

2023 IMPACT REPORT



THE IDA LEE PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

The Ida Lee Project began in Kisangani in 2016 offering free screenings for breast and cervical cancers. The more patients that were seen, the more clear it became that the women of Congo were suffering an epidemic of breast and cervical cancers due to the lack of updated medical practice and the education around the routine check ups necessary to prevent such cancers. Women in the DRC lacked and still lack preventative healthcare.

With limited resources, including limited electricity, many modern instruments that could improve discovery and treatment are not available and, as such, the ILP has had to drastically adjust how we diagnose cancers.

Once the cancer had been diagnosed, those that were not in stage 4 would receive surgery and treatment at no cost; those in the last stage received palliative care with training for their family members to help manage their end-of-life care.

Without free surgeries available through the ILP, women would not be able to afford this life-saving care.

Once word spread of our free services, babies and children began to show up that had devastating pathologies. The Ida Lee Project stepped up and flew these young patients to Panzi Hospital in Bukavu and the Uganda Cancer Institute in Kampala, Uganda for specialized care.

Today, our mission is to not only bring dignified and contemporary medical treatment to those facing female reproductive cancers and other medical needs in Kisangani, but also empower patients and their communities with quality health education.

Facing a decades-long conflict and among the poorest nations in the world, the Democratic Republic of Congo is not an easy place to mobilize a grassroots non-profit organization. Many organizations don't last. Still, since 2017, the ILP has become something people can depend on.

We have been here for eight challenging and meaningful years. We've gained trust from the community, and respect from the local government and military, and our impactful work continues thanks to your support.

Ravonna Gossett Martin, MD, LL.M, MBA
Founder & Executive Director

THE IDA LEE PROJECT

ABOUT US

The Ida Lee Project (ILP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education, early detection, and treatment of reproductive cancers and other medical care to the women of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of Congo and surrounding communities facing extremely limited access to medical services.

Since 2017, the ILP has led a team of Congolese doctors and staff who are specially trained to care for women facing cancer diagnoses and treatments with a high standard of efficiency and efficacy in a war-torn country with minimal on-the-ground resources and facing limited preventative health care options.

**We are the
leading
nonprofit
working on
behalf of the
Congolese
with cancer.**

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION:

Our mission is to bring holistic, contemporary, dignified medical care and health education to women and girls in Kisangani led by Congolese practitioners.

OUR VISION:

To develop a medical and surgical facility run by Congolese medical doctors and staff; to offering training in all aspects of reproductive cancers; to serve the women and children of the DRC and advance preventative care.

We envision a world where Congolese women and girls can live healthier, more dignified lives.

Free High-Quality Medical Treatment

We provide women and children of Congo experiencing medical difficulties hope by delivering free dignified medical care that is otherwise unavailable.

Education and Prevention for Women and Girls

We provide women of Congo with educational support to prevent, detect, and treat reproductive cancers. We also provide female hygiene products that allow girls to attend school full-time.

Education and Training for Local Medical Professionals

We provide local Congolese medical professionals with the resources to prevent, detect, and treat reproductive cancers. This education and training is rarely available locally.

Intentional Transparency

We strive to be as transparent as possible by intentionally communicating to local and global partners what we do, why, to what end, and with what resources.

WHERE WE WORK

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO

The ILP's work is based in Kisangani, Tshopo Province, DRC and surrounding communities. Currently, our operation is within the General Hospital Lubunga. Kisangani and Lubunga are divided by the Congo River and, as such, our staff commute across the river to Lubunga daily.



The city of Kisangani – where the ILP operates – has often been overlooked: ignored by government and donors, with no major humanitarian aid organizations operating in the area.

While needs are dire and the city is often in a state of near-collapse, Kisangani's remote location presents a benefit in that it is just far enough away from the worst of the current insecurity in eastern DRC that is making it impossible for humanitarian organizations to deliver services.

OUR WORK IS SUSTAINABLE

- We **employ and train Congolese doctors and staff** to sustainably grow the region's healthcare sector and empower local professionals to provide the most contemporary medical care.
- We have developed **long-term relationships with local medical equipment suppliers** with the supply streams we need to fulfill our needs as a local medical clinic.
- We bring inspired, knowledgeable and determined **healthcare leadership to the region** and partner with other medical facilities to meet the needs of women and children suffering from medical issues we cannot address.
- We **collect reproductive health data** with research partners to help inform and address larger-scale health sector needs in the region.
- Our involvement in **cervical and cancer research** in Kisangani can aid in finding more effective treatments and, potentially, a cure for reproductive cancers.
- Our outreach and campaigns providing **education** to women and girls on reproductive health serve to improve current conditions and advance a **new paradigm** for preventative care, early detection, and treatment.

IMPACT TESTIMONIES

MEET FAIDA

During violence in Lubunga in 2023, Faida's husband was tragically murdered, and Faida, 16 years-old and pregnant, was brutally attacked with a machete. The assailant attempted to kill her unborn child by cutting it out of her body, slicing her abdomen from the belly button to the pubic bone, but miraculously did not harm the fetus.

Faida was left with a severe, life-threatening wound that required urgent advanced medical care.

The ILP quickly contacted partners at the Panzi Foundation and Mission Aviation Fellowship, arranging for her to be flown to a Congolese trauma facility. There she received life-saving treatment at no cost and then returned to Kisangani, where she safely delivered a healthy son.

Today, Faida continues to visit the ILP office in Lubunga, proudly showing off her baby and expressing her deep gratitude for saving both her life and that of her child.



Faida and her healthy baby boy visit the ILP offices after surviving a violent, gruesome attack and life-saving treatment in 2023 thanks to the Ida Lee Project.

IMPACT TESTIMONIES

MEET ALIMA

Alima was just 16 years old when Arlette Kipungu, ILP Program Manager, was making rounds at the Makiso General Hospital.

She had been there for eight months with an open incision below her belly button, the result of two botched surgeries that left her with a stercoral fistula which left the incision open, allowing fecal matter and urine to accumulate.

None of the surgeons knew how to repair her condition, and her parents couldn't afford any further medical care.

Arlette listened to Alima's story, examined her, and assured her that the Ida Lee Project would do everything possible to save her life at no cost. With the help of the ILP, Alima's fistula was repaired, and the incision was closed. Alima returned to school and remains profoundly grateful to the ILP for saving her life.



Alima smiles at the ILP offices during a video interview with Arlette Kipungu, ILP Program Manager, discussing her experiences with the ILP and its profound impact on her health and life.

FINANCES IN 2023

EXPENSES SUMMARY

Program Costs	\$75,708.00
Administrative Costs	\$18,000.00

\$93,708.00

TOTAL EXPENSES (USD)

INCOME SUMMARY

\$ 105,957.00

Donations

\$ 105,957.00

TOTAL INCOME (USD)

PROGRAM IMPACT

EDUCATION, EARLY DETECTION, AND TREATMENT OF REPRODUCTIVE CANCERS

Cancer mortality rates in Africa are comparable to or higher than in other parts of the world, necessitating a comprehensive approach to cancer control and management, including, but not limited to, boosting cancer awareness, adopting primary and secondary prevention, mitigating risk factors, improving cancer infrastructure and timely screening and treatment.

2023 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

204

Total patients seen

144

New patients

60

Returning patients

Of the total patients seen:

- 80% received reproductive health screenings
- 2.4% received non-reproductive health screenings
- 12% received reproductive surgeries
- 5.6% received other medical procedures

CAMPAIGN IMPACT

PERIOD POVERTY CAMPAIGN

While 800 million people around the world menstruate each day, as many as 500 million lack menstrual products and hygienic bathroom facilities.

Women without access to menstrual products resort to unhygienic alternatives which can lead to serious health problems and increased risk of infection. Stigmatization and shame about menstruation can lead to social isolation, depression, abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation.

Lack of access to menstrual products also causes women and girls to miss work and education, with 1 in 10 girls across Africa missing school because of their period. Without access to menstrual products, girls can miss a week of school every month.

Through our period poverty initiative, the ILP is actively partnering with the Salongo Institute in Lubunga to provide menstrual products and health education to students, helping girls stay in school and recoup upwards of 3 months of missed classes each year.



Arlette Kipungu, ILP Program Manager, delivers pads to girls at the Salongo Institute in Lubunga. Period poverty is the lack of access to menstrual products, hygiene facilities, waste management and health education.

WE'D LIKE TO THANK ALL OUR PARTNERS & DONORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2023 Board Members: Dr. Ravonna Gossett Martin, MD, LL.M, MBA, Dr. Jean Battig, DVM, Tom Eisele, AIA, LEED AP, CPHD, Dr. Ara J. Baghdasarian, M.D, MBA, MHSA, Dr. Audrey Goelz, M.D, MPH, Chris Lemiux. Report by: Hannah Swenson.

PARTNERS

Columbia University, Panzi, City of Joy, Heal Africa, Enabel, Les Enfants de Panzi et d'ailleurs, University of Antwerp, Uganda Cancer Institute, STU St.Thomas University, Institute of Tropical Medicine (Antwerp), St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



