



# Friends of IPASC Trust

October 2011

## Achieving True Transformation within the Poorest Communities by Training Community Health Professionals

By Phil Wani Lumago – Executive Director

In DRC, primary healthcare is not working for the rural and poorest communities as the majority of trained health personnel are nurses working in hospitals and health centres in the urban areas. There is a severe shortage of schools which offer training programmes in other health-related domains such as community health, maternity, nutrition and physiotherapy; having serious repercussions on the delivery of primary healthcare at the grassroots. Radical change is needed so that the poorest communities can have access to primary healthcare, particularly in the rural areas, and IPASC is here for that purpose.

The mission of IPASC is to enable and empower people, so they themselves can prevent illness, care for their own health and develop their communities. One of IPASC's strategies is the education of qualified community health professionals at diploma and degree levels. After completing their education, our students go out and work with local communities to achieve true transformation. This article is about our Diploma Programme.

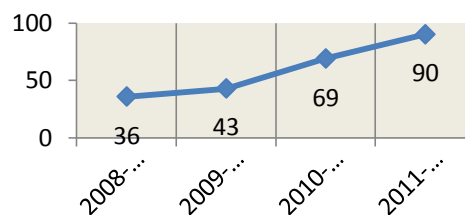
The Diploma Programme, a 4 year course, is comprised of 3 orientations: community health, midwifery and physiotherapy. Our programmes of study, particularly community health and midwifery, are appropriate for the needs of communities in the developing world. They are so unique and effective that the government in the DRC has recommended that the programme be used country-wide.



IPASC Diploma Course Students

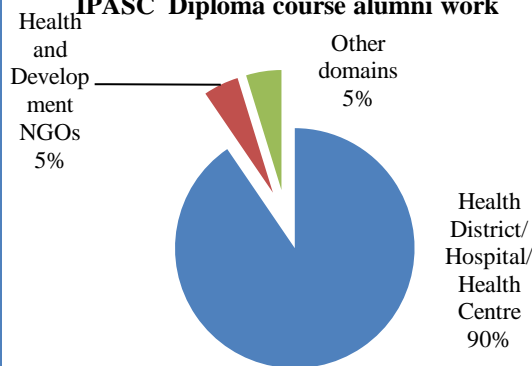
We have been encouraged by the gradual increase in the number of students on the Diploma Programme each year. This year, which started in September, 90 students have been registered for the programme, the highest number of students ever recruited for this course. We are especially happy to see that 43% of the students on our Diploma Programme are female.

### A four year comparison of the number of Diploma Course Students



Since 1998, IPASC has produced 125 qualified community health professionals from our Diploma Course. They work mostly in healthcare facilities in rural areas all over the country and across Africa. This year, 9 graduating students were appointed by the local health authority on the day of their graduation: 5 in midwifery and 4 in community health.

### IPASC Diploma course alumni work



90% of our Diploma alumni are employed in the field of their education and are very active in bringing positive and sustainable change to their communities. Their achievements are numerous:

- Increased access by the population to different health centre activities (preventive, promotional and curative)
- Improved health of mothers, mothers to be and their children;
- Increased awareness on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other preventable diseases;
- Decrease in water-borne disease within communities

IPASC firmly believes that it is possible to realise its mission of improving the health of vulnerable people. We have learned that local communities and individuals, when empowered, are able to overcome health and development obstacles (poverty and diseases) which they otherwise believed to be insurmountable. One of the sustainable ways to empower people is by training reliable individuals who are willing to work within the rural areas to achieve true transformation. The experience of Yaba is an example of where this has been achieved →

**Yaba Health Centre: Health obstacles can be overcome by the community**



*Ms Odharo talking with members of Yaba childbirth insurance scheme*

Yaba is a village of more than 5000 people located at about 20km North of Aru. Before 2010, Yaba Health Centre had 1 qualified nurse and 2 unqualified midwives and women's attendance at reproductive health services was very low.

In 2010, an IPASC student (Ms Odharo) was hired by Yaba Health Centre. With her IPASC education, she organized community health activities, working within villages, identifying priority health problems. She discovered that most women were not giving birth at the health centre because of poverty and low status within the community. Subsequently, there were a lot of health related problems, such as fistulae and high maternal and infant mortality rates.

Ms Odharo was able to initiate a childbirth insurance scheme in the village following awareness campaigns and through the support of IPASC's Safe Motherhood Programme. Through this scheme, women have begun to overcome their poverty and financial dependence on their husbands for healthcare. They make contributions on a monthly basis and carry out group work in order to raise money for the scheme. In return, members benefit from free access to reproductive health services at the health centre. Several women from Yaba have joined the scheme and men are beginning to change their views about their wives attending the clinic for reproductive healthcare. This work has brought about real change within Yaba. From 4 births a month, the health centre is now delivering an average 30 births a month and associated health problems have reduced.

IPASC is committed to support the people of the DRC in overcoming health and development obstacles through the training of community health professionals. We are encouraged by the high number of people interested in registering for our programmes. However, most of those interested are unable to afford the fees and some students drop out of the course due to a lack of funds.

We would like to extend our appreciation to individuals, churches and organisations for their support to IPASC. If you would like to contribute towards improving the health of vulnerable people at the grassroots, please support one of our students. You can contact us through the Friends of IPASC Trust ([www.IPASC.net](http://www.IPASC.net)).

**Meet the Staff- John Kisembo Katabuka  
Secretary to the Executive Director**



Meet John. He has degree in Community Health from IPASC University College in Bunia and has been working with IPASC since January 2009; first as the Librarian in Bunia and, more recently, as the Secretary to the Executive Director. John's work consists of assisting the Executive Director and carrying out IPASC's monitoring and evaluation activities. In this role, he reports on the impact of IPASC's work for its beneficiaries. He loves his job and is really enjoying doing this work.

John is a committed Christian and is married with 3 children. He loves singing and is a musical whiz kid, playing the guitar, piano and drums. In addition to his work, he helps IPASC's choir and the Umoja Choir (at Aru Cathedral), playing the guitar for them.

**AFESADE: Meet the children**

Each issue, we hope to meet children who are part of IPASC's programme, AFESADE, which supports children orphaned by HIV/Aids. This time, we meet Andama, aged 16, and twins, Grace and Jeremia, aged 8.



Grace and Jeremia live with their older brother, Andama, who has taken care of them since their mother and father died in 2008 and 2009, respectively. Andama dropped out of school when his father died and he has been earning enough money to keep his family by making bricks and doing odd jobs for other people. Grace is in Grade 3 and Jeremia hopes to start Grade 1. Grace's favourite subject is Reading and Writing. Andama was hoping to go back to Year 2 of secondary school in September. He was paying his own way through school, but may now need support from AFESADE.

**As we move towards Christmas why not sign up to be part of IPASC's and Wani's dream of bringing good health to someone who cannot afford. Give a gift this Christmas; visit [www.IPASC.net](http://www.IPASC.net) and click on 'supporting IPASC'. Thank You for your continued support of the Friends of IPASC Trust!**