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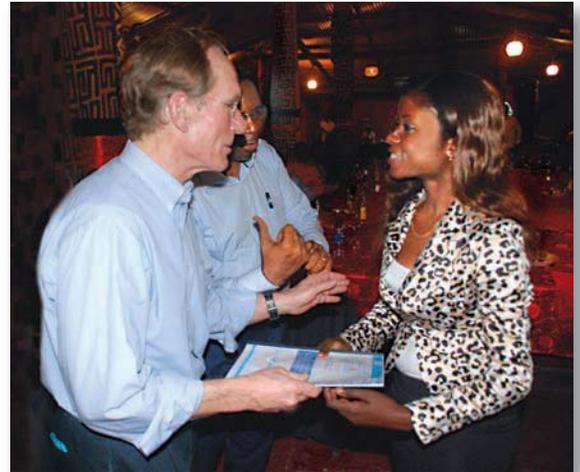
UPC hosts Nobel Laureate from Johns Hopkins

THE CAMPUS AT CONGO PROTESTANT UNIVERSITY

(UPC) was full of energy with the arrival of Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, Dr. Peter Agre, on February 13. As the Director of the Malaria Research Institute at Johns Hopkins University and a science diplomat, Dr. Agre and his colleague, Dr. William Moss, traveled to the Democratic Republic of

Congo (DRC) to spend time at UPC and to explore various malaria research collaboration opportunities. During his lectures on malaria and the resulting toll it has taken on Africa, **Dr. Agre stressed the importance of young people participating in science and urged them “to be a part of the solution.”** He said, “Who knows, maybe the Nobel Prize for the eradication of malaria will be given to an African scientist.” The students eagerly peppered Dr. Agre with questions as he spoke about his path to the Nobel Prize.

During a reception at his residence, U.S. Ambassador James Swan touched on the cooperation between the United States and the DRC through research and teaching about critical topics such as public health and disease. Understanding that collaboration will be the key component to malaria research, both the Congolese Minister of Health and the Head of President Kabila’s Cabinet have since pledged their support. “Dr. Agre called on UPC researchers to develop a synergistic approach to finding a cure for malaria,” reported Agence Congolaise de Presse. Stay tuned for more on malaria research initiatives at UPC.



From left, Nobel Laureate Dr. Peter Agre, with University Vice President and Dean of the Medical School Dr. Sam Mampunza, and former student president of the Medical School Sofia Mangala.

NEWS BRIEFS



Australians connect with English Club members

“WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT in the Congo?” was the question discussed early in March at UPC’s American Corner. More than 60 members of the English Club met to debate the question, using a process new to them. The Technology of Participation (ToP)[®] teaches team members how to collaborate on projects and teaches group facilitators how to effectively lead their teams. Robyn Hutchinson led the process,



Robyn Hutchinson (left) listens to an English Club member’s question.

dividing students and members of the business community into small discussion groups. The results were dynamic. “I like this process,” declared a young journalist, who is an active member of the weekly English Club discussions held on campus. “I can adapt it to my own work.” Robyn was part of an Australian delegation that included community development volunteers Lucy Hobgood-Brown (UPC’s representative in Australia), Sue Bromhead and Jacky Gendre. While on campus, the group also interviewed students who have received scholarships from Australia, Europe and North America.



Leadership begins with elective office

AFTER A RECENT, HARD-FOUGHT CAMPAIGN, a new Student Council was elected at UPC. Above right, from left to right, they are: Theology School president, Bernard Kako; Business School president, Mituku Ngyayi; student body president, Patrick Ngeleka; Law School president, Ambonga Djoli and Medical School president, Marc Baruani. This group of committed students will oversee student affairs for 8,000 students. They are poised to take on the challenge of their new office. The council will consult on and advise the university administration regarding student issues and concerns in addition to promoting the



New student leaders elected.

university’s objectives to the student body. According to the council, its tenure’s success will be measured by “its contribution to the students’ success.”



Spotlight on the TASOK Named Fund

THE NOVEMBER 2013 EDITION OF UPC NEWS contained an article describing Named Funds as a way to establish a personal legacy or to honor a loved one through a scholarship fund benefiting UPC students. As a way of paying tribute to their high school alma mater, The American School of Kinshasa (TASOK www.tasok.net), 11 North American Liaison Bureau (NALB) members have initiated a scholarship fund in the name of TASOK Alumni.

Why?

“For me, TASOK and Congo were formative. Without the experience I would not be the person I am. Helping support the future of the Congo by encouraging impressive young Congolese and helping with their education needs is simply a way I feel I can give back.”

– Jimmy Shafe (Class of ’67)

“I support the TASOK fund partly for legacy reasons (I attended TASOK, my father was on the board of TASOK and also was the first president of UPC). Mainly I support it because I think the fund makes a much-needed connection between one of the most excellent secondary schools in Kinshasa and one of the top universities in Congo. Both institutions benefit from such connections and I hope the TASOK Fund of NALB will help strengthen the bonds between the two.”

– Cynthia Decker (Class of ’76)

“I have been an enthusiastic supporter of Congo Protestant University and its North American Liaison Bureau for years. It’s a natural progression of my childhood in the Congo since the age of four, and my 12 years at The American School of Kinshasa. I travel the whole world on a daily basis but my mind and heart are in the Congo. The fact that the Congo ranks at the bot-



tom of many measurement standards energizes me to take action. The people of Congo are challenged to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, to fend for themselves and their families. A key tool in the struggle to brighten their country's future is a high-quality education. I'm happy to support the TASOK Fund to help the people of Congo take charge of their lives and their country."

- Bassel Fares (Class of '77)

Named Funds typically begin to pay out in scholarships after they reach \$25,000. The TASOK Named Fund is nearly halfway there, thanks to many supporters. To add your contribution to the TASOK fund, click on the Donate button at www.upcongo.org and select TASOK Alumni from the Named Fund field.



Challenges facing women in Congo, as told by UPC's Women's Club

WOMEN'S ISSUES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES CAN be overwhelming. In societies that define women's roles as getting married, household management, possibly working as a nurse, "the only way for women to get ahead is through education," says 25-year-old Olive Lobo (pictured below, 4th from right), a business school student who has organized a women's group to address these very issues. Representing all areas of study at UPC – Business, Law, Medicine and Theology – these women are looking for solutions when they meet to share ideas. They are also considering how to find mentors in their fields and amongst women faculty members.

UPC's more than 50-year history has featured only two women Student Council presidents (2005/06, 2009/10) and three women presidents of the schools (2011/12 and 2012/13). At the moment there are no female faculty advisors.

Currently, through the efforts of nonprofits and aid organizations, many young girls are able to complete their primary and even secondary education in Congo. Even the brightest and most determined young women, when they

take that next step to the university level, continue to be confronted with societal and cultural pressures, poverty, stereotypes and traditions which perpetuate discrimination against women. UPC does facilitate scholarships designated for women (who make up the majority of the university's students, underlining their strength and their determination to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them by the university).



Laetitia Mukombo

"Society considers women to be less important and subordinate to men," says one group member, who wishes to be anonymous. "Therefore, a family is more inclined to finance a male's education with the thought that he will support the family." She acknowledges that "the sad result being that women are forced to abandon their studies before earning their diplomas in order to marry." In a few instances, the husband is wealthy and progressive enough to help and encourage his wife to complete her education, says law student Laetitia Mukombo.

Going against society's mores can be quite a struggle, agrees another. "Why should a woman who has had a role created for her as a wife and mother try to put herself on equal footing with a man? She then becomes a bad wife and mother."

These stereotypes still weigh heavily on female university students. A case in point, during the recent student elections at UPC, women students were reluctant to submit their candidature – or if they did, they rescinded it due to lack of support. In the words of some group members, "The office of student council is a man's job."

Over the years, awareness about women students' lack of financial resources has improved. However, work still needs to be done. In many instances, the financial need remains great. Their ability to self-support is severely limited – some sell sweets and food on campus to fellow students and staff to supplement their money for transport, living expenses and tuition. At times, they depend on others to share books and notes to get through their course work. The group acknowledges that it's difficult for many to pay for library memberships, or to access cyber cafes or buy a class syllabus.

According to the World Bank, "Evidence also shows that when women and men are relatively equal, economies tend to grow faster, the poor move more quickly out of poverty, and the well-being of men, women and children is enhanced." At UPC, the women students face all of these challenges on a daily basis. However, these women are tackling these issues head-on because they know the power of change is in their hands.



UPC's Women's Club members (leader Olive Lobo is 4th from the right)



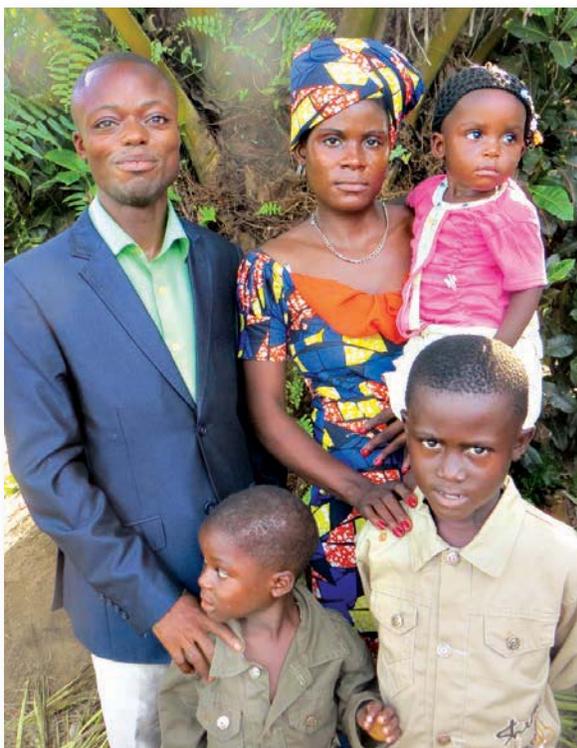
Rural leader puts UPC education to good use

HE'S ONLY 30, BUT JEAN ENTONTO BOLEKO is already building a solid legacy. He is married with three children and graduated from UPC's theology school in 2013 – the second UPC graduate from Lotumbe, a riverside community of 6000 residents in Equateur Province that is accessible only by canoe. He is now assistant pastor of a remote Disciples of Christ church located 300 kms from the provincial capital, Mbandaka.

Pastor Boleko has a powerful singing voice, which he joyfully uses in church. He also manages the parish's youth ("I like football"), finance and development initiatives, and serves on Lotumbe's community development committee. Elder care is a priority for him, and he is actively involved in initiatives supporting Lotumbe's more vulnerable residents.

Like most Congolese, he has an entrepreneurial spirit which he applies to farming four hectares and raising chickens. "These are good income generating opportunities," he says, noting that the riverside community struggles with poverty.

In his spare time, Pastor Boleko enjoys visiting his neighbors and singing. He also dreams of obtaining a PhD one day.



Pastor Boleko (left) and his family



Congo's future a family affair



"TO SEE THE CONGO PROTESTANT UNIVERSITY

presented as a model university" is Professor Christian Mabi's vision for his work as the Academic Secretary in the School of Business.

Working directly under the Dean of the Business School, overseeing its direction, he has been in his position for about three years. Born in the Kasai-Occidental, Dr. Mabi left the province at age 8 to live with family in Kinshasa in order to "increase my chances at a quality education." Influenced by his uncle, Mulumba Mabi (a renowned economics professor who also served as the country's prime minister under President Mobutu Sese Seko), Dr. Mabi abandoned his original plan of studying medicine to focus on business. Business training "gives us the tools to manage all levels of an organization even at the level of an entire country," he says.

After graduating from UPC in 1999, Dr. Mabi pursued his PhD in Spain at the University of Alcalá in Madrid. He later returned to UPC to take a position as a professor in the School of Business, which now has over 3,500 students. Dr. Mabi believes the ratio of student/teacher contact remains such that the students feel they are getting the attention and quality education they need.

During his breaks, he travels to Congo's interior to teach business courses at several universities. By training the rural as well as the urban populations of Congo and building its labor force, progress will be made, he declares. Married with four children, Dr. Mabi believes that building Congo is "the work of an ant – at the beginning, the work is almost invisible until it begins to take shape." He believes that by supporting UPC, the community will be served and his vision will be realized.

Prof. Christian Mabi (left) and his uncle, former Prime Minister Mulumba Mabi