



SOLIDARITE DES FEMMES POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL

SOFEDI asbl

Phone: 243 992542754, E-mail: association.ssd@gmail.com

PRESENTATION OF SOFEDI (SOLIDARITE DES FEMMES POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL

The foundation of SOFEDI

Solidarité des Femmes pour le Développement intégral, or SOFEDI, has existed as an organization since May 2005.

SOFEDI first operated as a community-based organization responding to the problems of women and children in the district of Nyalukemba in the city of Bukavu. SOFEDI was then known under the name SOFENYA (Solidarité des femmes de Nyalukemba). The district of Nyalukemba, bordering the city of Cyangugu in Rwanda, is very impoverished with over 70% living in poverty. It was also known for having the highest HIV cases (over 6%) in the city of Bukavu.

The idea came from the observation of the temporary, and therefore urgent nature of the interventions of international organizations, in the face of, among other things, the health needs of the populations of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who were struggling with the recurrent wars and conflicts of the 1990s, of which women and children were the main victims.

With 15 years of experience within other international organizations such as Doctors Without Borders (DWB), SOFEDI's current coordinator—Viviane Sebahire—shared her convictions and her idea of creating an association to face the challenge that is the brutal breakdowns in interventions and to respond to the many needs of women and other marginalized people in Bukavu and the rest of the DRC.

Over the years, SOFEDI's activities have ranged from small-scale actions like HIV prevention among pregnant women in the Nyalukemba District to interventions addressing structural problems, such as the sexual and reproductive health of girls and young women, the role of women, artisans and communities in artisanal and industrial mining areas, as well as the empowerment of vulnerable groups in South Kivu and North Kivu in DRC.

Organs

SOFEDI has four organs:

- the General Assembly
- the Board of Administrators
- the Control Commission, and
- Coordination

VISION: “a more equitable community in a healthy environment.”

MISSION: “inclusive development through local ownership of sustainable solutions taking into account the context and needs of the community.”

Institutional goals

Global: Contributing to the improvement of the situation of women in society, as well as other people in particular difficult situations.

Specific:

1. Mobilize women in particular difficult situations by raising awareness about the essential roles that women play both in the family and in the community.
2. Promote advocacy and the implementation of the fundamental rights for women and people in particular difficult situations.
3. Help women and other people in particular difficult situations to better organize themselves in order to improve their productive capacity.
4. Contribute to the HIV/AIDS prevention and promote reproductive health among these groups.
5. Encourage and support the initiatives of impoverished women and other people in particular difficult situations.
6. Foster the spirit of solidarity between women and people in particular difficult situations through community actions.
7. Promote educational and training initiatives for women and girls.
8. Set up a support and monitoring framework. for women and people in particularly difficult situations.

Achievements

SOFEDI participated in the development of the advocacy for the inclusion of contraceptives in the provincial budget of South Kivu for the 2017 fiscal year. These contraceptives are distributed in the 34 health zones of the South Kivu province.

SOFEDI participates in the elaboration of the provincial decree and the national law on reproductive health.

SOFEDI participates in the qualification of six mining sites in North and South Kivu and organizes the women’s structures in the mines into Mining Cooperatives.

SOFEDI is leading the advocacy to the local monitoring committee for the co-option of women in the mines.

SOFEDI consolidates the harmony of 209 HIV-positive couples in the city of Bukavu.

SOFEDI provides medical care to 374 people living with HIV in the city of Bukavu.

SOFEDI has contributed to the improvement of 507 community leaders (administrative heads of cells and neighbourhoods as well as leaders of basic ecclesial communities) in Bukavu and Uvira in the defence and orientation of young women in need of sexual and reproductive health care.

SOFEDI has provided microcredit to 3,020 people [people living with HIV-AIDS (PLWHA), women victims of sexual violence, and young mothers] operating a small business on the island of Idjwi and who are organized in mutual solidarity groups.

SOFEDI has opened a sewing workshop for 300 young mothers.

SOFEDI reintegrated 130 former combatants who left the armed forces and groups in the city of Bukavu and the Idjwi territory.

SOFEDI took care of 1,500 tuberculosis patients, their care of minor illnesses and their paraclinical exams

SOFEDI opened an information centre devoted to providing information about HIV and reproductive health from 2007 to 2014.

Established three youth-friendly reproductive health centres for young people.

Established three consultation frameworks for community leaders to put an end to negative norms and attitudes towards girls and young women who are victims of clandestine abortion.

Implementation of youth-friendly settings in three Health Zones (Ibanda, Kadutu and Bagira).

Vote on a budgetary law for the 2019, 2020 and 2021 fiscal years.

Organizational chart (see attached figure)

Scope and areas of intervention

SOFEDI's areas of intervention are the provinces of North and South Kivu in DRC, with the possibility of expansion into the provinces of Tanganyika and Ituri.

Currently, SOFEDI is active in the following fields and sectors:

- **Health:** sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and control as well as Tuberculosis/HIV co-infection.
- **Mining and natural resources:** women in artisanal mineral exploitation, rights of local communities in relation to the industrial exploitation of minerals, qualification

of mining sites in conflict zones and the accountability of mining and forestry companies.

- **Economic empowerment of vulnerable people and groups:** economic empowerment of PLWHA, economic empowerment of women living with disabilities (WLD), economic integration of former members of armed forces and groups.
- **Advocacy:** changing laws and implementing policies on reproductive health and for marginalized groups such as women who are living with disabilities (WLD).

Projects and Programs

Previous:

- HIV/AIDS prevention among pregnant women in the Nyalukemba District.
- Voluntary and Anonymous HIV/AIDS Testing Center in Bukavu, Walubgu and Fizi territory over a period of eight years.
- Consolidation of seroconcordant and serodiscordant PLWHA couples in Bukavu over a three-year period.
- Socio-economic reintegration of former combatants in the city of Bukavu and the Idjwi territory.
- Reduction of community violence in the Panzi District in Bukavu.
- Advocacy for the vote of an edict on reproductive health in South Kivu.
- Advocacy and support for women in the fight against gender-based violence at the Mukungwe mining sites.

In progress and at startup:

- Improvement in the representation of women in artisanal mineral exploitation in North and South Kivu.
- Project to vote for an edict and strengthen Coalition 14—sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) movement—in South Kivu.
- Advocacy and support for women in the fight against gender-based violence at the Nzibira mining sites.
- Improving access to post-abortion care and improving the SRHR movement in Bukavu.
- Fight against sexual violence and prevention of unwanted pregnancies during Covid-19 in Bukavu.
- Project to support the resilience of women living with disabilities during Covid-19 in the commune of Kadutu in Bukavu.

Prospects for the future:

Advocacy for the implementation of the edict on reproductive health and expansion of the SRHR movement in South Kivu.

Networks and Coalitions

- **At the DRC level:** RENAFEM in DRC: Réseau des Femmes dans les Mines (Women in Mining Network), Coalition 14 in South Kivu, Mining Thematic Group (GTTMines).
- **At the regional level:** ARRI in Africa: African Reproductive Rights Initiative and FEMNET (African Women’s Development and Communication Network).

Partnerships

1. **The state partners are:** ministère du plan (the Ministry of Planning), ministère de la Santé (the DRC Ministry of Health), ministère de genre, de la famille et de l’enfant (the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children’s Affairs), and ministère des Mines (the Mining Ministry).
2. **The current technical and financial partners are**
 - Pathfinder
 - AmplifyChange
 - Global Human Rights Fund
 - SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)
 - Alternatives
 - PACT/USAID
 - RISE/USAID
3. **Past technical and financial partners are**
 - Foundation of France
 - American Jewish World Services (AJWS)
 - Miva
 - FAO

Contact:

Address: 2 Pangi Avenue, Municipality of Ibanda, City of Bukavu

Website: www.sofedi.org

Email: association.ssd@gmail.com

Twitter: SofediOng

Facebook: Sofedi Bukavu Ong

Written by Viviane Sebahire,
Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo.
January 11, 2021.

Translated by Marie Simbi,
Ottawa, Canada.
January 25, 2021.