



REPORT FROM 2024UNCSC IN NAIROBI – Congos Børn and VIGALEX

Congos Børn (Denmark) and VIGALEX (R.D. Congo) were holding a workshop titled “Two NGO’s – One Purpose” at the 2024UNCSC, presented by:

Gina Tshiswaka Nzeba Hagebro, Chairperson of Congos Børn and founder of VIGALEX and Kim Henriksen, Secretary of Congos Børn.

Thanks to Congos Børn’s affiliation with the Association for World Education (AWE) and Gina Hagebro’s membership in AWE and AWE-UN, we got a seat at the conference. And thanks to the great guidance from Rex O. Schade, Vice-president of AWE, we were able to apply for holding a workshop.

Nadine Mujinga Ilunga, Chairperson of VIGALEX and Betty Beya Kalombo, Secretary of VIGALEX also got a seat at the conference but caused by a negative answer on our apply for financing the tickets from the Danish Fund, Civilsamfund i Udvikling, (CISU), and the 2024UNCSC special fund, Nadine Ilunga and Betty Kalombo unfortunately did not participate.

The purpose of our participation was to show - for general inspiration - how the overall values inclusive, impactful and innovative came into play in Congos Børn and VIGALEX's concrete collaboration to support street children in Kinshasa. At the same time, we wanted to expand our network in both Denmark and DR Congo – for the benefit of the children.

THE WORKSHOP "TWO NGO’S – ONE PURPOSE"

The common purpose for Congos Børn and VIGALEX is to establish and run an orphanage with school and farming for street children in Kinshasa, R. D. Congo.

Gina Hagebro started the workshop by telling her own story. As a teenager she experienced her family’s social downfall, when her father suddenly died. Later she got the luck to join the “World Class-Project” in 1998 at the Danish Ryslinge Folk High School with Rex O. Schade as project manager. Here she was introduced to the idea of the school’s obligation to integrate and support the local society – for the benefit of the children, the neighbours and the democratic development. In Denmark Gina Hagebro became an experienced pedagogue and family counsellor, and when she after many years visited Kinshasa, she was stocked by the many street children and their terrible life situation. She was reminded of her own childhood experience and made a strong determination to help the street children.

In February 2023 she founded Congos Børn in Denmark and VIGALEX in R.D. Congo and gathered two boards of experiences persons: pedagogues, teachers and young, dedicated people, supported by Rex O. Schade with his many NGO experiences. All are working on a volunteer basis, and all money are gathered among the members or raised by funds.

Within one year Congos Børn and VIGALEX have managed to:

- attain a membership of 142 persons in Denmark and 50 in R.D. Congo
- buy two acres of land in the outskirts of Kinshasa, planned to be the homeplace of Maison VIGALEX
- offering street children in Kinshasa a meal, a talk and caring ones a week from May to December
- January 1, 2024 establish a temporary orphanage in the centre of Kinshasa with 7 children and 3 employees
- invite neighbours, representatives from the local authorities including the local mayor, and local priests to the inauguration of the temporary Maison VIGALEX April 30.



CONGOS BØRN

An important issue for Maison VIGALEX is to be a centre for a social and democratic development in Mitendi, the local area of Kinshasa in which Maison VIGALEX is located.

In the presentation the three values inclusive, impactful and innovative was stressed.

Inclusive: The project is including the most vulnerable of all, the street children. But also, the young unemployed people among the volunteers of VIGALEX in Kinshasa are included.

Impactful: The temporary orphanage has already involved the neighbours by arranging football matches and are now planning to offer free evening school in the French language for the neighbours – to make an impact on the local society. There has started a corporation with the local authorities. Furthermore, the young unemployed people will get a priceless experience as volunteers, for the good of the future.

Innovative: is represented in the construction of two NGO's, one from the global North and one from the global South, with the same purpose. Based on an equal dialogue VIGALEX oversees the practical arrangements while Congos Børn are collecting money and raising funds. And together the two NGO's develop a suitable pedagogic for the school and ideas to make the Maison VIGALEX self-sufficient.

Gina Hagebro and Kim Henriksen gave a PowerPoint presentation of 20 minutes, after which there were 25 minutes of questions and debate.

A theme in the debate was about the trend of not making orphanages, but instead integrating the children into a normal everyday life immediately. So that the children are not abused behind the walls of the orphanage or simply cut off from society so that they will not be able to fend for themselves afterwards. Our contribution to that debate is that Maison VIGALEX is helping street children in the age of 8-15 years. They have often been living at the street for several years and are not able to join a normal family. Therefore, orphanages or families often don't want to help these kids. They first need to be treated and learn structure, which will happen in Maison VIGALEX. Furthermore, the focus of Maison VIGALEX is to contribute to the local community, and the children should have joint activities with the neighboring children. In addition, we attach great importance to cooperate with the authorities.

Another theme was the situation of street children in Kinshasa. Jacques Muhindo works in an NGO, Resilience Fund, which, among other things help street children out of the criminal networks. He said that while governments and well-meaning NGOs have finally begun to talk about the plight of street children, for many years the criminals have regarded street children as a resource. Not only can they exploit the street children for anything, but they can also raise 1st class criminals because they start so early.

After the workshop, there was a queue of people who wanted to talk with the speakers, especially Gina Hagebro, for exchanging business cards, express a desire for cooperation, as well as give good advice and ask questions.

FUTURE PARTNERS AND NETWORKS

Gina Hagebro and Kim Henriksen got in touch with many different NGOs that they will be able to collaborate with in the future. Till example:



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- Foundation for Subjective Experience and Research, (S.E.R)
- Association Foyer de Paix (AFP)
- Resilience Fund
- Life In Abundance (LIA)
- Globalt Fokus
- The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement

LACK OF TRANSLATION

A problem at the conference was that only English was spoken. Considering that it was the first ever civil society conference in Africa, and 70% of the participants were from Africa, it was unfortunate that translation into the three main languages in Africa, for example, was not possible: Swahili, Arabic and French. The problem was pointed out at one of the sessions, which gave a great applause. And there were many in the group of participants from R.D. Congo, which Gina Hagebro and Kim Henriksen became a natural part of, who were sad about it.

The two leaders of VIGALEX, Nadine Ilunga and Betty Kalombo, did not manage to come. But if Congos Børn had succeeded in raising funds to their tickets, they might have felt very left out at the conference, because none of them speak English.

IMPORTANT THAT CONGOS BØRN AND VIGALEX PARTICIPATED

Congos Børn and VIGALEX can benefit a lot from their participation in the UN conference. In Denmark, the network has been expanded, which hopefully can make it easier for us to apply for funds. For example, via Globalt Fokus and the contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' responsible for cooperation with NGOs.

Furthermore, Congos Børn is now involved in an impact collision together with S.E.R, AWE and three other NGO's.

For VIGALEX, it may have an impact on their contact with the authorities that they have participated in a UN conference. This will give them a higher status compared to other orphanages. In addition, there are several NGOs they will be able to collaborate with. For example, LIA and AFP.

Many thanks to all who have been involved in arranging this fantastic conference.
And thanks for giving us the opportunity to hold a workshop.

Copenhagen 28/6 2024

Gina Nzeba Tshiswaka Hagebro
Chairperson of Congos Børn

Kim Henriksen
Secretary of Congos Børn