

# FIRST STEP INITIATIVE

SMALL GIFTS. BIG CHANGES.

Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2015

## Just Funded – Sewing Studio

Six seamstresses used FSI funding to purchase two electric sewing machines, fabric and supplies. They then secured a contract with a local mining company to make mine worker uniforms. This allowed expansion of their existing business designing and making clothes for the community and making custom design uniforms for other entities such as hospitals.



## Just Funded – Soya Nutrition



Poor children in the DRC experience a special type of malnutrition from eating only carbohydrates. This merry-go-round of 10 women supports 63 dependents by operating a dual-focused soya business. They supply soya to hospitals as well as make house calls in the slums to train families on malnutrition and its causes. The families are encouraged to purchase soya. These women hope to expand their business into contracts with larger hospitals. The FSI grant provided the working capital needed to pursue this expansion.

### Volunteer for FSI: Learn more at a Complimentary Breakfast Buffet

Join us at The Metropolitan (5418 Wayzata Boulevard, Minneapolis; 763-797-1900) on **Saturday December 12 between 10 am and noon**. We'll be there to talk about volunteer opportunities with FSI and to share our experiences working with the women of Lubumbashi. Learn more by clicking [here](#).

**Watch your email: the Year End Appeal is on its Way!**

**Tuesday, May 10, 2016 –  
Save the Date**

Spring 2016 marks **10 years of service** by FSI in the DRC. Be sure to join our celebration, beginning at 5pm, as we reflect on our many accomplishments and thank our committed supporters.

**Project Update – Baking Bread**

These ladies rock! Last spring, FSI funding made it possible for this five woman merry-go-round to modernize and significantly expand their bread baking business. They had been mixing their dough manually and baking with a wood oven. They now have an electric oven and mixer, procured a contract with a local mining company and opened a shop. They are considering opening a second shop. A small gift, a big change!



**Give to the Max Success!**

We want to thank the many supporters who helped make our 2015 Give to the Max appeal so successful. We more than doubled from the contributions received one year ago! We are so grateful for the opportunities your generosity makes possible. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

**Project Update – Vegetable Garden**



The recently funded expansion of a gardening merry-go-round is yielding fabulous results. They have reaped the profits of the expansion and are already planting a new crop of vegetables. Here the members are at market.

**Project Update - Chickens to Market**

In this merry-go-round, the women purchase chicks in Zambia and raise them for sale at market. They encountered several challenges – locating reliable transportation from Zambia and sufficient food for the chicks, as well as the cost of needed vaccinations. They continue to persevere and solve these problems. Success is coming, albeit slowly.





## Who is Julienne Lusenge?



In mid-October Julienne Lusenge addressed the UN Security Council. An internationally recognized advocate for women's rights, she came with reservations. For although the Council was meeting to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of Resolution 1325, the Council's first resolution to address the impact of war on women and girls, Lusenge has seen little progress for women in DRC conflict zones. Her message to the Council is to do more and fulfill its original promises.

Lusenge hasn't been sitting on the sidelines waiting for the UN to act. She has become a formidable force in DRC politics as the President of Women's Solidarity for Peace and Integrated Development, a coalition of

40 women's organizations that work together to defend and protect women's rights in the eastern DRC and to assist victims of sexual violence in seeking justice through the judicial system. She also established and is the Director of the [Congolese Women's Fund](#). The Fund gives financial support to women-led grass-root organizations that address sexual violence, women's empowerment and HIV/AIDS and reproductive health education. Click [here](#) for additional information on Resolution 1325.

## Our DRC Staff

Nadine Bulaya's passing was commemorated at a service heavily attended by family and friends. Her death is a big loss for FSI as she was a strong and beloved member of our DRC staff.

However, the search for a new Managing Director is underway. A FSI board member will travel to the Congo in early 2016 to orient the new staff member as well as review projects.



### Contact Us!

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