



# Building a strong foundation: Looking back at the last 12 months

Dear Friends of IBM,

Happy Resurrection! We greet you with the hope of our risen Lord Jesus the Christ! Who would have imagined how the last twelve months turned out? The most amazing and yet terrible thing about the last 12 months is the disruption this pandemic has caused worldwide. There is no place it left untouched including our isolated ministry sites in Bukavu and in Kitindi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where many of our students of Complex Scolaire Amani and of Union Academic of Kitindi (UAK) live. Our students, our ministry partners, and their congregations have felt the threat of the illness, school closures, and contracted economy.

On March 8, 2020, our vision trip team left the USA for the DRC excited to survey our ministry sites and to work alongside our ministry partners in the DRC. By the grace of God, we completed our assigned mission and were able to rejoin our families back in the USA. However, on our return to the USA, we were rushed back as cases of the infection and number of deaths skyrocketed. God opened many doors and borders that would have been impossible to cross without His divine intervention.



2020 Vision Team returning home - from left to right: Rev. Kizombo Kalumbula, Sr., Wababili Feza Kalumbula, Jim Anderson, Jerry Montague and Ken Watkins.

## We value you.

Please partner with us as IBM moves the mission forward.  
You can give by mail or online.

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## Here is how the past 12 months have looked for our students and ministry partners:



### March 2020

The DRC confirms its first Covid-19 case, causing the government to close schools, places of worship, and large gatherings of more than 10 people.

### April 2020

Our board of directors in Grand Rapids met, and following our meeting, we reached out to you, our strategic partners for help to assist our most vulnerable families in the areas where our ministries operate in Bukavu and Kitindi, DRC. Through your generosity, we were able to meet the needs of our teachers, pastors, and struggling families in Bukavu and Kitindi.

### May- July 2020



The DRC extends school closures. None of our students have access to a family smartphone, computer and access to the internet making online learning impossible. We can no longer provide the most basic services (class room education, sports ministries, and community Bible Study) that give us an opportunity to share the gospel. This is a lost year academically. However, the Lord allowed us to shift gears. We shifted gears to rebuilding the foundation of physical spaces.

### Mid-August – September:



The maintenance team completed renovations of the latrines at UAK to increase safety and privacy for the students.



A group of people helped to clear and create a new demonstration field for the agriculture program.



### October – November

The DRC begins a phase of reopening schools and churches, bringing our students back to campus. (continued on back)



## Field Director's report

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Wababili and I are doing well. It has been a year since we came back to the USA. We

thank God for His leading and His protection during our stay here in Grand Rapids. We are saddened by the many lost lives due to the

direct and indirect impact of Covid-19. We thank you for praying for us and for our ministry in the DRC. We do appreciate your prayers during the time we were ill with Covid-19 earlier this year. I was taken twice to the emergency room when my oxygen reached a critical level. Friends, thank you very much for your prayers.

We were waiting for another step before we

could plan our trip back home: getting vaccinated. We have received our second vaccine shot and are now making reservations for our trip back to the DRC. May our God be praised for giving us a year during which many of our health issues were addressed. Let us praise Him also for giving us a place to stay through the hospitality of the leadership of Grace Christian University. We praise God for all He has given us.



Students at Complex Scolar Amani use social distancing as they line up to wash their hands before school starts.

Distancing and hand washing proved very difficult as our campus has no direct access to water, making its reopening near impossible forcing to keep students at home longer. Diligent effort by the administration and staff of both schools helped transition students back into the classrooms.

**December 2020 – January 2021** School shut down and all activities due to spike in local COVID-19 cases. Christmas was not celebrated like in years past. However, the hope and birth of Christ was felt among us even as we were scattered.

**February 2021**

The DRC ordered schools to partially open and our students came flooding back. Enrollment at UAK and Amani remains steady as many private schools have closed, unable to withstand the financial losses of the past year. We are grateful to our strategic partners who have been giving to supplement our teachers' pay. Despite the pandemic, we have had an opportunity to restructure our ministry by developing creative ways to do evangelism and discipleship. We also have had an opportunity to revisit our curriculum and lesson plans for both our schools and our community development training programs. Finally, we have rehabilitated much of Complex Scolaire Amani. Thank you to many of you who have generously given to this work.

In many parts of the DRC, school attendance is significantly down as parents struggle to pay school fees and send their children to work so they can help make ends meet. At Amani and UAK, this has not been the case; therefore, giving us an opportunity like never before to impact the young people within our schools and their families with the amazing grace of God.

Thank you! So much has changed in the past year, but your generosity and love have not changed. We have also remained resolute to pursue our mission of training and equipping the people of the DRC to meet their own spiritual, emotional, educational, and physical needs, especially during this time of acute need. Thank you for your friendship and partnership in this work of our Christ. Because of you, we are able to share the love of Christ with the people of the DRC.

**From the Executive Director...**

"I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds." Psalm 77: 11-12.

The year 2020 will always be remembered for how challenging it was to all of us; however, I will remember it also for how we saw the mighty hand of God guiding, leading, and providing for us. In my daily prayer, I look back and see what the Lord has done. This letter gives us an opportunity to share with you the



Pastor Simon (Bethany Church - Bukavu) distributing oil and other essentials to the people of Tchabene.



Mabanze (Director of Evangelism for CEBAI) distributing Christmas gifts for families in Bukavu>

imprint of our partnership in impacting lives in the DRC for eternity. **This July, Lord willing, I will be traveling to the DRC with a team of friends to encourage and to work alongside our partners in Bukavu and Kitindi. Please pray with me to see how the Lord might enlist you to be a part of our 2021 vision trip to the DRC.**

Many blessings!



*Kizombo Kalumbula, Jr.*

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Security gates were installed to protect the students and property. The lower level stairwell steps were rebuilt and the walls were white washed to brighten the stairwell.

**Prayer and Praise**

**We praise God for...**

- Good physical and spiritual health – protection against COVID-19
- An opportunity to spend time with our children and grand children
- The leadership of IBM-Congo for carrying on the work while we are away in America
- New board members of IBM
- Our prayer and financial strategic partners

**We need your prayer in these areas for...**

- A place to stay after April 30th when we evacuate from Grace Christian University and we await our departure plan to be accomplished
- As the renovations continue in Bukavu to protect our worship place from collapsing
- Confirmation of our plan to return to the field in DRC
- Securing our airfares when the time comes to return
- The new ministry plan sat up by the IBM-DRC team for 2021 to be followed through
- Wisdom for the board of IBM-USA
- An open way for us to return to the field in the DRC
- Provision to continue with our mission
- Continual good health
- IBM workers in the DRC