



## **AFRICA/DR CONGO - Respect and dignity for women in Kananga: poor, lonely and with dependent families**

Kananga (Agenzia Fides) – In Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo, even if the population does not live the direct consequences of the war looming in the Central African country for decades, it suffers the consequences. In particular, because of legal and cultural discrimination, women are the most vulnerable to poverty, corruption and bad governance. In addition to having to take care of their families they have limited access to education, financial services and the right to property, especially in rural areas. In the area water and electricity are also lacking. To cope with this patriarchal and male-dominated climate, punished and impoverished by a distant war, many of them have set up a sewing business through which they can contribute to the family's precarious finances. We are talking about a laboratory, managed for more than 10 years by the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary who in turn had inherited from another congregation, and for over a quarter of a century supports the most vulnerable women in a city where progress seems to have completely stalled. There are thousands, especially girls, abandoned to their fate, young single mothers, who are illiterate, poor, orphan, with family problems and without economic resources. For economic reasons, the young ones are given in marriage already at the age of 13 or 14, and for economic and social reasons, are then abandoned by their husbands with dependent children.

The Spanish Catholic humanitarian organization Manos Unidas has never ceased to support them and, recently, has helped to improve the laboratories with the purchase of sewing machines. In this way the younger students, rejected by a male-dominated society, will be able, with effort and economic independence, to receive the respect of their communities and families. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 29/07/2013)