



# RUN FOR CONGO WOMEN TALKING POINTS

**“One woman can change anything. Many women can change everything.”**

**CHRISTINE KARUMBA, DRC COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL**

## **Run for Congo Women**

raises funds to benefit Women for Women International's programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Women for Women International supports women in war and post-war regions—like our sisters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—with financial assistance, job skills training, rights awareness education, trauma counseling, and small business assistance so they can rebuild their lives.  
[womenforwomen.org](http://womenforwomen.org)

## **OUR STATEMENT**

### **Congolese lives matter.**

The lives of Congolese women are significant. The lives of Congolese children are precious. They have waited far too long. They are worth our effort. We are running to help.

For more information about the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visit [runforcongowomen.org](http://runforcongowomen.org)

- More than 5.4 million people have died in the conflict in the Congo since 1998.
- Half of these deaths are children under the age of five.
- For women in the Congo, brutal gang rape and torture are a daily reality. Rape is used as a weapon of war.
- The mission of Women for Women International is to help women survivors of war move from victim to survivor to active citizen.
- Women for Women International's program in the Congo provides women survivors of war with direct financial assistance, job skills training, rights awareness education, trauma counseling and the opportunity to bond with other women who have endured similar violence and hardship.
- Women for Women International has served over 31,000 women in the Congo. Each woman is matched with a sponsor, who contributes \$30/month and is encouraged to develop a one-on-one relationship with her “sister” through letter writing.
- Run for Congo Women was founded by Lisa Shannon, a supporter of Women for Women International. The initiative has grown from one woman in Portland, Oregon, to a global movement that has raised over \$1,000,000 for Women for Women International's Congo program and sponsored over 1,900 Congolese women... and counting!
- Women for Women International's program in the Congo is working. In a survey conducted in 2008, 86% of program participants reported having improved their economic situation, 88% of women expressed increased self-confidence, and 83% reported having a greater knowledge of their rights. In a survey conducted in 2009, program graduates reported a monthly income of \$33.84 whereas the non-participants groups' income was recorded at \$23.42.

**There is still MUCH work to be done in the Congo. To gain additional knowledge of the situation on the ground, Women for Women International conducted a descriptive research study of women and men living in eastern DRC's North and South Kivu provinces from June-July 2009. Below are some of the findings:**

- Over 70% of participants reported that their villages had been attacked and 36% had lost a family member to conflict-related violence.
- Over 14% of the women reported being raped and 60% reported knowing someone who had been abused sexually.
- Over 70% of the participants surveyed were living in absolute poverty (living on less than \$30 per month). Nearly 41% of survey respondents said that they are afraid to work outside the home.
- Over 60% of the participants had never been tested for disease and over 52% reported being in poor physical health.
- Women want to return home, fear less and start to work and market their wares. Over 55% of the women say that if they could solve one problem, it would be peace and security.



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[runforcongowomen.org](http://runforcongowomen.org)