

2010 *to* 2020

IMPACT STATEMENT

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



MWANA
VILLAGES

From our founders...



For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, "My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure." Isaiah 46:9-10

When we think back on the last 10 years, the word that resonates most is **THANKFULNESS.**

We are so grateful for the countless miracles God has performed...

His miracle of inspiring us, giving us the passion to start the ministry from absolutely nothing, then sending us one person at a time to help to make it happen. We appreciate every person who answered that call for their contribution to what Mwana has become today.

His miracle of instilling courage to go back to the Congo for the second time in 2012, then granting favour and opening doors for the legal pathway to open the first refuge in 2014.

His miracle of touching people from all over the world to bring their support to a small grassroots ministry in one of the smallest countries in Africa.

His miracle of the children He chose to bring our way, one by one, allowing us to be a part of their stories of hope and transformation. We think of those who were traumatized and broken, but now their eyes are full of joy and comfort and security. We think of the children who were abandoned and regarded as garbage, on the verge of death and starvation, yet they are now healthy and happy. How many of them would have been dead, but instead, they are alive and well. How amazing God's plan for their lives must be.

God is so kind. We are so very thankful for what He has done through Mwana Villages. He sees the end from the beginning.

*Cheryl and Lambert
Canada, 2020*

The early years

The heart of Mwana Villages was always a faith-based holistic restoration of that which had been lost for the orphan and the widow: family; spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical healing; socio-economic stability; hope and a future.



**For the orphan and the widow,
the crux of the crisis is the
loss of family and
societal stability.**



One of Mwana Villages' early projects was the construction of the Centre Siloé shelter for street children. Our involvement in this work illuminated the generational, cyclical nature of the orphan crisis and showed that unless broken, the orphan crisis will repeat itself.

At the founding of Mwana Villages in 2010, the model first conceived was a self-sufficient village in which these needs were met comprehensively and holistically. Land was purchased in Hinda, just outside of the hub of Pointe-Noire, for future cultivation and realization of this model. Within the city, the small team worked grassroots efforts to come alongside individual families in crisis and, in particular, widows and orphans, to reestablish stability.

CENTRE SILOÉ

THE PIVOT

to respond to
the need



As these grassroots efforts were underway and we worked in the city of Pointe-Noire, we learned more of what was actually happening to some of the most vulnerable.

The mothers behind these abandonments were often orphans and widows themselves. Their trauma and circumstances created a vicious cycle of neglect and abandonment. We realized that the most immediate need was right in front of us, a place where widows and orphans would find safety and protection instead of exploitation.



Thus the
Mwana Refuge
was opened.

OUR DISTINCTIVES

a model of ethical orphan care

We provide shelter to orphaned and vulnerable children at the Mwana Refuge.

We create safety for vulnerable children who may otherwise face trafficking, exploitation or death.

We employ trustworthy local staff who holistically and lovingly care for the children and families.

We unite each child to his or her family, either through family reunification or through adoption when needed.

We empower vulnerable women toward stability, self-sufficiency and hope.

The Mwana Refuge

- Low child to caregiver ratio: we never exceed a 4:1 ratio of child to caregiver.
- Excellence in professionalism: we conduct weekly staff training on topics from CPR to hygiene.
- Financial accountability and transparency with protocol developed by independent international accounting firms.
- Prioritization of family reunification and preservation.



BY THE NUMBERS

2014-2019

Five years of the Refuge

80

Children welcomed to the Mwana Refuge in our full-time care

Children adopted in Congo, France and the United States (representing 12 families)

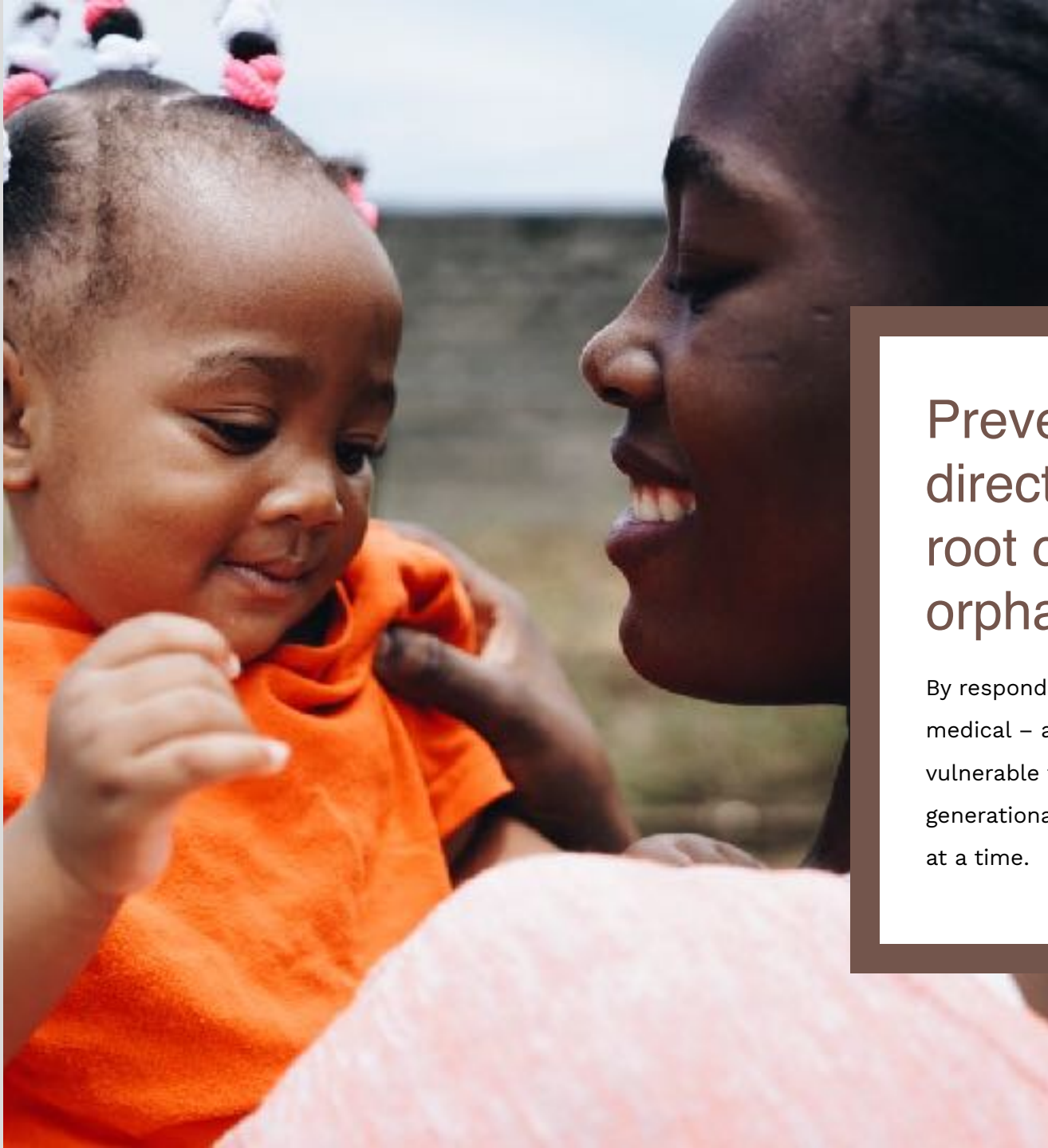
21

70

Families served in orphan prevention efforts, thus preventing these children from coming into our full-time care

40% of children who have come into our full-time care have been successfully reunified or are in the process of being reunified.

BREAKING THE CYCLE



Prevention efforts directly target the root causes of orphanhood.

By responding socioeconomically to the medical – and even spiritual – needs of vulnerable families, we can break the generational cycle of orphanhood, one family at a time.

Expanding our reach

NKAYI

In 2018, we officially opened our second Mwana Refuge in the town of Nkayi. This Refuge serves orphaned adolescents with disabilities, and represents our organization in the second most populated province in the country.



Mama Rebecca was one of the first women to be helped by Mwana Villages. As a destitute widowed mother to 10 children, she shared what little she had with those in need and often welcomed abandoned children into her family. Mwana assisted Mama Rebecca with moving into a new home and employed her as a caregiver. She now serves as the foster mother at the Nkayi Refuge.



Not far from the Nkayi Refuge, in the village of Bouansa,

we have planted a hectare of moringa trees on land donated by Dr. Mouanda, who oversees the land and trees. This “miracle plant” is multi-purposed: to employ vulnerable families in the maintenance, harvesting and product development; to serve as a nutritional source for our Refuges; and to serve as an income source through its sales locally and, potentially, internationally.



In 2018, we purchased land in Pointe-Noire

for our permanent Mwana Refuge and ministry hub. As we outgrow our current refuge (a rental property), the new building will allow us to expand our efforts in several key ways:

- **Expand our capacity to welcome children in need**
- **Begin revenue-generating streams with a boutique and a school (which will also serve our school-aged children)**
- **Operate a robust community outreach program focused on strategic orphan-prevention trainings**

We broke ground on the building in Summer 2019 and hope to finish it in 2021.



We are grateful for the consistent support

of the Mwana Refuge by the local community. From small businesses that host donation boxes to the daily passersby who donate canned tomatoes or diapers, this local support is indicative of the ministry's rootedness in and importance to the local community.



Mwana Villages is a true source of light in a dark place.

As an organization firmly committed to the safety of our children, Mwana has faced some dark challenges from those that have attempted to exploit families or have sought to do children harm. We must maintain discretion in what we can disclose publicly, so we are unable to comment further on the specifics of our work to protect our children and to expose those that have sought to do harm. We celebrate a trusted network of authority figures similarly committed to the ethical, legal protection of children, and Mwana continues its bold stance against corrupt practices.

INSIDER GLIMPSE

Mwana's reach has expanded not only within Congo, but across the globe as well.

We consider the global awareness, education and support of ethical orphan care as the linchpin of future expansion of this critical work. The model of family preservation and reunification as priority over adoption is triumphing over the traditional model and messaging of the response to and solution for the orphan crisis.



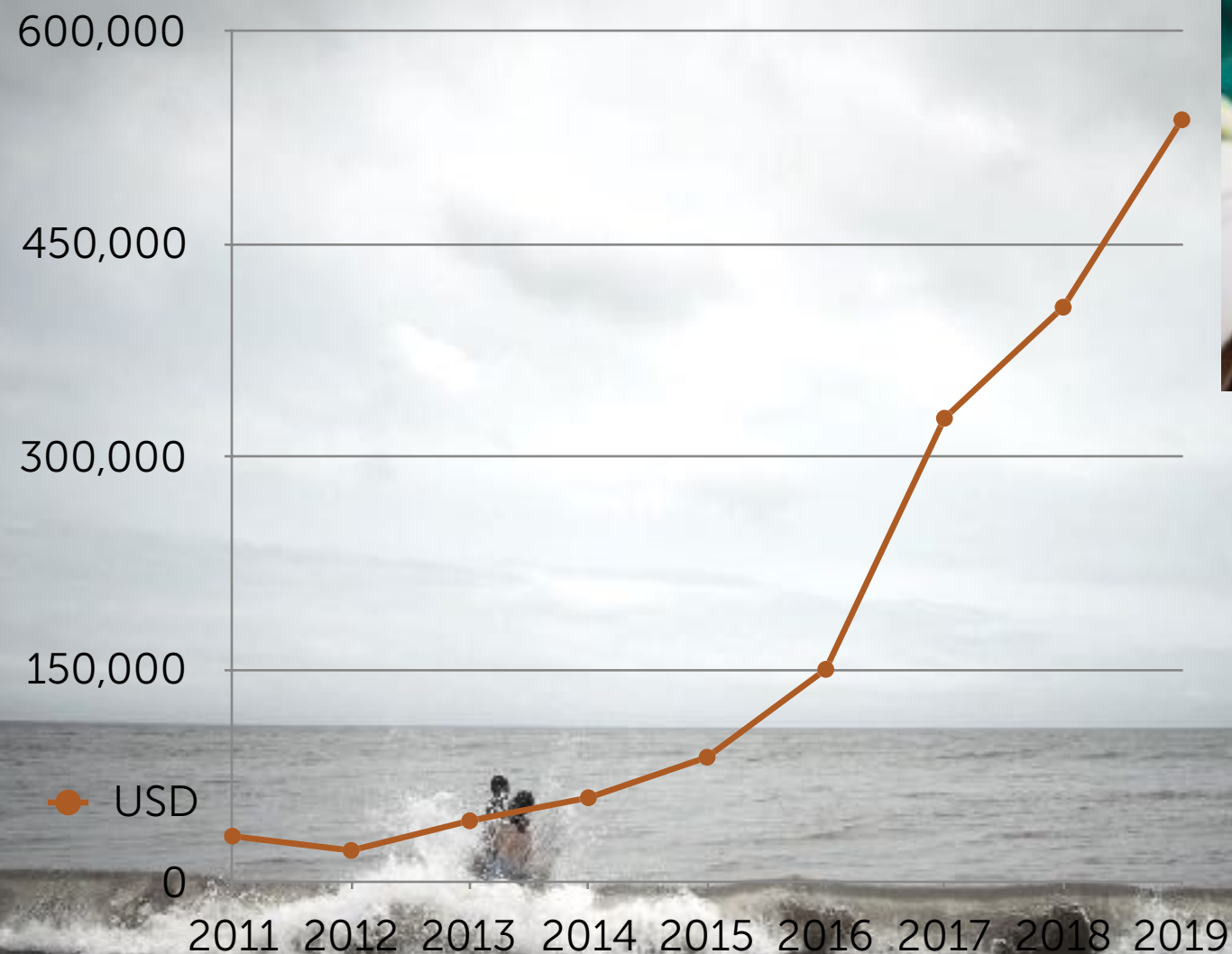
Across The globe

A glance at our global fundraising over the years



Mwana Villages was founded as a nonprofit in Canada in 2010. These early years reflected a true grassroots effort of fundraising, with individuals fully committed to the organization working and giving sacrificially and tirelessly to earn each dollar toward life-saving impact in Congo.

As Mwana Villages expanded, it was officially registered in Congo in 2013, in the United States in 2015 and in France in 2018. Our social media presence has expanded to over 9,700 regular followers, and our website has engaged people in 63 countries. Mwana documentary videos reflect nearly 850,000 views, communicating with each interaction that ethical orphan care **matters**.





INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Throughout the years, we have been intentional and strategic about the individuals who have traveled to Congo in a volunteer capacity. We uphold every effort to employ local individuals and experts and are careful to avoid any semblance of orphanage tourism that is often practiced elsewhere. Therefore, those volunteers who travel internationally are uniquely equipped and focused on sustainable efforts, growing the capacity of our local staff.



These volunteers reflect a Biblical foundation that our ultimate healing is found in Christ, who cares for our holistic needs as well as our eternal security through salvation in Himself.

One of the unique ways international volunteers have been involved is through counseling and social work. Since many of the women and children in our care have experienced profound trauma in their past, their emotional and psychological healing is a critical piece of their future stability.



HIGHLIGHT

SOCIAL WORK & COUNSELING

HIGHLIGHT

MEDICAL TRAINING

A team of medical professionals traveled to Congo to focus on qualitative and quantitative improvements in best practices, standards of care, outcomes and mortality rates in neonatology and pediatric units of local public hospitals. With a long-term goal to open a Mwana clinic serving vulnerable patients with specialties in pediatric, neonatal and maternal health, this close glimpse at the medical landscape in our city and developing partnerships laid early groundwork to achieve that future goal.



Poverty and medical complications are inextricable. In the Republic of Congo, 1 in 5 children will die before their fifth birthday. The lack of adequate healthcare and access to quality healthcare exacerbates the cyclical nature of the orphan crisis.





Mwana Villages has expanded its partnerships beyond individual donors in several key areas.

Partnerships with churches emphasize the necessity of the corporate Christian response to the orphan crisis and role in ethical orphan care. Partnerships with corporations echo the multifaceted opportunity of engagement in this work: anyone with any background can make an impact. Partnerships engaging families in our Kids for Kids campaign series invites kids to grow in their knowledge of children who are like them and support children who are finding refuge from orphanhood.

THE 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



The year in review

FEBRUARY

We broke ground on the New Refuge! Construction began by delineating the property with a security fence, preparing the groundwork and making bricks off-site. The purchase of a manual brick press allows us to save on the cost of purchasing fabricated bricks while securing a valuable asset as a future source of revenue.

MARCH

Our oldest four children expanded their school experience by engaging in extracurricular opportunities such as swim lessons, art class, chess and even zumba!

JUNE

In our first ever Kids for Kids Campaign, children around the world raised money with their brick banks for bricks for the new Refuge! We partnered with three church Vacation Bible Schools whose theme of the week was “Brick by brick for Congo!” Donors matched what children raised for a total of \$22,000. We also hired our first Development Director in the United States.

JULY

A team of medical professionals from the United States spent a week at the main local public hospital with physicians and nurses in the Neonatal Intensive Care, Pediatric and Maternity Units. The training topics were developed collaboratively between the Congolese and American physicians. This opportunity was so notable that four other local hospitals joined the training sessions.

SEPTEMBER

Refuge within orphanhood. We unveiled our new tagline and website, echoing the focus and distinctiveness of the ministry.

OCTOBER

We furthered the connection with our supporters in a few key ways this past fall. The new *Insider Email Series* informs advocates on the complex nature of providing refuge within orphanhood beyond what can be shared on our public platform. The *Live Series* features volunteers, advocates or staff members who join to chat about issues central to the work.

NOVEMBER

Our first Refuge Devotional was released: it unpacks the biblical concept of refuge and what it means for us to find refuge in God and then be moved by this faith to join in the hard, yet important, work of providing refuge.

DECEMBER

Closing out a fantastic year, we exceeded our lofty fundraising goal by over 20%!



HIGHLIGHT

BRENDA & JUNIOR

Baby Brenda was two months old when she was welcomed into Mwana after her mother passed away. Soon after her arrival, we met Junior, the eldest sister of all the siblings. Days after their mother's death, Junior also gave birth to her first baby and she began selflessly caring for both her own newborn and her baby sister Brenda. The man involved in Junior's life gave her an ultimatum, declaring that she had to choose between the babies or him. She chose the babies.

Junior is now employed as a caregiver at the Refuge, where she is receiving private tutoring to learn to read and write. She has reunified with several of her family members, who had become scattered following her mother's death, and this young family is on a path toward healing and stability.





We provided for the medical care and supervision for preemie Lucas in the NICU and were able to locate his family to facilitate a reunification.

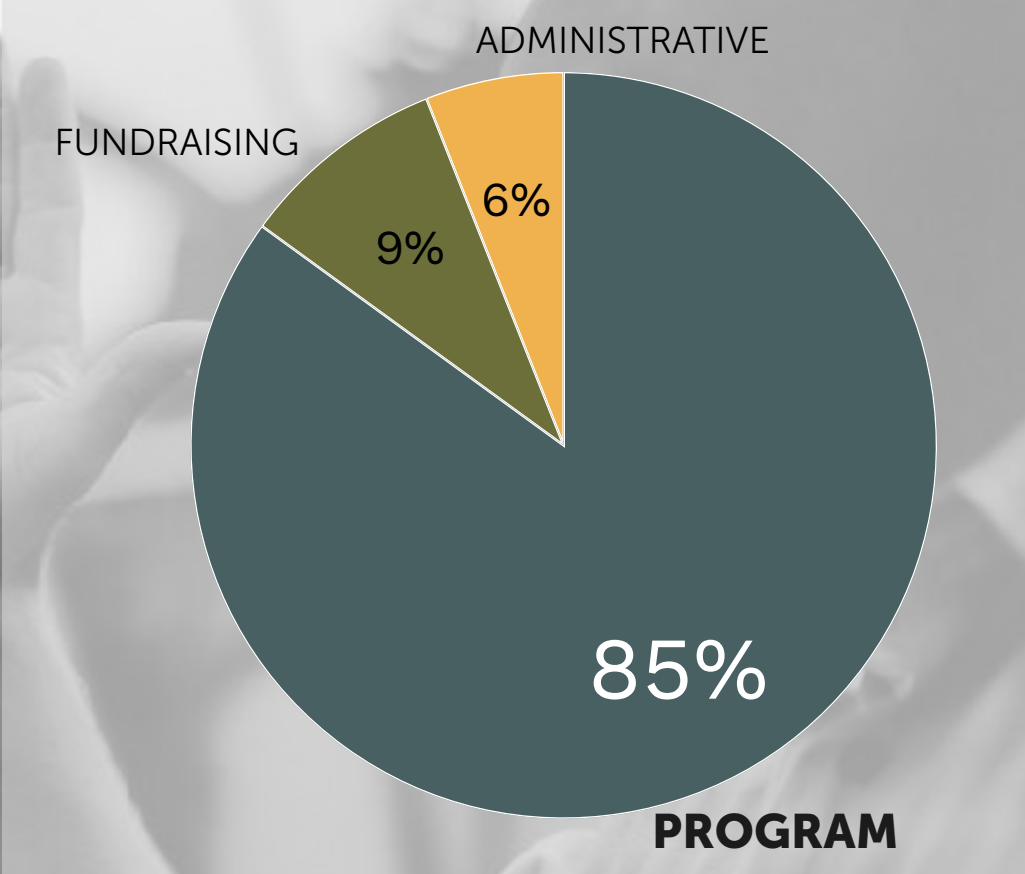


Divine was reunified with her family.



Aimée's dramatic transformation shows the importance of love, safety and provision.

Throughout the year, we continued to welcome new children and families, and we remained consistent in the work and model we have been practicing for the past five years. We welcomed the new year with our first New Year's Day Feast, provided by one of our donors, for the vulnerable families we serve.



Finances in 2019

Mwana Villages raised \$537,213 globally in 2019, a 32% increase from the previous year.

Source	Percentage
INDIVIDUAL DONORS	86%
CORPORATE SPONSORS	14%

What's ahead

We are so encouraged by how the Lord has worked through Mwana Villages, and we pray that He will continue to use the ministry to impact the lives of many for years to come. Our focus remains steady: to continue providing refuge within orphanhood with the ethical model and practices of excellence we have honed.

On a practical level locally, we look forward to finalizing our new Refuge, which will allow us to expand or launch efforts impacting vulnerable children and families. We continue to emphasize the model of priority of family preservation and reunification and of legal protection of vulnerable populations in the country of Congo.

On a global level, as our support base continues to expand, we seek to be strategic in our partnerships for emphasizing the importance of ethical orphan care.



THE HAGUE CONVENTION

As of April 1, 2020, the Republic of Congo became signatory to the Hague Convention (Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption). As regulations and practices for international adoption have yet to be implemented, we are unsure of the implications for our children in need of adoption and for whom we may not have local adoptive families. Our primary goal is that the children in our permanent care receive the best quality care we can offer them. We will also continue to explore options for long-term family-based care.



We look forward to your continued partnership
to provide **refuge within orphanhood.**

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Select photo credit The Archibald Project, a media-based orphan advocacy organization



MWANA
VILLAGES