

THE WOMEN'S CENTER IS UP!

At last! Despite many challenges, the construction is almost finished! The roof has been completed, the final walls are being bricked in (after removing interior scaffolding needed for the roof)! The septic tank & toilets are next, & replacing the concrete fence is next. Soon windows & doors will be fitted.



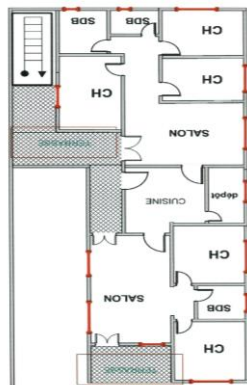
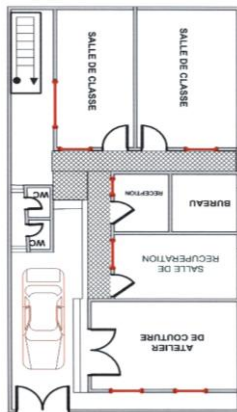
The idealized model of the Centre faces the street, with a narrow courtyard in front & to the side of the ground floor; small 2nd floor balconies are above. Not shown are surrounding houses: a lot of quite cozy neighbors!

Moving in may begin next month. Still needed are many items of equipment: tables, chairs, & chalkboards for teaching; beds, cupboards, kitchen & tableware for residents (battered women, sewing students & orphans); furnishings for office & counseling.



View from a 2nd floor window reveals the one-story houses surrounding the Center.

R: Ground floor: entrance into small courtyard (car park): doors open into the sewing school room; a counseling-teaching space; the reception & office headquarters for FEBA. Two public toilets; two larger classrooms at the back, next to stairs to the upper levels.



L: 2nd floor: primarily residence area, with dormitories, bathrooms, kitchen; "salons" can be used for dining or meeting; several small balconies. 3rd floor (not pictured) will be one large room extending over half of the structure, for large events (e.g. sewing school graduation) or to rent by the hour to women's or church groups.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN SUCCESS!!! THANK YOU, ALL!!!

Tuasakidila wa bungu! Merci beaucoup! What wonderful people you are! **THANK YOU SO MUCH** from all of us:

* from Maman Monique & all her colleagues, students in the sewing school & day schools, victims of rape & violence & floods & hunger & homelessness & AIDS & more;

* from our little non-profit in NJ

all of us say **THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!**

We cannot begin to name everyone, but we want to identify a few big events: three concerts "Chansons pour le Congo!" by **Karrin Allyson**, 2013, 2014, 2015, put us on the map! Thank you so much, Karrin!!! Two concerts "Pour Femmes" organized by Anna de Groot in 2016 filled our final campaign year with song. Thank you so much, **Anna & Friends!** A number of generous donors have swelled our coffers with their matching grant challenges & **YOU** have matched their gifts! Thank you so much, **Kind Friends Everyone!**

Naming Success: Land was bought in 2014, the building is complete in January 2017! Dreams can come true! Thanks to you, Woman Cradle of Abundance now has a home.

Naming Hope: A home needs furnishing (see across the page), & we hope that you may be willing to continue your generosity on this smaller scale, especially as Congo faces such difficult days. Give a chair or table or bed or pillows or plates!

Trials & Thanksgiving in Congo

Congo has been passing through a severe political storm. It is not over yet, but the grave fears of the past several months have been eased & all are thankful.

As noted in our Oct. newsletter, the president of Congo refused to organize elections or step down at the end of his 2nd term. Peaceful protests were met with military violence in Sept., local conflicts (as in Kasai, where Maman Monique & other FEBA leaders were born) have taken more lives, the continuing war in eastern Congo has been aggravated. In Kinshasa most people stayed home much of Dec. but soldiers & police have entered & arrested hundreds, mostly young men. Food is very scarce; tripled prices spell hunger, empty markets, few sales. Yet they pray daily.

The Roman Catholic bishops have labored for weeks to bring the president's party & opposition groups together. Dec. 31 - the last minute! - the accord was signed: Kabila remains in place but may not seek reelection or changes to the constitution, a transitional body headed by Tshisekedi, the opposition leader, will oversee until elections in late 2017. Challenges remain, but the people are hopeful & thankful & returning to normal life!

HOW WE HAVE GROWN!

I. July 2015: framing the two classrooms, doors & windows opening onto the interior court. (They are really level! The two photos were taken at different angles.) There are no exterior windows at ground level except on the street front since adjacent properties come right up to the walls of the Center & safety requires solid cement block walls. Ventilation spaces are set just under the roof line.



II. Early summer 2016: when the rains end, building picks up – work on the rest of the ground floor.



III. Fall 2016: 2nd floor rising; the men are standing in the small balcony over the front entrance. Note barbed wire on top of the neighbor's perimeter wall, & the ventilated cement wall in front of the Center. (This last will be replaced; it is crumbling in places.)

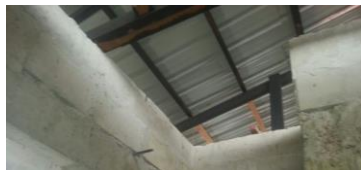
IV. Dec. 2016 almost there! The roof is on! The third level is taking shape.



Steps to 2nd floor



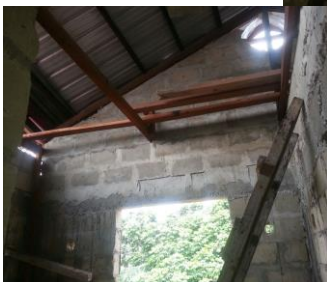
Roofing is specialized work and more expensive labor.



R: Looking through “French-doors/ picture window” from the dining-meeting room onto the small balcony. To the left is the narrow hall for access to the front bedrooms.



L: Trees visible through the front bedroom window show that surrounding buildings are lower & explain why upper levels can have large windows.



CONTRIBUTE OR GET INVOLVED

Contribute: Donate securely via Stripe at www.WomanCradleofAbundance.org/get-involved.

Please designate “Capital Campaign” in the purpose line to contribute to equipping the Women’s Center, or “Sustaining Gift” to support ongoing work.

Checks payable to Woman, Cradle of Abundance can be mailed to the following address:

Woman, Cradle of Abundance
attn: Cheryl Ciaranca, Treasurer
25 Alexander St.
Princeton, NJ 08525

Volunteer: Contact Cheryl Ciaranca, Community Outreach Coordinator, at cciaranca@gmail.com or 215.292.3290 to discuss ways to partner with Woman Cradle of Abundance.