

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**  
**MISSIONARY CENTER « LAUDATO SI » ON THE PROTECTION**  
**OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP**

*Nonprofit organization*



**REPORT – SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES**

**2018-2019**

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## **I. Background**

The activities of the Missionary Center LAUDATO SI for Information and formation on Environmental Protection and Ecological Citizen have started since the launch of its mini-symposium in August 2018, under the theme: "Together for the Safeguarding of our Common House." This conference has enabled the Centre to:

- ❖ Popularize its vision and identity;
- ❖ Stabilize its action strategies in relation to its three axes of intervention.

### **1.1. Identity and vision of the Centre**

The Missionary Center LAUDATO SI operates as a non-profit association (ASBL) with its own legal personality, in accordance with the legal and regulatory texts governing non-profit associations and public utility establishments, in particular law n° 004/2001 of 20 July 2001.

It is a joint initiative of the Comboni Missionaries and some lay Catholics with a view to complementarity, synergy and mutual reinforcement.

The Centre has the ambition to participate, according to the vision of the Encyclical of Pope Francis LAUDATO SI, in the promotion of actions for the safeguarding of creation and the protection of the environment, as an indeclinable responsibility to ensure the life and sustainable development of present and future generations, becoming aware of the responsibility of every human being to participate in the safeguarding of our common home. In doing so, the Encyclical LAUDATO SI of Pope Francis is the compass that guides his vision, objectives and activities.

### **1.2. Areas of intervention**

The activities of the Missionary Centre are articulated around 3 axes as follows :

- **Animation and training**

The Centre organizes capacity building programmes at all levels to implement the following activities: Thematic formation sessions, open days, field immersion activities, awareness campaigns, conferences-debates, retreats, international, regional and national symposium, ...

- **Research and documentation**

In the long term, the Centre intends to promote studies and research related to environmental issues, the preservation of creation and ecological citizen.

It also intends to develop and set up a resource centre to provide specialized documentation in its fields of intervention through a library with a relevant collection of documents, a multimedia and computer space with Internet access for users, and facilitation of networking of actors interested in environmental issues at the local, national, regional and international levels.

- **Support for micro-projects**

The Centre proposes, depending on the means at its disposal, to accompany and/or support micro-projects relating to relevant themes such as: Pollution, waste treatment, climate change and preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, sustainable management of natural resources, deforestation, environmental education, ecological citizen, etc.).

Having completed an experimental year of operation, the balance sheet presented below provides summary information in terms of administrative, technical and financial management during its first year of existence, as well as lessons learned, challenges encountered and future prospects.

## **II. Review of Activities**

### **2.1 Administrative management**

The Centre has set up:

- ∞ Mechanisms for the production of steering tools and it has equipped itself with strategic and operational plans, in particular notarial Statutes and Internal Regulations;

- ∞ A membership process for members of all categories, in accordance with the above-mentioned law regulating non-profit associations and public utility establishments. As the founding members, the Centre currently has 11 full members and the process continues;

- ∞ A system of human resources management materialized in particular by weekly rotation sheets and tally sheets;

- ∞ Mechanisms for collaboration and management of premises and space with the parish of St. John Paul II and the Comboni community.

It has taken all the necessary steps for the creation of partnerships with some organisations (national, regional and international).

### **2.2 Technical management**

For this first year, the Centre has proposed to pay particular attention to formation and raising the awareness of the various sections of the population, particularly the most disadvantaged, through its "Environmental Education" programme. It has a planning of several training and awareness-raising activities based on the recommendations of its first symposium and it has developed technical tools to be used for the implementation of these activities. These activities were focused on the acquisition of basic notions relating to the fight against the degradation and destruction of our Common House.

The Centre also developed a target mapping through which the various activities were to be deployed. To the extent of its means, the Centre carried out and developed the following activities:

### **i. Strengthening the internal capacities of its members**

Considering this vast programme on Environmental Education, the task seemed enormous in view of the challenges to be taken up. And the means to achieve it depended essentially on the pooling of efforts and strategies in the search for partners to mobilize resources without which no action would be possible.

With this in mind, the Centre organized two workshops for the members of the Executive Coordination, which focused on:

∞ Associative culture, writing and project management

The workshop covered the following aspects:

- The practices of management of the associative life: the fundamentals of the Non-Profit Associations in DRC, the obligations of the associative life and the team work;
- Project cycle management, with emphasis on: the fundamentals of results-based management, techniques for writing projects and seeking funding as well as an introduction to cycle management (programming, identification, instruction, funding, implementation, evaluation).

At the end of the workshop two projects were elaborated and focused respectively on : "The contribution to pollution mitigation in Limete Commune" and "Environmental education in schools and parishes in Limete Commune".

∞ The basics of the LAUDATO SI Encyclical

This formation enabled the members to understand the validity of the Encyclical as a text addressed to all humanity which describes the major aspects of the ecological crisis (various degradations), situates the human roots of this ecological crisis (our lifestyles at the origin of the upheaval of the planet), invites all humanity to ecological conversion and gives a method for finding the solution to all its problems (integral ecology).

### **ii. Awareness of the parish community**

Since the parish of St. John Paul II was chosen as a pilot parish, the Centre has been taking small steps to develop some activities in the community. In this context, it has, in particular:

- Animated a sensitization session for the members of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) extended to the Small Christian Community (CEVB) on the identity and mission of the Missionary Center LAUDATO SI and the foundations of the LAUDATO SI Encyclical;
- Organized several sessions of animation and sensitization of young people on environmental issues and the orientations of the Encyclical LAUDATO SI (Armée des Petits Anges (APA) and KIZITO - ANNUARITE (KA) groups, Youth Commission;
- Organized with the Catholic Women the closing of the month of March dedicated to the Woman by orienting the activities on the role of the woman in the safeguard of creation, the environment and the promotion of the ecological citizen in respect to LAUDATO SI ;

- Organized in partnership with the Youth Parish Commission several activities on the occasion of the Youth Parish Workshop of St. John Paul II in July;
- Organized the prayer with the parishioners on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for Creation celebrated every September the 1st;
- Organized in September 2019, its 2nd symposium (one of its priorities for the first half of 2019) under the theme: "Pastoral care and ecological citizen: the challenge of education in integral ecology advocated by the Encyclical "LAUDATO Si".

This symposium was attended by the various structures involved in one way or another in the protection of the environment. These included: state and private administrations, NGOs of civil society, religious denominations and the parish community of Saint John Paul II.

The Centre has benefited from an important pedagogical tool of Fr. Juan (Comboni priest) entitled "Child, this land is in your hands".

### **iii. Partnership development**

The Centre has developed operational partnerships on environmental issues and the safeguarding of creation with other actors, in terms of exchanges and participation in workshops and conferences, in particular:

- The Episcopal Commission for Natural Resources (CERN) of CENCO ( Bishops conference) within the framework of formation workshops for diocesan investigators on behalf of REBAC and the publication of Study Reports in the Mining, Agricultural and Environmental fields;
- The NGO COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL, a non-profit organization working for the promotion of democracy and peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as part of an awareness-raising activity for students;
- The Department of Pediatric Nephrology of University Clinics as part of an awareness activity on kidney diseases in children whose causes may be connected, in particular, to environmental degradation;
- The ASBL MIEC (International Movement of Catholic Students) PAX ROMANA, within the framework of a conference-debate on the theme: "Together, let us fight for the safeguarding of our common home", held for the benefit of young people and students, in the premises of the Parish of Saint Mary Help of Christians in the municipality of MASINA.

### **2.3 Financial management**

In order to carry out the above-mentioned activities, the Centre needed to mobilize sufficient financial resources from partners and people of goodwill.

Accordingly, it proceeded to:

- The mobilization of the Comboni Provinces of Europe and North America for the financial support of all the activities carried out this year at the Centre, at the 1st and 2nd symposium, the fitting out of the

Centre's facilities, the acquisition of materials and supplies for animation and sensitization, the publication of the proceedings of the 1st Symposium and the printing of the book "Children, this land is in your hands!", which is currently one of the Centre's most important educational tools.

We thank the Comboni Provinces of the United States of America, Spain, Portugal, Germany and England as well as the Reverend Fr. KIKE for their generosity.

- The mobilization of local income consisting of the following expenses: membership fees, membership dues and some internal self-financing income;

- The elaboration of two micro-projects of animation, sensitization and dissemination mentioned above, of which the one concerning "the contribution to the mitigation of pollution in the Commune of Limete" has been submitted to the Comboni Province of Italy and is awaiting financing.

### **III. Lessons learnt, challenges encountered, prospects**

#### **Lessons Learned**

The life of the Centre leads to a commitment of the members and the development of new identities thanks for everyone's efforts.

Collaboration between Missionaries and Laity brings a fruitful approach to pastoral care through the sharing of responsibilities and a richness in the way of living the Church in our time.

The strategy of "small gestures" makes it possible not to take ecological and environmental issues to an inaccessible level, but to address them in the simple everyday life of our lives, to invent solutions and to respond in a methodical way to global issues (for example, the treatment of domestic waste).

The integration of the ecological question into a pastoral dimension leads to a revisiting of pastoral animation approaches by integrating all aspects of the safeguarding of creation.

The choice of active targets (women, young people, vulnerable and marginalized people) ensures the dissemination of sound practices for safeguarding the environment and promoting ecological citizen in a broader temporal perspective.

The richness of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si* and the paradigm of integral ecology offers an opportunity to question current pastoral approaches.

The pastoral trilogy "SEE-JUDGE-ACT" finds in the Centre's working strategies a place of choice in its experimentation.

The complexity of the associative work imposes a cohesion of the members and an efficiency of those in charge of impetus and animation, in an attitude of humility, self-giving, complementarity and mutual reinforcement.

### **Positive elements or Strengths**

A committed, voluntary and supportive team at the Centre.

A realistic operational plan with relevant targets.

A permanent collaboration between the Congregation of the Comboni Missionaries, St. John Paul II Parish and the Centre for the common use of the premises and space of 7th Rue Limete Industrielle N°663/13.

Modest but effective human, financial and material resources.

A permanent watch in the development of operational partnerships with key actors, State and non-State, involved in environmental and ecological issues.

An innovative and incentive pastoral approach.

The Centre has a recognized physical address.

### **Challenges encountered**

Slow implementation of the activities planned for the first half of 2019 due to the cumbersome nature of the public administration in granting documents that could enable the Centre to operate and the fragility of the operational resources in relation to its ambitions;

Resistance to change on the part of certain actors due to the novelty of certain unusual pastoral themes that require major changes;

Presence of other state and non-state actors with weak and dispersed networking.

### **Perspectives**

With several initiatives being conducted in the field of the environment and sustainable development, the Center LAUDATO SI hopes, with humility and determination, to gradually find its place alongside other committed actors to make our common home even more beautiful and the lives of all creatures respected and valued.

The Centre sets out some short-, medium- and long-term perspectives:

Proceed with the effective operationalisation of the activities resulting from the recommendations of symposium 1 scheduled for the first half of 2019 as well as those resulting from symposium 2;

Ensure the translation of the Encyclical into an accessible format, by reproducing it in the 4 national languages;

Ensuring the awareness of the Encyclical among institutional and non-institutional stakeholders according to a previously validated action plan;

Work towards the emergence of an ecological parish pastoral care in partnership with the Lindonge Pastoral Centre;

To adapt the major axes of the Encyclical to the Congolese realities, in particular by comparing it with the National Programme for the Environment, Forests, Water and Biodiversity (PNEFEB);

Contribute to the intensification of Environmental Education Programs in schools and universities in order to establish an ecological citizen;

Organize symposiums and workshops between stakeholders on the sustainable management of the environment in order to find ways to enhance the value of our natural resources;

Lobby state and non-state institutions in order to raise awareness and ensure that all Congolese populations truly benefit from our natural resources;

Develop supports such as: songs, clips, illustrated booklets, proverbs, stories, etc.) to raise awareness on environmental protection, the protection of creation and ecological citizen;

Organizing conferences for teachers, pupils and students in schools and universities.

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