

# TAPORI CELEBRATES 20 YEARS IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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## A program to help children make friends also spurs community development

For three days this past summer, 260 children involved in [Tapori](#) in Democratic Republic of Congo took part in a celebration. It was the 20th anniversary of DRC's Tapori branch and the 50th anniversary of the global Tapori movement. Demonstrating their ongoing enthusiasm for Tapori, the children took part in the world-wide STOP-Poverty [puppet campaign](#). Bagunda MUHINDO René, a Tapori coordinator who has been involved in the program since it began in DRC, talks about the significance of Tapori for so many people in that country.

## Video of the event



This story of Tapori begins in 1997 when a young person from Burniba, a suburb of Bagira in the South Kivu province, shared the [Tapori newsletter](#) with some children who didn't have a lot of friends. Immediately enchanted by Tapori's spirit of friendship, they got other children like them to join together in a Tapori group. Together, they started doing all kinds of activities: visiting orphans, attending socio-cultural event, doing radio broadcasts, reading books, doing art and handicraft projects, and discussing development issues. The children worked together in amazing ways. Those who were literate would read books to those who could not read. Those who knew how to write taught those who did not.

Over the years, other Tapori groups have started in the region. Sometimes children and young people came together for major projects such as building a house for a family living in great poverty. All these activities helped knit together to a community bruised by years of war, and restored people's confidence in each other.

By clicking on the video on this site, you are helping to change how society views people living in poverty. Overcoming the stigma of their own poverty, adults, young people, and children have become actively involved in development. Together, they have found that:

For the Tapori 20th anniversary celebration, children from Bukavu, Goma, Uvira and Kavumu organized a three-day program with the theme "Come on! Let's look together for the keys to friendship and peace".



The event included exhibits about what the group has achieved, theatre activities, photographs and portraits, film screenings, and farandole dancing. The Taporis children invited their friends and parents, as well as political representatives and members of local associations.

### Puppets, friendship, and peace

At the celebration event, children wrote about the artwork they had created with Taporis, describing what it meant to them.





The Honourable Kindja Mwendanga Béatrice found this appeal very moving. She said,

After 20 years as part of this Taponi group, I keep asking myself the same question: does the friendship level children really contribute to development? The answer is yes, but on one condition: children should be seen as agents of change, not merely as learners. This requires us to listen to them attentively, seeking to understand the profound meaning of their actions. We need to allow children to develop the full potential of their friendships with others. These friendships lead to a way of living that creates peace and contributes to development. It is a long-term investment.

