2026 – 2027 Scholarship Recipient



Chantal Baraka

Civil Engineering · Year 1 of 4
Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, Goma

> *"In our neighborhood people drink rainwater, and water collected off the ground. It makes them sick, and some of them die because there is no medicine."*

#2
OF 30+ APPLICANTS
Ranked second by our review team, out of more than thirty.

Top 10%
NATIONAL EXAM
Congo's university entrance exam, taken by over a million students a year.

2025
STRAIGHT FROM SCHOOL
Finished high school in 2025, already specializing in biochemistry.

Her story

Chantal is from Goma. In her neighborhood there is no reliable water supply, so people collect rainwater or collect water from small puddles on the ground and drink it without treatment. Waterborne diseases are a normal part of life. Although mostly treatable in other countries, waterborne disease deaths in her neighborhood occur because there is no money for the medicine that would cure the illness. Both her parents are out of work. The repeated wars shut down the industry that employed them, and nothing is left over for normal expenses, let alone university. She has a passion for science and has already been specializing in biochemistry. This is a water scientist the DRC needs.

What she will do with the degree

- → Improve water treatment for Goma, the Nyiragongo territory, and the DRC.
- → Work as the link between her community and government authorities, to get a lasting fix rather than a temporary one.
- → Push for water access for the whole population, without distinction.

Her promise

- → Show diligence and excellence throughout her course.
- → Serve her community after her studies by working on its water problems.

PROGRAM
Civil Engineering

UNIVERSITY
Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs, Goma

YEAR
1 of 4 (preparatory year)

STATUS
In class since Oct 26, 2026

GRADUATED
High school, 2025

AGE
20

HOME
Goma, North Kivu

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Clean Water Help and PALPER asbl fund university scholarships for students in North Kivu who will spend their careers on water. Every student is selected on merit and followed through to graduation.

To support the next group of students, contact **impact@cleanwaterhelp.org**

FUNDING
Every student in this program is funded by a combination of Clean Water Help, corporate sponsors, and private donors.

SELECTION
Chosen from more than thirty applicants by our review panel, on exam results, financial need, and a demonstrated commitment to water.

Statement of Purpose and Need

Chantal Baraka · In her own words, June 2026

To the Clean Water Help organization: I take the liberty of sending you this letter to request your support for a study scholarship for the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

Why I want to work on water

I want to work in the water sector to help my community reduce water-related problems and diseases.

What I have seen at home

In our neighborhood, water scarcity is a recurring problem. People use rainwater, or water they collect from the ground, with no protection at all. Waterborne diseases spread from it. People fall ill, and some of them die, because there is no appropriate medicine.

Why I cannot pay

My parents' circumstances do not allow them to cover our academic costs. They are unemployed. The repeated wars have shut down the activities that generated work, and providing for a family is difficult.

What I will do after I graduate

- → Work to improve water treatment for the people of our region, for my family, and for the DRC.
- → Act as an intermediary between the community and government authorities, to find a lasting solution in the water sector.
- → Work to find drinking water for the city of Goma and the Nyiragongo territory, where water shortages are the problem.
- → Solve the problem of water access for the whole population, without distinction.

Who inspires me

Nelson Mandela. He fought against racial segregation in South Africa before becoming the country's first black president.

My dream

My dream is to become a laboratory technician and to be useful to my future society.

Outside my studies

Church, cooking, and helping my family.

My commitment

I commit to diligence and excellence throughout my course, to honor the trust you place in me, and to serve my community after my studies by working on its water problems.

Chantal Baraka

GOMA, NORTH KIVU · DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Every fact here comes from Chantal's own application letter and her written answers to our questions. The English has been shortened and tidied for length, and nothing has been added that she did not say. Chantal reviewed and approved this text before publication.

Why We Are Funding Chantal

A note from Clean Water Help

More than thirty young people applied to this program. Chantal was ranked second, and her interest in biochemistry is aimed at the questions that tell you whether the water is safe and stop the diseases it causes before they lead to death.

Chantal has the mind of a scientist, and we are thrilled at the idea that she can become one of the water scientists who helps validate the effectiveness of water infrastructure, proactively prevent serious illnesses, and translate the science for the government. A Congolese analyst in Goma who can do the science and communicate the results to the government is worth more than any filters that could be delivered.

She already thinks like an investigative scientist

Most applicants describe the outcome: people get sick. Chantal described the chain of events. People in her neighborhood collect and drink untreated rainwater or puddle water, undiagnosed stomach illnesses are rampant, and many people die of it because there is no money for the medicine. That is cause, pathway, and consequence, written by a twenty year old with no training yet. Just imagine where she will be with a university degree.

She wants to work between the community and the state

Asked what she would do after graduating, she said she would act as an intermediary between her community and government authorities to find a long-term solution. Many short-term solutions have been implemented, broken, and discarded in the DRC. A scientist who works with the government to design long-term solutions is just what we need.

Both her parents are out of work

The wars closed down the activity that employed them. There is no shortfall to make up here and no partial contribution to negotiate. Without this scholarship, her hard work and all of her potential would have gone to waste.

> *"My dream is to become a laboratory technician and to be useful to my future society."*
>
> CHANTAL BARAKA, IN HER APPLICATION, JUNE 2026

Byran Fuhrmann

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