

FIRST STEP INITIATIVE

S MALL GIFTS. *B*IG CHANGES.

Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2016

What a Year!

2016 was a banner year for First Step Initiative. We successfully hired a wonderful, third member of our Lubumbashi staff, launched a sewing workshop partnership with Kimbilio, strengthened our grant proposal development and review procedures and made grants that serve 43 women who support at least 182 children and another 66 household members. All in all, a wonderful year. We look forward to 2017 with optimism and hope.

Recent Funding

We have a number of new projects, all a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit of the women of Lubumbashi.

Vegetable Oil Project

Five women supporting twenty-six dependents received a grant that enabled them to triple the size of their vegetable oil business. These women buy oil in bulk, bottle it in recycled plastic containers, and sell it in the local market. The photo below is of one of the women bottling oil.



Beans Project



Six women supporting forty dependents have a business in which they buy dried beans outside the city and transport them to Lubumbashi for sale in their local market. They've been in business for more than two years. FSI matched the women's personal capital investments to increase the size of the business, leading to higher profits on what we expect will be a sustainable basis. One of the women is pictured here at the local market.

Potatoes Project

Five women supporting 29 dependents have a business much like the beans business, but buying and selling potatoes rather than dried beans. The grant was used to scale up their business. The photo to the right shows these beautiful potatoes being sold at market.



Update on the Sewing Project



Three of the four women enrolled in our first sewing workshop successfully completed the course. During the twelve-week session, they learned basic skills – cutting out, measuring, using tailor chalk, pinning, and basting – how to use treadle and hand sewing machines, how to calculate the costs of goods and time needed to make an item, and how to price the item so they could make a profit. They, alongside FSI staff member Bea, are pictured at graduation wearing dresses they made. They now are considering how to apply their new skills to better support themselves and their families.

Pictured on the right, the students are holding the children's dresses they made, one of several items they learned to make during the sessions. Asina is 18 and single. She has completed 3 years of secondary education and has never worked. She lives with her older sister, her husband and their 5 children. Marie thinks she is about 18, but appears younger. She isn't married and has no children. She completed primary education (but is not really literate). She is an orphan and lives with her older sister. Marie plans to repeat the course. Elsphrasie is 54, is married and lives with her husband and two children. Adeline is 47, divorced, lives with her daughter, and her 3 year old grandson.



Congolese Culture



A number of you enjoyed a private tour of Congolese and African art conducted by MIA's Head of Arts of Africa and the Americas and Curator of African Art Jan-Lodewijk

Grootaers. Curator Grootaers highlighted pieces in the collection from central Africa and the DRC, pointing out connections between African and American art and prevailing themes found in both areas. The piece behind Curator Grootaers represents a water spirit. The crucifix-like metal object is actually an early relic from religious traditions in central Africa that pre-date the arrival of

Christian missionaries. The large wooden piece was worn as a mask. A piece of general information about the art work from central Africa is that most is made using wood. Consequently, few pieces exist that are more than 100-200 years old.



Year End Appeal

Watch your email for our Year End Appeal. It is on its way.

Give to the Max Day

We want to thank the many supporters who helped make our 2016 appeal successful. Your contributions continue to grow. As they do, the work FSI does in Lubumbashi grows too. Your generosity makes that possible. Thank you.



Contact Us!

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Please note, we no longer use our P.O. box address