

PYGMY REPORT - JUNE 2022 (Way Alege)

When we vacated **Ataloholu** for **Komanda** under ADF rebels attacks on April 11 2022, the question we could ask was similar to that of the children of Israel in Babylon *"But how can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?"* (Psalms 137: 4). Even though Komanda is 17 kilometres away from Ataloholu, both the Pygmies and us felt as aliens.

Komanda is an upcoming commercial centre located 75 kilometres in the south of Bunia, the capital city of Ituri Province. It remains a vibrant commercial centre despite the ADF attacks with two particularities: first, it links three main provinces and their three major towns: North Kivu (Goma via Butembo and Beni),



Ituri (Bunia) and Tchopo province (Kisangani). Second, the commercial centre in Komanda is partly located in the Ituri tropical rain forest and also in the savannah. But the new Pygmy camp is located in the savannah because the forest area is prone to ADF attacks. This location leads to temperature fluctuations (hot during the day and cold at night). This fluctuation is also worsened by the **tarpaulin shelters** in which the Pygmies find it hard to light a fire as smoke hardly escapes.

Therefore, we are changing the shelters from tarpaulin to **thatched housing**. This move is a bit easier as we had experimentally improved shelters using grass in Ataloholu.



At the end of this month, we are likely to start experimenting with **ecodome** shelters. These alternatives will help us improve the Pygmy housing once ready to return to



Ataloholu. This will also help us share the experience with other Pygmies living in different camps across the Ituri forest.

In addition to temperature fluctuations, since the Pygmies moved from Ataloholu to Komanda, they have been exposed to unclean water and an unhealthy diet.

This has led to diarrhoea, dehydration, malnourishment and deaths mainly among children.

We have tried to refer most of the cases to the



Komanda General Hospital, but the results are not encouraging. First, the hospital is located on the road that leads to Beni, from where the ADF frequently launch their attacks on the town. This is why the Pygmies, feel psychologically insecure and are always tempted to escape from the hospital before they complete their health care. Second, when they have not sufficient



food at the hospital, they are forced to escape. Third, some medical staff are not kind to the Pygmies who are sensitive to harsh words and an unfriendly atmosphere. Finally but not least, proximity with their family members lures them back home even if their medical care is not yet completed. The above mentioned facts have led to the loss of some children. Therefore, for better medical care, we have decided to bring children whose health conditions are not improving to Bunia so that they are properly attended to. In total, we have 11 children assisted by four mothers and one male parent.

However, your prayers and gifts are changing the situation. Even if the Pygmies do not have sufficient food, they have hope that they can grow their own crops to supplement assistance given from outside.



This is thanks to part of your gifts that is invested in approximately 50 square metres of land in the unsecure zone. Farming can be done during the day while they retreat to the secure zone during the night.



In addition to farming, drilling the well on the camp is going to solve many health problems. Despite the fact that the area proved to be rocky after nine metres, the team worked hard day and night to get water 41 metres deep.



Thanks and praises

We praise God and thank you for your generous contributions. They are making a big difference in people's lives

Praise God for the water he has provided

Praise God for the land that is being used for farming. It is psychologically healing for many parents

Praise God some children will be discharged from the Hospital on July 3

Prayer requests

Pray for the completion of the water project

Pray as we plan to provide adequate housing for staff

Pray for a playing ground for children. We thought that teachers could start teaching a few lessons in the camp. However, children who have walked for 38 kms on foot seems to be traumatized. Some of them hardly talk. Pray for them as we think about creating a playing ground to help them relax.