

Elections Were Calm!

The Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced its first peaceful transfer of power since national independence from Belgium in 1960!

Through the turmoil of many delays & mostly small-scale violence, national elections were finally held on Dec. 30, 2018. Tensions were very high, military were everywhere, internet access was cut off for more than a week amid accusations from within & without about serious irregularities. YET...

On Jan. 24, the new President Tshisekedi was inaugurated, speaking of reconciliation & a "Congo for all."

The country is generally calm. Commerce has been virtually dead for months, & people starving. The hope now is for a return to economic stability & the possibility for ordinary people to live, work, make ends meet. Tshisekedi's province of origin is the Kasai, also the birthplace of Maman Monique & several other FEBA leaders. This area has suffered terribly since violence in 2016, so the presidency of one of their own is an encouraging sign that a new day has dawned.

The Sewing School

For several weeks during the election tensions most schools in Kinshasa were closed & people stayed home. As soon as it was feasible, the sewing school opened again, with brave young women coming out despite the continuing anxieties. Now there are 42 young women & soon there will be 50. HURRAH for the new Women's Center classrooms!!!

In celebration (& for practical reasons: 16 machines are simply not enough), new sewing machines are being bought, more chairs & tables are being ordered.

Would you like to provide a machine so that young women can progress through their studies, rather than sitting & waiting for a turn at a machine once or twice a day?

WOMEN'S CENTER NEWS

The courtyard of the Women's Center has a roof! Heavy winds & rains were blowing into the open courtyard & into classrooms. (Climate change has made the old rainy season a monsoon & construction is having to adjust.) So now with a roof the courtyard is a very large, pleasant veranda where more activities can take place.



The roof is at the first floor level. Part is corrugated iron, but at intervals there is clear roofing to admit light. The one disadvantage of the roof is the diminished light in the classrooms; the Center has wiring for lights, but the availability of electricity is very unreliable. Pictured above are the sewing teachers & a few students.



These sewing school students are wearing the aprons they have made with pockets to hold their tape measures, needles, etc. (Scissors are too expensive for each to have her own.) In the back row is an albino student, born with insufficient melanin in the skin. Such people sometimes experience discrimination. But not at FEBA. At FEBA all are welcome!

American Student Transforms Life for a Student in Goma's Community Charity School

Emily Kim, a beautiful young woman who has been a member of Hands Across the Water (HAW) for years, graduated from Plainsboro West Windsor High School North last spring. This year, as she begins college, she has provided a scholarship of \$55 for a student in the Community Charity School (CCS) in Goma. HAW has been the foundation & mainstay of support for the students in eastern Congo. Most children in the CCS are orphans or virtually destitute. Emily Kim's gift will pay for a year's education for a child... hope for a brighter future! Would you like to match Emily's generosity?!

Yet War is Still with Us

Eastern Congo, especially the Kivu where our associates live, has been in a semi-constant state of violence since 1996. The weeks before the elections saw an upsurge of attacks, & again the villages where our friends work were struck. As in Dec. 2014 (see winter/ Jan. 2015 newsletter), there were a series rapes & tortures: 21 women & girls (& several men). All needed hospitalization & some were there for weeks. We sent funds to pay for medical treatment, & all the victims have been able to return home, now walking wounded.



This woman was raped & then stabbed. Here she is being taken to hospital in a make-shift ambulance, the back of a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

Spring Pick-Up Truck: Lunch & Learn with Us!

Come lunch & learn with us! A delicious brunch menu & opportunity to find out a little more about Congo & the amazing people with whom we work there.

WHEN: Sunday, March 24, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

WHERE: Princeton United Methodist Church, corner of Vandeventer & Nassau, Princeton, NJ
Suggested donation \$10.

Reservations are helpful for our preparations, but not required. You can RSVP by calling Susan Lidstone at 609-688-9979, or write an e-mail to coverrock@gmail.com. Drop-ins are also welcome. Bring a friend or two!

Proceeds will help pay for our TRUCK's Arrival! All machinery (& much else) must be imported into Congo. All business shut down for many weeks during the election tensions, but now it is calm. By February 1st the pick-up will be bought in Dubai & shipped by sea freight. However, the import dues are very high, so we are saving our pennies to get our truck out of hock & to the farm.

CONTRIBUTE OR GET INVOLVED

Contribute: Donate securely via Stripe at www.WomanCradleofAbundance.org/donate .

Please designate "Leadership Development" in the purpose line to contribute to equipping the next generation of leaders, or "Farm Needs," 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: John McGlaughlin, 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.