced to give or receive oral, vaginal, or anal sex) committed by perpetrators outside the family was substantially higher during the conflict, when 17.8% of women reported at least 1 experience of sexual violence, than after the conflict, when 4.8% reported experiencing sexual violence. More than 1 in 20 women (7.3%) reported sexual assault (being forced or coerced by threats to give or receive oral sex or have vaginal or anal sex) during or after the conflict.

Self-reported survivors of sexual assault (n = 42) were asked about their care-seeking behavior. The majority of women (58.6%) sought medical treatment, yet fewer than half (46.1%) of those who sought treatment did so within the 72-hour window for postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) for the prevention of HIV transmission, and only 47.4% sought care within the 120-hour window for effective emergency contraception (EC) to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Only 3 of the eligible women said they were offered EC or PEP at the health facility. At the time of the facility assessment, none of the health facilities had PEP or EC in stock, although 1 facility reported having provided EC at least once in the previous 3 months.

**Discussion**

These data indicate a lack of access to timely, high-quality medical services for survivors of sexual assault in the DRC. Few women accessed medical care following their attack; of those who did, the majority were unable to do so within the necessary time frames to prevent pregnancy and HIV transmission because of barriers of access, culture, and knowledge. Even if a woman did access care in a timely manner, EC and PEP were rarely available at the health facility, as is likely the case in many public health facilities in the DRC. These services constitute a minimum standard of clinical care that must be made available to survivors of sexual assault according to United Nations guidelines, and they should be integrated into primary health care so they are available at all health facilities.

In an effort to address these needs, CARE International and the Reproductive Health Access, Information and Services in Emergencies (RAISE) Initiative have trained health workers to provide clinical care to survivors of sexual assault and have introduced EC and PEP into health facilities in Kasongo. CARE-supported community mobilization activities educate the community about the importance of seeking care early following a sexual assault, to prevent pregnancy or HIV infection. CARE has established a referral system so that sexual assault survivors who receive medical care can also, if they choose, access psychosocial care, socioeconomic reinsertion opportunities, and legal aid through local partners.

Clinical care for sexual assault must be integrated into primary health care, especially in crisis settings. Once these services are available, the community must be told where to access immediate and anonymous care in case of sexual assault. The DRC government and the international community should ensure that health workers are trained to appropriately respond to survivors and that these services are available to all who need them. The DRC government and the international community should also uphold their commitments to end sexual violence and the impunity with which it is perpetrated against women in the DRC.
Women’s Groups in the DRC Are Demanding Justice

Global Fund for Women
2019
https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

For women and girls in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), rape is a constant threat. Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war to control, humiliate, and intimidate millions of women and girls since conflict broke out in 1996. A weak functioning government in the area, a breakdown of social norms due to violence, a lack of respect for the rule of law, readily-available guns, and a destabilized society as a result of a struggle for the country’s national resources have allowed rape to become tragically endemic in the region.

Justice remains beyond reach for most survivors. The perpetrators largely go unpunished. Armed groups that used rape as weapon of war are not brought to justice, but instead given amnesty and integrated into the national army or let into general society, where they rape once more. Most women and girls do not report their rapes, as those who do are blamed, even shunned by their communities. Survivors tell of being thrown out of their homes by their husbands or parents and of being considered a shame to their families. Despite the signing of a peace accord in 2003 (and another in 2013), the violence continues in eastern DRC. In November 2012, hundreds of women and girls were raped in a single horrific day in Minova when Congolese soldiers – who had just been defeated by rebel fighters in Goma – retreated there.

However, many women and girls in the DRC are also experiencing sexual violence at the hands of ordinary civilians – teachers, neighbors, and other men who have never been in the military or
have been discharged. Congolese women’s groups explain that because of an ineffective justice system, poor governance, and women’s inferior social position, the sexual violence against women that characterized the conflict has infiltrated daily life in eastern Congo, including classrooms and public spaces.

To understand the context today for women, one must understand the Congo itself. After experiencing 32 years of dictatorship where freedom of expression was ruthlessly repressed, in 1996 Congo entered a period of political instability and war that involved several neighboring countries. Women live under the dual cloak of politically-imposed silence as well as silence due to their gender and bear the responsibility of maintaining their families in a context of diminishing resources and increased sexual violence, especially in conflict zones. With an estimated $24 trillion in mineral reserves, the Congo is arguably the richest country on earth in terms of natural resources. But unfortunately, the enjoyment of this wealth has been marred by a long period of political instability, corruption and violent conflict in the eastern region. With the complete decline of public institutions and cost-cutting by industries across the country, the standard of life has plunged to a level unparalleled in the majority of African countries. The social service sector reflects some of the worst indicators in the world for infant and maternal mortality, education access, and employment.

Women’s inequality persists in this broader context, and women are often restricted to traditional care-taking roles due to lack of education, discriminatory attitudes toward women, and a lack of economic rights such as land and inheritance rights. In this web of structural inequality, poverty, and violence, women are the poorest of the poor.

But Congolese women are bold and courageous. Congolese women and women’s groups are fearlessly organizing to build peace, stability, and respect for women’s human rights.

In 2004, inspired by these women and starkly aware of the lack of social change and women’s rights funders in the Great Lakes region (composed of DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, and Central African Republic), Global Fund for Women decided to prioritize support to the efforts of local Congolese women’s groups. Since then, Global Fund for Women has quadrupled support to these women’s groups, which included funding for more than 204 initiatives in eight provinces.
in DRC. The groups Global Fund for Women funds are led by women who have deep roots in Congo, and who understand that driving a broad agenda to respect and advance human rights is key to addressing systemic sexual violence. These Congolese women’s groups are working to address the issues holistically through initiatives focused on educating women and girls in various communities on their rights and empowering them with economic and leadership opportunities, as well as access to education and literacy trainings. With an eye toward addressing the root causes of instability in DRC to drive sustainable peace, Global Fund for Women grantees partners are promoting women in leadership who will govern responsibly and champion women’s human rights, create new job opportunities and diversify the economy, and organize peace committees to facilitate local conflict resolution. As bold human rights defenders themselves, women leaders are also advocating for a climate where freedom of expression is tolerated and human rights activists are safe.

Recognizing the importance of women’s groups and activists working together to sustain peace and advance women’s human rights, Global Fund for Women has also organized major meetings and gatherings in the DRC and throughout the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes region has long had strong women leaders working at the grassroots level to improve communities while advocating for women to be included in peacebuilding and working to embed women’s human rights in laws and social norms. Most recently – in May 2015 – Global Fund for Women brought together 50 women from throughout the Great Lakes region in Goma. This meeting enabled activists and leaders to learn how to participate in government peace processes, share strategies, organize, and strengthen the regional movement for women’s rights.

Amidst the turmoil, courageous Congolese women and women’s groups are a source of hope because of the tireless work they are doing to drive the movement for peace, justice, and equality. The creativity of this generation of young leaders promises bold steps to build the momentum of the women’s rights movement. With women at the helm working to address root causes of the conflict and advance human rights, the Democratic Republic of Congo will realize a brighter future where women can speak out, systemic sexual violence will halt, and justice can be realized.
Gisèle* sits in the relative safety of a clinic for victims of sexual violence in the district of Ituri. The mother of three, whose husband was killed in combat, tells a harrowing but sadly typical story about her experience in the conflict in this part of eastern DRC.

“I took refuge in a camp for displaced people where I was raped by three armed men,” she says. “The physical and psychological pain was immense. I was so distressed that I felt I couldn’t look after my children after the attack. I felt like I was completely abandoned by my family and community.”

Like thousands of other women in DRC, Gisèle is a survivor of the sexual violence that has become commonplace during the country’s long-running civil conflict. The Heal Africa Hospital based in Goma reports that an estimated 5,000 women were raped in one province in 2013. Forcing women and children into sex work, forced pregnancy, and even the deliberate spread of sexually transmitted infections are carried out by all sides in the conflict.
The brutal treatment that Gisèle and many other Congolese women have received, and the apparent impunity for the worst offenders, has become a serious challenge for the country as it tries to shake off its past and restore peace, security and the rule of law.

A UNDP project in the Kivus Provinces and Ituri District, funded mainly by the United States and Sweden as part of a broader Access to Justice Programme in DRC, is hoping to change all that by restoring trust in the justice system. The project has helped to provide better access to justice, security, and information for victims of sexual violence; to train police to investigate and the judiciary to prosecute those responsible; and to document the crimes committed.

Congolese women are often reluctant to report sexual violence because they lack awareness about the justice system or because they don't want to be stigmatized. In response, UNDP helped establish the Police Special Protection of Children and Women Unit, which specializes in crimes of sexual violence. The unit documents the mountain of cases left over from the country’s long running war, and by 2013, the unit has received, investigated, and transferred 570 cases of sexual and gender-based violence in the judicial system.

UNDP also conducted judicial monitoring in the Kivus Provinces and Ituri District, which allowed for gathering of exact data on the judicial response by the military justice, further ensuring that justice was carried out according to the standards of a fair trial. UNDP monitored over 6,500 sexual violence crimes, helping to obtain accurate data to adjust action plans accordingly. Of the cases heard, nearly 70% led to convictions and over half of all cases were related to sexual and gender-based violence.

Trials are held as close to the crime scene and the complainant’s home as possible, in order to make the justice process accessible to survivors. Sometimes, this means having open air and mobile court sessions. These UNDP-trained and supported mobile courts are able to bring justice to even the most remote areas.

"The victims I defend are relieved when they know that they can actually participate in the trial," says Mrs. Lorianne Shakira, a lawyer from Kisangani. “Before these mobile courts were in operation, even if a woman was able to make a complaint, it would take several months before she would hear news about her case. The court was often far from their village and they would lose hope. The mobile courts and these public hearings bring justice to these vulnerable people.”

Nine clinics have been established with UNDP help. They provide legal and medical assistance to women seeking justice and offer a “special legal aid service” for the victims of sexual violence. "Victims come to the clinic for treatment," says Justin Ntanyanya, a lawyer with one of the clinics. “The women get physical help from doctors, as well as legal help through our service. Because most women are not familiar with their rights, we encourage them to file complaints and refer them to appropriate legal assistance.”
In 2013, UNDP’s support to the clinics enabled more than 3,000 people living in remote localities to access legal advice, from which 5118 people were accompanied to judicial authorities for cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

UNDP has also assisted in training both community leaders and soldiers on the concepts of women's rights, gender-based violence, criminal responsibility and the judicial mechanisms. 78.4% of community leaders mastered these concepts on a test after the training, and over 2,200 soldiers have been given awareness training on the laws regarding sexual violence and the criminal responsibility of commanding officers. By training both military units and community leaders in their legal obligations, as well as in investigative techniques and the judicial process, they can become part of the solution rather than part of the problem, and in the future, fewer women like Gisèle will face the physical and psychological trauma of sexual violence.

*not her real name
Horrific levels of rape and other forms of sexual violence have plagued eastern Democratic Republic of Congo for almost two decades. Tens of thousands of women, girls, men, and boys have been raped and otherwise sexually abused. The exact number of victims is unknown.

The gathering of world leaders and activists in London for the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict on June 10-13, 2014, is an important opportunity for the Congolese government, donors, and other actors to make concrete commitments to support efforts to bring justice to the victims in eastern Congo. This document provides an overview of some of the worst cases of mass rape and other forms of sexual violence committed in recent years by the Congolese army and non-state armed groups, and the inadequate efforts to hold those responsible to account. It makes recommendations to strengthen accountability for crimes of sexual violence in Congo.
Dozens of armed groups operate in eastern Congo, and many of them—as well as members of the Congolese security forces—have been perpetrators of sexual violence. Armed groups have abducted and held Congolese women and girls as sex slaves. The perpetrators often harmed their victims with machetes and other weapons before or after raping them. Girls as young as 2 and women older than 80 have been targeted, as well as some men and boys. Many victims developed serious medical complications following the rape, frequently dying from their wounds.

Armed groups and members of the Congolese army have used rape as a weapon of war to “punish” civilians belonging to a particular ethnic group, or those they accused of supporting the “enemy.” Stigma and fear of rejection by their families or communities have prevented many women and girls from reporting rape. Others live in remote areas where no psychosocial or medical services exist. Many have been threatened by the perpetrators or members of their armed group or army unit, deterring victims from seeking justice.

In recent years, Congolese authorities have carried out an increasing number of arrests and prosecutions for rape, but the vast majority of perpetrators remain unpunished. Senior level officers who have command responsibility for soldiers who rape are effectively untouchable. The United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) in Congo recorded 187 convictions by military courts for sexual violence between July 2011 and December 2013. Four of those convicted were members of armed groups; the others were soldiers, police, or other state agents. Of the 136 army soldiers convicted, only three were senior officers, namely lieutenant colonels. The trial of one general, Jérôme Kakwavu, on rape charges is ongoing.

Widespread sexual violence in eastern Congo will not end until the perpetrators, including leaders bearing command responsibility, are brought to justice. Government officials should send strong, clear warnings to soldiers, officers, combatants, and warlords that rape carries a high price. Government officials who protect commanders or hinder investigations or prosecutions should also be brought to justice.

The justice system in Congo is beset by corruption, limited capacity, and political interference. Magistrates often lack proper training and basic equipment to conduct thorough investigations. Because of poor security in prisons, and corruption among judicial and prison staff, many of those arrested for rape have escaped from prison; some have returned to threaten the victims who denounced them. Others languish in appalling prison conditions awaiting trial, for weeks, months, or years. Ongoing insecurity in eastern Congo and the presence of armed groups has hindered the arrest of armed group commanders. The government has also had a policy over the past decade of rewarding former armed group leaders and alleged war criminals by integrating them into the army and giving them senior positions, effectively perpetuating the cycles of violence and impunity.

Human Rights Watch believes that a new judicial mechanism is needed in Congo to end the impunity protecting perpetrators of serious crimes in violation of international law, including sexual violence. A government proposal to establish specialized mixed chambers could make a difference and deserves international support. The chambers would be located within Congo’s national judicial system with the participation of international judges and other personnel for a
limited period. They would have the mandate to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed in Congo since 1993. The minister of justice and human rights has drafted legislation to establish the specialized mixed chambers, and President Joseph Kabila has publicly expressed his support for this mechanism.

Recommendations

Human Rights Watch calls on the Congolese government, donors, and other partners to support the following efforts to ensure that those responsible for the incidents described above, as well as other crimes of sexual violence, are brought to justice in fair, credible trials.

1. Support the Establishment of Specialized Mixed Chambers

Given the limited number of cases that the International Criminal Court can prosecute and the weak capacity and lack of independence of the Congolese judicial system, Human Rights Watch believes a new mechanism is needed to prosecute crimes of sexual violence and other serious human rights abuses. The specialized mixed chambers proposed by the Congolese government would be embedded in the national justice system, with a mandate to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Congo over the past two decades. It would be staffed by Congolese and non-Congolese judges and other personnel, with non-Congolese staff phased out as the chambers gain legitimacy, credibility, and independence.

A draft law was adopted by the Council of Ministers on April 22, 2014, and presented to the National Assembly on May 2. Citing technical concerns, members of parliament rejected the admissibility of the text on May 8. Government officials have said they will correct the technical errors and resubmit the draft law to parliament.

2. Support the Establishment of a Vetting Mechanism to Remove Human Rights Abusers from the Security Forces

Members of the Congolese security forces have been responsible for some of the worst abuses committed in Congo over the past two decades, including ethnic massacres, summary executions, mass rapes, torture, arbitrary arrests, and abductions. The pattern of abuse is in part due to the lack of accountability for past crimes and a policy of integrating former rebels into the security forces without formal training or vetting for their involvement in past human rights abuses. While there has been some progress with prosecutions in recent years, the vast majority of military and police responsible for grave abuses in Congo remain unpunished, and many remain in active service.

It will be difficult to end the cycles of violence in Congo until those responsible for serious abuses are removed from the security forces and brought to justice. To that end, a vetting mechanism should be a central component of Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Congo. Such a mechanism would remove perpetrators of serious human rights abuses from the security forces and support efforts to build disciplined, rights-respecting forces that protect civilians.
3. Reparations

Other mechanisms to support victims of sexual violence and other serious human rights abuses should be explored, including a comprehensive reparations program. In accordance with Congolese criminal law, civilian and military courts that prosecute rapes systematically order those who are convicted to pay a fine. But these individuals usually claim they cannot afford to pay damages to victims. When members of the armed forces are convicted of rapes and grave crimes, the state is convicted “in solidum” (because of its responsibility for actions carried out by the army, a public institution). However, the Congolese state is not known to have paid any such reparations to date. In addition to individual cash payments, other forms of reparations should be considered, including community reparations (such as the construction of schools, access to medical treatment and projects to provide economic opportunities for women abandoned by their families). The government should hold broad and transparent consultations with reparations experts and victims’ groups in order to set up a reparations program that would enjoy support and legitimacy.

4. Protection for Victims and Witnesses

All too often, victims and witnesses of sexual violence and other serious abuses are threatened, intimidated, or physically attacked by their perpetrators or members of the same armed group or army unit, making it even more difficult for them to seek justice. Greater efforts are needed to protect victims and witnesses who may be willing to testify. Recent experiences in the Fizi and Minova trials, including closed hearings, concealing victims’ identities, and preserving their anonymity, are positive practices that should be used in other trials. While the identity of victims should be known to defense lawyers in order to respect the rights of the accused, magistrates should be willing to act if this information is leaked or is used to intimidate victims, using provisions under Congolese law that criminalize intimidation or corruption of witnesses.

5. Ensure Rights of the Accused are Respected, Including the Right to an Appeal

Most trials for crimes of sexual violence that have taken place in Congo so far have tended to be expedited and the rights of the accused have not always been respected. The accused often do not have access to defense lawyers of their choosing who have recognized expertise in defending against accusations of rape or international crimes. Congolese law has provisions for legal aid for indigent defendants, but in practice this is hardly ever paid, further limiting the possibilities for the accused to be assisted.

There have also been cases where it appears that individuals tried for rape were not the actual perpetrators, but they were prosecuted either because authorities wanted to show they were taking action, or because they were sacrificed to protect their commanders. Some defendants have also been denied their right of appeal. The trial of 39 soldiers accused of involvement in mass rape around Minova took place before the military operational court – an exceptional military court for crimes committed during military operations, created through a governmental decree and which does not allow appeals. The right to appeal is a fundamental fair trial right that must be respected.
Chapter 2 Discussion Questions

Gender Roles in the DRC

1. How can changing the perceived role of women in the DRC help to curb the widespread occurrence of sexual violence?
2. In what ways do low literacy rates and unequal access to education both reflect and perpetuate gender inequality in the DRC?

Rape as a Tool of War

1. Why is rape so effective in terrorizing an entire community?
2. How do factors other than conflict contribute to the high levels of sexual violence in the DRC?
3. How has the prevalence of sexual violence in the DRC prevented the country from developing both socially and economically?
4. Compare and contrast the stigma around victims of sexual violence in the DRC and the United States. What are the most notable similarities and differences?
5. What struck you most about the soldiers’ viewpoints on sexual violence during conflict?
6. How does the “culture of masculinity” associated with rape further its prevalence in the DRC? Have you witnessed this theme in the US? Provide examples.

Responses & Proposals for Change

1. What steps can the DRC take to curtail the use of rape as a tool of war? What steps can other countries take to reduce the occurrence of sexual violence at home and abroad?
2. In what ways does the City of Joy serve as a model for equipping women with the abilities to fight back against sexual violence?
3. How can activists work to change the culture of sexual violence without a foreseeable end to the conflict in the DRC? Or is peace a necessary precursor to changing the culture of sexual violence?
Women in DRC protest against sexual violence in conflict / Actionaid, June 2, 2014
Although a beautiful country with a thriving culture, the history of the DRC is riddled with efforts to exploit it. From King Leopold II to the modern-day mining companies, many have attempted to take advantage of the DRC for its abundant natural resources with little regard for the Congolese people. Today, the Congolese still struggle with exploitation, but also with an unprecedented Ebola crisis, new terrorist threats, human trafficking, and increasing numbers of child soldiers. We hope this chapter both teaches you about the rich (but tumultuous) history of the DRC and urges you to consider how some of the products we use every day (and that are only becoming more popular) may be a part of the problem.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. History

“Democratic Republic of Congo Profile – Timeline”
“Chapter Two: The Story of the Kongo Kingdom” – Congo Stories
“A New Congo Crisis?”
“Patrice Lumumba: the Most Important Assassination of the 20th Century”

B. Mining, Natural Resources, Technology, & Conflict

“Paradise Papers Research Raises Questions Over Glencore’s $440m Congo Discount”
“The Dark Side of Electric Cars”
“Progress and Challenges on Conflict Minerals: Facts on Dodd-Frank 1502”
“Does Artisanal Mining Increase the Risk of Sexual Violence?”

C. Current Affairs

“Democratic Republic of Congo: Events 2018”
“Understanding the DRC’s Presidential Elections”
“‘Terrifying’ Ebola Epidemic Out of Control in DRC, Say Experts”
“ISIS, After Laying Groundwork, Gains Toehold in Congo”
“Human Trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo”
“Girls in the DRC Are Choosing to be Child Soldiers to Escape Poverty”

D. Discussion Questions
Democratic Republic of Congo Profile – Timeline

BBC News
January 10, 2019
https://www.bbc.com/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

A chronology of key events:

1200s - Rise of Kongo empire, centered in modern northern Angola and including extreme western Congo and territories round lakes Kisale and Upemba in central Katanga (now Shaba).

1482 - Portuguese navigator Diogo Cao becomes the first European to visit the Congo; Portuguese set up ties with the king of Kongo.

16th-17th centuries - British, Dutch, Portuguese and French merchants engage in slave trade through Kongo intermediaries.

1870s - Belgian King Leopold II sets up a private venture to colonise Kongo.

1874-77 - British explorer Henry Stanley navigates Congo river to the Atlantic Ocean.

Belgian colonisation

1879-87 - Leopold commissions Stanley to establish the king's authority in the Congo basin.

1884-85 - European powers at the Conference of Berlin recognise Leopold's claim to the Congo basin.

1885 - Leopold announces the establishment of the Congo Free State, headed by himself.

1891-92 - Belgians conquer Katanga.

1892-94 - Eastern Congo wrested from the control of East African Arab and Swahili-speaking traders.

1908 - Belgian state annexes Congo amid protests over killings and atrocities carried out on a mass scale by Leopold's agents. Millions of Congolese are said to have been killed or worked to death during Leopold's control of the territory.

1959 - Belgium begins to lose control over events in the Congo following serious nationalist riots in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa).

Post-independence turmoil

1960 June - Congo becomes independent with Patrice Lumumba as prime minister and Joseph Kasavubu as president.
1960 July - Congolese army mutinies; Moise Tshombe declares Katanga independent; Belgian troops sent in ostensibly to protect Belgian citizens and mining interests; UN Security Council votes to send in troops to help establish order, but the troops are not allowed to intervene in internal affairs.

1960 September - President Kasavubu dismisses Mr Lumumba.


1963 - Moise Tshombe agrees to end Katanga's secession.

1964 - President Kasavubu appoints Mr Tshombe prime minister.

Mobutu years

1965 - Army chief Joseph Mobutu seizes power.

1971 - Joseph Mobutu renames the country Zaire and himself Mobutu Sese Seko; Katanga becomes Shaba and the river Congo becomes the river Zaire.

1973-74 - President Mobutu nationalises many foreign-owned firms and forces European investors out of the country.

1989 - Zaire defaults on loans from Belgium, resulting in a cancellation of development programmes and increased deterioration of the economy.

1990 - President Mobutu agrees to end the ban on multiparty politics and appoints a transitional government, but retains substantial powers.

1991 - Following riots in Kinshasa by unpaid soldiers, President Mobutu agrees to a coalition government with opposition leaders, but retains control of the security apparatus and important ministries.

1994 - President Mobutu agrees to the appointment of Kengo Wa Dondo, an advocate of free-market reforms, as prime minister.

1996-97 - Tutsi rebels capture much of eastern Zaire while President Mobutu is abroad for medical treatment.

Rule of the Kabilas

1997 May - Tutsi and other anti-Mobutu rebels, aided principally by Rwanda, capture the capital, Kinshasa; Zaire is renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo; Laurent-Desire Kabila installed as president.

1998 August - Rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda rise up against Mr Kabila and advance on Kinshasa. Zimbabwe, Namibia send troops to repel them. Angolan troops also side with Mr Kabila. The rebels take control of much of the east of DR Congo.
1999 July - The six African countries involved in the war sign a ceasefire accord in Lusaka. The following month the Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) rebels supported by Uganda and Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) rebels backed by Rwanda also sign.

2000 - UN Security Council authorises a 5,500-strong UN force to monitor the ceasefire but fighting continues between rebels and government forces, and between Rwandan and Ugandan forces.

2001 January - President Laurent Kabila is shot dead by a bodyguard. Joseph Kabila succeeds his father.

2002 January - Eruption of Mount Nyiragongo devastates much of the city of Goma.

**Search for peace**

2002 July - Presidents of DR Congo and Rwanda sign a peace deal under which Rwanda will withdraw troops from the east and DR Congo will disarm and arrest Rwandan Hutu gunmen blamed for the killing of the Tutsi minority in Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

2002 September - Presidents of DR Congo and Uganda sign peace accord under which Ugandan troops will leave DR Congo.

2002 December - Peace deal signed in South Africa between Kinshasa government and main rebel groups. Under the deal rebels and opposition members are to be given portfolios in an interim government.

**Interim government**

2003 June - President Kabila names a transitional government to lead until elections in two years time. Leaders of main former rebel groups are sworn in as vice-presidents in July.

2006 February - New constitution comes into force; new national flag is adopted.

2006 March - Warlord Thomas Lubanga becomes first war crimes suspect to face charges at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. He is accused of forcing children into active combat.

2006 May - Thousands are displaced in the north-east as the army and UN peacekeepers step up their drive to disarm irregular forces ahead of the elections.

**Free elections**

2006 July - Presidential and parliamentary polls are held - the first free elections in four decades.

2006 November - Joseph Kabila is declared winner of October's run-off presidential election. The poll has the general approval of international monitors.

2007 April - DRCongo, Rwanda and Burundi relaunch the regional Great Lakes Countries Economic Community (CEPGL).
2007 September - Major outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus.

2008 October - Rebel forces capture major army base of Rumangabo; the Congolese government accuses Rwanda of backing Tutsi rebel leader Laurent Nkunda, a claim Rwanda denies.

2008 November - UN Security Council approves temporary increase of troops to bolster the strained UN peacekeeping effort in the east.

2010 July - $8 billion debt relief deal approved by World Bank and IMF.

2010 November - Paris Club of creditor countries scrap half of DR Congo's debt.

Kabila re-elected

2011 November - Presidential and parliamentary elections. Mr Kabila gains another term. The vote is criticised abroad and the opposition disputes the result.

2013 February - Representatives of 11 African countries sign an accord in Ethiopia pledging to help end the conflict in DR Congo. The M23 rebel group declared a ceasefire ahead of the talks, and its leader Bosco Ntaganda surrenders the following month.

2013 July - 3,000-member UN Intervention Brigade deployed to fight and disarm rebels in the east.

2015 January - Dozens killed in protests against proposed electoral law changes which the opposition said were designed to allow President Kabila to remain in power.

2016 November - A political deal signed between President Kabila's ruling coalition and the opposition to delay the presidential election until 2018 sees Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo and his cabinet resign, paving the way for a new cabinet to include opposition figures.

Controversial elections

2018 March - Main opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress chooses Felix Tshisekedi as its candidate for the December presidential election.

2018 June - Government asks commissions to look at declassifying parts of Virunga and Salonga national parks, both Unesco World Heritage Sites, for oil exploration. Environmentalists claim drilling would endanger wildlife and contribute to global warming.

2018 August - Governing People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy chooses former interior minister Ramazani Shadary as its presidential candidate, as President Kabila cannot run for another term.

2019 January - Officials declare opposition candidate Felix Tshisekedi the winner of December's presidential election, prompting protests from rival opposition candidate Martin Fayulu of a deal with the government, whose candidate Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary came third.
Chapter 2: The Story of Kongo Kingdom

Congo Stories (pages 12-19)
By John Prendergast and Fidel Bafilemba
Copyright 2018
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

Origins

The name Kongo descends from nkongo, “hunter”, a hero, an adventurer, in the Kikongo language people spoke along the Congo River. The people there told stories of the kingdom built by its founder, Lukeni lua Nimi, stories already generations old when Portuguese explorers, the first modern Europeans to visit, heard them in the late 1400s and Jesuit missionaries wrote them down.
The earliest known periods of the Kongo Kingdom are marked by stories of innovating technology and expanding territory. Although archaeology in this region is still at an embryonic stage and will likely yield much more information as efforts increase over time, there is already plenty of evidence that the territory that became the Kongo Kingdom was characterized by a complex society. There were iron and steel workers by 350 BC—as, elsewhere in Africa, Carthage was challenging Rome—and social classes and a political authority appear to have existed by AD 100.

By the 1300s, the first formal states emerged in present-day Congo, led by the Kongo, Lunda, Luba, and Kuba kings. One of the chief reasons for the development of these states, some of which were as big as modern-day Indiana or Ireland, was the advent of agricultural surpluses, which allowed them to more easily weather hard times. The states had feudal and hierarchical characteristics. The king was the indisputable leader who protected and supported his subjects, resolved disputes, consulted the elders, and took care of those in need. Not unlike today, each kingdom was broadly dependent on the distinct personality of its king. There were wide swings from progress to decline and back again, depending on the quality of the leadership and the intensity of the civil wars that often accompanied succession from one king to the next.

-----

In Kongo, each week of four days started with a holiday. The people farmed bananas and other fruits and crops, and raised cattle, pigs, and goats. The unit for distance was a day’s walk; they marked time with the phases of the moon. They paid the king taxes, with egg-shaped cowry shells serving as money.

Although there was no written language in the Kongo Kingdom, they used another way to communicate: their langage tambourine (drummed language). New developments were drummed throughout the kingdom, traveling up to 600 kilometers (370 miles) a day. European explorers called it the telegraphe de brousse (bush telegraph). This mode of communication was developed 1,500 years before Morse code.

At peace, men collected materials for building and for cloth, utensils, medicines, and palm wine. Women fed their families by farming.

The Kongo peoples had a unique and elaborate belief system. The universe was separated into the realm of the living and the realm of the dead, which existed parallel to each other. One’s life consisted of a progression through one realm and then the other, crossing the threshold that divides the two realms, which was believed to be a large body of water. The midpoint along the path was when one would transition to the afterlife. The living realm was marked by blackness, while the ancestors were full of color. Symbols drawn with chalk made from riverbed clay were connected to concepts of virtue, purity, and ancestral contact. The spirits of ancestors were regularly invoked. Power or weakness was seen in part as stemming from the ability to tap into these mystical connections. For example, a village chief, those with many children, those who lived long lives, and those who attained wealth were seen to have the ability to connect to ancestral spirits and their energies.

-----

The Kongo Kingdom produced luxury cloth and fabric, which was used also as a currency, although when more intricately woven it was considered priceless. Sixteenth-century Kongoese
art was on the radar of the world’s art elite. Kongoese textiles were considered by some explorers to be on par with those from Italy at that time. When trade with the outside world began to accelerate, Alisa LaGamma elaborates, “Exquisitely crafted decorative artifacts produced by local artists as diplomatic gifts began to circulate outside the region. A very limited number of these presentation pieces survive in the form of carved ivory oliphants and finely woven raffia textiles and basketry.” A New Yorker article about a recent museum exhibit of Kongoese art concluded, “There are no other sculptures in the world so fierce and sorrowing.”

The Kongo Kingdom’s diverse artwork consisted of copper and iron works, wood carvings, baskets, mats, and pottery, influencing artists such as Matisse and Picasso. Cubism was in part derived from pieces of art from Congo.

King Alvaro II of Kongo. Photo: EgyptSearch

Most European histories of the Kongo written before the 1960s, when serious and impartial research began to be conducted, assumed that the Portuguese created the Kongo Kingdom. But this historical inaccuracy has been rectified through more recent studies. As Congolese historian Didier Gondola observes, “Most colonial researchers were prejudiced regarding African history. Because the kingdom was so well organized, these researchers quickly dismissed the possibility that indigenous initiative might have played a role in Kongo’s development. But Kongo emerged as the major state in equatorial Africa at least two centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese.” Foreshadowing later developments, the most important variable in why the kingdom developed when and how it did seems to have been the natural resources afforded by its location. The population expanded in the fourteenth century primarily because of the development of agriculture as well as copper smelting.

The Kongo Kingdom was marked by healthy political structures. Not unlike other African governing structures before the colonial invasion, the lowest political level was the village, composed of closely connected families-often led by women-called kanda. A group of villages was administered by districts led by royally appointed officials. Provincial governors were the next level of leadership, answerable directly to the king. Women were the backbone of families...
in the kingdom, and they controlled who could be members of the *kanda*. Referred to as a matrilineal system, the mother and her sons were part of the *kanda*, whereas the father was not, even though he might be the household head. The mother’s brothers possessed legal authority over the mother’s children, while the father remained their guardian. Seniority dictated power, wealth, and privilege in each *kanda*.

By the late 1400s, the Kongo Kingdom was prosperous and growing. There were six main provinces governing some three million people. Supported by a council of elders, the king was considered the supreme ruler, and gave the governors of each province significant military, economic, and political powers. The governors and their provincial armies would join the king in war. At its height, the Kongo Kingdom’s army grew up to 80,000 men. The governors taxed their subjects and delivered a significant percentage of the revenue to the king while paying themselves through those same taxes. The governors also oversaw judicial mechanisms and maintained roads. The king had nearly absolute authority over his appointed officials, who often came from his own family to ensure loyalty. The provinces paid tribute to the king in the form of cloth, ivory, hides, slaves, and food, which he used to grant gifts and favors to cement his authority and build alliances. The king also used these gifts to maintain a large number of officials, soldiers, musicians, pages, and advisers in his court. In the 1500s, the kingdom sent diplomats to reside in Portugal, Spain, and the Vatican.

By the time the Portuguese arrived in the late 1400s, the Kongo Kingdom was already led by an evolved and highly centralized government. One Italian ambassador who visited opined that the houses in Kongo were the finest in all of that part of Africa, drew comparisons between the capitals in Kongo and Portugal, and complimented the kingdom’s judicial system.

**The Europeans Land, and Everything Changes**

Historian David Van Reybrouck uniquely imagines the scene of the Kongo’s first contact with the Portuguese: “In 1482 the coastal inhabitants of that empire had seen something extremely remarkable: huge huts looming up out of the sea, huts with flapping cloths. When those sailing ships anchored off the coast, the people along the shore saw that there were white people in them. These had to be ancestors who lived at the bottom of the sea, a kind of water spirit. The whites wore clothes, lots more clothes than they did, which seemed to be made from the skins of strange sea creatures. All highly peculiar. The inexhaustible quantities of cloth the strangers had with them made the people think they probably spent most of their time weaving, there below the ocean.”

Many aspects of European life were quickly copied in Kongo. In 1491, less than ten years after the Portuguese first landed, the Kongoese king was baptized. He took on the name of the Portuguese king, Joao.

Some of the early European writings about Kongo focused on allegations of cannibalism that were more about feeding the fascination and prejudices of European audiences than rooted in any empirical reality experienced by any of the writers, who made up stories they claimed were eyewitness accounts. The images and words fed stereotypes by depicting “the new and the exotic that clearly attracted the fascination of a European readership.”

-----
Civil wars within the Kongo Kingdom were frequent in the aftermath-and partly as a result-of the arrival of the Europeans, picking up in intensity after the mid-1600s. These conflicts were driven in part by the impact of the transatlantic slave trade, which created warped financial incentives for some Kongoese to participate in the trade. And the wars also accelerated the European penetration of the Kongo Kingdom as one of the major sources for enslaving human beings for export to the Americas.

It is likely that slavery was legal in the Kongo Kingdom before the arrival of the Europeans. As the European slave traders expanded their operations in the region, the number of people captured and sold out of Kongo spiraled upward, reaching thousands per year by the early 1500s. The king at the time, Afonso I, was not opposed to slavery conceptually, but he tried to stop “illegal” enslavement and the expansion of the abduction of people within his territory for export abroad.

The Kongo Kingdom’s enslaved people were those abducted in war, criminals, and debtors. Although the practice was cruel and vicious in many ways, there were differences between slavery in the Kongo Kingdom and the European transatlantic pipeline that funneled Africans to the New World. For example, in the Kongo Kingdom enslaved people could eventually earn or be granted their freedom, and there was intermarriage between free and enslaved people. But slavery’s very existence in the Kongo Kingdom and other parts of Africa proved to be a slippery slope that contributed to the cascade that would supply the New World colonies with slave labor.

More than twenty million Africans were subjected to the most egregious mass kidnapping in human history, with half of those people sent across the Atlantic to the New World, and this region was at its epicenter. European raiders attacked the kingdom with the intention of removing Kongoese authority figures in order to destroy the indigenous symbols of community leadership and thus undermine any resistance to Europe’s expansion of human trafficking.

As the European human traders descended on the region, it was only a matter of time before the central authority of the Kongo Kingdom began to unravel. Local chiefs were enriching themselves by kidnapping and selling people to the Europeans, and they had no reason to remain loyal to the king. Finally, in 1665, the Portuguese defeated the diminished Kongo Kingdom’s army and beheaded the king. By the late 1800s, European powers had colonized the entire territory of the kingdom.
A New Congo Crisis?

Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspectives
By Sarah Van Beurden
January 2018
http://origins.osu.edu
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

Colonial Congo

The Congo Free State, a vast area covering much of central Africa, was the dream of Belgian King Leopold II. In 1885, he established control over a territory that had never been a single political or cultural region before. With only a small number of colonial state officials to administer an area of over 900,000 square miles, Leopold II relied on a set of colonial companies to help run this vast territory.

Rule over Leopold's personal fiefdom was brutal. Together with the practices of the colonial companies, his reign established long-term patterns of economic exploitation and political authoritarianism.

The principle of company rule was prominent in the Belgian Congo. Major companies, usually closely aligned with the colonial state through personal or financial ties, exercised considerable influence over the colonial system locally, but also through its financial and industrial barons in the metropole.

Ivory, wood, and rubber were the first resources brought out of Congo to the international market. Later, palm oil and agricultural crops such as coffee joined them. But as the 20th century wore on, minerals—many of them crucial to modern industries—more than other resources became the source of wealth and conflict.

Although gold was found near the border with today’s Uganda and diamonds were—accidentally—first found in the Kasai region in 1907, the heart of the country’s mining wealth is the Katanga region, along the northern border with Zambia. Copper was “discovered” there in the late 19th century (local populations had in fact been mining and smelting copper since the 5th century). Add to this zinc, tin, nickel, cobalt, manganese, coal, and uranium, to name but a few, and the profits to be reaped from mining in Congo are simply overwhelming.
Large-scale industrial mining started in the early 20th century, mostly through the system of colonial companies. The best known was the Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK, Mining Union of Upper Katanga), which controlled copper mines in the Katanga region and functioned very much like a state within a state. The profits, however, flowed out of the Congo back to Belgium and into the pockets of the industrial and political elite there. Europeans became rich as minerals, commodities, and wealth were stripped from the Congolese people.

From 1885, this combination of business exploitation and the king’s authoritarianism generated considerable violence towards the Congolese. It came in many forms—labor coercion, the suppression of local political, social, and cultural traditions, forced migration, and physical beatings and mutilations. It remained embedded in the fabric of Belgian colonialism even after the Belgian state, under pressure of the international outcry over the abuses of Leopold II’s rubber production, took over the colony in 1908.

The violence associated with exploitation produced resistance in return. Religion played an important role, particularly in rural resistance against oppressive cash crop regimes, labor recruitment, and conscription practices. In an environment violently hostile to resistance, religious discourse was a prime avenue for the expression of identity and discontent.

But resistance took other forms as well. In 1931, for example, the Pende people of the Southwestern Kasai rose up against the Huileries du Congo (a Lever Brothers’ enterprise, and predecessor of today’s Unilever). The concessionary company exploited the region as a large palm oil plantation and subjected the Pende to a harsh labor regime. As the most vulnerable link in the global commodity chain, the palm oil laborers felt the Great Depression keenly in reduced wages, growing production pressure, and increased taxes.

The Pende sought solace in spiritual practices of resistance and eventually all-out revolt and the killing of a tax collector. By the time the revolt was suppressed, several hundred (between five hundred and a thousand, reports vary) Pende were dead, and strict control was exercised over the appointment of local chiefs.

**Independence and the First Congo Crisis**

When Congolese resistance to the colonial system burst out in the open in late 1959, and independence became inevitable, the moment seemed like a time of longed-for possibilities. Just as quickly it became painfully clear that the legacy of the entanglements of a colonial system based on political authoritarianism and economic exploitation would not easily be undone.

As soon as independence negotiations began, opinions differed as to what decolonization would entail. Belgians wanted to develop an independent political system much like their own. The Congolese demands included the restitution of their economic and cultural resources including Congolese art objects in Belgian museums.

Take, for example, UMHK. By 1960, the conglomerate was co-owned by the Société Générale de Belgique, the national bank, and the colonial state. Deeply embedded in elite Belgian industrial and political circles, it generated considerable wealth for Belgium and its economy. The Belgians proved reluctant to hand over their part of the ownership shares of the company to...
the Congolese, and dragged its feet long enough to allow for a restructuring of the company and its finances. It proved to be the start of a long dispute over economic decolonization.

Within months of official independence on June 30, 1960, the fragile democratic system found itself under threat, when the first democratically elected Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, was killed by a conspiracy of Belgian, American, and Congolese actors.

A first military coup by Joseph-Désiré Mobutu took place in September 1960 and a series of regional uprisings and secessions unfolded. The combination of hasty independence, a continued system of colonial exploitation, Cold War tensions, and interventions in order to assure access to mining resources meant the newly created and fragile democratic system soon fell victim to manipulation, outside interference, and renewed authoritarianism.

**Congo Becomes Zaire**

Mobutu became the permanent head of state after his second military coup in 1965 and remained in power until 1997 in one of the longest-reigning African dictatorships. Considered a safe choice and a guarantor of stability by his Western supporters, his relationship with Belgium was soon complicated by his actions to secure the country’s economic resources. The result was simply to reinforce the intertwined nature of economic exploitation and political authoritarianism, established by Belgians.

A journalist, military man, and former collaborator of Lumumba (in whose death he had a hand), Mobutu had considerable popular and foreign support after the 1965 coup. His pursuit of economic nationalization targeted the former colonial companies and foreign-owned businesses at large. After what the regime considered unsatisfactory progress on the state holdings in the UMHK, a 1966 law declared the state the owner of all mineral and mining rights in the country. This was followed a year later by the nationalization of the UMHK (renamed Gécamines).
Nationalization did not result in a democratization of access to and control over the country’s resources, however. Instead, the previous Western elite were simply replaced by a national elite with deep ties to the Mobutu regime.

This process pervaded political life, where the centralization of and access to power went hand in hand with increased authoritarianism. A one-party system was created in 1970, and the centralization of power was supported by a cultural politics aimed at increasing the population’s sense of national identity, tying it to the regime’s version of sovereignty.

The authenticity campaign promoted a national form of dress, so-called Bantu names rather than Christian or Western ones, and the renaming of the country as Zaire. Popular support for the regime was relatively high in the first decade, but declined steadily with a rise in political oppression and in the personality cult surrounding Mobutu.

A crash of global copper prices in the mid-seventies also revealed the lack of fundamental change in the economic system and initiated several decades of decline in people’s standard of living.

The decline of state infrastructure and the control by a small elite led many Zairians to develop alternate economic and social systems for survival, creating an informal economy on which the majority of the country’s citizens continue to rely.

Despite the regime’s increasing repression, resistance continued, with university students taking a prominent role. A combination of resistance, political opposition, local and region-wide conflicts, and the disappearance of Cold War support ultimately allowed for the overthrow of the Mobutu regime by Laurent-Désiré Kabila.

The Great War of Africa

L-D. Kabila, the father of current president Joseph Kabila, seized the opportunity to topple the weakening Mobutu regime and its terminally ill leader in 1997, heavily supported by neighboring Rwanda, in a military campaign that swept the country from east to west. Kabila was a longtime rebel leader with roots in the Katanga province who managed to stay out of Mobutu’s reach, in part by moving his family to Tanzania.

The conflict this invasion triggered in 1996 and 1997, and the subsequent conflict from 1998 to 2002, have become known as the “Great War of Africa” because many of the region’s countries were drawn in and because the death toll was staggering, likely topping several million. A major cause of the war originated in the Rwanda Genocide, which triggered the flow of about two million refugees, mostly Hutus, from Rwanda into refugee camps in the eastern part of the country.

Subsequent interventions by the Rwandan and Ugandan armies in pursuit of these refugees, who were (rightly) suspected of including members of the Interhamwe militias responsible for the genocide, along with local conflict caused by the presence of the refugees, in addition to the hollowed-out condition of the Zairian state and army meant that the coalition of forces, led by Rwanda and Uganda but including Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his troops (a significant percentage of whom were child soldiers), reached the capital of Kinshasa in a mere seven months. Mobutu left for longtime ally Morocco, where he died soon after.
The relationship between L-D. Kabila (who renamed the country Congo again) and Rwanda and Uganda soon soured, and the latter started a new military campaign in 1998, aiming to replace their former ally with the involvement of a different Congolese rebel group.

This time, however, the Congolese leader was saved by a coalition of Southern African forces, including Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola. In addition, Sudan and Libya sent support, while the rebels and Rwanda and Uganda received some assistance from Burundi. The new Congo crisis had become a continent-wide conflict.

It is generally believed that resource control was not one of the motivating factors for the invasion of Zaire by Rwanda and Uganda in the first Congo war of 1996–97, but gradually the profits of mining in the eastern region became integrated in the financing of both the smaller militias and certain factions of national armies at large. This exploitation is not always systematic, but consists of small scale smuggling by rank-and-file soldiers and wildcat mining, as well as larger scale digs controlled by the Rwandan and Congolese elite.

The consequences for the local populations were and are horrific. Not only does violence tear through their communities, their livelihoods are also precarious and often very dangerous. Extremely unsafe mining operations, child and forced labor, and frequent clashes over the control of mining areas are par for the course for the local populations.

Compounding the problem is that artisanal mining is often one of the only economic avenues available to local communities. This means that whenever (laudable) attempts are made at limiting the trade of conflict minerals from these areas—as for example a section of the

"Justice Is Not Negotiable"
American Frank-Dodd Act (2010) tried to do—miners and their families are inadvertently victimized again because the product they dig and sell on a small scale ends up in the commodity chains legislation is trying to restrict.

The conflict in the eastern part of Congo has also increasingly become known in the international media for the role violence against women plays in it. Violence against women, and specifically rape, as a tactic of war is widely used by all sides of the conflict, but the problem reaches beyond the conflict itself, as the uptick of violence against women since 2008 demonstrates.

As part of the now endemic violence in the region, its perpetration is not limited to soldiers and militias and it destabilizes not just communities and families but entire populations. Likely only a minority of women report the violence, and the justice system is woefully inadequate to deal with the issue. Although it is receiving increasing attention in the global media, the focus is often on doctors and institutions instead of the women themselves.

A meeting for rape victims where women receive counseling, training, and employment from the United States Agency for International Development (left). Congolese women speaking with the International Rescue Committee’s gender-based violence program coordinator in 2010 (right).

**From Kabila I to Kabila II**

Although a UN peacekeeping force was approved in 1999, negotiations proceeded slowly. Not only was it difficult to bring to the table the now very fragmented landscape of militias, rebel movements, and international participants, the process was also complicated by the assassination in 2001 of L-D. Kabila by one of his bodyguards, a former child soldier.

Meanwhile, economic conditions in the DR Congo were even direr than they were by the end of Mobutu’s reign. Under L-D. Kabila, external involvement in mining and other economic sectors seems to have increased again, but much of it came in the guise of shady agreements used to satisfy allies or buy allegiances.

To the surprise of many, L-D. Kabila’s son, Joseph Kabila, emerged as his successor. At 29, the younger Kabila seemed inexperienced and aloof, but the international community met the early part of his tenure with cautious enthusiasm.

He was willing to come to the table, and in 2002, signed an agreement that aimed to end the conflict and initiate a period of transition to democracy that resulted in the 2006 elections.
Declared free and fair by international and national observers, the 2006 elections raised hopes about the political future of the country.

Joseph Kabila eeked out a victory and was reelected for a second and final term in 2011, in an election widely seen as much less free and fair. Kabila, whose family has roots in the eastern part of the Congo, but who did not grow up in the country, continues to be seen as an outsider, although he retains some support in parts of the east.

Despite the hope of the transitional period, it seems that many of the current issues the country is facing have roots in the shift to democratic government. Although no longer an official international conflict zone, conflict simmered and continued to flare up, fueled by both low- and high-level interest in the country’s resources. Violence, intimidation, and abuse of the population have become anchored in the very structures of life in Eastern Congo.

Although the East is an extreme example, high-level exploitation and the continuation of a political system geared toward facilitating this exploitation and profit from it still have the country in an iron grip. Compounded by unclear and contradictory laws and opaque procedures aimed at discouraging citizen engagement, high-level mining deals such as the large infrastructure-for-minerals deal with China continue. Stories about the family fortunes of those in power or about disappearing profits from state coffers and enterprises surface with alarming frequency.

In December 2016, the deadline for new elections passed. This followed failed attempts by the Kabila regime to change the constitution to allow him to run for a third term, a tactic that has proven successful for neighboring Rwanda’s Paul Kagame and Burundi’s Pierre Nkurunziza.

The Catholic Church, traditionally an influential segment of society, brokered a failed deal between the regime and the opposition. Recently, after a visit by the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, the government announced a new deadline of December 2018 for elections, a full two years after the president’s mandate expired.

The political opposition sees these objections as mere delay tactics, and few have much faith in the newly announced deadline. A longstanding Congolese practice that dates to the Mobutu years is to neutralize opposition through their cooptation or integration into the political—and hence economic—system. They create division and strife or endless dialogues that give the appearance
of consultation. All of these further encourage the abuse of political power for personal enrichment.

Meanwhile resistance against the current regime, but also against the system at large, is rising and follows old patterns of resistance against abuses of power in Congo. Students and young professionals, who took a leading role in internal opposition to the Mobutu regime in the 1990s, are again at the forefront of protests. Aside from the capital Kinshasa, the eastern city of Goma is emerging as a stronghold of civil society and student movements.

At the same time, armed rebels and religious cults are increasingly destabilizing rural areas. The motivations of and culprits behind these groups are not always clear, and explanations range from the assertion of power by local and regional traditional leaders to behind-the-scenes orchestration of the current military and political apparatus.

Certainly the destabilization of the country is fast spreading beyond the Eastern region. A violent conflict with the Kamwina Nsapu group has led to an estimated 3,000 dead (including two UN observers), 1.4 million refugees (some of whom are flowing into neighboring Angola), and a looming humanitarian crisis in the Kasai region, between the capital Kinshasa in the West and the mining capital of Lubumbashi in the East.

Even if elections take place in 2018, they are unlikely to bring fundamental change to the Congo. Seeing the current ruling elite as the sole villain in this story would simply legitimize its replacement with another and ignore the structural origins of the current situation. As this brief overview demonstrated, these can be traced back through the postcolonial authoritarianism of the Mobutu era to the system of colonial exploitation.

What is more, the moral righteousness with which the West often approaches the problems in the DRC conveniently overlooks the global contours of its economic exploitation. In reality, a deep restructuring of the political and economic systems is necessary, changes that are likely not possible on merely a national level but would require the participation of Western nations as well.
Patrice Lumumba, the first legally elected prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was assassinated 50 years ago today, on 17 January, 1961. This heinous crime was a culmination of two inter-related assassination plots by American and Belgian governments, which used Congolese accomplices and a Belgian execution squad to carry out the deed.

Ludo De Witte, the Belgian author of the best book on this crime, qualifies it as "the most important assassination of the 20th century". The assassination's historical importance lies in a multitude of factors, the most pertinent being the global context in which it took place, its impact on Congolese politics since then and Lumumba's overall legacy as a nationalist leader.

For 126 years, the US and Belgium have played key roles in shaping Congo's destiny. In April 1884, seven months before the Berlin Congress, the US became the first country in the world to recognise the claims of King Leopold II of the Belgians to the territories of the Congo Basin.

When the atrocities related to brutal economic exploitation in Leopold's Congo Free State resulted in millions of fatalities, the US joined other world powers to force Belgium to take over the country as a regular colony. And it was during the colonial period that the US acquired a strategic stake in the enormous natural wealth of the Congo, following its use of the uranium from Congolese mines to manufacture the first atomic weapons, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs.

With the outbreak of the cold war, it was inevitable that the US and its western allies would not be prepared to let Africans have effective control over strategic raw materials, lest these fall in
the hands of their enemies in the Soviet camp. It is in this regard that Patrice Lumumba's
determination to achieve genuine independence and to have full control over Congo's resources
in order to utilise them to improve the living conditions of our people was perceived as a threat
to western interests. To fight him, the US and Belgium used all the tools and resources at their
disposal, including the United Nations secretariat, under Dag Hammarskjöld and Ralph Bunche,
to buy the support of Lumumba's Congolese rivals, and hired killers.

In Congo, Lumumba's assassination is rightly viewed as the country's original sin. Coming less
than seven months after independence (on 30 June, 1960), it was a stumbling block to the ideals
of national unity, economic independence and pan-African solidarity that Lumumba had
championed, as well as a shattering blow to the hopes of millions of Congolese for freedom and
material prosperity.

The assassination took place at a time when the country had fallen under four separate
governments: the central government in Kinshasa (then Léopoldville); a rival central government
by Lumumba's followers in Kisangani (then Stanleyville); and the secessionist regimes in the
mineral-rich provinces of Katanga and South Kasai. Since Lumumba's physical elimination had
removed what the west saw as the major threat to their interests in the Congo, internationally-led
efforts were undertaken to restore the authority of the moderate and pro-western regime in
Kinshasa over the entire country. These resulted in ending the Lumumbist regime in Kisangani
in August 1961, the secession of South Kasai in September 1962, and the Katanga secession in
January 1963.

No sooner did this unification process end than a radical social movement for a "second
independence" arose to challenge the neocolonial state and its pro-western leadership. This mass
movement of peasants, workers, the urban unemployed, students and lower civil servants found
an eager leadership among Lumumba's lieutenants, most of whom had regrouped to establish a
National Liberation Council (CNL) in October 1963 in Brazzaville, across the Congo river from
Kinshasa. The strengths and weaknesses of this movement may serve as a way of gauging the
overall legacy of Patrice Lumumba for Congo and Africa as a whole.

The most positive aspect of this legacy was manifest in the selfless devotion of Pierre Mulele to
radical change for purposes of meeting the deepest aspirations of the Congolese people for
democracy and social progress. On the other hand, the CNL leadership, which included
Christophe Gbenye and Laurent-Désiré Kabila, was more interested in power and its attendant
privileges than in the people's welfare. This is Lumumbism in words rather than in deeds. As
president three decades later, Laurent Kabila did little to move from words to deeds.

More importantly, the greatest legacy that Lumumba left for Congo is the ideal of national unity.
Recently, a Congolese radio station asked me whether the independence of South Sudan should
be a matter of concern with respect to national unity in the Congo. I responded that since Patrice
Lumumba has died for Congo's unity, our people will remain utterly steadfast in their defence of
our national unity.
Paradise Papers Research Raises Questions Over Glencore’s $440m Congo Discount

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists
Will Fitzgibbon
December 14, 2017
https://www.icij.org
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

Mining companies now controlled by commodities giant Glencore won $440 million in discounts on payments in 2008 to a Democratic Republic of Congo-controlled copper mining company – a massive financial loss for the desperately poor nation, according to a new report based on the Paradise Papers.

The $440 million loss to the DRC, where more than a third of adults are illiterate, was almost as large as its total expenditures on education at the time.

Elisabeth Caesens, director of the Brussels-based nonprofit Resource Matters, found that Katanga Mining Ltd. arranged to pay substantially less than market rate to obtain mining concessions from Gecamines, the state-controlled mining company, as part of contract renegotiations for mining projects. Katanga includes the companies that benefited from the discounts and is now controlled by Glencore.

“The Paradise Papers allowed us to look behind the scene and follow the negotiations of some of the most important contracts,” said Caesens, who used public documents and disclosures by ICIJ and its partners from the Paradise Papers, a massive leak of documents from an offshore law firm and others.

The Paradise Papers showed that during industry-wide renegotiations Gecamines initially said it would charge Katanga $585 million to participate in the mining venture.

Katanga, in which Glencore then had a small interest, found the $585 million payment unacceptable, internal company minutes reveal. Katanga approached Dan Gertler, an Israeli businessman with a minority interest in Katanga, for help. The pay-to-play amount was reduced to $140 million, according to company minutes.

Glencore declined to comment on the report. In a previous statement, Glencore said the agreement to pay $140 million was reached before Gertler’s involvement. Lawyers for Gertler have previously told ICIJ that Katanga didn’t receive preferential treatment as a result of Gertler’s involvement and that all negotiations were legitimate and arms-length.

The 21-page report zooms in on a series of discounts secured on the mining ventures that total $440 million. In the most striking case, one of the two companies that were part of Katanga Mining paid $5 million to obtain rights that would have typically cost $240 million, based on the industry average paid by other companies at the time, the report says.

In another case discussed by Caesens, the mining venture secured 4 million tons of copper without paying additional money to the state-owned mining company. In yet another discount,
the DRC mining company granted the venture a favorable deal by using a less common measurement of copper reserves that could have saved the venture $60 million, according to the report.

“Congo is one of the poorest countries in the world,” Caesens said. “Social services are minimal to non-existent. At the time, $235 million represented more than the country’s yearly budget for primary and secondary education.”

While more than a dozen other mining companies working in the same copper-cobalt rich region paid an average of just under $33 per ton of copper, Caesens found, the mining project now managed by Glencore paid 73 cents per ton.

“That is proportionally 48 times lower than what virtually all other investors agreed to,” Caesens wrote.

The Paradise Papers indicate that Gertler may have played a role in obtaining the larger discount. In March 2009, Gertler attended a meeting with DRC mining company representatives to discuss a range of issues, according to minutes from a Katanga meeting.

“All outstanding points were discussed there and Dan Gertler led the discussion before leaving the meeting,” minutes stated.

Less than one week later, at a Switzerland hotel, Katanga executives, including a senior Glencore manager, confirmed that it would pay $140 million, rather than the $580-plus originally sought for the mining concessions, according to board minutes from the Paradise Papers. The costs would be divided between two of Katanga’s projects in payments of $135 million and $5 million, according to the minutes.

The Resource Matters report comes amid growing pressure on Glencore and its operations in the DRC.

Last month, Glencore and Katanga announced that three directors had stepped down after an official investigation by the Ontario Securities Commission in Canada, where Katanga is based, prompted an internal audit that found “material weaknesses” in the company’s financial reporting controls.

Canadian authorities are also reviewing Katanga’s compliance with disclosures under bribery and anti-corruption laws, the company said.

In an interview, Switzerland’s justice minister said the Paradise Papers revelations would further pressure the country to reform its commodities sector and evoked new legislation to force companies to “play by the rules.”
The Dark Side of Electric Cars: Exploitative Labor Practices

Time
Mark Dummett
September 28, 2017
https://time.com/

The Scottish government recently announced plans to, by 2032, phase out petrol and diesel vehicles. By 2040, the only cars on United Kingdom roads will also be electric, and petrol stations will be replaced by car charging points. Meanwhile, in the United States, Elon Musk has announced the launch of the Tesla Model 3, which he hopes will become the world’s first mass-market electric car.

This shift to green technology is extremely welcome. Climate change is one of the biggest human rights challenges of our time, and cities from London to Delhi are choking on vehicle fumes. The move to electric cars will improve air quality and cut the carbon emissions that have pushed our planet to breaking point.

But some electric cars are not, currently, as ethically “clean” as manufacturers would have us believe. Amnesty International’s research has shown that cobalt mined by children and adults in extremely hazardous conditions could be entering the supply chains of some of the world’s largest carmakers.
A key component of the rechargeable lithium-ion batteries on which electric cars run is cobalt. More than half of the world’s cobalt comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Despite its mineral riches, the DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world, and has suffered from decades of war and corrupt leaders. With so few formal jobs in the country, hundreds of thousands of Congolese men, women and children, have been driven to dig their own mines to earn their livelihoods.

Government officials told us that 20% of the cobalt exported from the DRC comes from these so-called “artisanal” miners. The true figure is likely higher. The artisanal mines produce cheaper cobalt than industrial mines (partly because people are paid so little and are unregulated) and as demand has grown, we have heard of new mine sites being developed across the region.

What this means is that a huge amount of the global cobalt supplies comes from these mines. While we do not know where most of it ends up, it is reasonable to assume that it is entering the supply chains of the handful of companies which dominate the car battery market.

Working with a Congolese NGO, Afrewatch, Amnesty International found children as young as seven in the mining areas. None of the adult or child miners we saw wore facemasks that could prevent them from inhaling cobalt dust, which could lead to potentially fatal lung disease. Mines collapse frequently, burying people underground. No one knows the exact figure, but UNICEF estimates that 40,000 children work in mining across the south of the DRC where cobalt is found.

Using company records, our investigation into the supply of cobalt traced it from the mines in the DRC to Chinese buying companies and smelters, through battery component manufacturers in China and South Korea and on to battery makers who supply many of the world’s leading electric car companies.

So, what should these companies be doing?

In 2012, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) laid out clear guidelines for companies sourcing cobalt and other minerals from high-risk areas like the DRC. According to these guidelines, electric car manufacturers and battery makers should be able to say who their smelters or refiners are, and should make public their own assessment of whether the smelter’s due diligence practices are adequate in identifying and addressing human rights risks and abuses. We have contacted many of the largest companies and, not a single car manufacturer told us they had actually done this.

This could be because cobalt has been overlooked by narrowly drafted “conflict minerals” rules adopted in the United States in 2010 and the European Union earlier this year, meaning it escapes strict regulation. But there is no excuse for some of the richest companies in the world not to undertake proper due diligence.

Since our report came out in 2016, there has been some progress. Several companies — including some from China — have formed a body called the Responsible Cobalt Initiative to help the industry conduct due diligence in line with the OECD standards, and tackle the issue of child labour in the DRC. They include leading tech firms, such as Apple; HP; Huawei and Sony; as well as Samsung SDI, a battery manufacturer; and Huayou Cobalt, a smelter and refiner, whose subsidiary purchases cobalt from artisanal mines. None of the members of this group is as
yet a carmaker. Meanwhile in the DRC, the government announced that it would take action to eliminate child labor in its mines by 2025 and appealed for international help to do so.

The electric car industry must understand that transparency of human rights risks abuses arising in their supply chains is the way forward. I have been told by numerous executives from different global brands how difficult it is to map the cobalt supply chain. But surely any responsible company, understanding that there’s a risk of child labor, should make every effort possible to understand who their suppliers are, and the conditions under which their components were produced. Earlier this year, Apple became the first company to publish the names of their cobalt suppliers — proving that it can be done. Which carmaker will win the race to do likewise?

The other response we hear from companies is that they want to stop buying from artisanal mines in the DRC altogether. But this could have a negative impact on the already impoverished communities that rely on mining. Companies that have benefitted from child labor should not just walk away from the problem now that it has been exposed. The solution lies in regulating these artisanal mines, ensuring that they are safe places to work, while children attend school instead.

Governments around the world should pass laws that require companies to check and publicly disclose information about where they source minerals. The voluntary approach is not enough.

This does not have to be a choice between two evils. We need to phase out fossil fuels, and electric cars are an integral part of a greener future. But as electric car manufacturers move to the forefront of the market, they need to drastically improve their practices and take steps to ensure that their role in the energy revolution is truly clean and fair. A green future built on the backs of exploited children in the DRC is no kind of progress.

© Platon – The People’s Portfolio
Progress and Challenges on Conflict Minerals: Facts on Dodd-Frank 1502

The Enough Project
2017
https://enoughproject.org/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

Minerals and Conflict

Conflict minerals have fueled and continue to help sustain armed violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo), linking them to the deadliest conflict globally since World War II. The four conflict minerals (gold, along with the 3Ts – tin, tantalum, and tungsten) are not the only sources of income to armed groups, but they are some of the most lucrative. The illegal exploitation of natural resources today is a manifestation of grand corruption linked to violence that has plagued Congo for the past 130 years.

- The U.N. Group of Experts on Congo found in 2016 that gold “provides the most significant financial benefit to armed groups” and “is the most lucrative and easily smuggled of the natural resources in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.” A study from the Enough Project found that armed groups made an estimated $185 million from conflict minerals in 2008. In 2007 the Pole Institute noted “minerals are a major source of income and of conflict in North Kivu as in the whole of the DRC,”

- A mortality study by the International Rescue Committee looking at conflict-related deaths between August 1998 and April 2007 estimated that more than 5.4 million people died as a result of armed conflict in Congo. There has been continuing violence since that study, but no definitive follow up has been conducted on the mortality toll.

10 years ago, we were under de facto control of armed groups…today, let’s admit we are a long way from that. And if we’re honest, that’s in part because of Dodd-Frank – it came to shine the light on those illicit actors. Today, despite the problems with governance, you can feel more government control.” – Justine Masika Bihamba, Coordinator of the organization Synergy of Women for Victims of Sexual Violence

The Law

Section 1502 on conflict minerals of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act is a transparency measure, and one part of a comprehensive approach to Congo’s challenges. Passed in 2010 and implemented by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 2012, it creates a reporting requirement for all companies publicly traded in the United States with products containing any of the four conflict minerals. Dodd-Frank 1502 creates a lever to support transparency, security, and the rule of law in the region’s mining sectors. Companies must now publicly disclose annually whether any of the gold or 3Ts in their supply chains originated in Congo or one of its nine neighboring countries and, if so, describe the
due diligence measures taken to determine the source of the minerals. Dodd-Frank 1502 does not require companies to divest from Congo or source from conflict-free mines. The law only requires companies to report on their mineral sourcing and due diligence practices.

- The cost of compliance has been significantly overestimated by industry lobbyists. Elm Sustainability Partners estimates the cost for U.S. businesses to comply with the Rule has been 74 to 85 percent less than the original SEC estimate of $3-4 billion for the first year.

“A conflict-free minerals industry would contribute to ending the unspeakable violence the people of Congo have endured for years.” – Dr. Denis Mukwege, Founder and Medical Director of Panzi Hospital

In 2014, we educated suppliers who mistakenly believed that CFSP-compliant smelters are, by definition, not sourcing from the Covered Countries, or whose conflict minerals policies indicated that they intend not to source from the Covered Countries at all.” – EMC Corporation (Source: Conflict Minerals Report 2014)

Impact

Consistent with its objective, Dodd-Frank 1502 along with related reforms have led to significant improvements in the transparency of corporate supply chains and to a major reduction in the number of conflict mines for the 3T minerals in eastern Congo. More than 75 percent of the world’s smelters and refiners for the four minerals have now passed third party audits. Before Dodd-Frank 1502, there was no certification mechanism for distinguishing conflict mines (i.e. mines controlled by armed groups or the Congolese army) from conflict-free mines, and there were no federal transparency requirements for companies on conflict minerals. The law and related reforms have changed these circumstances and created a two-tier market whereby the price for untraceable 3T conflict minerals is significantly lower than the price for verified conflict-free minerals. This price difference has made the trade in 3T minerals significantly less lucrative for armed groups.

- As of 2016, the International Peace Information Service (IPIS) found that over three-quarters (79 percent) of 3T miners surveyed in eastern Congo were working in mines where no armed group involvement had been reported. This is a significant change given that the U.N. Group of Experts stated as recently as 2010 that “in the Kivu provinces, almost every mining deposit [was] controlled by a military group.” IPIS is currently updating this study.

- As of June 7, 2018, 78 percent of smelters/refiners worldwide (253 out of 324 total) for the four conflict minerals have passed independent, third-party audits by the Responsible Minerals Assurance Process, and an additional 11 smelters/refiners are participating in the program (i.e. are in the process of being audited) for a total of 264 participants (over 81 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of conflict free mines: 495 (as of December 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of refiners that have passed audits: 253 (as of June 7th, 2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• There is now an emerging certification mechanism run by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and mines have begun to be validated as conflict-free. As of December 2017, 495 mines in eastern Congo had been validated as conflict-free by multi-stakeholder teams made up of U.N. officials and Congolese civil society, business, and government representatives.

• An April 2018 study from the University of Radboud found that individuals, academics, and companies that continue to argue that the U.S. Dodd-Frank has resulted in unintended negative consequences in Congo are largely relying on outdated data and therefore exaggerating the negative impacts of the law they claim to be occurring today.

...Alcatel-Lucent does not want to prevent its suppliers from sourcing from legitimate mines located within the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighboring countries (as doing so could be detrimental to the legitimate economies and populations of those countries).” – Alcatel-Lucent (Source: Conflict Minerals Report 2013)

Mining Communities

Dodd-Frank 1502 must be fully implemented, not abandoned, and strengthened with livelihood projects and other support to mining communities. As often occurs in places where black markets are disrupted by reform, Congo’s 3T mining sector is being affected by the transition to a conflict-free economy, and many miners have experienced livelihood challenges. The original conflict minerals draft legislation included resources for livelihood programs for mining communities, but unfortunately those provisions were omitted from the final law and thus resources were not forthcoming in a timely way, causing hardship for some communities. Some aid has been disbursed to support conflict-free mining, but more support for livelihoods projects is needed. The solution to uncovering and eliminating these harmful illicit markets is not to reduce transparency measures but rather to strengthen and expand them.

• Livelihood projects should include complementary livelihood programs and artisanal mining support. Project planning should involve community consultations and decision-making, and projects should encompass microfinance, programs to increase women’s accessibility to mining and other livelihoods, and transition projects for child miners. Projects should also include aid for the formalization of artisanal mining— including the creation of artisanal mining zones, validation of more conflict-free mines, capacity building for mining cooperatives, and support for improved health and safety implementation for miners.

• Section 5 of the original “Conflict Minerals Trade Act” (introduced on Nov. 11, 2009) included provisions for livelihood support. Since that time, the Enough Project has repeatedly called on the United Nations, the United States, and other governments to engage in a process of dialogue and reform in Congo that is broadly inclusive of Congolese civil society, business, and government representatives.
Congolese Support

Many Congolese communities and leaders—including Nobel Peace Prize nominee and Sakharov Prize winner Dr. Denis Mukwege, and over 100 other Congolese civil society groups and the Congolese Ministry of Mines—support Dodd-Frank 1502. Leaders and activists support the law because they have seen direct positive impacts, because they believe in transparency and the rule of law, or both.

- 111 Congolese civil society groups and the Congolese Ministry of Mines wrote to the SEC in 2017 saying that Dodd-Frank 1502 should not be suspended, repealed, or weakened because that would lead to increased violence and conflict minerals smuggling. For example, a coalition of 31 civil society groups from South Kivu wrote, “Dodd-Frank… led to a positive change: cut off from the illegal extraction of minerals, which was a major source of funding, armed groups are significantly less active. In the east of the DRC, around 8,500 children left armed groups between 2009 and 2015. … The suspension of some high-level military officers in South Kivu due to their likely involvement in the illegal extraction of minerals. … Any step to suspend Section 1502 would undoubtedly lead to conflict minerals infiltrating the supply chain with devastating effects. Namely, the reactivation of armed groups and the feeding of terrorist and mafia networks.”

- Dr. Denis Mukwege, in a New York Times opinion piece: “A conflict-free minerals industry would greatly benefit the people of Congo and contribute to ending the unspeakable violence they have endured for years. The legislative tools to help make this a reality are available to international policy makers, but they must be enacted and enforced. Companies must conduct honest, rigorous investigations of their supply chains, publicly report their findings, and act on the results to ensure that their money — and ours — no longer ends up in the hands of violent rebels. If they are unwilling to do so, governments must compel them to action.” (2015)

- Open letter from 41 civil society groups in North Kivu: “Thanks to the Dodd-Frank Act, Eastern DRC has to date more than 220 certified green mining sites, more than 300 mining police officers trained and deployed to secure mining sites, an independent audit mechanism, and a regional certification system. These advances undoubtedly contribute to reducing the rate of crime and human rights violations, including rape of women and exploitation of children in mining areas.” (2017)

“Armed men have been free to exploit minerals away from any eyes. The formula for exploitation has been to attack civilians. To do that, they harm the women. When women are raped, the men are forced to flee, the children can’t survive, and the village is abandoned – then the area is free for exploitation.” – Archbishop Francois Rusengo, Archbishop of Bukavu, South Kivu
Does Artisanal Mining Increase the Risk of Sexual Violence?

Quality in Primary Care (pages 77-80)
Dr. Siri Aas Rustad, Dr. Gudrun Østby, & Dr. Ragnhild Nordås
2016
http://primarycare.imedpub.com
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

ABSTRACT

DR Congo’s natural resource abundance has featured in policy debates and amongst advocacy groups as the prime example of ‘conflict minerals’ driving conflict-related sexual violence. Yet, systematic analyses of the links between mining, conflict, and sexual violence are scarce. This article explores this link combining new subnational data on the geographical location of ASM sites with detailed micro-level data on exposure to sexual violence from the 2013/2014 Demographic and Health Survey in DRC. We find that women living close to ASM sites are indeed more likely to experience sexual violence. In the Kivus and Maniema, the risk of experiencing sexual violence is particularly high for women that live close to a mine with the presence of one or more armed actors.

Introduction

The situation in the war-torn eastern parts of The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been volatile for decades, and the most recent conflict has been referred to as ‘Africa’s World War’. Furthermore, Eastern DRC is often portrayed as the ‘rape capital of the world’ within the advocacy narratives, where violence is driven by ‘conflict minerals’ serving to fuel the activities of various armed actors.1,2 Most observers have portrayed the armed actors as focused on capturing ‘the benefits from the vast Congolese mineral resources rather than at the achievement of long-term political aims’, and sexual violence against women and girls has been portrayed as the main consequence.3 For example, in 2001, Suliman Baldo at Human Rights Watch stated that ‘there is a direct link between human rights abuses and the exploitation of resources in areas in the DRC occupied by Rwanda and Uganda’. 2a In the report entitled Sexual Violence in Conflict, the UN Secretary-General also points out that in some countries there is a correlation between spikes in incidents of sexual violence and military activity linked to the illegal extraction of natural resources, and Eastern DRC is presented as the prime example of rape being used by armed actors to punish civilians for preventing poaching and mineral trafficking.4

Although practitioners and policy-makers in particular have argued that there is a relationship between artisanal and small scale mining (ASM) and sexual violence in the DRC, the specification of potential mechanisms that could link ASM and sexual violence is limited, and some scholars criticize the advocacy narrative of the situation in Eastern DRC (e.g. Autesserre 2012). Yet, few, if any, systematic analyses have focused on testing this particular relationship statistically.2,5 Furthermore, we still know very little about how and why armed
conflict and conflict-related sexual violence perpetuate different forms of violence in post-conflict settings. This knowledge gap in the literature motivates our research question addressed here: To what extent and how is a woman’s risk of experiencing sexual violence influenced by the presence of artisanal and small scale mining (ASM)?

**Theorizing mining and sexual violence**

A relationship between ‘conflict minerals’ (resulting from ASM) and sexual violence has predominantly been proposed in policy and advocacy circles, but also in parts of the academic literature on Eastern DRC.1,4,6 Our first overarching hypothesis simply reflects this proposition:

H1: Women living in close proximity to mines are more likely to experience sexual violence.

While several reports and policy agents strongly suggest that there is a link between natural resource extraction and sexual violence, the link is often poorly explained. Two main mechanisms that link ASM and heightened risk for sexual violence can be identified through the existing academic literature on sexual violence and natural resources, as well as anecdotal evidence from policy makers and practitioners: the financing of armed actors and the hyper-masculine mining culture. These constitute the basis for the subsequent hypotheses. First, sexual violence has been argued to be used strategically by armed actors to terrorize and drive out the settled population in order to control mines and gain access to valuable resources. This makes women living in mineral-rich regions particularly vulnerable to sexual violence by armed actors. Second, due to what has been portrayed as a ‘hyper-masculine’ and inherently violent mining culture, women in or near mining sites may be more exposed to various forms of sexual abuse, or enter into transactional sex of various kinds.

The curse of the ‘honey pot’?

Sexual violence as a tactic for forced population displacement has been argued to be used by armed actors, in part for controlling or getting access to resource rich areas. Mines can be attractive not only for military, rebels and militia, but also for police, various public agents and business interests who might use various tactics for controlling the land and gaining access to riches. Hence, a mechanism linking natural resources to sexual violence is that sexual violence may to a larger extent occur in areas where conflict and lawlessness are being sustained by various armed actors exploiting the resources for economic gain. When armed actors control ASM sites, there could be a particularly heightened risk of sexual violence against women in the area. This leads to our second hypothesis.

H2: The closer a woman lives to ASM controlled by an armed actor, the more likely she is to experience sexual violence.

The curse of the mining culture?

The mining industry is often portrayed as being inherently violent and the mining zones as particularly hostile environment for women.5 Specifically, the mining culture has been presented as ‘hyper-masculine’, producing masculinities akin to those that emerge through initiation rituals into gangs, counter-cultures of marginalized youth, and other fringe cultures.7 The hypermasculine sub-cultures or ‘fringe cultures’ associated with ASM sites have
been found to pride themselves on delinquent behavior and rejecting the norms and regulations of society, including scandalizing existing sexual norms and piousness. Such masculine cultures could encourage more violence against women, particularly sexual violence.7

The above-mentioned findings that there are subcultures of hyper-masculinity associated with mining means that through working in ASM and walking to and from work associated with the mining industry, women could be more at risk of falling victim to sexual violence from men outside their household. Many women working in the mining sector are also recruited to the sex industry and the exchange of sex for money is very prevalent in artisanal mining towns in Eastern DRC. Women who are involved in transactional sex are also more at risk of rape and other forms of sexual violence. Hence, the third hypothesis states that:

H3: Women who live close to ASM sites and work outside the home are more likely to experience sexual violence.

Data and research design

To test these hypotheses, we spatially link detailed data on the location of ASM sites in Eastern DRC with georeferenced data for women aged 15-49 on sexual violence exposure, from the DRC Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in 2013-2014.3a The women respondents were surveyed on their experiences with sexual violence by both their intimate partners and others. Here we focus on the latter type, which constitute dependent variable: sexual violence committed by non-partners.4a The DHS data represent 172 randomly sampled clusters in Eastern DRC, covering a maximum of 2,134 respondents. The geographic distribution of DHS respondents is shown in Map 1.

The data on ASM is collected by the International Peace Information Service (IPIS).5a The data includes geographical data on 1,139 artisanal and small scale mines in five districts in Eastern DRC: South Kivu, North Kivu, Maniema, Katanga, and Oriental (only Ituri region).

In order to test H1, we used Geographical Information System tools to measures how close the woman lives to any ASM site (Distance to ASM) measured in degrees. To test H2, we measure how close the woman lives to the nearest mining site controlled by an armed actor (Distance to ASM with presence of armed actor). Further, we generate a dummy variable from DHS indicating whether the woman reports to work outside the home (1) or not (0) (Works outside home). This variable is then interacted with the distance to mining variable, Distance to ASM, to account for whether the combination of working outside the home and residing near ASM sites increases a woman’s risk of sexual violence, as proposed in H3.

In addition we control for conflict intensity and history using a measure of the log-transformed number of battle deaths within a 10km radius of the respondent, using the UCDP Georeferenced Events Dataset (GED) [8]. Further, we include the respondent’s age, education, the husband’s alcohol, household level of wealth and for urban or rural residence as well as regional dummies.
Results

In Table 1, Model 1, we test our first hypothesis, that women living in close proximity to mines are more likely to experience sexual violence. Distance to a mine is negative and significant, thus a woman is systematically more likely to experience both sexual violence by non-partner the closer she lives to an ASM site, which supports H1. Keeping all controls at their median values in Model 1, a woman who lives closer to a mine (10th percentile) has 5 percent points higher risk of experiencing sexual violence by a non-partner than a woman who lives further away from a mine (90th percentile). This means, a location close to a mine with say 10,000 women will see 500 additional women being victims of sexual violence compared to a location further away from ASM activities.

Model 2 tests Hypothesis 2, where we see that the coefficient for the variable Distance to ASM with presence of armed actor is negative, indicating that the further away the respondent lives to an armed actor controlled mine, the less likely she is to experience sexual violence. However, the effect is not statistically significant. A reason for this insignificant finding could be that as the distance to the nearest ASM site with armed actor presence increases, it makes little sense to expect a heightened risk, particularly due to the lack of good roads and infrastructure for travel across distances in Eastern DRC. Hypothesis 2 can therefore be particularly relevant in the nearest areas with armed conflict. As map 3 shows, the two Kivus and Maniema provinces have had high levels of conflict. Therefore, we also run the analysis on a subsample of only the respondents living in these areas (Model 3). Here, we find a highly significant relationship between living closer to ASM sites with presence of armed actors and sexual violence by other than partner. The substantial effect is quite strong. Comparing those living the furthest away from the mine (90th percentile) to those that live the closest (10th percentile) the risk of experiencing SV by a non-partner is almost three times as high.

In Model 4, testing hypothesis 3, we find no significant effect for the interaction between living close to ASM and working outside the home. One reason could be that the measure

Figure 1: Locations of DHS survey cluster points (blue) to the left, and locations of ASM mines (red/white) to the right in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.
working outside the home is too crude to proxy whether the woman actually works in the ASM sector. Another possible interpretation is that a woman in Eastern DRC is not necessarily any safer from sexual violence in her home than outside. Many stories of women being attacked by armed actors in their homes is testament to this.9 With access to better measures of women’s income-generating activities and types of work, future studies might be able to conduct more nuanced tests of the exposure risk depending on whether and how a woman is engaged in work outside the home. We have also run the same tests using a dependent variable measuring sexual violence by partner. We get similar results for Model 1, that the closer to a mine a women lives the more likely she is to experience sexual violence by partner. However, for this dependent variable we do not find that this risk increases when the woman lives closer to a mine that is controlled by an armed group, like we do in Model 3. The results can be found in the appendix.

Further, we also ran the same tests using DHS data from 2007. Here we do not find any significant results for the sexual violence by non-partner. This could suggest that sexual violence has become an increasing problem in the mining areas in Eastern DRC. On the other hand, this can also be a result of an increasing focus on the issues, and thus making it easier for women to report that they have been exposed to sexual violence. Results can be found in the appendix.

Conclusion

The dominant narrative among policy makers and advocacy groups suggests that there is a strong link between natural resource extraction and sexual violence in Eastern DRC. In an attempt to systematically test the relationship between mining and sexual violence, this article presents a quantitative analysis of whether living close to an ASM site increases a woman’s risk of experiencing sexual violence.

The findings indicate that in Eastern DRC, women living close to ASM are more likely to be sexually victimized by both partners and non-partners. At particular risk of sexual violence by someone other than their partner are women in North and South Kivu and Maniema who live close to ASM sites with armed actor presence. Women who report working outside the home are not more subject to sexual violence; nor is this relationship contingent on distance from mining areas. Finally, in South-and North-Kivu and Maniema, our analyses show that women who live closer to ASM sites with the presence of one or more armed groups have a higher risk of experiencing sexual violence by non-partners. Their risk of being abused by their own partners, however, is not affected by living closer to ASM with armed-group presence.

Given this additional statistical evidence presented herein, the need for establishing stronger measures and regulations that counteract the heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence in mining areas is further substantiated. It also calls for increased assistance to women who have been victimized and who might face severe health problems as a result of sexual abuse. However, although mining sites might be sites of great risks for women, they can also contribute to relative economic empowerment. Policy measures need to be continuously sensitive to the fact that ASM constitutes an important livelihood strategy for local women and gives access to various income-generating activities related to the mining industry. Any attempt to prevent violence against women in and near mining sites therefore has to design interventions that can strengthen women’s livelihood and economic empowerment.
Throughout 2018, government officials and security forces carried out widespread repression and serious human rights violations against political opposition leaders and supporters, pro-democracy and human rights activists, journalists, and peaceful protesters. The December 30 elections were marred by widespread irregularities, voter suppression, and violence. More than a million Congolese were unable to vote when voting was postponed until March 2019 in three pro-opposition areas.

In central and eastern Congo, numerous armed groups, and in some cases government security forces, attacked civilians, killing and wounding many. Much of the violence appeared linked to the country’s broader political crisis. The humanitarian situation remained alarming, with 4.5 million people displaced from their homes, and more than 130,000 refugees who fled to neighboring countries. In April, government officials denied any humanitarian crisis and refused to attend an international donor conference to raise US$1.7 billion for emergency assistance to over 13 million people in need in Congo.
Freedom of Expression and Peaceful Assembly

Throughout 2018, government officials and security forces banned peaceful demonstrations; used teargas and in some cases live ammunition to disperse protesters; restricted the movement of opposition leaders; and arbitrarily detained hundreds of pro-democracy and human rights activists, opposition supporters, journalists, peaceful protesters, and others, most of whom were eventually released.

During three separate protests led by the Lay Coordination Committee (CLC) of the Catholic Church in December 2017, and January and February 2018, security forces used excessive force, including teargas and live ammunition, against peaceful protesters within and around Catholic churches in the capital, Kinshasa, and other cities. Security forces killed at least 18 people, including prominent pro-democracy activist Rossy Mukendi. More than 80 people were injured, including many with gunshot wounds.

Catholic Church lay leaders had called for peaceful marches to press Congo’s leaders to respect the church-mediated “New Year’s Eve agreement” signed in late 2016. The agreement called for presidential elections by the end of 2017 and confidence-building measures, including releasing political prisoners, to ease political tensions. These commitments were largely ignored, however, as President Joseph Kabila held on to power through repression and violence.

On April 25, security forces brutally repressed a protest led by the citizens’ movement Lutte pour le Changement (Struggle for Change, LUCHA) in Beni, in eastern Congo, arresting 42 people and injuring four others. On May 1, security forces arrested 27 activists during a LUCHA protest in Goma, in eastern Congo. Leading democracy activist Luc Nkulula died under suspicious circumstances during a fire in his house in Goma on June 9. Fellow activists and others believe he was the victim of a targeted attack.

In July, two journalists and two human rights activists were threatened and went into hiding following the release of a documentary about mass evictions from land claimed by the presidential family in eastern Congo.

In early August, Congolese security forces fired teargas and live ammunition to disperse political opposition supporters, killing at least two people—including a child—and injuring at least seven others with gunshot wounds, during the candidate registration period for presidential elections. Authorities also restricted the movement of opposition leaders, arrested dozens of opposition supporters, and prevented one presidential aspirant, Moïse Katumbi, from entering the country to file his candidacy.

Congolese police arbitrarily arrested nearly 90 pro-democracy activists and injured more than 20 others during peaceful protests on September 3. The protesters had called on the national electoral commission to clean up the voter rolls after an audit by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) found that over 16 percent of those on the lists had been registered without fingerprints, raising concerns about potentially fictitious voters. They also called on the commission to abandon the use of controversial voting machines that were untested in Congo and could potentially be used to tamper with results.

A Congolese court sentenced four members of the Filimbi (“whistle” in Swahili) citizens’ movement to one year in prison in September. Carbone Beni, Grâce Tshunza, Cédric Kalonji, Palmer Kabeya, and Mino Bompomi were arbitrarily arrested or abducted in December 2017 as
they mobilized Kinshasa residents for nationwide protests on December 31, 2017. Kabeya was freed in September. The four others finished serving their sentence on December 25.

In November, authorities arrested and detained for a few days 17 pro-democracy activists in Kinshasa. They also abducted and tortured a LUCHA activist in Goma, who was released after three days.

Government security forces across the country forcibly dispersed opposition campaign rallies ahead of the national elections. From December 9 to 13, security forces killed at least 7 opposition supporters, wounded more than 50 people, and arbitrarily detained scores of others.

Attacks on Civilians by Armed Groups and Government Forces

More than 140 armed groups were active in eastern Congo’s North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, and many continued to attack civilians, including the largely Rwandan Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and allied Congolese Nyatura groups, the Ugandan-led Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Nduma Defense of Congo-Renové (NDC-R), the Mazembe and Yakutumba Mai Mai groups, and several Burundian armed groups. Many of their commanders have been implicated in war crimes, including ethnic massacres, rape, forced recruitment of children, and pillage.

According to the Kivu Security Tracker, which documents violence in eastern Congo, assailants, including state security forces, killed more than 883 civilians and abducted, as well as kidnapped for ransom, nearly 1,400 others in North Kivu and South Kivu in 2018.

In Beni territory, North Kivu province, around 300 civilians were killed in nearly 100 attacks by various armed groups, including the ADF.
In May, unidentified assailants killed a park ranger and kidnapped two British tourists and their Congolese driver in eastern Congo’s Virunga National Park. The park has since been closed for tourism. The tourists and driver were later freed.

Between December 2017 and March 2018, violence intensified in parts of northeastern Congo’s Ituri province, where armed groups launched deadly attacks on villages, killing scores of civilians, raping or mutilating many others, torching hundreds of homes, and displacing an estimated 350,000 people.

Also in northeastern Congo, the Ugandan-led Lord’s Resistance Army continued to kidnap large groups of people and commit other serious abuses.

In December, large-scale ethnic violence broke out in Yumbi, in western Congo’s Mai-Ndombe province, leaving reportedly hundreds dead in a previously peaceful region.

During the December elections, state security forces and armed groups in eastern Congo’s North Kivu province intimidated voters to vote for specific candidates.

**Justice and Accountability**

The trial of Bosco Ntaganda, accused of 13 counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity allegedly committed in northeastern Congo’s Ituri province in 2002 and 2003, continued at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague.

In June, an ICC appeals chamber overturned the war crimes and crimes against humanity convictions against former Congolese Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba for crimes committed in neighboring Central African Republic. In September, the court sentenced Bemba on appeal to 12 months for a related conviction of witness tampering. Interpreting witness tampering as a form of corruption prohibited by the Congolese electoral law for presidential candidates, Congo’s electoral commission later invalidated Bemba’s presidential candidacy in what appears to be a politically motivated decision.

Sylvestre Mudacumura, military commander of the FDLR armed group, remained at large. The ICC issued an arrest warrant against him in 2012 for nine counts of war crimes.

The Congolese trial into the murders of UN investigators Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán and the disappearance of the four Congolese who accompanied them in 2017 in the central Kasai region was ongoing at time of writing. A team of experts mandated by the United Nations secretary-general to support the Congolese investigation had not been granted the access or cooperation needed to effectively support a credible and independent investigation. Human Rights Watch research implicates government officials in the murders.

A UN Human Rights Council-mandated investigation into the broader, large-scale violence in the Kasai region since 2016 found that Congolese security forces and militia committed atrocities amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. In July, the council called on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to dispatch a team of two international human rights experts to monitor and report on the implementation by Congolese authorities of the Kasai investigation’s recommendations.
The trial against Congolese security force members arrested for allegedly using excessive force to quash a protest in Kamanyola, eastern Congo, in September 2017, during which around 40 Burundian refugees were killed, and more than 100 others wounded, had yet to begin at time of writing.

The trial of militia leader Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka, who surrendered to the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo (MONUSCO), began on November 27. Sheka was implicated in numerous atrocities in eastern Congo, and he had been sought on a Congolese arrest warrant since 2011 for crimes against humanity for mass rape.

In July, Kabila promoted two generals, Gabriel Amisi and John Numbi, despite their long involvement in serious human rights abuses. Both generals have also been sanctioned by the United States and the European Union.

Key International Actors

In 2018, the UN Security Council, which visited Kinshasa in October, the UN secretary-general, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the US, the EU, and many individual states called for the electoral calendar to be respected. They emphasized the need for full respect of the New Year’s Eve agreement, including the confidence building measures, and for the elections to be credible and inclusive.

Belgium announced in January 2018 that it was suspending all direct bilateral support to the Congolese government and redirecting its aid to humanitarian and civil society organizations.

Angolan Foreign Minister Manuel Domingos Augusto said in August that Kabila’s decision not to make an unconstitutional bid for a third term was “a big step,” but that more needed to happen “for the electoral process to succeed and achieve the objectives that have been set by the Congolese.” At a SADC summit in Namibia in August, the Namibian president and new SADC chairman, Hage Geingob, said that the crisis in Congo could lead to more refugees fleeing to neighboring countries if it was not resolved.

In December 2017, the US sanctioned Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler, one of Kabila’s close friends and financial associates who “amassed his fortune through hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of opaque and corrupt mining and oil deals” in Congo, as well as several individuals and companies associated with Gertler. In June 2018, the US announced the cancellation, or the denial, of the visas of several Congolese officials, due to their involvement in human rights violations and significant corruption related to the country’s electoral process.

On December 28, the government expelled the EU ambassador, Bart Ouvry, with 48-hours’ notice. This followed EU’s decision on December 10 to renew sanctions against 14 senior Congolese officials, including the ruling coalition’s presidential candidate, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary.
Understanding the DRC’s Presidential Elections

Charged Affairs
Sheila Archambault Helke
May 20, 2019
https://chargedaffairs.org

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a perfect example of the challenge in supporting a faltering democracy while expressing concern over potentially inaccurate election results. The DRC, a vast and ethnically diverse nation, has never had a peaceful transition of power prior to January 2019 and has been in a perpetual state of conflict and political unrest. DRC obtained independence from Belgium in 1960, but this transition was immediately followed by conflicts among different factions in the country, all backed by different sides during the Cold War.

The DRC’s presidential election was originally scheduled for November 2016, after President Joseph Kabila’s second presidential term, but was postponed repeatedly delaying Kabila’s departure. Opposition accused Kabila of “undermining the electoral calendar and refusing to step down.” Kabila took over rule of the DRC in 2001 after his father, former President Laurent Kabila, was assassinated.

This election was the first hope for a peaceful political transition for the DRC and a start to a healing democracy. Unfortunately, the DRC’s presidential election shows that merely holding a democratic election does not make a country a true, healthy democracy.

Kabila finally agreed to new elections after he was pressured by leaders in the United States, Europe and the United Nations. The DRC presidential election was initially due to take place on 23 December 2018, but was then postponed to 30 December, after DRC’s electoral commission cited issues caused by a “fire that destroyed 80% of the voting machines in Kinshasa,” the DRC’s capital and “widespread logistics problems, insecurity and an outbreak of Ebola,” which would have potentially left millions unable to vote.
While pre-election polls indicated that Martin Fayulu was the favorite to replace Kabila, on 10 January, to the surprise of the population, DRC’s electoral commission announced Felix Tshisekedi the winner. Kabila supported another candidate, former interior minister, Emmanuel Shadary. Both internal polling data and independent civil service observers and observers from the Catholic Church propose it was “highly implausible” that Tshisekedi actually won the election. Many observers worried of election fraud.

The National Episcopal Conference of Congo, also known as CENCO, led by the DRC’s Catholic Church, was a key organization observing the elections and a highly trusted institution in Congo. CENCO deployed “1,026 short-term and 40,000 long-term observers to over 75,000 polling stations across the country.” The Catholic Church’s unofficial tallies did not match the electoral commission’s official results and show a different winner.

CENCO has long pushed for the departure of Kabila, pitting itself against the DRC government. The DRC’s election commission accused the Catholic Church of supporting a revolt by claiming a different winner and trying to brainwash the DRC population.

The African Union also expressed “serious doubts” about the election results and asked that DRC suspend its announcement of the final vote counts. Additionally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which is headed by Zambian President Edgar Lungu, called for a recount and proposed that the DRC consider forming a national unity government. The SADC is known for not publicly intervening in member state electoral affairs.

Additional fears of electoral fraud rose after the DRC government ordered total block on internet connections and SMS services after the election as a means of censorship. Speaking to Reuters, a senior adviser to Kabila, said internet and text messaging services “were suspended to preserve public order after ‘fictitious results’ were circulated on social media.”

While organizations both within and outside the DRC expressed concern over the potentially rigged election results, nothing was done to challenge the presidential results. The DRC election shows a great difficulty faced by the international community in both supporting burgeoning democracies and holding faltering democracies accountable. What leverage can we use to hold democracies accountable but still respect sovereignty?

Western countries did little more than voice skepticism and call for fair and accurate results and a peaceful transition, as the Congolese government is known to violently suppress public opposition. Fayulu filed a court challenge demanding a manual recount of the results, but the DRC Constitutional Court ruled that Tshisekedi was in fact the winner and rejected the challenge from Fayulu. This solidified Tshisekedi’s win, and he was sworn in as president on 24 January, the first peaceful transition of power, though marred by suspicion.

While the international community has expressed concern and skepticism over the election results, these election results show the one of the greatest challenges for the international community, holding other countries accountable, while respecting their sovereignty. The international community can demand full transparency during an election, even utilizing sanctions to attempt to financially pressure the government, but international pressure can only go so far. While there are challenges and points of concern in the DRC presidential election, it is important to remember that the election is just the starting point of the democratic transition. The real work is yet to come.
‘Terrifying’ Ebola Epidemic Out of Control in DRC, Say Experts

The Guardian
Sarah Boseley
May 15, 2019
https://www.theguardian.com/

More than 1,600 people infected in North Kivu province since outbreak began in August

An Ebola epidemic in a conflict-riven region of Democratic Republic of Congo is out of control and could become as serious as the outbreak that devastated three countries in west Africa between 2013 and 2016, experts and aid chiefs have warned.

New cases over the past month have increased at the fastest rate since the outbreak began last year, as aid agencies struggle to enact a public health response in areas that have suffered decades of neglect and conflict, with incredibly fragile health systems and regular outbreaks of deadly violence involving armed groups.

“I’m very concerned – as concerned as one can be,” said Jeremy Farrar, the head of the Wellcome Trust, who called for a ceasefire to allow health teams to reach the sick and protect others in the community.

“Whether it gets to the absolute scale of west Africa or not, none of us know, but this is massive in comparison with any other outbreak in the history of Ebola and it is still expanding. It’s remarkable it hasn’t spread more geographically but the numbers are frightening and the fact that they are going up is terrifying.”
A six- to nine-month ceasefire, brokered by the UN, the Red Cross or similar bodies, is vital to stopping the spread, he said. “There was violence in west Africa, in Freetown and Monrovia, but this is on a different scale and it is coming from multiple sources.”

More than 1,600 people have been infected with the Ebola virus in the North Kivu region of DRC and more than 1,000 have died so far – the great majority women and children. At least 10 months since the outbreak began, the numbers are rising steadily and the fatality rate is higher than in previous outbreaks, at about 67%.

Returning from a visit to his teams in the region, David Miliband, the head of the International Rescue Committee, called for a “reset” in the response. “The situation is far more dangerous than the statistic of 1,000 deaths, itself the second largest in history, suggests and the suspension of key services threatens to create a lethal inflection point in the trajectory of the disease,” he said. “The danger is that the number of cases spirals out of control, despite a proven vaccine and treatment.”
IRC teams, who have had three triage units in health centres burned down, have warned that the situation in North Kivu is increasingly volatile and is making progress against the disease impossible. Last week, fighters from the armed Mai-Mai rebel group attacked a treatment centre in Butembo, one of the towns at the centre of the crisis. This week, two patients were killed during an assault on a treatment centre in Katwa, the second such incident in the town this month.

The WHO director general, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has also voiced profound disquiet. In March, Dr Tedros said the Ebola outbreak was contracting and would be over in six months. After a visit at the end of April with the regional director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, he said he was deeply worried about the situation. “Cases are increasing because of violent acts that set us back each time,” he said.

The pair went to Butembo, where a WHO epidemiologist, Dr Richard Mouzoko, was killed by armed men while he and colleagues were working on the Ebola response.

“We are entering a phase where we will need major shifts in the response,” said Dr Tedros. “WHO and partners cannot tackle these challenges without the international community stepping in to fill the sizeable funding gap.” Only half of the currently requested funds have been received, which could lead to WHO and partners rolling back some activities when they are most needed.

Those on the frontline in North Kivu fear no end is in sight. Whitney Elmer, a country director for Mercy Corps, one of the humanitarian NGOs working on preventing the spread, said there had been “a drastic change in the security situation”, which was causing a big rise in the number of cases.

Elmer said there had been about 400 cases over the past month – the highest figure for that time period since the outbreak began – and the number of new cases was increasing at a much higher rate than seen previously.

![More than 1,600 cases of Ebola have been confirmed in the DRC in the nine months since the outbreak began](chart.png)

New confirmed cases, week by week

Guardian graphic. Source: WHO
“We are very concerned,” she said, adding that there was real potential for the outbreak to spread to neighbouring Rwanda or Uganda.

Frontline workers say there has not been enough community involvement and that bringing in armed police and especially cancelling elections in the region have provoked hostility and suspicion. “The overall strategy has been to go full force to do things as quickly as possible,” said Elmer. She added that it was vital that local people and organisations were included in decision-making.

Médecins Sans Frontières, whose volunteer doctors have been at the forefront of every Ebola outbreak, agreed that the failure to engage communities had been a disaster.

“We are very concerned and the signs around the outbreak response are not good right now,” said Kate White, one of its emergency managers.

New cases should be picked up by routine surveillance and testing the contacts of people who fall ill. “But what we see right now is that the majority of confirmed cases are coming through community deaths. It’s a very worrying sign,” she said. “It means communities are not aware or not active participants in the response. People die in their communities and they have the ability to transmit the virus to as many people as possible.”

She said agencies needed to have the local people actively working against Ebola. “Anything else is a band-aid solution.”

WHO recently announced an expansion of the vaccination guidelines and the introduction of a second vaccine to try to protect people. Experimental drugs have also been given to 700 people, although nobody yet knows how successful they have been. But unless it is possible to reach affected communities with vaccines and drugs, the new technologies are useless.

“The tragedy is that we have the technical means to stop Ebola, but until all parties halt attacks on the response, it will be very difficult to end this outbreak,” Dr Tedros tweeted on Friday.
ISIS, After Laying Groundwork, Gains Toehold in Congo

New York Times
Rukmini Callimachi
April 20, 2019
https://www.nytimes.com/

Just over a year ago, Congolese troops found a book written in Arabic on the body of an enemy combatant.

The book was from the Islamic State’s Research and Studies Office, a department of the terrorist group’s now-defunct state in Syria and Iraq that issued doctrinal texts buttressing its brutal worldview. The discovery of the book in the spring of 2018 was among a number of clues indicating that the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, was trying to establish a toehold in the lawless jungles of eastern Congo.

On Thursday, the Islamic State’s news agency claimed the group’s first attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo, stating that its soldiers had assaulted a military barracks in the area of Beni, killing eight people.

The attack took place in a region troubled by violence in a part of the world long outside government control, the kind of terrain that has proved to be fertile ground for ISIS. If the group
succeeds in planting its flag here, it would not only expand its reach into a new part of the continent, but it would also do so far outside the grasp of international forces.

Congolese officials confirmed that an attack on a small military unit had occurred there days earlier, but they said the assailants belonged to the Allied Democratic Forces, a rebel group that originated in neighboring Uganda and is accused of killing hundreds of people over the past three years.

While the Allied Democratic Forces, or A.D.F., is an established rebel group with a decades-long history in the area, documentation collected by the Congo Research Group, an independent nonprofit run by a leading scholar of the country’s successive conflicts, shows that the militants have not only been espousing jihadist ideology, but have also been receiving funds from ISIS operatives.

Laren Poole, a co-author of the Congo Research Group report, said interviews with A.D.F. defectors showed that the rebels had received cash transfers from Waleed Ahmed Zein, a Kenyan national who was identified as an ISIS financial facilitator by the United States Treasury Department.

“We have been able to track the finances, down to bank accounts and receipts showing money moving from Britain, South Africa and Syria via Zein, through Uganda and into A.D.F. hands,” said Mr. Poole, adding, “It’s not a lax connection.”

In a statement, Maj. Karl J. Wiest, a spokesman for the United States Africa Command, said that the group in Congo is considered to have “meaningful ties to the Islamic State.”

Other signs of a link to ISIS can be found in 35 videos that one A.D.F. member posted online starting in 2016.

The footage shows the rebel group’s flag, which includes the so-called seal of Muhammad, the main visual element of the ISIS banner. Interviews with defectors indicate that the flag was seen flying from camps run by the combatants in eastern Congo, Mr. Poole said.

One video shows a man explaining that the group intends to create an Islamic State in Congo and calling on others to join them.

The message appears to be working, according to Mr. Poole, who said the recruitment drive appealed especially to Islamists in the region who could not afford a plane ticket to the Middle East and instead could head to Congo for the equivalent of a $20 bus ticket.

“In the last year, we have debriefed a South African, a Tanzanian, a Kenyan, a Rwandan, a Burundian, a Brit and a South Sudanese,” he said. “That’s a very worrying trend for an area that has been rocked by violence.”

While the evidence points to a concrete connection with the Islamic State, that does not mean the international terrorist group has a viable franchise in Congo. It remains unclear to what extent the A.D.F. is in communication with ISIS, or whether it is also flirting with other jihadist groups, including Al Qaeda.

However, the manner in which the affiliation appears to have been forged fits a pattern.
In many areas where ISIS has developed active chapters — from the coast of Libya, to the deserts of Sinai in Egypt, to safe houses in Bangladesh — it has grafted itself onto existing militant groups.

“ISIS is basically co-opting a group in Congo that has been carrying out atrocities against civilians for some time,” Mr. Poole said.

Among the data points that indicate a link to ISIS in eastern Congo is the claim that the recent attack was carried out under the banner of the “Central Africa Wilayat.” According to the Islamic State’s own literature, the religious empire it calls a caliphate is divided into 35 “wilayats” or provinces, 16 of which are outside Iraq and Syria.

While the recent attack is the first to be claimed for this newly minted province, it isn’t the first time the province has been mentioned.

In one of his rare audio recordings, released in 2018, the ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi made a passing reference to a Central African province, suggesting that the geographic subdivision had existed in the terror group’s own nomenclature as far back as last year.

One of the most tantalizing clues is the discovery of the hard-bound book published by the Islamic State department dedicated to articulating its ideology.

Congolese troops recovered it last year from the corpse of an A.D.F. combatant, Mr. Poole said. Another copy of the same book was discovered by a team of Times reporters in the Iraqi city of Mosul, in a building formerly occupied by the Islamic State’s suicide bomber squad.

First issued in late 2014, the book provides an overview of how the Islamic State is supposed to be run and acts as a primer for those trying to establish a new territory under the group’s aegis, said Cole Bunzel, a research fellow in Islamic law and civilization at Yale Law School.

“The physical aspect is super interesting,” said Caleb Weiss, a research analyst who wrote about the Islamic State’s expansion into Congo for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies’ Long War Journal. “We don’t know if they published the book themselves, or if it was brought there, in which case it had to move through several countries to get to the Democratic Republic of Congo.”
The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country located in Central Africa that is rich in natural resources including copper, gold, silver and petroleum. It has a brutal history of political unrest and violence, leaving millions living in deep poverty and at risk of exploitation. The country struggles with the internal issue of human trafficking, yet many around the globe are unaware that this is a significant problem. Here are some important facts about human trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo and what is being done to combat the problem.

Types of Trafficking and Who It Impacts

Human trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo is not isolated to a particular gender or age group, rather the issue impacts men, women and children of all ages.

Men and boys are often subjected to forced labor and debt bondage. They frequently work in unlicensed mines and are exploited through debt bondage. Many Congolese men and young boys are given cash advances, tools, food and other provisions at high prices by mine owners and expected to work to repay their debts. But more often than not, the prices are so high that miners are forced to continue to work, constantly accumulating more debts, making it nearly impossible to repay.
Women and young children are often forced into prostitution, sex slavery and marriages. According to the U.S. State Department, some women are even coerced into prostitution by family members. The issue of sex slavery for Congolese women is not isolated to the country, rather it extends throughout the continent of Africa and beyond. There are numerous reports that indicate Congolese women and children are trafficked by road to South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, the Middle East and parts of Europe, for the sole purpose of sexual exploitation.

**Trafficking in Person’s Report**

The United States has a Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which is the government’s diplomatic tool to engage foreign governments in the fight to end human trafficking. This report is part of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) that was passed in 2000. Within the TIP Report, the U.S. Department of State places each country into one of three tiers based on each country’s governmental efforts to comply with the “minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking”.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has a Tier 2 Watch List rating, meaning that the government does not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards, but are making efforts to meet the standards. However, because the country has the additional Watch List rating, this means the number of victims is significant and is increasing and there is also a failure to provide evidence of efforts to combat the issue of human trafficking.

**What is Currently Being Done?**

Over the past several years, the Congolese government has taken significant steps to eliminate human trafficking. The government now holds military and police officials accountable if they are found to be complicity involved with sex slavery and other forms of exploitation. The government has also ceased the recruitment of child soldiers through the assistance and implementation of a United Nations supported action plan that works to end the use of children in armed conflict around the globe.

The Free the Slaves program works extensively to end human trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Their efforts are geared towards educating the Congolese on their rights, while also strengthening the community’s resistance to slavery. They also work to improve the knowledge, attitudes and practices of key government officials, as these are individuals who play a large role in eliminating human trafficking in the country.

The program has seen extensive results with nearly 120,000 Congolese Villagers educated, nearly 300 liberated from some form of slavery and more than 150 government officials trained on anti-slavery laws.

**What Else Can Be Done?**

While there has been some progress in the work to end human trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there is still much more that needs to be done. Greater awareness around the globe is necessary for combating the issue. The United Nations Action Plan to end the recruitment of children in armed conflicts utilizes #childrennotsoldiers to raise awareness....
through various social media platforms. The Democratic Republic of Congo also needs to address trafficking crimes committed by individuals other than officials and put forth greater efforts to identify victims, as well as provide victims with necessary health care services.

With greater financial assistance, awareness and support from the United States and various countries around the globe, the Democratic Republic of Congo can be equipped with the necessary tools to ultimately end human trafficking in their country.
The majority of the child soldiers being used in the ongoing conflict in Democratic Republic of Congo are boys who were enlisted by force. But almost a third are girls, and a new report shows that many of them have joined armed groups voluntarily, driven by poverty and a lack of access to education.

Many of the children fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s militia groups were abducted and forced to enlist. But researchers have found that girls are joining the groups voluntarily, motivated by a lack of access to education and a future with no prospects.

Throughout the decades-long conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), children have been abducted and made to serve as soldiers. While most are male, it is estimated over a third are female, used mainly as domestic and sexual servants, but sometimes as fighters. Now the London-based NGO Child Soldiers International (CSI) has released a report showing that
many of the girls in armed groups weren’t enlisted by force. They joined of their own free will – driven by poverty and a lack of access to education.

The NGO interviewed over 200 female former child soldiers following their escape from local militia groups, collectively known as the Mai Mai. The researchers found that many of the girls who had joined by choice cited the burden of school fees as their primary reason. Education was beyond their reach, but life with an armed group would at least offer them food, security and, they thought, better opportunities. “I was pushed out of school for failing to pay the fees, so instead of roaming aimlessly in town, it was better to go and help [the militia] in the bush,” one girl was quoted as saying in CSI’s report.

“Sometimes they join the Mai Mai encouraged by their parents, who think that providing their children to the armed group can protect the family against attacks and looting,” says Sandra Olsson, spokeswoman for CSI. “Although it may sound like a choice, in reality it could be their only option to escape a life of utter poverty or to protect themselves from constant and terrifying attacks on their villages.”

But for all the girls who join, whether voluntarily or by force, the reality is that life under the control of armed groups is one of servitude and abuse. As one of the girls interviewed by CSI put it: “Life in the bush was only suffering.”

The girls said they were used as domestic servants and sex slaves. Many were repeatedly raped, often by different men, and drugged. “I would wake up and find myself naked,” one victim told the researcher. “They gave us drugs so that we would not get tired of all of them using us.”

The girls also described how they were forced to loot goods and then carry the heavy spoils through the bush, for hours and sometimes days. Those who were too weak to carry their pillaged load were killed.

But for many of the girls, escape offered little relief. When they finally make it back home, girls who have been living with the Mai Mai are “often stigmatized and rejected by the community and also experience difficulties in rehabilitation,” says Dede Nkuluba, spokeswoman for Reconfort, a local organization that helps reintegrate former child soldiers.

The assumption that all female child soldiers are used for sex leads to many of them becoming isolated and, as a result, living in poverty. “For the majority of girls we interviewed, we were struck to find out that a major source of distress came from the current stigmatization, if not outright rejection, they faced when they finally returned home, because [in their words], they had ‘known men in the bush,’” says the CSI’s Olsson.

“Some of the girls we talked to even said that they had considered going back because they couldn’t take the pain of being stigmatized and excluded from community life,” she says. Furthermore, advocates believe this stigma could explain why many girls choose to stay in the militias and suffer.

Though it’s difficult to get accurate figures for the number of girls within the Mai Mai, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) estimates that girls make up around 30 to 40 percent of children in armed groups. Between January 2009 and November 2015, out of 8,546 former child soldiers registered by
MONUSCO, only 7 percent were girls. That leaves a disproportionately high number of girls either unaccounted for or still serving as members of the armed groups.

The former female child soldiers who spoke to CSI researchers said, that when they escaped, they left many girls behind. As well as fearing rejection by their communities, girls within the groups are often subjected to stricter security measures than boys. And during demobilization, girls aren’t considered soldiers but “wives” and, in some cases, mothers, so they are often held back, or hidden away, when militia commanders hand over the children in their ranks to child-protection agencies.

Despite their ordeals, many of the girls interviewed by CSI still hold on to dreams of a better life. According to Nkuluba of Reconfort, many female child soldiers find it difficult to re-enter the school system because they are usually too old by the time they manage to escape. But the girls in the CSI study said they were determined to get an education in the hope that it would lead to a positive identity and acceptance by their communities.

One recurring theme in the CSI’s research is the importance of access to education for girls, both in helping those who are trying to reintegrate and for preventing them from joining the Mai Mai in the first place.

“Prevention is rarely prioritized in a situation of ongoing conflict,” says Olsson. “We need long-term interventions to stabilize and pacify communities. Education is an important part of that.”
Chapter 3 Discussion Questions

History

1. In what ways can colonialism be blamed for the current state of affairs in the Congo? In what ways is the Congo’s current state independent of that history?
2. How does Congo’s colonial past and its resulting economic exploitation compare to America’s colonial period?
3. Compare and contrast the treatment of Native Americans to that of the native Congolese during their respective periods of colonialism.
4. University students played a prominent role in the overthrowal of the Mobutu regime. What are some examples of other social movements in which students played a prominent role?
5. What impact did the Rwandan genocide have on the DRC?

Mining, Natural Resources, Technology, & Conflict

1. How has the Congo’s mineral wealth impacted the country’s history? How does it impact the country today?
2. In what ways did the events recounted in the Paradise Papers demonstrate a betrayal of the Congolese people?
3. How can Dodd-Frank be improved to better protect those in danger of being exploited for conflict minerals?
4. In what ways are conflict minerals and sexual violence in the DRC related?

Current Affairs

1. How can the government address the culture of mistrust between the citizens of DRC and its government?
2. Should Western nations have done more to call for free and fair elections in the DRC? How can international actors hold democracies accountable while still respecting a country’s sovereignty?
3. How has the ongoing conflict in the DRC inhibited efforts to stop the spread of Ebola?
4. Why do you think armed groups find it advantageous to attack health centers?
5. How does ISIS’s presence in the DRC complicate conflict responses?
6. Consider the impact human trafficking has had on Congolese citizens. How does this compare to the impact of human trafficking in the US, or in a hub like Charlotte, NC?
7. What factors contribute to girls becoming child soldiers?
Kinshasa, DRC

© GWENN DUBOURTHOUMIEU/JEUNE AFRIQUE

© UNESCO Creative Cities Network
Chapter 4: Congolese Culture

While the DRC has and continues to struggle with conflict, that certainly does not define the nation or its people. Depictions of the DRC as “The Heart of Darkness” promote dangerous misconceptions of the country as a nation with little more to it than savagery and war. We want this section to emphasize that despite their struggles, the Congolese people still make up a thriving and vibrant culture. They design and wear elaborate clothing, they produce beautiful art and music, and many Congolese are heavily involved in sports like soccer and boxing. Some, like the female boxers in the Congo, even use their sport as a way to dismantle traditional gender norms. The DRC should not be defined by conflict – it should be defined by its people and their culture. And Congolese culture is as lively as ever.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. Religion
   “DR Congo – Religion”

B. Environment & Wildlife
   “USAID: DRC Environment”
   “In Congo, a Climb to the Mouth of Hell”
   “The Democratic Republic of Congo Mobilized for the Protection of Endangered Animal Species”

C. Sports
   “The Healing Powers of Football in the DRC”
   “Fight Like a Girl: The Female Boxers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo”

D. Music & Art
   “Music of Congo”
   “Exploring a Century of Art from Congo”

E. Fashion & Textiles
   “A Great African Kingdom Tells its History in Fabulous Royal Clothes”
   “The Fashion Cult Cut from a Different Cloth”
   “DRC Artisans, Merchants Turn Distinctive Traditional Cloth into a Banner of Contemporary Fashion”

F. Discussion Questions
The U.S. government estimates the total population is 75.5 million (July 2013 estimate). Approximately 50 percent is Roman Catholic, 35 percent Protestant (including evangelicals), 5 percent Kimbanguist (a Christian Congolese church), and 5 percent Muslim. Religious groups with small populations include Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Greek Orthodox Christians, and Jews. The remainder of the population generally adheres to indigenous religious beliefs.

Most religious groups are scattered throughout the country and are widely represented in cities and large towns. Muslims mainly reside in the provinces of Maniema, Orientale, Kasai Occidental, Bandundu, and Kinshasa. Although present throughout the country, Kimbanguists are primarily concentrated in Kinshasa and Bas-Congo.

The relationship between church and state has varied over time. In the colonial era, the mostly Catholic Belgian colonial administrators cooperated closely with Catholic missionaries, while Protestant missionaries were sometimes critical of colonial practices, as in the international
movement against the Red Rubber Regime, which was organized mostly by Protestant churches. Under Mobutu, both the ECC (which includes all mainline Protestant groups) and the Kimbanguists were closely allied with the government, while the Catholics were often at odds with the regime. The Catholic Church provided essential support to the pro-democracy movement in the 1990s, with a bishop serving as president of the National Conference. Both Catholic and Protestant leaders played important roles in promoting peace during Congo’s various armed conflicts.

Most of the non-Christians adhere to either traditional religions or syncretic sects. Traditional religions include concepts such as monotheism, animism, vitalism, spirit and ancestor worship, witchcraft and sorcery, and vary widely among ethnic groups; none is formalized. The syncretic sects often merge Christianity with traditional beliefs and rituals.

The most popular of these sects, Kimbanguism, was seen as a threat to the colonial regime and was banned by the Belgians. The Kimbanguist religion is a Protestant sect founded by Simon Kimbangu (1889-1951), who was educated by the Baptist Mission Society. In 1921 he experienced visions, and thenceforth conducted faith healing and Bible preaching. His basic precepts were condemnation of fetishism, lascivious dancing, polygamy, smoking, and drinking. The Kimbanguist's thirst for literacy stemmed from Kimbangu's command that they read the Bible.

In 1921, after having had visions in Kinshasa, he sought to escape them by returning to Nkamba. However, he not only continued to have visions but experienced miracles as well. Finally, after having refused to obey the instructions he was receiving during these visions, he was warned in a dream that if he did not do as he was told and begin to heal the sick his own soul would be reclaimed. Propelled by this imperative Kimbangu began his faith healing and preaching from the Bible.

The news of his religious activities spread rapidly to throughout the Bas Zaire region, and people began to flock Nkamba at the rate of some 4,000 to 5,000 per day. First converts began to follow him and then Catholics also Protestant joined the movement. The roads and pathways to Nkamba were crowded with the sick hoping to be cured, and churches as far people sought to see and hear away as Kinshasa were emptied as the new prophet. Kimbangu was arrested, tried by a military court and sentenced to death. King Albert of Belgium intervened and commuted the sentence to one of life imprisonment. Simon Kimbangu was imprisoned in Lubumbashi and in 1951, thirty years later, died there.

Kimbanguism, officially "the Church of Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu," now claims about 3 million members, primarily among the Bakongo tribe in the provinces of Bas-Congo and Kinshasa. In 1969, it became the first independent African church admitted to the World Council of Churches.

A much more radical product of the synthesis of African and Christian elements is the Kitawala movement, which appeared in Katanga Province (now Shaba Region) during the 1920s. Born of the black American missionary activity in South Africa of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses), the movement converted miners who then spread the movement northward from their South African base into the Katangan copper belt.
Watch Tower missionaries preached racial equality, equal pay for equal work, the imminent arrival of God's kingdom, and the impending struggle for the restitution of Africa to Africans. Although anticolonial in ideology, the movement had no concrete strategy of revolution, which, however, did not prevent the state from cracking down on it. As with Kimbanguism, the state attempted to repress Kitawala by relegating its members to isolated rural regions. Ironically, this strategy once again simply served to speed the spread of the movement as exiled adherents converted their rural neighbors.

Over time the movement became more Africanized and more radical, slowly transforming itself from a branch of the worldwide Watch Tower Church into what has been termed a form of peasant political consciousness. Theological messages varied from place to place, but a common core of beliefs included the struggle against sorcery, the purification of society, and the existence of a black God. Kitawala denounced all forms of authority as the work of Satan, including taxes, forced labor, and most other coercive elements of colonial rule.
The Central African rainforest is home to some of the world’s most spectacular wildlife, including gorillas, chimpanzees and forest elephants. The planet’s second largest tropical rainforest ecosystem, it also plays an important role in slowing down global climate change because the forest actually absorbs greenhouse gases, which keeps them from being released into the atmosphere. Almost 80 million people depend on the forest for their livelihoods from farming, hunting and harvesting of wild fruits and vegetables, edible oils, timber and other essential products.

USAID’s efforts have helped maintain the ecological integrity of the Congo Basin’s tropical rainforest, which is still largely intact while other tropical forests around the world are being severely depleted. USAID’s Central Africa Program for the Environment protects biodiversity, landscapes and livelihoods in seven Central African countries of Central Africa. For example, USAID helps governments and communities plan how the forests and land will be used so that they are conserved for future generations, while at the same time providing products such as medicines, wildlife, wood and other products that can improve living standards today. These plans have put forest management in the hands of local communities—which has been shown to be among the most effective ways to slow deforestation.

USAID’s satellite remote sensing technology helps communities, governments and scientists to better understand the changes caused by human activities and can determine areas where more protection is needed. This technology, along with forest patrols, has enabled governments in the region to better enforce industrial logging regulations. USAID’s satellite technology is free and can be accessed by anyone, making timely information available to a wide variety of users.
In Congo, a Climb to the Mouth of Hell

The Washington Post
Henry Wismayer
October 9, 2014
https://www.washingtonpost.com/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

The summit of Mount Nyiragongo, which towers above the thick jungles of Virunga National Park at about 11,000 feet. A long hike to the rim of the crater reveals a fiery lava lake deep inside. (© LuAnne Cadd/Virunga National Park)

Surprisingly, I had a cellphone signal. For one giddy instant, I actually considered calling home: “Hi Mum, you’ll never guess where I am. . .” and then thought better of it.

For if there was one thing sure to put Mother’s nose out of joint, one thing guaranteed to catapult her into a torment of parental panic, it would be the revelation that her son was standing on top of a hyperactive volcano in the Congo.

Plundered by its Belgian colonial masters, bedeviled by 50 years of kleptocratic misrule, theater of the deadliest conflict since World War II, the Congo has languished pretty low on Mummy’s vicarious holiday wish list for the past hundred years. Only a couple of days before, I hadn’t been sure whether to go . . . .

“But the Hutu militia are 200 kilometers north,” Kennedy had insisted with a broad salesman’s grin. “They won’t come near the border, because that would give Rwanda the excuse to cross into DRC to crush them.”
This, I imagine, was how most people had been arriving at their decision to defy the travel advisories. You’re sitting in Gisenyi, perhaps a little underwhelmed by the sanitized Rwandan resort town on the shores of Lake Kivu. You know that Goma, the gateway to the Congo, is a mile down the road. Then one of Gisenyi’s émigré travel agents — a little grasping, but full of Congolese charm — gets wind of your interest and tries to offer some reassurance.

“The route is safe.” Kennedy leaned forward insistently, and I sorely wanted to believe him, for there was one glowing reason to cross the border. Yesterday evening, as yet another power cut snuffed out the lights of Goma, I had seen that reason casting an orange incandescence in the northern sky.

At 11,382 feet, Mount Nyiragongo — the mountain Kennedy was cajoling me to climb — isn’t the largest of the eight volcanoes, known collectively as the Virungas, that stud the border between Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. But deep within its crater there broods a special treasure: the largest and most accessible lava lake on Earth, one of the most spectacular natural marvels in all Africa.

War and peace

I had arrived in the region in summer 2011, during a fortunate window. Since mid-1994, when the Hutu-Tutsi divisions that precipitated the Rwandan genocide spilled over into the Congolese interior, the province of North Kivu has been at the epicenter of Central Africa’s Great War, the desultory and shamefully underreported conflict that has claimed an estimated 5 million lives and displaced millions more. But I’d reached Gisenyi during a lull in the fighting; curious tourists were crossing the border daily.

The peace was to be short-lived. Within months of my climb, the paraffin-soaked touch-paper would ignite again, as a ragtag band of militiamen calling themselves M23 swept into the Virungas from the north to launch an offensive against the combined forces of the Congo’s national army and MONUC, the UN’s 17,000-strong peacekeeping mission.

As North Kivu’s latest chapter of misery unfolded and fighting raged anew, Virunga National Park, the 3,000-square-mile tract of verdant highlands, equatorial forest and Rift Valley lakes in which Nyiragongo resides, was closed indefinitely. But following a truce between insurgents and security forces in November 2013, the park — Africa’s oldest protected area, established in 1925 — finally reopened to visitors in early 2014.

This rare piece of good news came at what appears to be a critical juncture in the battle to save the region from threats both at home and abroad. In April, a feature-length documentary about the park, “Virunga,” premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York, to widespread acclaim. Ahead of its global release on Nov. 7, an accompanying campaign to halt the activities of the British oil company Soco, whose alleged explorations around Lake Edward are exposed in the
film, has been gathering momentum. As celebrities and conservationists pile on to highlight the park’s vulnerability and importance, this vital cradle of biodiversity, home to a quarter of the world’s mountain gorillas, is finally getting the attention it deserves.

And with the embattled park unlocking its gates to visitors, the mists have once again begun to lift on Nyiragongo and its extraordinary lava lake. Although the trail to the volcano’s summit remains closed at the time of writing, park officials are hopeful that it, too, will open before the end of the year.

That footpath, Kennedy had explained to me, starts 12 miles north of Goma, along a heavily U.N.-fortified road. I would be in, up, down and out within 36 hours — hardly penetrating the Heart of Darkness, just taking a quick foray along a peripheral capillary.

My mind was made up.

**To the summit**

At 11 a.m. the next day, I stood at the Kibati Ranger-Post accompanied by four more victims of Kennedy’s reassuring smile: two fearless young women from London and a pair of perspiring Finnish physicists, who looked like they were anticipating a rabid, tourist-slaying horde to jump out of the bushes at any moment.

The post marks Virunga National Park’s southern boundary. From here, it runs north for 120 miles, towards the snow-clad peaks of the high Rwenzori Mountains. But the sign at the post still bore the original name: “Parc National Albert” – yellow capitals on a metal disk peppered with bullet holes, collateral damage in a military engagement, or perhaps strafed by a drunk with an AK-47: disconcerting, either way.

After some formalities and a security briefing from a soldier, most memorable for the jovial injunction “Don’t fall in the crater!,” we were introduced to Mwendo, a park ranger in threadbare camo-green fatigues, an antique Kalashnikov that he would later introduce as “Anastasie” slung over his shoulder. Mwendo’s job was to take tourists to the summit and back again and to provide the post chief down here with hourly updates of our progress and welfare. His easy manner belied the constant danger his cadre faces from the rebels who still inhabit the park’s northern reaches. Outnumbered and often outgunned, more than 130 of his colleagues have been killed in the line of duty over the past decade. With an economy of words that would become characteristic over the coming hours, he led the way into the trees.

It was midafternoon before we got a first glimpse of the summit we were aiming for, although by then we were already halfway up its eastern flank. For the past three hours we’d slogged uphill through tangles of cloud forest. But it was only now that the haze was lifting, giving context to the ground beneath our feet. Looking back the way we’d come, verdant flatlands ran east toward the rolling hills of Rwanda, while far to the north, the symmetrical cone of Karisimbi, tallest of the Virungas, stood regal beneath a bowler hat of cloud. Our target’s aspect was more foreboding: Up ahead, Nyiragongo’s great dome had broken through, its silhouette all bulbous and misshapen by the push and pull of forces underground. In local mythology, Karisimbi’s summit represents Heaven. Nyiragongo is Hell.
From what we’d seen, the reputation seemed well deserved. Quite apart from the region’s continued instability, Africa’s most active volcano conceals a violence of its own, and its latest major eruption had defined our trip so far. The tsunamis of craggy rock that loomed behind the makeshift homesteads along the Goma road, the chink of ankle-twisting rocks under our boots, the charred stumps of incinerated trees: all were remnants of the molten river that had spewed from the mountain in January 2002 before hurtling toward Goma, engulfing 14,000 homes and forcing 350,000 people to flee the city. Someday, volcanologists have warned, Nyiragongo will blow again, potentially transforming Goma into a modern Pompeii.

At “le troisieme repose,” a clearing at about 9,000 feet where we stopped to rest our aching legs, Mwendo pointed out fists of rock lodged high in the branches of charcoaled trees, spat out when that 2002 eruption broke. More ominous still was the steam that could be seen billowing up from moss-rimmed fissures, not 60 feet from where we were sitting. As recent events on Japan’s Mount Ontake tragically reaffirmed, climbing an active volcano gives much reason for pause.

Most people think the lava came out the top,” remarked porter Yassin, relishing the opportunity to drop the burlap wash-bag full of tents and sleeping bags that he had been balancing on his head for several uphill hours. “Actually, it came out from here. It took five days to reach Goma. From here on up we are safe!”

Minimally reassured, we plowed on through the final band of jungle, until the trees gave way to a bleaker environment of giant lobelia and musenze bushes. With a thick mist reducing visibility to a few yards, and our trekking group strung out in various stages of exhaustion by the steepening slope, it came almost as a surprise when the trail finally petered out, and a multilingual sign bade us bienvenue, karibuni and welcome to the summit of Nyiragongo.
Liquid fire

It could hardly be described as a welcoming place. Up here, the mountain is desolate — a cold and lifeless jumble of carnelian-colored lava terminating at the serrated lip of the crater rim. At first, all we got was a hint of what lay within. Standing at the brink of a great void inundated with swirling cloud, we had only the heat on our faces and the sulphurous smell to go by. That, and the sound — a churning, roiling monotone — of something very restless down below.

Only at the onset of dusk — with our three dome tents all perched on an exposed rock-shelf and a charcoal fire burning to counter the plummeting temperature — was Nyiragongo’s secret finally revealed. At Mwendo’s beckoning, we gathered along the razorback, around a foot-high crucifix crudely welded from iron bars, raised in memory of “Le Chinois,” a Chinese man who fell — some say threw himself — into the crater in 2007 and didn’t come out alive. The view beyond his humble memorial showed that he didn’t have a prayer either way.

Beyond the rim, the ground fell away sheer and hellish, down to a point where some seams of bright orange had begun to slice through the fog. The picture sharpened as the light dwindled. By nightfall we were looking at the lava lake in full cry: a giant disk of molten rock 800 feet wide, surfaced with a mosaic of crusty plates that you could watch harden and tremble under the mighty pressure before imploding back into the roiling cauldron. The whole scene seemed to breathe, each exhalation spitting out coronas of liquid fire that faded from orange to black as they cooled. It was a window into the forces that shaped the world, our inanimate planet at its most alive.

For hours, everyone stood there dumbstruck, listening to the lake’s purr in between the thunder-cracks of an electrical storm breaking somewhere far away. Even our Congolese companions seemed cowed, the familiarity of many expeditions having done little to quash inherited superstitions. While we balanced cameras on rocky nooks to take photos through the dark, they stood and pondered a crucible of evil spirits, each molten belch a symbol of an ancestor’s torment.

“We say that people who are evil in life must come here when they die,” Mwendo murmured. “The angrier the spirits become, the more the volcano burns.” And this evening, it was burning bright, for this fabled mountain has had lots of ammunition in the Congo, where bad spirits have been particularly busy.

It wasn’t the sort of place where sleep came easy, and by lunch the next day our foray on Nyiragongo was done. A whistle-stop trip indeed, but I was glad to get down, if only to re-validate my insurance policy and for the sake of my mum’s sanity.

Although true stability remains elusive, few but the most intrepid are about to make a habit of holidaying in the Congo. But later that afternoon, clinking bottles of Primus beer with new friends on Kivu’s lakeshore, I couldn’t help wondering, as people have since the days of Stanley and Livingstone, what other marvels this great green blank on the tourist map might hold.
The Democratic Republic of Congo Mobilized for the Protection of Endangered Animal Species

*UNESCO*
October 11, 2018
https://whc.unesco.org/

Every year some 300,000 elephants are killed by poachers in Africa for their tusks, and approximately 41 tons of pangolin scales were seized in Africa (in 2017), that is the equivalent of over 34,000 animals.

On Sunday, 30 September 2018, the Democratic Republic of Congo organized a ceremony, in the presidential park of N’sele, 50 km from the centre of Kinshasa, to set free five grey parrots and burn 1,050 kg of raw ivory as well as 1,197 kg of giant pangolin scales. This symbolic event (similar to the one organized by Kenya in April 2016) was attended by the President of the Republic, members of the Government, the parliament, judicial authorities, ambassadors accredited in DRC, conservation NGOs, civil society, the management body CITES, universities and the Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature (ICCN).

This symbolic action is spectacular, because the situation requires urgent action. This year, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) reported that in 2012 alone, only 1% of the seized pangolins came from Africa; this figure has risen to 80 to 90% over the past two years, and the main countries of origin and transit are now Nigeria, Cameroon, DRC and Uganda. At the same time, ivory trafficking in central Africa has become international in scope due to the strengthening of international criminal networks, especially those of Chinese origin (source: WWF, 2017).

Trade involving these species is prohibited by international law, but legal holdouts still remain, and for Africa “this strong act demonstrates the will of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to make a sustainable commitment to the effective protection of emblematic African animal species, many protected in World Heritage Sites” affirmed Dr Mechtild Rössler, Director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre.
The Healing Powers of Football in the DRC

Al Jazeera
Didem Tali
February 14, 2017
https://www.aljazeera.com/
Photo Credit: Didem Tali/Al Jazeera
Modified for length by Echo Foundation Interns

Goma, DRC - The decades-long civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) divided communities that had previously coexisted peacefully.

But millions of young Congolese still have a lot in common, particularly their love for football. Football is the most popular sport in the DRC and at the grassroots-level interest in it keeps growing. The sport brings together children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, encouraging tolerance, reconciliation and understanding between communities and building a sense of solidarity. As a cheap and accessible form of entertainment, it also offers a momentary escape from the realities of life in a warzone.

Children warm up before playing football on a cloudy day. Their coach, Amani Demata, a 37-year-old father of three, has been unemployed for years. He says he's volunteering as a coach to give back to his community and help children to remain stimulated. 'We have a lot of problems here in Congo,' he says. '[But] when people watch or play football, they forget about all their problems.'

A statue of a football in the centre of the war-torn city of Goma in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. During the 1990s and 2000s, at the height of the civil war, Goma was the closest major city to the bushes where rebel fighters were based.
In recent decades, rebels have taken control of the city and recruited thousands of child soldiers. Demata is aware of the vulnerability of many of the children and believes football offers a solution. '[Children in Goma] don't have after-school activities, holidays or courses,' he says. 'A lot of them don't even go to school. They don't have anything to do. A person might become dangerous if they don't have anything to do. But when children come here and play football, they don't go to the bush. They learn to play instead of fight.'

Claire Kabongo, 36 (at the back, wearing a red football shirt), shows some tricks to her students on a dusty football field. She has been teaching football to children and adults for the past eight years. In the past few years, she says, she has seen positive developments on the field. 'In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of girl students,' Kabongo explains. 'People are starting to understand that there's absolutely no reason why girls shouldn't play football.'

Camille is a 14-year-old football enthusiast and one of Kabongo's students. She says people initially found it odd for a girl to play football, but that more and more friends have since joined her.
Children play football at the Bulengo internally displaced people's camp in eastern Congo. Since 2009, more than three million people have been displaced from their homes. Many reside in IDP camps on the outskirts of Goma. Football is often one of the only activities that can give the children living in these IDP camps something resembling a normal childhood.

Two boys practise warm-up techniques taught by their coach, Demata. Some of the children, such as the boy on the right, do not have matching shoes to wear. 'For these children, playing football isn't like playing football in the West,' Demata explains. 'Here, they don't have the equipment, proper nutrition or football fields. Most of them don't even have footballs or shoes. They play it purely out of passion and joy. Football gives them hope for the future and a [sense of normality] in their daily lives.'

Demata's students, many of whom aren't enrolled in school, run before starting football practice.
Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is a city that lives and breathes sport. Militia violence in the countryside and the corruption of the political system seem distant problems when ducking errant footballs and dodging boxers sparring in the roads of “Kin La Belle”.

It is a largely patriarchal country, with women responsible for domestic work and absent from most positions of power. DRC has also been riven by years of bloodshed, with widespread sexual assault with rape frequently used as an instrument of terrorism and war.

There are 22 female boxers training in DRC. In June, I met and photographed four of them and asked them to speak about their personal journeys.

“I started boxing where I was born in Mbuji, Mayi province. In 2010, I joined the national Congolese boxing team … when I was younger I was always playing with boys and preferred their games. I introduced myself to the small boxing club in my area and learned. I won some fights in the province, which led to me being recommended to the national team. I’m hoping they must have said that we’ve found the best fighter in the country. I was very surprised, my coach got the money for a ticket to Kinshasa for me. There wasn’t even a real ring for fights in my home province, terrible conditions. When the ticket came, I agreed to come here and start training.

When I came to Kinshasa I was fighting well and I won a prize in my first year. That meant I was selected to fight in Cameroon. I won the prize there too!

I still don’t feel any different, I still take it easy. My priority is my daughter and making sure she is loved. I have a five-year-old called Princess. She loves seeing me train and comes to watch me

The Guardian
Hugh Kinsella Cunningham
July 14, 2017
https://www.theguardian.com/us
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns
spar. I can see it makes her happy because she screams and sings: “Mama, bomaye.” I feel like Muhammad Ali with that behind me. Sure, it helps against my adversary too.

(Bomaye translated from the local Lingala means “finish him, knock him down” and is notorious due to its widespread use when Muhammad Ali fought in Kinshasa in 1974)

Speaking of Ali, he is a huge inspiration. Kind of an unseen mentor. He’s a great boxer and I try to learn from his shaking legs and quick technique. Like him, I want to get to the next level and win. I don’t have a job, but I know if I focus I will be known all over the world. It hasn’t been easy – there are far too many difficulties. I’ve moved from far to be here, to train with the federation. It’s a struggle to feed my daughter; it’s a struggle to pay for transport to get to training and it’s hard to buy sports clothing and gear.

I may have won prizes but that doesn’t mean I win real money or get to be well-off. I don’t feel like a champion and maybe I don’t look like one either. My sport doesn’t feed me or pay to send my girl to school. Maybe when I’m famous.

Miki Ndaya shows her boxing medals. Photo: Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

It’s strange, everyone thinks of Muhammad Ali in the Congo but what made me want to box was footage of Mike Tyson fighting. I loved him when I was younger and will definitely be as big as him. I fight with his style. If you watched me fight in the ring you’d think it was him, you wouldn’t know if it was Jorbelle or not! The big motivation for me is becoming a better person than I am today. I know with hard training that things will be better one day and I’ll be known all over the world.

Boxing is like my job, I don’t have another. I can’t be an employee to someone. I don’t have a job, but it’s not important to me as I am so focused on what I want to do in sport. I don’t have a husband or a child, my mother and grandmother are my family, there’s nothing to hold me back!

“In this sport I feel equal to the boys, I am not afraid of anything. Here it feels like gender never comes into sport.”

It doesn’t really matter who you are when you are being punched. I’ve been boxing since 2010 and have won provincial championships and the champion of Kinshasa competition twice – last year in 2016 and again this year. It’s the African championship in Brazzaville late June and I’m
set on winning my category there. I want gold prizes, and the best get to travel to Germany for the international competition in December.

My wish is to find a sponsor or maybe some kind of management. I am the only middleweight girl in the country. When I’ve seen boxers from other countries while at competitions, its clear they get great training and I think they are well supported. Here in Congo we are not. Nice conditions for training mean better results. Our training conditions are not comfortable. I am a champion, but I feel very unaided: the state of our facilities and the money that funds us doesn’t reflect our potential and talent here.

Safi Nadege Lukambo, 21 Photo: Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

I’ve been boxing for five years. No one suggested it or encouraged me but I dreamed of doing it and found the strength. There are only 22 girls who box here, we have to work extra hard. Only eight of us will be selected for participation in the pan-African championships and big competitions. It’s difficult, but if you have the will you can do anything.

I won my first prize last year. That felt amazing and made me believe in myself. Although I was expecting more and the reward was purely symbolic. I think here in Congo we have a problem with priorities: doing the sport doesn’t feel professional, I can’t hope to do well, even if I win titles. I feel such passion for boxing and do it for the love of the sport, to have something that means the world to me. I know I have the potential to be known internationally.

But Kinshasa is hard place and I see a confusing future for myself. I don’t want to go on to coach. For now, I want to win some titles – as many as I can. But I will have to get married. That’s the future I have to have.

Marcella Sakobi, 22 Photo: Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

Boxing is my passion. I wish to become a world champion. I fell into it by accident. I was doing law studies and running for exercise, and I started going running with a boxing club. I saw I was testing them at running so I thought I’d go to their training as well.

“People think female boxers are wasting time, that girls are only good for cooking, going to bed with and making children.”
At first it was very hard, but the first boxing gala I went to watch inspired me and made me think it was possible for me to be as good. I had a great coach at the club but was the only girl so felt pressure. Coach Nkele showed me my potential and told me I could be great. Another coach saw me sparring with the boys and recommended me to the national federation.

I was really afraid when I climbed on stage for my first real fight because I had just four months of training. It was 2014 when I won a fight for the first time, I then won a champion of Kinshasa prize, which meant I had to beat three fighters from different communes in the city.

I know it’s possible now for me to aim higher and win some gold medals internationally. If I win an African prize then I will be respected and known … I’d like to fight outside Congo because honestly I think we look like amateurs. We don’t have the proper clothes to train, it’s not like other places where things are taken for granted. I have to train outside in the street. My coach is sacrificing his personal money to buy me gloves and punching bags. That money could go to his family but he has spent it on me because the government only funds football here. We are really poor in the city and that brings it home for me. I really don’t like training outside every morning with people watching.

People think female boxers here are wasting their time, that girls are only good for cooking, going to bed with and making children. I know I’m not wasting my time, my near future is in boxing. I have brains and skills – I don’t want a husband yet. Not everyone has the talent and drive I have.

Even so, I know it isn’t forever – when I won a Kinshasa prize I won $10. Such a small reward for so much work … boxing for money really isn’t a concept here. Eventually I will have to marry someone for support.
Music of Congo

Congo: Heart Of Danceness

The Congolese rumba was a musical form that hit a nerve throughout Africa and had a bigger cumulative effect on Western dance floors than any other African music.

There are two countries called Congo—The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Republic of the Congo. While both capital cities have been involved in the musical developments, it is the capital of the DRC, Kinshasa, that has provided most of the Congolese superstars. Kinshasa was Africa’s undisputed musical heart, pumping out and endless flow of dance music and great bands. Each generation brought its own style, but all played music known in the West as rumba or soukous.

Rumba Roots

Afro-Cuban rumba stormed West and Central African before and after World War II. It was quickly reappropriated by the Congolese who adapted the piano part for the guitar. Unlike Ghanaian highlife, Congolese music was less influenced by European taste and in many ways more African.

The forefathers of Congolese music include Feruzi, often credited with popularizing the rumba in the 1930s. The cross-border popularity of Congolese music was boosted by a number of practical factors. It was 'non-tribal', using the interethnic trading language, Lingala. The guitar style was an amalgam of influences from Central and West Africa. Finally, postwar Belgian Congo was booming and traders were taking advantage of the commercial potential including the sale of
records. Early Congolese labels released a deluge of 78rpm recordings and in the early 1940s Radio Congo Belge started African music broadcasts.

The Belle Époque

The music scene really came alive in 1953 with the inauguration of African Jazz, the first full-time recording and performing orchestra. Three years later, 'Franco' Luambo Makiadi and colleagues formed OK Jazz. African Jazz created an international-sounding fusion whereas OK Jazz was rootsier and drew on traditional folklore rhythms and techniques. African Jazz, featuring guitarist Nicholas 'Dr Nico' Kasanda, ensured musical immortality with the 1960 release of 'Independance Cha Cha', which celebrated the end of colonial rule.

The 1950s and 60s saw constant movement of musicians between the Belgian and French colonies and a mood of optimism gave the region its good-time reputation. Hundreds of dance bands formed following independence in 1960, including the group Afrisa.

Riding the New Wave

In the 1970s student groups, like Thu Zahina, started a new stream of pop music, picking up on the Western rock-group format. The new music was raw and energetic, with interactive guitars and almost no horns. It took elements from shanty-town music and wordplay, bringing an extra vitality to the music.

It was the group Zaïko Langa Langa that lead the way for the whole post-independence generation. Unlike other bands, Zaïko was not the personal property of one leader. It was a group of over twenty musicians. Other New Wave groups appeared in the 1970s, featuring a rough, sweaty feel while the singers compensated with honey-toned vocals.

Soukous really entered international markets during the 1980s when musicians began recording in Europe. Four Stars was an early success, although OK Jazz and Afrisa were still thriving and releasing international albums.

During the mid-1980s, Mbilia Bel joined Afrisa and became one of Africa’s first female superstars. Women artists were able to experiment with European-style ballads while the men had to stick to dance formulas. More recently, Tshala Mwana has found fame as the queen of mutuashi, a funk-folk rhythm of the Baluba.

Kinshasa in the 1990s

Overall, the Kinshasa music scene was suffering on account of socio-political upheavals in the 1990s. However, a showcase event in 1993 demonstrated that the music had not been silenced. A few subsequent festivals helped keep the momentum, but further upheavals in the mid- to late-1990s set Congolese music back.

New Directions

In the absence of a vibrant music scene, many stars turned to religion. Other artists reverted to folklore, starting the neo-folklore music in 1989 beginning with Swede Swede. Other musicians unplugged and started the acoustic revival. Now, Congolese musicians perform for their own constituents, marking its move out of the limelight and transformation into an underground artform.
“Yes One Must Think,” a painting by Chéri Samba, depicts President Obama, Patrice Lumumba, and Nelson Mandela. It’s part of an exhibition at the Cartier Foundation in Paris. André Morin

PARIS — The art practically leaps off the walls. A striking painting of President Obama, Nelson Mandela and Patrice Lumumba, the Congolese leader who was assassinated in 1961. Luscious black-and-white photographs of 1950s nightlife in Léopoldville, now Kinshasa. Whimsical watercolors from the 1930s.

These are among 350 works by 41 artists in “Beauté Congo,” an electric, eye-opening survey of art from Congo from 1926-2015 at the Cartier Foundation here that offers a window into a dynamic art scene not often showcased in Western museums.
“We wanted to create a narrative that reintroduces these exceptional artists into the history of art,” said André Magnin, a boisterous Frenchman who curated the show. He has traveled to Congo for decades, cultivating relationships with some of the artists featured as well as buying work on behalf of a major collector. “We wanted to show the broader public exceptional works from a continent where the television only presents dark, disastrous images of war and illness,” he added.

Mr. Magnin said the survey was intended as a “political and historical” gesture that sought to disprove the common misconception that art in Africa had skipped several generations from the traditional works of the past to those made after many African countries became independent of their European colonizers. (Belgian colonial rule in Congo ended in 1960.) Although much of this show is dedicated to contemporary artists like Chéri Samba, who painted the image of world leaders, the earliest works here have rarely been shown in such numbers, and the exhibition makes a strong case for the continuity of rich artistic production over the last century.

“Beauté Congo,” which runs through mid-November, begins in the 1920s, when the husband-and-wife painters Albert and Antoinette Lubaki and the artist known as Djilatendo moved from decorating traditional huts to creating works on paper at the request of a Belgian colonial administrator. The Lubakis’ watercolors, often of animals or leaves, fall somewhere between realism and fantasy, while Djilatendo’s geometric patterns hover between traditionalism and modernism. The show fills all of the exhibition space at the foundation, which is housed in a glass box designed by Jean Nouvel.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, work by the Lubakis was shown in important museums and galleries in Europe. Djilatendo was represented in an exhibition in Brussels along with Magritte. But after 1935 and a fight between curators, they stopped producing and were eventually lost to history. Mr. Magnin said he went in search of their work after learning about it in a book he stumbled upon in 1989 in Zaire, as the country was then called. (It is now the Democratic Republic of Congo.)

“Beauté Congo” also showcases the artists who participated between 1946 and 1954 in an academy “for popular indigenous art,” as the catalog puts it, started by a former French navy officer and artist, Pierre Romain-Desfossés. They include vibrant, naturalistic underwater scenes of fish and of birds in trees from the 1950s by the artist known as Bela, who worked as a night guard for Romain-Desfossés before taking up painting, which he did with his fingertips, without a brush.
In the 1950s, the photographer Jean Depara, born in 1928, captured a moment in Léopoldville, where rumba was all the rage and ladies of the night wore cocktail dresses. His images, in rich silver gelatin prints, recall those by the Malian photographers Seydou Keïta and Malick Sidibé, but unlike Mali, Congo isn’t a Muslim country, and its night life is racier.

Various works in the show are dedicated to the “Rumble in the Jungle,” the politically charged 1974 boxing match in Kinshasa in which Muhammad Ali defeated George Foreman, a moment of black pride in a newly liberated country. These include photos and a colorful painting by Moke, who worked in the popular style and died in 2001. Steve Bandoma, born in 1981, revisits the match in his 2014 “Cassius Clay” series, done in papier collé with ink. “I try to go against the stereotypes of African artists,” Mr. Bandoma said at the exhibition opening. “I define myself as an artist, not an African artist.”

Today, Moke’s cousin Monsengo Shula, 55, a self-described autodidact, works in the popular vein, but with an “Afrofuturist” twist. The exhibition features his 2014 painting “Sooner or Later the World Will Change,” of African astronauts in outer space, with an African statue at the center of their satellite.

Also on view are colorful futuristic cityscape sculptures, architectural models gone wild, by the artist Bodys Isek Kingelez, (“Phantom City,” 1996) and Rigobert Nimi (“The City of Stars,” 2006), who uses found material and castoff electronics. Born in 1965, Mr. Nimi lives in Kinshasa without electricity, Mr. Magnin said. At the show’s opening, Mr. Nimi and other artists in the show spoke of the challenges they face. “For an artist to become a celebrity, he has to go to Europe,” Mr. Nimi said.

Congo’s current government has come under fire by human rights groups for its repression of dissent, and most of the works in the exhibition shy from direct political confrontation. Mr. Samba, one of Congo’s best-known artists, veers into the political with a work depicting a child soldier with the words “I am for peace, that is why I like weapons.”
“Beauté Congo” has received positive reviews in France since it opened on July 11, but there has also been some criticism. Pascale Obolo, a filmmaker and the editor of Afrikadaa, a cultural journal, found fault with the “very neocolonial and paternalistic” attitude of Mr. Magnin and others who bring African art into European museums. “We’re in a world of globalization,” she said. “We don’t need France or Belgium in order to show art from Africa.”

An untitled watercolor by Albert Lubaki (circa 1929). Credit Fabrice Gousset/Cornette de Saint Cyr, Paris

Some questioned why the only woman included in the exhibition was Antoinette Lubaki, from the 1930s, and why, for instance, the show did not include the prizewinning artist Michèle Magema, born in 1977, whose work has been shown widely in Europe. “I’m sure they exist,” Mr. Magnin said of female artists. “Unfortunately I haven’t met them.”

Others questioned the possible commercial implications of the show, since Mr. Magnin acquired work by some of the artists featured here in building up the holdings of Jean Pigozzi, a businessman, with what Mr. Magnin said was the largest collection of African contemporary art in the world, with 12,000 works.


Hervé Chandès, the director of the Cartier Foundation, said he wasn’t concerned. “If André hadn’t been there, I couldn’t have done the exhibition,” he said. “I needed someone with the knowledge of the artistic life of Congo.”

Back at the exhibition opening, some of the artists thanked Mr. Magnin for championing them. “He helped me a lot after he said, ‘Find your style,’ ” said the artist J P Mika, standing by one of his paintings, which also features Mr. Obama and Mr. Mandela. In this one, each man is split in half, depicted simultaneously as his younger and older self. Mr. Shula, who painted the African astronauts, said he hoped being included in the show would drive up prices for his work. “Of course,” he said.

Nearby were rich color photographs from the 2011 series “A View,” by Kiripi Katembo, born in 1979. They show images of Kinshasa reflected in puddles. A world turned upside down, saturated with grit and color and love.
A Great African Kingdom Tells Its History in Fabulous Royal Clothes

NPR
Tim McDonnel
October 20, 2018
https://www.npr.org

What can an old piece of cloth tell us about the rise and fall of a kingdom? Quite a lot, if you know how to read it.

That's the premise behind a new exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art titled "Kuba: Fabric of an Empire." It features an array of captivating patterned textiles from the Kuba Kingdom, which between the 17th and early 20th centuries was one of Africa's largest and most powerful societies, controlling trade in ivory and rubber in what is today the southeastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Kuba were renowned for their artistry, and today any museum of African art in the U.S. or Europe is likely to display Kuba sculpture, masks, beadwork or especially textiles, which were commissioned by royalty and worn or displayed for ceremonial occasions. The textiles are made of woven and dyed raffia palm fronds and feature hypnotic geometric designs mostly in shades of black and tan.

In some, the designs are stitched; in others, serpentine cutouts are appliquéd onto a raffia backing. Some are 20 feet long and meant to be worn as a wrapped unisex skirt; others are 2-foot-square panels meant to be hung on display behind a royal throne.

The designs themselves likely didn't carry a literal symbolic meaning but were instead products of the creative invention of the artists, mostly women, who created them and whose names have been lost to time, travel and the DRC's troubled colonial and modern history. But they tell a story about how the Kuba's leaders asserted themselves in a changing world, says Kevin Tervala, the museum's associate curator of African art, who organized the exhibition.

Tervala wanted to arrange the textiles chronologically and then compare them to the historical record. But as is often the case with African art that was removed from the continent during the colonial era, the provenance of each piece — the date and location of its origin and the name of
its maker — is murky or nonexistent. So he sent samples of the textiles to a lab in New Zealand for carbon dating analysis. The method is imperfect: Carbon dating can have a margin of error of up to a hundred years, which is no big deal if you're dating a fossil but problematic when the item is no more than a couple hundred years old. Still, Tervala was able to make an informed guess about the order in which the pieces were produced.

What he found was that the oldest pieces tended to be the simplest, often a single color with a subtle design scarcely visible from more than a few feet away. The oldest piece in the collection, which Tervala dates to the mid-1700s, is a faded blood red, with a faint border of repeating triangles.

Another old piece, a skirt, is cream-colored with a smattering of L-shaped appliqués. As time goes on, the designs become busier, and the colors dial up their contrast. Tervala’s personal favorite piece, which he dates to the early 1900s, is an explosion of popping black-and-white angles arrayed in an off-kilter grid.

This evolution of design is closely linked to how Kuba elites projected and even attained, political power, Tervala suggests. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, ivory made the Kuba kings fantastically rich, and they invested their wealth in bespoke ceremonial wardrobes that broadcast their wealth to their subjects and to other elites. Kuba royal succession was not always patrilineal but was instead a perpetual heated jockeying for power reminiscent of "Game of Thrones."

Royal ceremonies and parties sometimes had the feel of a runway showdown, with elites competing to see whose patterns were most unique and impressive, Tervala says. Designs needed to scream and to be heard from a distance. They were engineered to capture the eye and not allow it to rest. The best designs were reserved for the king; more quotidian patterns filtered down to the masses. Tervala argues that the need to publicly and aggressively assert power drove textile design, especially as, in the mid-to-late 1800s, the kings began to reckon with a new threat: Belgian colonizers scrambling for rubber.
"The designs become bolder at moments when visualizing power and visualizing authority become more important," Tervala says. "As the economy changes and power erodes [because of Belgian colonial pressure], the pomp and circumstance gets boosted up. That's when you see Kuba elites really doubling down on pattern and visibility and boldness."

The Kuba Kingdom's wealth allowed it to resist colonization longer than other parts of the Belgian Congo, where King Leopold II's mad rush for rubber resulted in the brutal murder of up to ten million Congolese, according to Adam Hochschild's seminal history *King Leopold's Ghost*.

But just before the turn of the 20th century, as the king's iron fist was replaced by the more bureaucratic administration of the Belgian state, the Kuba kings gradually opened their doors and allowed freer trade with Europe.

Kuba textiles have been hot commodities ever since. They were displayed at one of the first major exhibitions of African art in Europe, in Brussels in the late 1800s, and at the Brooklyn Museum in 1923. The French painter Henri Matisse kept some in his studio and said he would often stare at them "waiting for something to come to me from the mystery of their instinctive geometry." His 1947 paper cut-out *Les Velours* reportedly drew on Kuba appliqué. Kuba textiles even appeared in episodes of *Grey's Anatomy* and *Frasier* as archetypes of African fine art.

Market demand also drove Kuba artists to take on bigger and bolder designs, especially after the DRC gained its independence in 1960, says Elisabeth Cameron, an art historian and Kuba specialist at the University of California-Santa Cruz.

"Kuba artists were definitely savvy in how they created designs and the impact those designs had on their audiences, whether that audience be the Kuba peoples themselves or colonial officials who witnessed the Kuba courts and performances or in published photographs that appeared throughout Europe and the USA," she says. "The visibility of bold designs is important in reinforcing the political power that was slowly disappearing. It's exciting to see a new take on Kuba textiles that acknowledges that the Kuba as a people were not passive in the face of colonization — not victims."

Artists in the DRC's Kasai province still produce textiles based on popular historic designs. But well-preserved historic Kuba textiles like those in the exhibition are increasingly rare, Tervala says, because the raffia material is prone to disintegration, especially in the DRC's tropical and savanna climates.

Those on display have survived in part because, as expensive ceremonial costumes, they were worn infrequently and taken well care of. And although the patterns themselves were aggressively unique, in some ways the story they tell is familiar.

"Fashion is always linked to status and authority in some way," Tervala says. "This is a Kuba spin on a universal tale."
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (CNN) - Sewage-lined streets, crumbling concrete homes and jagged sheets of metal are in stark contrast to the formally dressed man standing proudly in the middle of it all.

His name is Daniel Etienne. He grimaces into a Cuban cigar and happily sports two pairs of designer sunglasses; one straddling his eyes, the other tucked into his suit. He is a loyal and unapologetic member of "Les Sapeurs."

In this Kinshasa neighborhood, eight of them strut the congested streets, decked out in a wide-array of name brands; from Gucci and Christian Dior to G-Star and Yohji Yamamoto. Three-piece suits, shiny black leather shoes and flashy accessories are all part of an eccentric dress code -- and demeanor to match.

"I could use that money to help with the war that is happening in the East but [they're] so expensive it might hurt people's feelings," says Papa Griffes, of his pricey threads.

He describes himself as the "supreme commander of Les Sapeurs" or "Sap" for short. While he wouldn't admit to the actual cost, some Saps boast of spending $5,000 on a single suit. But in a country with one of the highest poverty levels in the world, how is a trend like this even possible or accepted?

Part of the performance put on by Sapeurs is showmanship, smoke and mirrors. Papa Griffes is actually a shoemaker and designer by trade so he stitches up and repairs each member's look.
His crew dresses up together just once a week, meeting first at Griffes's shoe-repair shack in the parking lot of a local bar before stepping out. It's also typical for Sapeurs to trade their expensive clothes with each other to keep up an appearance of affluence.

Still, the Sapeur following has cultural significance beyond the facade of fabric. Born out of gradual economic improvements leading up to independence, both the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and its confusingly named neighbor, the Republic of the Congo, broke free of Belgium's and France's colonial grip respectively in 1960.

The capitals of Kinshasa and Brazzaville on opposing sides of the Congo River became centers for a new African francophone elite, flying to Paris and returning to show off sophisticated garments.

For the first time in the modern era, the Congolese were empowered after decades of brutality and economic subjugation enforced by foreigners. Papa Wemba, the famous singer credited with popularizing the Sapeur look with his group Viva La Musica, says inspiration partly came from his parents who took great pride in dressing up on Sundays back in the '60s, "always well put together, always looking very smart."

Things changed in the DRC shortly after independence, when Joseph Mabutu assumed power, renamed the country Zaire and implemented a strict non-Western dress code.

Papa Wemba wanted to challenging the status quo -- not vocally, but visually. So he devised the acronym SAPE, roughly translated from French to mean "the Society of Atmosphere-setters and Elegant People." By dressing up his band in the SAPE style, the adoring Congolese crowds soon followed suit -- literally. Since then, Sapeur swagger and the freedom of expression it represents have attracted legions of followers in central Africa and beyond.

By now they've earned an increasingly visible status in popular culture; Italian photographer Daniele Tamagni profiled them in his book "Gentlemen of Bacongo," The Wall Street Journal anointed them "the most unlikely fashionistas." They pop up in music videos and in the book "History of the Congo," the Saps are included in great detail. They are an important part of the Congolese story.

Papa Wemba invited CNN to one of his musical performances in Kinshasa being attended by Papa Griffes and company and it became obvious how serious this movement is today. A dapperly dressed Sapeur from a competing clique danced with a woman in front of Papa Griffes and afterward flung open his cape -- yes, cape -- kicking-off a fashion face-off.

What followed were multiple poses on the dance floor as each Sapeur defended his reputation. Labels were revealed, heads flung high and jackets swung around. In a country torn apart by colonialism, corruption, civil war and poverty, these men have found something refreshing in which they can take great pride.

They've also devised a sort-of entertaining conflict resolution that requires buttons instead of bullets, belts instead of bombs. In a very real way, we could all learn something from these special Congolese standouts: honor history, keep conflict resolution peaceful and never tell anyone how much you really paid for your fancy clothes.
**DRC Artisans, Merchants Turn Distinctive Traditional Cloth into a Banner of Contemporary Fashion**

From *Global Press Journal*
Esther Nsapu
April 20, 2015
https://globalpressjournal.com

African designers are using kitenge, a commonly worn fabric, in fresh, inviting ways. The trend is raising the popularity of locally produced garments, offsetting a preference for European fashion. Photo Courtesy of Kivu Nuru


The beautiful chaos of kitenge, a thick wax cotton fabric common in East Africa, is a common sight in markets and outside small kiosks and shops here. Many women wear *pagne*, a traditional garment made by wrapping five yards of kitenge.

But in Sumuni Mapendo’s shop, Kivu Nuru, kitenge designs hail a modern fashion revival for the traditional fabric.

Kitenge-wrapped shoes for men and women line the tables. Kitenge jewelry and hats are stacked everywhere. Kitenge blazers with modern lines and innovative handbags fill the shop.

Congolese people have long been fashion-conscious, says Mapendo, 31. But when she opened her business, people were surprised that she was using kitenge in her modern designs.

Traditionally, European-style fashions have been more popular, she says. But in recent years, locals have regained their pride in kitenge.

“Some people are surprised to see how my shop has grown and the progress in my work,” she says.

Mapendo acquired her love of artistic crafts growing up in Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province. When she was a young girl, people told her she had a peculiar way of making jewelry, she says. When she began sewing, people said the same.
Soon, people began asking her to make similar designs for them.

“Crafts have opened many horizons for me,” she says.

Mapendo has used her success to provide a platform for other local artisans who are using traditional arts in innovative ways. In March 2014, she opened a gallery attached to her shop. Today, painters, designers, sculptors, jewelers and leather workers showcase their designs at Kivu Nuru.

“We aim to give space to local craftsmen – to promote their works, their creativity, through exhibitions with a view to exposing the talents of Goma (CQ) craftsmen to the public,” Mapendo says.

The shop’s name expresses Mapendo’s desire to showcase fresh creations. It means “Light of Kivu,” a reference to the region surrounding Lake Kivu. (Goma is the capital of the province of North Kivu.)

Kivu Nuru is the first shop in Goma to sell modern fashions made with kitenge. Together with local artisans, the shop owner encourages young people to promote Congolese culture rather than European fashion.

DRC, a former Belgian colony, is heavily influenced by European culture. Since gaining independence in 1960, the nation has continued to interact with the West via Christian missionary work and international aid.

Constant exposure to Western media also gives Congolese a taste for Western fashion. Young people here have long imitated international television stars, filmmakers and musicians, says Jean Bahani Wakishuba, head of the North Kivu office of the Division of Arts and Culture.

“They wanted to dress like them,” he says. “But recently, the people of Goma have understood the need to give value to the local culture.” She says Kivu Nuru supports this trend.

Congolese people have long been fashion-conscious. Young men who associate with a movement called La SAPE, which stands for La Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes (“the Society of Ambiance-Makers and Elegant People”), wear dapper suits and other fancy European-style clothing.

Like La SAPE members, called sapeurs, Congolese people strive to look their best, despite living in extreme poverty, Mapendo says. It’s not uncommon, she says, for people to spend a significant portion of their income on fashion, despite living in small metal shacks or struggling to find consistent employment.

The price difference between local and imported fashions can be dramatic. A simple cotton, button-down shirt imported from the United States or Europe can cost as much as $100 here. Shirts made from kitenge can cost as little as a few U.S. dollars, the primary currency here. Still, Congolese tend to prefer European fashions that convey status, Mapendo says.

But slowly, designers like Mapendo are helping to change the preference for European fashions. Mapendo’s customers say she is taking kitenge-based fashion to the next level.

Kali Elavia says the kitenge fashions he finds at Kivu Nuru are courageous.
Emilie Vumilia says she has never seen another clothing shop like Mapendo’s.

“The designs she is producing reflect the beauty of our African culture,” she says.

The artisans who work in Kivu Nuru say Mapendo’s vision enables them to earn a living doing what they love.

Seamstress Rachel Binwa says sewing innovative kitenge garments is a dream come true.

“Mapendo encourages us to express ourselves through our artwork,” Binwa says. “It’s contributing to our visibility as artists.”

However, some visitors to the shop say they would never pay designer prices for kitenge, no matter how attractive the design.

“I would rather buy an imported bag,” says Jeanne Maombi, an economics student in Goma. “To buy this would be wasting money.”

Mapendo says she has heard that reaction before. Nonetheless, the shop is becoming more popular.

The shop has yet to become especially profitable, she says. Some weeks, she only clears 18,000 francs ($19) after paying the staff, the other artisans and other expenses.

Mapendo is heartened to see that the shop is busy throughout the day. Still, she wishes she had more buyers and fewer browsers.

“Sometimes 10 people per day come through just to satisfy their eyes,” she says.

Koko Nepo, a locally famous designer who studied at Institut Supérieur de l’Art et Métier (“Higher Institute of Arts and Crafts”) encourages people to shop locally.

“Imported clothes are ready to wear, unlike those made by craftsmen and designers using local fabrics, which take time,” she says.

Nepo says she is thrilled to see more local people wearing modern kitenge-inspired clothing, carrying kitenge handbags and wearing kitenge-covered shoes.

“It’s so great to see this local style becoming popular, as opposed to imported products that are often very un-unique,” she says.

Mapendo says she is inspired by the confidence Nepo and others have put in her designs.

“Frankly speaking, I love arts,” she says. “Through my art, I now have a name in Goma. Though I do not earn much at all from my art yet, and some people do not believe in my passion, I do.”

Mapendo dreams of someday selling her kitenge clothing and designs on the international market.

“If more people had our beautiful local products, it could give value to the Congolese culture and to better our image,” Mapendo says.
Chapter 4 Discussion Questions

Culture
1. What aspect of Congolese culture do you find most fascinating? Why?
2. In what ways do you believe western culture has impacted Congolese culture? Compare and contrast with other former colonies.
3. How can one have pride in their country while also realizing the need for social change?

Religion
1. Contrast the separation of church and state in the US with the role of the church in the DRC. Do you think this influence is helpful or harmful?
2. Religion continues to be a central aspect of Congolese culture and even plays a role in its governance. Are there contradictions between the devotion to religious ideals and the widespread conflict and inequality that exists in the DRC?

Environment & Wildlife
1. Should forest management be in the hands of local communities or a larger institution/government? Why?
2. In the face of conflict, should the Congolese government be devoting time and resources to preventing the illegal trafficking of endangered species?

Sports
1. How does soccer offer an escape from the surrounding conflict in the DRC?
2. In what ways do the struggles of female boxers in the DRC reflect the established gender roles in their society? In what ways do their stories they defy them?

Music & Art
1. What do you think has spurred the recent resurgence of art and music in the DRC?
2. How has Congolese music changed throughout its tumultuous history?
3. Why do curators think it is so important to gain international recognition of Congolese art and give it its proper role in art history?
4. Female artists were not included in the art show in the New York Times article because the curator has never met one of them. Why do you think that is?

Fashion & Textiles
1. Why do you think the Congolese use dress as one of the most prominent ways to express themselves? What are the different style trends expressing?
2. What aspects of the Le SAPE culture indicate a movement toward peace?
3. How has the production of Kitenge cloth empowered women in the DRC?
Chapter 5: The DRC & The International Community

Across the globe, prominent international actors such as the UN to small, independent NGOs have worked to aid the Congolese people and bring peace to the DRC. While some initiatives have been successful, others are in need of improvement. And, despite these efforts, the situation still remains dire enough that some Congolese are forced to flee. Fortunately, many communities around the world have welcomed them with open arms and provided them a safe new home.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. US/DRC Bilateral Relations
   “US Relations with Democratic Republic of Congo”
   “Op-Ed: In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Foreign Aid Matters”
   “How Washington Got on Board with Congo’s Rigged Election”

B. Mexico City Policy (Global Gag Rule) & Women’s Health
   A Note From The Echo Foundation
   “Factsheet: The Global Gag Rule and Human Rights”
   “Trump’s ‘Global Gag Rule on Steroids’ Threatens Congolese Clinics”
C. International Actors & The DRC
   “Responsibility to Protect”
   “Protection of Civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A New Approach”
   “Congo: Why UN Peacebuilders Have a Credibility Problem”
   “Congo to EU: Mind Your Own Business”
   “Democratic Republic of Congo” (ICC)
   “Unitaid: About Us & Democratic Republic of the Congo”
   “Democratic Republic of Congo: International Organizations”

D. International Responses to Sexual Violence in the DRC
   “High Level Dialogue in Combatting Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo”
   “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Fact Sheet”

E. Human Geography as it Relates to the DRC
   “Democratic Republic of Congo: A Migration History Marked by Crises and Restrictions”
   “Fact Sheet: U.S. Refugee Resettlement”
   “In Burundi, a Mass Wedding Celebration for DRC Refugees”
   “Portland, Maine, Turns ‘Crisis’ to ‘Opportunity’ for African Migrants”
   “Belgium Elects Nation’s First Black Mayor, a Congolese Immigrant”
   “Belgium’s Africa Museum Had a Racist Image, Can It Change That?”

F. Discussion Questions
U.S. Relations with Democratic Republic of the Congo

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of African Affairs
October 10, 2018
https://www.state.gov/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

U.S.-Democratic Republic of the Congo Relations

The United States established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.) in 1960, following its independence from Belgium. Post-independence, the country saw a mix of unrest, rebellion, secession movements, a long dictatorship, armed conflict, and foreign intervention, including on the D.R.C.’s territory. The D.R.C.’s last protracted conflict, commonly known as Africa’s World War (1998-2003), involved nine African countries and resulted in a death toll of an estimated 5 million people in the D.R.C. from the fighting and ensuing humanitarian crisis. In January 2001, Laurent Kabila, who led the rebel movement that overthrew the 32-year regime of Mobuto Sese Seko in 1997, was assassinated and his son, Joseph Kabila, was named head of state. The D.R.C. held multiparty elections in 2006 and 2011. The presidential elections, which should have been held in 2016, are now scheduled to take place in December 2018. These elections would result in the D.R.C.’s first democratic transfer of power in the country’s history, as President Kabila is prohibited from running for a third term under the D.R.C.’s constitution.

Regional stability and security is dependent on durable peace in the D.R.C., as it is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, borders nine other nations, and is home to substantial natural resource wealth, including an estimated $25 trillion in mineral reserves. The country faces challenges, including inadequate infrastructure and human resources; the government’s inability to project authority across the sizable country; rampant corruption; a limited capacity to raise and manage revenues; outbreaks of Ebola, cholera, polio, and other health concerns; and presence of numerous armed groups, particularly in eastern D.R.C.. The United Nations has maintained a peacekeeping presence in the D.R.C. for 23 of the 58 years since the country’s independence in 1960. The mandate for the UN’s current peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO, was renewed in March 2018 with a troop ceiling of 16,215 military personnel.

U.S. relations with the D.R.C. are deep and longstanding. U.S. foreign policy in the D.R.C. is focused on supporting the country to uphold democratic processes and effective governance, promoting stability and peace within the country and with its neighbors, improving the rule of law to strengthen state authority across its territory, and developing institutions that are accountable and responsive to the basic needs of its citizens. The State Department’s Bureau of African Affairs leads U.S. engagement aimed at supporting a peaceful democratic transfer of power following the December 2018 elections and addressing the root causes of conflict and instability in the region. The United States is the D.R.C.’s largest bilateral donor and the single largest financial contributor to MONUSCO.
U.S. Assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The D.R.C.’s development and humanitarian needs are vast. The U.S. government is the largest bilateral donor in the D.R.C., with approximately $500 million in development and humanitarian programming per year. U.S. assistance supports a more stable, democratic nation through improving the capacity and governance of core national-level institutions, creating economic opportunities, responding to urgent humanitarian needs, and addressing the root causes of conflict. The United States has also served as a lead donor to the recent Ebola outbreaks in the D.R.C..

The United States remains the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to the people of the D.R.C., providing more than $87 million for the D.R.C. and Congolese refugees since FY 2017, representing approximately 50 percent of all humanitarian assistance in the D.R.C.. USAID provides life-saving food, safe drinking water, emergency medical care, critical nutrition services, improved hygiene and sanitation conditions, psychosocial services and other support for vulnerable children, as well as essential household supplies for families who were forced to flee violence and leave everything behind. The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) supports countrywide protection programs and multi-sector assistance, including gender-based violence prevention and response, targeting refugees and conflict victims in the D.R.C.. U.S. government FY 2017 development assistance to D.R.C. totaled $317 million. USAID development assistance integrates programs in education, stabilization, democracy and governance, health, social protection, and economic growth. The United States also works to promote Security Sector Reform (SSR), with an emphasis on professionalization of the armed forces, human rights, and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) prevention, as well as improving the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of the civilian justice system.

Bilateral Economic Relations

Leading U.S. exports to the D.R.C. include pharmaceutical products, poultry, machinery, used clothing, and wheat. The top U.S. import from the D.R.C. is copper, accounting for over 50% of D.R.C.’s total exports to the United States. Other leading D.R.C. exports to the United States include antiques, diamonds, coffee and coffee beans, propane, and tantalum. The two countries have signed a bilateral investment treaty. The United States also has signed a trade and investment framework agreement with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, of which the D.R.C. is a member.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo’s Membership in International Organizations

The D.R.C. and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization.
Op-Ed: In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Foreign Aid Matters

Los Angeles Times
Ben Affleck and Adam Hochschild
https://www.latimes.com/
June 19, 2019

No territory on Earth has been plundered so long and severely as the land that is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. The first thefts were of human beings. For hundreds of years, slave traders from the Arab and Islamic world raided what’s now the eastern part of the country, bordering several of Africa’s great lakes. From its west, the Portuguese shipped huge numbers of captive Africans to Brazil.

In the late 1800s, Europeans began eyeing other riches. First came ivory, tremendously valued because it could be carved into everything from statuettes to piano keys to false teeth. By the century’s end, the territory was the privately owned colony of King Leopold II of Belgium, and one of the world’s largest sources of rubber. The king made a fortune estimated at well over $1 billion in today’s money by turning much of the male population into forced laborers to gather the rubber that grew wild in the rainforest.
After 1908, when it became the Belgian Congo, the colony’s economy diversified, but its wealth largely flowed to the outside world. Foreign corporations reaped immense profits by exploiting copper, palm oil, cotton and uranium — which went, among other places, into the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. In recent years, the cornucopia of exported Congolese raw materials has included gold, diamonds, manganese, timber and coltan — used in cellphone computer chips. But Congo’s resource wealth hasn’t benefited the more than 70 million ordinary citizens, most of whom live on less than $2 a day.

The seldom-acknowledged debt that the United States owes Congo is greatest for the period since 1960, when the country gained independence. Together with Belgium, the U.S. successfully plotted the assassination the next year of the first democratically chosen prime minister, Patrice Lumumba. Both Washington and Brussels saw him as too determined to make his country economically independent. Then, from his seizure of power in 1965 onward, the United States heavily supported the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. By the time he was overthrown in 1997, Mobutu had bilked his country of even more money than King Leopold — helped by more than $1 billion in U.S. aid. Many of the troubled nation’s current problems have their roots in Mobutu’s 32 years of kleptocracy. *Our country owes a debt to both Congo and the entire continent, and we need to keep paying it.*

Knowing that background, it’s encouraging today to find Americans involved with Congo in far more constructive ways. A few weeks ago, for instance, the two of us visited a coffee farm on an island in Lake Kivu. The prized Arabica strain of coffee has long been grown in the fertile highlands of East Africa, but Congolese production had fallen dramatically due to plant disease and two decades of intermittent warfare. However, on this particular land, owned by families who have lived on the island for generations, coffee is back. While supplies last, you may be able to find it at your local Starbucks.

Production on the farm was restarted with the help of both private American technical expertise and the U.S. government’s foreign aid agency, the United States Agency for International Development. President Trump has proposed deep cuts to foreign aid, questioning whether it’s worth the investment. But in Congo, we saw evidence over and over of the positive impact U.S. foreign assistance is making. Thankfully, for years this has been well understood by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress who continue to believe in, and fund, USAID.

In shantytowns ringing the hills above the dusty lakeside metropolis of Bukavu, we visited a chain of neighborhood clinics, each paired with a small concrete building surrounded by faucets. In many countries such as Congo, both medical care and water are dangerously unreliable. Faith healers, charlatans and people with little training hang out signs for clinics. And the drinking water sold to the poor from tanker trucks is often drawn from polluted streams and treated inadequately, if at all. Now, a group called Asili, a local partner of the Minneapolis-based American Refugee Committee, has created a well-thought-out alternative system, again with help from USAID.
Each clinic is staffed by carefully vetted doctors and nurses. And the faucets next door to the clinic get their water from a mountain spring — filtered and delivered to different neighborhoods through an 18-mile system of pipelines. Since no electrical grid reaches most of these locations, the clinics are solar-powered, and the water pipeline and filtration system, thanks to mountainous terrain, is run by gravity. Users pay a small charge for being seen at the clinic and for water. But the whole system is set up so that, after each clinic and water distribution point has been built, it is entirely self-supporting.

Despite having a weak and sometimes dysfunctional government, Congo is a hotbed of civil society activism. A particularly impressive group of younger people is called LUCHA — Lutte pour le Changement, or Fight for Change. Lobbying for the guarantees of fair elections and social justice in the country’s constitution, the group uses strictly nonviolent tactics, including sit-ins and a telephone tree that mobilizes people to flood a provincial governor’s cellphone with calls when someone is unjustly arrested.

News from Africa generally focuses on war and tragedy. But positive change is happening, too, some of it aided by the work of individual Americans, our ongoing foreign aid program and private U.S.-based organizations. Our country owes a debt to both Congo and the entire continent, and we need to keep paying it.

Director, actor and two-time Academy Award winner Ben Affleck is co-founder of the Eastern Congo Initiative, which supports Congolese-led economic and social development projects. Adam Hochschild is the author of “King Leopold’s Ghost” and other books.
How Washington Got on Board with Congo’s Rigged Election

Foreign Policy
Robbie Gramer and Jefcoate O’Donnell
February 1, 2019
https://foreignpolicy.com
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

When the results of the presidential election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were announced last month in favor of the candidate Felix Tshisekedi, officials from government agencies across Washington worked together to craft a U.S. response. Independent groups in Congo had detected widespread fraud in the vote, so U.S. officials agreed to condemn the process as rigged and vowed to hold those involved responsible.

Supporters of Fayulu hold up a coffin with “Goodbye Felix” written on it in French as they protest in Kinshasa on Jan. 21. (John Wessels/AFP/Getty Images)

But the statement that came out of the U.S. State Department on Jan. 23 caught some of the policymakers who worked on the region by surprise. Instead of condemning the election as “deeply flawed and troubling,” following the language of the original draft, the United States endorsed the results—with minor caveats—and offered praise for the election. By doing so, the Trump administration went further than any of its Western counterparts or international organizations in embracing Tshisekedi, who many in Congo believe cut a corrupt deal with outgoing President Joseph Kabila to gain power.

Supporters of Felix Tshisekedi, the newly elected president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, hold his portrait and cheer during his inauguration in Kinshasa on Jan. 24. (John Wessels/AFP/Getty Images)
The changes in the wording were dictated by a small group of diplomats, sources told Foreign Policy. They made some senior decision-makers in Washington “livid,” according to one senior U.S. official. To them, the new statement undercut the legitimacy of the United States in one of Africa’s largest and most influential countries just as it was undertaking its first peaceful transition of power in six decades.

The story of how the United States came to offer a full-throated endorsement of Congo’s election is being told here for the first time, based on interviews with nearly a dozen current and former U.S. officials and experts briefed on the internal deliberations. It sheds light on the chaotic policymaking process that has become emblematic of the Trump administration.

The State Department officials who reworked the statement apparently worried that rejecting the election results might have sparked more civil strife and violence in Congo and viewed a peaceful transition of power, however fraudulent, as the least bad option.

“Everyone knew the elections were crap, but … they thought they had to accept [Tshisekedi], [that] they had no other recourse here,” one former U.S. official briefed on the internal deliberations said.

Africa experts and Congolese civil society leaders reacted to the U.S. position with a mixture of anger and resignation, with some seeing it as a betrayal of long-standing U.S. commitments to advance democracy in Congo—an issue that Nikki Haley, the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, pushed before stepping down in late 2018.

“The U.S. did a lot to get Congo where it got in terms of elections, but then the U.S. at the last minute washed its hands of it,” said Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, a Congolese professor and nonresident senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “We are in a very bad situation, where we have ended up with the old illegitimate guard still in place, and Tshisekedi does not have the legitimacy to bring change.”

“I think it was a cynical approach, based on low expectations, and you cannot have peace in Congo by pushing low expectations,” Dizolele added.
A Note from The Echo Foundation

The Global Gag Rule (formally known as the Mexico City Policy) is a United States executive order that prohibits any federal funding from the US for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide abortion services. This policy was first enacted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 and has been continually repealed and reinstated as the presidency has switched between Democrats and Republicans. We understand that this is both a very political and very sensitive topic. The Echo Foundation does not endorse a political stance. Instead, the sole intention of these articles is to detail the Trump Administration’s revision and reinstatement of the policy and its effects on women’s health. We believe these articles keep political rhetoric to a minimum and instead present objective facts that we hope will serve as a foundation for further discussion.
Factsheet: The Global Gag Rule and Human Rights

Center for Reproductive Rights
January 2018
https://reproductiverights.org
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL GAG RULE?

On January 23, 2017, in one of his first actions as President, Donald Trump reinstated and expanded the Mexico City Policy, now officially known as “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance” (and referred to as the “Global Gag Rule” or the “GGR” throughout this document). Under this policy, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) incorporated outside the United States and receiving U.S. global health assistance funds for grants or cooperative agreements are prohibited from using this money or any of their own funds from any other sources to perform or actively promote abortion as “a method of family planning.” The prohibition includes providing referrals and counselling for women seeking an abortion as “a method of family planning” or advocacy to make abortion safe and legal as “a method of family planning.” The GGR states that the only abortions that are not considered “a method of family planning” are those in the cases of rape or incest, or if the life of the pregnant woman would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term. Non-U.S. NGOs receiving U.S. government health assistance funds will now be required to certify that they do not perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning as a condition of receiving assistance from the U.S. government. Non-U.S. NGOs are placed in the difficult position of losing vital funds that support a range of health services they provide, or accepting the funds but undermining their patients’ well-being by not being able to provide the full range of lawful sexual and reproductive health services and information. Complying with the GGR may also undermine compliance with national laws related to the provision of health care, such as guaranteeing referrals and ensuring evidence-based counselling. The current GGR applies to a wide range of global health assistance provided by the U.S. government, impacting funds for contraception, safe motherhood, treatment of HIV/AIDS, Zika, Ebola and other infectious diseases - affecting $8.8 billion in U.S. foreign aid. The rule does not directly apply to U.S. NGOs, presumably because such an application would violate the U.S. Constitution. If U.S. NGOs engage in abortion-related activities, as long as such activities are not supported with U.S. funds, they will continue to remain eligible for global health assistance from the U.S. government. However, U.S. NGOs that receive global health assistance are required to enforce the GGR on their non-U.S. NGO partners.

UNDERMINING HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Public health and U.N. human rights bodies have long recognized that denying women and girls access to abortion does not stop women from seeking abortion services, it just makes the procedure less safe and contributes to maternal mortality. The GGR undermines access to a vital component of women’s reproductive health care and has a chilling effect on access to other sexual and reproductive health services, and curtails advocacy on liberalization where abortion is
legally restricted. By doing so, it inhibits women’s access to trained providers who offer safe and legal procedures and accurate information about their options and their rights. The GGR proliferates misinformation and heightens stigma related to sexual and reproductive health care, leading to greater mistrust in the health system. Ultimately, the GGR puts women’s health and human rights at risk.

HEALTH IMPACT

While the U.S. is far from meeting the Official Development Assistance target of 0.7% of Gross National Product set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, it is still the single largest donor country to global health efforts. Thus, the GGR is expected to have far-reaching impacts on sexual and reproductive health and other health initiatives across the globe. This undermines U.S. commitments to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and hinders progress on the Sustainable Development Goals set by the 2030 Agenda. 214 million women of reproductive age in developing regions have an unmet need for contraception, accounting for 84% of all unintended pregnancies in developing regions. If these women had access to contraception, the number of unintended pregnancies, unplanned births and abortions would drop by nearly three quarters. That in turn would mean fewer maternal deaths due to unsafe abortion, which range in the tens of thousands per year, mostly in countries with restrictive access. This is especially critical for adolescents who are at greater risk of pregnancy-related death and complications. Concern on the part of service providers of violating GGR regulations creates a chilling effect on access to all sexual and reproductive health services. For example, under the previous GGR, there is evidence of service providers mistakenly refusing patients access to emergency contraception. In addition, because contraception is frequently provided after safe abortion services are performed, elimination of abortion access in clinical care decreases opportunities for women and girls to obtain contraceptives, which results in more unintended pregnancies.
"Planification Familiale c'est la cle dela prosperite de votre famille."

The message, which translated from French means “family planning is the key to your family's prosperity,” was printed in blue, block letters on the wall of a small reproductive health clinic in Lubumbashi, a city in the southeastern strip of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Empty boxes of birth control pills were piled nearby in a corner.

The last of the day’s patients, two women seemingly barely in their 20s, waited in a dimly lit room inside the cinder block building that serves the needs of Lubumbashi’s poorest.

Jeannine Assani, regional coordinator for ABEF (or Association pour le Bien-Etre Familial/Naissances Désirables), the Congolese reproductive health organization that runs things at this clinic, was concerned about her organization’s ability to continue its work providing free contraception, gynecological exams and family planning education because its funding has been reduced as a result of the Trump administration’s reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy, known as the "global gag rule."

“Now, we can’t even really supply condoms,” Assani said as we toured the clinic. “Women will come here, but often we have to refer them to the main hospital where they have to pay.”

The global gag rule, which every Republican administration since Ronald Reagan has enacted, bans international organizations that receive US aid from providing abortions or suggesting abortions as an option to pregnant women. ABEF doesn’t provide abortions — the procedure is illegal in the DRC — but larger organizations that do, primarily the International Planned Parenthood Federation, bankroll a good portion of ABEF’s budget.

IPPF does provide and support abortions when they are legal in a country and has refused to stop doing so in the face of the global gag rule. It expects that its losses from the Trump administration policy will reach around $100 million.

Additionally, ABEF expects to lose money because the Trump administration has stopped funding another of its important funders, UNFPA, the wing of the United Nations that supports women’s health. The US has been spending about $70 million annually on UNFPA. The Trump administration pulled that money because it alleged UNFPA engaged in coercive abortions and involuntary sterilization, though that has never been proven. Since 1973, US foreign assistance
has been barred from going toward abortions, and so GGR and cutting support to UNFPA adds another layer of restriction to exactly how US aid money can be used.

Swahili and French messages on the outer walls of the ABEF clinic in Lubumbashi encourage women to use family planning methods.

Credit: Laura Kasinof/PRI

ABEF is set to lose about 70 percent of its budget, according to Jean-Claude Mulunda, program coordinator for ABEF.

“We’re looking to left and right to try to find any kind of funding that can continue our programs. At the very least, we want to maintain the services we offer in the clinic for family planning, helping victims of sexual violence and for post-abortion care,” Mulunda continued. “But what we’re facing is that women who started a family planning program with us will not be able to continue, and also for young girls who come to us for cases of sexual violence, they will not be able to come anymore.”

ABEF provides free, post-abortion care for women who try to induce miscarriages at home or use untrained midwives to terminate pregnancies. While abortion is outlawed in the DRC, they still happen regularly and in dangerous conditions. Often women require urgent medical attention afterward. Middle Africa, which the DRC is a part of, has among the highest rates of unsafe abortions in the world, according to the World Health Organization, so services like what ABEF and similar organizations provide save women’s lives.

The challenges that ABEF faces will be felt by other organizations across the world, according to Seema Jalan, executive director of the Universal Access Project, a project of the United Nations Foundation that promotes family planning and reproductive care.

“We were really heading in the right direction. Huge strides had been made, like women's access to contraception. The global gag rule and defunding UNFPA is stopping all of that momentum
“Justice Is Not Negotiable”

...and progress,” Jalan said. “The impact will be profound, and this is about girls and women who have no other options, who need subsidized or free health care.”

A 2011 Stanford University study discovered that once GGR was reinstated in the early days of the George W. Bush administration, abortion rates more than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa, especially where cuts were felt the most.

If that trend repeats itself, then the number of abortions will be set to rise even more sharply. The global gag rule has been expanded under the Trump administration to affect not just US aid for family planning, which is around $600 million, but recipients of all US-funded global health assistance (including for things like Zika and HIV/AIDS) must abide by GGR’s rules, which affects 15 times more funding.

“The Trump-Pence version of the global gag rule is GGR on steroids in that it impacts way more funding than prior iterations,” Jalan explained.

Back at ABEF’s modest office in Lubumbashi, Assani felt that GGR must be “one big misunderstanding.”

“The best way to fix the problem of unsafe abortions, because the law prohibiting abortions isn’t working, is to provide birth control and family planning measures,” she said.

The dysfunctional Congolese government is not in a place to fill in the gaps left by a less-funded ABEF. That being the case, Assani sees the name of the Trump administration’s rollout of GGR, Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance, to be a misnomer, because, in her country, this American policy will be doing the exact opposite.
Responsibility to Protect

United Nations General Assembly
September 15, 20015

2005 World Summit Outcome, Paragraphs 138-140:

Responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity

138. Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.

139. The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications, bearing in mind the principles of the Charter and international law. We also intend to commit ourselves, as necessary and appropriate, to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out.

140. We fully support the mission of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide
Protection of Civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A New Approach

United Nations Peacekeeping
David Gressly
January 8, 2019
https://medium.com

For nearly two decades, UN Peacekeeping has been at the forefront of a complex security operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It is mandated to protect civilians, build sustainable institutions of governance and promote state authority. MONUSCO is the UN’s longest standing multidimensional peacekeeping operation and the largest UN presence in the country.

Protection of civilians is at the core of MONUSCO’s mandate. Nearly 19,000 personnel, including approximately 14,000 troops and 1,500 police, are in the country in support of that objective. And although it is the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that has the primary responsibility to protect civilians, MONUSCO has an important support role to play covering critical gaps remaining in the national security framework.

MONUSCO is delivering its protection mandate through a series of actions such as:

a) Providing physical protection through early warning and response as well as neutralizing armed groups through targeted strategies
b) Supporting the military justice for the prosecution of grave human rights violations by armed groups and security forces
c) Managing small arms and weapons for national security forces, who are often a source of weapons for armed groups, and
d) Strengthening prison security to minimize prison breaks which had become a source of new recruits for armed groups.

**Rethinking our physical protection strategy**

There have been a number of recent innovations in MONUSCO’s protection of civilians strategy that are changing the way in which we respond to these alerts thus enhancing the physical protection of civilians.

Historically, physical protection has been achieved through static positions on the ground — protection through presence — with, at its peak, nearly one hundred operating bases providing area security in a radius around each base. However, this approach was limited in its ability to react to a dynamic and changing environment with emerging threats in areas where the Mission did not have a base. Furthermore, with the recent reduction in troops, the capacity to maintain the same number of permanent bases has been reduced, subsequently reducing our capacity to protect through presence. This has prompted us to rethink our physical protection strategy.

MONUSCO has taken a comprehensive approach combined with increased mobility and a proactive posture facilitating both civilian and military interventions in areas where the Mission does not have a presence. This approach has become known as “protection through projection”. It relies on greater mobility and agility of military forces and civilian personnel, as well as an expanded and strengthened early warning system, allowing rapid deployments whenever and wherever needed either to prevent or respond to violence or conflict and provide physical protection to civilians.

Despite precarious conditions, troops from MONUSCO remain undeterred towards fulfilling the protection of civilians mandate through a range of tactical deployments that prevent hostile activities and create a protective environment for local populations. UN Photo/MONUSCO
Furthermore, *protection through projection* is intended to be comprehensive and is tailored to the specific alert or threat. Most importantly, it is not only a military action or response that is projected, it is a platform for various civilian interventions, such as investigation of human rights abuses or assessment of future protection needs as well as implementing conflict resolution initiatives, creating the space for local authorities and security forces to be able to respond more effectively or arranging for the surrender of armed groups. It can also facilitate humanitarian access to certain areas.

**Early warning system: a key tool in responding to conflict**

In order to be able to respond effectively and project to areas where the Mission is not present, an expanded and strengthened early warning system is fundamental. This system was introduced by the head of our mission and Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the DRC, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, in her previous role as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in MONUSCO (2008–2012). This system allows the Mission to have a better situational awareness on the ground and be aware of the need to respond as well as the kind of intervention required to be projected. Situational awareness is also being enhanced through improved analysis and information gathering systems that can also identify hot spots or feed into the development of appropriate interventions.

Our network presently has 65 nodes based at the community level which link protection committees and various alert systems. It allows the Mission to identify threats and respond by channeling information from communities to our operating bases and headquarters. Today, 900 communities are covered by the early warning system network in Eastern DRC and we continue to expand the coverage. Since the system relies on mobile phone connectivity, we are continuously working with phone operators and assisting them expand their coverage area to allow more communities to be part of our early warning network. Currently, we receive approximately 500 alerts per month and have a response rate of 86%. This is an improvement on the 2017 response rate of 70% and we continue to try and improve this rate.

Projecting presence is just one of MONUSCO’s protection tools. It is used in combination with static positions that the Mission maintains in locations where conflict may be more protracted. These positions are normally in areas where state authority is virtually absent or where multiple armed groups are competing for territory or natural resources creating a high protection risk for the local population. In these areas, early warning systems also remain a vital tool to address conflict and provide effective physical protection to civilians in the surrounding area.

Given our key role in the protection of civilians, we are committed to continuing to innovate, improve and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our approaches to better protect the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Protection through projection is one more step forward in the evolution of UN protection doctrine.
Congo: Why UN Peacekeepers Have a Credibility Problem

The Guardian
Christoph Vogel
August 30, 2013
https://www.theguardian.com/

After 14 years, with a budget of $1.5bn a year, and employing 20,000 uniformed staff, the UN peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the largest mission in the organisation's history. Yet the force, currently known as Monusco, is struggling for credibility. On Twitter, critics have given it the hashtag #MONUSELESS.

Peacekeepers have been blamed for standing by when rebels from the allegedly Rwanda-backed March 23 movement (M23) conquered the city of Goma for 10 days last November. It has also been accused of blurring the lines between military and humanitarian activity, and for having an appalling record in protecting the civilian population – one of its two major aims. The second is to help restoring state authority, which requires engaging with politicians and public servants with sometimes dubious motives and propping up an army notorious for human rights abuses.

Monusco and its predecessor, Monuc, never had an easy task. Started in 1999 as an observer mission, a relatively small team found itself watching the gloomy reality of a conflict known as Africa's "world war", pitting nine countries and even more rebel groups against each other. The UN security council enlarged the mission, expanded its mandate and tasked it with ensuring the success of Congo's first democratic elections in 2006. But Monuc often remained toothless, depending on additional backup: during elections an EU force was called on to secure Kinshasa. Monuc was not able to prevent the siege of Bukavu by rebel commanders in 2004 or to counter threats posed by the Rwandan FDLR militia or Laurent Nkunda's National Congress for the Defence of the Congolese People (CNDP) rebellion.
Ironically labelled a post-conflict country since the 2006 election, the DRC continued to suffer from ill-conceived international intervention, insecurity, and ongoing rebel attacks in the east. In 2010 this culminated in Monuc's transition to Monusco, following growing international criticism and threats of expulsion from the president, Joseph Kabila. During the country's second elections in 2011, Monusco witnessed a rise in armed group activity in eastern Congo and the subsequent creation of M23.

After the fall of Goma, the acronyms flourished. The UN security council posed the creation of a Neutral International Force (NIF), set up by the regional International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). In its most recent DRC resolution, the UN established a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) which was given a mandate to "neutralise" armed groups. Meanwhile, the Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework (PSCF), the first promising international agreement in years, was signed and UN secretary general, Ban Ki-Moon, appointed the former Irish president, Mary Robinson, as special envoy to the area.

Against all odds, Monusco has had some successes. While protection failures made the news (for example reports of the women who threw their children over the fence of a Monusco base before being slaughtered by approaching militiamen), experts agree that without the UN mission insecurity would be worse in DRC.

Although it has only recently become fully operational, the Force Intervention Brigade already faces mockery. From delayed deployment to a confusing ultimatum establishing a security zone around Goma, it manoeuvred from one blunder into another. Public relations were never among the peacekeeping mission's strengths, but the chaos exposed a serious problem with leadership. Recently, German diplomat Martin Kobler replaced Roger Meece as head of mission only after a one month. Of two deputies who assumed interim command, it was humanitarian coordinator, Moustapha Soumaré, who announced the military ultimatum. After a lively debate over the dangers of blurring peacekeeping and humanitarian action, there were questions about why a humanitarian chief was announcing military operations.

Congolese women call for peace in Goma. Photograph: AFP/AFP/Getty Images
Similar on the military side: Monusco's new force commander Lt-Gen Carlos dos Santos Cruz, and Brig-Gen James Mwakibolwa, the Tanzanian head of the FIB, joined the mission only in June. Some countries contributing troops seemed to be focused on monetary rewards, backing off as risks surface.

To make matters worse, Monusco has a hard time dealing with the state. The security council introduced the mission into an environment reluctant to reform. of full-scale reform deadlock. It will be crucial for Kobler to put pressure on the DRC government and assure the credibility of upcoming talks between the state, opposition parties and civil society. Notwithstanding the diplomatic constraints, there is little alternative to a serious push for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration. Current efforts, such as digitalising the army registers for proper pay and a new, comprehensive disarmament programme (as indicated by rumours from New York and Kinshasa) only work if accompanied by strong political clout. Once soldiers are paid and disarmament efforts include real reintegration of demobilised combatants, Congo's cycle of militarisation may be easier to tackle.

With more than 40 armed rebel groups operating in eastern DRC, most of them small and locally confined, the M23 and FDLR are just the tip of an iceberg. Alas, the UN's present carrots-and-sticks approach is defunct as there are neither carrots nor sticks: the former are either unethical (eg amnesty for war criminals) or unrealistic (eg successful peace talks in the near future). On the side of sticks, the intervention brigade is yet to deliver proof that it can live up to expectations without acting too partially in its support to the government army.

In late August, renewed frays engaged M23 and the army after a three weeks lull. Both sides accuse each other of causing havoc in a propaganda war as vivid as battlefield developments. As bombs fell both in Congo and neighbouring Rwanda, the two countries blamed each other for violating territorial sovereignty. The UN attributes the shelling to M23 and ordered the intervention brigade's first participation in the hostilities on 23 August, firing on M23 positions north of Goma. Triggered by increasing war fatigue, massive anti-Monusco demonstrations followed. Many civilians blame Monusco for not protecting Goma, but protests were also aimed at M23 and the government. Since 28 August, M23 and FARDC have been embroiled in heavy clashes again, dragging in the intervention brigade and possibly the Rwandan army, which announced a reaction if shelling onto Gisenyi continue. The brigade suffered its first casualty.

With M23 declaring a unilateral ceasefire on Friday, there are indications - however fragile - that the joint UN and DRC mission might be gaining the upper hand. If Monusco hopes to succeed, it should transform past weaknesses by using its political clout from above while joining forces with Congolese civil society below. For the new head Martin Kobler, UN special envoy Mary Robinson, and others, perhaps there is even a window of opportunity.
KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of the Congo — The message from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the EU was loud and not-at-all subtle.

The African nation's decision to expel the EU ambassador, Bart Ouvry, days before a long-delayed election, was done in public, humiliating fashion.

On Thursday evening, Congo’s foreign affairs minister gathered the diplomatic community for a meeting in the capital, Kinshasa. According to people in the room, the government made sure Ouvry was sat in the front row before telling him on live, state-controlled television that he had to pack his bags and get out of the country within 48 hours.

The move sends diplomatic relations between Congo and the EU to an all-time low, as the vast and mineral-rich country heads into an election on Sunday that could see its first peaceful transition of power since independence from Belgium in 1960.

The expulsion of Europe’s top diplomat came in direct response to renewed EU sanctions against high-level Congolese officials, including President Joseph Kabila’s handpicked candidate to replace him, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary.

“Nothing can justify this arbitrary act” — Federica Mogherini, the EU foreign policy chief
“We are not in the domain of diplomacy here, it's all about a show of force, and the Congolese government sent a clear warning to the diplomatic community,” said an EU diplomat in Kinshasa, talking on condition of anonymity for fear of repercussions.

Brussels was caught off-guard and condemned the decision.

“Nothing can justify this arbitrary act … the EU would like to recall that these measures [the sanctions] are linked to violations of human rights and obstacles created to peacefully exit the DRC from its crisis,” Federica Mogherini, the EU foreign policy chief, said in a statement Friday night.

Congo, which is roughly the size of Western Europe, is no backwater for the EU: it’s the world’s top producer of cobalt, a key component in batteries for electric cars and mobile phones.

Between 2014 and 2020 the EU gave €709 million to the DRC, mainly spent on improving governance and the country’s dilapidated infrastructure as well as health projects. In 2018 it also gave €12.83 million for the fight against Ebola, as the country battled with the worst epidemic of the virus in its history.

Ahead of Sunday’s election, Brussels also financed a mission of independent election observers, after its own election monitors were refused accreditation by the government earlier this year.

The EU first adopted sanctions against Shadary and 15 other top Congolese officials, including a cannibal warlord, in 2016 for severe human rights violations and interference in the electoral process.
At the time Shadary was interior minister and oversaw a violent crackdown against protesters demonstrating against a delay in holding elections. President Kabila, in power since his father was murdered by a bodyguard in 2001, has now stayed in office for two years after his second elected term expired in December 2016.

The EU sanctions were extended for a year in early December.

Congo’s government has accused the EU of blatant interference and said the sanctions, which include travel bans and asset freezes, are illegal and renewing them is futile since Kabila intends to step down in January.

In Kinshasa, over 10 million Congolese, out of the 40 million registered for voting nationwide, are preparing to head to the polls, but observers and diplomats fear a rigged election.

“Many thanks to my loyal and patient caddy, who has always accompanied me in good humor on the Kinshasa golf course” — Bart Ouvry

The introduction of touchscreen voting machines has been widely criticized by opposition candidates, who claim the previously untested devices are more vulnerable to voter fraud than paper ballots, and could be compromised by Congo’s defective power supplies.

On Friday evening, Ouvry held farewell drinks with Kinshasa’s diplomatic community and diplomats expressed concern about the rising atmosphere of intimidation from the government as it tries to hold on to power and crack down on foreign interference.

On Saturday Ouvry attended a service at Kinshasa’s Notre Dame Cathedral and publicly bid farewell to his golf caddy on his Facebook page.

“Many thanks to my loyal and patient caddy, who has always accompanied me in good humor on the Kinshasa golf course,” he said.
Democratic Republic of Congo

Coalition for the International Criminal Court
http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the world’s deadliest since World War II. Since 1998, some 5.4 million are reported to have died from war related causes. Civilians in the regions of Ituri and North and South Kivu have borne the brunt of fighting between government forces and local militias, often backed by regional powers, over control for territory and rich mineral resources. Political and ethnic tensions have resulted in years of grave international crimes including mass murder, the use of child soldiers, pillage, sexual and gender based crimes, among others. For many years, victims and civil society have demanded accountability at the national and international levels.

The ICC investigation opened in 2004 - its first ever - has focused on the leaders of several armed militia and rebel groups suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The DRC ratified the Rome Statute in April 2002. A law incorporating ICC crimes into domestic law and facilitating cooperation with the Court was adopted in 2015, after many years of civil society advocacy. There have also been several prosecutions of grave crimes in special domestic courts in eastern DRC.

Background

DRC has experienced a protracted conflict since the First Congo War in 1996. In 1998, the Second Congo War saw Congolese government forces engage with up to 25 armed groups, in the country’s eastern provinces in particular, with eight African states supporting different actors. A peace agreement was finalized between the government and rebel groups in 2004, and similar agreements were subsequently concluded in Ituri in 2007 and Kivu in 2009. Despite this, armed conflicts continued in eastern DRC in the following years, characterized by serious international crimes including mass murder, the illegal use of child soldiers, sexual and gender-based crimes, and forced displacement. Unable to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice in national courts, DRC government made a self-referral to the ICC.

ICC Situation

In April 2004, DRC invited the ICC Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) to investigate alleged Rome Statute crimes in the context of an ongoing armed conflict in its territory. In June 2004, after a brief preliminary examination, the first investigation in ICC’s history opened. The main regional focus of the ICC situation is the Ituri region as well as the North and South Kivu provinces in eastern DRC. The OTP acknowledged that, while alleged crimes were reported to have taken place since the 1990s, the ICC could not look at crimes committed earlier than 1 July 2002, the date of the Court’s establishment and temporal limit of its jurisdiction. Reports from 2002 onward, meanwhile, allege a pattern of rape, torture, forced displacement, and the illegal use of child soldiers.
Congoese rebel leaders Thomas Lubanga and Germain Katanga became the first suspects ever convicted by the ICC, while a third, Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui, was acquitted.

The ICC investigation has not yielded charges against government officials and armed forces. The absence of these cases—or clear and public explanations as to why they are not being pursued—has left too many victims without justice and undermined perceptions of the court’s independence and impartiality according to Human Rights Watch.

**Cooperation**

DRC government has been largely cooperative with the ICC investigation in its territory, having referred itself to the ICC in 2004. After years of advocacy by civil society, 2015 saw the adoption of a bill incorporating Rome Statute crimes into Congolese criminal law and further facilitating the country’s cooperation with the ICC. The DRC has also concluded ad hoc agreements with the ICC to enforce the ICC sentences imposed upon rebel leaders Thomas Lubanga and Germain Katanga.

**National Prosecutions**

Following repeated calls by victims, international organizations, and civil society for DRC to address the impunity gap in the country, in January 2016 DRC’s “Law implementing the Rome Statute of the ICC” entered into force. The law amends DRC’s military and criminal codes to incorporate Rome Statute crimes and general principles of law. The law also establishes the competence of civilian criminal courts, including in appeals, for all cases of genocide and crimes against humanity. Congolese rebel leader Germain Katanga, convicted by the ICC in 2014, was committed to trial in the DRC on war crimes charges - charges different from those he was prosecuted for by the ICC - soon after completing his ICC sentence and release in early 2016.

A number of national and local courts have been undertaking prosecutions of military figures in Eastern DRC accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Other countries, such as Germany, have taken on trials of individuals suspected of grave international crimes in the DRC, including rebel leaders from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda.

**Civil Society Advocacy**

The DRC has a particularly active civil society network working to end impunity for grave crimes. The DRC National Coalition for the ICC advocates for enhanced national accountability mechanisms, holds workshops and awareness raising events, and works with local ICC offices to support victims’ participation in ICC proceedings.
Unitaid invests in better ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases.

Who we are

Unitaid is an international organisation that invests in innovations to prevent, diagnose and treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria more quickly, affordably and effectively. We also work to improve access to diagnostics and treatment for HIV co-infections such as hepatitis C and human papillomavirus (HPV). Unitaid is a hosted partnership of the World Health Organization (WHO).

June 20, 2019, former French Minister of Social Affairs, Health and Women’s Rights (2012-2017), Marisol Touraine, was appointed Chair of the Executive Board on Unitaid for a three-year term.

What we do

We provide health partners with short-term financial grants, targeted to achieve maximum impact. For example:

- Our investments played a key role in bringing about a tenfold price reduction for antiretroviral treatment for HIV.
- We helped scale up use of a new tool that tests for drug-resistant tuberculosis, doubling the global detection rate in four years.
- We increased access to quality antimalarial drugs and new diagnostic techniques, contributing to a 50 percent reduction in malaria deaths since 2000.

How we work

Unitaid researches and identifies new health solutions with potential to alleviate the burden of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as HIV co-infections including hepatitis C.

Through calls for proposals, Unitaid finds partners best qualified to put key innovations into practice.
These partners receive grants from Unitaid to fast-track access and reduce costs of more effective medicines, technologies and systems.

In this way, Unitaid’s investments establish the viability of health innovations, allowing partner organisations to make them widely available.

**Who pays for it**

Since its establishment in 2006, Unitaid has received about US $3 billion in contributions from donors. Unitaid’s main donors are France, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Brazil, Spain, the Republic of Korea, and Chile.

A key source of income is innovative financing, specifically the solidarity levy on airline tickets implemented by France, which was later adopted by a number of other countries (including Cameroon, Chile, Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, and the Republic of Korea).

**Unitaid in the DRC:**

**Unitaid investments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed Projects</th>
<th>Current Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$39.8M</td>
<td>$24.8M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Investment Area</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Lead Grantee</th>
<th>Project Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV and Co-Infection</td>
<td>Accelerating access and integration to innovative point-of-care (POC) diagnostics for HIV in national diagnostic programmes</td>
<td>Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)</td>
<td>2012-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV diagnostics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe malaria</td>
<td>Emergency malaria care to save children’s lives</td>
<td>Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)</td>
<td>2017-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand access to preventive chemotherapy in pregnant women</td>
<td>Preventive malaria medicine to protect pregnant women and their babies (TIPTOP)</td>
<td>Jhpiego</td>
<td>2017-2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paediatric tuberculosis treatment</td>
<td>Catalyzing paediatric tuberculosis innovations (CaP TB)</td>
<td>Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)</td>
<td>2017-2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Unitaid and Democratic Republic of the Congo” / Last Updated March, 2019
Democratic Republic of Congo: International Organizations

*Peace Insight*
Peace Direct
https://www.peaceinsight.org/

**ACORD**

ACORD defends rights and promotes justice. Its peacebuilding work concentrates on helping communities mitigate and prevent conflict at grassroots level.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:*
ACORD's peacebuilding work in the DRC works to support communities to unite in their fight against poverty. ACORD uses participatory approaches, social exclusion analysis, and social dialogue encouraging local communities to work together, beyond ethnic, racial, tribal and gender barriers.

http://www.acordinternational.org/

**Action Aid**

Action Aid works to end hunger and poverty, provide education for all, deal with conflicts and emergencies, and support women's rights.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:*
Action Aid has a wide range of programmes in the DRC, working on women's rights, human security in conflict and land rights.

http://www.actionaid.org.uk/where-we-work/liberia

**CAFOD**

CAFOD works in disaster relief and development, in particular on basic infrastructure, workers rights and advocacy towards donor governments.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:*
CAFOD works to fund peacebuilding, reconciliation, trauma healing, humanitarian aid and governance programmes in the DRC.

http://www.cafod.org.uk/
Campaign Against Arms Trade

CAAT works to end the international arms trade, promoting progressive demilitarisation and ending government financial and political support for arms export.  
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: CAAT provides data on UK and EU arms exports to the DRC.  
https://www.caat.org.uk/

Carter Center

The Carter Center works in more than 80 countries on conflict resolution, democracy promotion, disease prevention and the improvement of mental health care.  
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Carter Center has worked in the DRC since 2006, monitoring elections and working to safeguard human rights.  
http://www.cartercenter.org/

Conciliation Resources

Conciliation Resources works on cross-border conflict, engaging armed groups, developing governance, facilitating dialogue, strengthening public participation and integrating women properly into all areas of peacebuilding.  
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: Conciliation Resources works at both the community level, with civil society organisations, and at a political level, to influence regional and international decision-makers, to deal with the Lord's Resistance Army in the DRC and across central Africa.  
http://www.c-r.org/our-work/west-africa

Danish Refugee Council

DRC focuses on helping people who have fled war and conflict, persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, political conviction or social affiliation.  
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Danish Refugee Council works to support the estimated 920,000 displaced persons in the DRC's North Kivu province.  
http://www.drc.dk/home/
Gender Action for Peace and Security

GAPS is a network of development, human rights, humanitarian and peacebuilding NGOs. It promotes, facilitates and monitors the meaningful inclusion of gender in all aspects of UK policy and practice on peace and security.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The DRC is one of GAPS' focus countries. It works to monitor and focus attention on gender perspectives in peacebuilding in the country.

http://www.gaps-uk.org/

Global Network of Women Peacebuilders

GNWP is a coalition of women’s groups and other civil society organizations. It is involved in advocacy and action for the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The GNWP has several partner members in the DRC.

http://www.gnwp.org/

Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

GPPAC is a member-led network of civil society organisations active in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding across the world.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: GPPAC's partner organisation in the DRC is Heritiers de la Justice.

http://www.gppac.net/

Global Witness

Global Witness investigates and campaigns to change the system by exposing the economic networks behind conflict, corruption and environmental destruction.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: Global Witness's work in the DRC focuses on conflict minerals, forests, and transparency and anti-corruption initiatives.

http://www.globalwitness.org/
International Action Network on Small Arms

IANSA is the global movement against gun violence, linking civil society organisations working to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: IANSA has a large number of partner organisations in the DRC.

http://www.iansa.org/

International Alert

International Alert works with local people to build peace by them with training, advice and support. It brings communities together as well as advising companies, governments and international organisations on how they can support peace.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: International Alert integrates peacebuilding into local development programmes, helping to address conflicts over land, power and resources, to promote women’s political and economic empowerment, provide training and practical support to women in politics and civil society, facilitate community discussions and help restore relations between people and communities affected by violence.

http://www.international-alert.org/

International Center for Transitional Justice

ICTJ works to help societies in transition deal with the legacy of mass atrocities, and build civic trust in state institutions as protectors of human rights.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The ICTJ provides technical assistance to government and civil society institutions in the DRC, to advance an informed national debate on transitional justice and to implement specific accountability initiatives.

http://www.ictj.org/

International Criminal Court

ICC is the first permanent, treaty based, international criminal court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes.

Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The situation in the DRC is under investigation by the ICC.

http://www.icc-cpi.int/
**International Crisis Group**

The International Crisis Group conducts independent research and analysis on conflicts around the world. *Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:* The ICG has a range of reports and analysis on the conflict in the DRC.  

**International Organization for Migration**

IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, including to migrants in need - refugees, IDPs and other victims of conflict. *Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:* The IOM runs an extensive range of programmes assisting IDPs and refugees across the DRC.  
[http://www.iom.int/](http://www.iom.int/)

**International Peace Bureau**

The International Peace Bureau is dedicated to the vision of a world without war. Its current main programme centres on disarmament for sustainable development. *Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:* The IPB has eight partner organisations in the DRC.  

**International Rescue Committee**

The IRC responds to the world’s worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. *Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo:* The IRC runs a large number of initiatives in the DRC, providing basic services and support to its people.  
Karuna Center for Peacebuilding

The Karuna Center innovates approaches for transforming conflict across divides by supporting people in all sectors of society to discover their shared capacity for building peace. Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Karune Center is developing a new programme, Women and Men as Partners in Peacebuilding, to work on limiting community and gender-based violence.
http://www.karunacenter.org

Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

Kvinna till Kvinna conducts projects that promote women’s health, esteem, self-reliance and participation in building democratic societies. It also conducts research and raises awareness of peaceful conflict resolution issues.
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: Kvinna till Kvinna's office in the DRC is in Bukavu. Its partner organisations work with women who have suffered from the prolonged conflicts in the country in different ways.
http://kvinnatillkvinna.se/

Life and Peace Institute

LPI is engaged with local partners in conflict transformation programmes in Eastern and Central Africa.
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: LPI supports and works with Congolese peacebuilding civil society partners across the country.
http://life-peace.org/

MONUSCO

MONUSCO is the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC.
Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: MONUSCO has a comprehensive mandate to help build and maintain peace and stability in the DRC.
http://monusco.unmissions.org/
Peace Research Institute Oslo

PRIO conducts academic research and analysis on peace and conflict worldwide.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo*: PRIO has a wide range of projects and publications on the conflict in the DRC.


Search for Common Ground

SFCG partners with people around the world to resolve conflict. It works to build sustainable peace through three main avenues: dialogue, media, and community.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo*: SCFG has recently released its new, multi-year vision to work towards a peaceful and democratic DRC.

[https://www.sfcg.org/](https://www.sfcg.org/)

Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey serves as the principal international source of public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo*: The Small Arms Survey has publications and resources on SALW in the DRC and central Africa.


swisspeace

swisspeace is a practice-oriented peace research institute. It conducts research on the causes of violent conflicts and develop strategies for their peaceful transformation.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo*: swisspeace has researched the impact of business, peace and resource conflicts, as well as being involved in related mediation activities, in the DRC.

[http://www.swisspeace.ch/](http://www.swisspeace.ch/)

Transparency International

Transparency International is a global movement seeking to fight corruption and bribery, conducting research and advocating change.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo*: The DRC ranks 154/175 on TI's Corruption Perceptions Index.

UN Development Fund for Women

UN Women implements programmes tailored to individual countries throughout Africa. Its strategies support women's participation in decision-making, leadership development and skills training.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: UN Women's DRC office is in Kinshasa.*

[http://www.unwomen.org/](http://www.unwomen.org/)

UN Development Programme

UNDP is the UN's key development organisation, seeking to improve lives based on its eight Millennium Development Goals.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The UNDP runs a comprehensive range of peace and development programmes in the DRC.*


UN High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR is the UN agency mandated to lead and coordinate action to protect refugees and resolve their problems worldwide.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: The UNHCR works to protect and support IDPs and refugees in the DRC.*

[http://www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

United to End Genocide

United to End Genocide is dedicated to preventing and ending genocide and mass atrocities worldwide by building a powerful, lasting movement of community activists, faith leaders, students, artists, investors and genocide survivors.

*Work in Democratic Republic of the Congo: United to End Genocide campaigns to raise awareness off and improve the situation in the DRC.*

[http://endgenocide.org/](http://endgenocide.org/)
Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving the International Committee of the Red Cross the floor.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would like to offer some insight into the lessons learned and the continuing challenges in preventing and responding to sexual violence against women, girls, men and boys in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, more specifically, in the provinces of North and South Kivu.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence can be widespread in armed conflict, despite the fact that international humanitarian law absolutely prohibits these acts in both international and non-international armed conflict.

Many victims do not report attacks owing to feelings of guilt or shame, fear of retaliation, or taboos. Yet sexual violence in the DRC is a common phenomenon with grave and dehumanizing effects on victims, their families and entire communities.

The ICRC is committed to offering victims assistance aimed at better prevention and mitigation of the consequences of sexual violence. From previous experience, the ICRC knows that a priority issue for many victims is access to medical and psychosocial care. The ICRC is also aware that activities aimed at responding to and preventing sexual violence in the DRC must be tailored to local communities, so as to provide culturally sensitive and effective support and promote long-term community-based approaches.

Thus, in 2006 the ICRC formed partnerships with several local organizations which today run approximately 40 “Maisons d’écoute” (literally “listening houses”) in the provinces of North and South Kivu. They offer psychosocial care combined with other services, such as referral to medical facilities and economic assistance, which support victims of violence throughout the process of recovery. As the Maisons d’écoute had already developed active community support networks in various parts of the region, the ICRC recognized their value as entry points enabling victims and the communities from which they came to access care and assistance which would have a positive impact on their lives.

Cooperation with grassroots associations - The ICRC’s aim is to set up self sufficient support centres by training local men and women from the community who respect and apply the principles of integrity, impartiality and neutrality in their efforts to reduce the long term impact of sexual violence on victims. Victims can seek care in a safe environment where they receive completely confidential psychosocial and material support.

Persons working in these centres are trained to hold regular awareness-raising activities to educate local communities about the consequences of sexual violence for victims, their families and their communities. These activities help to change preconceptions of sexual violence, reduce
the stigmatization of victims and inform the local population about the services offered by the centres.

**ICRC multidisciplinary approach** – Its experience has taught the ICRC that programmes need to be multidisciplinary if they are to respond to victims’ wide variety of medical, psychological, social and/or economic needs. In addition to receiving psychosocial support, victims are referred to health structures to receive specialized medical treatment, while the most vulnerable may also receive emergency economic assistance.

**Our impact** – In 2013, an ICRC evaluation of the Maisons d’écoute revealed the positive impact that their services have had on victims and communities. They are perceived by victims as a place where they can seek immediate help and share their experiences frankly and confidentially in a safe environment. Changes in local attitudes in various communities, such as less stigmatization of victims and an increasing number of victims seeking assistance reflect the effectiveness of the awareness-raising campaigns and the overall benefits of this system for these Congolese communities.

However, despite these positive achievements, continuing, widespread sexual violence in the DRC still has devastating short and long-term consequences for the victims.

Consequently, the ICRC wishes to stress its commitment to assisting and protecting victims of sexual violence in the DRC and thanks the Chairman for giving the ICRC the floor during this important dialogue.
OVERVIEW
Since 2002, the United States Government has been a major donor in the response to and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Deep-seated gender discrimination, harmful cultural practices, and the low social status of women and girls in the DRC contribute to high rates of SGBV. Furthermore, continued population displacement, insecurity, and conflict in eastern DRC perpetuate the cycle of violence against women and girls, although most perpetrators are community members not associated with armed groups.

Despite a 2006 Congolese law prohibiting SGBV, many cases of sexual violence are neither reported to local authorities nor investigated. Factors contributing to this lack of prosecution include fear of stigma and abandonment, weak law enforcement, and poor judicial infrastructure. In 2013, USAID helped to fund the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), which surveyed 18,000 households nationwide and found that more than 57 percent of women experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

PROGRAM
USAID’s 2015-2019 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) integrates activities to counter SGBV into health and education programs, with a focus on challenging gender inequality nationwide and expanding access to services. Under this strategy, USAID provides emergency and long-term assistance to SGBV survivors and strengthens Congolese institutions to address SGBV in the future.

USAID has provided a holistic set of essential services to more than 100,000 SGBV survivors, including access to medical care, psychosocial support, economic reintegration, vocational and literacy training, income generating activities, fighting impunity for perpetrators through support for legal reform, and strengthening of civilian and military judicial systems. Community awareness activities and information campaigns use various communication approaches to promote women’s rights, acceptance of rape survivors, and equity for women.

Since 2001, USAID has incorporated treatment for SGBV survivors into its humanitarian emergency health programs. USAID provides services in 141 health centers within conflict-affected health zones of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. These programs deliver clinical management and treatment of SGBV cases, training for health staff on medical management of SGBV, and provision of psychosocial care to survivors in conflict-affected zones of North Kivu and Orientale provinces. USAID provides first line treatment at local clinics and referrals to larger hospitals, when necessary, for complications such as fistula.

The Department of State has taken an active role in addressing SGBV in the DRC through a variety of programs funded by the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), the...
Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the Bureau of African Affairs (AF), the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (S/GAC), and the Office of Global Women’s Issues (S/GWI). Additionally, Embassy Kinshasa’s Democracy and Human Rights Fund gives small grants on an annual basis to local organizations that provide economic and legal support to SGBV survivors. The Embassy’s Public Affairs Section also sponsors SGBV-focused activities.

SELECT 2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

• USAID provided 7,755 survivors of SGBV with medical, legal, and economic reintegration services.

• USAID strengthened 1,550 organizations to respond to and prevent SGBV in their communities.

• USAID established School-Related GBV monitoring committees in 618 schools and worked with the Ministry of Education to field test and validate the Doorways curriculum aimed at building skills to effectively counter SRGBV.
The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) is one of the most populous countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and the largest French-speaking African country. Since gaining independence from Belgium in 1960, the country and its 75 million residents have experienced numerous political and economic crises, including a war that claimed millions of lives. Although tremendously resource-rich, DR Congo remains one of the least developed countries in the world.

Protracted economic slumps and violent crises have profoundly affected Congolese migration trends. Once an attractive destination, especially for African migrants, DR Congo has been a country of outmigration since the early 1980s. Overall, emigration has increased, particularly toward neighboring countries, with inflows becoming less significant. At the same time, DR Congo’s social and economic deterioration has transformed the composition of its migration flows to extra-African destinations—with greater outflows of women, the less educated, and refugees and asylum seekers, particularly since the 1990s. In addition, with growing immigration restrictions in some destination countries and changing entry strategies, Congolese migration trajectories have become more complex, with new destinations attracting growing numbers of migrants.

Drawing on micro and macro data from the Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE) and Determinants of International Migration (DEMIG) projects as well as other sources, this article surveys the changing patterns of Congolese migration over the last 50 years, examining how the shifting dynamics and characteristics of Congolese migration relate to changes in the economic and political contexts in the DR Congo and destination countries.

**Figure 1. Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

While political violence and lack of economic opportunities remain significant push factors, new opportunities in destination countries have also contributed to this growth. The end of the apartheid regime in South Africa in the mid-1990s boosted its desirability as a destination. And in the early 2000s, the end of the Angolan civil war, combined with unprecedented economic development, attracted many Congolese. The MAFE survey conducted in Kinshasa in 2009 also shows that migration rates from Kinshasa to African countries have markedly increased since the 1980s, much more so than to Western countries. South Africa and Angola alone received more than half of the migrants leaving the Kinshasa region in the 2000s.

Congolese refugee flows have also increased dramatically since the early 1990s. Approximately 80,000 refugees from DR Congo were living in neighboring countries through the mid-1990s; by the late 1990s, following the First Congo War and start of the Second, this number exceeded 250,000, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). There were approximately 450,000 Congolese refugees in other African countries as of March 2016, UNHCR estimates. Most reside in Uganda (202,000), Rwanda (75,000), Tanzania (64,000), and Burundi (53,000). Internal displacement has also been widespread, reaching a peak of 3.8 million IDPs in 2008 and dropping to approximately 2.8 million as of March 2015, according to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates.

**African Migration to DR Congo**

In contrast, other Africans have been less prone to move to DR Congo. Recent data on international migrants in DR Congo are lacking, as no census has been conducted there since 1984. World Bank and UN Population Division estimates suggest a long-term decline in the presence of African migrants and refugees. More than 650,000 immigrants and refugees resided in DR Congo in 1990, according to UN Population Division estimates, most from neighboring countries (see Table 2); this number stood at more than 400,000 as of mid-2015.

However, refugee numbers fluctuate widely and sometimes rapidly in response to crises, as in 1994-95 after the Rwandan genocide that led to a peak of almost 2 million refugees. Around 250,000 Rwandan refugees still live in DR Congo, according to March 2016 UNHCR estimates. This figure is much higher than the overall number of Rwandese migrants and refugees estimated by the UN Population Division (Table 2), illustrating the uncertainty around these figures. Most recently conflict in the Central African Republic led to an influx of refugees, rising to more than 100,000 as of March 2016 according to UNHCR, and refugees from Burundi have also increased recently, reaching around 25,000 people in 2016. DR Congo was also host to several hundred thousand Angolan refugees displaced by that country’s 1961-75 war of independence and subsequent civil war. Most have returned through UNHCR repatriation programs since 2002, though a few hundred remain. Overall, the number of Congolese refugees abroad exceeds the estimated 400,000 foreign refugees in DR Congo as of March 2016, according to UNHCR estimates.
Table 2. Stock of African Immigrants and Refugees in DR Congo, 1990, 2000, and 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>468,462</td>
<td>325,733</td>
<td>185,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>20,203</td>
<td>36,692</td>
<td>39,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>(no data)</td>
<td>(no data)</td>
<td>73,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Rep. of</td>
<td>3,647</td>
<td>9,470</td>
<td>6,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>22,972</td>
<td>85,936</td>
<td>97,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>113,409</td>
<td>118,742</td>
<td>8,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>15,895</td>
<td>16,643</td>
<td>5,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>18,418</td>
<td>24,177</td>
<td>6,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>663,006</td>
<td>617,393</td>
<td>421,668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures for 2015 are mid-year estimates.

Changing Patterns of Congolese Migration to Western Countries
The presence of Congolese migrants in Western countries has increased in recent decades. Despite the colonial connection to Belgium, migration from DR Congo to Europe did not truly take off until the 1960s. At that time, most migrants were members of the country's elite who traveled to Belgium to study or for professional reasons, and returned to the Congo after completing their education or at the end of their mission. While Belgium has always imposed a visa for Congolese migrants, in the postcolonial era educated Congolese had certain opportunities to migrate to Belgium, for instance through university scholarships or professional sponsorship.

Increasing Migration to Western Countries and Diversification of Destinations
Several thousand Congolese migrants have arrived in Western countries each year over the last two decades (see Figure 2). Increases in these flows have been especially pronounced since the mid-1990s, when economic and political troubles in DR Congo intensified. However, this uptick was much less significant than that of outflows to other African countries, reflecting the higher costs of migration as well as tighter entry restrictions.

While Belgium was the main Western destination of Congolese migrants prior to the 1980s, destinations have increasingly diversified. France has become the preferred end point since the late 1990s (Figure 2), possibly as a result of greater ease getting visas and of obtaining asylum, and better labor market opportunities. Recent estimates indicate that France and Belgium together host more than 100,000 Congolese migrants, and that more than 50,000 others live elsewhere in Europe (including Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and the United Kingdom; see Figure 2).

In addition to traditional migration flows, the number of Congolese asylum seekers in European countries also increased significantly since the late 1980s, fluctuating in response to crises in DR...
Congo (see Figure 3). Over the last 25 years, seeking asylum has become a particular immigration channel among Congolese migrants, together with family reunification and migration for education. MAFE surveys in Belgium and in the United Kingdom showed that since the 1990s, the proportion of asylum seekers among Congolese migrants has exceeded 50 percent.

Outside Europe, the United States and Canada have also become increasingly popular destinations since the 1990s (see Figure 2), each now hosting nearly 30,000 Congolese immigrants. This growing interest is also found among would-be migrants in surveys conducted in Kinshasa. Congolese migration to the United States has taken off since 2005, making the United States the second most popular Congolese destination outside Africa. Refugees and asylees represent a large share of Congolese obtaining permanent status in the United States, around 60 percent over the 2005-13 period. But the face of Congolese migration to the United States has been changing rapidly, with a growing share arriving via the diversity visa program (almost 40 percent of Congolese immigrants in 2013). Countries such as Australia have also recently started attracting Congolese migrants, but the flows have been much lower. While European destinations still appeal to Congolese migrants, restrictive immigration policies and difficulties integrating into the labor market may explain the emerging preference for other destinations.

**Figure 2. Congolese Migration Flows to Selected Western Countries**


The Echo Foundation
In addition to direct migration from DR Congo to new locations, secondary migration has also contributed to the diversification of destinations. Beginning in the 1990s, substantial numbers of Congolese resettled in the United Kingdom from elsewhere, mainly France and Belgium. Congolese migration to North America also often takes place as secondary movement, from locations either in Africa or Europe.

Figure 3. Congolese Asylum Applications in Selected Western Countries


As a result of the diversification of flows, Congolese migrants now live in more countries than in the 1970s. All in all, more than 200,000 Congolese migrants live in Western countries, not counting asylum seekers and unauthorized migrants. Congolese migration to Asia, especially China, is also thought to be increasing but little information is available.
Table 3. Congolese Migrants living in Selected Western Countries, Various Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Proportion of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France (2010)</td>
<td>59,641</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (2015)</td>
<td>44,715</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (2011-13)</td>
<td>20,410</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (2011)</td>
<td>19,890</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales (2011)</td>
<td>19,193</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (foreign citizens) (2015)</td>
<td>9,299</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland (2015)</td>
<td>6,724</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy (2015)</td>
<td>6,010</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (2015)</td>
<td>4,973</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (2011)</td>
<td>2,576</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (2015)</td>
<td>2,210</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (2015)</td>
<td>3,092</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain (2013)</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (2015)</td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark (2015)</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (2015)</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Declining Return Migration from Western Countries
Prior to the 1990s, two-thirds of Congolese migrants in Europe returned within a decade. Today, most Congolese migrants in Western countries do not return. Whereas Congolese families used to encourage their children to return in the 1970s and 1980s, they now tend to push them to remain abroad, because of poor prospects in the labor market and high economic and political uncertainty. Anecdotal evidence suggests that returns may have increased recently among the better educated, as employment prospects and wages have improved for some categories of workers over the last few years. But return is not an option in the short term for many. As obtaining a visa for reentry to Europe has become more difficult, return jeopardizes the chances of departure in the event of new crises or difficulties reintegrating.

Feminization of Congolese Flows and Stocks
As returns have declined, the number of women migrating to Western countries has risen, in contrast with Congolese migration within Africa, which remains heavily male. The vanishing prospect of return has encouraged families to reunify in Western destination countries, leading to larger numbers of female Congolese emigrants. Emigration of single women has also increased, as well as migration for economic reasons among women, indicating more frequent autonomous movement. The share of females among Congolese migration flows to Canada, France, Germany, and the Netherlands has increased steadily since the 1990s, in some cases doubling or even overtaking that of males, as shown in DEMIG data. In most Western countries, Congolese women represent around half of the Congolese migrant population (see Table 3). MAFE survey evidence indicates Congolese women are also less likely than men to want to return. As a result, the percentage of women among Congolese migrants may continue to increase.
Changing Educational Profile of Congolese Migrants

In the 1970s and 1980s, Congolese migrants to Europe had overall high levels of education. In recent years, the share with higher education has greatly decreased. The opportunities for migration are still greater among the better educated, reflecting their greater economic resources, their relative advantage in obtaining a visa to pursue further education, greater social capital in destination countries, and the selectivity of destination-country admission policies. However, the educational profile of migrants to Europe began to change in the 1990s as a result of several factors. First, scholarship opportunities offered by both the Congolese and European governments were greatly reduced as bilateral relations were disrupted due to war and instability in the 1990s. At the same time, emigration became part of a strategy among Congolese families for increasing and diversifying sources of income, with low-income and lesser-educated migrants increasingly leaving the country. The growing share of asylum seekers—less educated than migrants arriving through traditional channels—as well as the feminization of migration flows contributed to the decrease in migrants’ education levels.

Looking Ahead

International migration to and from the Democratic Republic of Congo has undergone enormous change in recent decades, partly in response to political and economic crises in the country and in the region. Large flows of refugees, to and from DR Congo, as well as increasing migration flows to African and Western countries have characterized Congolese international migration over the last 30 years.

How will Congolese migration evolve? Political and economic conditions in DR Congo, though improving, have been unpredictable over the last decades, and their effect on future departures and returns is necessarily speculative. However, the recent development of the domestic and regional political context suggests that DR Congo may continue to experience substantial inflows and outflows of refugees in the coming years. The management of these flows, to and from DR Congo, will be a challenge for Congolese authorities and UNHCR, operating in settings with poor infrastructure and ongoing insecurity.

Migration flows to Western countries and returns are of course difficult to predict, but recent trends suggest the Congolese diaspora will keep growing rapidly, especially in new destinations such as North America. And, should a substantial improvement in the living conditions in DR Congo occur, it would not necessarily translate into less migration, as more development often leads to increased migration to developed countries. Moreover, the growing Congolese diaspora in Western countries may in turn fuel further Congolese emigration, facilitated by the presence of family and friends in destination countries. A challenge for DR Congo will be to develop, implement, and reinforce policies and initiatives to facilitate circulation and returns, and to stimulate remittances and investments by the diaspora. In destination countries, improving integration in the labor market—which remains difficult for a large share of Congolese in Western countries—will also be key to the well-being of migrants and their relatives in DR Congo.
Fact Sheet: U.S. Refugee Resettlement

National Immigration Forum
Zuzana Cepla
January 25, 2019
https://immigrationforum.org/

Who is a refugee?

A person outside the U.S. seeking refuge. The U.S., based on international law, defines “refugee” as a person outside the country of his or her nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

The legal basis for humanitarian admissions of refugees and asylum seekers to the United States began with the Refugee Act of 1980, which defined a refugee, established the Reception and Placement (R&P) program for initial resettlement under the U.S. Department of State, and created the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Who determines the number of refugee admissions?

The President of the United States. The number of refugees accepted to the United States each year is set by the President in consultation with Congress.

What is the refugee limit for fiscal year 2019?

30,000. Although historically the U.S. has resettled more refugees than any other country, its resettlement program has not kept up with increase of the global refugee population that has increased by about 50 percent over the past five years.

While there were approximately 19.9 million refugees worldwide as of fiscal year (FY) 2017, the U.S. currently resettles just a small fraction of them. Less than 1 percent of the total number of displaced people on the world has been resettled to one of 37 current resettlement countries each year. In FY 2016, the U.S. admitted nearly 85,000 refugees, a number that declined to fewer than 54,000 refugees in FY 2017, the lowest number in a decade after President Trump reduced the cap on refugee admissions via executive order. In FY 2018, the president further reduced the refugee admission cap to 45,000, the lowest since the enactment of the Refugee Act of 1980. For 2019, the administration cut the number of admissions even more to 30,000. However, the cap represents the maximum number of refugees that may be resettled in a year and the Trump administration is unlikely to resettle anywhere close to 30,000 people in FY 2019. In FY2018, the administration failed to keep pace with the 3,750 refugees who would need to be resettled each month to reach the annual ceiling, resettling a total of less than a half of the annual admission number.
Where do refugees resettling in the U.S. come from?

All around the world. The United States admits refugees from more than 60 countries all around the globe. In FY 2018, U.S. refugees came mainly from Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Ukraine and Bhutan.

![Bar chart: Where America's Refugees Come From](chart.png)

The number of U.S. refugees from Syria and Iran dropped considerably in FY18 due to implementation of the latest version of the Trump administration’s travel ban, which prevents individuals from Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen and certain government officials from Venezuela from entering the U.S. Because the travel ban has been in effect since June 2018 after being blocked by courts for nine months, the two countries are no longer among the top 10 countries of origin for U.S. refugees.

Where do refugees resettle?

All across the United States. Refugees have been resettled in 49 U.S. states, with Texas, Washington and Ohio resettling the most refugees in FY 2018.

![Bar chart: Where do Refugees Live](chart.png)
Who refers refugees to the U.S. for resettlement?

**Primarily the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** UNHCR, the United Nations (UN) Refugee Agency, is an international agency dedicated to protecting forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. UNHCR screens applicants to determine whether they qualify as refugees and if they are in particular need of resettlement, and, if so, refers them to the U.S. and other countries. In some cases, for the U.S. refugee admissions program (USRAP), refugees are referred by a U.S. Embassy or a specially-trained nongovernmental organization; certain groups with family members in the U.S. or who served U.S. missions in Iraq also have application pathways.

How long does it take to screen and vet a refugee?

**An average of nearly two years.** While the total processing time varies depending on an applicant’s location as well as other circumstances and policy changes, the vetting time – from the refugee’s initial UNHCR referral to his or her arrival in the U.S. – has averaged approximately 18 to 24 months in recent years. Given recent developments, the length of the wait will likely increase. To be admitted to the U.S., refugees go through several rounds of background checks, screenings and interviews under the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), including:

- After an initial screening by UNHCR, the nine Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) located around the world collect applicants’ biographic and other information.
- After the State Department preliminarily approves an application to begin the resettlement process, they are reviewed by officers from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as well as ongoing vetting by a variety of intelligence agencies (including the FBI, CIA, and others).
- USCIS also conducts an in-person interview with each refugee applicant before deciding whether to approve him or her for resettlement in the U.S.
- All USCIS-approved refugees then undergo health screening to prevent those with contagious diseases from entering the U.S.
- Most refugees undergo also a cultural orientation course prior their arrival.
- Before refugees arrive, it is established where in the United States they will initially live and which refugee resettlement agency will help orient them to life in the United States.
- After arrival to the U.S., all refugees are checked at the airport by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer to ensure they are the same people that were screened and approved for admission.

What do refugee resettlement agencies do?

**Assist refugees after their arrival in the U.S.** After the final screenings by the U.S. government, the refugees are picked up at the airport by a representative of one of the nine domestic resettlement agencies, all of which have cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of State.
Shortly before the arrival of the refugees, the resettlement agencies arrange for their housing, which include basic furnishings, appliances, climate-appropriate clothing, and some of the food typical of the refugees’ culture. When the refugees arrive, the resettlement agencies’ representatives then take refugees to their new homes.

After arrival, the resettlement agencies help refugees to start their lives in the U.S., assisting them with applying for a Social Security card, registering children in school, learning how to access shopping facilities, arranging medical appointments, and connecting them with needed social or language services.

**How is the refugee resettlement funded?**

**Through the Department of State and the Department of Health and Human Services.** The State Department’s Reception and Placement (R&P) program provides refugees with a loan to travel to the U.S., which they are required to start repaying after they arrive. The R&P program then supplies resettlement agencies a one-time sum per refugee to finance their first 30-90 days in the U.S. That money goes mostly towards rent, furnishings, food, and clothing, as well as costs of the agency staff case management and other integration services. After three months, HHS’s Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) then works through the states and other nongovernmental organizations to provide refugees with limited cash and medical assistance, as well as short-term language, employment, and social services, and longer term integration services.

**Can refugees legally work in the United States?**

Yes. Upon arrival in the U.S., refugees receive employment authorization and are encouraged to become employed as soon as possible so that they can support themselves.

**Can a refugee become a U.S. citizen?**

Yes. All refugees are required to apply for a green card to become a permanent resident after one year in the United States. After five years of residency, they become eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.
In Burundi, A Mass Wedding Celebration for DRC Refugees

Al Jazeera
Griff Tapper
October 17, 2016
https://www.aljazeera.com/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

Kavumu, Burundi - Inside a wooden, tin-roofed structure in the Kavumu refugee camp in eastern Burundi, 46 couples are waiting to get married. They have all fled their homes in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo.

Some of them are already married but, having lost their wedding certificates when they left their homes, are going through the process again. Others, like Bonnet Mfaume and Zubeda Karinga, are marrying each other for the first time. Zubeda is pregnant with their fifth child and describes her "unusual happiness" about the occasion. It is a cause for celebration at a time when they have had little to feel positive about.

But marriage can mean more than that for the refugees. Abel Mbilinyi, the Burundi representative for the UNHCR, explains that marriage offers "protection for women".

"In a refugee camp, depending on which religion you are having, depending on culture, the protection of a husband is so important," he continues. "Women who are single are vulnerable. They are vulnerable to being attacked by single men."

Deo Kasereka and Antoinette Etamboseka are among those waiting to get married. They have been a couple for many years and have five children together.

A woman dances in celebration at the weddings. © GRIFF TAPPER/AL JAZEERA
They fled their home in Goma, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC, after Deo was accused of giving the M23 rebels medical supplies from the pharmacy he owned. He says men in military uniforms came to his house while he was in hiding.

"Not finding me there, they abused my wife," he says. "I had a little brother at home to whom they also asked my whereabouts. He replied that he was not aware of where I was and they shot him dead on the spot."

The couple's oldest son is 14 years old. He went missing during their flight, and they haven't seen or heard from him since.

'I feel very happy because I have a husband. I had children but had not yet been married. Now I feel much happiness because he is really my husband from now on, and the way we exchanged rings made me overjoyed,' says Antoinette Etamboseka. © GRIFF TAPPER/AL JAZEERA

Faliala Tulinao and Johanna Faila say they fled the DRC after they became involved in a land conflict with a neighbour who was a major in the Mai-Mai rebel group. The man threatened to kill them, they say, after he refused to give back a small plot of land on to which he had encroached. © GRIFF TAPPER/AL JAZEERA
The city of Portland, Maine, has seen an influx of migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola.

And as the nation engages in a heated debate over whether to welcome immigrants or keep them out, Maine's governor, Janet Mills, has said the state will help those who arrive.

"Obviously, we're having a situation here by fate, by circumstance, by the hand of God," Mills said in a meeting with municipal and state leaders in June. "And there are those who might want to make it political. I don't see it that way. None of us here sees it as a political issue. It is a humanitarian issue. The broader community of the people of the state of Maine are going to be lending a hand and helping these people who are in such dire need. They call upon us, and we will be there for them."

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been embroiled in conflict for decades. It has seen a new wave of instability since its fiercely contested 2018 general elections, which ended the rule of Joseph Kabila after 18 years in power. Internal conflict that drove Congolese citizens to Angola to work in the informal mining sector has led to regional conflict with Angola, which faces its own problems — namely, widespread corruption and dire poverty. Many of those who arrive in the US are seeking asylum.

Claude Rwaganje and colleague at an event aiding asylum seekers in Portland, Maine. © Claude Rwaganje

Claude Rwaganje is among those helping these migrants acclimatize to live in Portland. Born and raised in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwaganje now directs a group called ProsperityME: The Center For Financial Education. Rwaganje has firsthand knowledge of the conditions refugees go through in order to find safety.
"The majority fly to Brazil," Rwaganje says. "Then they start the journey through the buses, mostly, and others walk."

Rwaganje spoke with The World's Carol Hills about the journey that asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of Congo must endure and Maine's attitude toward them.

Carol Hills: So it could be a plane, a boat, but it definitely includes lots of walking, and then eventually, a bus ride from San Antonio?
Claude Rwaganje: Definitely. Once they landed in South America or Central America, walking was a big issue for them. And I feel so bad for the little children and mothers who are pregnant. I was talking to a mother who actually delivered in Panama, and I was talking to others who delivered in New Mexico. So I wondered how they really did this journey. It's unbelievable.

That journey is more than 10,000 miles. It takes months. Do these migrants know that when they start the journey? Do they know what's ahead of them? I really doubt it, because if they knew how long it would take them, somebody would really reflect twice before they can put a pregnant woman on a journey or even a baby on a journey without knowing the outcome. You might reconsider taking such a risk.

Why are migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola heading to Portland, Maine? It's certainly not a familiar climate for these migrants.
Every group wants to migrate. They go where their friends and their family members are. Portland, Maine, has been a welcoming city for many immigrants — Angolan and Congolese. So when you communicate back home people know where you are. Newcomers, they tend to go where the other immigrants have resettled.

"Obviously we're having a situation here by fate by circumstance by hand of God. .... They call upon us and we will be there for them."
Janet Mills, Maine Governor

So they go there because there's already people from the Democratic Republic of Congo?
Absolutely. I will add that this city is also a welcoming city to many immigrants.

The governor seems to be welcoming those in need, but at the same time, the migrants' numbers have really deluged shelters and attorney caseloads. Portland officials are kind of overwhelmed, aren't they?
They are. This is an opportunity for us. It might look like a challenge at the beginning, but long-term, this is an opportunity for Maine to bring these people to us when the border is closed. So we are very grateful to have these people come to us. I know it might be a challenge for this city but again we are responding as a community, as stakeholders, as corporations. It sounds like a crisis to some, but it's an opportunity for me.

"One thing that they said was, 'We are glad that we have reached a safe place. We can't go back to our home country. Here is our home country.'"
Claude Rwaganje, refugee volunteer
Portland has even had to turn its basketball arena at the Portland Expo Center into an emergency shelter. And I know you and your staff have been there translating and helping out in other ways. Tell us what the scene looks like there with some 200 African migrants sleeping on cots.

When you go to the Portland Expo, first of all, at the entrance, you have to have a badge. You have to be signed up as a volunteer to get in because there is police at the door. Of course, there are beds everywhere, maybe a couple hundred. Then you see some tables. Interpreter agencies, medical screening, lunch and breakfast and dinner is served. We line up some tables there. Then, on the other hand, you have kids playing — they created a little station where there are some cartoons — and it's wonderful. It's wonderful to see that these children finally have a place where they can spend a day without traveling.

Portland doesn't have a formal asylum assistance program, so these people who are arriving, they're unlikely to get all the help they need. And as more of their friends and family members are on the way, isn't this going to turn into a bit of a crisis? Is it sustainable to keep welcoming more and more people into Portland?

Poland may be overwhelmed on its own but definitely, we expect more cities to support as well. Once we send these migrants into different cities, I don't think this is going to be a big deal for the city of Portland at all.

Is there anything any of the migrants have said to you that particularly moved you?
Yes. One thing that they said was, "We are glad that we have reached a safe place. We can't go back to our home country. Here is our home country."
Belgium Elects Nation’s First Black Mayor, a Congolese Immigrant

The New York Times
Milan Schreur
October 15, 2018
https://www.nytimes.com/

BRUSSELS — Belgian voters elected the first black mayor in their nation’s history on Sunday — a man originally from the huge swath of central Africa that Belgium brutalized for generations, in one of the harshest of the European colonial regimes.

Pierre Kompany, 71, who fled the Democratic Republic of Congo as a refugee in 1975, will be sworn in before the end of the year as the mayor of one of Brussels’s 19 boroughs, Ganshoren, where he was elected by an overwhelmingly white community.

“"My success, my election, shows the direction of the march of history, which is towards a more peaceful history," Mr. Kompany said on Monday. "I think one has to regard this as a victory for humanity as a whole."

His election, he said, shows that Belgium has made significant progress in integrating a people whom, not so long ago, it systematically suppressed, exploited and almost annihilated.

For almost 80 years, until Congo won its independence in 1960, Belgium exercised a destructive colonial rule, extracting natural resources like ivory, rubber and minerals at a frightful human cost. Particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the Belgian King, Leopold II, wielded personal control of the colony, his forces relied on violence, terror and torture to turn much of the black population into a slave labor force, and they killed millions of people. From the 1920s onward, Belgium installed a de facto apartheid system.

But Belgium is, in fits and starts, reassessing its colonial past.
This year, a square in Brussels was named for the Congolese independence leader, Patrice Lumumba, whom Belgium helped overthrow. The government has fully opened its colonial archives on Rwanda, another former Belgian possession — the first step of its kind among Europe’s former colonial powers.

Later this year, Belgium will reopen its century-old Africa museum, which until five years ago presented a favorable image of colonialism. The revamped museum will tell a more critical story of European rule in Africa.

While his election is historic, Mr. Kompany, who has been a city councilor in Ganshoren since 2006, ran a decidedly local campaign, promising to help the elderly, expand day care availability and improve soccer fields.

His victory “marks the undeniable presence of the Congolese here in Belgium,” said Mathieu Zana Etambala, an emeritus professor of history at the Catholic University of Leuven, and an expert on African colonial history. “I’m especially proud, and so is the whole Congolese community, that a black man was directly elected by Belgians in a city like Ganshoren, which has maybe 100 people of Congolese origin.”

But Belgium still has far to go in reckoning with its legacy in Africa, said Mr. Etambala. “Most people don’t realize anymore what happened, I know of no politician who cares, colonial history is barely taught in primary school or even in high school.”

About 120,000 people of Congolese descent live in Belgium, which has a population of about 11 million.

Colonial policies that restricted migration and impoverished Congo kept the figure low for decades, “but prevailing racist views and systematic suppression in Belgian society should not be underestimated either,” said Maarten Couttenier, who researches colonialism at the Royal Museum for Central Africa.

As a university student in Kinshasa, Congo’s capital, Mr. Kompany was imprisoned for more than a year for supporting protests against the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko, he said, while dozens of his fellow students were killed.

Mr. Kompany fled to Belgium in 1975, completed his studies in engineering, worked as a taxi driver, and became a Belgian citizen. One of his three children, Vincent Kompany, is an international soccer star, who has served as the captain of both Manchester City and the Belgian national team.

A handful of people with sub-Saharan roots have been elected to other offices in Belgium, including two women who won seats on city councils on Sunday, said Elena Matundu, 50, the president of the Group of Integrated and Active African Women.

“This shows that we are part of this community,” she said, “that we are unerasable, that we are Belgian.”
Belgium’s Africa Museum Had a Racist Image. Can it Change That?

The New York Times
Alex Marshall
December 8, 2018
https://www.nytimes.com/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

BRUSSELS — Belgium’s Africa Museum, once seen as Europe’s last unreconstructed museum of the colonial era, recently reopened after a five-year, $73 million revamp.

The museum in Tervuren, on the outskirts of Brussels, had been overhauled in an effort to shake off its racist and pro-colonial image, said Guido Gryseels, 66, the museum’s director general, in an interview.

“Entire generations of Belgians came here and got the message that colonialism was a good thing, that we brought civilization and welfare and culture to Congo,” he said.

For almost 80 years, until Congo, now called the Democratic Republic of Congo, won its independence in 1960, Belgium’s scramble to extract rubber and other resources from the country incurred a frightful human cost, with millions dying of starvation and disease. Belgium also ruled neighboring Rwanda (which then included Burundi) from the early 20th century.

The museum’s reopening comes as Belgium tries to come to grips with its colonial legacy. Most of the collection of over 120,000 items comes from Congo, collected in colonial-era military campaigns, or by missionaries and scientific explorers.

The overhaul is the first change to the museum’s permanent collection since the 1950s. Many of the items on display — including masks, statues and preserved examples of Congolese wildlife — are the same as before, but they have been reordered and given new wall texts to highlight the problems of colonialism, and to allow the people of Congo and Rwanda to speak in their own words.

Problematic statues from the collection are displayed in a gallery called “A Museum in Motion” © Max Pinckers/The New York Times

The Echo Foundation 236 “Justice Is Not Negotiable”
On entering the museum, visitors now first see displays explaining Belgium’s colonial legacy and how the museum’s items were obtained. Alongside this is a room of racist statues, portraying Africans as savages, that were previously dotted throughout the museum. One, “Leopard Man,” shows a masked African man wearing a leopard skin about to attack another asleep on the ground.

By placing the statues in a side room, the museum is distancing itself from its past without denying it, Mr. Gryseels said.

There are also now rooms that allow Belgium’s African community to tell its story, as well as others devoted to colonialism’s legacy in Congo and Rwanda, from its impact on natural resources to climate change.

The renovation had one major difficulty, Mr. Gryseels said: The museum’s main building has colonial statues and symbols built into its walls. During a recent tour, he stopped in one room and pointed to some gold statues in alcoves. One was of black children clinging to a white missionary. Another was of a topless African woman dancing.

Mr. Gryseels recited the names of some of the statues: “Belgium Brings Civilization to Congo” and “Belgium Brings Security to Congo.” He sighed: “See what we’ve had to deal with?” The statues could not be removed because the building is protected by heritage laws, he added.

The museum’s solution has been to commission contemporary artworks to sit opposite or next the offensive items. In a memorial room that contains a wall with the names of Belgians who died in Congo, for instance, an artist uses a projector to superimpose the names of Congolese victims of colonialism.

The overhaul goes some way toward presenting objects from Africa in a more sensitive way. But, for some, the artifacts’ presence in a Belgian museum remains problematic. Following the publication of a French report last month that called on museums there to return items to their countries of origin, some in Belgium restated similar sentiments.

Mireille-Tsheusi Robert, president of Bamko-Cran, a nonprofit that fights racism in the country, said in a telephone interview that the organization has asked Belgium’s government to return all objects in the museum. “It’s a cemetery for my ancestry,” Ms. Robert said.
Pressure to return items is also coming from outside the country. On Dec. 1, President Joseph Kabila of Congo, told Belgium’s Le Soir newspaper he would likely ask for the restitution of Congo’s heritage in May, a month before a new national museum is due to open in Kinshasa, the capital. Mr. Kabila did not say which items would be requested and the director of its current national museum did not reply to requests for comment.

King Philippe of Belgium had been expected to appear at the renovated museum’s official reopening on Saturday, but pulled out because of the controversy. There was speculation that the king would use the event to offer an apology for Belgium’s colonial adventures, and many were disappointed by the decision.

Mr. Gryseels has been trying to change Belgium’s view of its past since being appointed to run the Africa Museum in 2001. In 2005, he held an exhibition that shocked many by showing what happened in the colonial period and how its legacy damages Congo still.

The renovation continues that work, but even some of the museum’s staff and advisers feel it does not go far enough. “It remains a Belgian museum, with a Belgian view on central Africa,” said Ayoko Mensah, the museum’s main adviser from Belgium’s African community. “What’s needed is a new collection.”

Aimé Mpane, a Congolese artist who now has a statue in the museum, said in an email that he wanted some objects to be returned. “It’s a way to recover our identity and stolen memories,” he said. He admitted Congo’s politics are unstable, but added, “I do not like this idea that we are not ready to manage our collection.”

Politicians need to be careful not to “fall into the trap of overnight decisions without careful reflection,” Mr. Gryseels said when asked about the issue. “People talk about Africa like it’s one country, but you can’t compare one with the other,” he said. “The situation is very different in, say, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda and Kenya, where you have good museums and basic infrastructure.” Countries like Congo need improvements in museums and security, he added.

The Africa Museum has experienced problems returning objects before, Mr. Gryseels said. Between 1976 and 1982, it sent back 114 objects to Congo. The country was then ruled by Mobutu Sese Seko, a dictator who renamed the country Zaire in a break with its colonial past. But after Mr. Mobutu’s regime collapsed and the country fell into civil war, most items went missing and are assumed to have found their way onto the black market. Mr. Gryseels said he is sometimes alerted about items for sale.

Aimé Mpane’s “New Breath, or Burgeoning Congo.”
Works of contemporary art are now displayed with colonial-era artifacts.
© Max Pinckers/The New York Times
Mr. Gryseels admitted that by highlighting such issues he could make himself unpopular among those seeking to return objects. But he said he should not be misunderstood: Objects should be returned where possible. “It’s not normal that 80 percent of African heritage is in Europe. We need to do something about it,” he added.

Mr. Gryseels said that in some cases it is better to first talk about long-term loans, or helping Congo build its own museums and staff to conserve objects.

For this weekend at least, Mr. Gryseels is more focused on his museum reopening than the restitution debate. Sitting in a meeting room in the museum’s small offices, he said will know the renovation is a success if Belgian visitors learn something new about Africa.

“They don’t necessarily have to walk away saying colonialism’s a bad thing, but they’ve reflected on it and they understand the consequences of it,” he said. “That’s what I want: A reflection.”

Milan Schreuer contributed reporting from Brussels.
Chapter 5 Discussion Questions

US/DRC Bilateral Relations

1. Evaluate the US’s role in the DRC? Overall, has it been positive or negative?
2. Is financial aid the most effective way to assist the DRC? Why or why not? What are some viable alternatives?
3. Does the US have a responsibility to aid the DRC? Why or why not?

Global Gag Rule & Women’s Health

1. How has the Global Gag Rule affected healthcare clinics abroad, even if they do not offer abortion services?
2. What are the dangers of politicizing issues that affect people’s health?

International Actors & The DRC

1. If you were responsible for setting the international community’s agenda for the DRC, what issue(s) would you focus on first? Why?
2. How does MONUSCO’s strategy of “protection through projection” attempt to create a safer environment for local populations? Is it effective?
3. Is it ethical for a peacekeeping force to have offensive capabilities? Why or why not?
4. Has MONUSCO’s presence in the DRC been more harmful than helpful? Explain.
5. Was the DRC justified in its actions regarding the European Union?
6. How might the DRC’s response to the EU affect the willingness of other international actors to get involved in the DRC?
7. How can an international organization like the ICC be effective in deterring crimes while simultaneously respecting the sovereignty of individual nations? Is it possible to do so?
8. Which NGO’s work in the DRC intrigues you the most? Why?

International Responses to Sexual Violence in the DRC

1. Why do you think the Red Cross felt the “listening houses” they established in the DRC would be helpful in addressing the problem?
2. How can the United Nations better address sexual violence in the DRC? Is a peacekeeping force enough?
4. Some feel that a resolution to the conflict lies within the Congo, not with the political will of international actors. However, given the role external figures (ex. mining companies, the United States, Belgium, etc.) have played in their history, can the resolution truly come from within?

Human Geography as it Relates to the DRC

1. In the 1960s, most Congolese migrants were elites traveling to study. How have the demographics of people exiting the Congo changed?
2. What are the push factors causing people to leave the DRC? What are the pull factors of the countries they seek to immigrate to?
3. Do you think Portland serves as a good example for the reception of immigrants? Why or why not?
4. Is Belgium making enough of an effort to address its colonial past and make retributions for it? How could they do better?
5. Do museums like Belgium’s Africa Museum have an obligation to return artifacts to their country of origin?
Families rest on cots last week at the emergency shelter for asylum seekers at the Portland Expo. Derek Davis/Staff Photographer
Chapter 6: Global Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is not confined to the DRC. While not always tied directly to conflict, women (and men) around the world face the threat of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. And these occurrences do not occur in a vacuum – they are a result of a pervasive culture of sexism and toxic masculinity. This culture remains so pervasive because of popular culture’s depictions of romance and “manly men,” which influences the way we act and how we perceive the acceptability of those actions. While we are certainly in need of more effective preventative policies, truly curbing the occurrence of sexual violence will require a lot more: it will require a change in our culture.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. Sexual Violence Around the World
   “Women in Global Conflict”
   “Sexual Harassment: How it Stands Around the World”
   “It’s Not Just O’Reilly and Weinstein: Sexual Violence is a ‘Global Pandemic’”

B. Toxic Masculinity & Sexist Language
   “What is Toxic Masculinity?”
   “Fight to End Rape in War Must Begin in Peacetime: Mukwege”
   “Challenging Toxic Masculinity in Schools and Society”
   “Foundations of Sexual Violence”

C. Rape Culture
   “Rape Culture is Real”
   “When Pop Culture Sells Dangerous Myths About Romance”
   “Emily Doe’s Victim Impact Statement, Brock Turner Case”

D. Discussion Questions
Women in Global Conflict

Congo Women
Thoraya Ahmed Obaid
http://congowomen.org

Violence against women occurs in every country, every culture, to women young and old, rich and poor. In the words of Sarah, a rape survivor from Sierra Leone: “That man had the gun and he had the power. I just wanted to survive.” Her words speak volumes about the reality of war for women.

Sexual violence soars in times of armed conflict. Women as old as grandmothers and as young as toddlers have suffered violent sexual abuse by military and rebel forces. As many as 500,000 women were raped in Rwanda; up to 50,000 in Bosnia and 64,000 in Sierra Leone. The list goes on: Darfur, Timor-Leste, Haiti, and the DRC.

Sexual violence is a cruel form of discrimination against women. At least one out of every three women in the world is likely to be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime; one in four is abused during pregnancy. The consequences, which can last a lifetime, may be as devastating as HIV/AIDS, suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, unwanted pregnancies, or fistula. In times of crisis, a lack of access to healthcare only heightens women’s vulnerability.

Sexual violence is not inevitable. Cultures can be transformed by the men and women who create and live within them day by day. Effective development programs are sensitive to culture and how deep-rooted attitudes can change.

The United Nations urges governments to take responsibility for their obligations and to respect international agreements and treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Geneva Conventions, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. It is the right of every human being to live free of violence and discrimination.
Any woman, in any country, will most likely be able to relate to this situation:

Walking down the street, alone, past a group of guys hanging out with nowhere to go. Her guard goes up, and preparation takes place. Many things could happen when she passes them.

It may be the words "hey, beautiful" or "hey, sexy," or being instructed to smile. It may be more intentional: standing in the way or blocking the path in hope of some interaction. It may get more aggressive, with hands reaching to inappropriate places.

The spectrum is far and wide, with one end harboring the potential for things to become more violent with physical abuse or rape.

"Rape is an extreme consequence of sexual harassment," said Rachel Jewkes, director of the What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls global program. But there are a "myriad of behaviors," she said.

The fact is that sexual harassment is part and parcel of daily life, particularly in public places, Jewkes believes. "It's used to curtail a woman's freedom."

In the streets of London, Mumbai, Washington or Lagos, the recent outpouring of stories from women using #MeToo and its many iterations has showed the uniformity of the problem -- irrespective of country and culture.

In 2017, the world has made one thing clear: Sexual harassment is everywhere.
When quantifying the problem on a global level, minimal levels of reporting and data limit what experts can provide to help prove -- and solve -- the problem. Based on what is available, here's how the numbers look globally.

**Asia**
"There is massive male sexual entitlement ... especially in south Asia," said Jewkes, who is now based in South Africa but researched male violence in Asia and the Pacific.

"Public spaces are run by men. They perceive an ownership of all public places," she said, adding that social norms enable men to feel this way and, in turn, harass women.

When the streets are unsafe, it provides an excuse to keep women and young girls at home or take them out of school, Jewkes added.

The gang rape of a young female student on a bus in New Delhi, India, in 2012 brought attention to the issue across that country. Research by international charity ActionAid in 2016 found that 44% of women surveyed in India had been groped in public.

Data from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, reveal that almost four in 10 women have experienced sexual or physical violence from a partner in their lifetime.

Numbers are similar in neighboring Bangladesh, where 84% of women in an Actionaid survey had experienced derogatory comments or sexual advances in public. More than half said they had been harassed by people operating public transportation. And more than half of women are estimated to have experienced physical or sexual abuse by a partner, according to UN Women.

In India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, "gender inequality is so marked," Jewkes said. The problem of entitlement is firmly articulated by society, she believes.

Jewkes highlights Bangladesh as an unusual example of where women who work are more likely to be abused by their husbands than women who don't work. Many Bangladeshi women work in garment factories, where managers and business partners can often expect women to be available to them.

With this comes tensions in marital relationships. "It's recognized as a problem, but it's deeply shameful," Jewkes said, leaving husbands to then fear their wives working.

To the east of the continent, in Cambodia and Vietnam, for example, the problem continues with more than three in four women experiencing harassment and sexual remarks, according to Actionaid reports. More than 40% of women reported feeling unsafe in places where many young men gather.
Middle East and North Africa
One region where the #MeToo campaign has been somewhat quieter is the Arab world. Experts believe that the burden of harassment and abuse there is as rife as in any other region but that the voices heard are few and far between.

"There are so many reasons behind this silence," said Lina Abirafeh, director of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, in Lebanon. "I've heard trickles ... (but) people are scared."

She highlighted the stigma and shame associated with speaking out about experiences with sexual harassment or assault.

Though shame and stigma could be argued to be universal, Abirafeh says it's particularly an issue in the Arab world, where women risk losing their jobs and family by coming forward. Some families may even kill their daughters if they are no longer virgins, she added.

"Patriarchy is still very strong here," she said. "There's entitlement and a feeling of 'we've always done this' and that sexual harassment is not wrong."

One group at significant risk is migrant and domestic workers, who have no voice, said Abirafeh. "There's a minuscule chance of justice if they report violence," she said.

In Egypt, a 2013 report by UN Women found that 99% of women surveyed across seven regions in the country had experienced some form of sexual harassment. A report by Harassmap -- a company whose app aims to allow women to highlight unsafe regions of the capital, Cairo -- found that more than 95% of women sampled in the city had been harassed.

Abirafeh added that the reasons for high levels of harassment and violence against women across the 22 Arab states "are diverse." Some countries actively practice female genital mutilation, and others are in conflict, during which reports show women are often victims of sexual violence or rape.

Child marriage is common in some countries, such as Somalia and Yemen, according to the Population Reference Bureau, and only recently have countries such as Jordan repealed legal loopholes that enabled rapists to walk free if they married their victims. Lebanon announced plans in 2016 to end its law, but eight other Arab states still have laws that let rapists off the hook on condition that they marry their victims, according to Human Rights Watch.

"We're not doing very well in the region overall," Abirafeh said. "It's all about power and control."

West and sub-Saharan Africa
Harassment affects millions of women across Africa, but in this region, sexual violence is more common.

More than 50% of women in Tanzania reported violence by their husbands or partners in a recent World Health Organization report, and that figure rose to 71% in Ethiopia.
In Nigeria, child marriage rates are more than 43%, according to UN Women, and six out of 10 children under 18 have experienced some form of physical, emotional and sexual violence, according to the National Population Commission in Nigeria.

In South Africa, just 12% of women feel safe from verbal or physical abuse in their own neighborhoods, and 80% surveyed had experienced some form of abuse in the past year, according to a 2015 ActionAid report.

"There is a great deal of sexual harassment, but it doesn't constrain a woman's movements in the same way" as in Asia, Jewkes said. "It's not an honor-based culture or about the chastity of a female by family members."

In southern Africa, violence against women is high. "There is a much higher threat of rape" compared with other regions, she said. "A lot of women are raped."

According to the South African organization Rape Crisis, more than 53,000 rapes were reported to the South African Police Services in 2014 and '15, translating to nearly 150 per day. Worse still, it adds, many cases go unreported. "It's a well-recognized African problem," Jewkes said.

In Zimbabwe, years of extreme poverty have fueled the number of girls forced into prostitution or marriage to bring money to their families, said Debbie Brennocks, co-founder of the Sandra Jones Center, a home for orphans and children in crisis. Orphans cared for by extended family are also at risk, particularly if men are unemployed and at home, she said.

"Girls in Zimbabwe are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault, child marriage and prostitution due to severe poverty. They cannot fight for themselves," Brennocks said.

"A girl takes a big risk when she reports sexual abuse. If she is living with relatives, she risks being kicked out of her home. If the abuser is the breadwinner and is jailed, the family will have no financial support and means of survival. When that is the case, the child is often beaten and treated very badly. If the girl becomes pregnant, she is often forced to have an abortion, often in terrible circumstances," she said.

As a result, Brennocks adds, #MeToo has not had much resonance in Zimbabwe either, with most women not knowing about it and those who do unlikely to use it due to this stigma and the potential consequences of coming forward.

**The US and Canada**
The burden of sexual harassment and abuse in the West has been made clearer than ever before with the numerous recent accusations against men in positions of power.

"And it's not just Hollywood. Viewing women as objects, property and having less value than men is something that all males have been taught, even by 'well-meaning men,' " Ted Bunch, co-founder of the violence prevention and male socialization group A Call to Men, previously said.
According to research by the nonprofit Stop Street Harassment, 65% of US women have experienced some form of street harassment, 23% have been sexually harassed, and 37% don't feel safe walking home at night.

But Jewkes adds that, compared with other regions of the world, harassment levels are less in North America, and rape is less common. Any cases that occur, for example in Canada, are more likely to be date or partner rape, she said.

According to the website Sex Assault Canada, 80% of sexual assault incidents occur in people's homes, and just 1% to 2% of date rapes are reported to the police.

Europe
Insight into the rates of abuse faced by women is much greater in Europe due to an extensive survey conducted in 2012 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

The results are the most comprehensive survey on women's experiences of violence worldwide, with revelations on the 28 European member states.

Sexual and physical abuse by both partners and non-partners was reported in all member countries, with Denmark having the highest numbers when all factors were combined: at 52% of women affected.

When broken down, the data show greater likelihood of physical violence against women in Scandinavia and more abuse specifically from partners in Latvia, Scandinavia and the UK.

In London in 2012, more than 40% of women had experienced sexual harassment in the street during the previous year. A separate report by Stop Street Harassment on the UK found that 35% of women had experienced unwanted sexual touching.

Latin America
This region faces the same challenges as Asia, in terms of harassment and abuse being somewhat normalized by culture and society. Many laugh the issue off, including police, leaving women
unable to speak up, said Yeliz Osman, UN Women's Safe Cities program coordinator for Mexico.

"It's normalized by both men and women," Osman said. Women don't report it, passersby don't intervene, and police don't take it seriously, she said.

Research by ActionAid in Brazil found 86% of women surveyed had been subjected to harassment or violence in public, and worryingly, 84% reported having been sexually harassed by the police.

When it comes to Mexico, where Osman is based, she adds that levels of harassment are very high. "It's around eight to nine women out of 10, depending on the city," she said.

She believes Mexico also faces the issue of male entitlement, and when this is combined with poor infrastructure, overcrowded transport and women having to work late or unusual hours, the opportunities are plentiful.

Add in impunity and lack of awareness and education on the problem, and you get high rates of abuse.

In Mexico City, 96% of women surveyed by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography had experienced some form of sexual violence in public spaces, and 58% had been groped.

"Laws also don't address it," Osman said. "There are a whole range of structural factors."

**Australia and the Pacific**

Harassment and violence have not skipped the societies on the edges of the Pacific.

Despite cultural and developmental differences, Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea all have high proportions of women facing harassment as part of their day-to-day.

Australian data suggest street harassment to be the bigger issue, with 87% of women surveyed by the Australia Institute reporting at least one form of verbal or physical street harassment and 40% not feeling safe walking in their own neighborhoods at night.

In Papua New Guinea, the baseline is more violent, with 77% of women experiencing some form of sexual violence on buses or when waiting for buses. In Fiji, data are more scarce, but UN data show sexual violence from a partner affecting 64% of women.

In Papua New Guinea, "there are very high rates of non-partner rape ... often in public places," Jewkes said. She believes the poor education system and extreme poverty feed the problem. "Employment of women is very limited; they cannot move around..... There is enormous risk of being raped in forests."
All three experts believe now is the time to ride the wave of global attention on this issue, which has otherwise been an ignored reality for women for centuries.

Osman highlighted that over the past decade, laws have been introduced in some countries to prevent and respond to harassment, but ensuring that they are implemented is another challenge, she said.

More emphasis on what works, and more investment to make it happen, is the way forward, she believes.

The overarching issue globally that needs to be changed, experts agree, is the entitlement shown and perceived by men. "This is a massive driver," Jewkes said. "It comes down to fundamental social norms around gender relations."
It’s Not Just O’Reilly and Weinstein: Sexual Violence is a ‘Global Pandemic’

The Conversation
Valerie Dobiesz and Julia Brooks
October 24, 2017
https://www.scientificamerican.com

The recent exposure of widespread sexual predation in the American media industry, from Harvey Weinstein to Bill O'Reilly, has elicited shock and sparked debate on violence against women in the United States.

Sexual harassment isn’t the exclusive domain of show biz big shots. It remains alarmingly prevalent nationwide, even as other crimes are generally decreasing nationwide.

In the U.S., a 2006 study found that 27 percent of college women reported some form of forced sexual contact – ranging from kissing to anal intercourse – after enrolling in school. This sexual violence is heavily underreported, with just 20 percent of female student victims reporting the crime to law enforcement.

Nor is sexual harassment limited to the United States. The U.N. has called gender-based violence a “global pandemic.” As experts in emergency medicine and legal research at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, we believe it’s important to acknowledge that this issue transcends national borders and class boundaries to touch the lives of roughly 33 percent of all women worldwide.

A world of trouble

According to World Health Organization estimates, one in three women worldwide will experience either physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, many of them before the age of 15.

In fact, for many rural women, their first sexual encounter will be a forced one. Some 17 percent of women in rural Tanzania, 21 percent in Ghana, 24 percent in Peru, 30 percent in Bangladesh and 40 percent in South Africa report that their first sexual experience was nonconsensual.

Intimate partner violence is also pervasive globally. In one World Health Organization study, 22 to 25 percent of women surveyed in cities in England, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Zimbabwe reported that a boyfriend or husband had committed some form of sexual violence against them. Globally, up to 55 percent of women murdered are killed by their partners.

Violence against women takes many forms, ranging from psychological abuse to the kind of sexual predation, sexual assault and rape allegedly committed by Harvey Weinstein. Honor killings, physical attacks, female infanticide, genital cutting, trafficking, forced marriages and sexual harassment at work and school are also considered gender-based violence.
Rates range from country to country – from 15 percent in Japan to 71 percent in Ethiopia – but violence is, in effect, a ubiquitous female experience.

**Violence against women around the world**

Gender-based violence, which includes sexual predation, touches women in every country in the world and every socioeconomic group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO region</th>
<th>Countries included</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean</td>
<td>Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia,塞尔维亚,土耳其,乌兹别克斯坦</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
<td>Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Pacific</td>
<td>Cambodia, China, Philippines, Samoa, Vietnam</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-income</td>
<td>Australia, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Korea</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sexual violence is committed at particularly high rates in **crisis settings** like war zones, refugee camps and disaster zones.

In these places, even humanitarian workers are not immune. Dyan Mazurana and her colleagues at Tufts University found that many female development-aid staffers in places such as South Sudan, Afghanistan and Haiti had experienced disturbing rates of sexual assault, often perpetrated by their own colleagues.

**Explaining sexual violence**

So what’s driving this pervasive phenomenon? Research reveals that there are multiple causes of sexual violence, among them gender inequality and power differentials between men and women.

For example, sexual violence occurs more frequently in cultures where violence is widely accepted and where beliefs about family honor, sexual purity and male sexual entitlement are strongly held.

Even in many countries that rank well on gender equality, including in the United States, weak legal sanctions against perpetrators of sexual violence can encourage and effectively condone such behavior.
So can cultural acceptance. Weinstein’s sexual predatory behavior was longstanding and well-known within the film industry, yet he was allowed to continue his abuse with impunity – until women began speaking up.

Likewise, Fox News renewed Bill O'Reilly’s contract even after he and the company had made at least six multi-million-dollar settlements with women who filed sexual harassment claims against him. Awareness of a problem is one thing; taking action is quite another.

Men with lower educational levels, or who have been exposed to maltreatment or family violence as children, are more likely to commit sexual violence themselves.

That’s because violence begets violence, a relationship that’s abundantly clear in the kinds of conflict zones where we work. Mass rape has long been used as a weapon of war, and has been well-documented during conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia and South Sudan.

Among the most salient cases are the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides. According to the U.N.’s High Commissioner for Refugees, up to 500,000 Rwandan women were systematically raped in 1994 as part of an ethnic cleansing strategy, while tens of thousands of Bosnian women and girls were systematically raped between 1992 and 1995.

**Psychological trauma**

Wherever and however it happens, violence against women and girls poses a major public health problem for women and their communities. Some 42 percent of women who experience intimate partner violence reported an injury – including bruises, abrasions, cuts, punctures, broken bones and injuries to the ears and eyes – as a consequence of that abuse. Women who suffer violence are also 1.5 times more likely to have sexually transmitted diseases like HIV, syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhea, twice as likely to experience depression and drinking problems and twice as likely to have an abortion. Violence against women is also closely associated with suicide and self-harm.

If there’s any silver lining to the Weinstein and O'Reilly scandals, it’s that in coming out against these high-profile men, dozens of women have helped to highlight not just the prevalence of sexual violence in the United States but also the societal norms that silence women and allow abusers to go unchecked.

Humanitarian organizations from the World Health Organization to the U.N. to the U.S. Agency for International Development have recognized that gender-based violence is not just a women’s issue. Addressing it requires working with men and boys, too, to counter the cultures of toxic masculinity that encourage or tolerate sexual violence.

After all, women’s rights are human rights, so sexual violence is everyone’s problem to solve.

The fact is, societies with high rates of sexual violence are also more likely to be violent and unstable. Research shows that the best predictor of a state’s peacefulness is how well its women are treated.
“By far the worst thing we do to males — by making them feel they have to be hard — is that we leave them with very fragile egos.” — Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, award-winning author

For decades, we used terms like “macho,” “red-blooded” or “machismo” to describe the kind of hulking masculinity that men were, on some level, expected to aspire to.

Now we have “toxic masculinity” — an expression once relegated to women’s studies classrooms that suddenly seems to be everywhere.

Last week, the razor company Gillette released an advertisement titled “We Believe: The Best Men Can Be,” a spin on its longtime slogan “The Best a Man Can Get.” The ad challenges viewers to confront #MeToo and issues of “toxic masculinity” that manifest in acts like bullying and catcalling. It suggests that men abandon the “boys will be boys” mentality and instead hold other men accountable for misogynistic attitudes and behavior.
While the spot got plenty of love — it has been viewed about 25 million times on YouTube and 40 million times on Twitter — it also unleashed a torrent of backlash, including calls to boycott Gillette.

It came days after the American Psychological Association released its first-ever guidelines for psychologists working with boys and men who are socialized to conform to “traditional masculinity ideology” — which it says can hinder them from exploring what it means to be male — as well as an article in The Times about a new breed of straight male rockers who are protesting old notions of manhood.

“All these norms that we see aren’t normal at all,” said Joe Talbot, the lead singer of the British band Idles. “It’s a giant lie.”

So what does “toxic masculinity,” or “traditional masculinity ideology,” mean?

Toxic masculinity is what can come of teaching boys that they can’t express emotion openly; that they have to be “tough all the time”; that anything other than that makes them “feminine” or weak. (No, it doesn’t mean that all men are inherently toxic.)

It’s these cultural lessons, according to the A.P.A., that have been linked to “aggression and violence,” leaving boys and men at “disproportionate risk for school discipline, academic challenges and health disparities,” including cardiovascular problems and substance abuse.

“Men are overrepresented in prisons, are more likely than women to commit violent crimes and are at greatest risk of being a victim of violent crime,” the A.P.A. wrote.

Wade Davis, a former N.F.L. player who now speaks to men about gender inequality and masculinity at companies like Google, Netflix and the N.F.L., said that there are no better messengers to help men confront these issues than other men.

“I don’t think it’s the work of women,” he told me recently. “I think it’s the work of men like myself who need to be talking to our brothers, fathers, our friends.”

It’s individual men, he continued, who are “going to have to, at some point, decide how to define manhood and masculinity for himself.”
Fight to End Rape in War Must Begin in Peacetime: Mukwege

France24
September 12, 2018
https://www.france24.com

Mukwege who has treated tens of thousands of victims of sexual violence says he has been heartened by the #MeToo movement © AFP

Congolese doctor Denis Mukwege may have won his Nobel prize for his work to end sexual violence in war, but the crusading surgeon said the groundwork for equality must be laid in peacetime, as he praised movements like #MeToo.

Mukwege, whose work has made him a global expert on gang rape in conflict, will on Monday be presented with the Nobel Peace Prize that he shares with Yazidi activist Nadia Murad.

The 63-year-old has seen a lifetime's worth of horrors at his Panzi hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo's war-torn east, which he set up in 1999 and has treated the wounds of tens of thousands of women and girls, even babies.

"When one does not fight against an evil, it is like a cancer, it spreads and destroys the whole society," he said, noting that few perpetrators are ever brought to justice.

While atrocities against women are often committed in conflict, Mukwege said that even countries like Norway -- which often tops equality rankings -- and France still have work to do, because "it is in peacetime that men forge a negative, disrespectful" view of women.
"We must change masculinity, moving from toxic masculinity, domineering masculinity to positive masculinity that promises gender equality," he said, calling for schools and families to play a greater role in encouraging respect at a young age.

Mukwege said he had been heartened by the #MeToo movement, which has spread across the globe after sparking in the United States over a year ago in response to accusations of sexual abuse and harassment by powerful men in the entertainment industry and other sectors.

"If our society wants to change things, there are steps to be taken, changes to be made and I am very happy today to see the silence broken. It is an ultimate step to break the taboo in relation to rape," he said.

Fellow laureate Murad has become a tireless campaigner for justice for Yazidis since surviving captivity, gang rape and forced marriage under the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria where it targeted her Kurdish-speaking community.

Mukwege said while the Nobel prize itself will not have a "magical effect" on behaviour, he still hoped it could help improve the lives of women, not just in DR Congo, but also those in other conflicts like Syria, or threatened by Boko Haram.

"The world must do more," he said.

- 'Tip of the iceberg' -

The Nobel laureate lives under armed guard at his hospital after an attack in 2012.

He does not like to talk of his work in terms of statistics, because "each woman raped is one woman too many" and he fears people have become desensitised to the swelling toll.

But he said more than 50,000 women and girls had been treated at the hospital for injuries from sexual violence, though he stresses this is "just the tip of the iceberg", accounting only for those able to get to his hospital. Many are not able to make the journey.

Mukwege has emerged as an excoriating critic of President Joseph Kabila, set to be replaced in December 23 elections in a nation that has not had a peaceful transfer of power since independence from Belgium in 1960.

But he said he was not tempted by politics at the moment.

His focus will stay on his work at the hospital, he said, despite the publicity of the Nobel award.

"The Nobel Prize found me in the operating room. I will try to stay there as much as possible," he said.
If there is a silver lining to the increasing number of allegations of sexual misconduct coming out of Hollywood, it is that they shine new light on the issue of gender inequality and have started a national conversation about toxic masculinity, gender and power. It is a conversation that education professionals should listen to closely. After decades of working to expand opportunities for women, there are signs of progress toward gender equality. Women now earn the majority of bachelor degrees and one-third to one-half of all law and medical degrees (US Census Bureau, 2012). They are represented in boardrooms, newsrooms and classrooms and occupy powerful positions in government, business, science and arts. Young women can play sports and take high-level math courses and pursue ambitious careers often without the kinds of hurdles that their mothers and grandmothers faced. Schools have played an important role in these developments through improving access to high-level classes, encouraging girls to excel in subjects dominated by men, growing athletic programs and developing curricula that include women’s contributions in diverse fields. However, despite these efforts, gender inequality, bias and violence remain alive and well in schools and in the American culture more broadly. The news unspooling from the Harvey Weinstein scandal, the story of a powerful man accused of harassing and assaulting dozens of women over the course of decades without repercussions, is the latest reminder of the depths this inequality reaches. It highlights the magnitude of our failure, as a society, to address toxic, simplified masculinity and the unequal power dynamics on which it thrives.

As a society, we tend to think of inequality only in terms of those on the losing side, creating a significant blind spot with regard to power. In this way of thinking, gender inequality is considered a women’s problem, something that does not involve men and that can be addressed by focusing on women alone. Hence, the decades of trying to address gender inequality through programs and policies aimed at advancing and empowering women and girls, but with very little attention paid to examining masculinity; how we raise boys and think about boys and men; or how policies, institutions and culture create and support the very inequalities we are trying to mitigate. This lopsided focus on femininity and women addresses only one part of the problem and, therefore, renders any progress partial as well. It leaves the power dynamics that support gender inequality unexamined and firmly in place. Further, it allows dominant or toxic masculinity, masculinity based on simplified norms and understandings of traditionally masculine characteristics such as violence, physical strength, suppression of emotion and devaluation of women (Connell, 2005; Pascoe, 2005; Posadas, 2017) to flourish unfettered. The result is a culture that continues to award power and status to men (particularly white men), despite how they behave or treat others, and that offers to women a complex mixture of
opportunity and constraint, empowerment and subjugation, which they must navigate on a daily basis.

There are a myriad of examples of this tension in nearly every corner of our culture and society. Women can be leaders in business, industry and higher education, positions that require, even celebrate, ambition, confidence and assertiveness, but they must also adhere to the conflicting mandate that women be nice, nurturing, self-sacrificing and not too demanding. Women can participate in, and even excel at, athletics, but they do so in a culture that demands that they also conform to dominant standards of beauty and heterosexual desirability. These double standards persist because of our collective failure to address gender inequality as a cultural problem, not simply as a women’s issue, and to challenge toxic masculinity and the power hierarchies that create and support it. Sexual assault and harassment are perhaps the most heinous examples of the consequences of this failure. While most men do not engage in such behavior, most women (e.g. athletes, executives, researchers and artists) experience it, fear it and/or learn to adjust their behavior to avoid it–another symptom of the cultural sickness.

In his statement following The New York Times article that first broke the story of his decades long use of sexual intimidation, harassment and assault, Weinstein dusted off an old scapegoat and blamed his actions on the past, on having grown up in a time “when all the rules about behavior and workplaces were different” (The New York Times, 2017). This excuse has many problems, including that it attempts to deny any personal responsibility for his actions. But it is also a powerful justification because it draws on the collective wish that things will get better simply through the march of time and generational change. It is the same impulse that insists that children will not make the same mistakes as their parents and that the next generation will know and be better, stronger, more just than the one before it. It is a wish that allows us to forgive ourselves for our shortcomings and releases us from the responsibility to make the world a better place, now, ourselves. It is also a wish that just isn’t going to come true. While Weinstein blames his actions on coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, there are plenty of examples of younger men, who grew up in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, engaging in the same behavior and benefitting from the same systems of power that do not hold them accountable for denigrating, intimidating and abusing women and, in fact, even reward them for it. Clearly, despite some progress toward expanding women’s (and, to an extent, men’s) roles and opportunities, each new generation is not doing better than the one before it and the progression of time will not, by itself, undo what decades of socialization have wrought.

**Challenging gender and sexual inequality in schools**

Which is why it is important for educators, in particular, to think about masculinity and to consider the roles that schools can play in shaping conceptualizations of masculinity and gendered patterns of power. Schools are powerful socializing institutions, which is why they have been at the forefront of efforts to address gender and sexual inequality for years and why they have been successful in helping facilitate change in this area. Despite the lopsided, and therefore, limited, nature of their focus, educational programs for girls and women have been successful at encouraging, empowering and preparing young women to take on expanded roles in society. Women’s school-based athletic programs transformed how the US society views women athletes. School-based efforts to encourage girls to take high-level classes (including math and
science) gave young women the tools to take advantage of expanded access to higher education. Initiatives and developments like these added “strong” and “smart” to the list of things women can be and made a tremendous difference in society. Schools can take on the same kind of leadership role in expanding ideas about masculinity and men’s role in society.

**Challenging toxic masculinity in schools**

Schools around the USA and the world have already begun to take on this challenge, mostly in higher education. Organizations like Men Can Stop Rape (mencanstoprape.org) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Men’s Project (msc.wisc.edu/mens-project) are notable examples of programs aimed at expanding ideas about masculinity and involving men in anti-sexist work. The Men’s Project at UW-Madison focuses on intersectionality and the complexity of masculine identities and helps participants develop the perspectives and skills necessary to challenge simplified definitions of masculinity and take on leadership roles in preventing gender-based violence and discrimination. While this program is targeted for undergraduate young men, many of its goals and methods can be adopted in k-12 schools. Finding ways to promote healthy masculinity early and to teach boys and young men to recognize, reject and challenge simplified, toxic masculinity is essential for creating cultural change. Educators of all types can and should be involved in this work, which includes simple steps that educators across disciplines can engage daily in their schools.

**Highlight women’s achievements in curricula and in the classroom**

Including women’s achievements and stories in the official curriculum has been promoted for decades as a way to work towards gender equality and empower young women in the classroom. It remains a powerful way of providing more diverse representation and teaching students (girls and boys) about women’s achievements, which are more likely to be omitted from formal curricula. But teaching about women’s achievements is not only good for girls. It is also a powerful way for boys to see examples of women who are intelligent, capable leaders, images that contradict the ones of women as subordinate and sexualized that are most often promoted in popular media. This lesson can be extended by ensuring that girls in the classroom are receiving equal time to ask questions, participate in discussions and receive praise for academic achievement. While girls receive higher grades and graduate in greater numbers than boys, they are also less likely to speak in class or receive teacher attention, which can help promote the idea that girls and women can be smart, but should also be submissive.

**Explicitly teach and model complex masculinity**

Masculinity is diverse and complex, shaped by an individual’s racial, social class, religious and cultural identities, as well as by their experiences. However, the image of masculinity youth encounter in the media, popular culture and even in textbooks and other curricular resources is often dangerously oversimplified and focused on aspects of toxic masculinity such as physical strength, dominance and heterosexual prowess. Provide boys of all ages and grade levels with diverse examples of men and of masculinity and encourage them to identify and explore the varied and complex aspects of their own identities. Modeling is a powerful teaching technique that teachers, coaches and administrators can use every day. Teachers can model respect for all
genders and sexualities, demonstrate vulnerability, express emotion, sensitivity and empathy and create learning spaces and opportunities in which all their students can do the same. This may be particularly important for teachers who are men to demonstrate to boys and young men in schools.

Explicitly teach about sexist speech, behavior and gender-based violence

For students who have grown up in a culture saturated with sexist images (of women and men), language and patterns of behavior, it can be difficult to identify them as anything other than normal or, even, natural. This normalization of gender inequality influences how people think about and treat others. Students use sexist language and behave in discriminatory ways often without realizing it, but can be encouraged to change their behavior is taught to think about it more critically. For example, teaching students the homophobic nature of saying “that’s so gay” or the sexist underpinnings of calling someone a “pussy” as a way of marking them as weak or timid can make them reconsider their language and change their behavior. Be explicit and straightforward in these lessons. Make them part of official classroom discussion. Challenging this kind of language and behavior is essential, and so is explicitly teaching students why it is unacceptable and why they should challenge it in themselves and others.

This goes for sexist language and behavior of all types, including gender-based violence such as sexual harassment and assault. Educators can take the lead in changing how we, as a society, think and talk about gendered violence, which is an important step in decreasing its occurrence. For example, explicitly teaching against common justifications for sexual assault that blame the victim, rather than the perpetrator, can provide students with the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about these common discourses, which they likely encounter regularly in the media. Having a safe, structured environment in which to challenge these ideas with the help of a knowledgeable adult can teach students to think critically about gendered violence and power, a necessary skill in developing new understandings of sexual assault and harassment that consider their relation to power and that hold perpetrators responsible for their actions.

Challenge sexist speech and behavior ...

Here, too, modeling can play a transformative role. Educators send powerful messages to students through which language and behaviors they challenge and discipline and which they let go without comment or repercussion. Paying attention to, naming and challenging sexist and homophobic language and behavior in the moment are some of the most powerful ways that educators can teach young people to think and behave differently. Again, it is important to interrupt this behavior with the aim of teaching young people to know and do better. This means stopping it in the moment, while allowing time, when able, to engage in discussion with students about their language choices or actions in a way that is challenging, but also respectful of students and mindful of the learning process. When practiced on a school-wide level by teachers, coaches, administrators and others, these actions can change a school’s culture from one that accepts, or even tacitly encourages, these behaviors, to one that rejects them and holds students accountable for a higher standard of conduct. Knowing and following through on school and district antidiscrimination and disciplinary policies is an important part of this action.

The Echo Foundation 262 “Justice Is Not Negotiable”
students understand that there will be consequences for their actions, they are more likely to take these policies seriously.

... and teach boys to do the same

One of the most illuminating and frustrating aspects of the Harvey Weinstein case is the number of men, some of them very powerful, who knew about his actions and did not challenge them. Many have admitted to hearing rumors, many others heard first hand accounts from women colleagues, friends, even partners, but no one came forward or took tangible steps to hold him accountable for such behavior, such as refusing to work with him or his company. This level of silent complicity is, perhaps, one of the most insidious ways that toxic masculinity operates, escaping censure and even garnering rewards for men who embrace it. We are left to wonder what would have happened if even one man had been willing to use his power to challenge such behavior.

While it is important for educators to challenge sexist behavior, they cannot be everywhere and when such messages are received from one’s peers they can be much more powerful than when they come from authority figures. But standing up to one’s peers is incredibly difficult. Teach students to recognize problematic language and behavior. Provide them with the tools to challenge their peers when they hear disparaging or derogatory language or witness discriminatory or harassing behavior. Construct opportunities for students to practice these actions through role play or discussion exercises. Preparing students, particularly boys, to challenge sexist behaviors and to accept responsibility for doing so, is perhaps one of the most important ways to teach against gender discrimination and violence and to provide young men with the means to become part of the solution.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the perspectives and ideas offered here are not new. They describe established understandings and entrenched problems. The prescriptions for change also are not new. They are simple methods shown in the past to be effective in challenging inequality in schools and society. And that is the point. While educators have taken on gender inequality in the past, for the most part, we have not stepped forward to take the same kind of lead in challenging toxic masculinity and the gendered patterns of power that both support and are supported by it. The actions outlined here provide a blueprint for tackling this long-standing problem that’s time has come. Modeling and teaching diverse, complex masculinities, explicitly teaching about and against sexist language, behavior and gender-based violence and continuing to include women’s voices and achievements in the curriculum and the classroom can all help bring about healthier, more complex understandings of masculinity and femininity; the kind that can support more equitable relationships, social patterns and institutions. It is essential that men are involved, and take leadership roles, in this work and that educators teach young men and boys to recognize and challenge simplified conceptions of their own and others’ identities. Supporting young men in their work as allies in the fight against gender inequality and violence is, perhaps, the most important and revolutionary role that educators can play at this moment.
Most know that there are certain jokes that cross the line. Regardless, many of us still go along with the sexist, homophobic, gender-based, or otherwise derogatory jokes that people around us make, most often for reasons of social preservation.

While it is important to know how to intervene and challenge these situations, it is equally important to understand why sexist jokes and language have serious implications. The structure of sexual violence can be thought of as a pyramid with the foundation of violence grounded in jokes that dehumanize, “other,” or mock genders.

Offensive jokes, degrading language, and objectification facilitate an environment in which acts of violence such as rape, abuse, and assault become more permissive. Although jokes and language may not directly cause violence, they do affect how we see the issue—from how we
treat survivors to the structure of our legal system. An environment in which jokes about the
inferiority of women or the dominance of men are commonplace can normalize acts of violence.

By taking away the power at the base of the pyramid, it makes it harder for the acts at the top to
manifest. It starts with changing our culture and creating a space that is not conducive to
violence. We need to clean the cracks, pick the weeds, and scrub the floors until we create an
environment where it’s difficult for roots of violence to take hold in the first place.

The easiest place to start is within your own friend group. You might have that one friend or
group of friends that thinks they need to be the party’s jester and resort to cheap jokes. If that
person truly is your friend, say something about it. You hold a level of respect and a friend is
more likely to listen to you. Let that person know that you are not okay with what is being said
and you think they should stop—it’s embarrassing to make jokes of that nature.

When it comes to situations where you don’t know the person making an inappropriate or crude
joke: use your best judgement. If you’re not sure how the person will react to direct
confrontation, make a point by not laughing, leaving the conversation, or changing the subject. In
any instance, do not make it seem that you are okay with it.

From there, it’s possible to extend your skills to embody all forms of inclusiveness. Work to
create an environment of safety and comfort for not just all genders but also all sexual
orientations, races, and intersectional identities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language to Use</th>
<th>Language Not to Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>humankind</td>
<td>mankind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chair or chairperson</td>
<td>chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first year student</td>
<td>freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>firefighter</td>
<td>fireman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flight attendant</td>
<td>stewardess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>police officer</td>
<td>policeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>congressperson</td>
<td>congressman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From The University of Pittsburgh
Rape Culture is Real

Time
Zerlina Maxwell
March 27, 2014
https://time.com/

“You were drinking, what did you expect?”

Those were the first words that I heard when I went to someone I trusted for support after my roommate’s boyfriend raped me eight years ago. When I came forward to report what happened, instead of support, many well-meaning people close to me asked me questions about what I was wearing, if I had done something to cause the assault, or if I had been drinking. These questions about my choices the night of my assault — as opposed to the choices made by my rapist — were in some ways as painful as the violent act itself. I had stumbled upon rape culture: a culture in which sexual violence is the norm and victims are blamed for their own assaults.

Last week, in an essay here at Time, Caroline Kitchens wrote that rape culture as a theory over-hyped by “hysterical” feminists. Emboldened by a disappointing and out of touch statement by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), Kitchens writes, “Recently, rape-culture theory has migrated from the lonely corners of the feminist blogosphere into the mainstream. In January, the White House asserted that we need to combat campus rape by ‘[changing] a culture of passivity and tolerance in this country, which too often allows this type of violence to persist…’ Tolerance for rape? Rape is a horrific crime, and rapists are despised.” Kitchens goes on to downplay the problem of sexual violence saying, “Though rape is certainly a serious problem, there’s no evidence that it’s considered a cultural norm.”

Is 1 in 5 American women surviving rape or attempted rape considered a cultural norm? Is 1 in 6 men being abused before the age of 18 a cultural norm? These statistics are not just shocking, they represent real people. Yet, these millions of survivors and allies don’t raise their collective voices to educate America about our culture of rape because of fear. Rape culture is a real and serious, and we need to talk about it. Simply put, feminists want equality for everyone and that begins with physical safety.

“If so many millions of women were getting carjacked or kidnapped, we’d call it a public crisis. That we accept it as normal, even inevitable, is all the evidence I need,” Jaclyn Friedman, author Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape told me, in response to Kitchens’ piece. “If we already despise rapists, why are they so rarely held accountable in any way?,” Friedman asks. An analysis by RAINN found that 97% of rapists never spend a single day in jail for their crimes. “What we really despise is the idea of rapists: a terrifying monster lurking in the bushes, waiting to
pounce on an innocent girl as she walks by,” Friedman says. “But actual rapists, men who are usually known to (and often loved by) their victims? Men who are sometimes our sports heroes, political leaders, buddies, boyfriends and fathers? Evidence suggests we don’t despise them nearly as much as we should.”

In response to Kitchens’ piece, I started the hashtag #RapeCultureIsWhen on Twitter hoping that it would spark a public dialogue about rape culture and shift the conversation away from the myths that shame so many survivors into silence. This conversation is meant to be a tool to educate people about what rape culture is, how to spot it, and how to combat it. The hashtag immediately took off and trended nationally for hours on the strength of personal stories and advocates sharing information about victim blaming, bystander intervention, and healthy masculinity. The level of engagement is an illustration of how many people wanted to speak out about this issue many are too afraid to touch. The following statements are made up of contributions the #RapeCultureIsWhen hashtag as well as the myriad personal stories of survivors with the courage to speak out:

- Rape culture is when women who come forward are questioned about what they were wearing.
- Rape culture is when survivors who come forward are asked, “Were you drinking?”
- Rape culture is when people say, “she was asking for it.”
- Rape culture is when we teach women how to not get raped, instead of teaching men not to rape.
- Rape culture is when the lyrics of Robin Thicke’s ‘Blurred Lines’ mirror the words of actual rapists and is still the number one song in the country.
- Rape culture is when the mainstream media mourns the end of the convicted Steubenville rapists’ football careers and does not mention the young girl who was victimized.
- Rape culture is when cyberbullies take pictures of sexual assaults and harass their victims online after the fact, which in the cases of Audrie Pott and Rehtaeh Parsons tragically ended in their suicides.
- Rape culture is when, in 31 states, rapists can legally sue for child custody if the rape results in pregnancy.
- Rape culture is when college campus advisers tasked with supporting the student body, shame survivors who report their rapes. (Annie Clark, a campus activist, says an administrator at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill told her when she reported her rape, “Well… Rape is like football, if you look back on the game, and you’re the quarterback, Annie… is there anything you would have done differently?”)
- Rape culture is when colleges are more concerned with getting sued by assailants than in supporting survivors. (Or at Occidental College, where students and administrators who advocated for survivors were terrorized for speaking out against the school’s insufficient reporting procedures.)
It’s no surprise that we would refuse to acknowledge that rape and sexual violence is the norm, not the exception. It’s no surprise because most of us would rather believe that the terrible realities we hear about aren’t real or that, at least, we can’t do anything about it.
The truth is ugly. But by denying the obvious we continue to allow rapists to go unpunished and leave survivors silenced.
Edward Cullen. Chuck Bass. Lloyd Dobler. Spike from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. That guy from *Love Actually* with the sign. The lead singers of emo bands with their brooding lyrics. Many of the romantic heroes that made me swoon in my youth followed a pattern and, like a *Magic Eye* picture, only with a little distance did the shape of it pop out to me. All of these characters in some way crossed, or at least blurred, the lines of consent, aggressively pursuing women with little or no regard for their desires. But these characters’ actions, and those of countless other leading men across the pop-culture landscape, were more likely to be portrayed as charming than scary.

Romance often involves a bit of pursuit—someone has to make a move, after all. And there’s certainly a spectrum of pursuit: Sometimes supposedly romantic gestures in pop culture veer toward the horrendous or illegal; sometimes they’re just a bit creepy or overzealous. But revisiting some of these fictional love stories can leave one with the understanding that intrusive attention is proof of men’s passion, and something women should welcome. In a number of cases, male characters who were acknowledged to have gone too far—by, for example, actually forcing themselves on women—were quickly forgiven, or their actions compartmentalized and forgotten.
I grew up watching movies in which women found it flattering when their pursuers showed up uninvited to hold a boombox under their window, or broke into their bedrooms to watch them sleep, or confessed their feelings via posterboard while their love interest’s husband sat in the next room. So I found it flattering, too. I sang along with The Killers’ “Change Your Mind” (“If the answer is no, can I change your mind?”) and Fall Out Boy’s “7 Minutes in Heaven” (“I keep telling myself I’m not the desperate type, but you’ve got me looking in through blinds”) without a second thought about what the lyrics implied.

Allegations of sexual harassment have been pouring out of the entertainment industry, among others, in recent months. But while predatory male behavior has been condoned and covered up behind the scenes, it’s also been glorified on screen and on the page and on the radio. As my colleague Lenika Cruz put it to me: “Rape culture, actually, is all around.” The narratives of a culture help to set its norms. Research has already found that romantic comedies can normalize stalking behavior. It’s not difficult, then, to imagine that toxic love stories can also normalize coercion. That they can make people—women, especially—question when and whether their boundaries have really been violated, when they should be flattered and when they should be afraid.

It’s worth beginning with the more shocking examples of how pop culture condones and redeems violating behavior: In a number of cases, sexual assault is treated as the start of a love story. On General Hospital, the longest-running soap opera in production, the tale of the “supercouple” Luke and Laura started in an October 1979 episode—when Luke raped Laura at the disco where they both worked. Eventually the show began recalling the incident as a “seduction” rather than a rape, and the two fell for each other. They later married in a record-making 1981 episode watched by 30 million people. The rape was “romanticized to my great regret,” Anthony Geary, the actor who played Luke, has said. But in the same interview he described Luke as “a classically romantic character, a classic anti-hero.” General Hospital portrayed sexual assault not as a definitive shattering of trust, but as a foundation on which a relationship can be built—a model embraced by other shows and films as well.

For example, in the 1982 sci-fi classic Blade Runner, the protagonist Rick Deckard at one point forces himself on an android named Rachael. But the moment is portrayed as romantic—it’s even soundtracked with a sexy ’80s saxophone. Casey Cipriani at Slate writes of the film’s 2017 sequel, Blade Runner 2049, that “a big part of the new Blade Runner’s plot relies on the belief that Deckard and Rachael fell in love in the first, [but] their ‘love’ is the result of a coercive sex scene.” Similarly, in the first season of Game of Thrones, the relationship between Daenerys Targaryen and Khal Drogo—which is portrayed as a great love, one through which Daenerys eventually comes into her own as a ruler—begins with a wedding night on which the teenage girl cries and tries unsuccessfully to keep Drogo from undressing her. (This is a departure from the book’s depiction of that scene.)

The serial nature of television in particular means many shows suffer from a kind of assault amnesia when it’s no longer convenient for a character who once raped or attempted rape to be seen as a villain. On Gossip Girl, a show that permeated the culture for late-’00s teens like few others, predatory behavior functions as a black mark on a character’s past that’s simply erased when the series wants to change his arc. The trust-fund Playboy Chuck Bass rings in the show by
trying to force himself on two girls in the very first episode—Serena, and Jenny, a freshman girl. Within episodes, the incidents seem to have faded from the show’s memory. Chuck morphs from an antagonist into a romantic lead.

Well, sort of. Chuck’s behavior over the course of his fan-favorite romance with Blair Waldorf often tipped over from sexy into coercive, or downright emotionally abusive. In Season 1, after the show’s titular blog reveals that Blair slept with both Chuck and another boy, she turns to Chuck for comfort. He responds thusly:

“You held a certain fascination when you were beautiful, delicate, and untouched. But now you’re like one of the Arabians my father used to own: rode hard and put away wet. I don’t want you anymore and I can’t see why anyone else would.”

That moment isn’t played for romance, but neither is it much of an impediment to the unfolding of their love story. By the end of the season, Chuck is wooing Blair by alluding to her in a toast at his father’s wedding. “In the face of true love you don’t just give up, even if the object of your affection is begging you to,” he says, staring at her. The series ends with Chuck and Blair’s wedding.

Though rape is frequently used as a device to add drama, shows often don’t deal with the fallout for a relationship realistically, or at all. On Buffy the Vampire Slayer, another fan-favorite character, the vampire Spike, tries to rape Buffy in an attempt to force her to admit she loves him. “I’m going to make you feel it,” he says. As the series continues, Spike’s character remains beloved: He earns a soul (literally—as a vampire he didn’t have one before) and resumes an emotionally intimate, if not clearly sexual, relationship with Buffy.

Even more pervasive than the redeemed rapist is the romantic hero whose efforts at seduction look more like harassment. In the Twilight series, the brooding vampire Edward Cullen not only breaks into his love interest Bella’s house in the first book to watch her sleep, but later on, in the third book, he also disassembles her car engine to keep her from leaving her house. But readers are supposed to see it as a protective gesture: He did it because he loves her, because he wants her to be safe.

Sometimes badgering is packaged as confident flirtation. The love story of Meredith Grey and Derek—Doctor “McDreamy” himself—on the medical drama Grey’s Anatomy begins with workplace harassment. “I’ve been wondering to myself,” Meredith says in an early episode, “why are you so hell-bent on getting me to go out with you? You know you’re my boss. You know I keep saying no.” McDreamy responds, “Well, it’s fun isn’t it?” (The two go on to marry and have a family together.)

These scenes all add up to give the impression that romance requires a man’s desire, but not necessarily a woman’s. For her, the romance is mined from the fact that she is desired. At the end of the 1989 romantic comedy Say Anything, some time after the protagonist Lloyd Dobler held a boombox under the heroine Diane Court’s window in an attempt to win her back after their breakup, Diane finally comes to tell Lloyd she needs him. “One question,” he says. “Are you here because you need someone or because you need me?” He allows for a moment the
possibility that Diane’s desires matter. The music swells, and then: “Forget it,” he says, before he goes in for the kiss. “I don’t care.” Of course he doesn’t.

In music, too, there’s no shortage of songs that glorify a man’s threatening overtures, from “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” (“Say, what’s in this drink?”), to “Every Breath You Take” (“I’ll be watching you”), to “Blame It (On the Alcohol)” (“I hear you saying what you won’t do / But you know we’re probably gon’ do”). And of course, there’s Robin Thicke’s literal anthem for the “Blurred Lines” I’m talking about (“I know you want it ... Just let me liberate you”).

Emo—the genre in which I found most of the romantic anthems of my youth—is a particularly potent brew of romance and violence. While many emo songs are full of longing and daydreams of unrequited affection, their tales of intense pursuit also sometimes accelerate into explicit aggression toward women when things don’t go the narrator’s way. And emo was an overwhelmingly male-dominated genre. “Wear me like a locket around your throat / I’ll weigh you down, I’ll watch you choke / You look so good in blue,” one Fall Out Boy song goes. In “Jude Law and a Semester Abroad,” Brand New’s singer laments, “Even if her plane crashes tonight / She’ll find some way to disappoint me / By not burning in the wreckage / Or drowning at the bottom of the sea.”

But even the love songs that weren’t explicitly violent, the ones that put cartoon hearts in my eyes as I listened to my Walkman on the school bus, told a tale where love meant never having to take no for an answer. “If you only once would let me, only just one time,” the singer of Jimmy Eat World begs in the song “Work.” (“Work and play, they’re never okay, to mix the way we do,” it continues.) The Dashboard Confessional song “As Lovers Go” starts with: “She said ‘I’ve gotta be honest, you’re wasting your time if you’re fishing around here.’” After this polite rebuff, the singer does not stop his pursuit. “I’ll belong to you, if you just let me through,” he says. “This is easy as lovers go, so don’t complicate it by hesitating.”

Don’t complicate it by hesitating could be the slogan for rape culture. Don’t hesitate in giving men what they want, don’t complicate our love stories by worrying about consent.

Recent accusations of sexual assault and harassment—including against the actor Ed Westwick, who played Chuck Bass, and Jesse Lacey, the lead singer of Brand New, and so many others—have pushed me to take another look at the love stories that shaped me as I grew up. Obviously, Westwick, who has denied the rape allegations against him, is not the same as Chuck Bass. And misogynistic song lyrics don’t prove that Lacey—who has apologized without admitting to any specific wrongdoing—mistreated young women. But neither can I call these parallels a complete coincidence. Both the products and the people of the entertainment industry have been shaped by a culture of harassment when it comes to women and children. And if the actions of the people in the industry lay shrouded in shadows for a long time, the products have always been there for us to see and hear.

The plots that play out on screen play out in the world, too. Harassers apologize, and are allowed the chance for rehabilitation. Alleged incidents of sexual misconduct in a man’s history are conveniently forgotten when it’s uncomfortable. Our romantic cultural touchstones find parallels in real life, on the grand scale and the small.
Take, for example, the story of an anonymous young woman who described an upsetting date with the comedian Aziz Ansari, during which she said he repeatedly pressured her for sex. In his response, Ansari said the incident “by all indications was completely consensual”; his accuser said she “felt violated.” While observers disagree about how to characterize the encounter, many have recognized it as an example of how differently men and women are taught to view consent. As Anna North wrote in Vox of the Ansari episode: “Boys learn at a young age, from pop culture, their elders, and their peers, that it’s normal to have to convince a woman to have sex, and that repeated small violations of her boundaries are an acceptable way to do so—perhaps even the only way.”

When living out their own romantic narratives, people often, consciously or not, compare them to the love stories they’ve already been told. When tales like these pile up, they can leach into our minds and relationships like radiation. It has been hard to realize, and harder still to admit, how much my own desires sprouted up twisted by the poison they absorbed. The confessional, vulnerable nature of emo songs made me feel like my headphones gave me a direct line to boys’ hearts. They craved the chase, I thought, and then, so did I.

It’s so easy when you’re young to mold yourself in the shape of your fantasies. When I was a teen, my desire to be romantically pursued was so strong that when I spotted a guy I liked ahead of me in the hallways of my high school, rather than catching up to talk, I would pretend not to see him and get ahead of him in the crowd, to see if he would approach me. How much of that was teenage awkwardness and a lack of self-confidence, and how much of it was the conviction that I was more desirable if I appeared to be passive and oblivious? How can you dig the roots of your desires out from the soil they sprouted in without killing them entirely?

My colleague Megan Garber has described our current era as “a time in which feminism and Puritanism and sex positivity and sex-shaming and progress and its absence have mingled to make everything, to borrow Facebook’s pleasant euphemism, Complicated.” Our culture is beginning to complicate things, to question the value of romanticizing stories where one person chases another, or wears her down, or drags her along against her will. But recognizing the flaws in these ideas doesn’t make them go away. They still float in the spaces between people; they are the sludge through which we have to swim as we try to see each other clearly.
Here’s The Powerful Letter The Stanford Victim Read To Her Attacker

Buzzfeed News
Katie J.M. Baker
June 3, 2016
https://www.buzzfeednews.com/

One night in January 2015, two Stanford University graduate students biking across campus spotted a freshman thrusting his body on top of an unconscious, half-naked woman behind a dumpster. This March, a California jury found the former student, 20-year-old Brock Allen Turner, guilty of three counts of sexual assault. Turner faced a maximum of 14 years in state prison. On Thursday, he was sentenced to six months in county jail and probation. The judge said he feared a longer sentence would have a “severe impact” on Turner, a champion swimmer who once aspired to compete in the Olympics — a point repeatedly brought up during the trial.

On Thursday, Turner's victim addressed him directly, detailing the severe impact his actions had on her — from the night she learned she had been assaulted by a stranger while unconscious, to the grueling trial during which Turner's attorneys argued that she had eagerly consented.

The woman, now 23, told BuzzFeed News she was disappointed with the “gentle” sentence and angry that Turner still denied sexually assaulting her.

“Even if the sentence is light, hopefully this will wake people up,” she said. "I want the judge to know that he ignited a tiny fire. If anything, this is a reason for all of us to speak even louder.”

She provided her statement, printed in full below, to BuzzFeed News.

Your Honor, if it is all right, for the majority of this statement I would like to address the defendant directly.

You don’t know me, but you’ve been inside me, and that’s why we’re here today.

On January 17th, 2015, it was a quiet Saturday night at home. My dad made some dinner and I sat at the table with my younger sister who was visiting for the weekend. I was working full time and it was approaching my bed time. I planned to stay at home by myself, watch some TV and read, while she went to a party with her friends. Then, I decided it was my only night with her, I had nothing better to do, so why not, there’s a dumb party ten minutes from my house, I would go, dance like a fool, and embarrass my younger sister. On the way there, I joked that undergrad guys would have braces. My sister teased me for wearing a beige cardigan to a frat party like a librarian. I called myself “big mama”, because I knew I’d be the oldest one there. I made silly faces, let my guard down, and drank liquor too fast not factoring in that my tolerance had significantly lowered since college.
The next thing I remember I was in a gurney in a hallway. I had dried blood and bandages on the backs of my hands and elbow. I thought maybe I had fallen and was in an admin office on campus. I was very calm and wondering where my sister was. A deputy explained I had been assaulted. I still remained calm, assured he was speaking to the wrong person. I knew no one at this party. When I was finally allowed to use the restroom, I pulled down the hospital pants they had given me, went to pull down my underwear, and felt nothing. I still remember the feeling of my hands touching my skin and grabbing nothing. I looked down and there was nothing. The thin piece of fabric, the only thing between my vagina and anything else, was missing and everything inside me was silenced. I still don’t have words for that feeling. In order to keep breathing, I thought maybe the policemen used scissors to cut them off for evidence.

"You don’t know me, but you’ve been inside me, and that’s why we’re here today."

Then, I felt pine needles scratching the back of my neck and started pulling them out my hair. I thought maybe, the pine needles had fallen from a tree onto my head. My brain was talking my gut into not collapsing. Because my gut was saying, help me, help me.

I shuffled from room to room with a blanket wrapped around me, pine needles trailing behind me, I left a little pile in every room I sat in. I was asked to sign papers that said “Rape Victim” and I thought something has really happened. My clothes were confiscated and I stood naked while the nurses held a ruler to various abrasions on my body and photographed them. The three of us worked to comb the pine needles out of my hair, six hands to fill one paper bag. To calm me down, they said it’s just the flora and fauna, flora and fauna. I had multiple swabs inserted into my vagina and anus, needles for shots, pills, had a Nikon pointed right into my spread legs. I had long, pointed beaks inside me and had my vagina smeared with cold, blue paint to check for abrasions.

After a few hours of this, they let me shower. I stood there examining my body beneath the stream of water and decided, I don’t want my body anymore. I was terrified of it, I didn’t know what had been in it, if it had been contaminated, who had touched it. I wanted to take off my body like a jacket and leave it at the hospital with everything else.

On that morning, all that I was told was that I had been found behind a dumpster, potentially penetrated by a stranger, and that I should get retested for HIV because results don’t always show up immediately. But for now, I should go home and get back to my normal life. Imagine stepping back into the world with only that information. They gave me huge hugs and I walked out of the hospital into the parking lot wearing the new sweatshirt and sweatpants they provided me, as they had only allowed me to keep my necklace and shoes.

My sister picked me up, face wet from tears and contorted in anguish. Instinctively and immediately, I wanted to take away her pain. I smiled at her, I told her to look at me, I’m right here, I’m okay, everything’s okay, I’m right here. My hair is washed and clean, they gave me the strangest shampoo, calm down, and look at me. Look at these funny new sweatpants and sweatshirt, I look like a P.E. teacher, let’s go home, let’s eat something. She did not know that beneath my sweatsuit, I had scratches and bandages on my skin, my vagina was sore and had become a strange, dark color from all the prodding, my underwear was missing, and I felt too
empty to continue to speak. That I was also afraid, that I was also devastated. That day we drove home and for hours in silence my younger sister held me.

My boyfriend did not know what happened, but called that day and said, “I was really worried about you last night, you scared me, did you make it home okay?” I was horrified. That’s when I learned I had called him that night in my blackout, left an incomprehensible voicemail, that we had also spoken on the phone, but I was slurring so heavily he was scared for me, that he repeatedly told me to go find [my sister]. Again, he asked me, “What happened last night? Did you make it home okay?” I said yes, and hung up to cry.

I was not ready to tell my boyfriend or parents that actually, I may have been raped behind a dumpster, but I don’t know by who or when or how. If I told them, I would see the fear on their faces, and mine would multiply by tenfold, so instead I pretended the whole thing wasn’t real.

I tried to push it out of my mind, but it was so heavy I didn’t talk, I didn’t eat, I didn’t sleep, I didn’t interact with anyone. After work, I would drive to a secluded place to scream. I didn’t talk, I didn’t eat, I didn’t sleep, I didn’t interact with anyone, and I became isolated from the ones I loved most. For over a week after the incident, I didn’t get any calls or updates about that night or what happened to me. The only symbol that proved that it hadn’t just been a bad dream, was the sweatshirt from the hospital in my drawer.

One day, I was at work, scrolling through the news on my phone, and came across an article. In it, I read and learned for the first time about how I was found unconscious, with my hair disheveled, long necklace wrapped around my neck, bra pulled out of my dress, dress pulled off over my shoulders and pulled up above my waist, that I was butt naked all the way down to my boots, legs spread apart, and had been penetrated by a foreign object by someone I did not recognize. This was how I learned what happened to me, sitting at my desk reading the news at work. I learned what happened to me the same time everyone else in the world learned what happened to me. That’s when the pine needles in my hair made sense, they didn’t fall from a tree. He had taken off my underwear, his fingers had been inside of me. I don’t even know this person. I still don’t know this person. When I read about me like this, I said, this can’t be me, this can’t be me. I could not digest or accept any of this information. I could not imagine my family having to read about this online. I kept reading. In the next paragraph, I read something that I will never forgive; I read that according to him, I liked it. I liked it. Again, I do not have words for these feelings.

"And then, at the bottom of the article, after I learned about the graphic details of my own sexual assault, the article listed his swimming times."

It’s like if you were to read an article where a car was hit, and found dented, in a ditch. But maybe the car enjoyed being hit. Maybe the other car didn’t mean to hit it, just bump it up a little bit. Cars get in accidents all the time, people aren’t always paying attention, can we really say who’s at fault.

And then, at the bottom of the article, after I learned about the graphic details of my own sexual assault, the article listed his swimming times. She was found breathing, unresponsive with her
underwear six inches away from her bare stomach curled in fetal position. By the way, he’s really good at swimming. Throw in my mile time if that’s what we’re doing. I’m good at cooking, put that in there, I think the end is where you list your extracurriculars to cancel out all the sickening things that’ve happened.

The night the news came out I sat my parents down and told them that I had been assaulted, to not look at the news because it’s upsetting, just know that I’m okay, I’m right here, and I’m okay. But halfway through telling them, my mom had to hold me because I could no longer stand up.

The night after it happened, he said he didn’t know my name, said he wouldn’t be able to identify my face in a lineup, didn’t mention any dialogue between us, no words, only dancing and kissing. Dancing is a cute term; was it snapping fingers and twirling dancing, or just bodies grinding up against each other in a crowded room? I wonder if kissing was just faces sloppily pressed up against each other? When the detective asked if he had planned on taking me back to his dorm, he said no. When the detective asked how we ended up behind the dumpster, he said he didn’t know. He admitted to kissing other girls at that party, one of whom was my own sister who pushed him away. He admitted to wanting to hook up with someone. I was the wounded antelope of the herd, completely alone and vulnerable, physically unable to fend for myself, and he chose me. Sometimes I think, if I hadn’t gone, then this never would’ve happened. But then I realized, it would have happened, just to somebody else. You were about to enter four years of access to drunk girls and parties, and if this is the foot you started off on, then it is right you did not continue. The night after it happened, he said he thought I liked it because I rubbed his back. A back rub.

Never mentioned me voicing consent, never mentioned us even speaking, a back rub. One more time, in public news, I learned that my ass and vagina were completely exposed outside, my breasts had been groped, fingers had been jabbed inside me along with pine needles and debris, my bare skin and head had been rubbing against the ground behind a dumpster, while an erect freshman was humping my half naked, unconscious body. But I don’t remember, so how do I prove I didn’t like it.

I thought there’s no way this is going to trial; there were witnesses, there was dirt in my body, he ran but was caught. He’s going to settle, formally apologize, and we will both move on. Instead, I was told he hired a powerful attorney, expert witnesses, private investigators who were going to try and find details about my personal life to use against me, find loopholes in my story to invalidate me and my sister, in order to show that this sexual assault was in fact a misunderstanding. That he was going to go to any length to convince the world he had simply been confused.

I was not only told that I was assaulted, I was told that because I couldn’t remember, I technically could not prove it was unwanted. And that distorted me, damaged me, almost broke me. It is the saddest type of confusion to be told I was assaulted and nearly raped, blatantly out in the open, but we don’t know if it counts as assault yet. I had to fight for an entire year to make it clear that there was something wrong with this situation.
"I was pummeled with narrowed, pointed questions that dissected my personal life, love life, past life, family life, inane questions, accumulating trivial details to try and find an excuse for this guy who had me half naked before even bothering to ask for my name."

When I was told to be prepared in case we didn’t win, I said, I can’t prepare for that. He was guilty the minute I woke up. No one can talk me out of the hurt he caused me. Worst of all, I was warned, because he now knows you don’t remember, he is going to get to write the script. He can say whatever he wants and no one can contest it. I had no power, I had no voice, I was defenseless. My memory loss would be used against me. My testimony was weak, was incomplete, and I was made to believe that perhaps, I am not enough to win this. His attorney constantly reminded the jury, the only one we can believe is Brock, because she doesn’t remember. That helplessness was traumatizing.

Instead of taking time to heal, I was taking time to recall the night in excruciating detail, in order to prepare for the attorney’s questions that would be invasive, aggressive, and designed to steer me off course, to contradict myself, my sister, phrased in ways to manipulate my answers. Instead of his attorney saying, Did you notice any abrasions? He said, You didn’t notice any abrasions, right? This was a game of strategy, as if I could be tricked out of my own worth. The sexual assault had been so clear, but instead, here I was at the trial, answering questions like:

* How old are you? How much do you weigh? What did you eat that day? Well what did you have for dinner? Who made dinner? Did you drink with dinner? No, not even water? When did you drink? How much did you drink? What container did you drink out of? Who gave you the drink? How much do you usually drink? Who dropped you off at this party? At what time? But where exactly? What were you wearing? Why were you going to this party? What’d you do when you got there? Are you sure you did that? But what time did you do that? What does this text mean? Who were you texting? When did you urinate? Where did you urinate? With whom did you urinate outside? Was your phone on silent when your sister called? Do you remember silencing it? Really because on page 53 I’d like to point out that you said it was set to ring. Did you drink in college? You said you were a party animal? How many times did you black out? Did you party at frats? Are you serious with your boyfriend? Are you sexually active with him? When did you start dating? Would you ever cheat? Do you have a history of cheating? What do you mean when you said you wanted to reward him? Do you remember what time you woke up? Were you wearing your cardigan? What color was your cardigan? Do you remember any more from that night? No? Okay, well, we’ll let Brock fill it in.

I was pummeled with narrowed, pointed questions that dissected my personal life, love life, past life, family life, inane questions, accumulating trivial details to try and find an excuse for this guy who had me half naked before even bothering to ask for my name. After a physical assault, I was assaulted with questions designed to attack me, to say see, her facts don’t line up, she’s out of her mind, she’s practically an alcoholic, she probably wanted to hook up, he’s like an athlete right, they were both drunk, whatever, the hospital stuff she remembers is after the fact, why take it into account, Brock has a lot at stake so he’s having a really hard time right now.

And then it came time for him to testify and I learned what it meant to be revictimized. I want to remind you, the night after it happened he said he never planned to take me back to his dorm. He
said he didn’t know why we were behind a dumpster. He got up to leave because he wasn’t feeling well when he was suddenly chased and attacked. Then he learned I could not remember.

So one year later, as predicted, a new dialogue emerged. Brock had a strange new story, almost sounded like a poorly written young adult novel with kissing and dancing and hand holding and lovingly tumbling onto the ground, and most importantly in this new story, there was suddenly consent. One year after the incident, he remembered, oh yeah, by the way she actually said yes, to everything, so.

He said he had asked if I wanted to dance. Apparently I said yes. He’d asked if I wanted to go to his dorm, I said yes. Then he asked if he could finger me and I said yes. Most guys don’t ask, can I finger you? Usually there’s a natural progression of things, unfolding consensually, not a Q and A. But apparently I granted full permission. He’s in the clear. Even in his story, I only said a total of three words, yes yes yes, before he had me half naked on the ground. Future reference, if you are confused about whether a girl can consent, see if she can speak an entire sentence. You couldn’t even do that. Just one coherent string of words. Where was the confusion? This is common sense, human decency.

According to him, the only reason we were on the ground was because I fell down. Note; if a girl falls down help her get back up. If she is too drunk to even walk and falls down, do not mount her, hump her, take off her underwear, and insert your hand inside her vagina. If a girl falls down help her up. If she is wearing a cardigan over her dress don't take it off so that you can touch her breasts. Maybe she is cold, maybe that’s why she wore the cardigan.

Next in the story, two Swedes on bicycles approached you and you ran. When they tackled you why didn’t say, “Stop! Everything’s okay, go ask her, she’s right over there, she’ll tell you.” I mean you had just asked for my consent, right? I was awake, right? When the policeman arrived and interviewed the evil Swede who tackled you, he was crying so hard he couldn’t speak because of what he’d seen.

Your attorney has repeatedly pointed out, well we don’t know exactly when she became unconscious. And you’re right, maybe I was still fluttering my eyes and wasn’t completely limp yet. That was never the point. I was too drunk to speak English, too drunk to consent way before I was on the ground. I should have never been touched in the first place. Brock stated, “At no time did I see that she was not responding. If at any time I thought she was not responding, I would have stopped immediately.” Here’s the thing; if your plan was to stop only when I became unresponsive, then you still do not understand. You didn’t even stop when I was unconscious anyway! Someone else stopped you. Two guys on bikes noticed I wasn’t moving in the dark and had to tackle you. How did you not notice while on top of me?

You said, you would have stopped and gotten help. You say that, but I want you to explain how you would’ve helped me, step by step, walk me through this. I want to know, if those evil Swedes had not found me, how the night would have played out. I am asking you; Would you have pulled my underwear back on over my boots? Untangled the necklace wrapped around my neck? Closed my legs, covered me? Pick the pine needles from my hair? Asked if the abrasions on my neck and bottom hurt? Would you then go find a friend and say, Will you help me get her
somewhere warm and soft? I don’t sleep when I think about the way it could have gone if the two guys had never come. What would have happened to me? That’s what you’ll never have a good answer for, that’s what you can’t explain even after a year.

On top of all this, he claimed that I orgasmed after one minute of digital penetration. The nurse said there had been abrasions, lacerations, and dirt in my genitalia. Was that before or after I came?

To sit under oath and inform all of us, that yes I wanted it, yes I permitted it, and that you are the true victim attacked by Swedes for reasons unknown to you is appalling, is demented, is selfish, is damaging. It is enough to be suffering. It is another thing to have someone ruthlessly working to diminish the gravity of validity of this suffering.

My family had to see pictures of my head strapped to a gurney full of pine needles, of my body in the dirt with my eyes closed, hair messed up, limbs bent, and dress hiked up. And even after that, my family had to listen to your attorney say the pictures were after the fact, we can dismiss them. To say, yes her nurse confirmed there was redness and abrasions inside her, significant trauma to her genitalia, but that’s what happens when you finger someone, and he’s already admitted to that. To listen to your attorney attempt to paint a picture of me, the face of girls gone wild, as if somehow that would make it so that I had this coming for me. To listen to him say I sounded drunk on the phone because I’m silly and that’s my goofy way of speaking. To point out that in the voicemail, I said I would reward my boyfriend and we all know what I was thinking. I assure you my rewards program is non transferable, especially to any nameless man that approaches me.

"This is not a story of another drunk college hookup with poor decision making. Assault is not an accident."

He has done irreversible damage to me and my family during the trial and we have sat silently, listening to him shape the evening. But in the end, his unsupported statements and his attorney’s twisted logic fooled no one. The truth won, the truth spoke for itself.

You are guilty. Twelve jurors convicted you guilty of three felony counts beyond reasonable doubt, that’s twelve votes per count, thirty six yeses confirming guilt, that’s one hundred percent, unanimous guilt. And I thought finally it is over, finally he will own up to what he did, truly apologize, we will both move on and get better. Then I read your statement.

If you are hoping that one of my organs will implode from anger and I will die, I’m almost there. You are very close. This is not a story of another drunk college hookup with poor decision making. Assault is not an accident. Somehow, you still don’t get it. Somehow, you still sound confused. I will now read portions of the defendant’s statement and respond to them.

You said, Being drunk I just couldn’t make the best decisions and neither could she.

Alcohol is not an excuse. Is it a factor? Yes. But alcohol was not the one who stripped me, fingered me, had my head dragging against the ground, with me almost fully naked. Having too
much to drink was an amateur mistake that I admit to, but it is not criminal. Everyone in this room has had a night where they have regretted drinking too much, or knows someone close to them who has had a night where they have regretted drinking too much. Regretting drinking is not the same as regretting sexual assault. We were both drunk, the difference is I did not take off your pants and underwear, touch you inappropriately, and run away. That’s the difference.

You said, If I wanted to get to know her, I should have asked for her number, rather than asking her to go back to my room.

I’m not mad because you didn’t ask for my number. Even if you did know me, I would not want to be in this situation. My own boyfriend knows me, but if he asked to finger me behind a dumpster, I would slap him. No girl wants to be in this situation. Nobody. I don’t care if you know their phone number or not.

You said, I stupidly thought it was okay for me to do what everyone around me was doing, which was drinking. I was wrong.

Again, you were not wrong for drinking. Everyone around you was not sexually assaulting me. You were wrong for doing what nobody else was doing, which was pushing your erect dick in your pants against my naked, defenseless body concealed in a dark area, where partygoers could no longer see or protect me, and my own sister could not find me. Sipping fireball is not your crime. Peeling off and discarding my underwear like a candy wrapper to insert your finger into my body, is where you went wrong. Why am I still explaining this.

You said, During the trial I didn’t want to victimize her at all. That was just my attorney and his way of approaching the case.

Your attorney is not your scapegoat, he represents you. Did your attorney say some incredulously infuriating, degrading things? Absolutely. He said you had an erection, because it was cold.

You said, you are in the process of establishing a program for high school and college students in which you speak about your experience to “speak out against the college campus drinking culture and the sexual promiscuity that goes along with that.”

Campus drinking culture. That’s what we’re speaking out against? You think that’s what I’ve spent the past year fighting for? Not awareness about campus sexual assault, or rape, or learning to recognize consent. Campus drinking culture. Down with Jack Daniels. Down with Skyy Vodka. If you want talk to people about drinking go to an AA meeting. You realize, having a drinking problem is different than drinking and then forcefully trying to have sex with someone? Show men how to respect women, not how to drink less.

Drinking culture and the sexual promiscuity that goes along with that. Goes along with that, like a side effect, like fries on the side of your order. Where does promiscuity even come into play? I don’t see headlines that read, Brock Turner, Guilty of drinking too much and the sexual promiscuity that goes along with that. Campus Sexual Assault. There’s your first powerpoint
slide. Rest assured, if you fail to fix the topic of your talk, I will follow you to every school you go to and give a follow up presentation.

Lastly you said, I want to show people that one night of drinking can ruin a life.

A life, one life, yours, you forgot about mine. Let me rephrase for you, I want to show people that one night of drinking can ruin two lives. You and me. You are the cause, I am the effect. You have dragged me through this hell with you, dipped me back into that night again and again. You knocked down both our towers, I collapsed at the same time you did. If you think I was spared, came out unscathed, that today I ride off into sunset, while you suffer the greatest blow, you are mistaken. Nobody wins. We have all been devastated, we have all been trying to find some meaning in all of this suffering. Your damage was concrete; stripped of titles, degrees, enrollment. My damage was internal, unseen, I carry it with me. You took away my worth, my privacy, my energy, my time, my safety, my intimacy, my confidence, my own voice, until today.

See one thing we have in common is that we were both unable to get up in the morning. I am no stranger to suffering. You made me a victim. In newspapers my name was “unconscious intoxicated woman”, ten syllables, and nothing more than that. For a while, I believed that that was all I was. I had to force myself to relearn my real name, my identity. To relearn that this is not all that I am. That I am not just a drunk victim at a frat party found behind a dumpster, while you are the All American swimmer at a top university, innocent until proven guilty, with so much at stake. I am a human being who has been irreversibly hurt, my life was put on hold for over a year, waiting to figure out if I was worth something.

My independence, natural joy, gentleness, and steady lifestyle I had been enjoying became distorted beyond recognition. I became closed off, angry, self deprecating, tired, irritable, empty. The isolation at times was unbearable. You cannot give me back the life I had before that night either. While you worry about your shattered reputation, I refrigerated spoons every night so when I woke up, and my eyes were puffy from crying, I would hold the spoons to my eyes to lessen the swelling so that I could see. I showed up an hour late to work every morning, excused myself to cry in the stairwells, I can tell you all the best places in that building to cry where no one can hear you. The pain became so bad that I had to explain the private details to my boss to let her know why I was leaving. I needed time because continuing day to day was not possible. I used my savings to go as far away as I could possibly be. I did not return to work full time as I knew I’d have to take weeks off in the future for the hearing and trial, that were constantly being rescheduled. My life was put on hold for over a year, my structure had collapsed.

I can’t sleep alone at night without having a light on, like a five year old, because I have nightmares of being touched where I cannot wake up, I did this thing where I waited until the sun came up and I felt safe enough to sleep. For three months, I went to bed at six o’clock in the morning.

I used to pride myself on my independence, now I am afraid to go on walks in the evening, to attend social events with drinking among friends where I should be comfortable being. I have become a little barnacle always needing to be at someone’s side, to have my boyfriend standing
next to me, sleeping beside me, protecting me. It is embarrassing how feeble I feel, how timidly I move through life, always guarded, ready to defend myself, ready to be angry.

You have no idea how hard I have worked to rebuild parts of me that are still weak. It took me eight months to even talk about what happened. I could no longer connect with friends, with everyone around me. I would scream at my boyfriend, my own family whenever they brought this up. You never let me forget what happened to me. At the end of the hearing, the trial, I was too tired to speak. I would leave drained, silent. I would go home turn off my phone and for days I would not speak. You bought me a ticket to a planet where I lived by myself. Every time a new article come out, I lived with the paranoia that my entire hometown would find out and know me as the girl who got assaulted. I didn’t want anyone’s pity and am still learning to accept victim as part of my identity. You made my own hometown an uncomfortable place to be.

You cannot give me back my sleepless nights. The way I have broken down sobbing uncontrollably if I’m watching a movie and a woman is harmed, to say it lightly, this experience has expanded my empathy for other victims. I have lost weight from stress, when people would comment I told them I’ve been running a lot lately. There are times I did not want to be touched. I have to relearn that I am not fragile, I am capable, I am wholesome, not just livid and weak.

When I see my younger sister hurting, when she is unable to keep up in school, when she is deprived of joy, when she is not sleeping, when she is crying so hard on the phone she is barely breathing, telling me over and over again she is sorry for leaving me alone that night, sorry sorry sorry, when she feels more guilt than you, then I do not forgive you. That night I had called her to try and find her, but you found me first. Your attorney's closing statement began, "[Her sister] said she was fine and who knows her better than her sister." You tried to use my own sister against me? Your points of attack were so weak, so low, it was almost embarrassing. You do not touch her.

You should have never done this to me. Secondly, you should have never made me fight so long to tell you, you should have never done this to me. But here we are. The damage is done, no one can undo it. And now we both have a choice. We can let this destroy us, I can remain angry and hurt and you can be in denial, or we can face it head on, I accept the pain, you accept the punishment, and we move on.

Your life is not over, you have decades of years ahead to rewrite your story. The world is huge, it is so much bigger than Palo Alto and Stanford, and you will make a space for yourself in it where you can be useful and happy. But right now, you do not get to shrug your shoulders and be confused anymore. You do not get to pretend that there were no red flags. You have been convicted of violating me, intentionally, forcibly, sexually, with malicious intent, and all you can admit to is consuming alcohol. Do not talk about the sad way your life was upturned because alcohol made you do bad things. Figure out how to take responsibility for your own conduct.

Now to address the sentencing. When I read the probation officer’s report, I was in disbelief, consumed by anger which eventually quieted down to profound sadness. My statements have been slimmed down to distortion and taken out of context. I fought hard during this trial and will not have the outcome minimized by a probation officer who attempted to evaluate my current
state and my wishes in a fifteen minute conversation, the majority of which was spent answering questions I had about the legal system. The context is also important. Brock had yet to issue a statement, and I had not read his remarks.

My life has been on hold for over a year, a year of anger, anguish and uncertainty, until a jury of my peers rendered a judgment that validated the injustices I had endured. Had Brock admitted guilt and remorse and offered to settle early on, I would have considered a lighter sentence, respecting his honesty, grateful to be able to move our lives forward. Instead he took the risk of going to trial, added insult to injury and forced me to relive the hurt as details about my personal life and sexual assault were brutally dissected before the public. He pushed me and my family through a year of inexplicable, unnecessary suffering, and should face the consequences of challenging his crime, of putting my pain into question, of making us wait so long for justice.

I told the probation officer I do not want Brock to rot away in prison. I did not say he does not deserve to be behind bars. The probation officer’s recommendation of a year or less in county jail is a soft timeout, a mockery of the seriousness of his assaults, an insult to me and all women. It gives the message that a stranger can be inside you without proper consent and he will receive less than what has been defined as the minimum sentence. Probation should be denied. I also told the probation officer that what I truly wanted was for Brock to get it, to understand and admit to his wrongdoing.

Unfortunately, after reading the defendant’s report, I am severely disappointed and feel that he has failed to exhibit sincere remorse or responsibility for his conduct. I fully respected his right to a trial, but even after twelve jurors unanimously convicted him guilty of three felonies, all he has admitted to doing is ingesting alcohol. Someone who cannot take full accountability for his actions does not deserve a mitigating sentence. It is deeply offensive that he would try and dilute rape with a suggestion of “promiscuity.” By definition rape is the absence of promiscuity, rape is the absence of consent, and it perturbs me deeply that he can’t even see that distinction.

The probation officer factored in that the defendant is youthful and has no prior convictions. In my opinion, he is old enough to know what he did was wrong. When you are eighteen in this country you can go to war. When you are nineteen, you are old enough to pay the consequences for attempting to rape someone. He is young, but he is old enough to know better.

As this is a first offence I can see where leniency would beckon. On the other hand, as a society, we cannot forgive everyone’s first sexual assault or digital rape. It doesn’t make sense. The seriousness of rape has to be communicated clearly, we should not create a culture that suggests we learn that rape is wrong through trial and error. The consequences of sexual assault needs to be severe enough that people feel enough fear to exercise good judgment even if they are drunk, severe enough to be preventative.

The probation officer weighed the fact that he has surrendered a hard earned swimming scholarship. How fast Brock swims does not lessen the severity of what happened to me, and should not lessen the severity of his punishment. If a first time offender from an underprivileged background was accused of three felonies and displayed no accountability for his actions other than drinking, what would his sentence be? The fact that Brock was an athlete at a private
university should not be seen as an entitlement to leniency, but as an opportunity to send a message that sexual assault is against the law regardless of social class.

The Probation Officer has stated that this case, when compared to other crimes of similar nature, may be considered less serious due to the defendant’s level of intoxication. It felt serious. That’s all I’m going to say.

What has he done to demonstrate that he deserves a break? He has only apologized for drinking and has yet to define what he did to me as sexual assault, he has revictimized me continually, relentlessly. He has been found guilty of three serious felonies and it is time for him to accept the consequences of his actions. He will not be quietly excused.

He is a lifetime sex registrant. That doesn’t expire. Just like what he did to me doesn’t expire, doesn’t just go away after a set number of years. It stays with me, it’s part of my identity, it has forever changed the way I carry myself, the way I live the rest of my life.

To conclude, I want to say thank you. To everyone from the intern who made me oatmeal when I woke up at the hospital that morning, to the deputy who waited beside me, to the nurses who calmed me, to the detective who listened to me and never judged me, to my advocates who stood unwaveringly beside me, to my therapist who taught me to find courage in vulnerability, to my boss for being kind and understanding, to my incredible parents who teach me how to turn pain into strength, to my grandma who snuck chocolate into the courtroom throughout this to give to me, my friends who remind me how to be happy, to my boyfriend who is patient and loving, to my un conquerable sister who is the other half of my heart, to Alaleh, my idol, who fought tirelessly and never doubted me. Thank you to everyone involved in the trial for their time and attention. Thank you to girls across the nation that wrote cards to my DA to give to me, so many strangers who cared for me.

Most importantly, thank you to the two men who saved me, who I have yet to meet. I sleep with two bicycles that I drew taped above my bed to remind myself there are heroes in this story. That we are looking out for one another. To have known all of these people, to have felt their protection and love, is something I will never forget.

And finally, to girls everywhere, I am with you. On nights when you feel alone, I am with you. When people doubt you or dismiss you, I am with you. I fought everyday for you. So never stop fighting, I believe you. As the author Anne Lamott once wrote, "Lighthouses don’t go running all over an island looking for boats to save; they just stand there shining." Although I can’t save every boat, I hope that by speaking today, you absorbed a small amount of light, a small knowing that you can’t be silenced, a small satisfaction that justice was served, a small assurance that we are getting somewhere, and a big, big knowing that you are important, unquestionably, you are untouchable, you are beautiful, you are to be valued, respected, undeniably, every minute of every day, you are powerful and nobody can take that away from you. To girls everywhere, I am with you. Thank you.
Chapter 6 Discussion Questions

Sexual Violence Around the World

1. Compare and contrast the causes, manifestations, and effects of sexual violence in different parts of the world.
2. What populations are most vulnerable to being victims of sexual violence during conflict? How might such groups be different around the world?

Toxic Masculinity & Sexist Language

1. Define toxic masculinity in your own words. Has it had any impact on your everyday life? What impact has it had on your society? On Congolese society?
2. What does Dr. Mukwege mean when he says that “the fight to end rape in war must begin in peacetime?”
3. What role can education play in addressing toxic masculinity and rape culture?
4. How do homophobic remarks and sexist jokes contribute to a toxic culture around sexual violence?

Rape Culture

1. In what ways might society excuse the actions of a perpetrator of sexual violence?
2. What impact has victim-blaming had on the perpetuation of rape culture?
3. How do common themes in pop culture contribute to rape culture? How should pop culture adjust its content to address this?
4. Does the pop culture industry have an obligation to change its content? Why or why not?
5. What does the victim impact statement from the Brock Turner case reveal about the way victims of sexual violence are treated?
Chapter 7: Activism

Survivors of sexual violence are sometimes perceived as helpless to stand up to those who perpetuate it – but that couldn’t be further from the truth. Around the world, survivors and allies have supported each other, lobbied for critical change, and ensured perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. Social media has revolutionized these activists’ efforts, as it has allowed them to build a stronger movement, reaching more people than ever before. The movement strengthens with every new advocate, and that’s why we urge you to get involved in activism in your local community as well. Every voice counts.

-The Echo Student Interns

A. Activism Against Sexual Violence Around the World
   “Ask an Activist: What are the Most Important Lessons Learned on Sexual Harassment in this Last Year of Activism?”
   “Women Activists in the DRC Show How Effective Alliances Can be Forged”
   “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women”
   “A Wave of Women Fighting Rape Across Europe”
   “New Wave of Student Activism Presses Colleges on Sexual Assault”

B. Social Media Activism
   “Six Activists Who Are Using Social Media for Change Offline”
   “Four Ways Social Media is Redefining Activism”
   “Why Social Media Isn’t the Revolutionary Tool it Appears to be”
   “The Movement of #MeToo”

C. Challenges of Speaking Out
   “TIME Person of the Year 2017: The Silence Breakers”

D. Local Activism: Get Involved in Charlotte, North Carolina
   “About: North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA)”
   “About Us: Charlotte Women’s March”

E. Discussion Questions
Ask an Activist: What Are the Most Important Lessons Learned on Sexual Harassment in This Last Year of Activism

UN Women
Jodie Mann
December 11, 2018
http://www.unwomen.org

We re-learned it is not only epidemic but endemic. This is so because gender is pervasive. Masculinity sexualizes hierarchy, and much of social life is hierarchically organized. Sexual harassment is a creature of hierarchy—gender combined with inequality based on race, age, class, disability, and sexuality. Anything that places a person in a less powerful or lower status position, an unequal position, heightens the risk of that person being sexually harassed.

So social inequality needs to change to eliminate sexual harassment. Elevating members of subordinated social groups to higher positions in real numbers could make a significant difference.

Existing leadership and accountability processes can also help: people at the top making viscerally clear that they oppose sexual harassment, and setting up procedures that are timely, effective, equitable, transparent, and perceived as fair.

We’ve learned that “consent” has no role in this area. Consent comes from rape law, where its content ranges from desire through defeat and despair to death, and includes acquiescence to dominant power. Nothing about it is equal. If you are doing what you have to do to get through the day, that is not equality; that is surviving under conditions of inequality. Sexual harassment law is part of equality law—a human right. This is why it uses a “welcomeness” standard instead.

We re-learned why so much sexual harassment is not reported: retaliation. And the most abused people are the least likely to report, due to traumatic damage. Not that survivors do not want to tell their stories. I have never met one who didn’t. It is only a matter of to whom and under what circumstances of receptivity, responsiveness and security. It is our challenge to create those conditions.

Women Activists in the DRC Show How Effective Alliances Can Be Forged

The Conversation
Maria Martin de Almagro
August 14, 2018
https://theconversation.com/

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been called the worst place in the world to be a woman. Sexual violence and rape are considered defining features of the civil war in the eastern part of the country.

This narrative has been reinforced by documentaries like The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo, and The Man Who Mends Women. And more recently, news reports have shown that women cannot even trust the people who came to the rescue as mothers have started to speak up about abuse at the hands of foreign aid workers.

These accusations have not been made in isolation. In February, similar revelations were made about Oxfam aid workers in Haiti who paid survivors of an earthquake for sex.

Combined, these revelations have enabled human rights advocates to place gender violence, and the abuse of power by humanitarian workers, on the agenda.

This, in turn, has led to two unintended consequences for women in the DRC.

First, the narrative now being spun portrays them as victims without political agency. And second, there’s been a tendency to cast the entire international humanitarian community as an immoral collective of workers who shouldn’t receive taxpayers’ money by way of foreign aid.

To counter these two narratives, I argue in my article –‘Hybrid Clubs: a feminist approach to peace-building in the Democratic Republic of Congo’ – that although women in the DRC have been victims of tremendous abuse and violence, they are both creative agents, and innovative activists. They have participated in peace negotiations and have managed to secure constitutional change.

I also argue that the work of the entire humanitarian community shouldn’t be put in jeopardy just because abuses have been uncovered. Rather, human right abuses must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

I came to these two conclusions by studying the development of a women’s movement in the DRC from its inception in 2015. What started as a small initiative launched by two international NGOs and their local partners has become a national movement to increase the number of women candidates for the upcoming elections and improve women’s participation in electoral processes.
Not only victims

The movement, aptly titled “Nothing Without the Women”, – Rien sans les Femmes – kicked off in March 2015 as a hybrid initiative of international NGOs and local women’s groups in eastern Congo. It has now become one of the only movements that has managed to bring together female activists from North and South Kivu in the East, and Kinshasa in the West.

“Nothing without the Women” was created with two aims. The first was to advocate for the enactment of the Parity Act. This law was drafted to formalise female participation in all domains of society and public life, but it’s just a declaration of principles, as it doesn’t propose specific measures on how to achieve this aim. The second was to petition for the revision of the DRC’s electoral laws so that women candidates are included on all electoral lists, and that lists that don’t include women cannot be registered.

The movement collected more than 200,000 signatures from across the country in the months before the act was passed in May 2015. The signatures were submitted to the President of the National Assembly. At the same time, marches were organised in Bukavu in Eastern Congo, Uvira in South Kivu, and Goma in North Kivu to popularise the petition. More than 6000 people joined the march in Bukavu. Thanks to this concerted push, the Parity Law was passed in August 2015.
Since then, the movement has grown. It now incorporates more than 160 women’s rights organisations from around the country. It has become one of the most visible counters to the victim narrative, or the idea that women in the DRC can’t exercise their agency to effect change.

One of the movement’s strongest attributes has been the ability of local and international humanitarian organisations to work together. This has allowed them to build networks both nationally and internationally.

**Partnerships across borders**

One of the key findings from my research in the DRC was that partnerships between local and international actors are common. These partnerships have been formed into what I call “hybrid clubs”.

One of the features of these clubs is that they forge a sense of group identity. This is done by operating on specific codes of conduct, wearing distinguishing clothing, and occupying specific geographical locations.

The clubs are keen to overcome simplistic assessments of international humanitarians – the sense of “us and them”. For example, in a meeting with international funders at the Swedish embassy in Kinshasa in May 2017, local and international members of the movement dressed the same.

But this visual element – uniform dressing – that was used to identify “sameness” between the local women and those from foreign countries on one day, was used to signal “difference” on another. At a meeting with members of the Congolese parliament, only local women were represented. They dressed in “Nothing without the Women” clothing. Their allies from the international NGOs didn’t, and sat at the back of the room without speaking. The tactic was an attempt to prove to parliamentarians that this was not a foreign initiative but a truly Congolese one.

Contrary to current media narratives about the DRC, my research shows that Congolese female activists are resourceful, independent citizens who know how to run effective campaigns. It also shows that local and international humanitarians are varied and multiple.

If meaningful change is to be achieved, they must work together.
Launched in 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign is a multi-year effort aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls around the world. UNiTE calls on governments, civil society, women’s organizations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces in addressing the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

The campaign builds on existing international legal and policy frameworks, and works to synergize the efforts of all UN offices and agencies working to end violence against women. It sets out five key outcomes to be achieved in all countries by 2015:

- Adoption and enforcement of national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls, in line with international human rights standards.
- Adoption and implementation of multi-sectoral national plans of action that emphasize prevention and are adequately resourced.
- Establishment of data collection and analysis systems, on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women and girls.
- Establishment of national and/or local campaigns and the engagement of a diverse range of civil society actors in preventing violence and in supporting women and girls who have been abused.
- Systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations and to protect women and girls from rape as a tactic of war, and the full implementation of related laws and policies.
Right now, courageous women are sparking change all over Europe, fighting for their governments to introduce legislation that defines rape based on lack of consent, as opposed to force, and improve how justice systems treat rape survivors.

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, it is timely to pay homage to the women who keep fighting for their unequivocal right to autonomy over their own bodies.

The numbers of women still experiencing rape in Europe are shocking. In the EU, one in 20 women over 15 has been raped, and one in 10 has experienced some form of sexual violence.

“Amnesty International has analysed rape legislation in 31 countries in Europe, and only eight of them have laws that define rape as sex without consent” - Anna Blus, Amnesty International

Let’s start with the basics: sex without consent is rape. It is as simple as that. Surprisingly, this simple truth is not reflected in most of European countries’ rape laws. Amnesty International has analysed rape legislation in 31 countries in Europe, and only eight of them have laws that define rape as sex without consent. The others all have legal definitions of rape based on force, threat of force or coercion or the victim’s inability to defend themselves.
However, change is happening country by country.

This year alone, Iceland and Sweden became the seventh and eighth countries in Europe to adopt new legislation defining rape on the basis of lack of consent.

These victories have not come by chance. They are the result of years of hard work by women activists, reclaiming their right to be safe from sexual violence. They are changes achieved by countless women, who are all too often betrayed by justice systems that refuse to acknowledge the devastating crime they have survived or fail to provide redress.

In Sweden, women’s rights organisations and activists campaigned for this change in legislation for more than a decade.

In 2013, a court's decision to acquit three young men accused of raping a 15-year old girl with a wine bottle until she bled, sparked the formation of a new national movement, FATTA (“Get It”). Through awareness-raising and campaigning their message gained currency. It took five years, but Swedish law now finally recognizes that sex without consent is rape.

Spain, Portugal and Denmark may be the next countries in line to recognize sex without consent as rape in their laws. Their government officials have all publicly stated that they are open to discussing such amendments to the legal definition of rape. Again, these positive steps come as a result of women fighting for change.

In Spain, millions of women took to the streets on the 8th of March 2018, marching for a variety of women’s rights causes, including the right to be free from rape. The so-called “La Manada” case, where five men were found guilty of sexual abuse, but not rape, also caused protests all over the country a month later. Spain’s deputy Prime Minister Carmen Calvo announced in July that laws making it clear that if a woman does not explicitly consent, that means no.

Women in Portugal were outraged in the aftermath of another high-profile case in which the court gave a suspended sentence to two men for “sexual abuse of a person incapable of resistance”. The case involved the assault of a woman in the bathroom of a bar during which she repeatedly lost consciousness. The demonstrations and media debates that followed showed that women refuse to stay silent when their rights are trampled upon.

In Denmark, the Minister of Justice has said that he would consider adopting consent-based rape legislation following calls from activists and survivors. The scope of the reform is still under discussion but this Sunday, women in Denmark will protest in four different cities to demand change in legislation and greater protection from rape.

Over the last five years in Norway, an extraordinary number of high school students of all genders have joined a campaign against rape. Earlier this year, however, politicians failed them by voting down a proposal to adopt consent-based legislation.

Still, the overall trend is that we are heading in the right direction. European governments can no longer ignore the voices of women demanding sexual autonomy. Although women have
The recent protests and an online campaign in Ireland in the aftermath of a rape trial during which a teenager’s thong was described to the jury is another example of women’s anger fuelling action and solidarity. In the hours after the case was reported in the media, hundreds of women posted pictures of their underwear on social media, tweeting #ThisIsNotConsent to show their opposition to victim blaming.

In Northern Ireland, the highly publicised acquittal of four Ulster rugby players for rape and other sexual offences provoked nationwide discussions about the adequacy of the legal processes and their treatment of complainants. Nationwide protests led to an independent review of the handling of sexual violence cases and complainants’ treatment. Its preliminary recommendations, recognized the importance of challenging rape myths and providing victims with legal assistance.

For many survivors of sexual violence, it is a huge step to talk about their own experiences, overcoming the stigma still attached to rape, public shaming and threats. Their bravery should not be underestimated. Their stories are crucial to driving the message home to decision-makers that lack of consent must be recognised as a rape in law and in practice and that impunity must end.

“We need a society where we are free from rape, and where everyone’s sexual autonomy and bodily integrity are respected and valued” - Anna Blus, Amnesty International

The Istanbul Convention, a human rights treaty ratified by the majority of European countries, requires states to criminalize all non-consensual acts of sexual nature. Changing laws will not eradicate rape. But it is a crucial step along the way.

It is an easy and tangible action for states to do, and it sends a very powerful message on what kind of society we want to live in: one where we are free from rape, and where everyone’s sexual autonomy and bodily integrity are respected and valued.

Amnesty International have published an overview of the legislative situation with regard to rape across Europe.
New Wave of Student Activism Presses Colleges on Sexual Assault

The New York Times
Anemona Hartocollis
June 8, 2019
https://www.nytimes.com/
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

Morgin Goldberg, Daria Mateescu and Amal Haddad were part of a group of students at Swarthmore College who protested reports of sexual misconduct by the school’s fraternities, which have since disbanded. © Michelle Gustafson for The New York Times

The moment Abbey Bako, a student at Rhodes College in Memphis, found her activist voice came after she received several emails from the campus safety office in one weekend last winter about reports of sexual misconduct. Many students connected the episodes to fraternity formals taking place at the time, and Ms. Bako felt an urge to do something.

Some weeks later, she and a group of friends, who call themselves Culture of Consent, asked students to boycott fraternity parties, using the hashtag #AskForBetter on social media. The fraternities, she said, canceled parties in response and promised to support assault survivors.

Ms. Bako, 21, said she was a “pot stirrer,” but not particularly an activist, during high school. “I don’t think I knew what activism was,” she said. “I’m from a small town in Louisiana, where the status quo is status quo, and if you ask too many questions in religion class, or in class in general, you become known as ‘that girl.’”

Today, she is one of many protesters, mainly women, who have organized around sexual assault at schools across the country, winning major concessions and putting pressure on administrators who struggle to balance the concerns of their students with longstanding university practices.
In just the last few weeks, activists have helped shut down fraternities at Swarthmore, ousted a dormitory leader at Harvard who had signed on as a lawyer for Harvey Weinstein and pushed Princeton to review the way it handles sexual assault complaints. Administrators have initiated talks with the protesters to address their concerns.

“Are these difficult spots for presidents to be in — the answer is absolutely,” said Marjorie Hass, president of Rhodes College. “We have multiple constituencies whose voices and concerns we’re trying to be aware of at the same time.”

- 

Encouraged to speak out by the #MeToo movement, most of the protesters said they did not portray themselves as activists when they applied to college but discovered their calling when they got there. They see themselves on a continuum from the college protest movements of the 1960s, but are different from older generations of protesters because their gaze is focused inward, more on their own campuses than on larger societal ills.

The activists organize across institutions, sharing demonstration tactics like putting tape over their mouths and circulating similar slogans like #DartmouthDoBetter and #HarvardCanDoBetter. And they chronicle their actions on social media, using it to share organizing tips and form instant coalitions.

Protests today move so fast, university presidents said, that they often have reporters calling them before they are even aware of what is going on.

Some observers said that for all their efficiency and outspokenness, this new generation of student protesters lacked the edge of their predecessors. Dr. Hass said she found the activists to be “really impressive people,” but at the same time, a bit risk-averse.

“A lot of the models of the past are not the ones students necessarily feel comfortable with,” she said. “I don’t see, for example, today’s students going to jail. Sometimes it’s the opposite. They want to be confident there won’t be any negative consequences for their actions.”

The protests have split campuses, to some degree, along generational lines.

Janet Halley, a legal and feminist scholar at Harvard, said she supported the right of students to demand that Ronald Sullivan Jr., a fellow law professor, be removed from his dormitory position for representing Mr. Weinstein. But she thought it “cowardly” of the university not to be more forceful in defending the legal principle at stake.

“We’re living in a hyper-polarized time,” Dr. Halley said. “If we can all be fired because of people who can be offended, there’s going to be a gigantic housecleaning around here.”

At Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania last month, two fraternity houses stood eerily empty as people gathered from across the country for graduation festivities. Students had recently published graphic accounts of sexual abuse by fraternity brothers, prompting an uproar on campus. On April 27, as protesters occupied one of the houses, Phi Psi, Swarthmore’s president suspended fraternity activities. Fraternity members said days later that they were disgusted too, and that they were closing voluntarily.
Even some of the protesters were surprised at how quickly the houses shut down. “People at Swarthmore have been trying to get rid of fraternities since the 1980s, and even before then,” said Daria Mateescu, a rising senior.

But protesters like Amal Haddad were also shocked to receive emails telling them that Swarthmore had hired an external investigator to look at “potential conduct issues” during the protests, and that they could face disciplinary action.

A college spokeswoman, Alisa Giardinelli, said Friday that Swarthmore was committed to “a safe and supportive environment.”

Campus activism has also intensified in the wake of the confirmation hearing for Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh and the Trump administration’s redrafting of federal Title IX guidelines on sexual assault, which would give more due process rights to the accused.

This spring, a Princeton student was fined about $2,700 for writing “Title IX protects rapists” on paving bricks. A GoFundMe campaign quickly raised enough money to pay the fine.

Rebecca Sobel, 21, who graduated from Princeton recently, said the graffiti episode led to conversations with classmates and made her realize that there was widespread frustration with what they felt was a lack of clarity in Title IX proceedings on campus. Students, for instance, did not know how to present evidence. They felt they were not protected from retaliation for making a complaint. And it was unclear what violations would result in which outcomes.

Students camped outside the administration building for more than a week, sometimes in torrential rain. They registered their protest with the university, which sent “open expression monitors” to watch over it.

Since then, students and faculty have begun meeting to discuss changes. “We don’t want to look at this as us-versus-them,” said Ben Chang, a Princeton spokesman.
At Harvard, Danu Mudannayake, 21, who will be a senior in the fall, became an almost accidental leader of the protests against Mr. Sullivan.

Ms. Mudannayake, who hopes to be a film director, grew up in London. Her father is an Uber driver, and her mother works behind the counter of a gas station; neither went to college. “I wasn’t someone who tried to go out and organize sit-ins and teach-ins,” she said.

But the Sullivan affair made her uncomfortable in a way she could not ignore.

She said she believed even people accused of doing bad things were entitled to a strong defense. But she felt there was a conflict between Mr. Sullivan’s role as a lawyer and his role as a faculty dean, along with his wife, of a student residential house. The job of a faculty dean is part intellectual mentor, part den mother. Representing Mr. Weinstein, she said, compromised his more nurturing role.

Ms. Mudannayake lived in the dormitory next door to Mr. Sullivan’s. But at a forum to discuss the Sullivan controversy, she listened to victims of sexual assault talk about their experiences and decided she had to get involved.

“I cared a lot about the issue, but just had not done much,” she said. Because she had not suffered as others had, “I felt I was someone who was in a position that I could use my voice.”

Protests erupted at Harvard, sowing deep divisions. Students who wanted Mr. Sullivan out stood in front of the administration building with tape over their mouths. Meanwhile, 52 Harvard Law School professors signed a letter saying that pressuring Mr. Sullivan to resign was incompatible with the university’s commitment to the free exchange of ideas.

After a “climate review” of the dormitory, Harvard did not renew Mr. Sullivan’s post as faculty dean, which he had held for 10 years. He has also stepped down as Mr. Weinstein’s lawyer.

Rakesh Khurana, the dean of Harvard College, said Mr. Sullivan had been absent when students needed him; he did not explicitly link Mr. Sullivan’s removal to Mr. Weinstein. By that point, Ms. Mudannayake had Dr. Khurana in her email contacts.

She was joined in the protests by Remedy Ryan, 20, who said she had become an activist about a year ago, when she got involved with a group opposing sexual violence, Our Harvard Can Do Better.

“I think when I came to college, I was kind of looking for some sort of activist group,” said Ms. Ryan, who is from Riviera Beach, Fla. “That was shortly after the whole #MeToo movement had started to pick up. It was obviously on my mind when I joined.”

As for Ms. Bako at Rhodes, her profile has only grown. To her astonishment, Dr. Hass, the college president, called her in the middle of finals period, asking if she would work with the college on preventing sexual assault. They have already started meeting.

“The #AskForBetter was our way of taking the #MeToo movement to the next step,” Ms. Bako said. “It was not only ‘me too,’ but ‘here’s what I want to follow after that, these are our demands, what we want. Listen to us.’”
As women’s activism around #MeToo, #TimesUp #NiUnaMenos and other movements continue to build, social media is giving women a space to speak up and be heard. From politicians and lawmakers to farmers and small business owners, conversations on social media are connecting women around the world so they can support one another in the push for change.

On Social Media Day (30 June), we’re celebrating women who are leading the charge through social media. By harnessing the power of social media, these trailblazers are engaging women and men in tough conversations and raising awareness about gender equality and women’s rights.

Tarana Burke

Over a decade before the hashtag was trending, Tarana Burke founded the #MeToo movement. A survivor of sexual violence herself, Burke wanted to create a platform for girls with similar experiences to connect with one another in a safe space. Way before tweets sparked global conversations, she launched her campaign online on MySpace. The magnitude of participation revealed the hunger for solidarity among survivors, and so, the movement grew.

It wasn’t until renowned actress Alyssa Milano tweeted with #MeToo, asking sexual abuse victims to share their stories, that the campaign burst into the global spotlight.

After Milano’s tweet, the power of social media took over and people all around the world woke up to a deluge of disclosures and solidarity from women who had been silent about their experiences of sexual harassment and assault. As more and more people started to use #MeToo to tell their stories, the hashtag became a tool not only to stand in solidarity with other survivors, but to demand an end to impunity.

“There has to be a shift in culture. What’s happening now, in this moment, it’s a beautiful thing, and it feels really good for people. And I think it’s necessary and needed. But beyond the feelings that we have, we have to have conversations about the systems that are in place that allow sexual violence to flourish.”

Emma Watson

Our Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson tapped into the power of social media to bring people together for women’s rights and gender equality with the #HeForShe campaign. This time the target audience was men.

“I am reaching out to you because I need your help. We want to end gender inequality—and to do that we need everyone to be involved,” she said at the launch of #HeForShe. “We want to try
and galvanize as many men and boys as possible to be advocates for gender equality. And we
don’t just want to talk about it, but make sure it is tangible.”

After the campaign kicked off, thousands used #HeForShe to declare their commitment to end
gender discrimination and to invite others to join the movement. The hashtag soon fired up a
much-needed conversation around gender equality, meeting its audience in their own space and
bringing the movement to their fingertips.

While the campaign was successful in reaching millions around the world, including plenty of
world leaders and influencers, the women’s rights movement still needs more men to support
gender equality. In today’s world, Emma Watson’s words from almost four years ago are still
very much relevant.

“We are struggling for a uniting word but the good news is we have a uniting movement. It is
called HeForShe. I am inviting you to step forward, to be seen to speak up, to be the "he" for
"she". And to ask yourself if not me, who? If not now, when?”

**Monica Ramirez**

When Monica Ramirez reached out to the women of Hollywood who were speaking up against
sexual harassment and abuse with #MeToo, she had the same idea as Tarana Burke: to use the
loudest voices in service of the most marginalized, whose stories are often cast in the shadows.

As the co-founder and president of Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, an organization that seeks
to end the exploitation of farmworker women, Ramirez wrote an open letter of solidarity to the
brave women in Hollywood who had come forward with their experiences. From the unlikeliest
alliance, the #TimesUp movement was born, with a steadfast commitment to stand in unity to
break the silence around sexual harassment, end gender discrimination and fight for gender
equality.

“It’s the women themselves, on the ground, around the country, who have risen up and have
clearly stated what they need to survive and thrive. They have inspired all of us, myself included
as an activist, to gather all of our strengths and resources to help bring their voices forward.”

**Dina Smailova**

Dina Smailova kept her rape a secret for 25 years. She was 20 years old when she was raped by a
group of classmates., Her mother told her she had shamed her family. She felt isolated and lost
ties with many relatives and friends.

In 2016, Smailova broke her silence by telling her story in a Facebook post. Women immediately
began commenting and sending her private messages about their own experiences with violence.
The outpouring of stories from others made Dina realize how important it was to keep the
conversation going.

“For the first time in Kazakhstan, we started talking openly about the issue, at the highest levels
of the government and in the remote villages and towns, where we organized public awareness
events,” Smailova said. “Our movement helped other survivors of sexual abuse break their
silence, report the abuse and win their cases.”
Now, as one of the leading figures in ending sexual violence in Kazakhstan, Dina has supported and guided more than 200 women survivors of violence, and has been instrumental in winning sexual violence court cases.

“I want to help more women speak out and change the attitudes within our communities. We are not the ones to be shamed! Our attackers should be ashamed and prosecuted,” she said.

**Ana Vasileva**

In 2013, Ana Vasileva published a blog about rape culture in fYR Macedonia. She was spurred into action by a trending hashtag on Twitter at the time, #TheyCalledHer (#ЈаВикале), which was packed with sexism and misogyny under the pretext of humour. But the blog made Ana a target of online abuse. A women’s rights activist and a member of the feminist collective, Fight Like a Woman, Ana didn’t back down. Inspired by the global #MeToo and #TimesUp campaigns, Vasileva and other feminist activists kicked off a new social movement in fYR Macedonia against sexual harassment under the hashtag #СегаКажувам (#ISpeakUpNow).

Vasileva and six other activists shared their personal stories about sexual harassment, mainly focusing on abuse of power, and the trend spread like wildfire. By the end of the first day, many women had spoken up about their experiences using the hashtag, drawing attention from the regional media for being the first campaign of its kind in the region.

“The campaign showed the magnitude and prevalence of sexual harassment, and also exposed the subtle ways in which this behaviour is normalized and internalized,” Vasileva said. “By the end of the next day, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Interior along with the Prime Minister, had issued official support for our campaign.”

To Vasileva and her partners, the movement is about more than just punishing a few individual offenders. It’s about bringing real change in people’s attitudes and making sexual harassment an inexcusable offense.

**You**

People are speaking up for themselves like never before, resisting against gender discrimination and claiming their rights. We need to transform this momentum into action for a world where nobody would ever have to say #MeToo again.

It’s your turn. Use your social media platforms to say no more violence, no more discrimination, #TimeIsNow for gender equality.
In a recent New Yorker column, author Malcolm Gladwell argues that social media is not redefining activism. Along with many others, I disagree. There are four ways that social media technologies are rewriting the rules of activism because of the breadth and quality of its reach: changing public awareness, word of mouth persuasion, the increased sense of urgency, and enhanced individual agency.

In his editorial, Gladwell describes some powerful scenes from the civil rights activism in the sixties where people literally risked life and limb to stand up for their beliefs. Gladwell asserts that contrary to this level of risk and passion, the activism associated with social media is transient participation without sustainable motivation or potency because it's based on weak ties. As described by the sociologist Granovetter (1983) in his seminal work, connections are called ‘weak ties’ to describe how they link us to outside networks providing information we wouldn't otherwise get.

The word ‘weak’ in our common usage, however, misrepresents the nature of the weak ties connection. It is not an emotional or interpersonal description of the quality of the link, but rather a term for how the individuals (or nodes, in network parlance) are related. In network terms, Jesus
and Buddha were weak ties because they connected people across many, many networks. However, for many of the individuals who connected to them, their emotional attachment and commitment was anything but weak. The intensity and commitment to the connection is independent of the weak/strong descriptor. In social networks, many individuals connect to many others. Will every connection or relationship be of binding emotional intensity? No, of course not. Does this mean that social media activism does not have the potential to create activists with staying power because they were created through weak ties? No.

It is a mistake to attribute human passion and commitment to social change to the communications conduit. Gladwell cites Clay Shirky's (2008) example of the lost cell phone and resultant Internet-based resolution and notes that "The instruments of social media are well suited to making the existing social order more efficient." This is absolutely true. It is not, however, indicative of the humanity or passion that drives communication. It is an example of how communication facilitated a goal. The cell phone loss, while inconvenient, was not a pivotal social event, nor did Shirky suggest that it is. It is a demonstration of how information travels in ways that were not possible before, connecting people in a way that allows for action in a new way.

If sustainable activism requires passion and commitment, then it makes more sense that social media will facilitate rather than decrease advocacy by connecting more of those who do have passion. At the same time, passersby who are not on engaged in the ‘fever’ that Gladwell describes of the sixties can still meaningfully contribute. There are multiple paths to promoting social change: increasing awareness, providing support, and taking action. All are necessary.

There are four important ways that social media is redefining activism and advocacy.

The first is that social media changes public awareness. Because information circulates so freely and quickly, it creates a new baseline for change. The donations to the Haitian earthquake are a case in point. While many people were moved to text in a donation, a few were committed enough to get on a plane and go to Haiti to help. The many, however, had a new appreciation of the enormity of the disaster in a part of the world that might never have invaded their consciousness. Social media distribution gave it an urgency much more potent than getting highlights in the evening news while reclining passively on the sofa. This matters when it comes to changing public policy where the majority view is what ultimately legislates change.

Second, social media distribution means we are getting information from someone in our network. In this world of ubiquitous information, the scarce commodity is filtering and social proof. Consequently, whether this information is from a Facebook friend, a Twitter follower, a real friend, or someone in our Scrabble group, it is more persuasive because it has context and word of mouth validation.

Third, social media networks cross technologies and have immediate impact that gives it urgency, makes it personal and allows for immediate individual action. This is particularly important in raising donations quickly and spreading critical information.

And finally, social media technologies have changed the psychological impact of communications by changing our expectations about participation and individual agency. The ability to act, even if
it is furthering a Twitter post on the Iranian elections, allows us to feel a level of involvement in events we might not otherwise feel (or possibly have even heard of.) This act, while insignificant compared to the bravery of the college students at the coffee counter, creates engagement and emotional buy-in and well as a sense that our individual actions matter. I think of it as the "thin edge of the wedge," to borrow a phrase from novelist Nancy Mitford. It moves people toward social action.

Gladwell's position is change-phobic. Things don't have to happen like they did in the past to be powerful, valid, or effective. Social change isn't about what tools people use. It's about people. It's about what they believe, their goals, and how they communicate, connect, and commit. Twitter does not create a revolution any more than the first small group of protesters that show up in person do. It is the people who join in that create energy and action. Don't underestimate the potential for bringing people of passion and purpose together online and don't assume that something that starts online will stay there.

This is a transmedia world--information knows no boundaries. Just because the civil rights protests occurred without Twitter, Facebook and mobile phones, doesn't mean a powerful movement for change won't happen with them helping bring people and resources together. It's even possible that with social media, the civil rights movements of the sixties could have succeeded faster and avoided some of the physical violence. A YouTube video of the threats against those first black college students "sitting in" at the coffee counter would have been extraordinarily powerful and taken the cause to a national level much earlier.

References


Many people think that social media has been a boon for grassroots social and political movements, and it’s easy to understand why. The rise of Facebook, Twitter, and other technologies since the mid-2000s has coincided with an explosive increase in popular uprisings during the same period. Whether it's organising revolutions in Egypt and Iran, tracking Russian troop movements in Ukraine, or providing real-time information to protesters in Sudan, social media is supposed to give activists an edge.

It's a reasonable assumption - and there are indeed many ways in which these new technologies can help. Perhaps most obviously, social media can lower the costs of communicating the crucial “where, when, how, and why” of protests to large numbers of people, as Twitter did during the 2014 Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine. Other platforms, such as YouTube, can help popularise basic knowledge about how to protest effectively, helping movements build organisational capacity. When physical gatherings are prohibited, digital venues such as Facebook or Reddit can create forums for new, virtual public spheres that are difficult to shut down.

Internet optimists also argue that online venues create space for dialogue in the midst of conflict, presenting policy options to the public and to elites in spite of government censorship. And, of course, the internet allows activists to promote their own narrative, which is particularly important when the mainstream media is controlled by the government.
Yet in spite of this optimism, what is sometimes known as “liberation technology” is not, in fact, making pro-democracy movements more effective. It’s true that we've seen more episodes of mass mobilisation since the rise of digital communications than we did before. But we should note that the stunning rise of nonviolent resistance came long before the internet. The technique has enjoyed widespread use since Gandhi popularised the method in the 1930s. And in fact, nonviolent resistance has actually become less successful compared to earlier, pre-internet times. Whereas nearly 70 per cent of civil resistance campaigns succeeded during the 1990s, only 30 per cent have succeeded since 2010. Why might this be?

There are a few possible reasons. First, as political scientist Anita Gohdes has carefully documented, governments are simply better at manipulating social media than activists. Despite early promises of anonymity online, commercial and government surveillance has made internet privacy a thing of the past. The Russian government, for example, has successfully infiltrated activists’ communications to anticipate and crush even the smallest protests. These practices are common in democracies too. In the United States, the National Security Agency’s warrantless wiretapping programme, or Yahoo’s collaboration with the US government in harvesting information from its users, are probably just the beginning. Recent reports indicate that local police departments (including in my own city of Denver) monitor social media to harvest data about their districts. While in the past, governments had to devote significant resources to detecting dissidents, today's digital climate encourages people to proudly announce their political, social, and religious beliefs and identities – data that allows law enforcement and security services to target them that much more effectively. Of course, there are ways for people to protect their privacy, but few of these techniques will hold up against a dedicated adversary.

Second, the turn to social media among popular movements has degraded the experience of participating. Activists and “clicktivists” might connect and pay attention to an issue for a short amount of time, but they often fail to engage fully in the struggle. Building trust in marginalised or oppressed communities takes time, effort, and sustained interactions, and this requires routine face-to-face contact over a long period. When movements mobilise without having earned this sense of trust and internal unity, they may be more likely to succumb under pressure. Participating in digital activism can give the impression that one is making a difference, but as internet sceptic Evgeny Morozov argues, creating real change requires far greater dedication and sacrifice.

Third, social media can have a demobilising effect by enabling armed actors to threaten or even coordinate direct violence against activists. For instance, in the midst of the Libyan uprising in 2011, Muammar Gaddafi’s regime used the country’s mobile phone network to send text messages that ordered people to go back to work. It was a chilling warning that the government was watching – and that failing to comply would have consequences. Political scientists Florian Hollenbach and Jan Pierskalla have found that greater availability of mobile phones in Africa is associated with an increase in violence.

Conversely, if activists use social media to report violence by security forces, would-be protesters may not show up to the big demonstration the next day. Such reports can therefore carry unintended consequences. Instead of drawing outraged crowds, they may repel many risk-averse participants, leaving the movement’s hardliners and risk-takers on their own.
This relates to a final important disadvantage: misinformation can spread on social media just as fast (or faster) than reliable information. Reports of Russian trolls manipulating a polarised information environment to influence the recent US elections are a case in point. And misinformation is only compounded by peoples’ tendency to select news sources that confirm their prior beliefs. The echo chambers so prevalent in social media serve to further divide societies instead of uniting them behind a common cause.

Even those who are well-intentioned and diligent about reading reliable and credentialed news sources can inadvertently cause problems. Seeing the downfall of a tyrant through social media can encourage dissidents in a neighbouring country to rise up in identical fashion. In fact, they may try to prematurely “import” the tactics and methods they see used successfully elsewhere into their own situation – with disastrous consequences. One need look no further than Libya or Syria to see the danger of this effect. It was easy for activists in those countries to watch the Arab Spring unfold in Tunisia and Egypt and conclude that, if they assembled masses of people in public squares, they too could topple their dictators in a matter of days. This conclusion neglected the years-long mobilisations that preceded the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings and led Libyans and Syrians to be overconfident in the ability of improvised uprisings to succeed nonviolently.

Kurt Weyland’s study of the 1848 revolutions found that dissidents have been learning the wrong lessons from yesterday’s revolution for centuries. But social media almost certainly exacerbates this dilemma by encouraging the diffusion of simplistic snapshots in 140-character doses rather than through studied and methodical analysis.

“Where activists were once defined by their causes, they are now defined by their tools,” wrote journalist Malcolm Gladwell in 2010. And that’s a bad thing when it comes to building and sustaining resilient popular campaigns. But instead of seeing the more recent failures as a failure of nonviolent mobilisations, we should adopt a more complex and realistic understanding of the ways in which increased reliance on social media has undermined the success of mass mobilisation. It’s not the technique that’s broken, necessarily. It’s the tools.
Alyssa Milano attends a protest against Donald Trump's plans to reinstate a ban on transgender individuals serving in the U.S. military, in New York City, July 26, 2017 © CARLO ALLEGRI / REUTERS

About 10 years ago, after I’d graduated college but when I was still waitressing full-time, I attended an empowerment seminar. It was the kind of nebulous weekend-long event sold as helping people discover their dreams and unburden themselves from past trauma through honesty exercises and the encouragement to “be present.” But there was one moment I’ve never forgotten. The group leader, a man in his 40s, asked anyone in the room of 200 or so people who’d been sexually or physically abused to raise their hands. Six or seven hands tentatively went up. The leader instructed us to close our eyes, and asked the question again. Then he told us to open our eyes. Almost every hand in the room was raised.

For a long time, most women defined their own sexual harassment and assault in this way: as something unspoken, something private, something to be ashamed of acknowledging. Silence, although understandable, has its cost. A decade ago, I couldn’t have conceived of the fact that so many women had experienced sexual coercion or intimidation; now, I’d be surprised if I could find a single one who hadn’t. On Sunday afternoon, the actress Alyssa Milano used her Twitter account to encourage women who’d been sexually harassed or assaulted to tweet the words
#MeToo. In the last 24 hours, a spokesperson from Twitter confirmed, the hashtag had been tweeted nearly half a million times.

#MeToo wasn’t just mushrooming on Twitter—when I checked Facebook Monday morning, my feed was filled with friends and acquaintances acknowledging publicly that they, too, had experienced harassment or assault. Some shared their stories, some simply posted the hashtag to add their voices to the fray. And it wasn’t just women: Men also spoke up about their experiences with assault. Actors including Anna Paquin, Debra Messing, Rosario Dawson, Gabrielle Union, and Evan Rachel Wood joined in. The writer Alexis Benveniste used it to remind people that the messages they were seeing were only the tip of the iceberg. For every woman stating her own experiences out loud, there were likely just as many choosing not to do so.

For all the frequent grumbles about the passivity of most forms of Twitter activism, this was a moment in which the form fit perfectly with the message: The goal of #MeToo, as Milano’s friend told her, was simply to give people a sense of “the magnitude of the problem.” Waking up to a feed dominated by women discussing their experiences of harassment and assault, it turns out, will do that. For more than a week, social media has been filled with stories told by women about their interactions with the producer Harvey Weinstein, accusations that range from verbal coercion to rape. But as horrifying as the allegations against Weinstein have been, more appalling still is the sense that his behavior isn’t uncommon. That in industries across the world, from media to music to modeling to academia, women have encountered their own Weinsteins and have deduced, for whatever reason, that nothing could be done about it and nobody cared.

The power of #MeToo, though, is that it takes something that women had long kept quiet about and transforms it into a movement. Unlike many kinds of social-media activism, it isn’t a call to action or the beginning of a campaign, culminating in a series of protests and speeches and events. It’s simply an attempt to get people to understand the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in society. To get women, and men, to raise their hands. Recent revelations about the alleged abuses of Weinstein and Bill Cosby and Jimmy Savile and R. Kelly have proven that truth has power. There’s a monumental amount of work to be done in confronting a climate of serial sexual predation—one in which women are belittled and undermined and abused and sometimes pushed out of their industries altogether. But uncovering the colossal scale of the problem is revolutionary in its own right.
Movie stars are supposedly nothing like you and me. They're svelte, glamorous, self-possessed. They wear dresses we can't afford and live in houses we can only dream of. Yet it turns out that—in the most painful and personal ways—movie stars are more like you and me than we ever knew.

In 1997, just before Ashley Judd's career took off, she was invited to a meeting with Harvey Weinstein, head of the starmaking studio Miramax, at a Beverly Hills hotel. Astounded and offended by Weinstein's attempt to coerce her into bed, Judd managed to escape. But instead of keeping quiet about the kind of encounter that could easily shame a woman into silence, she began spreading the word.

"I started talking about Harvey the minute that it happened," Judd says in an interview with TIME. "Literally, I exited that hotel room at the Peninsula Hotel in 1997 and came straight downstairs to the lobby, where my dad was waiting for me, because he happened to be in Los Angeles from Kentucky, visiting me on the set. And he could tell by my face—to use his words—that something devastating had happened to me. I told him. I told everyone."

She recalls one screenwriter friend telling her that Weinstein's behavior was an open secret passed around on the whisper network that had been furrowing through Hollywood for years. It allowed for people to warn others to some degree, but there was no route to stop the abuse. "Were we supposed to call some fantasy attorney general of moviedom?" Judd asks. "There wasn't a place for us to report these experiences."

Finally, in October—when Judd went on the record about Weinstein's behavior in the New York Times, the first star to do so—the world listened. (Weinstein said he "never laid a glove" on Judd and denies having had nonconsensual sex with other accusers.)

When movie stars don't know where to go, what hope is there for the rest of us? What hope is there for the janitor who's being harassed by a co-worker but remains silent out of fear she'll lose
the job she needs to support her children? For the administrative assistant who repeatedly fends off a superior who won't take no for an answer? For the hotel housekeeper who never knows, as she goes about replacing towels and cleaning toilets, if a guest is going to corner her in a room she can't escape?

Like the "problem that has no name," the disquieting malaise of frustration and repression among postwar wives and homemakers identified by Betty Friedan more than 50 years ago, this moment is born of a very real and potent sense of unrest. Yet it doesn't have a leader, or a single, unifying tenet. The hashtag #MeToo (swiftly adapted into #BalanceTonPorc, #YoTambien, #Ana_kaman and many others), which to date has provided an umbrella of solidarity for millions of people to come forward with their stories, is part of the picture, but not all of it.

This reckoning appears to have sprung up overnight. But it has actually been simmering for years, decades, centuries. Women have had it with bosses and co-workers who not only cross boundaries but don't even seem to know that boundaries exist. They've had it with the fear of retaliation, of being blackballed, of being fired from a job they can't afford to lose. They've had it with the code of going along to get along. They've had it with men who use their power to take what they want from women. These silence breakers have started a revolution of refusal, gathering strength by the day, and in the past two months alone, their collective anger has spurred immediate and shocking results: nearly every day, CEOs have been fired, moguls toppled, icons disgraced. In some cases, criminal charges have been brought.

Emboldened by Judd, Rose McGowan and a host of other prominent accusers, women everywhere have begun to speak out about the inappropriate, abusive and in some cases illegal behavior they've faced. When multiple harassment claims bring down a charmer like former Today show host Matt Lauer, women who thought they had no recourse see a new, wide-open door. When a movie star says #MeToo, it becomes easier to believe the cook who's been quietly enduring for years.

The women and men who have broken their silence span all races, all income classes, all occupations and virtually all corners of the globe. They might labor in California fields, or behind the front desk at New York City's regal Plaza Hotel, or in the European Parliament. They're part of a movement that has no formal name. But now they have a voice.

II

In a windowless room at a two-story soundstage in San Francisco's Mission District, a group of women from different worlds met for the first time. Judd, every bit the movie star in towering heels, leaned in to shake hands with Isabel Pascual, a woman from Mexico who works picking strawberries and asked to use a pseudonym to protect her family. Beside her, Susan Fowler, a former Uber engineer, eight months pregnant, spoke softly with Adama Iwu, a corporate lobbyist in Sacramento. A young hospital worker who had flown in from Texas completed the circle. She too is a victim of sexual harassment but was there anonymously, she said, as an act of solidarity to represent all those who could not speak out.

From a distance, these women could not have looked more different. Their ages, their families, their religions and their ethnicities were all a world apart. Their incomes differed not by degree but by universe: Iwu pays more in rent each month than Pascual makes in two months.
But on that November morning, what separated them was less important than what brought them together: a shared experience. Over the course of six weeks, TIME interviewed dozens of people representing at least as many industries, all of whom had summoned extraordinary personal courage to speak out about sexual harassment at their jobs. They often had eerily similar stories to share.

In almost every case, they described not only the vulgarity of the harassment itself—years of lewd comments, forced kisses, opportunistic gropes—but also the emotional and psychological fallout from those advances. Almost everybody described wrestling with a palpable sense of shame. Had she somehow asked for it? Could she have deflected it? Was she making a big deal out of nothing?

"I thought, What just happened? Why didn't I react?" says the anonymous hospital worker who fears for her family's livelihood should her story come out in her small community. "I kept thinking, Did I do something, did I say something, did I look a certain way to make him think that was O.K.?" It's a poisonous, useless thought, she adds, but how do you avoid it? She remembers the shirt she was wearing that day. She can still feel the heat of her harasser's hands on her body.

Nearly all of the people TIME interviewed about their experiences expressed a crushing fear of what would happen to them personally, to their families or to their jobs if they spoke up. For some, the fear was born of a threat of physical violence. Pascual felt trapped and terrified when her harasser began to stalk her at home, but felt she was powerless to stop him. If she told anyone, the abuser warned her, he would come after her or her children.

Those who are often most vulnerable in society—immigrants, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income workers and LGBTQ people—described many types of dread. If they raised their voices, would they be fired? Would their communities turn against them? Would they be killed? According to a 2015 survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality, 47% of transgender people report being sexually assaulted at some point in their lives, both in and out of the workplace.

Juana Melara, who has worked as a hotel housekeeper for decades, says she and her fellow housekeepers didn't complain about guests who exposed themselves or masturbated in front of them for fear of losing the paycheck they needed to support their families. Melara recalls "feeling the pressure of someone's eyes" on her as she cleaned a guest's room. When she turned around, she remembers, a man was standing in the doorway, blocked by the cleaning cart, with his erect penis exposed. She yelled at the top of her lungs and scared him into leaving, then locked the door behind him. "Nothing happened to me that time, thank God," she recalls.

While guests come and go, some employees must continue to work side by side with their harassers. Crystal Washington was thrilled when she was hired as a hospitality coordinator at the Plaza, a storied hotel whose allure is as strong for people who want to work there as it is for those who can afford a suite. "Walking in, it's breathtaking," she says.
But then, she says, a co-worker began making crude remarks to her like "I can tell you had sex last night" and groping her. One of those encounters was even caught on camera, but the management did not properly respond, her lawyers say.

Washington has joined with six other female employees to file a sexual-harassment suit against the hotel. But she cannot afford to leave the job and says she must force herself out of bed every day to face the man she's accused. "It's a dream to be an employee there," Washington says. "And then you find out what it really is, and it's a nightmare." (Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, which owns the Plaza, said in a statement to TIME that it takes remedial action against harassment when warranted.)

Other women, like the actor Selma Blair, weathered excruciating threats. Blair says she arrived at a hotel restaurant for a meeting with the independent film director James Toback in 1999 only to be told that he would like to see her in his room. There, she says, Toback told her that she had to learn to be more vulnerable in her craft and asked her to strip down. She took her top off. She says he then propositioned her for sex, and when she refused, he blocked the door and forced her to watch him masturbate against her leg. Afterward, she recalls him telling her that if she said anything, he would stab her eyes out with a Bic pen and throw her in the Hudson River.

Blair says Toback lorded the encounter over her for decades. "I had heard from others that he was slandering me, saying these sexual things about me, and it just made me even more afraid of him," Blair says in an interview with TIME. "I genuinely thought for almost 20 years, He's going to kill me." (Toback has denied the allegations, saying he never met his accusers or doesn't remember them.)

Many of the people who have come forward also mentioned a different fear, one less visceral but no less real, as a reason for not speaking out: if you do, your complaint becomes your identity. "Susan Fowler, the famous victim of sexual harassment," says the woman whose blog post ultimately led Uber CEO Travis Kalanick to resign and the multibillion-dollar startup to oust at least 20 other employees. "Nobody wants to be the buzzkill," adds Lindsey Reynolds, one of the women who blew the whistle on a culture of harassment at the restaurant group run by the celebrity chef John Besh. (The Besh Group says it is implementing new policies to create a culture of respect. Besh apologized for "unacceptable behavior" and "moral failings," and resigned from the company.)

Iwu, the lobbyist, says she considered the same risks after she was groped in front of several colleagues at an event. She was shocked when none of her male co-workers stepped in to stop the assault. The next week, she organized 147 women to sign an open letter exposing harassment in California government. When she told people about the campaign, she says they were wary. "Are you sure you want to do this?" they warned her. "Remember Anita Hill."

Taylor Swift says she was made to feel bad about the consequences that her harasser faced. After she complained about a Denver radio DJ named David Mueller, who reached under her skirt and grabbed her rear end, Mueller was fired. He sued Swift for millions in damages. She countersued for a symbolic $1 and then testified about the incident in August. Mueller's lawyer asked her, on the witness stand, whether she felt bad that she'd gotten him fired.
"I'm not going to let you or your client make me feel in any way that this is my fault," she told the lawyer. "I'm being blamed for the unfortunate events of his life that are a product of his decisions. Not mine." (Mueller said he would appeal.)

In an interview with TIME, Swift says that moment on the stand fueled her indignation. "I figured that if he would be brazen enough to assault me under these risky circumstances," she says, "imagine what he might do to a vulnerable, young artist if given the chance." Like the five women gathered at that echoing soundstage in San Francisco, and like all of the dozens, then hundreds, then millions of women who came forward with their own stories of harassment, she was done feeling intimidated. Actors and writers and journalists and dishwashers and fruit pickers alike: they'd had enough. What had manifested as shame exploded into outrage. Fear became fury.

This was the great unleashing that turned the #MeToo hashtag into a rallying cry. The phrase was first used more than a decade ago by social activist Tarana Burke as part of her work building solidarity among young survivors of harassment and assault. A friend of the actor Alyssa Milano sent her a screenshot of the phrase, and Milano, almost on a whim, tweeted it out on Oct. 15. "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet," she wrote, and then went to sleep. She woke up the next day to find that more than 30,000 people had used #MeToo. Milano burst into tears.

At first, those speaking out were mostly from the worlds of media and entertainment, but the hashtag quickly spread. "We have to keep our focus on people of different class and race and gender," says Burke, who has developed a friendship with Milano via text messages. By November, California farmworkers, Pascual among them, were marching on the streets of Hollywood to express their solidarity with the stars.

Women were no longer alone. "There's something really empowering about standing up for what's right," says Fowler, who has grown comfortable with her new reputation as a whistle-blower. "It's a badge of honor."

We're still at the bomb-throwing point of this revolution, a reactive stage at which nuance can go into hiding. But while anger can start a revolution, in its most raw and feral form it can't negotiate the more delicate dance steps needed for true social change. Private conversations, which can't be legislated or enforced, are essential.

Norms evolve, and it's long past time for any culture to view harassment as acceptable. But there's a great deal at stake in how we assess these new boundaries—for women and men together. We can and should police criminal acts and discourage inappropriate, destructive behavior. At least we've started asking the right questions. Ones that seem alarmingly basic in hindsight: "What if we did complain?" proposes Megyn Kelly. "What if we didn't whine, but we spoke our truth in our strongest voices and insisted that those around us did better? What if that worked to change reality right now?" Kelly acknowledges that this still feels more like a promise than a certainty. But for the moment, the world is listening.
About: North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA)

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault
2019
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns
About Us: Charlotte Women’s March

Charlotte Women’s March
https://charlottewomensmarch.org
Modified for length by Echo Student Interns

The 2019 CWM Executive Committee is headed up by Co-Presidents Laura Meier and Gina Navarrete. Here’s a statement from them about their vision for our organization:

We are hoping to use the CWM platform to further the causes of women’s rights. In particular, we will continue to focus on women’s healthcare and reproductive rights. CWM strongly believes that gender disparities in healthcare, particularly for women of color, is a problem that we can no longer ignore. We need to shed light on this problem and educate women on how to best advocate for themselves.

CWM’s purpose is to be a strong voice for women – particularly women from marginalized communities. We believe the best way to advocate for Women is to encourage and support them to “take a seat” at the proverbial table. This includes women running for leadership positions and political office.

Finally, CWM feels deeply that to make positive change, we must educate ourselves and the community by supporting the many quality programs and seminars currently being presented in Charlotte on racial equity and inclusion. We cannot expect a peaceful and prosperous community without justice and equality. CWM is an organization that was founded on the basis of the Women’s March, yet we are so more than a march—WE are a movement!

–Laura and Gina

Who we are and how it all started….

How did it all begin? The story is one of synergy—those women who traveled to Washington DC on January 22, 2017 and those women and men and children who marched in Charlotte.

The handful of women who decided to hold a Women’s March on Charlotte the day after Donald Trump’s inauguration thought a few thousand people might join them. But in a stunning demonstration of solidarity with marchers around the world, according to police estimates some 25,000-30,000 women and men, many with children in hand, marched peaceably and joyfully together through the streets of Charlotte.
At the same time, the Charlotte women returning home on their bus from the Washington, DC march talked about their experiences and what had occurred in their home town. They knew they wanted to keep the momentum going.

The result was the first meeting of Charlotte Women’s March, an organization created to harness the energy unleashed at the marches and put it into action. And once again, the turnout was stunning. Charlotte’s spacious McColl Center for Art + Innovation was filled to capacity. Those who were at the February 7 meeting broke into interest groups and began to define their goals and action steps.

The Women’s March of 2017 has galvanized us to follow issues that matter. To offer our view of what our political leaders and representatives are doing in leading our country. To raise our voices in either support or resistance. We acknowledge that not all women will agree on every issue. But we seek to offer more daylight on ALL issues, and let our members decide. We offer a platform for discussion and notification of local action. We encourage you to follow us through this blog and on social media. We encourage you to join our mailing list, and become a member of charlottewomensmarch. We encourage you to engage and contribute your comments. We encourage you to share our organization with friends and family. We encourage you to keep marching…digitally and physically. We have found our voices. We march on.
Chapter 7 Discussion Questions

Activism Against Sexual Violence Around the World

1. Do you think the narrative of the DRC being the “rape capital of the world” is harmful to the recognition of Congolese women as strong, independent political agents?
2. Does the role of female activists in the Congo change your perception of the DRC as “the worst place in the world to be a woman?”
3. Why is it important to define rape as sex without consent? Why do you think there has been resistance to adopting this definition in a multitude of countries?
4. Even though “changing laws will not eradicate rape,” can it still play a crucial role in decreasing the occurrence of sexual assault? Why or why not?
5. How can students be effective advocates against sexual violence?
6. Should the fight against sexual violence be focused on a community level or should it take a broader, global approach?
7. Who must be involved in the fight against global sexual violence for it to be effective?

Social Media Activism

1. How can social media be an effective tool for activists?
2. In what ways might social media activism fail to be as effective as more traditional activism?
3. What role has social media played in human rights dilemmas around the world?
4. How did the #MeToo movement involve women around the globe in activism?

Challenges of Speaking Out

1. Why has it been difficult for survivors of sexual violence to seek justice and/or speak out about their experiences?
2. What societal changes are necessary to make survivors feel more comfortable reporting incidences of sexual violence?

Local Activism

1. In what ways can you be involved in local activism in your community?
2. Even if you do not become involved with an organization, what can you do as an individual to work towards gender equality?
ADDENDUM

A. Interviews
   Adam Hochschild, Author, *King Leopold’s Ghost*
   Dr. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, Professor of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

B. Classroom Activities
   Addressing Sexual Violence as a Tool of War (Chapter 2)
   The Power to Write History: Evaluating Diverse Perspectives (Chapter 3)
   Conflict Minerals: A Product of Modern-Day Slavery (Chapter 3)
   What Makes a Democracy? (Chapter 3)
   “The Danger of a Single Story” (Chapter 4)
   The Great Statues Debate (Chapter 5)
   Toxic Masculinity, Rape Culture, & Pop Culture (Chapter 6)
   The Role of Social Media Activism (Chapter 7)
   Cathartic Narrative

C. References
   Sensitive Content Warning & Resources
   Further Reading
   Filmography
   Bibliography

D. Appendix
   2019-2020 Footsteps Global Initiative Application
   About The Echo Foundation
Interview with Adam Hochschild

Adam Hochschild began his journalism career as a reporter at the San Francisco Chronicle. He subsequently worked for ten years as a magazine editor and writer at Ramparts and Mother Jones. Freelance articles of his have been published in The New Yorker, Harper’s, The New York Times Magazine and elsewhere.

Hochschild is the author of eight books, mostly on the subject of human rights, including King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa and The Mirror at Midnight: A South African Journey. His book, Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves, was a finalist for the National Book Award and was also long listed for the Samuel Johnson Prize. In addition, he has consulted for the BBC and taught writing workshops for working journalists in the U.S., Britain, Zambia, South Africa and India.

Hochschild currently teaches writing at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley and lives in San Francisco. His latest book, To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918, was published in 2011. (Source: Lannan Foundation)

**Question:** Can you start by telling us a little bit about yourself and what inspired your interest in the DRC?

**Hochschild:** I’ve been a journalist or writer of some sort all my life. I have long had a special interest in issues of human rights and social justice, and I think a large part of that had to do with coming of age in the 1960s. I was involved in the Civil Rights Movement. I was very involved in the movement against the Vietnam War. Those things made me more aware than I would have been otherwise of the amount of injustice in the world, and the things that are going on in the other parts of the world that sometimes the United States is responsible for. I had spent quite a bit of time in Africa as a journalist, and then some 25 years ago was startled in reading something about the continent to see a reference to 10 million people killed in the Congo at the time that it was a privately-owned colony of King Leopold II of Belgium. So, I decided to investigate and found that, at the time that this was going on, it was really the number one human rights scandal in the world, but it had been completely forgotten about by people since then. So, that was the subject of my book King Leopold’s Ghost. Then, because of my interest in the country, I’ve returned there a couple of times. Once about 10 years ago for several weeks, and, during that time, I wrote the article that I sent you, and then once just about 2 months ago, but that was a very short trip for less than a week.

**Q:** What was your experience like when you visited the Congo? After having done all that research, did you encounter anything you didn’t expect? Was it everything you expected?

**H:** One of the things that struck me, especially on the first of these trips (the one ten years ago, which was longer), was the extent to which you found things there today which were echoes of...
the history that I had been immersed in when writing my book. For example, the business of mass rapes that you’re studying was something that took place there more than 100 years ago during the period of conquest. You can find references to it in the article I quoted from the diary of a Belgian officer with King Leopold’s army talking about how his soldiers did this. Similarly, the business of conscripting people as forced laborers, something done by the armies then and done again today. I think what I really found was that the history lies very heavily on that part of the world. I think that’s true for most of Africa, but it’s perhaps especially true in the DRC because when you have this vast territory, which was so exploited – treated like a cash register, treated as a source of wealth by first King Leopold II with his privately-owned regime, and then as a Belgian colony for 52 years – where the entire economy was oriented toward exporting the enormous riches of the territory to Europe. Then, it very suddenly became independent in 1960 with less than three dozen Congolese who had university educations who tried to take over the administrative apparatus. It’s not surprising that they’ve had many troubles since then, exacerbated by the fact that the United States and Belgium connived together to assure the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the Congo’s first democratically chosen prime minister. And then for 32 years, starting in 1965, the US and its European allies heavily supported the dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, who stole even more money out of the territory than King Leopold had. He had a much more developed economy to steal from. So, we’ve got a responsibility to try to rectify those wrongs, but it’s going to take a long time to do that.

Q: What were some of the differences you noticed between the different trips that you took? Were there any significant developments in the 10 years that have passed from the first time you went?

H: It’s hard for me to say because I went to a different place on this last trip. Both trips were to the Northeastern part of the country, the part that has been most impacted by these 20 years or so of intermittent warfare. The first trip was to the areas north of Lake Kivu in the east, the city of Goma and the touring district north of that. This trip, I was just in and around Bukavu, which is at the south end of Lake Kivu. So, I didn’t see the same place twice so that I could make a comparison.

Q: As we’ve researched, we’ve noticed that sexual violence is very prevalent in the DRC, but we’ve seen that, seemingly more than in any other country, rape survivors are often shunned and ostracized from their communities. Do you know why that is and why there’s such a stigma around it?

H: I think that’s something that you’ll find almost anywhere in the world where women have very low status. I think when you’ve got a totally male-dominated society, women are regarded as the possessions of men. And if your possession has been sullied by being raped by invading soldiers, it is very common – all too common – that she is shunned, kicked out of the house, kicked out of the family, that you as a man feel disgraced that this happened to your wife. It’s the exact opposite of what common sense and compassion and empathy should make us feel. If you’re a man and your wife is raped, this is the most terrible thing that can happen to her. You should be helpful and kind and help her heal. But, all too often, the opposite happens. I think because soldiers know that’s what’s going to happen, rape becomes a very powerful weapon of war. It’s a way of humiliating your enemies, shattering their families, shattering a community. And, again and again, we see these patterns where when rape has become an instrument of war, these mass rapes will take place in front of the men of the household, in front of the children, so that this is seen as sort of a further insult, a further degrading of this family. I think it’s probably
not unique to the DRC. When you read about the mass rapes that took place in other wars, such as in the Balkan Wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the same kind of pattern was true. There, again, societies often where women had a very low status, and where rape becomes a way of humiliating the whole family.

Q: You mentioned briefly in your historical account that in the times of Belgian colonialism, rape was often used as a tool of conflict or humiliation. Do you think that, for the DRC particularly, it was the type of practices in colonialism that have led to its occurrence today? Or do you think it has roots somewhere else?

H: I don’t think you can blame it all on colonialism. You can blame a lot of things on colonialism - and I do - but human beings have found ways of being cruel to each other for millennia. There are certainly accounts for thousands of years going back of rape being used as a tool of warfare. It’s all too common in all too many wars. It was notorious, for example, as the Russians pushed the German army out of eastern Europe and finally back into Germany itself at the end of World War II. There were mass rapes on a huge scale. This is extremely well-documented. It was, if not encouraged, at least not punished by the Soviet high command. They actually did encourage looting. This becomes a tool of warfare, and it happens even when it’s not a policy. Somebody wrote a book that came out in the last 5-7 years about the epidemic of rapes that happened as the American army swept through Northern France in the closing months of World War II. You think of the Americans in that war as the good guys. You think of the French as our allies rather than our victims, or at least as a country that should be glad to have been liberated from the claws of Nazi Germany, but it happened in that war. I think it happens in a whole lot of wars also where it’s not documented and we don’t hear about it because when a war’s going on, soldiers are encouraged – ordered – to be violent. One of the things that military training does – and I myself was in the army a long time ago – is you’re trained to overcome the natural human aversion to sticking a bayonet into somebody, so you stick your bayonet into a dummy in the training exercise. You’re taught to overcome the natural aversion you have to pointing a gun at somebody and pulling the trigger. To not want to do these things is purely human. The point of military training is to overcome that resistance. So, when you’ve got a large mass of people who’ve been trained to be violent, they are going to be violent in other ways as well. You look at this society, and when you talk about places where there is a lot of rape going on, look at the number of instances where professional and college football players have been accused of this. Football is also one of these sports where you’re trained to overcome your natural resistance to bodily attacking somebody. That’s what makes it an exciting game to watch, but perhaps not such an exciting game for the women who are the victims of some of these players.

Q: How do you think mining in the Congo impacts both the conflict and children (child labor)?

H: This is a country that just is awash in mineral wealth of all kinds. I think if you could measure it, the amount of mineral wealth in the soil – gold, diamonds, uranium, coltan, manganese, silver, all kinds of things – it’s probably greater or as great per capita or per square mile as almost any patch of land on earth. There’s a huge amount of mineral wealth there. It takes labor to dig it out of the soil, and in a situation where the central government exerts only very loose control and in effect does not really provide services or in effect govern in much of the country, whoever is armed can control that mineral wealth. So, in the northeastern part of the country, where so much of it is concentrated, many of these mining sites tend to be under the control of either the
Congoles national army or one or another of the very many militia groups. I wrote an article on my trip ten years ago about visiting one of these mining sites that happened to be under the control of the Congolese army. That means that the officer who commands that unit has a chance to amass a lot of riches. Command posts in the army are sought not necessarily by what rank the officer has or where he is stationed, but whether that particular unit controls a mining site. And the miners – I talked to miners at this place – they have to pay a certain percentage of everything they take out of the soil to the army unit that control that site. The miners themselves are not earning very much, maybe $1.50-$2.00 a day, if measured in American currency. I was travelling with the same woman from Human Rights Watch that I was with for the piece that I sent you. We went to visit one of these mine sites. To get to the site, we had to take a half hour walk downhill into a steep ravine. On the way down this path to the mine, we met two young miners coming up who showed us a little bag of gold dust that they had managed to find that morning. They were exuberant because it was only 10:00 AM, and they had already found like $1 worth of gold, which was more than they sometimes found all day. They were on their way up this trail to the village at the top in order to use that gold dust to buy themselves breakfast. After we visited the mining site at the bottom, a couple of hours later, we were walking back up the trail to the village, and we met these guys coming down. They said they were now going back to the mining site to try to gather enough gold so that they could buy themselves dinner. So, people are living literally hand-to-mouth at many of these places. And, as I said, they tend to be controlled by the Congolese army, sometimes by a local armed police unit, sometimes by these rebel militia units.

Q: What do you envision as the future of the DRC? Is there a future where the DRC exists in peace?

H: Well, there’s a little bit less conflict today than there has been at many points in the past, especially 15-20 years ago. I think it is going to take quite a long time to get an effective government established there – an effective, honest government. These things don’t come easily. Democracy is a hard thing to achieve. Its roots go very deep, and when you’ve got a tradition as they’ve had during the colonial era – and the King Leopold era before that – of being used just as a source of plunder, people tend to think of government as a source of plunder and that’s what it’s there for. And they accept that. I was very moved by meeting a guy from a group who I mentioned in the shorter article, the Op/Ed, that’s trying to change that: Citizen Activists. Most of them joined the group as college students, and they were trying to use nonviolent tactics to pressure the government into living up to the promises in the country’s constitution. It has a constitution, like most countries, which promised democracies, fair elections, tells you when these elections are to be held, specifies the rule of law, and so forth. They were using nonviolent tactics like sit-ins to pressure the government to hold these elections because Joseph Kabila, the president who left office at the beginning of this year, was due to have elections in 2016 but kept finding excuses to delay them and delay them. So, this group began sitting in government offices and so forth, and Kabila said, “What do you want?” And they said, “We want you to hold these elections as they’re required in the constitution.” And various members of the group got arrested. The fellow I talked to spent six months in prison. Finally, Kabila sent an emissary to the group and said, “How would some of you like to be on our slate of parliamentary candidates when we finally do hold the election?” And they said, “No. That’s not what we’re here for. We want you to follow the constitution.” A couple weeks later, another emissary came and offered them several million dollars to stop their protests. Again, they refused. They developed some very
effective nonviolent tactics for how to achieve what they were trying to do, which was just to get the president to follow the constitution. For example, the Congo’s infrastructure is so bad that there are very few landline telephones. Everybody’s got cell phones. They realized that one pressure tactic they could apply was that when one of their members got arrested unjustly – just for having one of these peaceful demonstrations – they would immediately, using a sort of cell phone text telephone tree, send out the cell phone number of the provincial governor to all of their several thousand members. This provincial governor would find his phone clogged with calls saying, “Why is our comrade arrested? He hasn’t done anything,” and so forth. So, the fact they used tactics like that, I found moving and appealing. They had studied the way nonviolent tactics like that had some success in deposing autocratic rulers in places like Serbia and Ukraine in recent years. A lot of these things are things that have been written about by an American guy named Gene Sharp, a University of Massachusetts professor who died last year at the age of 90, a very influential theorist of nonviolence. So, when I meet young people like that in the DRC, I feel encouraged that even though they’re a long way from having well-functioning democracy now, there are at least some very good people there who want to make that happen. But it’s going to be a long struggle, I’m afraid.

Q: After having done such extensive research, do you feel like there’s a role you can play in building that future? Is the most effective path forward to build on these nonviolent campaigns internally, or is there something people external to the DRC can do?

H: Most of it has to happen within. But I think those of us who are not in the country – and there are many other countries about which you can say this – have to be very careful that we don’t repeat the longtime American practice of supporting thuggish regimes when that thug happens to go along with the policies we want. This was the case for the 32 years of Mobutu’s dictatorship in the Congo, and an awful lot of problems today have a root in the way that country was plundered so thoroughly with US help during that. So, one thing we’ve got to be sure to do is to support democratically chosen leaders and not to support the thugs.

Q: What is your perspective on foreign aid and the idea of the “white savior” complex? Can the Congo only be fixed from the inside?

H: I don’t think “white saviors” are in a position to save Africa or anywhere else. But I do think that given the way the United States was complicit in the plunder of this country for so long, that we have a responsibility to give something back. I think it can be done in ways that don’t displace local industry, that are helpful rather than harmful, that provide technical expertise, and that provide people who can teach useful skills. I’d like to see more Americans helping out this way… For instance, we visited Panzi Hospital, which is a very impressive place. It is partially supported by funding raised in the United States. Well, I would like to see it receive more support. We were in a hospital with a maternity ward. The hospital was so crowded that there were two mothers and two babies in every bed. If they were able to raise more money here it would have a less crowded situation. There are other hospitals and clinics that also receive some support from the United States. I visited one in Goma, another city, when I was there 10 years ago. So, I don’t think these are people with a white savior complex. In the case of Panzi Hospital, the staff, at least those that we met on the day we were there, were almost entirely Congolese. In fact, I don’t think I saw any American or European physicians or anybody else there. So, we’re helping something that the Congolese people are doing themselves, but they’re not going to get money from their own government for doing that sort of thing.
Q: To what extent do you believe your writing makes a difference?

H: Well, I wish I could say it made all the difference, but I don’t think any writer should have the illusion that his or her writing alone is going to change the world. Hopefully, if you can put some good facts out there, if you can bring the distant place alive for your readers, it will make them a little bit more sensitive to what’s going on in the world, and I think that’s a good thing. I do believe that - especially at a time when Americans are so consumed with our own problems, with our Presidential election, and everything else that’s going on in this country – that it’s very important to write and speak about what’s going on in other parts of the world. It’s especially important because one of the terrible things that has happened in the United States in the last 20-25 years is that, largely because of the internet and other changes, major newspapers – which used to have vast staffs of foreign correspondents covering other countries, other continents – have shrunk dramatically. I was, in the 1980s and 90s, many times in South Africa, about which I wrote a book. There, you go to a big public event, and there would be 20 foreign correspondents there, including half a dozen Americans. I would compare notes with these folks and get to know some of them. In the two weeks I spent in the DRC in 2009, of which one of those articles I sent you came, I crossed paths with an American correspondent only once. A woman from the Washington Post who told me she had to cover about 20 different countries. So, that’s why I think the more reporting we can have from other parts of the world, the more we can fill in the blanks where people here are simply not aware.

Q: Another section we’re including in our curriculum is based on the culture of the DRC because the curriculum is certainly very heavy and focuses on conflict and sexual violence, but we want students to understand that there is still a thriving culture there as well. What aspects of that culture did you experience when you visited the DRC? Food you tried? Music you heard? Something that was notable about the people you interacted with or the communities you visited?

H: The music is terrific, and hopefully you’ve been able to listen to some of it. The colorfulness of dress is spectacular. The women somehow manage to look elegant in these beautiful cloth patterned prints in the clothes they wear. There’s a practice of people being what they call “Sapeur.” I don’t know where the word comes from or what its other meaning is or what its original meeting was in French. But people, mainly men, kind of compete in trying to out-dress each other in fancy dress of one kind or another. When I first arrived at the hotel on this last visit in the city of Bukavu, the guy who helped take our suitcases out of the Land Rover that brought us there over this deeply rutted dirt road (there are almost no paved streets) was dressed in a tuxedo. This is the culture, and there’s something very appealing about that. So, okay, you don’t have all the things that we have here in the United States, but at least you can dress up. So those were some of the things that I was aware of, and I’m sure that had I been able to speak Swahili or any of the other local languages, I could have told you a lot more. I can speak French, but that tends to be the language of government and people with a high school education and more, so that limits you somewhat.

Q: Are you working on any new books?

H: I am, although not about the DRC. I tend to write about a completely different country or different century in whatever books I write. I like to hop around the world and look at different places and different issues. The one thing they all have in common is people struggling for human rights or social justice somewhere. The most recent book I published was about Americans in the Spanish Civil War, which was the major fight in the 1930s, which attracted
people from all over the world to try to stop the spread of fascism to Spain. I have a new book coming out in March about some early 20th-century American radicals. I am working on an magazine article about something which relates to the DRC. In the last chapter of my book *King Leopold’s Ghost*, I talk about an enormous museum in Belgium that was founded by King Leopold and is, I think, the largest museum in the world specifically concerned with Africa. It’s called the Royal Museum for Central Africa. At the time I was writing the book, I visited the place for the first time, and it had an outlook which was totally colonial. It looked like it hadn’t changed in one hundred years. It’s been the subject of a great deal of controversy. About five years ago, it shut down to be completely renovated and reopened last December. Having been there a couple of times over the years, I wanted to visit it on my way to Africa this last time. I went by way of Belgium, visited the museum, and I’m working on a piece about how it has changed, what that says about how Europe looks at Africa, and the craziness of having the largest museum in the world about Africa in a park outside Brussels, Belgium, where there are relatively few Africans.
Interview with Dr. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

Past President of the African Studies Association of the United States (ASA) and of the African Association of Political Science (AAPS), Professor Nzongola is the author of several books and numerous articles on African politics, development, and conflict issues. These include, Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Africa; Nation-Building and State Building in Africa; and Le Mouvement Démocratique au Zaïre, 1956-1996. He is the editor of The Crisis in Zaire: Myths and Realities and of Conflict in the Horn of Africa, and co-editor of the State and Democracy in Africa and of The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World (both the first and second editions). His major work, The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People’s History, won the 2004 Best Book Award of the African Politics Conference Group (APCG), an organization of U.S.-based political scientists specializing on Africa.

(Source: UNC Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies)

Question: “The first thing is if you can just tell us a bit about yourself and who you are and how you began to study the subject and teaching the subjects you are?”

Dr. Nzongola-Ntalaja: “Well, I came to this country in 1962 as an exchange student. I spent my last year of high school in Montana and then Davidson College (in Davidson, NC) invited me to go there in 1963 as the second black student to integrate the college. I went there originally with the idea of becoming a medical doctor. I was enrolled in the pre-med program, but then, demonstrations against segregation in Charlotte took me away from the labs, so I had to change to philosophy. And, when I graduated in ’67, I went to University of Kentucky to get my master’s degree in diplomacy and international commerce. Then, I became so interested in politics that I went to University of Wisconsin Madison in 1968 and got my PhD in political science in 1975. I’ve been a professor since then.”

Question: “So, when you came over to the US from the DRC, how was the transition for you?”

N: “Uh, it was difficult, but bearable. I came here knowing fully well what the situation was in the United States in regard to race. As a matter of fact, I was the only black person in the small town of Dillon, Montana, 60 miles south of Butte, Montana. So, that gave me a very good preparation for Davidson and the years beyond because I was able to work in any environment, even being the only black student in the class or only two blacks on campus at Davidson. Then, in 1964, the first of two African Americans came. By the way, the first person to integrate the college was also from the Congo, and I was the second.”
Question: “What are the biggest revelations that you’ve made about African politics through your studies?”

N: “Well, mostly the point that the former President Barack Obama pointed out in his speech in Accra, Ghana in 2009, that we in Africa have weak institutions. This is one of the major weaknesses of African politics: that we have too many strong leaders - a number of dictators and autocrats - but very weak institutions that cannot check and balance the power of the executive. So, we have in many cases, a Parliament that’s a rubber stamp and a judiciary that is afraid to make strong decisions likely to challenge our authoritarian leaders. This is one of the major problems. This can lead to a lot of violations of human rights by governments that are more interested in enriching its members rather than taking care of the people’s needs.”

Question: “What is your opinion on foreign aid, like the UN or America helping out the DRC?”

N: “Well, the importance of foreign aid is usually exaggerated. It doesn’t really amount to much. But in certain cases, countries, like Rwanda, Mozambique, and others have had at some point almost 40% of their budgets financed from abroad. In most cases, it’s a very tiny fraction. There’s a book by Tom Burgis, a British journalist from the Financial Times entitled The Looting Machine, which came out in 2015. Burgis points out that the amount of money that goes out of Africa each year is seven times the amount of money that comes in the continent in terms of foreign aid. We lose a lot of money. In a testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa of the US House of Representatives in 1993. I told the honorable members that we, in the Congo, used to get something like 50 Million US Dollars a year before US aid was cut because of President Mobutu’s corrupt and dictatorial rule. In contrast, experts pointed out each year, our country was losing 3-5 billion dollars in capital flight. This money was going out because foreign companies, like mining companies that invested in our country, were not paying the right amount in taxes and royalties to our government, and of course, the corruption of leaders, with money going out to the City of London (UK’s Wall Street) and other major banks in Switzerland, Luxembourg, and the United States. In 2004, I believe, the US Senate had an investigation on money laundering by the Riggs National Bank in Washington, DC. Investigators found out that Riggs held seven hundred million dollars belonging to the president of the little country of Equatorial Guinea, and much of this money had entered the US illegally. It came out in suitcases, was not declared to customs, and so on. So, you can see how banks around the world have been participating in this process of looting Africa. So, I certainly support humanitarian assistance, which is very important. There are places where people’s lives are saved by food aid and medical aid and intervention by NGOs and governments. That is to be supported, but I won’t exaggerate the role of foreign economic assistance.”

Question: “Are there other roles that countries in the international community can play in improving the lives of people in countries where the political situation isn’t ideal? Or is aid still going to be the primary way in which they can help?”

N: “No, I don’t think aid is the primary way. As I just indicated, I think my argument was to say that aid cannot be primary. What is primary is locally produced resources. People have to rely on their own resources. Our countries in Africa are extremely rich. When the first Belgian geologists came to the Congo at the beginning of the 20th century, one young geologist said that this country was a geological scandal. Why? Because when they looked at the table of elements, almost every mineral you could think of was found in the Congo. We are extremely rich, but not only in minerals. We have the second largest tropical forest in the world. We have lots of arable
land, which is good for agriculture. We have vast waterways, lakes, rivers and places where you can have lots of fish and so on. But, we are not using these resources the way we should be using them. So, what the international community can do for us, which I think the United States is one of the countries attempting to do this, is to fight corruption. It’s to be able to place sanctions on both institutions, including international banks, and governments and corporations that are engaging in corruption. This is what is destroying Africa because in spite of all of the resources we have, our people are among the poorest in the world. Yet, our countries are extremely rich in natural resources. That is simply intolerable.”

**Question:** “So, in terms of the politics and the legal system within the DRC, but in Africa in general, do you see that they’ve taken an active stance against sexual violence? Or, is it ignored in their legal systems?”

N: “Well, our legal systems are quite advanced. Harvard economist Albert Hirschman once said that as newly independent countries, we have ‘the advantage of being the late-comers’. In other words, look at our constitutions, we have some of the best written constitutions in the world because we took from what existed from America, Europe, and other places. We have a bill of rights, and we theoretically defend, protect and promote most of the human rights known to the world. We have in our constitutions provisions for protecting everything you can think of. Maybe except for homosexuals and people who differ in sexual orientation because that is still not accepted in most countries in Africa. But as far as the rights of the elderly, children, and women in general, everything is taken care of. The problem however is that these provisions are not being respected and enforced. Governments do not really act the way they profess in their constitutions. Again, that is due in part because of this problem I mentioned of the lack of strong institutions. We have human rights commissions, we have human rights NGOS, and so on. But governments are so authoritarian in most places that they simply do not respect the rights of people, and this is a major weakness of our systems.”

**Question:** “How do you think that problem could be fixed with authoritarian governments?”

N: “Well, creating strong institutions and having strong democracies where the people’s voices are heard and where we have institutions that challenge the executive, a parliament that can take a strong stance against an authoritarian government, and a judiciary that can defend the rights of people. This is what we need. Like, we saw a year ago in Kenya where the supreme court ruled that the presidential election was fraudulent; annulled it, and then ordered a new election. And, the government obeyed, which was great, and so this is the kind of thing we would like to see. If our institutions can start having powers that they can act boldly in defending the rule of law, this is what we need. We need strong systems and the rule of law across the continent.”

**Question:** “On that note, can you speak to the recent election in the DRC?”

N: “Well, the election had a lot of irregularities, but generally, I think that the results announced were credible because the guy who’s claiming that he won the election, Mr. Fayulu, was a total unknown, and I can’t see how he could have won and won by 62% of the votes cast, as he claims. Mr. Félix Tshisekedi, the one who was announced the winner, had the advantage of having a well recognizable name. He’s the son of Étienne Tshisekedi, the person who is now considered in the Congo as the father of democracy. The elder Tshisekedi died in February 2017 in Brussels, but he was just buried on June 1, 2019 in the Congo because Joseph Kabila, the former president, simply refused to have his body brought back to the Congo because he was
afraid that might bring about a popular uprising. So, his body came back home only on May 30th.”

**Question:** “Do you think that this election then is a step in the right direction for a more positive political future in the DRC?”

N: “Oh, I mean, as long as they are free, fair and transparent. Many of our elections are fraudulent because the people in power don’t want to leave. We have in most countries in Africa today elections that are supposedly organized by independent electoral commissions, but these commissions are mostly independent in name. They are still controlled by the government and in many cases, they will simply proclaim the government candidate the winner, and the opposition will reject the announced results. This happens all over the continent, as the opposition never accepts these results because they consider them to be fraudulent. There are some exceptions, where elections have been very credible. I think of countries like Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia, and a few other places, but we still need to improve our electoral mechanisms.”

**Question:** “So, on a different topic, you’ve probably heard the last few weeks about the increase in immigration from the Congo. How do you think America should react to that and best welcome refugees and immigrants?”

N: “Well I think this country is a country of immigrants, and I think that many people all over the world look at the United States as a land of opportunity. They have their American dream, so the United States should remain faithful to its founding ideals. US authorities should not treat refugees as undesirable. They should welcome refugees, and the country is big enough to welcome these people. Refugees are not going to flood the country or to make it unlivable. Consistent with US history, new refugees will follow the path taken by their predecessors through their contributions to making the United States a stronger, wealthier, and greater country.”

**Question:** “So, throughout our curriculum, which focuses on the work of Dr. Mukwege, we talk a lot about sexual violence and conflict because it’s what the root of this issue is and has given him his reason to do his work. But, at the same time, we want to teach students about the thriving Congolese culture that’s still present despite this conflict. Can you speak to what stands out to you about Congolese culture?”

N: “Solidarity. Family solidarity. The fact that we don’t have old people’s homes; we take care of our elderly and the grandparents and older people. Right now, I have my mother-in-law, 83 years old, living here with me in Cary. There’s great solidarity. Many of our people are poor, and one of the many things not only in the Congo, but all over Africa, is that you see the Africans in the Diaspora sending lots of money home every month. Many of our people survive because of the support they get from their relatives who are in Europe and in America who send them money to pay for medical emergencies or food or school fees for children and so on and so forth. So, solidarity is a major, major value in our culture, and this is one of the beautiful aspects of African culture.”
**Question:** “To branch off of that, do you have anything specific to say about gender roles in the Congo?”

N: “Well, as in most African countries, we have this problem of traditional male chauvinism. The Europeans reinforced this. I can give you this example. I was teaching at the University of Lubumbashi in 1971 through 1973. And, my first wife was an African American. She wanted to go to Zambia, the country South of the Congo. It’s very close to Lubumbashi- Lubumbashi is in the Southeastern part of the Congo, close to the Zambian border. As a foreigner to come back in the Congo, she needed a travel permit from our government to reinter the country. So, she goes to the Immigration office and they tell her that she can’t obtain the travel document unless she has her husband’s permission. And she exploded, “I’m an American, this is nonsense”. Unfortunately for her, the person she was talking to was another woman. And she said, “look lady, I am a woman. I don’t like this law, but it is the law and I have to enforce it.” So, she asked, “who’s your husband?” My wife tells her who I was and so she calls me at the University asking if it is OK with me for my wife to go to Zambia? I said, “of course.” Then she said, “well you better get here and sign the authorization.” So, I went there. But see, the point is that traditional Africa, pre-colonial Africa, did not have passports. And, yet we had countries in Africa with laws stating that a married woman needs her husband’s permission to get a job, a passport, or to open a bank account. We didn’t have banks. We didn’t have banks and salaries jobs, either. So, where do you think these laws came from? These are all colonial laws. These are laws that came from Europe, from the Napoleonic Code. The Europeans have dropped these laws a long time ago, probably in the 50’s and 60’s, but we still have them in our books, until the 1990s in the Congo. Now we have removed them, but the point I would like to stress here is that European male chauvinism did reinforce traditional African male chauvinism to slow down the emancipation of African women from inequality and a rigid sexual division of labor. We are working to eliminate these obstacles to gender equality and now there are more and more women being educated and holding high positions in the state and private sector. In the DRC, for example, the current president of our House of Representatives is a woman, and she can play a role to try to increase the level of participation of women in politics and try to remove all of the restrictions on the freedom of women to be able to do things in the same way as men. So, it is a process. I think we are making progress because I’ve seen many countries in Africa where women are now occupying very high positions and the more of them we have in the system, the better it’s going to be in terms of improving the situation of all women.”

**Question:** “With that progress being made, why do you think that sexual violence continues in the Congo and the rates have increased over recent decades?”

N: “Sexual violence in the Congo is a political issue, it’s not a cultural issue. It’s basically a political issue. I grew up in the Congo. I don’t remember in my 18 years in the Congo before I came to the United States any situation of rape. You know, maybe because I grew up in a mission station, a Presbyterian mission station. I never heard of any kind of case of rape. And, so what has happened? Now certainly rape did take place, especially in the urban areas and so on. But, what is happening in the Eastern Congo is a political issue. It’s rape being used as a weapon- a weapon for militia groups who are trying to intimidate people to not report their crimes to the authorities. Also, the people are intimidated by these groups because they are armed and make a lot of money through the looting of the resources of the Congo, which they sell to smugglers. Strategic resources like coltan, gold, tungsten and others end up in the hands of respectable companies such as Nokia, which needs coltan for the fabrication of cell phones. The
militia groups use rape as a weapon of war, and there are many articles written by women scholars pointing out how rape is used as a weapon of war. It’s a weapon to intimidate people because when a woman is being raped, in many cases she will be rejected by her husband, and sometimes it is done to really humiliate men and create a situation where people do not want to do anything against these militia groups for fear of reprisals. It’s not a question of culture at all.”

**Question:** “So, going off of that, what do you think we can do, as Americans, to help these women?”

N: “Well, this is what many organizations have been doing. Dr. Denis Mukwege receives a lot of support from a number of foundations and individuals who are supporting the work he is doing at the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu. I went to the Nobel Peace prize ceremony for him in Oslo on December 10 of last year, and I saw how he was surrounded by a number of people, including some Americans who have been helping him. So, I think supporting the work Dr. Mukwege is doing and supporting women’s organizations involved in campaigning against rape and for the reproductive rights of women is the right thing to do. All of these are really important areas for which support is needed.”

**Question:** “So, and this is changing subjects a little bit, what was it like to be there when he accepted the Nobel Prize?”

N: “Oh, it was great! I was fortunate to be given an invitation by the Norwegian Nobel Commission. I had worked in Norway for three years from 2002 to 2005 as Director of the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre and de facto UN representative. So, my wife and I were there, and we were caught on camera, so people that know me said, “Oh, we saw you on television at the ceremony”. But the most interesting thing was in the evening of December 10, 2018, 850 Congolese coming from all over the world organized a big dinner in honor of Dr. Mukwege at the big conference hall of the labor unions in Oslo. The people present comprised distinguished professors, Congolese professors, teaching in Japan, China, Europe, America, and other places and lots of Congolese professionals in several fields were there from Africa, Europe, and Asia. It was wonderful to be there to honor him and there was music and testimonies, including a couple of women who had been sexually assaulted and abused in the Congo who gave testimony of their ordeals. It was a great event and a wonderful day for the Congo.”

**Question:** “So, even just over this fairly short interview, we’ve spanned a variety of subjects, and I’m sure your courses do as well. When you teach courses about African politics and the Congo, what is it that you hope your students will take away from those courses?”

N: “Well, basically to understand what is happening and that in politics all over the world, there are so many similarities. There are differences of course due to the level of democratization and the level of economic development, but many of the issues are the same. Politicians like to stay in power. There are people who have been in the US Senate for over 40 years, with some of them dying in office. Also in this country, if you didn’t have presidential limits, I’m sure some people would have stayed on for a third term. Franklin Roosevelt had 4 terms before the change of the Constitution to limit the presidency to two terms. So, there are many similarities. Politicians are politicians. But, the key difference is of course what I pointed out about institutions. So, in my teaching, I try to show what is universal or what is common to political systems worldwide, and then the differences. And, the major difference I point out is the strength of the institutions.”
Addressing Sexual Violence as a Tool of War
(Chapter 2)

TIME: 60+ minutes

START: Have students read through the articles in the Sexual Violence in the DRC chapter of the 2019 Echo Curriculum. Ask students to take notes throughout their reading process on the use of rape and sexual violence as a tool of war in the Democratic Republic of Congo.


Ask students to take notes throughout the video on the use of sexual violence as a tool of war. Spend a short time comparing/contrasting the use of sexual violence as a tool of war in the DRC with its use in the areas the video discusses.

READING: Consider the following resolutions passed by the UN to address sexual violence as a tool of war and to protect women in armed conflict:

UN Security Council Resolution 1325: https://www.usip.org/gender_peacebuilding/about_UNSCR_1325


ACTIVITY: Have students work in groups to research and conduct their own resolution or plan to address sexual violence as a tool of war. They can adopt or modify principles from the resolutions that have already been passed or construct their own. In addition to the goals of the policy, students should also consider how, as an international organization, they will encourage countries to comply.

Once all plans are written, hold an assembly session where each policy is presented and debated. Then, hold a vote to determine the policy your class would adopt.

NEXT STEPS: Take action! Don’t allow your discussions about such an important issue to stop once you leave the classroom. Try contacting your elected officials (https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials) to share your ideas!
The Power to Write History: Evaluating Diverse Perspectives (Chapter 3)

CLASS TIME: 45-60 minutes

ACTIVITY 1: Navigate to http://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/colonialism/ and select “Mojimba-Stanley Meeting Accounts.” The document provides two perspectives on a meeting between Africans and explorers. Then, fill out the accompanying graphic organizer.

ACTIVITY 2: Navigate to http://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/colonialism/ and select “Two Different Perspectives on Colonialism (Textbook Excerpts).” The first two pages are an earlier version of the book’s description of colonialism (1995), while the second two pages are a later one (2000). Compare the two perspectives and evaluate each one. Answer the

DISCUSSION: Open a classroom discussion to students with the following intro questions:

- The “winners” often have the power to write history. How do these texts demonstrate the pitfalls of accepting these narratives without question? Refer to both activities in your answer.
- Do textbooks have an obligation to present only facts, or can they provide commentary? How can a textbook’s presentation influence how students perceive historical events?

As the classroom discussion expands, pose any questions you feel would allow for an open-ended discussion.
Conflict Minerals: A Product of Modern-Day Slavery (Chapter 3)

CLASS TIME: 45-60 minutes

START: Ask students to take 10 minutes to fill out the survey at https://slaveryfootprint.org/ on an electronic device.

DISCUSSION: Create an open classroom discussion with students about their survey findings and ask questions such as:

1. Did you find the results of your survey to be surprising? Why or why not?
2. Will you make any changes to your daily life after taking this survey? Why or why not?

Allow students to discuss their findings and pose any questions that come to mind that would further expand classroom discussion.


ACTIVITY: Create a “human thermometer” in the classroom. One side of the room will represent 0% agreement, and one side will represent 100% agreement. After reading each statement, have students move to a spot in the room between 0% and 100% to indicate their level of agreement. Then, ask for students at different spots on the thermometer to share their reasoning and allow for some discussion and debate.

1. The use of conflict minerals produced by child labor is akin to using a product of slavery.
2. We have a responsibility to boycott companies that use conflict minerals in their products.
3. As electric cars are popularized in an effort to save the environment, the demand for cobalt is going to increase. Our concerns about the use of child labor and conflict minerals should come before our concerns about the environment, even if that means it would be difficult to make electric cars accessible to the average person.
4. The abundant natural resources in the DRC are more of a burden than an advantage for the Congolese people.
What Makes a Democracy? (Chapter 3)

TIME: 40-60 minutes

START: Ask students to take 3-5 minutes to think about and free write on what a democracy means to them.

VIDEO: Ask students to compare their definition of democracy to the one described in the video.

Play “Democracy – A short introduction” by MinuteVideos (3m, 09s)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6jgWxkbR7A

DISCUSSION: Create an open classroom discussion about democracy by asking students the following questions:

1. In what ways was the video’s description of democracy similar to your own?
2. In what ways did your personal definition of democracy differ from the video’s description of democracy?
3. The video mentioned a quote by Winston Churchill: “Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” What might some of the imperfections of democracy be? Were those included in your personal definition?

Pose any questions you can think of throughout the discussion that would further expand students’ dissection of democracy.

START: Before watching the second video, ask students’ to spend 5-10 minutes researching democracies around the world. Ask them to research examples of successful and unsuccessful democracies and think about what makes them succeed or fail.

VIDEO: Play “Surprise D.R. Congo Election Victory for Tshisekedi Amid Election Fraud Claims” by EuroNews (4m, 11s)
https://www.euronews.com/2019/01/10/surprise-d-r-congo-election-victory-for-tshisekedi-amid-election-fraud-claims
Refer also to the article “Understanding the DRC’s Presidential Elections” in the Current Events subsection of Chapter 3

DISCUSSION: Open a classroom discussion with students about democracy and the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo using the questions below. Pose any questions you think of throughout the discussion that would spark further analysis of Congolese politics or democracy.

1. Even though the recent elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo were imperfect, do you believe they are a step in the right direction?
2. Based on the article and video, how would you describe the current political situation in the Congo?
3. Do you believe the Congo meets the criteria of being a democracy?
4. How perfect must a democracy be to be considered successful?
5. Are any democracies perfect? If not, are there any you would consider perfect enough to be successful?
“The Danger of a Single Story” (Chapter 4)

TIME: 40-60 minutes

START: Ask students to spend a few minutes thinking about a time they have been stereotyped and to jot notes or write about their experience.

Ask students to take notes throughout the video in preparation for the class discussion.

DISCUSSION: Create an open class discussion about the dangers of the single story. To start the discussion, ask questions such as:

1. What impact do you believe the single story Adichie discusses have on our local communities? Our country? Global society?
2. Reflect on your own experiences being stereotyped. In what ways were these generalizations incomplete, as Adichie discusses? Did you respond in a way that provided a more complete picture to negate the stereotype?
3. What can we do to prevent stereotyping and the dangers of the single story in our world today?

Feel free to pose any questions you think of as the discussion progresses that would further widen the discussion and keep students engaged!


DISCUSSION: Open a discussion to the class analyzing the article and comparing it to Adichie’s thoughts from her Ted Talk “The Danger of a Single Story”. Start the discussion by posing questions such as:

1. How do cartoons such as Tintin in the Congo further racist attitudes in our global society?
2. How do racist attitudes shown in the media further stereotypes of different groups?
3. How has media representation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo impacted westerners’ view of the country? How does this representation relate to Adichie’s speech about the dangers of a single story?
The Great Statues Debate (Chapter 5)

TIME: 60+ minutes

START: Consider the debate on preserving or removing Confederate monuments. Before starting the video, ask students to note the key points from each side of the debate, no matter their personal opinion. Then, compile a comprehensive list with the help of the entire class.

VIDEO: Play “Erasing History?: The Debate Over Confederate Monuments” (8m, 56s) by ABC News YouTube

READING: Ask students to read and take notes on the articles listed below:

1. “From Charlottesville to Brussels: Collective Memory and the Challenge of our Monuments” by Equal Times. 
https://www.equaltimes.org/from-charlottesville-to-brussels?lang=en#.XUGbp-hKiUk
2. “Cecil Rhodes Effect: Queen Mary University Removes King Leopold II Plaques After Student Protest” by the Telegraph 
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2016/12/16/cecil-rhodes-effect-queen-mary-university-quietly-remove-king/
3. “The Rise and Fall of Silent Sam” by The Chronicle of Higher Education 
https://www.chronicle.com/specialreport/The-RiseFall-of-Silent/220

DEBATE: Ask students to move to one side of the room or the other based on their agreement or disagreement with the following statement: statues such as Silent Sam and those of King Leopold II should remain standing. Once students have chosen a side, ask a few students from each team to share their justification and facilitate a debate.

DEBRIEF: Once the debate has concluded, discuss the following questions:

1. What similarities do you notice between the debate over the statues of King Leopold II and remaining Confederate statues in the United States? What differences do you notice between the debates?
2. Return to both your personal list of key points and the class list from the beginning of the activity. In what ways have you gained a deeper understanding of this issue? Has your perspective on the issue changed at all?
3. Do you believe there is room for compromise in this debate? Why or why not?


**Toxic Masculinity, Rape Culture, & Pop Culture**  
*(Chapter 6)*

TIME: 40-60 minutes  

VIDEO: Play “What is Toxic Masculinity” by Pop Culture Detective (6m, 38s)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gha3kEFCqUK

Refer also to the articles in the subsections on toxic masculinity and rape culture in Chapter 6, and consider:

- Catcalling  
- Victim Blaming/Shaming  
- Media Coverage of Rape Cases  
- Campus Rape  
- Well-Known Rape Cases (Brock Turner, Anita Hill)  
- Rape Jokes  
- Popular Culture and its Relation to Rape Culture  
  (ex: songs such as Blurred Lines, tv shows that romanticize rape such as Gossip Girl)  
- Social Media Movements such as #MeToo, #ThisIsNotConsent, #TimesUp, #HeForShe, #BelieveSurvivors, #ImWithHer, #WhyIDidntReport, and many more.

Ask students to take notes on the key points of the video in preparation for the open classroom discussion.

DISCUSSION: Start an open classroom discussion about toxic masculinity with the questions below. Feel free to pose any questions throughout the discussion that will allow for students to dive deeper into the topic and keep them engaged.

1. Had you heard the term toxic masculinity prior to watching the video? If so, in what context had you heard the term used?  
2. How does the definition of toxic masculinity given in the video compare to your own definition?  
3. Did any of the examples of toxic masculinity given in the video particularly stand out to you? If so, which ones and why?  
4. How do depictions of masculinity in pop culture shape rape culture?  
5. How can depictions of masculinity in pop culture be changed to change rape culture? How big of an impact do you believe these changes would have?
6. Did any of the examples from the list above stand out to you as playing a pivotal role in perpetuating rape culture? How so? How can such a behavior be changed to improve our culture?

VIDEO: Play “Purl | Pixar SparkShorts” by Pixar (8m, 43s)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6uuIHpFkuo

Play “Toxic Masculinity In Boys Is Fueling An Epidemic of Loneliness” by NBC News (6m, 44s)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbX76n6A160

Ask students to take notes on the key points of the video in preparation for the open classroom discussion.

DISCUSSION: Start an open classroom discussion about toxic masculinity in our society today using the questions below. Pose any questions you think of throughout the discussion that will enable further discussion.

1. How do commonly held stereotypes about masculinity affect the way men act and their relationships?
2. Do you feel that men have to conform to these expectations to be accepted?
3. Do you agree that society today expects boys to ‘disconnect’ from their feelings?
4. Have personally you seen toxic masculinity in action in society today?
5. What actions can be taken to change the culture of masculinity?
The Role of Social Media Activism (Chapter 7)

TIME: 40-60 minutes

VIDEO: Play “Social Media Activism: How a Hashtag Launched a Movement” from EmergingUS (7m, 48s)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=315&v=-8-KZ0RIN3w

Play “How Social Media Is Shaping Activism in America” from wired.com (6m, 01s) *WARNING: Graphic Language & Footage*
https://video.wired.com/watch/the-power-of-live-streaming-in-america

Refer also to the articles in the subsection entitled “Social Media Activism” in Chapter 7.

Ask students to take notes on the positive and negative sides of social media activism as discussed in the videos and articles, as well as how each side has manifested itself in the Black Lives Matter movement.

DIAGRAM: Have each student fill in a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting social media activism and more traditional activism. Include the advantages and disadvantages of each one. Then, work as a class to compile a comprehensive diagram.

DISCUSSION: Create an open classroom discussion about social media’s role in activism movement by asking the questions below. Feel free to pose any questions you can think of throughout the discussion that will contribute to the conversation.

1. What role has social media played in the Black Lives Matter movement?
2. In what ways does the Black Lives Matter movement and other social movements such as the #MeToo movement today differ from past social movements?
3. What are some other examples of movements where traditional activism has been successful?
4. What are some other examples of movements where social media activism has been effective?
5. Overall, is social media a beneficial tool for activists?
6. Is social media activism preferable to traditional activism or vice versa? In the modern era, can one be successful without the other?
7. Does the relative decentralization of social media activism create too much space for a message to be distorted without accountability?
Cathartic Narrative

Julia Carr, 2018 Echo Student Intern

Near the end of my junior year, my English teacher, Mr. Conor McCaffrey from Hough High School, presented us with a writing prompt:

**In at least a page, write about whatever you want to write about. No literary topics or academia. Just catharsis.**

And frankly it was weird for all of us. We were taught for so long how to write trite three-bodied essays on predetermined topics we didn’t really care about. This new assignment just wasn’t what you did in an 11th grade English class. It wasn’t about the eloquence or the grade, if the writing was too personal, you could still get a 100 by merely flashing your page(s) of writing without him reading it. It was about gaining your voice.

The next class, we were given the opportunity to share our writing to the class. Slowly students queued up to share, and speaking from personal experience, it was simultaneously terrifying and extremely liberating. There is so much value to be learned from a student's own experiences and thoughts. I heard my classmates speak on bullying and insecurity, on parental deaths, and financial struggle, even of attempted suicides and life afterwards. These were my classmates, the same faces I saw every day without a second thought.

Students often come to class long enough to get counted present, do some work, and talk to a handful of buddies. It’s rare that the social bubbles present in a classroom pop, meaning a student may never hear of the touching struggles and triumphs of their peers, the same ones they sit next to for 90 minutes every day. Sharing our stories is so incredibly powerful, it undeniably brought our class closer together and opened connections to people we would have never broken out of our bubble to say hello to. It fostered empathy for the many kids facing hardship, and made us realize that everyone’s character was the result of a unique background that you’d never know about without these types of conversations. Ultimately, it taught me that all of us are struggling with our own identities and purpose in a massively unknown world. That we’re all human.

Teachers, I cannot tell you how much I encourage you to implement this. To trade in two of your classes in order to give your students tools they can’t use on the final exam: self-identity, empathy, a closer relationships to their peers, and the priceless ability to value their own voices.
Sensitive Content Warning & Resources

The Echo Foundation would like to inform teachers and students of the sensitive nature of the 2019-2020 Echo Curriculum content. The content is distressing to read, and may evoke memories of bad experiences for victims of sexual abuse or assault. This is a guide designed to be educational and authentically represent the challenges women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and women across the globe face. Therefore, the curriculum uses graphic stories of sexual assault and rape to affirm their experiences and give them a voice. Sexual assault is a disturbing topic and the process of healing after an event can take a very long time. If you need to excuse yourself from any discussion at any time, please do so. We encourage you to reach out to resources if you’d like to talk to someone about these topics. Here is a list of some agencies that provide support and referral services:

800-656-HOPE – U.S. National Sexual Assault Hotline: National hotline operated by RAINN for anyone affected by sexual violence. It automatically routes the caller to the nearest assault service provider.

800-799-SAFE – U.S. National Domestic Violence Hotline: Through this hotline, an advocate can provide local direct service resources (safehouses, transportation, assistance, etc) and interpreter services are available in 170 languages.

https://1in6.org/ – This website, 1 in 6, provides resources for men who have been sexually assaulted or abused and offers the option to chat with a trained advocate, available 24/7. There’s also a weekly chat-based online support group.

800-832-1901 – GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project: Hotline for GLBTQ victims of domestic violence and their families. They have a website with resources as well.

https://tinyurl.com/yb5dpqqp – This webpage provides the website and contact information for child abuse and neglect reporting services in every state.

Your school guidance counselors and wellness specialists* are resources you may wish to call on for help.

*In some localities, guidance counselors and wellness specialists are mandatory reporters, meaning they are legally required to report abuse of minors to relevant authorities.
Further Reading

*To Kill A People: Genocide in the Twentieth Century*

Dr. John Cox

Dr. John Cox, Director of Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Studies at UNC Charlotte provides a comprehensive case study of four genocides in the twentieth century: The Armenian, Nazi, Cambodian, and Rwandan Genocide. In doing so, he details not only how to define genocide, but also goes deeper to analyze their causes and understand their relation to other atrocities throughout history.

*King Leopold’s Ghost*

Adam Hochschild

A fascinating story of pop history, Hochschild has tediously researched each character and storyline in the history of the Congo. The book is filled with facts and anecdotes, following the events in the Congo from early history to European explorers to King Leopold’s rule and legacy.

*Necessary Noise: Music, Film, and Charitable Imperialism in the East of Congo*

Dr. Chérie Rivers Ndaliko

In this book, Professor Ndaliko delves into the controversial issue of charitable imperialism and analyzes the positive and negative role international NGOs can have on a community. By using unique, fascinating, and endearing case studies, Ndaliko is able to portray the importance of arts and culture in creating sustainable peace in the DRC.
Despite the Congo’s tumultuous history, the Congolese people have not resigned to a fate of oppression. Instead, as Dr. Nzongola details in his book, the Congolese people have instead fought to improve their nation by attempting to establish democratic institutions and put an end to the exploitation that has plagued their country for centuries.

**Congo Stories: Battling Five Centuries of Exploitation and Greed**

John Prendergast and Fidel Bafilemba

John Prendergast of the Enough Project travels to the Congo to document the stories of a people and culture exploited for natural resources. The book shares the voices of the Congolese people and also discusses what actions can be taken at an individual and community level to combat the injustices in the Congo.

**Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa**

Jason K. Stearns

In this book, Stearns discusses the social and political forces behind the turmoil in the Congo. Meticulously researched and comprehensive, the narrative follows the collapse of the Congo into war and the key perpetrators behind the violence.
Filmography

City of Joy (2016) – 1 hour 15 min

This documentary shows the stories and lives of survivors living in the safe haven of City of Joy, recovering from their trauma and learning new skills so they can become valuable leaders in their communities. *City of Joy* is easily available on Netflix.

Lumumba (2000) – 2 hours

This political thriller tells the story of Patrice Lumumba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s first Prime Minister, who only made it two months in office. This historical fiction movie stays as close to the truth as possible, using details from the assassination case.

Virunga (2014) – 1 hour 45 min

*Virunga*, produced by Leonardo DiCaprio, parallels the turmoil in the Congo with a mountain gorilla conservation center in the Virunga National Park. This gripping and intense documentary, which can be found on Netflix, discusses how international companies take advantage of and plunder the country’s rich natural resources.


This VICE documentary, easily accessible on Youtube, follows a reporter as he ventures into the mining areas of the Congo. His journey leads to run-ins with milita members, child labor cover-ups, and more.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYqrflGpTRE


This documentary follows the life and work of Dr. Mukwege as he seeks to provide medical as well as psychological care to survivors of rape as a weapon of war in the DRC.
Bibliography

Chapter 1: Dr. Denis Mukwege: Surgeon, Activist, Visionary

Dr. Denis Mukwege, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate


Panzi Hospital & Foundation: DRC & US


City of Joy

Chapter 2: Sexual Violence as a Tool of War in the DRC

Gender Roles in the DRC


Rape as a Tool of War


Responses and Proposals for Change


Chapter 3: The Democratic Republic of Congo – From Then to Now

History


Mining, Natural Resources, Technology, and Conflict


**Current Affairs**


Chakamba, R. (2017, January 9). Girls in the DRC are choosing to be child soldiers to escape poverty. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/drc-child-soldiers_n_587000cee4b099cd0fd2de0


**Chapter 4: Congolese Culture**

**Religion**

**Environment and Wildlife**


**Sports**


**Music and Art**


**Fashion and Textiles**


Chapter 5: The DRC & The International Community

U.S./DRC Bilateral Relations


Mexico City Policy (Global Gag Rule) & Women’s Health


International Actors and the DRC


International Responses to Sexual Violence in the DRC


Human Geography as it Relates to the DRC


Chapter 6: Global Sexual Violence
Sexual Violence Around the World


Toxic Masculinity & Sexist Language


Rape Culture


Chapter 7: Activism

Activism Against Sexual Violence Around the World


Social Media Activism


Challenges of Speaking Out
Local Activism
https://charlottewomensmarch.org/about-us/about/

http://www.nccasa.org/cms/about

Cover Art & Additional Photos
https://www.thepeoplesportfolio.org/sexual-violence-in-the-congo
The Echo Foundation promotes understanding and inspires hope through education, service, and the development of leadership for a more humane world. Our programs teach responsibility to young people in the context of social justice.

Echo was founded in 1997 following Wiesel’s visit to Charlotte that year. As the community-wide project Against Indifference concluded, Wiesel challenged the community to act on its convictions of human dignity, justice, and moral courage. He also offered his assistance in developing programs to address critical issues facing humankind.

Through comprehensive educational programs, The Echo Foundation equips individuals with moral and intellectual tools necessary to create positive change in their local and global communities. Echo initiatives use the power of example to educate about human rights, social justice, and urgent matters of sustainability. Experiential learning opportunities, programs using the arts in service to humankind, and facilitated dialogue in the pursuit of innovative solutions are hallmarks of the organization.

The foundation has hosted 28 humanitarians, Nobel Laureates and world leaders and created curriculum about each; serving over 740,000 students, and forging partnerships to benefit students worldwide. Recent projects have focused on Dr. Paul Farmer & Partners In Health; Africa expert and activist, John Prendergast, Rwandan Bishop John Rucyahana; Science Nobel Laureates, Günter Blobel, Edmond Fischer, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, Douglas Osheroff, Robert Richardson; founder of Doctors without Borders, Bernard Kouchner; Earth Institute Director, Jeffrey Sachs; Nobel Laureate in Literature, Wole Soyinka; human rights advocate Kerry Kennedy; Chinese dissident Harry Wu; and others. For more information and printable copies of past curriculum, visit www.echofoundation.org
The Echo Foundation mission: “...to promote justice and inspire hope through education, service and the development of leadership for a more humane world” is realized through the implementation of five initiatives:

I. **Voices Against Indifference**: A curriculum-based educational program, VAI connects high school students with global humanitarians who exemplify the power of the individual to make a difference. Each year, VAI addresses critical issues facing humanity from the perspectives of our participating humanitarians with the underlying goals of shifting attitudes, fostering global awareness and promoting personal responsibility among youth. Simultaneously, VAI builds bridges across cultural divides by bringing students from all corners of the region together for dialogue. An extension of this initiative is Echo’s Annual Award Dinner, at which the guest humanitarian is the keynote speaker and a local hero is honored with the Echo Award Against Indifference.

II. **Forum for Hope**: Designed to promote social responsibility among regional business, faith and education institutions from the top down, the Forum for Hope is an opportunity for community leaders to connect with global humanitarians. Participants explore effective means by which they can leverage their stature to create a culture of equality, dignity and mutual respect. Previous forums have included Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel, Partners In Health Founder Dr. Paul Farmer, Doctors Without Borders Founder Dr. Bernard Kouchner, and Columbia Earth Institute Director Jeffrey Sachs.

III. **Footsteps Global Initiative**: Travel and hands-on experiences have the capacity to transform students in a way that transcends classroom learning; only by “doing” can young people fully appreciate the challenges that face them as future leaders. This leadership initiative for regional high school students promotes awareness and global citizenship through travel and service. Competitively selected Ambassadors of the initiative participate in yearlong programming that combines intensive study, volunteerism and travel to locations of great humanitarian interest. Past initiatives have taken students to Europe to travel In The Footsteps of Elie Wiesel, to Rwanda to work in partnership with Partner In Health, and to Lexington, NC to further literacy in underserved schools.

Continued...
IV. **Living Together in the 21st Century:** Living Together in the 21st Century is a curriculum-based, education outreach project for 2nd grade students originated by Nobel Peace Laureate, Elie Wiesel, with involvement by child activist, Jonathan Kozol, and created by Charlotte-Mecklenburg teachers. Living Together teaches problem solving strategies, conflict resolution and respect for others. The underlying mission of the project is to simultaneously begin to build compassion for people of all races, cultures and backgrounds, and to teach life skills in young children that will prepare them to live in our society harmoniously. Living Together has been mandated as an integral part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg elementary school curriculum.

V. **Books Beyond Borders:** Books Beyond Borders encourages international understanding and action on behalf of others by helping Charlotte students furnish libraries for children around the world. To date, libraries have been created at Ningyuan Middle School in China, the Beit Tzipora Centers for Ethiopian Children in Israel, Lexington City Schools in North Carolina, and The Echo Children’s Library at Nkondo #1 Primary School in Rwanda.
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

- International Board of Advisors -

Elie Wiesel†, Lifetime Honorary Chairperson
Nobel Laureate for Peace, 1986
Dr. Aaron Ciechanover, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, 2004
Dr. Paul Farmer, Founder, Partners In Health
Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Chair, Dept. of African & African American Studies, Harvard University
Kerry Kennedy, International Human Rights Activist & Author
Dr. Bernard Kouchner, Founder, Doctors Without Borders
Jonathan Kozol, Author & Child Advocate
Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director, The Earth Institute, Columbia University

- Charlotte Board of Advisors -

Mary Lou and James Babb, Civic Leaders
Robert Bertges, Executive Vice President, Wells Fargo
Clarice Cato Goodyear, Community Volunteer
Ambassador Mark Erwin, President, Erwin Capital
Dr. Ophelia Garmon-Brown, SVP & Chief Community Health & Wellness Officer, Novant Health
The Honorable James Martin, Retired VP for Research, Carolinas HealthCare System
Sally D. Robinson, Civic Leader
William Vandiver, Retired Executive, Bank of America
The Honorable Kurt Waldthausen, Past Honorary Consul, Federal Republic of Germany
The Honorable Melvin L. Watt, Director, Federal Housing Finance Agency
Dr. James H. Woodward, Chancellor Emeritus, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

- Board of Trustees -

Rajnish Bharadwaj, Chair
Head, Cross Border Governance, Wells Fargo
Stephanie G. Ansaldo, President
The Echo Foundation
Thomas Palmer, Vice Chair
Retirement Practice Leader, Willis Towers Watson
John Stedman, Treasurer
President, JBS Capital, LLC
Dr. Joan F. Lorden, Secretary
Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UNC Charlotte
Frank Bryant, Partner, Poyner & Spruill, LLP
Lorine Edwards, President, Enirol Resources, Inc.
Tom Jackson, Principal, Financial Services, Ernest & Young LLP
Thomas Joseph, Managing Director, Advisory Services, Grant Thornton
Candice H. Knezevic, Corporate Communications, Duke Energy
Kenneth Levine, Director, Global Recruitment Strategy, United Technologies Corp.
Thomas D. Pollan, President, Pollan Enterprises

Eric Teal, Chief Investment Officer & Managing Partner, Queens Oak Advisors
Global Responsibility: “Justice Is Not Negotiable”

Echo Footsteps Global Initiative Application

WHAT: A unique experiential leadership initiative, Echo's Global Footsteps Initiative “Justice is Not Negotiable” promotes understanding, inspires a quest for knowledge, and is an exciting study/international travel opportunity for a select group of Charlotte-Mecklenburg students to explore global citizenship and personal responsibility.

Students will learn about Dr. Denis Mukwege, a surgeon in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who is the living example of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The R2P is a global political commitment through which states are given the right to intervene in other countries to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Dr. Mukwege treats victims of sexual violence during conflict and advocates internationally for their protection. Students will gain a better understanding of the global mechanisms designed to protect and enforce international human rights with an emphasis on global health and crimes against humanity.

WHERE: Following six months of study in Charlotte, students will travel to Paris, France for a two-day conference on global access to healthcare; Brussels, Belgium for an immersive experience at the European Union; The Hague, Netherlands to tour the ICC and The Mukwege Foundation; and Amsterdam, Netherlands to visit the Anne Frank House and National Holocaust Museum. Through educational and hands-on activities, both locally and abroad, Echo Student Ambassadors will learn about and contribute to the Responsibility to Protect worldwide.

WHO: Students from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area in grades 9-11 during the 2019-2020 school year are invited to apply. We are looking for outstanding students who display leadership skills, individual initiative, compassion, and who have a demonstrated commitment to service.

COST: The program fee is $10,000.00 per student. Scholarship opportunities are available. There is no application fee.

HOW: Interested students should complete and submit the following application and attach a current photograph. Application forms can be obtained at The Echo Foundation office or online. Semi-finalists will be chosen for interviews with Echo representatives.

WHEN: Activities take place Winter - Fall 2020. Travel occurs in Summer 2020.

DEADLINE: Entry forms and accompanying documents must be received by The Echo Foundation no later than Monday, October 28, 2019 at 11:59 PM.

Applications may be submitted via email to Stacey.Schanzlin@echofoundation.org or delivered to the Echo Office. For more information, contact The Echo Foundation at (704) 347-3844 or Stacey.Schanzlin@echofoundation.org, or visit www.echofoundation.org.
THE ECHO FOUNDATION
presents
Global Responsibility: “Justice Is Not Negotiable”

Official Application Form

Application Instructions

• Please type or print legibly all information.
• You must attach a photograph of yourself to the first page of the application.
• If on any section you do not have enough room in the space provided, you may attach your responses on a separate sheet of paper.
• You must sign and have a parent or guardian sign the Duties and Responsibilities statement. Only signed applications will be considered.
• We will accept only completed applications. Please check that you have completed each section before submitting your materials.

Personal Information

Full Name ____________ Male □ Female □
Address ____________
City ____________ State_____ Zip_
Home Phone ____________ Cell Phone ____________
Email ____________
Parent/Guardian Email ____________________ P/G Phone ____________________

Class Status for 2019-2020 school year:

□ Freshman □ Sophomore □ Junior

School_____________________________ GPA _____

Date of Birth ________________
References

Please list three individuals not related to you who we may contact to get to know more about you. You should have one academic reference, one personal reference, and one reference that can attest to your community service or extra-curricular activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Curricular:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extra-curricular Activities
Please list your school, community, athletic or other activities beginning with the one most important to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Office(s) held or honor(s) received</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International Travel
Have you previously traveled outside the U.S.? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If so, please provide the following information on each country you have visited:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Reason for Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial Aid
If chosen, will you require financial assistance to participate in the program?

☐ Yes ☐ No
Consider the quote below from the Dalai Lama. Construct an essay exploring the theme of the Responsibility to Protect, making sure to address the three questions posed below. Your response should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 1500 words. Attach your essay to the application form and be sure to include your name on each page.

“In today’s highly interdependent world, individuals and nations can no longer resolve many of their problems by themselves. We need one another. It is our collective and individual responsibility to protect and nurture the global family…” – The Dalai Lama

1. Dr. Mukwege has said that “silence is the greatest ally of sexual violence.” Why do you think it is important that we speak up and act when we witness injustice, even when such injustice does not immediately affect us? Consider both of the quotes above and explain the compelling reasons why each one of us has a responsibility to intervene.

2. The Responsibility to Protect speaks to the responsibility of states to intervene. However, embodied in this principle is also our individual responsibility to protect other human beings. Describe a time in your life where you felt the need to protect someone else. Did you act? What was the result? If you could do it over again, would you respond the same way?

3. Tell us why you would like to be a Student Ambassador with The Echo Foundation Footsteps Global Initiative, R2P: “Justice Is Not Negotiable.” Considering the duties and responsibilities, what qualities do you bring to the role? What do you hope to learn from the experience and how would you seek to share this knowledge with others?

Fulfillment of Duties and Responsibilities Statement

I certify that all the information on this application is correct, that all work submitted is my own, and that if selected, I am available to participate in the program and fulfill my duties during the 2019-2020 school year and June 2020 travel.

____________________________  ______________________
Student Signature                Date

____________________________  ______________________
Parent/Guardian Signature       Date

DEADLINE: Entry forms and accompanying documents must be received by The Echo Foundation no later than Monday, October 28, 2019 at 11:59 PM. Applications may be submitted via email to Stacey.Schanzlin@echofoundation.org or delivered to the Echo Office.

For more information, contact The Echo Foundation at (704) 347-3844 or Stacey.Schanzlin@echofoundation.org, or visit www.echofoundation.org. Entry forms and guidelines are also available on The Echo Foundation website.