Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
International Central Council

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November 15, 2023

Dear AIMM family,

"I would like to be able to read and write, so that if a family member sends me a letter, I can read it for myself," said Sindani Matango of the Kanzombi neighborhood of Kikwit, in southeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sounds like a reasonable desire, doesn't it? Responding **to the need for literacy among Congolese women** is one of the many ways AIMM is helping people and bearing witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Women in the three Anabaptist-Mennonite denominations in the DRC have had remarkable success with their Evangelism through Literacy initiative. 161 adult literacy teachers are working with approximately 4,000 people, most of whom are women, who are learning to read and write. But in a country where **one in three adult women cannot read**, Sindani's desire to read and write is shared by thousands more who have not yet had the opportunity to become literate.

Sindani learned of the Literacy Project from the project's Kikwit director and went to one of the literacy sessions to find out more. "Our father died when we were small children, so there was no one to pay for our education," Sindani explained. She moved to the Kikwit recently after her mother died and resolved to attend the literacy training to "learn even a little." When she was a child, her uncles, who are the family heads among her people, said they could not afford to pay for formal schooling. Sindani's situation is common among women in the DRC, which is why it is critical that the literacy project is free to participants.

By training adult-literacy teachers and providing some supplies such as primers and blackboards, AIMM is helping Sindani and others like her acquire new skills that add value to their lives and build the capacities of their churches and communities. The Literacy Project is only one example of AIMM's partnership ministries that **focus on improving people's lives while modeling Jesus' way of love and peace through evangelization**. Other AIMM ministries include support for African missionary work in Mali and the DRC, seed funding for a cooperative of small-scale farmers in Angola, and training for local Bible translators in Burkina Faso. With your help, we can invest in the future of Sindani and others like her.

Recounting her first visit to the literacy training center, Sindani said, "Coming here I see that **those who came before me and could neither read nor write are now able to do so**. They can

read letters sent to them, and they can use the telephone well. That's **why I also decided to come and learn**."

With the Literacy Project, one cannot separate the advantage of very practical skills that participants learn and the witness of **an initiative that integrates the biblical story into its curriculum**. That was yet another aspect that Sindani valued. "I've always wanted to read the Bible, but I haven't yet. I would really like to read the Bible," she noted. AIMM's initiatives with African partners seek to be wholistic, **integrating Christian faith into capacity-building training and practice** as much as possible.

We are pleased to be inspired by the way that **the Congo Literacy Project embodies AIMM priorities**. The project was conceived out of needs articulated by women leaders in the three DRC Anabaptist-Mennonite denominations. Although AIMM has provided training for adult literacy teachers, the project itself is directed by the women leaders of the Congolese denominations and the instructors are all local teachers. With collaboration among the three denominations, the Literacy Project models **a unity of spirit as well as of practical collaboration**. With participation across churches in the DRC and AIMM donor assistance to supply materials and training in adult-learning methods, it has become **a ministry of the global church**, with all of us bringing what we can contribute to the table!

Whether through literacy training in the DRC or other collaborative ministries across Africa, **the AIMM family is partnering to bring hope to the same world that Jesus came to save**. Together, **we can be the hands and feet that help God's will be done**.

Can you come alongside our African partners in this important work? It costs **$237 US to train one adult literacy teacher and $177 to equip one literacy center for one year**.

We are grateful for your gracious offerings of prayer and financial resources that allow the AIMM family to invest in people like Sindani in the DRC and across Africa. May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Yours in Christ,

John Fumana and Bruce Yoder

AIMM, Co-Executive Coordinators