

Outreach Partnership Program Updates

MARCH 2022 | DR CONGO

2021 challenged us all with some obstacles that were bigger than any of us could have expected. But rather than halting our progress, you still came through, making our victories even bigger than we could have imagined. We were all fatigued from uncertainty and isolation, from having to adjust to a new normal. And as volunteers and fundraisers, you had to rethink strategies to keep helping us do our work with your support. And you succeeded, as always, more impressively than ever.

So, thank you. Thank you for your perseverance, for advocating for our mission, for sharing our story in new and creative ways. Thank you for being our voice that allowed people everywhere to continue to make a positive difference during these unprecedented times.

We envision a world where communities work together to overcome the challenges of chronic poverty. Your partnership makes this a reality. The victories you have made possible are your victories, too.

We're proud to present you with this partnership update, so you can see a small example of the good that your generosity makes possible in the country you choose to support. And enclosed is your 2021 Giving Report, summarizing the contributions made toward your partnership last year.

We hope you enjoy and find inspiration in this edition of the Partnership Program Updates. If you need more resources to share with your group, please visit our website at outreach-international.org/resources. If you have specific questions or just want to say "Hello!", please contact Marsha Penrose at m.penrose@outreachmail.org



Gradual Progress Leads to Graduation

All good things must come to an end, and in DR Congo, an end meant a new beginning. Four communities graduated from the Participatory Human Development process facilitated by the Outreach Congo team, meaning they're moving forward on their own. After 16 years of guidance and learning from facilitators, they now know how to keep resolving issues and sustaining development in their communities independently, and to teach those around them how to keep the progress going into the future.

There was a graduation ceremony and celebration, with 94 members and additional guests in attendance. Even the Mayor and the media came to share and document this great occasion!

Kelly, an Outreach Congo staff member who is among the newer of the team members, summed up his observations.

"Previously, I had no idea how the graduation ceremony goes. And while we had this opportunity to participate in this double celebration, I quickly understood the importance of this big day."

The "double celebration" he's referring to is the graduation ceremony and the inauguration of four solar water systems in the communities.

Kelly continues, *"It has always been said that everything has a beginning and an end. Thus, I saw great joy among the members of the different*

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communities who were in the spotlight that day, and especially that they achieved so many things within their communities with the support of the facilitators."

"The steps of the dances, the shouts of joy, have sufficiently proved that they have come a long way and they have learned a lot of things to finally get to the stage where they themselves have to continue working without the presence of the facilitator in their communities. Some members representing the groups told me, 'We see and understand where we are going for a sustainable development of our communities.'"

Passing the Baton

Michel, an Outreach Congo facilitator who has worked with these communities since their start in 2005, was concerned at first because they had never before graduated a community to total independence.

But his concerns were eased by witnessing the graduation itself. He noted that the organization of an official ceremony made the members of the communities aware of their responsibility for the continuation of the work. It clearly seems like a long relay race, and the ceremony was a definitive expression that the baton had been passed.

Said Michel, *"(the celebration) prompts me to say that nothing is impossible. It is enough to exchange ideas, share experiences and take common strategies to make possible what seems impossible."*

Thank you so much for making this amazing success possible!



Left:

- Group facilitators with a community member in front of the water tower
- Water tower
- Celebratory filling of buckets