

## HER BUSINESS IS GROWING

### THANKS TO THE USAID-FUNDED PIRK II PROJECT, MUKOBO PATIENCE HAS BUILT A BETTER LIFE FOR HER FAMILY BY GROWING AND SELLING VEGETABLES

The agricultural perimeter of Kingabwa is situated in the Malebo pool in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and constitutes an important livelihood and food source for thousands of farming households in the municipality of Limete. This means that it not only improves food security but also provides income opportunities, thus offering an opportunity to fight against child malnutrition and poverty using local resources. This is one of the main objectives for the USAID-funded PIRK II project, which supports nearly 2,000 beneficiary households, mostly lead by women.



Mukobo Patience, 50, has fished for a living for many years. Together with her husband, they used to fish in the Nd'jili or Congo River located close to their makeshift dwelling. Over time, there were fewer fish to catch, and the situation continued to worsen over many years. Patience started thinking about her family's future. She decided to get in touch with farmers to understand how they live and collect information about their profession. She then chose to grow vegetables. First, she bought a small plot of land alongside the river, but she didn't have sufficient knowledge and technology to grow vegetables.

As fate would have it, she heard about PIRK II through outreach activities organized at the site. She decided to join the project. Due to her full participation in planning meetings, she was selected as one of the prime beneficiaries. She was trained in vegetable production and attended the nutrition program before receiving a kit of agriculture materials and a batch of spinach, tomato and cabbage seeds (which are among the six new vegetables introduced by PIRK II). With the newly acquired knowledge and skills, she embarked on producing vegetables, which gives her real income opportunities, made possible by an optimum yield and a year-round production. This has allowed her to abandon her fishing activities. She currently uses her old fishing nets as protective fences against pests and rodents for her vegetables as shown in the picture above. It worth noting that, currently, vegetable consumption is higher in Kingabwa following the culinary demonstration and awareness sessions organized by PIRK II. As an illustration, Mukobo easily sells her harvest of 176kg of spinach and 670kg of cabbage for a total income of \$368 — much more than her earnings from fishing, and these revenues improve her family's living conditions.

Aware of his wife's contribution to the household budget as well as activity benefits, Mukobo's husband is currently in charge of watering the family farm. And Mukobo has begun telling others about her

experience: *"I am actively involved in demonstration sessions organized weekly in school gardens, and I hold feedback sessions with my peers because I also want them to effectively contribute to their household 's income like I do."* For this reason, she became as CNV and works with the community to sensitize, disseminate, and share experiences. She admits that her family has rediscovered joy and smiles thanks to the USAID PIRK II's support.