

## Mission Beyond our Borders (MBoB) Country Profile – June 2024

We thought we would do something a little different this month for our MBoB nation profile.

Bishop Mark recently visited the Diocese of Aru, one of Chester's linked dioceses in the global Anglican Communion. The Diocese of Aru is located in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), near the borders of Uganda and South Sudan.

A French-speaking nation, the DRC, was under Belgian rule until it was granted independence in 1960. In the years that followed, the country has been marred by civil wars, political corruption and instability.

The purpose of Mark's visit was to meet with the Archbishop of the Congo, Titre Ande, to affirm our support with the Diocese of Aru and Boga. While there, Mark attended a six-hour ordination service which was conducted in four languages, Swahili, Lingala, French and English. Archbishop Ande jokingly remarked that the service would be, "ten hours long next time."

See the link below to a video of the conversation between Bishop Mark and the Archbishop:

<https://www.chester.anglican.org/news/bishop-mark-visits-drc.php>



### Democratic Republic of Congo:

The population of the country is 105 million. French is the official national language though 217 languages are spoken. It's HDI Ranking (*The Human Development Index* (HDI) is a statistical composite index of life expectancy, education and per capita income indicators.) is 179/189 countries.

The recent history of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) has been one of civil war and corruption. It is rich in natural resources but has suffered from political instability, a lack of infrastructure, centuries of both commercial and colonial exploitation, and little widespread development since independence.



### The Church in Congo:

Christians make up 92% of the population. The Christian Church is an essential entity for rebuilding the DRC. It remains the only viable national social structure to survive and retain some credibility. Its role in rebuilding the nation is crucial. Most hospitals, clinics and schools now operate with Christian initiative. The Catholics admirably invest much into these institutions. Pray for Christian leaders of spiritual maturity and moral integrity to be raised up for ministry both in the Church and in society.

**Christian help ministries** will be essential for the foreseeable future due to the destruction of recent years.

**Health Services.** A large number of major and smaller hospitals are run by networks such as Interchurch Medical Assistance.

**The school system** suffers, with plummeting enrollment, negligible financing, lack of educational resources and a shortage of good teachers. Poverty and lack of opportunity constrain many families from sending their children to school. Thank God for the educational ministries of the Catholic Church and increasingly Protestant churches, without which an entire generation may have gone without education. Around five million children still go without schooling today.

**Leadership training.** Leadership training at every level is a priority that is more important than ever. Pray for Christian leaders of spiritual maturity and moral integrity to be raised up for ministry in the Church and society.

**Lay leadership** was neglected for years. Pray for re-establishment of Theological Education by Extension, a vital model due to Congo's sheer size and poverty. Training courses are often held by churches for lay leaders, many of whom are then sent out as church planters to unchurched villages.

**Bible schools** once abounded, but some were closed due to the conflicts. Pray that all might reopen and acquire the resources, staff and students they need.

**Higher-level institutions**, both seminaries and Christian universities, need prayer. These are strategic for shaping a new generation of well-educated pastors and leaders. Pray too for imaginative and appropriate means to maintain themselves financially.