

# Ten Reasons Be A Bonvolo Supporter



## 1. BEING YOUR BEST YOU

Your best you is generous and wholehearted, with genuine connections to causes close to your heart. Bonvolo offers long-term relationships that help you know, and feel, the real impact of your donation.

Bonvolo serves a community that gets very little attention. It is far inland and at high altitude. Security is poor, and English is rarely spoken. The area is still recovering from the first and Second Congolese Wars, which killed millions in the 1990s and continues in the action of armed militias today. The volcano is active and has further impoverished the already poor quite recently. There is very little employment and no free education available, so many children cannot afford to attend school.

Most donors give to whatever charity is nearby, or to whatever is in the news. Goma, DRC is neither of those, and so your support is all the more precious.

When you support a great charity that matches your values and priorities, you feel satisfied in the knowledge that your actions reflect your values and are making the world a better place.

## 2. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE



We have a wealth of meaningful ways for you to get involved with like-minded people to make the most of the long-term power of human connections.

Our website has a page to make it easy for you to choose the combination of interactions that best suits you.

We have online groups in both Esperanto and English who share our journey, provide encouragement, help with ideas and maybe bring more friends into our circle.

If you are a traveller, we would love to make you welcome as a visitor. We can recommend safe and affordable places to stay. Our supporters also have an annual opportunity to meet each other at the UK- a global convention of Esperanto-speakers that meets every year somewhere different. Esperanto was designed to be easy to learn, so that might be something some supporters would like to do.

You might choose to sponsor one or more students, from little ones just beginning school, to students learning trades or getting degrees. If your student is old enough, you can make direct contact, if you would like that.

Sponsoring a SchoolKit, either just the once or on a regular basis, is a gift to both the makers and the recipients- two for one!

We'll send you a photo of the child you serve by School Sponsorship or SchoolKit so you get to share their happiness from your kind deed.

We would love to help you to be active in your own local community too, by representing Bonvolo to service clubs, schools, fetes, festival or markets. Selling our bright buntings provides income for the project of your choice and can spark curiosity about the work we do, for those whose plight is rarely televised.

Do you have time and internet skills to share? From search engine optimization to on-line shopping for supplies, we have important work that needs doing, and we would be very glad for you to take on a task for us. Flexible hours, work from home, pay no tax on your non-existent pay, but know that your help is making the world a bit better!

Finally, some of our supporters sponsor shelter for families who would otherwise be homeless. Once the lease is established, they may be able to maintain it, but that first step can be impossible without help, so some of us choose to do that, and sleep well knowing that children have a home to go to.

It's fun to belong to a team that is kicking meaningful goals in the world, we hope you'll join us!

Our community needs all kinds of helpers and you may be an important part of it.



### 3. CLEAR AND PUBLIC FINANCIAL RECORDS

When you give to Bonvolo, your donation is always used as described, whether you choose to give for a specific purpose, or to fund our general work.

Our income statements make it easy for you to understand how we gain and spend funds. You can see our income sources and expense categories, such as specific program funding, administration and fundraising.

We save and provide receipts, and share a lot of photographs, to provide extra confirmation that you are achieving exactly what you intended.

We have considered getting our records audited by a third party for extra extra confirmation, but we have not yet found a donor who wants to fund an audit, and we do not keep a pool of unassigned money which could be directed to that purpose.

If an audit would make the difference for you, we are absolutely ready to cooperate, and facilitate the process.



### 4. EFFICIENCY

Some charities waste too much of each donation on administration. We don't.

According to charity experts Seedling Giving, charities usually spend:

10% of their income on administration,  
10-15% of their income on fundraising, and keep  
10% of their income in savings.

Bonvolo's figures in all of those areas are much less, with the result that we achieve a lot with a little, and that our every major expenditure is the exact intention of one of our wonderful donors.

Most of our donations come from Australia and are processed by Rotary Australia World Community service for a transaction fee which has been 2.75%, recently increased to 5.5%, which is still quite competitive for international transfers.

We spend minimal amounts on administration, get maximum value from the expense, demonstrate high levels of transparency, achieve quality outcomes and strive to constantly improve the quality of donor services.

More than 80% of Bonvolo funds go directly to the cause.



## 5. CAREFUL FUNDRAISING

Fundraising has barely been a part of Bonvolo's charity experience. It is not our style to waste donations on glossy brochures or unsolicited phone calls.

One of the two joint CEOs joined the team in 2012 as a volunteer webmaster, and still provides all internet services *pro bono* to Bonvolo.

All of our donors have joined us, and support our shared endeavors, through the international Esperanto network, or through Rotary or personal connections.

Because our increasing commitment to sustainable development will need increased levels of reliable donation income, we are considering collaboration with the crowdfunding platform DonorBox.

This provider is priced lowest in the market with 1.5% of monthly donations plus transaction fees, it is affordable, easy to use, integrates with Mailchimp, PayPal and Stripe for payments in multiple currencies, languages and payment options and comes with a powerful donor management system and good email support.

We will not need to source funding to launch this fundraising strategy and it will not increase donation cost for existing donors.

Fundraising is generally considered to be effective if it delivers twice the investment. Our strategy will certainly beat that.



## 6. LEADERSHIP

The values, integrity and performance of a charity depend on the leaders and their incentives.

In the case of Bonvolo, the leaders are joint CEOs Alphonse Waseka Kamango and Penelope (Penny) Vos.

Alphonse was a founding member in 2004 and has worked consistently to ensure that fundamental human rights to education, medical care and shelter are not denied to the poor population of Goma since that time, carrying the vast majority of the on-site responsibilities.

Alphonse is from a poor family himself and, despite a university education sponsored by an Italian Pastor, is not formally employed. He donates his time and talents to Bonvolo for free. Inspired by Alphonse's strength of character and determination to serve others despite the needs of his own young family, various donors have chosen to take turns paying his modest rent for a year or so at a time. Alphonse's children also qualify for school fee support among other beneficiaries of Bonvolo services.

Penny is an Australian teacher, who has retired early in order to work full time for Bonvolo, also without pay. She was conceived in Africa, in Kenya, and grew up in a family which spoke Swahili to a degree. She later learnt Esperanto and was recruited to build Bonvolo's first website through that network. Penny is a significant donor to Bonvolo, giving at least A\$10 000 per year.

Penny has visited Goma for a few weeks on two occasions and both times conducted a thorough audit of every home and school involved in receiving support from Bonvolo. She has been in almost daily contact with Alphonse and other team-members in Goma for 11 years now. She may not have been highly qualified in Congolese Aid at the beginning but has had years of opportunity to learn on the job!

Few charities have such devoted leadership.

## 7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Bonvolo is the everyday name for the NGO legally registered in the Democratic Republic of Congo as Solidarite Bonne Volonte, often abbreviated to SBV. The same abbreviation nearly works in Esperanto when the name is translated to Solidareca Bonvolo. The English translation is "Solidarity Goodwill" which doesn't match, so we don't use it.

Bonvolo has Members who have appointed a Board of Directors which recruit the Executive Team, including CEOs.

Because Bonvolo has always been a tiny organisation, the number of members has never been much bigger than the legal minimum size of the board. The board consists of two members of the local community, co-CEO Alphonse Waseka Kamango and treasurer Zizina Mwenge Chahi, and one international member, co-CEO Penny Vos. The three other members are Alphonse Idumba, Bernadette Azama Kimono and Etienne Katchelewa. Bernadette works with the sewing team.

The Board is the ultimate decision maker, keeping the charity on task to deliver its long term mission. The Board has, in the past, voted both to expel members whose conduct reflected badly on the organisation and also to accept a charter of Ethical Standards to prevent recurrence of such behaviour. It is displayed on our website.

The executive team is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the charity and includes the two CEOs and various local volunteers, mostly graduates from our sponsorship programs and members of the sewing team.

Our directors take their role seriously, but do not follow the western pattern of regular formal meetings except for the January AGM. They have been working as a team for a decade now and

their participation is more organic, and involves more almost-daily contact than would be common in larger and more westernised agencies.

## 8. NO CORRUPTION



Bonvolo directors, including the CEOs, are unpaid and never use the charity for their own financial benefit.

Bonvolo funds are almost always earmarked for specific purposes, and are be used for that purpose only.

Bonvolo pays no wages, and no director owns anything that could be leased to the organisation, so there is even more than our good character to reassure the donor that Bonvolo’s activities are always firmly above board.

In our low-budget organisation, a director is often the only qualified person available to provide a service. In this case, the director always offers the service on a *pro bono* basis.

## 9. CLEAR STRATEGY



Bonvolo has a clear five-year-plan with goals that are precise, specific and measurable.

1. To establish a co-op to provide an earned-income stream (sufficient to pay rent and school fees at least) for our sewing team by making and distributing 100-200 free school bags per month to Goma’s most needy children. The bags will either contain School-in-a Bag’s mix of school supplies, or a new school uniform, depending on whether the funding comes from the UK Charity “School in a Bag” or our own SchoolKit campaign.
2. To maintain a relationships with “School-in-a-Bag and SewAid for this 5 year period with a tapering dependency on their support.
3. To find new and repeating donors for 1000 SchoolkKits per year beyond the 5 year horizon. Strategies include use of DonorBox crowd funding, better social media engagement and partnerships with Seedling Giving , corporate sponsors and Global Development Group.
4. To realize the cash value of some assetts: 20 computers and an educational server that works independently of the internet, and 850 buntings.
5. To find, use, and properly report on sponsorship for our 86 children and 6 university students and keep them properly equipped until the earned-income solution takes that responsibility from us, in most cases. (After that, to provide a conduit for funds to support other children and students in need).
6. To keep our 6 homeless families in rental accomodation until the longer-term solution takes.
7. To arrange the importation of necessary bag-making supplies from China, and negotiate the transport, duties and charges process, learning how to do it better next time.

8. To find cheaper, better and more complete sources of requirements within Africa if possible.
9. To help the Mama Wimbi Team to find viable local markets for specific designs of bags, uniforms and other sewn products to enable them to become independent of international support.
10. To find and investigate other viable business opportunities to enable other very poor families to start working towards independence.



## 10. EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH EVALUATION

Life in central Africa is full of problems, and we work hard to find the best ways to solve them. We test different solutions and constantly monitor the results. When what we are doing isn't working, we adjust.

For example, it once seemed to us that owning a bus could be a useful income source for Bonvolo. We could buy it for \$5000, the driver would earn more than he previously earned as a chauffeur and we would have income for our school fee program. For various reasons (from which we learned!) it didn't work and we no longer have a bus.

Other programs have worked well. Our training programs have been very effective and have also had a very positive side-effect of providing a sense of community for the refugee single-mothers who make up most of our sewing team. Therefore, we plan to keep providing this kind of service.

Bonvolo is constantly improving and building on our strengths. Evaluation is a core part of our operations and is used to inform future directions.



## CONCLUSION

Bonvolo can help you to get the most from giving, by reflecting your own personal values and ideology. You will know that you are making an efficient and effective choice, and that your money makes a real difference where a difference is most needed.

In summary:

### *Why Choose Bonvolo?*

- ☼ We are your kind of charity.
- ☼ We see you as an important part of our community and offer you attractive opportunities to be involved.
- ☼ We have trustworthy financial records with understandable reporting categories.
- ☼ More than 80% of funds go directly to the cause, often specifically to the specific initiative chosen by the donor.

- ☀ We have dedicated and experienced leaders who are committed to effective service in our field and location.
- ☀ Board members are involved in supervision and conduct themselves according to a publically shared ethical framework.
- ☀ Board and executive work pro bono, any and all benefits are disclosed.
- ☀ We report progress against strategic goals.
- ☀ We can and do describe how our programs work.
- ☀ Evaluation and improvement are embedded in our organisation.

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