

DRC Literacy Training Update

August 2021



Participants attending a training session

A huge amount has happened since our update in May. There has been insecurity, a second wave of COVID and on the 22nd May, Mount Nyiragongo erupted, tragically killing 32 and destroying 1,000 home. The impacts have disrupted all Dioceses involved in the project to varying degrees.

However, through all this the planned **Training of Trainers** (four MU Community Diocesan Coordinators and four Diocesan Development Coordinators) were trained in community mobilisation, participatory learning approaches, functional adult literacy, and improved agriculture techniques. This training has helped new Trainers to discover their local and God-given resources in their communities and discover for themselves that they are no longer poor but rich when utilising these resources.

The participants learnt how they were going to play a key role **in reducing poverty in the most vulnerable households** in their communities through a self-help-based approach to addressing the problems of illiteracy; instead bring about economic and social empowerment through new skills, knowledge, and opportunities.

One such technique is through the '**Longest Line**' exercise (pictured below) where participants compete to create the longest line using the items to hand around them. Here you can see they have used a belt, scarf as well as other materials. It's a fun and important exercise – always creating lots of laughter – to help the participants reflect on the resources they have at hand and how they can be used creatively.

Another way is by using a '**Problem Tree**', a participatory learning tool (picture below). This enables communities to reflect on the root causes of a certain issue

such as illiteracy which then helps them address those issues and develop their own solution tree so they can take local action.

The literacy circle facilitator uses the tree to teach a keyword like **'illiteracy'** for the learners to read and spell. Therefore, each session helps the learners build their knowledge and skills through discussion and sharing with each other what they know to learn together on the different topics and themes.

The eight new Trainers have now returned to their respective dioceses and together have trained **48 volunteer facilitators** who have been selected by their communities. These facilitators will now be leading all the literacy activities in their communities.

The enthusiasm has been palpable from the facilitators as they found the training was full of new discoveries and methodologies they had never heard of or encountered before.

They spent a week in participatory bible studies, discussing these issues with problem trees and gender matrixes, then assessing how seasonal calendars and improved literacy and numeracy can generate new agricultural ideas.



'Longest Line' Exercise to show how available resources can be used creatively to overcome challenges.



Participants practicing writing skills



A 'Problem Tree' being used to illustrate issues and their wider implications on communities and households.

Petronile's happiness learning how to read and write

Case Study

Petronile lived with her grandmother in a village in Kamango Diocese when she grew up. Unfortunately, there wasn't a school nearby, and she didn't have a chance to learn how to read or write. At 23, she is now married and has three sons.

Initially she didn't know how not being able to read or write would impact her life. She soon realised when she got her first mobile telephone. She couldn't make a call because she couldn't read or write any names or numbers. Therefore, she asked her brother to look after it so if she wanted to make a call, he could assist her.

When her local Mothers' Union announced the literacy registration this year she said, *"I can't be left out of this program"* and signed up straight away.

She is now enjoying working hard and feels happiness to be among women and men who are learning with her to know how to write and read. She says, *"thank you to donors and MU to this program in her area."*



Petronile attending a session

Prayers for Carlisle Diocese

Our father, Lord our creator, we thank you for our Christian life.

Within you, with grace through your son.

That is why you have united us through our salvation.

We have been trained to do your work without stigma and discrimination.

You have called us to help people in spiritual and physical needs.

We thank God for your people from Carlisle Diocese who have supported us to implement the literacy and agriculture project.

It will help many marginalised and disadvantaged men and women.

God, we ask you to remember these people from Carlisle,

Don't be far from them oh Lord!

Bless them and protect them, give them wisdom and long life.

We thank you for their fundraising oh Lord.

Bless us too so we can be able to facilitate with a good heart, oh Lord.

Father, with your grace hear our prayer.

Amen.

(Written by Aime Masika, Butembo Diocesan Co-ordinator)

God, we pay homage to you for the unity and communion which you continue to show us with Carlisle diocese.

Bless all members to contributed materially and spiritually so that the four dioceses of Beni, Butembo, Kamango and Kindu are able to implement this literacy project with MU in DRC.

We ask you oh God to open your doors of blessings so that they can testify your greatness and magnificence.

Be with us too so we can do good work through this project, and we will be blessed.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen

(Written by Asha Peruzi, Assistant Provincial Co-ordinator)