



## Health Professionals Training – The Mafunzo Project Year 8

### Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

**Budget:** \$16,800 per annum, fully funded! Year 9 of the program begins 1 October 2017 – approx. \$18,000 needed to allow for fee increases and inflation.

#### Update:

The Mafunzo Project (which means “training” in Swahili) supports 12 nursing students and 16 medical students with 80% of the cost of tuition each year. The students are selected by staff at Panzi Hospital, the main hospital in Bukavu, after they complete their first year of study. This is based on their financial needs, character and their desire to serve Congo for years after graduation. They also need to demonstrate the required dedication and skill. Students attend the Evangelic University of Africa for Medicine and Technical Medical Institute of Nurses for Nursing. This project is in its 8<sup>th</sup> year and seeks to build up the healthcare professional body in the politically unstable and war-ravaged DRC. Medicine requires seven years of study and Nursing four years. Since 2011-12, 10 nurses have graduated (5 male, 5 female) and 6 doctors (2 women, 4 men).



Nurses in training in Bukavu.

Key successes during this period include continuing the sponsorship program through the turbulent political and social instability of the Congolese elections, which were due to take place last November but are being stalled by the government. This has caused upheaval and sporadic conflict. Despite this, five students are due to graduate in 2017 and a graduation ceremony will take place in November. Over the past three years the Congolese franc has devalued by 50% to the USD. DRC remains a volatile country where corruption and violence are too common and the people suffer as a result.

In a recent visit by Entrust Foundation to meet the students, they were so pleased to tell their stories of how the support is helping them to complete their studies. One student said, “I am so grateful for this opportunity to study medicine. This is my final year and although it is hard to find jobs in our country, I am hopeful.” Another said, “Many in my family have died and I have to support them and try and study at the same time. It’s tough, but I feel supported not only financially but by the help of Kabuto in charge of this project. Thank you for your help.”

One recent graduate is working at the University as the Secretary to the Medical Faculty Director and is pleased that he has such a good and relevant job. Three graduates are employed at Panzi Hospital and the others in health care centres around Bukavu and beyond. This is a good record considering many students graduate from universities with limited job opportunities due to the poor Congolese environment.



Our thanks to you for standing by these students in this difficult country. They are buoyed by your support and would not have any chance of continuing their studies without it. They say a collective THANK YOU – all the way from Bukavu to Australia!

Jenny Cramer from Entrust with 2017 students at Panzi Hospital.