



SANGO MALAMU

GOOD NEWS FROM GBA

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Where We've Been

We begin 2008 with enthusiasm for Congo's future and gratitude for the remarkable individuals who lend hope and energy to our work. We've recently welcomed the first two Giving Back to Africa Scholars, and we are buoyed by their passion for service and commitment to their country.

Malembe Malembe - Little By Little

By Abbey Martin

I could not be more proud to report to you that the Giving Back to Africa Scholars Program is up and running! Since the start of the academic year in October, Malivo Kagaba and Masani Matshi have eagerly joined me in the cause of giving back to Congo. Amidst the turbulence of Kinshasa and the DRC as a whole, there is nothing more refreshing than collaborating with Scholars who are hopeful and dedicated to improving the quality of life for the underserved and under-resourced communities in their home country.

Malivo, Masani, and I meet regularly to discuss both the philosophy and implementation of Giving Back and Servant Leadership. Our discussions have included the distinction between Giving Back and Giving (the former connoting more of a *responsibility*), how to carefully render ourselves meaningful in service so as to honor as opposed to unintentionally harm those we intend to help, and how to develop a relevant partnership with our hosts. The Scholars craft thoughtful essays in response to the works we read and discuss in our sessions, and it is thrilling to see how our discussions often lead to mutual discoveries that beg further questions and re-examination of the ideas we entered with. For their practicum this semester, Malivo and Masani are contributing to the internal workings of the Giving Back to Africa Scholars Program in its new home at the Protestant University of Congo, helping to evaluate our progress and plan for future Scholars.

The Scholars' work is collected and guarded by them in a Portfolio which they will build upon during the subsequent three semesters of Theory and Practicum courses. (One of their Portfolio entries is included on the reverse side of this newsletter.) These Portfolios not only serve as a record of



Masani, Abbey, and Malivo meet for a Saturday morning class at the Protestant University of Congo

their work, but also as a tool to use when designing their own Giving Back projects for Congo's underprivileged communities.

Masani and Malivo are insightful, keen, resourceful, passionate, and have a sense of social justice that would make our heart's heroes proud. They work *hard!* Malivo leaves his home in Massina at 5am so that he can be sure to find minibus-taxi transportation to be at the university by 8am. Malivo volunteers with a Congolese youth organization committed to raising awareness about the local manifestation of the HIV/AIDS crisis. They return to their homes when it is dark, and often there is no electricity. But they persevere, they press on, they *work*, manifesting that unbreakable hope within.

Thank YOU, for the opportunity you have afforded two young men you know only in spirit to live out their dreams. Our world is brighter because of you and because of these Scholars. Malembe malembe, but *surely* we will bear witness to a better world.

New Board Member

We welcome Gene Devane, who joined the GBA Board this fall. Gene has lived in Indiana for more than 40 years, where he has actively participated in several community initiatives and organizations. Professionally, he worked at Cook Incorporated for 27 years; now that he's retired, he enjoys spending time as an avid private pilot and president of the Indiana University Flying Club.

Malivo Kagaba Jeannet

I was born on December 14, 1980, in Nyankunde, a city of the district of Ituri, in Oriental Province in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo. I began my studies in the same city, attending kindergarten, primary, then secondary school, and I finished in 1999. I am an orphan; my father died in 1990 and my mother died in 2006. After my secondary studies, my ambition was to continue studies at the superior level, which was not possible because of repeated wars in the east of the country. With the reunification of the country in 2003, and the opening of traffic from the west to the east, I profited from the confidence of my older brother to come to pursue university studies at the Protestant University of Congo in Kinshasa in 2004.

My continuing desire is to serve the community within the framework of rural development, which justifies my choice of Rural Economics, a choice which began with the economics of development. This vision is also one of the objectives of Giving Back to Africa. I am happy to work in partnership with GBA in order to achieve my dream.



This Month in Congo: Caught between Hope and Despair

By Osita Afoaku

Though war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was formally ended with a major peace agreement in 2003, armed conflict has continued in the east between Tutsi rebel militias and government forces. Hope of ending this lingering war was raised last month, on January 21, 2008, when Joseph Kabila's government reached an agreement with rebel Gen. Nkunda and his supporters to end an insurgency that has forced 400,000 people from their homes in the past year and threatened to undermine the new democratically elected government. Under the terms of the agreement, government and rebels soldiers will withdraw from some of their positions and UN peacekeeping forces will establish a buffer zone between the two groups.

While the Congolese have reasons to celebrate the end of a bloody conflict if the latest peace agreement holds, they still have to contend with the unprecedented humanitarian crisis that is the culmination of three decades of unbridled corruption, authoritarianism and civil war. According to a recent mortality survey by the International Rescue Committee, a US aid organization, more than 5.4 million

Masani Matshi

I was born in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the fifth in a family of seven children. I studied in Kinshasa and obtained a diploma of secondary studies in the humanities at the bilingual school Claude MAFEMA in Kinshasa Ngaliema.

I worked with NGOs in the fight against AIDS, and I am responsible for the NGO "Let us Unite to Combat AIDS," which has several times organized awareness programs, mobilizing and training for young people.

Having the vocation and the ambition to work in the humanitarian field, GBA came to help us firm up our ambitions through our projects, especially:

- To help orphans, whose parents have died from HIV/AIDS and other causes, to pay for their studies, and live under more humane conditions by creating income-producing activities in the area of agriculture and livestock production.
- To create orphanages to promote adoption, because without that framework these orphans may become criminals who kill and pillage on our streets, and because there are many families in DRC, in Africa, and throughout the world that really need a child.

I feel that GBA can help us start up our projects by putting us in contact with institutions relative to this field, and help us at the end of the two-year program with technical and material support for the realization of our projects.

people have died in Congo since the second of two consecutive wars began in 1998 (an earlier war ended in May 1997); nearly half of those who have died are children under five years of age. Five years after what was dubbed 'Africa's world war,' the rate at which people die in Congo remains virtually unchanged.

Besides the war, the mortality crisis in the DRC is due in large part to preventable conditions such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, intestinal worms and malnutrition. Years of war and neglect have left Congo's infrastructure in total ruins, and the difficulty of travel across the vast territory means that seriously ill patients often die in route to a health center. Local clinics are equipped to deal with minor ailments only, thus many villagers stricken by the many lethal tropical diseases are highly likely to die before they can receive treatment.

Despite the structural issues that continue to challenge Congo's development, we have hope in the diplomatic progress of this latest peace agreement and take heart in the personal commitment of those like Malivo and Masani who see beyond their current reality to the promise of true social change. Their commitment rallies our efforts to contribute to educating a new generation prepared to give back to Congo.