

Partnership with Bukavu Since 1981

„Learning with people on the ground. Cultural exchange at a grassroots level. People instead of money. Aid that is personal and supports self-help.“ These were the ideas that unpinned the relationships between the churches in the Northern and Southern hemispheres in the 1980s. These ideas are still relevant to today’s partnerships.

For the church district of Herne, a partnership in the Congo was both a challenge and a chance to combine developmental policy and concrete help. Since 1981, that partnership has been fostered with the Baptist Community in Central Africa (CBCA).

The flow of refugees after the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, and the ensuing wars, in addition to the illegal exploitation and exportation of natural resources, have all brought unimaginable suffering to the people of Kivu. So for many years we have been leading this “Partnership in a Difficult Time.”

Over time, a basic trust developed, that endured through the terrible war years from 1996 to 2005. Twice (between 1985 and 1995) parish families from Herne spent several years in Bukavu, to learn about the local life and meet the people who live there. Since 2001 there have been further mutual visits.

A not uncontroversial feature of our partnership: we do almost no “projects.” The Bukavu church district receives a subsidy of 10,000 Euros per year for its work. The church has control over the money like other church districts, including ours. This can include making small loans to women or support for parish families experiencing poverty, as well as scholarships for students. It can also cover the cost of sometimes difficult travel to outlying communities, or a roof for a church. The people of Bukavu know that the money comes from Herne. And in the church communities of Herne and Castrop-Rauxel, the people know that the church district in Bukavu receives the funds. But we want the partner church to use the money without paternalism from Herne. In doing so, we are complying with the rules laid down by the Vereinte Evangelische Mission (United Evangelical Mission) for the use of aid.

Donate to Bukavu:

Kirchenkreis Herne

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