

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

—Helen Keller



## From harrowing canoe trips to scholarship recipient...

Imagine having to carry your sick child or spouse down a long winding path to the river on a hot humid day in the Congo. After hiring a canoe and pilot you then embark on a 3+ hour journey down a fast flowing river. There is a good likelihood you will need to navigate around areas with hippos or crocodiles on this trip. Eventually you reach the nearest town with a medical facility. The last leg of your voyage involves hiring a taxi to take you to the hospital where you join the long queue of people waiting to be seen by a doctor. You hope you have arrived in time...

These were the kinds of experiences familiar to Moluamba Clavers as he grew up in a village

distant enough from the city of Mbandaka in the DRC that the only way to access medical care was via dugout canoe. After experiencing this reality firsthand, Moluamba became determined to study medicine so that he could make medical care more readily and easily available to the people in smaller more remote villages like the one he grew up in.

Moluamba got his start as a nursing student in Mbandaka. Subsequent to nursing school he decided that he wanted to become a doctor. He did not have the financial resources for university studies so he and his family moved to Kinshasa where he worked as a nurse, saving up money as he was able.

Once at l’Université Protestante au Congo (UPC) in Kinshasa he found that he didn’t have sufficient funds to complete his studies. He wrote a letter to the university administration asking if there were any scholarships available. UPC was able to grant him a scholarship through Education Congo. Moluamba is now nearing completion of his medical studies!

Ernie Ross, president of Education Congo, recently met Moluamba while visiting l’Université Protestante au Congo (UPC) in Kinshasa. Education Congo board members periodically travel to the DRC to engage face to face with our partners on the ground to assess programming and ensure that our mutual goals and vision for education are in alignment.



**Feb. 2023: Ernie Ross with Moluamba Clavers**

Moluamba is very grateful to Education Congo for the help we’ve given him through our scholarship program. It has made it possible for him to succeed in his studies and thus move towards his goal of providing medical care to more remote communities.

Thank you for your support in making Moluamba’s journey as a health practitioner possible!



## Cargo container saga



In December 2021 World Outreach made a generous donation to MedShare in Decatur, Georgia USA to help the Université Protestante au Congo (UPC) medical school acquire equipment and supplies and then ship them in a 40’ container to the Congo (DRC). Education Congo agreed to help resource this shipment.

From vital equipment to much needed supplies, the goods in the container have an approximate value of \$250,000-300,000. Shipping costs from Decatur/Georgia to Matadi/DRC amount

to \$25,000 for a nonprofit organization such as MedShare. In addition there will be further costs to transport these goods overland to the Congolese hospitals selected by UPC to receive the equipment and supplies. Education Congo has agreed to raise funds to help cover these costs.

Though the shipment has now made it to the Congolese port of Matadi, it has been subject to unforeseeable delays. The first significant challenge encountered was that donated supplies usually accessible through MedShare were suddenly not available because the effort and need in Ukraine

was so great and so urgent, due to Russia’s invasion. This caused a delay of several months.

Finally, in November 2022 the container was loaded onto a ship in Savannah, GA and began its voyage across the Atlantic. It arrived on schedule in the Congolese port of Matadi just before Christmas 2022. Unfortunately Congo was then experiencing heavy rains which left roads, infrastructure and many neighborhoods underwater, including the highway between Matadi and Kinshasa. Surprisingly, this turned out not to be not that great of an obstacle.

*Continued on page 2*



# Margaret Loewen, Education Congo Board Member

## How did you get involved in Education Congo?

I was invited to a Board of Directors meeting when I was in medical school. The Board at that time did not have a representative from the medical profession, and they felt it was

Margaret Loewen, MD

important to add this specialty since Congo's Protestant University (UPC) had decided to build a medical school. My father Melvin Loewen was the second rector of this university (1965–1967). He was instrumental in founding Education Congo (originally known as the North American Liaison Bureau) in 1998 to raise funds for scholarships for deserving students at UPC. Ben Hobgood and other exceptionally talented individuals also helped get this nonprofit off the ground.

After meeting this group of dedicated people and UPC's Rector Ngoy and Professor Mampunza, I was inspired by the work that they were doing in Congo. Their goal was to increase access to higher

education in Congo for university students who would not otherwise have this opportunity due to financial barriers.

## What aspects of the operation of Education Congo are you involved in?

I am currently working with a committee of Board members to evaluate the quality of our work together and find ways to maximize the efficiency of our organization. Since our workforce consists entirely of volunteer labor we are intensely aware of the need for updated computerized systems that will help us organize information and provide data that will allow the Board to function well on behalf of our donors and partners in Congo and take our work to the next level.

## What is your connection to the Congo, and why is it important to you?

I spent my childhood in Congo. My first memories are of the mission station where my father was teaching at a secondary school in the Kasai region. We lived in a brick house with a metal roof and, important to me at that age, we had bananas perpetually ripening on a stalk in the shed behind our house. My mother would plan picnics often,

and all five of us kids would walk down the path through the tropical rainforest to the river for an outing with our parents when we were ready for some splashing in the shallows. Sometimes on the dirt road in front of our house we would see animal prints that were unusual. One that I especially remember was the elephant that left its signature during the night in front of our house. This was during the Belgian Congo era that immediately preceded the country's independence.

Our family returned to Congo soon after independence, but this time to Léopoldville, now called Kinshasa. I was a second grader in 1961, and we stayed until 1967 due to my father's involvement with the brand new private university that became UPC. It had been commissioned by the Council of Congolese Protestant Churches in 1959, and my father was asked to help.

Our family experienced some scary times while in Stanleyville, but for me the upheavals always demonstrated the desperation of people who had few opportunities and were vulnerable due to lack of education. They wanted the same things we all want out of life. I have always loved and respected this country and its people.



## Cargo container saga, continued from page 1

The problem we are currently facing is actually bureaucratic.

Despite efforts to expedite the process, for most of January 2023 the shipment sat in the port waiting for a detailed Bill of Lading from the shipping company. Finally it arrived, and all necessary paperwork was submitted to the customs

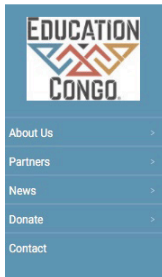
authorities in Matadi. We should now be free to move the goods to their final destination . . . but wait, another roadblock has emerged. The customs authorities, for some unknown reason, now indicate they will not release the container under the IMA World Health agreement. So, we again have to wait until we can convince the customs authorities to release the shipment as per their own agreement with the Congolese

Ministry of Health. It will all happen in due course, but unfortunately these are the real dynamics of shipping goods around the world.

Thank you for your steadfast and ongoing support for this venture. Once in place, the equipment and supplies will make a huge contribution to the medical centers we support through UPC.

## It's easy to donate online!

Just visit our website [educationcongo.org](http://educationcongo.org) and click on DONATE.



**Strategic estate planning** can enhance the utilization of all your assets, defining what you want to leave to your heirs and what would best meet your philanthropic goals during your lifetime and beyond. For more information email us at [execdir@educationcongo.org](mailto:execdir@educationcongo.org).



On behalf of everyone at Education Congo, we would like to express our deepest sympathies to longtime Education Congo Board Member Douglas Cardwell on the passing of his wife Marilyn Cardwell on December 25, 2022. Marilyn was an amazing, enthusiastic and shining light in our lives.

Obituary: [www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/winstonsalem/name/marilyn-cardwell-obituary?id=38503394](http://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/winstonsalem/name/marilyn-cardwell-obituary?id=38503394)