



COVENANTKIDS
Congo

powered by
World Vision

**GLOBAL
6K FOR WATER**

Six Weeks to 6K Prayer Guide » a 6-week training companion



Photo by Gideon Tsang

COVENANT KIDS Congo powered by World Vision GLOBAL 6K FOR WATER

Dear Friend:

6K. Roughly 3.7 miles. That is the typical distance many people in the Democratic Republic of Congo walk round-trip simply to get water. And it is the distance we are setting for church-sponsored runs or walks this spring, called Global 6K for Water.

More than five years ago, we entered into the largest-ever partnership between a denomination and World Vision to stand alongside our sister church Communauté Évangélique de l'Ubangi-Mongala (CEUM) in the northwest region of DRC. This is an area which, in all of its beauty and richness, has also been devastated by crippling poverty and civil strife. The partnership is called Covenant Kids Congo, and I've seen the impact of this powerful ministry firsthand.

A team from the Covenant Offices, which included former president Gary Walter, went to DRC recently to assess CKC at the five-year mark. All I can say is, I'm speechless. What we saw impressed us all. Thousands of children sponsored. A utility project that has made drinkable water accessible to more than 40,000 people. A women's agricultural business—mothers of sponsored children—enhancing food security in the area. Schools built and educational opportunities for more children. A youth parliament that gives sociopolitical voice to the younger generation. A community advocacy group that champions pressing issues that are identified by the community. All of these things happen in and through the Covenant Kids Congo partnership between World Vision, CEUM (and other churches), and the ECC.

While the progress in all these areas of community transformation has been remarkable, so much more can be done. If 40,000 people now have access to water, 150,000+ more still do not. When you registered for this race, your \$50 provided clean water for one person in Gemena, DR Congo!

Yet this 6K is not just a walk and it's not just a fundraiser. It's a spiritual journey. These next six weeks, **I ask that you walk in prayer for our sisters and brothers in Congo.** Enjoy God's creation. Get a good workout. Savor the fellowship. And in the midst of it all, lift up your prayers and humbly realize that your efforts are contributing to a tremendous work in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Here's to walking with purpose!

Al Tizon

Executive Minister of Serve Globally

How to Use the CKC Six Weeks to 6K Prayer Guide

This guide is your companion as you prepare physically and spiritually for your race. You can use this guide on your own or in a group, for a total of six weeks before, during, or after your 6K.

No training is required – you can show up on race day and walk your 6K! But if you'd like to train, a Team World Vision training plan is on the next page. Here's how you can use this guide, with or without training, each week:

- **Pray the weekly prayer.** If you're training, pray during your walks and runs, while reading a reflection on your rest days.
- **Memorize the verse.** Repeat it to yourself as you walk or as you go about your day.
- **Do the action step.** Share your experience on social media with #SixWeeksTo6K or in conversations with others.
- **Discuss the question** with your family, friends, team, or small group.

Listen for God's voice, wherever you may be, whether at work, school, home, out walking, or running with a group. Thank you so much for walking in prayer and solidarity with our friends in Congo! *Merci mingi.*

		RUN	WALK	RUN	REST	RUN	RUN	REST
1	March 25	20 min run 2, walk 1	30 min walk	20 min run 2, walk 1	rest	20 min run 2, walk 1	30 min run 2, walk 1	rest
2	April 1	25 min run 2, walk 1	30 min walk	25 min run 2, walk 1	rest	25 min run 2, walk 1	35 min run 2, walk 1	rest
3	April 8	30 min run 3, walk 1	30 min walk	30 min run 3, walk 1	rest	30 min run 3, walk 1	40 min run 3, walk 1	rest
4	April 15	35 min run 4, walk 1	30 min walk	35 min run 4, walk 1	rest	35 min run 4, walk 1	50 min run 4, walk 1	rest
5	April 22	40 min run 5, walk 1	30 min walk	40 min run 5, walk 1	rest	40 min run 5, walk 1	60 min run 5, walk 1	rest
6	April 29	45 min run 5, walk 1	30 min walk	45 min run 5, walk 1	rest	rest	Global 6K!	rest

MINUTES, NOT MILES.

Run 2 minutes.
Walk 1 minute.
Repeat.
Run more.
Add minutes.
6K!

Why 6K? It's the average distance people in the developing world walk for water every day.

In World Vision's Global 6K for Water, every step we take is one they won't have to. To get your body ready for race day, first focus on walking and getting into shape. Stick to the plan, follow the run/walk ratios, and you'll be golden!

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

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World Vision

PRAYER:

Pray for the courage to step out in faith and stretch yourself to new limits.

SCRIPTURE:

“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

ACTION STEP:

Pick one way that you will take a step outside your comfort zone. Maybe it's setting a new physical goal (even running a marathon!), trying a new spiritual practice like lectio divina, inviting a friend to coffee, or scheduling a family prayer night. Lean in where you feel God's pull.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Where is God calling you to stretch yourself next?



How I Became a Runner

by ElenaClaire Lindholtz

I actually didn't intend to become a runner. The reason I stepped out the door of my Chicago apartment that cool spring morning, sneakers laced, was simply because I hadn't done it. And I wanted to see what would happen. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to fall so deeply and passionately in love with a sport that I had zero experience in.

Fitness, faith, and emotions have become central themes for me. My journey has not been easy. It involves: Over a decade of often-incapacitating physical illness. Receiving care for the wrong diagnosis. Discovering the correct diagnosis to great relief, yet grief over years lost. Bearing the burden of a brand-new treatment regimen. The added struggle of also sustaining a traumatic brain injury and the herculean effort it took to come back from that.

All of these facets of my journey were accompanied by emotional trauma that a wide-eyed optimist like myself did not know how to process. But fitness has provided catharsis, a sense of freedom, and an emotional outlet, while bringing me to a newfound deeper faith in Christ. I shocked my entire family by taking up kickboxing to release emotion. That led to weightlifting, cycling, running, and eventually hybrid cross-training.

God has taught me so many spiritual lessons through these experiences, speaking to me at moments from a particular sparring match to my recovery from a running injury. He has taught me humility. Trust. Reliance. Courage. Repentance. He has revealed fitness to also be a beautiful form of joyful worship for His redemptive and healing power.

But it was time for fitness to become something more, something not just for me. I am a vessel, a tool, part of God's hands and feet here on Earth. My running shoes needed to become a blessing.

I've committed to a 12-month period of running exclusively for Covenant Kids Congo, raising money to bring clean water to my brothers and sisters there. It has not been an easy year, but God doesn't promise an easy life for His followers. He does promise good plans and hope for the future, and He calls me to serve. If I can use my newfound passion for running to bless others, then here I am, Lord, send me!

ElenaClaire Lindholtz is a former employee at Covenant Offices in Chicago where she worked with church planting and congregational vitality. ElenaClaire has a deep passion for running and fitness, and she's an extreme coffee enthusiast. She also enjoys wearing every shade of purple imaginable, cooking, reading, and anything associated with Wonder Woman or Captain America.

Step Out of Your Ease

by Nancy Thompson

I run. I'm a runner.

It's still amazing to me that I'm able to call myself a runner. Several years ago, I was challenged to do a 5K with a friend, and my running days began. I felt ill-equipped, out of shape, and determined to improve. I finished several half marathons, without training well and with little direction other than to finish the race. I was stepping out of my comfort zone, but I was focused on my own finish times.

Then I partnered with Covenant Kids Congo and Team WorldVision. I knew I could run, and that training with an actual plan would be beneficial. What I didn't anticipate was the transformation in myself and the impact I could have clear across the world.

As I started running with a renewed focus, I was also learning that most children and women walk an average of 6K every day to get water—water that makes them sick. Water that is filled with disease. I realized every step, every mile, and every run completed could raise awareness of the walk these children do daily.

My teen daughter and I ran the Global 6K together in 2017. It was so much fun! Afterward, I took her to brunch. We had fresh water in a pitcher on our table. Then I went home, tossed my clothes in the washing machine, and took a hot shower. My water

heater is on the first floor, while my shower is on the third, so I let the water just run to get good and warm first.

That afternoon I sat and cried. I was almost ashamed of the ease that we take for granted. We can walk to the faucet and turn on water that doesn't make us ill. We wash our clothes, our dishes, our cars, ourselves with water that is clean. There are so many families in DR Congo who are not afforded this ease.

Yet we have the capability to step out of our ease and out of our comfort zones. We can walk in hope for the future. Hope that can actually change lives, as each \$50 donation covers the cost to bring clean water to one person. So I encourage you: Start with a walk. Step out of your ease. See what God will do with your small strides.

Nancy Thompson serves as Pastor to Children and Families and Team World Vision Captain at Pine Lake Covenant Church in Sammamish, Washington. She is passionate about growing children and families closer to Jesus and each other. Nancy is the parent of three young adults. She's also a runner and a statue climber, and she loves living in the joy of family ministry.



PRAYER:

Pray for the current water projects in Congo.

SCRIPTURE:

“He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs” (Psalm 107:35).

ACTION STEP:

For one day, fast from all liquids except for water (yes, even coffee). Notice each time you turn on a faucet, whether to fill a glass, cook, shower, or wash your hands. Before you turn on the faucet, take a moment to pause and pray.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

What did you learn from the water challenge? What would it be like for you and your family to carry your daily water needs?



Partnering for Clean Water

by Rev. Etienne Mbewa

When the CKC partnership began in 2012, World Vision conducted an assessment to measure clean water access in Gemena. The results revealed that only 11% of the population had access to potable water. Consequently, there have been many cases of waterborne diseases in our community, especially for children.

Since then, 41,000 people have gained access to clean water. The Covenant Church of Congo, known as the CEUM, has been a leader and a partner in this work. Most recently, the CEUM decided with its partner World Vision to improve the Bokongo gravity-fed springs. Together the partners capped an additional spring and improved a spring capped many years ago by missionaries. This work included building a collecting basin, rehabilitating a concrete water cistern, and constructing five water distribution fountains. The pipe connects to six water fountains, one of which is the original located in the middle of CEUM headquarters.

The local community actively participated in this project. Volunteers opened a one-mile long road for construction materials to be transported to the area, and they dug 3.5 km of trenches for the pipe. A water management committee also formed to maintain the water system over the long-term.

Here are the results we've seen in Gemena:

- Waterborne diseases have significantly diminished. Before, dirty water was the cause of 80% of childhood illnesses. But after opening this system, that dropped to 40%.
- Household incomes have improved since families have not had to pay for treatment of waterborne illness.
- Women who used to walk long distances for water have their task reduced, only walking 50 meters now.

Meanwhile, water still remains a huge challenge in Gemena and beyond. While the CKC partnership is only located in Gemena, the CEUM ministers in all of the northwest region of DR Congo, where many people don't have access to clean water:

Our prayer is that God would touch the hearts of those with goodwill, whether that is in Congo or in North American Covenant churches, to continue to help this population. May God bless you.

Rev. Etienne Mbewa is a CEUM Pastor, and he serves as the CEUM's Focal Point for the CKC partnership. Rev. Mbewa works closely with several key projects through this partnership, including as the coordinator of the CEUM child protection committee.

The Miracle of Clean Water

by Billy Baraka Mugisha and Cat Knarr

Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink. — Exodus 17:6 (NIV)

Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. — Numbers 20:11 (NIV)

In these two passages of Scripture, Moses acted like a driller when he used the staff in his hand to flush clean drinking water out of the rock. Water poured out in sufficient quantity for the entire community of the Hebrews. Likewise, World Vision uses equipment to drill boreholes and cap sources of spring water to bring clean water for vulnerable communities and children of Gemena. This program is called WASH: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene.

Last year, the CKC WASH program in Gemena focused on drilling the borehole and building the distribution system for the third deep water well, as well as improving sanitation and hygiene. Thousands of people gained access to sanitation facilities in their homes and benefited from hygiene behavior-change promotion in their community.

Billy Baraka Mugisha recently served as the World Vision DRC WASH Specialist.

One Family's Story

When Bernadette collects water for her family, she picks up her jug and walks a few minutes to a kiosk. There, clean water sprays from a faucet, pouring until it fills her jug all the way. "Beforehand we had a lot of pain getting water, and now we have good water," Bernadette said. "It's beautiful."

Bernadette used to walk a mile to a stream. It took an hour roundtrip, and she could see how dirty the grayish water was—but back then, it was the only water available. "It had a bad taste and there were animals in it," Bernadette said. "Other people were going to the bathroom nearby." Her children often got sick, and they would cry because of the pain in their stomachs.

But now, with easy access to clean water, Bernadette's four kids haven't gotten sick in more than six months. Bernadette's husband, Serge Jackson, thanked everyone who contributed to build and maintain the water system. "We thank God very much," he said. "Now we have good health. Now you can go and get water in five minutes. You walk there, get water, and come home."

Cat Knarr is the Project Manager for Covenant Kids Congo. She writes CKC blog posts and social media updates.



Week Three

FUNDRAISING

PRAYER:

Pray about who you can ask to give to your race.

SCRIPTURE:

“If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday” (Isaiah 58:10).

ACTION STEP:

Ask three people to give a gift for clean water in Congo. You can send an email, ask in person, do a live video on social media, write letters, make cards with kids, or even throw a party like Rickey did. Get creative and have fun!

(see pg. 13)

GROUP DISCUSSION:

What are your fundraising fears? What are some creative ways that we can fundraise together? Pray for each other's and the group's fundraising efforts.

Week Three FUNDRAISING



The Power of Asking

by Donn Engebretson

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.
— Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)

My dad used to ask people, “What’s the primary reason that people give to support ministry?” He would get a wide variety of answers about altruistic motives, obedience to God, and what captured people’s hearts. But my dad would respond, “Those are important reasons why people give. But not the primary reason. **The primary reason people give is because they were asked.**” In other words, they were invited to extend themselves for the sake of God’s Kingdom.

Here are two important reflections on the ministry of asking:

What has it been like when you have been asked? Reflect on when you’ve been asked to step forward—to teach Sunday School, to join the worship team, and so on. Are you disappointed that you were asked to join Jesus in his work? The things we do for God’s Kingdom never diminish our lives, but rather profoundly fulfill us. When you ask someone to extend themselves, whether with time, energy, or financial resources, you’re giving them the most wonderful opportunity to become the unique masterwork of God they were created to be.

Reflect on the character of a biblical ask. In exploring Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:7-8, Dallas Willard discusses the character of asking people the way God asks us. Dallas says that asking gives an invitation, while carefully protecting

the freedom to decline the invitation. This means that a biblical ask liberates both the person asking and the person being asked! In *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas goes on to say that this request “draws people into the kingdom rather than into the web of our devices and plans for them.”

When we ask, we must be careful that we’re giving an invitation that people can decline or joyfully accept. A few tips:

1. Be bold, clear, and direct.
2. Communicate how their support will impact our friends in DR Congo—\$50 covers the cost to bring clean water to one person.
3. Rejoice greatly with people who join you, but also honor the choice to decline. Bless the person who does not join in.
4. Report back to your supporters on how much you raised and the impact their faithfulness is making in Congo.

Donn Engebretson is the Project Leader for Covenant Kids Congo and the Director of Global Advancement for the Evangelical Covenant Church. Donn loves to read, spend time with his family, and do outdoor activities of all kinds.

Fundraising with Fried Chicken

by Rickey Lumpkin II

I was standing in the fellowship hall at church when I told someone that I'd ask people to give toward clean water after the holidays. My friend looked at me and said, "Just do it now. Let them decide what to do with their money."

Those words rocked me, and it started me on a fundraising journey I never thought I'd be on. Immediately I sent out emails to EVERYONE on my list, even the info@'s and customerservice@'s. I raised \$2000 in under two weeks!

How was that even possible? I'll tell you. I'm not out here begging people or walking in a less-than posture. When I tell people about clean water in Congo, I'm inviting them to participate in something great that God is doing through His people. I'm showing the love of God and saying, "Hey, do you want to share this love too?!" I absolutely hate asking people for money, but I absolutely love asking people to give for clean water in Congo.

Praise be to God my fundraising story doesn't stop at that \$2,000! I was challenged to raise \$10,000, and reluctantly I accepted. I sent out a few more emails and got a few more responses. And then the responses stopped. My fundraising page stayed stagnant at the same number—no matter how many times I refreshed the page.

I started to think about what kind of incentives I could give. What could I offer to people as a sign of appreciation that would ignite them to give? The only thing I could think of was cooking people a meal. So as a half-joke, I sent out an email describing my mom's

fried chicken, which is probably the best chicken you'll ever have. I told people about the chicken's magical healing powers and how people travel near and far to get it. At the end of the email, I promised that if you donated \$50 or more, you would be invited to a private fried chicken party where I cooked my mom's secret recipe.

No joke, guys, about two minutes after I sent the email, my phone started beeping. And then another beep, and another and another. People started donating from all over. When I took that step of faith and offered the little I could do, God blessed that and we raised over \$10,000.

When you're thinking about what you can do to fundraise, it doesn't have to be an elaborate, crazy plan. Just look at what you have and ask God to use that and bless it.

Rickey Lumpkin II is originally from Wurzburg, Germany. He attends Newsong Los Angeles Church. Rickey has been running with Team World Vision and fundraising for CKC since 2015. In June 2017, Rickey got to see CKC water projects firsthand, and now he continues his efforts to bring clean water to this community in Congo.



PRAYER:

Pray about who you can invite to walk or run with you. Then, pray through the following prayer requests from CEUM President Mboka:

- Pray for peace in Congo, an essential factor for development.
- Pray for the political situation of the country.
- Pray that the partnership between World Vision and the three local churches would be strengthened.
- Pray for the CEUM (Covenant), CECU (Evangelical Free), and Catholic churches.

SCRIPTURE:

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

ACTION STEP:

Invite one person to join you on this journey. Tell them about why you’re doing the Global 6K for Covenant Kids Congo, and how their registration will provide clean water for life for one person in Congo. Then ask if they’ll cross the finish line with you in two weeks.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

Who are you praying for? Pray for each other’s loved ones and our friends in Congo.



Working Together in Gemena

by Rev. Jules Mboka Ngate, CEUM President

In days past, the local churches in Gemena would only meet for religious activities and ceremonies. But with the birth of the CKC partnership, three local churches—Covenant (CEUM), Free (CECU), and Catholic—united to work together for our community. This partnership has enabled us to break through certain barriers that limited our being together.

Today we work together in synergy, celebrating our successes and pushing past our failures. The three churches collaborate for the well-being of children in Gemena, and together they're responsible for progress such as the large water projects.

The CEUM, CECU, and Catholic churches work very well together, building trust, and the Covenant Kids Congo project has been a catalyst in this respect. Now our common mission is to make the city of Gemena clean, through water and sanitation efforts.

In terms of the impact:

- The best thing that has happened is clean water. SAZA, Gemena II, and Gemena III are three neighborhoods in Gemena that have been served with safe water. We note that there is now a reduction in the frequency of waterborne diseases and child mortality.
- About 5,000 children and students use hygienic latrines built by close collaboration of the three local churches (CEUM, CECU, and Catholic).
- Five health areas are following the steps of becoming "clean" villages through a collaborative process of working together; follow-up, evaluation, and using their assets for the well-being of children.

Through working together, we have become stronger. We thank God who has helped us set aside our differences and prioritize the well-being of the communities, especially of the children in them. This partnership has reinforced love, unity, understanding, tolerance, and a spirit of teamwork in the churches. Now inter-church meetings have been encouraged. Our partnership has been a very good experience for the growth of the body of Christ and a great witness to the community.

May the Lord bless the North American Covenant churches for their interventions in Congo.

Rev. Jules Mboka Ngate is the president of the Communauté Evangélique de l'Ubangi-Mongala (CEUM) also known as the Covenant Church of Congo. President Mboka has been serving as the president for seven years.

Training Together, Sweating Together, Learning Together

by Lyndsey Watson

When I was first asked if I would run with Covenant Kids Congo and Team World Vision, my answer was a solid no. But as I said *I can't, I won't, I don't want to*, God was saying *You can, you will, let's do this*. My husband and I ran the half marathon together, and my kids joined the Global 6K. Since that first yes, since that first invitation was made, my life has changed.

I have found a community like none other in the TWV team at Cascade Covenant Church. Our team serves as a large small group. We're not just teammates, but friends who support, challenge, and encourage one another.

There's something incredible about a group of people training together, sweating together, learning together, and working together for God's Kingdom purposes. Since we started our team in 2016, we've witnessed this as a church. Each year, our team has grown. Because we're not just a group of individuals training for faster times—we're brothers and sisters in Christ, training together for the common goal of bringing clean water to those who don't have it in Congo.

Between group training runs, social media accountability, and high-fives in church hallways, our team has connected on a level that wouldn't have been possible during a church service. As one of our team captains, Jesse Enfield, said, "I really enjoyed laughing at the sideways rain or snow, as we still show up, knowing we are in this together. Knowing that WE can make a difference in the lives of people who receive clean water."

People from all different points in their faith journey and fitness journey have united around this common goal. We're an all-walks-of-life, mixed gender, multiethnic, and multigenerational community group on mission together. As another team captain, Heather Dean, shared, "I am humbled by the way my son is embracing the cause and becoming a servant to the world. The intergenerational connections formed have been awesome."

When my kids walked the Global 6K last year, that made it easy to invite our extended family, neighbors, and their schoolmates to join us too. So our circle of connection has expanded not only in our church, but also in our community! Consider who you might invite to walk the Global 6K with you. Who do you want to get to know better? Who would love to walk for water, and who would appreciate a nudge to leave their comfort zone? Who is yearning for a community or to experience Christ's love?

It all starts with an invitation. Who will you invite on this journey with you?

Lyndsey Watson is an Associate Pastor at Cascade Covenant Church in North Bend, WA. Cascade Covenant partners with CKC, TWV, and Paul Carlson Partnership on an ongoing basis. Lyndsey and her husband, Tom, are both TWV runners. They sponsor two children through CKC.



Week Five

WRESTLING WITH COLONIALISM

PRAYER:

Pray for Congolese leaders and the DR Congo. Lament how colonialism has damaged this beautiful country and pray for its resilient people.

SCRIPTURE:

“How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?” (Psalm 13:2).

ACTION STEP:

Read more about the history of Congo. Look up information online or get a book or ebook from your library. Check out the books *King Leopold's Ghost* by Adam Hochschild and *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters* by Jason Stearns.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

How can we as Christians respond to poverty, injustice, and oppression? How do we wrestle with the past and current sin of colonialism?



Lamenting Colonialism

by Pete Ekstrand

Before independence in 1960, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had a 75-year history with colonialism, first as the Congo Free State under the control of King Leopold II of Belgium and then as the Belgian Congo. Leopold's colonial rule was driven by extreme exploitation, as he enslaved Congolese people to plunder ivory and rubber for his own personal profit. An estimated 10 million people died.

As Michela Wrong wrote in her book *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, "Keep your head down, think small, look after yourself; these constituted the lessons of Leopold. That spirit, once comprehensively crushed, does not recover easily." Today, DR Congo is rich in resources, and yet it remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Why? Economic exploitation continues, as global companies extract precious resources, like the coltan in your cell phone.

With an 81-year history in Congo, Covenant mission work has been affected by colonialism. Today we seek to partner in all aspects of our work and not take charge, even when others may want us to. Meanwhile, it's important to lament this horrific history of colonialism in Congo and the exploitation that continues today. Serve Globally Executive Minister Al Tizon offers the following pertinent laments:

- For the brokenness of humanity that enables one people to think of itself as more superior than other peoples;
- For the tremendous loss of life and the dehumanization of black and brown peoples all over the world;

- For the extinction of beautiful, indigenous cultures as part of the colonial project;
- For the church's collusion with colonization, which violated the very nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ as an invitation;
- For the coercive ways in which the church evangelized indigenous peoples;
- For how the colonial legacy continues in different forms today.

In lament, we confront the consequences of sin, past and present, so we can move on in genuine and effective partnership together. We pray: *Have mercy on us, O Lord. Empower us to sin no more and to champion the justice and peace of the gospel.* The people of Congo, and the CEUM in particular, are hopeful people. One only needs to look at the wide-reaching ministry of the CEUM to see the long-lasting change they're creating, far beyond the CKC partnership. Their faith is powerful. It is an honor to work together with CEUM leaders, because we are better together.

Pete Ekstrand is a Covenant missionary working with the CEUM in northwest DR Congo. He is married to Cindy, and together they serve as advisors to the CEUM leaders. Pete and Cindy are the champions for the CEUM's Community Health Evangelism (CHE) holistic development model. Visit Pete and Cindy's blog, "Ekstrands in Congo," at blogs.covchurch.org/ekstrand.

Resilient Strength

by Rev. Jules Mboka Ngate, CEUM President

The CEUM is an amazing partner in the work of Covenant Kids Congo in Gemena—but that's only one aspect of their expansive community development work and their vibrant and active ministry throughout northwest DRC and beyond. Read more about how the CEUM is shaping the future in Congo in this reflection from President Mboka.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has suffered since the period of colonialism and evangelization. In fact, colonialism and conversions were married together, taking place simultaneously under Belgian colonial authorities and representatives of the Catholic Church.

The colonial powers oppressed the Congolese people for 75 years, and the impact of colonialism continues to affect the country today. We note with bitter regret that the DRC lives in a corrupt environment. People use politics as an instrument for personal profit rather than for the good of society. That's why there is a lack of public infrastructure in the DRC today. There are villages without potable water where people must collect water from swamps or rainwater from roofs, a situation which causes waterborne diseases and childhood deaths.

However, the CEUM works to improve the living conditions of the Congolese population, particularly within the provinces of North and South Ubangi, Mongala, and a part of the population of Bas-Uélé. The CEUM is spreading the Gospel and has reoriented its diaconate ministry to more deeply engage the local community.

The CEUM is also actively involved in education and water. The CEUM collaborates with the government on education, managing schools that receive government funding. The CEUM operates 1,120 schools, including preschool, primary, and secondary schools. The schools educate children who will grow up to take on active roles not only within the CEUM, but also in the different sectors of political and socioeconomic activities of the country. Meanwhile, the CEUM and its partners are implementing projects to provide potable water for the population, with convincing results. The CKC clean water projects in Gemena are just one example. The CEUM works on many other community development projects of its own in DR Congo.

Yet the CEUM can't effectively reach the Congolese population unless it constantly leaves the church walls to go out and meet with those who have lost hope, who are excluded from the social system and marginalized in their daily quest to survive. The poverty in DRC is a poverty of the masses, because it affects people of all socioeconomic categories who live without public infrastructure. But beneath this poverty is resilience, a source of social strength in DRC.

Rev. Jules Mboka Ngate is the president of the Communauté Evangélique de l'Ubangi-Mongala (CEUM). President Mboka has been serving as the president for seven years.



PRAYER:

Pray for the child on your bib, your sponsored child, and for all the children in Congo.

SCRIPTURE:

“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward” (Matt 10:42).

ACTION STEP:

1,000 CKC children are waiting to be sponsored through the Global 6K this year. Find a sponsor for the child you’re walking for! You can sponsor them yourself, or ask someone you know to sponsor them. Read more about this child on the sponsorship folder you received in the mail. What stands out about them? Who do you know who might want to sponsor this child? Pray for the child on your bib, now and when you’re walking the 6K on Saturday.

Note: This year, many CKC children appear on multiple bibs to give them the greatest chance of being sponsored. If you want to sponsor the child on your bib, please do so right away! In the rare case that the child on your bib has already been sponsored by someone else, World Vision will assign you another CKC child from the same community who is waiting to be sponsored.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

What has God taught you through this experience?



God's Children in Gemena

by Edouard Ngoy

Every child deserves to be protected, cared for, and given the opportunity they need to become all God meant them to be. In Gemena, children face many barriers to reaching their full potential, such as the lack of access to safe drinking water, the lack of educational opportunities, poor sanitation, low food intake, and restraining sociocultural norms and practices.

At World Vision, we are concerned with the sustained well-being of all children, especially the most vulnerable. In Gemena, in DR Congo, and around the world, we commit to help communities become a better place for children to grow up. Through child sponsorship, Covenant Kids Congo powered by World Vision walks alongside children, families, and their communities to transform the conditions these children are growing up in.

In Gemena, World Vision staff and community volunteers are present where children live, visiting their homes to monitor their health and educational progress. Covenant Kids Congo also partners with three local churches—CEUM (the Covenant Church), CECU (the Free Church), and the Catholic Church—who have an important presence. Therefore, CKC has the unique opportunity to get to know these children better, understand the issues they and their families face, and work with them to design solutions to improve their lives. These solutions benefit all the vulnerable children in the community, whether sponsored or not.

This presence also helps children know they are valued, no matter where or in what conditions they live, and that they deserve to be active participants in choices adults make to meet their physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs.

One exciting innovation in Covenant Kids Congo has been the involvement of local organizations, mostly churches and faith-based groups, in managing child sponsorship business. This partnership empowers them to better understand the needs of children so they can offer holistic responses, taking into account all dimensions of children's lives. We have worked with churches to build schools, improve access to water and sanitation, train mothers in better ways to feed and care for their children, and develop women's savings groups to help families build their income.

My work with World Vision has afforded me a special privilege to meet children and their families, including through CKC sponsored children visits in Gemena. I have witnessed the special connection sponsors and children share. If you haven't already, I invite you to get to know one of these children by sponsoring a child.

Edouard Ngoy is the Integrated Programmes Director of World Vision DRC.

From Jericho to Gemena

by Justin Kazadi

The citizens said to Elisha, "As you can see, sir, this city is in a good location, but the water is bad, and the land causes miscarriages." He said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put some salt in it." They did so. Elisha then went out and threw salt into the spring. He said, "This is what the Lord has said: I have purified this water. It will no longer cause death and miscarriage."

— 2 Kings 2:19-21 (CEB)

Elisha answered the call of the people of Jericho whose water was of poor quality. The water caused deaths and miscarriages, so Elisha purified it by throwing salt in the source. It was not the salt itself that restored the water quality, but the miraculous work of God.

Like Jericho, the city of Gemena is in a good location and has great agricultural potential, including a large workforce. However, access to clean water remains a key challenge. Available and accessible water sources are mostly unprotected, leading to unsafe water for residents. This contaminated water is the main cause of waterborne diseases, which can be fatal.

Temperatures in Gemena average 31°C (88°F) and often go up to 39°C (102°F), so to avoid walking under the hot sun, women and children get up early in the morning to fetch water.

They walk 3 to 4 km, which adds up to more than an hour walking both ways because of the long queue at the water source. For example, Merveille is a 12-year-old CKC sponsored child. She often had to walk more than 3 km to bathe in a local brook, which made her late for school. Meanwhile, the

contaminated water made her sick. "I suffered bellyaches because of the bad water qualities," Merveille said.

But now that two deep water wells have been drilled in Merveille's neighborhood, she only walks a short distance for clean water. "I thank my God for having given us water in the district," Merveille said. Smiling brightly, she added, "I know that the donors contributed largely for this realization. It is through their contribution which my district begins to change."

Water is life. The poor quality of the water of Jericho caused multiple deaths and miscarriages. In the same way, the poor quality of water in Gemena has caused many diseases and deaths, as well as poor performance of children in school. When God improved the water quality in Jericho, people gained access to safe water, and the rate of deaths decreased. As clean water access expands in Gemena, more children like Merveille will experience fullness of life.

As the Ledia Operations Manager for World Vision DRC, Justin Kazadi oversees the Ledia Area Development Program in Gemena, DR Congo. Ledia is the World Vision name for the CKC program on the ground, meaning "a new thing is happening in the village" in Ngbaka, a local language. Justin brings 10 years of experience with World Vision to this role. He is a happy husband and father to four children, three girls and one boy.



Merveille at the water kiosk

WHAT NEXT?

Thank you for praying and walking 6K for the children of Congo! Your \$50 registration fee covered the cost to provide clean water for life to one person in DR Congo.

Want to do it again? You can sign up to run another race for clean water in Congo! Now that you've done a 6K, you've completed about a third of a half marathon. Go even farther and run a half or full marathon!

How to Run a Team World Vision Endurance Race for CKC

1. Go to **TeamWorldVision.org** and search for events in your area. Sign up for a race. Follow the Team World Vision training plan to prepare for your race, and check out the fundraising tips. If there isn't an event listed in your area, you can sign up for a DIY race.
2. Email CKC at **CovenantKidsCongo@covchurch.org** to ensure that your fundraising is designated for Congo. If you're signing up with your church, only your church team needs to contact CKC. If you're signing up on your own, email us so we can make sure to count you!

Regardless of where you go next, keep praying for our sisters and brothers in Congo. *Merci mingi* – thank you very much!



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