



## BUTOKE'S ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT ON EDUCATION - 2023

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation or driving force of all Butoke's activities, for it is through education that we recruit many of the next generation of our great family of mutual support and social and economic development not only for our province and city but for the entire nation.

It's through education and vocational training and above all through the practical application of the knowledge acquired through these various forms of training that we can see a change in mentality and in the social and economic development of our society.

### EDUCATION

Butoke works education into its programs to achieve meaningful and lasting results. Here are a few examples:

- Information is shared about the importance of hand washing, combined with the construction of spring taps, for improved access to clear water and has significantly reduced disease spread by dirty hands.
- Women who had been abandoned including orphans and young women who have been sexually abused have today become active contributors to their families and society as a whole, thanks to the educational support they received from us combined with material and financial support.
- Malnourished children who were considered to be either bewitched or witches themselves because people did not understand why they were always sick now have regained their good health and are like all the other healthy children based on a better diet (both qualitatively and quantitatively) and the training provided by Butoke on nutrition and the treatment of health issues based on locally-based nutritional foods.

Lately we've made global warming and the need for reforestation a cross-cutting theme in all our activities and in our schools.

## OUR SCHOOLS

In 2023 we operated two school complexes in Tshikaji and Tshimbundu. Each complex consists of six classrooms and a few stand-alone rooms. Both offer primary and secondary education, as well as technical training in agriculture, tailoring, and mechanics. A second building in Tshikaji houses the offices and two residences. In Tshimbundu some classes operate in two additional houses that the local traditional chief gave us as a gift for the development of his region.

At the primary school level we have 141 girls and 212 boys at the Tshikaji school complex and 126 girls and 147 boys in Tshimbundu or a total of 626 primary school students, half the number from the previous year. This reduction can be explained by the introduction of free tuition in public primary schools resulting in 100 or more students in a classroom. These overcrowded classrooms record failure after failure while success rates in private schools with fewer pupils are 85 percent or higher.



Butoke has two categories of pupils. Vulnerable pupils such as orphans, children from large families, albinos and children of our staff don't pay and Butoke covers the cost of their school kits. Other pupils are expected to contribute what they can, if only in kind in the form of manioc, maize and sometimes guinea pigs, given directly to the teachers.

At the secondary school level we have as follows:

<b>Tshikaji</b>	Girls	Boys
General education	206	276
Mechanical technical	0	71
Cutting & sewing	93	0
Agriculture	34	115

Tshikaji also offers pedagogy, biology and chemistry

<b>Tshimbundu</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
General education	237	278
Mechanical technical	6	126
Cutting & sewing	138	0
Agriculture	56	165

In contrast to what we see for primary education, general secondary school enrollments have increased considerably rising from 732 in 2022 to 997 in 2023.

Classes are organized to maximize infrastructure use with primary school classes in the morning and secondary school classes in the afternoon.

Vocational training involves learning a trade from observing it to practicing it in the market. Our goal is to empower women, girl-mothers and the elderly to look after themselves. Courses in cutting and sewing and agriculture last for three months. Training in mechanics is a two-year course. Vocational training culminates with the award of a certificate of completion.



## SPONSORED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The budget line for university students has supported a total of 13 students (three in Kinshasa and ten in Kananga). All are Butoke orphans.

The three students in Kinshasa include two girls studying communications and business and a boy studying geology. They are in Kinshasa because their subjects are not available in Kananga. Two other students in Kinshasa have just finished their studies and are doing further training. Jeanne Monica (right below) is one of our girls who is supported by FOB USA. She is studying business at the University of Kinshasa, now in her 2nd year of undergraduate studies and is finishing this year. She plans to do her Master's degree outside the DRC next year.

The ten students in Kananga include two girls and eight boys. The two girls are looking to become midwives, while the boys are studying nursing, laboratory work, medicine, teaching, childbirth and nutrition.

The selection criteria are as follows:

- vulnerable and being gifted and intelligent
- agreeable to return to the community to serve for five years
- demonstrate love for the vulnerable, the elderly, the disabled, orphans, albinos and children
- testimony to the team philosophy we are trying to develop

## ON-SITE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

This year we initiated training on climate action and reforestation and organized other customized training courses including tailoring for women and unwed mothers, and high-yield tilapia fish farming. We organized special activities in fish pond construction and the construction of spring taps.

Climate and reforestation training is a cross-cutting subject that we incorporate into our associations and elsewhere at every opportunity. By 2023 we had given certificate training to 650 people, including 413 women and 136 men. We incorporate this theme into our schools on an ad-hoc basis.

Everyone is interested when we explain that trees help us not only to produce fruit, caterpillars and shade, but also to regulate climate change. It's a message that comes across all the more forcefully when we're experiencing exceptional heat.

## RESULTS

We have placed great emphasis on grade testing in every class, from grade 1 to grade 6 in our two elementary schools. Only grade 6 pupils from our two schools took the state test which is required to obtain the primary school final grade certificate. Of the 88 pupils who took the test, 87 were successful. They obtained their primary school leaving certificate, issued by the Ministry, which entitles the pupil to be admitted to secondary school. Our secondary school pupils in Tshikaji and Tshimbundu were regularly monitored. Finishing students in each specialization of the national curriculum were tested in state exams with an overall success rate of 94 percent for our two school complexes. The best results were seen in pedagogy, agriculture and tailoring in which a 100 percent pass rate was observed. The result was more mixed for technical training in mechanics. In this case, 31 of our students



took the test with a success rate of 75 percent for each of the two schools. As a result, 12 students from Tshimbundu and 11 from Tshikaji received their mechanical engineering diplomas in 2023.

Some of those who failed agreed to repeat the year. The secret of this excellent performance of our schools is the will to do better, the love of a job well done, discipline, a passion for the vulnerable and also the memory of our dear Cécile de Sweemer, our model of courage.

Our university students in Kananga and in Kinshasa obtained satisfactory results and moved to the next level.

Some of our high school graduates went on to university, while others, like many of our pedagogical students, chose to join the workforce. Depending on their specialization, these students became primary school teachers, mechanics or farmers. All have become responsible and hard-working, taking responsibility for themselves and their little sisters and brothers. They take care of their families, and sometimes some of the people in their region.

Among those whose training we supported are several people who are now part of our staff. Many of the agronomists we trained now work with us at Butoke. Many of our nurses, especially in Tshimbundu, are among those for whom we have provided financial support for their university studies. Butoke's current legal counsel is a girl we sent to study in Kinshasa. She has returned and is working with us at Butoke.

## NEEDS

The needs in the field of vocational training are enormous. Many of our beneficiaries would like to take the computer training course which requires every student to be in front of a computer which is not possible under current circumstances.

In tailoring we have four sewing machines, and the girls in tailoring want to be all at the sewing machine at the same time during technical training. There's a real need here. We need more practical service equipment.

Agronomists need agricultural tools for learning. If we had specific funds to support climate and reforestation training, we'd like to set up a large nursery to distribute fruit trees and other trees to those taking part in this kind of training, enabling people to put what they've learned into practice on their own plots.

We have no monthly income from primary school pupils because of the free primary education advocated by the Head of State. The only contributions expected from pupils who are able to pay are to cover their own school needs or for contributions in-kind that their parents may offer to the teachers. At the secondary school level, we manage to achieve around \$200 per month and \$2,000 per year per complex.

The contribution from our FOB US, FOB UK and HOPE backers therefore covers most of

our salary and other expenses.

## AN UPDATE

The current head trainer at our cutting and sewing training center in Tshikaji and Tshimbundu, Mrs. Mbombo Tshipamba, is a product of our center. Although she's a daughter-mother, she's very intelligent and we've chosen her to mentor other daughter mothers in professional practice.

The current manager of our orphanage, Mr. Munda Vinthium, is a graduate of our mechanical training program, and has lost both his father and mother. He arrived at our center in 2008, aged 11, accompanied by his two little sisters, the younger Nyembue and her sister Mulanga, aged five and seven respectively. Munda Vinthium did all his schooling with us and after primary school chose to study mechanics. Very bright, he finished his studies and we retained him as manager of all the orphans and as Butoke's mechanic. This young man is very much in demand and lives a pleasant, independent life, managing to take care of other orphans when necessary.

This report highlights the work of Butoke in the area of education. Your support transforms the lives of many in Kananga, Tshikaji and Tshimbundu. We look forward to your continued support in 2024.



Tshimbunda School

Contributions can be sent to: Friends of Butoke, c/o Jeannine White, 32942 Kiwi Court West, Lewes, DE 19958. Contributions can also be made through the website ([www.friendsofbutoke.org](http://www.friendsofbutoke.org)) and clicking the Donate button.

Thank you,  
Friends of Butoke, USA

Friends of Butoke	32942 Kiwi Court West, Lewes, DE 19958	<a href="http://www.friendsofbutoke.org">www.friendsofbutoke.org</a>
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