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The letter

Newsletter March 2022 - The Friends of Butoke Charity (Registered Charity no. 1140094)

How much did you raise in 2021?

Welcome to The Friends of Butoke Charity's annual newsletter.

In 2021 the Charity's income was £32,259.68. We sent a total of £38,214.39 to Butoke to support its work. A big "thank you" to everyone who contributed, whether by donating each month, supporting one-off projects, sponsoring Paul's half marathons or buying Christmas cards. 100% of the money you give is sent to Butoke. The running costs of the Charity are covered by the Trustees.

The reason that we spent more than we raised last year was the Maternity Unit: we had raised the funds necessary to build and equip it in 2020 but the work was not carried out until 2021 (further details below).



Some of the children Butoke cares for at its orphanage and feeding centre in Tshikaji

The Justice Project that we ran in 2020/2021 had exhausted its funding by March 2021. It helped ten rape victims, all girls aged 12 to 17. They were provided with legal and medical assistance, basic necessities such as food, clothing and medicines, and in some cases were relocated. A more detailed report on the project is available [here](#).

We then sought further donors to run a similar project for 2021/2022 and were delighted when [byrne dean](#), one of the project's supporters from previous years, and the family of Elsa Corp stepped forward with significant funding. We decided that we would like to re-name the project the Elsa Corp Justice Project. Information about Elsa is available on our website [here](#). If you take a moment to read about Elsa you will see why we wanted to name the project after her.

Since last September the Elsa Corp Justice Project has helped 8 women and girls who had all been raped. In addition to the forms of support provided last year, this year the women and girls have all been offered counselling by a psychologist.

Butoke believes that this work is important not only because it helps individuals, but also because it pushes back against the culture of impunity from which the perpetrators of sexual violence often benefit in the DRC. Butoke has ensured that a number of offenders have been prosecuted and imprisoned in a way that is far from normal in the DRC. Butoke believes that the communities in which the offenders lived have taken note of this.

The Maternity Unit in Tshimbundu

Much of our fundraising efforts in 2020 were related to the construction of a Maternity Unit in Tshimbundu, a deprived community where Butoke has previously built a school, where there were no medical facilities at all. Building work took place in the first half of 2021 and, after a final push for funds (thank you to everyone who sponsored Paul in his two half marathons), the Maternity Unit opened in August 2021. Between 1 August and 23 November 58 children were born at the Maternity Unit, including 9 by caesarean. These were all births that would have previously taken place without any medical assistance being available. In addition, 49 women sought ante-natal advice.

The general lack of facilities in the area has meant that many have sought general medical assistance. Consequently, the Maternity Unit, acting as a general clinic, also treated 124 children and 76 adults for a variety of illnesses.

Around half the funding for the construction of the Maternity Unit was provided by your donations, and we are particularly grateful to the Methodist Women in Britain for their contribution. The other half was provided by a Canadian charity with which we work closely.



The Maternity Unit went from foundations to the finished building in 2 months.

Now that the Maternity Unit is up and running, it is largely self-sustaining: most women pay a small fee and the doctors who work there do so on the basis that they will be paid two thirds of the fees taken. However Butoke has a policy of never turning away women who cannot afford to pay anything.



The facilities are basic - but there are doctors and other staff at the Maternity Unit and previously women gave birth at home without access to any medical care.

The main activities of Butoke in 2021

Butoke's activities in 2021 were relatively unchanged. The coronavirus pandemic caused less disruption than in 2020 and, generally, it appears to have had less impact on Congolese society than on society in the UK. This may be because the population of the DRC is young, lives largely outside, and, also, is used to living with a variety of fatal diseases. Malaria is widespread and Butoke's clinics regularly treat patients with typhoid. Dr Jean has also told us that 75% of snake bite victims who seek medical treatment die (anti-venom cannot be stored outside cities) and diabetes is a death sentence for many because insulin is not widely available.

Education: Butoke has continued to run a secondary school and two primary schools. Butoke was pleased that its pass rate in national exams was 100%.

provides us with details of the conditions treated. Malaria, typhoid and conditions caused by malnutrition seem to be prevalent.

Orphanage and shelter for the elderly: Butoke continues to operate an orphanage and shelter for the elderly. It generally has about 30 young people who are resident and around another 20 who live with foster families but who are fed by Butoke. There are usually around ten elderly people living in the shelter for the elderly.



Agriculture: Butoke continues to work with around 30 local agricultural associations. Butoke insists that women are involved in the management committees of its association partners. This year Butoke reported that it has been encouraging the growing of soya which has helped reduce the incidence of malnutrition amongst children in the communities with which it works.

Fish farming: Butoke introduced fish farming to a number of its association partners to increase the amount of protein available to villagers. It organises a total of 27 fish ponds. These are used both as a source of protein and as a source of income.

Butoke in 2022 - how you could help

The Friends of Butoke Charity has for the first time formally teamed up with the Friends of Butoke (USA) and a Canadian Charity, Hope International; to guarantee Butoke a certain level of funding for 2022 against an agreed budget. We hope that this will make it easier for Butoke to plan and manage its activities - it is a small organisation and has always survived hand to mouth.

The Friends of Butoke Charity has agreed to increase its annual contribution towards Butoke, so we need to raise more money! If you are a regular donor and might feel able to raise your regular donation by a small amount, that would be fantastic. If you are not a regular donor and would like to become one, please [email](#) Paul and he will send you the Charity's bank details and a giftaid form. A contribution of just £5 a month makes a difference over the course of a year.

Thank you!

Many big online retailers (Amazon, eMall, eBay, etc., for example), will make a small donation when you visit their website through the [easyfundraising portal](#). Over the last 4 years the Charity has received £1127.73 in this way. Firefox has an [add on](#) which will tell you when you visit a website that will make donations via [easyfundraising](#).

If you access **Amazon** via [smile.amazon](#) rather than the normal URL, Amazon will give a small percentage of each purchase to your chosen charity. The Friends of Butoke Charity is one of the charities you can choose.

Can we ask you to consider selecting the Charity as your chosen charity for [smile.amazon](#)? If you have never used [smile.amazon](#) before, you will be prompted to choose a charity the first time you use it.

Alternatively, if you have used it before and perhaps selected a larger charity, you can change your chosen charity to The Friends of Butoke Charity. You can find details of how to do this [here](#). However, you need to go to "Your Account" via [smile.amazon](#) (**not** the normal amazon URL) and then scroll down to "Shopping programmes". Under that heading you will find "Change Your Charity" - that is what you need to change your current charity to The Friends of Butoke Charity.



Butoke's clinic in Kananga, Dr Jean, and the school in Tshimbundu.

Christmas cards - it's not too late (or too early)

We raised £920 from the sale of Christmas cards, thank you. However we still have boxes of them left which are cluttering up Paul and Marleen's attic. If you would like to stock up for next year, they are going at the discount price of £3.50 per pack of 10 plus postage. [Email Paul](#) with orders.





Just remind me again, what does Butoke do?

Butoke is a small NGO working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its core activities are to run several schools, two big and one small clinics, an orphanage, and a food security programmes. The on the ground expertise comes from a medical team lead by Dr Jean Lumbala, who is also a trained agronomist. The Friends of Butoke Charity raises funds to help Butoke continue its activities. We have four trustees: Matthew Pollard, Adriane Pollard, Marleen Tiemens and Paul Evans. Our accounts are independently examined each year and copies of the independent examiner's reports are available on request.

More information about Butoke's activities are available on our [website](#).

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