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Ensemble pour demain

REPORT of ACTIVITES

1st Semester 2025

2025

INTRODUCTION

In its project to support vulnerable women through agriculture and livestock farming, the Kitumaini Centre – CK – has organized several activities in the first half of 2025.

Unlike previous years, this year has a particularity: supporting women, children, and youth in a situation of unstable security and rebel occupation of areas. Fighting rages almost daily in an unpredictable manner, creating terror, looting, theft, rape, population displacement, and numerous deaths.

For more than 20 years, the Kitumaini Centre has been supporting and assisting a specific population in the process of social and economic reintegration. It includes women who are victims of rape, orphaned children, children born of rape, and young mothers under the age of 18: all of them are marginalized and rejected by their families and the community. To support the socio-economic reintegration of these groups of victims, the Kitumaini Centre implements annual programs in agriculture (training in farming techniques, provision of improved seeds), livestock breeding (training, distribution of breeding stock), schooling for orphaned children and children born of rape, and training for young mothers in various trades (tailoring, soap making). A school has been established for the education of orphaned and destitute children, and a nutrition centre to accommodate malnourished children.

The volatile security situation has forced several organizations to leave the area. Repeated looting and theft, lacks of access to fields, kidnappings, etc. have resulted in increased malnutrition, reduced production and a lack of basic necessities, etc.

Faced with all this, the Kitumaini Centre did not pack up and withdraw from the field like other international and national organizations; on the contrary, strategies were put in place to stay in touch with women, children, youth, and other people in the various CK intervention groups, in order to continue supporting them despite the very delicate security situation. We implemented a communication system that allowed us to remain in constant, minute-by-minute contact with women in different areas, especially those at high risk, to share information in a timely manner, provide guidance, schedule in-person meetings – time and location -, know how to move and know the travel times, how to deliver seeds or farming tools to the women, etc.

The Kitumaini Centre's strong commitment is to work with and support these women, youth, and children to ensure their socio-economic reintegration. By strengthening ties and relationships between women – the primary protagonists – they support each other in a strong relationship of mutuality to face together the different challenges in front of them. These women, subdivided into small subgroups called NYUMBA KUMI (Ten Houses), have demonstrated a surge of solidarity among themselves throughout the difficult period that they are going through, like in all the provinces of North and South Kivu under the rebellion.

1. AGRICULTURE:

Agriculture being the main activity in rural areas, more than 90% of the population lives it, and the rest is active in education and small businesses. For years, the CK has been supporting and assisting several women victims of rape and sexual violence in this sector for their empowerment and socio-economic reintegration. A great development was already observed in several households: more than 1,400 households out of the 2,000 supported by the Kitumaini Centre no longer needed good quality seeds or farming tools provided by the CK, because they were already able to obtain them through their production which allowed them to cover certain expenses and feed their children. Unfortunately, the war broke out in January, a period just corresponding with the beginning of the harvest, so many saw their products perish in the fields because they could not access them due to the growing insecurity and gunfire everywhere. Other women saw their products looted; others left their homes and everything behind to seek shelter somewhere else. To help women maintain their survival through agricultural activities, the CK encouraged them to set up small vegetable gardens near their homes in order to continue growing short-cycle products such as amaranth (only 1 month from sowing to harvest), cabbages, onions, or eggplants (4-month cycle). 200 women benefited from training on vegetable garden development with the aim of putting into practice the lessons learned during the training and making them available to other women. Other training courses, always aimed at improving agricultural production, were carried out for the benefit of more than 1,200 women in various fields, including:

- Training on the production of organic fertilizers and pesticides
- Development of manure and compost pits
- Training on GAP (good agricultural practices) and bean crop management

Young mothers under the age of 18 have not been forgotten: the Kitumaini Centre has provided them with a demonstration field, where they come to learn agricultural techniques by combining theory and practice. This is also a way to support them during this difficult period when armed groups forcibly recruit young people. To promote sustainable agriculture, village-based advisors for young mothers are being established, and the Kitumaini Centre in the agricultural sector is supervising 15 young mothers.

Several agricultural technical schools and universities sent their pupils and students for internships of 2 weeks to 1 month: the Kitumaini Centre welcomed, from April to June, more than 70 interns from schools and universities for agricultural practice.

2. CATTLE BREEDING:

Since we cannot talk about agriculture without talking about livestock, the Kitumaini Centre had made goats available to women in the form of rotating credits. With this rotation policy, more than 1,000 women had already become owners of one or more goats. Some already had 3 or 4, or even 6, others, through the sale of some goats, bought sheets of metal for their houses, and others set up small projects after their goats gave birth. Becoming a goat owner gives these women social consideration in their communities, but unfortunately, since war spares nothing or no one, some women had their goats forcibly stolen before their eyes. As of April 2025, 196 goats have been stolen or lost.

To continue supporting women in this livestock sector and address the problem of malnutrition, 450 guinea pigs were distributed to more than 220 women after training the beneficiaries on guinea pig breeding. The choice of guinea pigs has several objectives, namely food security (rich in animal protein in this time of crisis when many families cannot afford meat) and a source of income (the guinea pig can be sold at any time and provide the family with a small income). Their breeding is simple, requires a small space, and does not require much effort for feeding.

3. EDUCATION :

The education of orphaned children, children born of rape and vulnerable children, has been one of the priority activities of the Kitumaini Centre for more than 20 years, because we cannot ensure the future of the country without the education of children. Each year, around a hundred children are supported by the CK in their school education; many of them have already completed their studies and have even found work and formed families. Some freed up time in their program to take care of those who are still in school. This year, there are 300 students, including 240 in primary school and 60 in secondary school. All these children are enrolled at the Umoja School Group/Scuola di Pietro, a school belonging to the Kitumaini Centre to provide supervision and education for children.

4. HEALTH

In its approach to supporting women who are victims of rape and sexual violence, the Kitumaini Centre considers all aspects of the lives of the person being treated. Most women who are raped have been psychologically and physically destroyed to the point that farming is not easy. Thus, the Kitumaini Centre focuses primarily on their health. The women are referred to Panzi Hospital for appropriate care following a collaborative protocol between the CK and Panzi Hospital. The Kitumaini Centre has a mobile clinic to provide care and follow-up for women before and after their hospitalization.

With the on-going war in the eastern part of our country, particularly in the Kitumaini Centre's intervention area, we recorded more than 96 cases of rape among the 2,000 women supported by the

CK from January to April 2025. We don't have access to some areas of our intervention, and if we would count the months of May and June, the number will be even higher.

About ten women were kidnapped and taken into the forest.

Twenty-five women were transferred to Panzi Hospital for appropriate care.

Forty-five women received treatment at other health centres and hospitals, depending on the case and proximity.

During this period, the first half of 2025, 12 women and 10 children died from illness, malnutrition, or lack of appropriate care due to the difficulty our staff had in reaching them at home due to insecurity.

5. NUTRITION :

Since 2011, the Kitumaini Centre has welcomed around sixty children suffering from acute malnutrition each year; the majority of them are children of raped women. These children are welcomed at the Kitumaini Nutritional Centre for a 6-month program and every day, they receive a concentrated porridge very rich in protein. After 6 months, more than 90% of the children recover their health and can now live without assistance. This year, from February to July 2025, there were more than 45 children enrolled, while the centre's capacity is only 30 children per program. This is explained by the malnutrition that exists in the area on a large scale: lack of food because some farmers cannot access their fields due to insecurity, theft and looting of agricultural products, absence of humanitarian workers, etc.

6. SOCIAL and other points

In addition to the activities mentioned above, visits were conducted to elderly and vulnerable women to provide comfort and assistance despite the volatile security situation. Twenty-six elderly women in difficult circumstances were visited and provided with food assistance (sugar, soap, salt, rice). These elderly women are most often abandoned and considered witches by the local community.

Awareness-raising and support meetings were held for women on the formation of cooperatives: each farmers' organization will form a cooperative; the texts (bylaws) are already available, and women's membership in the cooperative formation process is growing.

We also encouraged women to build improved stoves (braziers and briquettes) to combat deforestation and the misuse of firewood, as well as to limit their visits to the forest to collect firewood and avoid being kidnapped or raped.

1. AGRICULTURE

➤ Training on the production of organic fertilizers and pesticides

Several training sessions were organized in various farmers' organizations on the production of organic fertilizers and pesticides: 61 bags of 100 litres, or 6,100 litres, were produced throughout the semester by producers.



➤ Manure pit development and composting

The dissemination of manure pit development and composting techniques continues in the POs: during this period, 979 composters and 1,070 manure pits were developed, some already in use last February and others filled for the next September season.



➤ **Training on GAP for bean production and management**

A training course was held in May on good agronomic practices for bean production: 513 women were trained.



➤ **Training on market gardening crop management and production**

Training was organized in the POs to strengthen their knowledge of market gardening crop production (amaranth and cabbage): 200 female producers were trained.



➤ **Distribution of amaranth seeds and cabbage seedlings:**

200 women benefited – 5kg of seeds and 8080 seedlings were distributed.



➤ **Distribution of farming tools to women in the 7 POs.**

The Kitumaini Centre, through its partner AFDI, distributed hoes to women members of the POs for those who lost their farming tools during the war: 500 hoes were distributed.





➤ **Installation of VBA single mothers for sustainable agriculture**



➤ **Supervision of trainees**

The Kitumaini Center welcomes students and pupils from various local institutions/schools with agricultural departments. During this period, 119 trainees were supervised at the Kitumaini Center. Encadrement des stagiaires





2. CATTLE BREEDING

➤ Training on guinea pig breeding techniques

200 women were trained in guinea pig breeding techniques in their households.

➤ Purchase and distribution of guinea pigs to Pos

To combat meat shortages and poverty in households, 500 guinea pigs were distributed to women.



3. EDUCATION

The UMOJA school group at the Kitumaini Centre ended the 2024-2025 school year with a total enrolment of 298, including 152 boys and 146 girls, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and orphans. The goal is to provide these children with the knowledge to prepare them for working life.



4. et 5. NUTRITION and HEALTH

➤ Nutrition

For years, the Kitumaini Centre has been assisting orphaned children suffering from acute malnutrition in Miti. These children receive concentrated cereal porridge throughout the week. During this first semester, the Kitumaini Centre regularly assisted more than 47 children.



➤ WOMEN'S HEALTH

The Kitumaini Centre assisted women by providing them with medical care through its mobile clinic; this activity did not take place due to lack of funds and the security situation. During this period, 25 women victims of rape were identified and taken to PANZI hospital by the Kitumaini Centre for appropriate care.



6. SOCIAL AND OTHER SUBJECTS

➤ Care of old people and visits to sick people

To bring a smile back to some elderly and vulnerable women in different POs, the Kitumaini Centre assisted 25 women with food and non-food items.



Difficulties: Given the limited financial resources, certain activities such as adult literacy and tailoring for young girls have not taken place.

The volatile security situation has meant that some women do not have access to their fields and have not cultivated throughout the B growing season, from February to June 2025, resulting in famine in their households.

It was difficult for our agents to access certain villages given the insecurity in these areas.

The need for support and assistance, as well as the need for farming tools and seeds, is enormous, and we do not know how to meet all these demands.

Some women have left their communities because their homes have been destroyed and they do not know where to begin rebuilding.

Some younger girls engage in debauchery, and young boys go to mining areas to find food, thus dropping out of school.

We must also address cholera and Mpox, which are present in the region.

Done in Bukavu, 8th July 2025