

DRC PYGMY REPORT - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2026

(Way Alege)

Working beyond saving lives

The major concern of humanitarian relief is the urgent material and logistical support aimed at saving lives through the provision of food and water, medical care and shelter. This provision helps vulnerable people affected by a disaster to recover and to set them back to normal life. Academic papers and books again explain that in the context of crisis, it is possible to connect short-term emergency response with long-term stability using triple nexus, an approach which links and coordinates emergency aid, long-term economic growth and peace-building efforts.

However, after four years of displacement from Ataloholu to Komanda, we believe that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the suitable approach should be the quadruple nexus, meaning that saving lives spiritually is the major missing piece of emergency aid, economic growth and peace building. The major reason is that for the last 30 years, not much has been accomplished to change the situation.

Having said that, the approach of our ministry that places the Word of God at the centre of our



interventions remains valid before and after evacuation. For instance, for the last five months, there is no food assistance for the internally displaced people. As they move back to secure areas, ADF launched new attacks at the end of August driving them back to Komanda. This is unfortunate for the same population that is wrestling with Ebola, a

virus that has claimed so far 3577 lives out of 7404 cumulative cases.



It is in this context of starvation, insecurity and Ebola crisis that we started the new school year September 1st. That is why parents and children dedicated the morning hours of Tuesday, September 22nd for prayers, evaluation and reflection on the ministry.

This was also an opportunity to reinforce preventive measures both at school and at home since the Ministry of Education have ruled out the option of suspending education in the areas affected by Ebola



. Despite the above crisis, new houses are surrounding our Komanda property from all sides. As there are more people fleeing the war from Goma. Buildings are springing up beyond the area where the school has been isolated for a long period. Some people flee from the Ituri forest located, where the ADF rebels

keep on driving them out of their villages. This applies to all the villages of Ataloholu and Kangakolo where the Pygmies have recently decided to return to their properties. This back and forth movement



makes it difficult for the spiritual, medical and educational follow up of the Pygmies. But the good news is that the property of Komanda is perfectly serving it's purpose as the Pygmies have no difficulties when things turn wrong in their original sites, to come to this site for safety..

However, when the Pygmies move into the forest searching for food, it also exposes the property of Komanda into the hands of people with whom it shares borders. Looking at the size of the property (approximately 2.5 hectares), they are always tempted to grab some few metres. This is why the Pygmies are tracing the boundaries prior to planting trees and fencing the property. Fencing and planting trees all around is urgent because of the size and strategic location of the property.



Meanwhile, according to our last meeting with the Pygmies, three families are going to permanently remain and watch over the Komanda property while others do the same in Ataloholu, Kangakolo and Shaurimoya.

Though this will imply additional assistance for those who are willing to watch over the Komanda property, it is worth it because the

value of the 500 square metres we purchased at 1200USD in 2022 has tripled the price up to 4000 USD.



The other challenge we are facing is **water crisis** due to climate change. Unusually, rains failed in August and three weeks of September leading to wilting of plants and yet we normally receive regular rains in these months up to November.

As a result, the unexpected dry season negatively affected the underground water

source. We have run out of water from our well and yet we earnestly needed it to water our gardens and at this period of Ebola to ensure hygiene.



Since November 2025, **Shalom** has not been feeling well. Different doctors assessed his health in Komanda and Bunia without success. We sent him to Uganda for further medical care. But the diagnosis was not clear enough. He returned to Congo to another hospital located in Aru. That is where the doctor had a clue on the state of his spine. He then went to Burundi where doctors properly attended to him. He underwent a surgery to remove from his spine some kind of liquid that was causing a lot of pain irradiating into his legs. According to the first hand findings, the doctors talk of tuberculosis.

However, further analysis of the extracted liquid is underway to determine the true causes of the sickness. After 6 weeks he is still in

Burundi and in October to undergo a medical review to assess his health conditions whether it is safe for him to travel back to DRC. Though the pain is disappearing slowly from his back, his legs are not yet strong enough to walk on for a long distance.

Shalom's absence at Komanda and my irregular visits due to my current responsibilities in Aru are having a negative impact on the stability of the Pygmies.



Most of them tend to believe that it is a polite way of our abandoning them. The suspension of commercial and missionary flights from Bunia to Aru because of Ebola exacerbated my irregularity. Currently, the flight routing is only from Aru to Beni and then Beni-Bunia by road. This makes traveling extremely expensive and lengthy, as the roads between Aru and Bunia are insecure and in poor condition. Besides, travel costs have doubled since drivers only carry 50% less passengers because of Ebola preventive measures.

Despite these changed, I managed to travel to Bunia and my recent visit to Komanda was an encouragement to the staff and the pygmies. These latter had the opportunity to talk to Shalom. It was interesting to see my phone passing from one hand to another without interruption. All the Pygmies expressed how they missed Shalom as they wished him quick recovery and return to his duties, though we do not know when that will be possible.

Praises and prayer requests

- We praise God for his unfailing love to each one of us. He has kept all our family members safe in Bunia. **Sylvia** and our son **Will** have temporary contracts with Sumaritan's Purse to attend to Ebola patients. Sylvia works in the dressing sections of nurses while Will is putting his pharmaceutical skills in preparing the medication for the sick. Please keep praying for their **safety**.
- We praise God that **Sylvia** has been able to run her small kiosk since 2009. Unfortunately, in 16 years, we are shifting the business for the second time. This is very hard especially for



designing, planting the grass and the flowers. It takes time before it attracts customers. For 10 years, we were on her late sister's property. For the last 6 years, Shalom University temporarily gave us the space.

Now, the University is planning to erect the school of management on the same site. We are temporarily planning to implement her business in her uncle's property while working on implementing it on our own property where we are building our house.

This process is time and resource consuming. Meanwhile, staff at Komanda asked me if I could set them a similar business on a portion of the property so that they can locally generate some funds to supply for their needs. I am working on the design; hoping that we shall implement it in one year's time. **Pray for this project.**

- Pray also for **water**. We are fortunate that our well functioned perfectly for 4 years. Many wells drilled in Komanda after ours dried up. Water Engineers are struggling to get the best waterbeds in Komanda. We are fortunate to benefit from the underground survey from a Ugandan friend who came to visit us lately.

He was able to locate water approximately at 60m in the ground. The good news is that this is on the portion of the property we purchased recently. The Water Engineer who drilled our well suggested the same spot 4 years ago. Unfortunately, our property did not extend up to that area when we evacuated. Otherwise, we would not have wasted all the energy and resources on the current well.

- Pray for my work in the **College** in **ARU**. Up to now, the Ministry of Education has not yet recognized my credentials. That has a direct impact on my financial benefits from the government. For the three years now, there are no clear signs whether salaries will come one day. Though the students, staff and community members appreciate my work, I believe that I have a right to financial advantages.

Fortunately, the University Council of Shalom in Bunia having acknowledged my positive contribution to the development of the University, has decided to keep my social (housing and primary medical care) and financial advantages up to 2030. Though this sounds like a guarantee, it becomes difficult when I have to use the same means to cover all the travel, accommodation and living expenses with the same amount in Aru.

However, if my contribution as a Christian can make a difference in the public sector, that will be of great help to the country.

- Pray for **Timothy**, head of School who has trouble with his eyes and right arm and cannot concentrate on reading for so long Timothy also has trouble writing for a long time. This has reduced his input.

As Timothy seeks medical care, he will only be able to give a few hours to continue coaching Robert mainly in administrative duties.

- Pray also for **Robert Molili** who has many responsibilities - having worked with Timothy for the last six years, has now taken over the direction of the School.
- Pray that we can find other **committed people** to be trained to assist Robert.