

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INGA AND THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED IN VARIOUS LEADERSHIP TEAMS

This year INGA general election was an historical one. Beside the record participation in the elections, a first woman was elected as President of INGA and for the very first time, an American-born Congolese ran for an office in INGA structure and was overwhelmingly elected as Local Treasurer of Patterson/Stockton/Modesto region. These milestones trigger us to take little time to share with you a brief history of where and how we started based on those we spoke to who were there at different times.

Well, the history of INGA Association is long one because the idea of bringing Congolese and Friends together in Northern California started in various informal structures since the first major waves of Zairians/Congolese moved to the region in 1970/80s. The following link on INGA web site contains additional information on Congolese migration to Northern California (www.ingaassociation.org/AboutUs.html).

Without taking away any credits or gratitude due to our elders and founders who initially started this noble idea of INGA community, according to the Secretary of State Records, INGA was formally incorporated in California in 1997 by Mr. Baudouin Bulaya during Dr. Omer Pasi's presidency, the first President of INGA in its current organizational structure. Some sources consulted note that Mr. Myango Jules Kapuku wrote the first Bylaws of the Community of Zairians (C.O.Z) that was ultimately used as a model enhanced later by other Congolese groups.

Most people we spoke to concurred that INGA Association took some of its roots from the various groups that existed before. A lot of people contributed in different ways and times to this gracious cause that brings all Congolese together to promote and preserve our cultural values and help raise awareness of the Congo's issues here in Northern California where we now live. Although sometimes INGA misses opportunities to publically acknowledge some friends and members' significant contributions to the community, it is worth mentioning that everyone participation and support to INGA at any times and/or in different ways never gone unnoticed!!

The list below of people who have served INGA in different leadership teams would be incomplete without acknowledging the work of those elders or leaders, and current and past members of this great community who worked and/or continue to work so hard tirelessly behind the scene to make things happen but never had any formal title in the structure of INGA. To avoid forgetting someone, their names are known to ALL and their monumental contributions to this community will always be remembered!! Some of those people have moved out of the state, out of the country, and other no longer live in this life. May their spirits rest in peace!!

To make a long story short, this brief historical background would take 1992 as a starting point in time but the idea of Congolese association existed well before in different forms. In the tradition of celebrating the Independence Day, an informal temporary team was created in Bay-Area to organize 1993 Independency Day fundraising event in Oakland at Manyatta. This

temporary team was led by Doyen Papa Fungula as President, Ms. Jolie K. as Vice-president, Dianna (former American peace corps officer) as Secretary, Pauline Depelchin as Treasurer, Saji Mwanza as Assistant Treasurer, and Delphin Kyubwa as Assistant Secretary/Notes Taker. However, before then, there were always other organizations of Zairians such as COZ led by Jules Kapuku and other folks that organized similar Independence Day events before as well as related events at different venues on the same day, in the same city.

After the successful Oakland-Manyatta fundraising event, Mrs. Depelchin (group's Treasurer) moved out of California upon completing her PhD at UC Berkeley and handed over the remaining \$700 from the event to her assistant, Mr. Saji Mwanza. Since the group was temporary and did not have a formal organization structure, Saji had to keep those funds in his personal bank account until he transferred them to the group that revolutionarily started AZAC (Association des Zairois et Amis en Californie, en english: Association of Zairians and Friends in California) in 1995/1996.

Our special thanks go to Papa Saji because if he had mismanaged the funds left from the Oakland event, we would probably not have what we call INGA Association today. He inspired a lot of people that Congolese could still trust each other. It's also worth noting that Father Tongele was one of the major key players behind the scene in the creation of AZAC. Some people believe he was even more influential than even the group president. People also believe AZAC was created as result of dissatisfaction of the COZ leadership under Jules Kapuku. The new revolutionary group changed the name from AZAC to INGA Association after the country changed its name from Zaire to D.R. Congo in May 1997.

In 1996/97 during the war that started in the Kivu and brought Laurent Desire Kabila to power in Kinshasa, even after the creation of AZAC, COZ continued to exist as a restructured parallel group led by Jules Kapuku as President, Delphin Kyubwa as Secretary, and Makuba was Treasurer. In its new structure, COZ mission was changed and became more political activism than social to protest the invasion of eastern Zaire by L.D. Kabila and his allied forces from Rwanda and Uganda.

While the majority of Congolese in the Northern California supported L.D. Kabila to overthrow Mobutu, COZ had some reservation that he came with the wrong people who would eventually turn Zaire into bloodshed in near future. They were probably right!! However, this small group did not exist for a long time and its leader M. Kapuku decided to join the bigger family of INGA Association in 2002 as Vice-President after losing his presidential bid to M. Manu Kapapa. It was the beginning of what we now enjoy today as our unity that brings all Congolese together in a single community organization as an extended family.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of people who have held key positions in various leadership teams since INGA formal inception in 1997 under its new structure and name:

1. Dr Omer Pasi Gimana, President (1996-1997), and Co-President for the Bay Area region
 - Baudouin Bulaya, Vice-President and Co-President for the Sacramento region

- Pierrot Kashal , General Secretary
- Saji Mwanza, Treasurer

2. Pierrot Kashal, President (1997-2001)

- Makasi ?, Vice-President
- Ife Francis Bongi, General Secretary
- Saji Mwanza, Treasurer
- Mbiye Tshiunza, Public Relations

3. Lumbala wa Lumbala, President (2001-2002)

- Edric Zanga, Vice-President
- Fungula Fumu, General Secretary
- Saji Mwanza, Treasurer
- Lokoko Kitenza, Assistant General Secretary

4. Manu Kapapa, President

First term (2002-2003)

- Jules M. Kapuku, Vice-President
- Lokoko Kitenza, General Secretary
- Saji Mwanza, Treasurer
- Faida Bisimwa, Public relations
- Alice Kitenza, Assistant Public relations

Second term (2003-2005)

- Faida Bisimwa, Vice-président
- Lokoko Kitenza, General Secretary
- Miko Munga, Assistant General Secretary
- Saji Mwanza, Treasurer
- Alice Kitenza, Public Relations
- Hilaire Bonkaw, Assistant Public Relations

5. Delphin Kyubwa, President

First term (2005-2007)

- Vice-President: Ndombele Nkuku
- General Secretary: Thierry Mukaz
- Treasurer: Annie Zombil
- Public Relations: Alain Nshimba, then replaced by Manu Kapapa

- Assistant Public Relations: Valy Webster (Maman Mapassa)
- Assistant General Secretary: Robert Kidianga, then replaced by Calvert Balumbu

Second term (2007-2009)

- General Secretary: Fidele Mutima
- Treasurer: Annie Zombil
- Social Committee Director: Thierry Mukaz
- Women Committee Director: Valy Webster
- Youth Committee Director: Calvert Balumbu
- Children Committee Director: Mimi Mandiangu

6. Mimi Mandiangu, President-elect (2009) – first woman to lead INGA Association

- General Secretary, Fidele Mutima
- Treasurer, Annie Zombil
- Social Committee Director, Jerome Sindano
- Women Committee Director, Valy Webster
- Youth Committee Director, Calvert Balumbu
- Children Committee Director, Felicite MAVUMBU

Serving INGA is always non-paid and voluntary responsibility, but should be taken seriously as a community commitment to honor. We are where we are today by the good will of those who have voluntarily served this community in different roles and times. Together, we are strong in the spirit of unity that exists among us. Our strength is in the unity with the aim of promoting together our cultural values here in our new homeland while raising awareness of the Congolese issues. We are a community of people, an extended family where everyone counts. As such family, we are bound together through times of joy and times of grief.

Our gratitude goes to those who participated in the survey for this effort. Thank you ALL for your continued support to this noble community cause.

By Delphin B. Kyubwa, PMP
 Outgoing President
 November 30, 2009