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## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

# SUCCESS STORY Water purifiers save lives

**USAID helps communities to reduce impact of cholera outbreaks.**



Photo: Igor Kallumba, PSI/ASF, DRC

Laurette, in the center, decided to fight against the cholera outbreak which appeared in her community. She asked her husband to buy the water purifier PUR®, to treat their drinking water at home and keep a small stock at home to regularly purify water for her family's health.

**During FY2011, thanks to USAID funds, a total of 133,496,590 liters of water were treated by targeted populations. Indeed, water purifiers PUR® and AQUATABS® were distributed through the existing points of sales and the 1,496 additional points created this fiscal year by trained sales teams. Among the 3,276,123 sachets of PUR and 5,036,768 tablets of AQUATABS (procured with other donors' funds such as UNICEF and P&G), approximately 50% were distributed through the USAID project during cholera outbreaks.**

Laurette, a 25 year-old mother, lives in the periphery of Kinshasa, the capital of DRC. With a 5-month pregnancy, she has two children: Lorditte (right on the photo) and Junior (left on the photo) respectively 5 and 3 years old. She lives with her husband 5 km far from the nearest well with only marshes or rainwater (during rainy season) as alternative solutions. This precarious situation has been exacerbated by a cholera outbreak: "The community-based educators (CBEs) told us that the outbreak was severe in our region, and that we absolutely needed to drink safe water to prevent ourselves from deadly diarrhea", said Laurette. She does not have neither current water nor toilets at home, and have to use the one-meter across and three-meter deep hole that their neighbor accepts to share with them to throw away her family's wastes. Otherwise, the nearest marsh serves as toilets.

The USAID-funded "Advanced Social Marketing for Health in DRC" project has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) through its National Program for Diarrhea Diseases Treatment (PNLMD) to implement its "punch and shield" strategy as respectively care and prevention actions to minimize morbidity and mortality associated with cholera outbreaks among exposed populations, and particularly children under five. "The community-based educators visited us at home, and told us to wash our hands every time with soap, to opt for cooked meals, to cover meals, to keep our toilets clean" said Laurette with enthusiasm. Laurette attended one of the 1,634 interpersonal communication (IPC) activities and is among the 308,719 people reached from October 2010 to September 2011 with hygiene, water and sanitation messages promoted by actors trained by Association de Santé Familiale (ASF), in partnership with Population Services International (PSI), in the different targeted provinces of the project (Kinshasa, Katanga, Bas Congo, Sud Kivu, Kasai Occidental and Kasai Oriental).

"As the community-based educators also told us to drink pure and safe water, I always ask my husband to pay some sachets of PUR®, as advised by CBEs, on his way back from work to treat water at home", said Laurette. Suddenly, she stood up and went inside the house. Thirty seconds later, she came back with two sachets of PUR® in her hands: "Look, this is my current stock which is almost out. But I am not afraid because I can have some at the pharmacy, here at the corner". She also stated: "Since I have been using PUR®, I see diarrhea episodes decreasing among my kids".