



INTERACTIVE RADIO INSTRUCTION BRINGS LEARNING BACK TO **EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

You do not have to go far in Kalungwe, a little village situated about ten kilometers away from Uvira, South Kivu, to find someone to help guide you.

Like the rest of the region covered by the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program, even small children are able to point you in the direction of the community education centres that were established through a partnership between local communities and War Child Canada. Only one question was needed: "Do you know where we can find the Radio Turudi Shuleni schools?" Asking this immediately results in these curious young boys jostling amongst themselves to guide the way.

Walking to the center you might cross paths with one of the many learners like Nada, a young 16 year old girl and student in the local IRI program. "I dropped out of my studies since my father decided to enroll my brothers first. I come from a family of nine children. My salvation was the arrival of War Child Canada with Turudi Shuleni, the radio program in my village!"

War Child Canada's project Making Waves: Radio-

Based Learning in the DRC has been implemented in South Kivu since 2014 targeting out of school children, particularly girls, allowing them to catch up on their education in a safe, community-based setting. Learners listen to radio programming together, in a local community space, avoiding the long and sometimes dangerous walk to formal school. They are guided by an Education Assistant who reviews the previous days' lesson before the days' radio broadcast and then guides the students through additional learning activities



post-broadcast. Exams are government approved ensuring that students receive formal certification upon completion.

All students echo Nada's excitement for the program. Rochi, a young boy from the Kalungwe centre, says that he loves the approach used. "With the radio we follow the lesson the in form of a program. The innovation here is that along with the radio explanations, we also have an education facilitator who goes over the same material in class with practical exercises. We have double the education. This permits us to be even more applied."

He went on to share some of what he had learned. "In History, as an example, we have studied the kingdoms of Kongo, Kuba, Bateke, and the empires



of Lunda and the capitals of countries." Rochi is very proud of what he has accomplished. "I don't know how anyone in my village who goes to formal school that can easily remember the lessons taught like I can. I was the top of the class with more than 80%!"

The impact is significant. "I no longer want to be unproductive like I was when I was studying in a formal primary school. I was even spending a week at home due to a lack of school fees. After payment, I would arrive in class after having forgotten all of the material I had already learned. With this radio program, I could successfully follow the lessons and receive a pass at the end of the year," one learner explained.

Learners enrolled in the program had been out of school between one and three years by the time they started the radio-based classes.

- ▶ The first test pass rate was **59%**
- ▶ By the second exam, this increased significantly to a **93%** pass rate
- ▶ Overall, all exams averaged an **80%** pass-rate

This was an impressive result for students who had been previously out of school. Also as part of the program evaluation, learners were tested alongside students enrolled in the formal school system. In all subjects, those enrolled in IRI classes scored the same or slightly above those in the formal system, an encouraging result for this innovative methodology.





already experiencing a weak agricultural output with a disease that attacks cassava and corn, our main economic resources. Today, a bag of corn cannot even pay a single month for my child, while it was the only activity that permitted us to enroll our children in formal school,” a parent told us.

The methodology is ensuring that, not only can out of school children to catch up on their education, but that they can, ideally, re-enroll in the formal system. The results are encouraging. Mali recently left the radio-based program to re-enroll in formal school. “I was in third place at the end of the year at the Turudi Schuleni centre [radio-based education center]. When I arrived to formal school I obtained a 75.3% during the first term before being top of the class at the end of the first semester with a 75.5%!”

The results are encouraging and War Child Canada will be expanding the program both in the DRC and in other countries. Most importantly, it’s providing an education to those who are otherwise left out – as one parent stated:

“This is my daughter’s last chance to finish high school and get her diploma.”

And it’s not just the learners who are excited about this new approach – parents and teachers are equally engaged. As the program is broadcast over the radio, War Child Canada receives phone calls from teachers in the formal system explaining that they are learning from the program and will start implementing some of the radio-based curriculum into their classrooms. And, as the radio-based programming is free of charge for all learners, even the most vulnerable are able to attend.

“This project has restored the meaning to our lives. We are

