



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Bikers Make Health Commodities Available in Rural Areas

**USAID helps low-income people living in rural areas access high quality health products**



Photo Justin Bagula, DRC

*Albert Ilunga (in the foreground) and his fellow “mustrongers” are ready to go in the field.*

***Social Marketing is about product availability in all areas where vulnerable people live. Through the USAID-funded AIDSTAR project, a mobile distribution strategy is being implemented first in Kasai, Province Orientale and Katanga with a total of 3,000 mobile sellers; their main objective is to bring condoms to remote villages.***

Albert Ilunga lives in Kasai Oriental Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He is one of the seven hundred and eighty bikers of the province involved in the “mobile sales point” strategy implemented by PSI/ASF under the USAID-funded social marketing project, AIDSTAR. These bikers call themselves *mustrongers*, paying tribute to Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the Moon. How are these people implementing this mobile strategy?

In many parts of DRC, access to rural areas is not always easy both for people and goods because of bad roads. So, bicycles are used. Villagers load their bicycles with agricultural produce such as corn and ride to urban areas where they sell them. With their earnings, they bring back to their villages fast moving consumer goods like sugar, salt, etc. on their bicycles, which can be loaded for up to two hundred kilograms.

The AIDSTAR project selected this distribution channel in order to help people living in remote areas have access to high quality health products, the first step being the distribution of condoms. To accomplish this, *mustrongers* are identified, briefed on HIV prevention and accept to buy condoms to be sold to people in rural areas where they live. These bikers are then provided with a kit for mobile points of sales which consists of a cap, an apron, a bag for bicycle and HIV prevention’s printed materials (posters).

The activity of these bikers helps save lives of vulnerable people living in rural areas. In addition, it gives them some pride since it provides them with some financial benefit. Albert Ilunga says: “Thanks to my presence in the field with many products, I’m happy to help people who need condoms in my village and who could not find them before. Because of this we are respected by the community.”