

## Who Is Dr. Cecile DeSweemer??

Anyone can read a bio about someone and think they know that person, but until one spends time with Dr. DeSweemer, knowing her and what she is about is difficult to imagine.

I was introduced to her in 2005 on my first trip to the DRC. My party of three and our Congolese pastor went into the town of Kananga for introductions to the head of a newly formed NGO known as Butoke. At that time Dr. DeSweemer was just organizing and mentoring a young medical student who would eventually graduate in 2006 and become Executive Director of Butoke. They had a small office in town where she was able to initiate a few programs with the poor. (click to continue)

**In 2006 I returned and actually spent a few days with her in town as well as at her newly built nutrition center in Tshikaji, approximately 45 minutes away over very rough terrain.** At that time Cecile was traveling between the two places most days, sleeping the night where she was needed and sometimes not knowing until the last minute. If a sick child required more care at the center or someone needed to be taken to the nearby hospital, she would readily comply.

Cecile's sincere love and passion for the downtrodden has caused her to give up all worldly desires and possessions, using her own pension and other monies to take care of people, projects, and ensuring that those less fortunate get a fair chance. Though there are quite a few years between us, Cecile ran laps around me regarding all the things she did in a day. There was no such thing as a firm schedule because if someone knocked on the door just before we went out, that took priority. I was to learn that this was a prevalent Congolese attitude. Life and death issues occur regularly and if one doesn't react quickly, a precious life could be lost. Cecile denies no one. She has strong faith in God and prays regularly to have wisdom and guidance from Him. She was able to quote Bible verses which inspired her to become involved in her work at an early age. Unlike so many of us, she does not become inert due to the enormity of the problem or situation. She is challenged by it!!!

She definitely thinks outside the "box" but then I consider her outside the "box." She has become an inspiration to me and my life. I thank God for her and the path He has set before her.

Respectfully submitted,  
Adrienne Scott