



# HANDS AT WORK IN AFRICA

## KATEMBE COMMUNITY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO | GOMA REGION

Goma is located in the north east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), bordering Rwanda. Goma is an area characterised by instability where armed groups have consistently launched attacks. Its recent history has been dominated by the Rwandan genocide in 1994, the aftermath of which saw a huge number of people fleeing and settling in the DRC, as well as the environmental destruction caused by an active volcano, Nyiragongo.

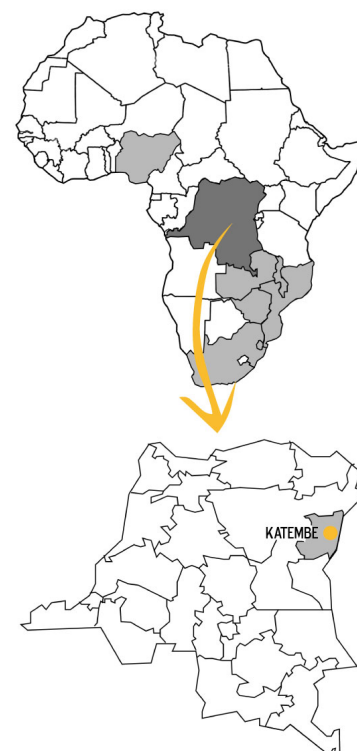
The majority of the people living around the villages of Goma are refugees from other communities who fled the ongoing armed conflict. Food security is a daily battle, made worse by recent droughts and food prices spiking in neighbouring East African countries. Families primarily feed themselves by growing their own food, however, people living as refugees have no access to land, and when they informally plant fields, the harvests are regularly raided by militias in the region. A large portion of the land, normally used for agriculture, cannot be used because of frequent volcanic activity. The gases released from the volcano are filled with unhealthy toxins, resulting in a growing number of illnesses. This is the region where the community of Katembe lies. In addition to these immense challenges, many people in Katembe believe in traditional healing and ancestral worship.

The Hands at Work team in Goma weren't necessarily searching for a new community to expand into, but God led them to the community of Katembe.

Between 2018 and 2019, the Goma team and other leaders were searching for Vumi, a young girl from the Luhonga community who had disappeared. She is one of the children who attends the Care Point there, so they wanted to find her and bring her home. Eventually, they had a lead about where she might be, and it was in a place that people said was unreachable. Taking Oliver, one of the Care Workers from Luhonga, the leaders climbed the steep and dangerous mountains, desperate to find Vumi and ensure she was safe and cared for. The community can't be reached by car, and even by motorbike, it is a dangerous route that winds along the side of the mountain. One wrong turn and you would fall into the valley below.

Reaching the community, the team found Vumi and spent time encouraging her and sharing the word of God. As they were visiting, they could see the immense vulnerability in the area that was in desperate need and unreached by any other infrastructure or support services. Wanting to further understand the vulnerability in this area, the Goma team, as well as Erick (DRC leader) and George (Hands co-founder), visited again, but this time to the other side of the mountain, following the clear prompting of the Holy Spirit. On the other side of the mountain was Katembe. Upon reaching Katembe, they were introduced to the local chief, community and church leaders, who after hearing the vision of Hands at Work were willing to join in this work.

Through subsequent visits, the Goma team facilitated a meeting in a local church with people from the community, where they shared the heart and vision of Hands. From there, Care Workers were mobilised to care for the children. Over the next couple of months, the needs of the children were assessed and in November 2021, the Katembe Community Based Organisation was formed and began serving 30 of the most vulnerable children in their community - a number that has since increased to 100 children.



Children Currently Supported **100**  
Number of Care Workers **11**  
Coordinator Name **Furaha**  
Distance from Local Office **70km**  
Basic Services Started In **2021**