

Dear Clinic Partners,

It is my privilege to serve as the Executive Director of the Paul Carlson Partnership and to join you in this effort to *develop a knowledgeable heart for Congo* and raise the standard of healthcare through the Congo Clinic Initiative.

We are in Phase 3: Access to Clean Water. As you may know, clean water is vitally important to our health! Water is a natural, precious resource we cannot do without. Many Congolese men, women, and especially children, suffer from water-borne illnesses due to lack of clean water. Our approach is to assist our Congolese partners in creating sustainable clean water sources in clinic communities. PCP has initiated pilot projects with 5 communities to determine the most effective community involvement and will be assessing the results before moving into other areas.

Women Lead the Way

Water is large part of many people's lives in Congo. Every day, people wake up early to go to the nearest water source, often many miles away. This is especially the case for women and girls. Usually water is collected from a stream or river with murky but flowing water. Many communities have built small reservoirs in an attempt to make the water collection process easier, but this water is rarely clean.



Community groups discuss and plan solutions for clean water.

As you learn more about clean water development in Congo through this newsletter, please be in prayer for the following:

- medical leaders who will meet with communities about health, hygiene, and the water source
- communities' commitment to own and maintain the water source
- people seeing real change in their health due to clean water
- leaders who will care for the water source on a long-term basis and train others to do the same

Thank you for your support and prayers!

Renée N. Hale
PCP Executive Director

Animals use the water source, too, and spread disease. People sometimes bathe in the water source, not realizing they are contaminating the drinking water.

Most of the communities supported by the Congo Clinic Initiative have no access to clean drinking water, despite an abundance of rivers, marshes, and natural springs. Over the last few decades, there have been attempts to install wells and water purification systems, but these installations tend to break down and go unrepaired. Only springs coming from deep enough underground can provide clean drinking water, and this water is quickly contaminated once it reaches the surface. For these springs to provide clean, usable water, they need to be capped. This involves building a platform over the spring to harness its pressure and channel clean water through pipes. Spring capping is one way to provide clean water to communities and clinics.

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We believe the best way to achieve clean water is by working through our local partners and with communities to identify problems and possible solutions. Through organized community meetings, the village clinic personnel are working with a delegation from the village that includes women, youth, religious leaders, and other representatives to discuss, teach, and assess the primary causes of health problems.



Recently capped springs in the Bogose Nubea region.

In a recent meeting, many of the women quickly realized that the water they drink was causing serious health problems, especially for their children. After a bit of resistance from the men, some of the women said, "If you could see what you drink, you wouldn't be drinking it!" Since then, they've spent time together at the water source. We were able to arrange for a water technician from a nearby town to help them assess their water source and highlight possible solutions. Already, community members are discussing things that

go, we saw the results ourselves. The clinic doctor reported that people from all over are coming to the spring to collect clean water. The patients are drinking and bathing in clean water, the clinic is cleaning the hospital and sanitizing equipment with clean water. And, clean water is actually reducing the number of deaths. Malaria and diarrhea both cause severe dehydration, but having clean water for people to drink can prevent death and reduce disease.

We rejoice in the progress being made by our local partners! Taking what is learned from the pilot phase, we will begin to roll out community water projects throughout the region.

We love the tangible impact that many of these projects have. However, we realize that the intangibles are often more important! Even the best installation will eventually crumble if it isn't valued and owned by the people who depend on it. By working through local leadership and with community members, we believe that these water projects will be of much more use to the communities we serve. Thank you for your gifts and prayers, and for the part you're playing in this process!

Thank you for your support!



A Congolese technician was brought in for an assessment with the men and women in the community.

they can do on their own to improve their village's water source!

In fact, over the last several months, pilot projects in 5 clinic communities were started. One clinic community in Bogose Nubea has already completed the construction of capped springs! In our recent trip to Con-

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