



Wednesday 24 June 2009

## The Kids' Desk Drive

**An inspiring new student-led project enabled by SchoolAid & Australia for UNHCR, to support children in need in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

**Launch Date:** 30 June 2009  
**Close Date:** 30 September 2009  
**The Target:** 5,000 desks (A\$45.50 each)

*The Kids' Desk Drive* is an initiative of SchoolAid, in association with Australia for UNHCR (The UN's Refugee Agency), to enable Australian kids to help kids in need in the DRC.

Recently, UNHCR has facilitated the return of more than 62,000 refugees from Tanzania to the Uvira and Fizi regions of South Kivu in the DRC. Almost half of the refugees are children in critical need of primary education but schooling facilities in these regions are extremely poor. Schools are in desperate need of rehabilitation and nearly all require desks and other school equipment.

*The Kids' Desk Drive* aims to unite and empower students across Australia to make a difference in the lives of 26,545 Congolese children, while experiencing and learning about the power of giving.

The objective of *The Kids' Desk Drive* is to improve conditions and create an environment suitable for learning. UNHCR is currently rehabilitating schools in the South Kivu region and within the next five months will have rehabilitated all 110 classrooms. At this time, 5,000 desks, called 'table bancs' (combined desk/chair), will urgently be needed to accommodate children in 24 South Kivu schools to help enable the children to learn.

On Tuesday June 30, Mark Schwarzer OAM – current Socceroo goalkeeper and 'Australia for UNHCR' special representative – says he will officially launch the initiative as *The Kids' Desk Drive* ambassador.

"As a father of two young children myself, I am proud and inspired to be part of The Kids' Desk Drive", says Mark.

"This initiative gives Australian school children an opportunity to help provide refugee children in the DRC with an education and hope for a brighter future."

SchoolAid is putting the call out to all schools and students from across the Australian school community to respond to this urgent humanitarian need affecting the children in the DRC. Full project details are now available online at [schoolaid.org.au](http://schoolaid.org.au) – including resources, fundraising ideas and opportunities to create a 'Message in a Desk' for the Congolese school students.

Throughout the appeal we will be updating our website with current fundraising tallies and remaining desk targets. We will also work closely with 'Australia for UNHCR' to provide you with regular updates, pictures and progress reports on the rehabilitation work currently underway.

To be involved and to prepare for the June 30 launch, register your school or class with us at <http://www.schoolaid.org.au/sign-up.php>. Together we can make a substantial difference - as one united school community. If you have previously registered for a SchoolAid appeal, simply login at our website and add '*Kids Desk Drive*' to your existing profile.

Thank you - your generous support really does make a difference.

*The SchoolAid Team*