

## TSHIKAJI COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM

In 2002, the village of Tshikaji had a population of 5,000 people (50% of the population under age 15) and had no health center, no primary health care and no maternity services. Due to the fact that there was no active vaccination program, the vaccination rate was the lowest in the health zone, with few children under the age of 10 having had received even one vaccination. When labor started, village pregnant women had to walk for miles to reach a qualified maternity center. Most delivered their babies at home on the dirt floor of their huts. Sick children were treated at home with traditional remedies or with a few unidentified medicines purchased from vendors at the local market. Many children died of preventable and treatable diseases.



The village church and community leaders proposed a plan to Mike and Nancy Haninger (PCUSA missionaries) and the Health Zone authorities that would immediately initiate a vaccination program and offer prenatal services. A village hut was quickly renovated to make a space for a prenatal clinic, and a local church offered its facility to hold weekly vaccination clinics.

Nancy Haninger provided the first clinic services, and quickly trained another Congolese nurse to assist at the clinics. The response was tremendous! In one day, the vaccination clinic exhausted its vaccination supplies and women came in droves to receive quality prenatal care. Four village midwives (traditional birth attendants) were trained and added to the health center staff, along with village health educators and volunteers.

In 2003, the Haningers proposed to a PCUSA congregation the building of a permanent health center and maternity. The budget was \$10,000 that included construction of a 6 room building



with concrete floor and metal roof. Later, a solar system and a front and back porch were added.

Today the village of Tshikaji has a beautiful health center and maternity center (see photos) that offers vital community health services to over 9,000 people. Two Congolese nurses and the original 4 village midwives comprise the health center staff, which is open 24/7. The Tshikaji maternity center is renowned throughout the health zone and has delivered hundreds of healthy babies. The village now boasts a community vaccination rate of 97%. There is an active community outreach program where the staff goes into the village to teach health classes and screen for malnourished children.

Additional clinic services:

- quality primary health care
- maternity services
- family planning services
- nutrition and sanitation counseling
- malaria prevention (distribution of mosquito bed nets)
- medical referrals
- vaccination services
- free care to the poorest of the poor; no one is turned away

*This important program is supported with many generous donations from PCUSA congregations and individuals and requires continuous funding for ongoing operational support. Please send donations to PCUSA through ECO 320402/Health Center/Haninger projects.*

*Thank you and God bless.*