



How Shall We Overcome?

(D.R. Congo)

By

Msaada J. Nankumba



Reflection

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I'm glad and grateful to have completed this Biliteracy Seal Project. The whole process took about three months, starting in early February and ending in May. The Biliteracy Seal Project was about writing an essay or creating a project in two languages to depict one's ability to communicate in those particular languages. I opted to write a play in Swahili and English about the violence, corruption, political instability and totalitarian leadership in developing countries in Africa and most specifically in Congo.

It's been long in my heart to write about the situation in DRC because it is my country of origin and I can't forget the trial and persecution that my family went through until we were forced to leave and become refugees in Kenya. There were also some forms of political instability and corruption there too. After we left until even today I have continually heard about the violence and how Congolese are still suffering under bad leadership and the FDLR rebel group from Rwanda. I wrote this play to challenge the violence, bad leadership, and to suggest possible solutions.

My sources of information were relevant videos on YouTube, news programs about DRC, documentaries, and books about the Congo. I also listened to Congolese political music and watched popular movies like Hotel Rwanda about the massacre the FDLR group committed before fleeing to the Congo. I worked hand in hand with my parents and other elders from Congo who have much firsthand experience and knowledge about the country's situation.

The whole process was quite challenging because this was the first time to introduce the Seal of Biliteracy in New York. It seemed difficult to go through some steps because neither the students nor the teachers had done it before. We also didn't have a lot of time to plan, research, and write in both languages which required a lot of time.

I suggest that next time for seniors who are interested, notification of the Biliteracy Seal should be given in June at the end of their junior year. This way students could start doing their research and planning in the summer. I realized

that this should not only be to test our biliteracy ability but also a way of developing and showing our talents and creativity. This would also increase participation in the process.

I also suggest that it would be incredible if they change the name and make it the Seal of Multiliteracy because that would give a student, like me, who can communicate in multiple languages the advantage of those other languages.

The process was fair because it occurred when there is not examinations and gave choice of different things to do as a project or essay. It also was open ended. It was well organized because we made it through despite it was the first time this was offered. This project has been keeping me busy and working all the time. Perhaps, I realized that with such kind of activities, the number of youth in drug abuse and other forms of crime may be reduced as they would be busy writing their projects all the time. It was good exercise and preparation to work and research this extensively. Lastly, this project has also personally given me the opportunity to research and learn more about my country of origin.

Characters in the Play

Daktari-	A doctor at the Masisi Hospital. A patriot and advocate for civil rights. The main character.
Muuguzi-	A nurse at Masisi Hospital.
Baba Amina-	The father of Amina. A resident of Masisi.
Mama Amina-	The mother of Amina. A resident of Masiisi.
Mzazi-	A parent from Masisi.
Mwalimu-	A teacher at the Masisi school. A patriot and advocate for civil rights.
BBC-	BBC News program about the situation in Congo.
Mnenaji-	A speaker and government representative. A leader.
Sauti Mama-	A group of women from Masisi.
Mama Shauri-	A counselor and leader of Sauti Mama from Masisi.

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(Early in the morning in Masisi, Daktari is moving around in his office while murmuring to himself. He hear a voice from outside calling him loudly.)

Muuguzi: Daktari! Daktar-i-i!

Daktari: (Shocked) What's up?

Muuguzi: (Entering the office) I'm done man, totally discouraged. It is very sorrowful.

Daktari: (Angrily) Eeh! Why should you scare me if you have nothing to tell me... haven't I warned you against that?

Muuguzi: I apologize sir, but I don't know what to do. The hospital is full of patients. Just this morning around fifty have arrived. As usual they are violated women and famished children.

Dakatari: Oh! That is horrible, I'm not sure of what to do. I have been struggling to figure out how to deal with the situation in our country and I wonder why we are suffering all this. Violence, corruption, epidemic and all sorts of evils have been increasing in our country Congo. Especially here in the town of Masisi.

Muuguzi: To me, it has reached the time to throw up my hands and just surrender. I can no longer bear watching about ten people dying every day at the hands of the Hutu simply because of the lack of supplies to help them. I'm sorrowful and hurt because of this inhumanity done to us in this nation. Think about how you normally feel whenever you encounter a little girl violated and raped. All this darkness yet nothing is done to change the situation.

Daktari: I got you and I'm feeling the same. My sorrow is that many people are dying while under our care here at the hospital and not even at

the hand of the Hutus who are propagating violence in this country. Although we try to do our best in saving people's lives, the fact that we have run out of medicine is still letting us down. Not long ago I wrote to our local government here in Masisi concerning the hospital running out of drugs, but I hope you know that our own leaders may not listen to us.

Muuguzi: That is the problem we have, it has been two weeks since we ran out of medicine and people have been dying as a result.

Daktari: I delineated all what the people are going through. They first promised money to buy the medicine last week, but they didn't give anything. I called them to ask what happened, but I was told that the money is still in the process of being released out. I don't really understand why that should take all this long.

Muuguzi: Thank you Lord! They are going to help! I now have hope. It is not easy to die when you are hopeful. Even if rape cases are intensifying, we will be able to save the victims because that money will help us to acquire necessary equipment and drugs.

Daktari: (Surprised with Muuguzi's words) Are you new to Masisi? You are not aware of how our leaders are dishonest and corrupted.

Muuguzi: But they promised, why can't we just hold them to their promise. Apart from that, they are also human, they should feel sorry for us. They are the leaders and we are their subjects.

Daktari: We should not be fooled. Don't believe any voice, especially that of leaders in this nation. How many times have they lied to us? For your information, how many schools up to now have been closed because parents no longer can afford to pay school fees while those leaders are merely saying they will pay at least primary school for our children. It has been three years since. Just another lie! Be careful on what you hear from those people. (The door is knocked hard as if somebody want to rush in. A voice of someone crying is heard outside.)

Muuguzi: Come in!

Baba Amina:(He is panting.) Brothers, please, help m-e-e

Muuguzi: What's up? How can we help you please?

Baba Amina:My chi-l-d---

Daktari: What happened to your child, sir?

Baba Amina:She is at risk of passing away, not even breathing well.

Daktari: What exactly happened to her?

Baba Amina:Please doctor don't ask many questions now because she may die while we are still talking, I beg you to come and help her.

Daktari: I understand the situation you are in, but it is very important to tell us what happened to her so that we know how to go about it. Please Muuguzi bring that child in here so that we can check her.

Muuguzi: Alright doctor, (The child is brought in with her mother crying bitterly.)

Daktari: (Having a record book and a pen on the table.) What is the name and the date of birth of your child?

Baba Amina:She is called Amina and she is four years old.

Daktari: Well tell me her problem.

Mama Amina: She has a big trouble. Today she left home along with other children to go playing and while there, she was raped by five Hutu men. It is so insane.

Daktari: What? Ooh! I wonder why these people are doing all that. Anyway don't be so worried we will try our best to save her life. I would request that you leave the room for us to start testing the child. (The door is closed and Daktari start taking Amina's body temperature using a thermometer.)

Muuguzi: Doctor is she still breathing?

Daktari: Sure, it is serious for a kid like this to go through such brutality. She was lucky not to die on the spot. What can we do to treat her?

Although we don't have any medication here, we will still admit her.
(Thinking)

Muuguzi: The country's economy is also deteriorating such that people don't easily get money. How are we going to admit someone when we know they can't afford to pay the cost?

Daktari: Thinking about money in this critical condition is not important, let us save life first then all those other things will be after. What we do to ourselves dies with us but what we do to others is immortal. The way you see this child now, it is hard to tell who she will be in life and how she will benefit our society. Even so, we don't have medication to pay for. Please, go to warm some water and bring equipment for washing her. (Thinking) Add a spoon of table salt. It will help her wounds get better. (Muuguzi leaves to do as instructed. They lie Amina on a bed and started working on her. After two hours she started making some body movements.)

Muuguzi: Let me call her parents in. (The parents come in.)

Daktari: Don't be worried, your child will be alright. She just started making some body movement. One of you can now go to take care of your home while the other stays here with Amina as we continue treating her. She will be alright, have hopes.

Scene Two

(It is evening, Mwalimu is taking a walk around the village. He meets with Mzazi and they walked together.)

Mazazi: I'm glad to see you, what is the news?

Mwalimu: I'm glad to see you too. All sad news.

Mzazi: What else happened?

Mwalimu: Hmm, Where have you been hiding that you do not know what is going on in Masisi. You are not aware of what is happening in this town?

Mzazi: I'm aware but there have been a lot of incidents that it is even hard to differentiate. Tell me please.

Mwalimu: Violence has escalated in this country. The Hutu (FDLR) rebels have disrupted peace and harmony everywhere in our country. Yesterday I was shocked about my kindergarten student who was raped by five Hutu men...

Mzazi: What a misfortune! Oh my God! Did the child die? What kind of human are they who can violate a child in such a way.

Mwalimu: This is a calamity to all residents of Masisi. We are still not sure of what to do. That child was lucky to survive and I heard she could now speak.

Mzazi: Well, that is great because she is getting well. God bless the doctors who are sacrificing a lot to save the victims.

Mwalimu: Yeah, all medical staff are doing their best, but I heard that the hospital ran out of drugs and the government has not budgeted for anything pertaining to health care. I don't know where we are heading as a nation with all these violent acts and corruption all over. Workers are not well paid. Moreover, now a days we are only paid half of our salary at a time.

Mzazi: How blind is our government to realize that we are facing many social, economic, and political crises as a nation. But it has not been long since Congo borrowed \$5 million from Europe. How was that money spent if workers are getting half of their salaries?

Mwalimu: Hmm, some of our leaders are just robbers. By the way, many of our problems today are as a result of bad leadership. That money was put in their pockets and they started claiming to have budgeted it. If the money was spent, could our roads be in such a mess or schools lack supplies? We are led through corruption. Brother, the big problem is we are putting a debt burden on our coming generation. How will our nation ever develop if our children will be working to pay debts?

Mzazi: Realize that many of our leaders get their positions through manipulations to the system instead of free elections in a real sense. I think you can still remember that the election process was reported to have been very corrupted. They have money. Money is power in this country. By the way, I think they might have borrowed the \$5 million because the election time is coming very soon. To mean that the coming election may also be corrupted so they can maintain themselves in power. This time round we need to be careful so that their plans don't succeed. Mwalimu, you are among the educated men in this community, we look to you guys to stand and fight for our rights as well as getting our country out of this trouble.

Mwalimu: It is my hope too that our country will have a great transformation if we get rid of those bad leaders. Since independence, we have had a problem with leadership. Now is the time to rise up. That is what we should be thinking about, I'm looking for a brave partner to start claiming our rights. I have heard many good testimonies about Daktari and how committed he is to our community. I need to meet him to talk about this matter. I think he will like to hear that because even the doctors' salaries have been reduced and sometime paid late.

Mzazi: Just be determined, we are behind to support you in everything until we fulfil our purpose. (They bid farewell to each other.)

Scene Three

(It is evening, Daktari is sitting in his living room watching BBC News)

BBC News: "Well, dear listeners wherever you are, welcome to today's evening news session. It is 4:30 PM according to Eastern Time. I am your journalist Ben Bella.

Breaking news; the Commander of Democratic Republic of Congo's army, General Didie Etumba, has officially declared the starting of the battle against the rebel group in Eastern Congo, the Hutus (FDLR) originally from Rwanda. However UN Peace Keeping Force, MONUSCO, said that they have not yet approved starting the battle. General Didie Etumba's decision resulted from the unsuccessful peace discussion that went over between the Hutus' leaders, Congo's leaders and the United Nations. The United Nations continues to be Congo army's great partner in the battle against all rebel groups in that region. From the discussion the Hutus were required to hand over their weapons to the authority, stop the violence, and be peacefully repatriated to their country Rwanda. Out of the thousands of Hutus in Congo Forests, only 280 showed up while the others needed assurance of their safety through negotiation, something the Rwanda government has refused to do. Remember dear listeners that this rebel group of Hutu escaped their country Rwanda to Congo forests in the year 1994. This happened after perpetrating a massacre against the Tutsi tribe, where about one million people lost their lives. Thousands were maimed and orphaned. There are different views of dealing with this rebel group. First between Congolese and their government and between the Congo's army and the UN Peace Keeping Force.

Congolese people are saying that they can't wait to attack the rebel group directly because of rapes and other forms of violence they have been committing in that region for approximately twenty years since they fled their country. General Didie Etumba's decision of declaring the battle against the Hutus is based on Congolese people's views which is not yet in agreement with their government and the UN. Many Congolese are saying that their government should stop the peaceful approach to this rebel group, something they have been unsuccessfully doing for years. They need their government to change its strategy. Many Congolese people though suspect their president to be of Rwandan origin and that he had been using corruption to stay in power. Despite these differences, the

Congolese people have decided, especially those who are adversely affected in the eastern part of the country. The two towns impacted most are Goma and Masisi where about twenty women are violated every day. Alright dear listeners, this is the end of today's evening BBC News session. Remember it was brought to you by your journalist, Ben Bella. See you next time."

(Someone knocks on the door, Daktari rose from his couch to open the door where he found his long time friend Mwalimu)

Daktari: (smiling happily) ooh ooh! You are highly welcome to my house dear friend.

Mwalimu: Thanks friend. It has been a really long time since we have seen each other from our days at school.

Daktari: That is true and the reason why I'm so glad to see you. How are you and your family?

Mwalimu: We are fine only because we are still having the breath of life. You know how life is here in Masisi. What about you?

Daktari: Well, I'm also fine as you said because of possessing the breath of life. For sure violence here has gone beyond the limit. I have just been watching the BBC News about this crisis we have today.

Mwalimu (Looking at him) I'm happy you also watched the news session. Before I could come here, I was in the restaurant watching it too. It is disgusting. I have come to discuss with you how we can fight for our rights. We can no longer wait, we've suffered a lot. Our children, wives, and properties have been destroyed. We must.....

Daktari: Thanks, Brother, you have hit the nail on the head. I had the same idea. What happened recently to the child Amina was awake up call to me. In addition to that, as we are speaking here our hospital has run out of drugs and patients are continually dying. I did a research from which I found that about 80% of those raped have contracted

HIV/AIDS virus. With this kind of poor health facilities, in the few coming years we are certainly going to lose many people.

Mwalimu: I appreciate your efforts, we will try then to present our problems to our leaders. We can call upon them next week.

Daktari: Good idea, but they can't come to us. We should go to them. Although I am much occupied with my hospital duties, I will create time because it is so important.

Mwalimu: Thanks, all the best brother. Good Bye.

Daktari: See you!

Scene Four

(At the hospital of Masisi, Daktari looks so confused. He is moving around in his office while murmuring to himself. He found a note on his table and started reading it.)

Daktari: (Shocked) Oh no! It can't be possible. What should I do? (He picked up his phone and dialed Mwalimu's number. Hello!

Mwalimu: Yes Hello! How is everything?

Daktari: Nothing good at all. Everything is messed up....

Mwalimu: Please tell me so that we can assist each other....

Daktari: I am very confused because of a letter I got this morning, notifying me that all hospital workers have resigned. I'm left alone in charge of these hundreds of patients. What am I going to do???

Mwalimu: Oh my gosh! Why did they make such a decision?

Daktari: Last week all the hospital cleaners resigned because they had not been paid any salary for three months. What made all the other workers resign is that the water has been disconnected as a result of bills not being paid. Do you follow me....

Mwalimu: Yes, please continue.

Daktari: Since then the hospital sanitation has been deteriorating. It has been a big burden to take care of patients as well as looking for water. With no medication and water, I can't predict how many people will be lost because of that.

Mwalimu: (Listened keenly but much troubled.)

Daktari: I guess nurses decided to leave because of the many deaths they have been witnessing. They have the skills and knowledge to cure people but no medicine or equipment. Other factors that resulted to that tough decision is that the hospital has run out of food. On top of this the electricity has been disconnected because the bill was not paid. The whole hospital is at stake. It is smelling bad even in my own office. The smell is unbearable. I can't imagine what I should do with this kind of situation.

Mwalimu: I can't bear to see all that burden left on your shoulders alone. Let me come there at once. I can't let you down. I'm ready to abandon my teaching profession at this moment to help our people at the hospital because as teachers we are not even able to teach due to the fact schools don't have supplies. Many kids also are not showing up at school because of hunger and problems in their families.

Daktari: Thank you very much for volunteering to help me. I'm encouraged. Come and we will know how to deal with this problem.

Mwalimu: I have conceived an idea. Let me call my three boys and give them loud speakers to announce for people to help us too!

Daktari: Excellent! Mwalimu that's the reason unity is strength and why I love you. Your thoughts are always advanced. I would like you also to go along with them because you will easily convince people to volunteer. It doesn't mean that everyone should come here. Those who may not have time to come here, can still donate food, water, firewood or money. Some may not even have enough for themselves. I would also like to accompany you, but I can't leave the hospital alone.

Mwalimu: Great! I should take care of that right now. Hopefully people will be coming there in a while.

Daktari: I had informed some of my friends overseas about all these problems we are going through. I just got an email informing that we will receive donated medication that should carry us for some months. God bless these dear friends for their kindness.

Mwalimu: Wow! God bless them. That should give us strength to go on despite of all the evils surrounding us. As humanity our destination is the same. That is why those dear friends are offering help. I hope more good things are still coming.

Daktari: Moreover, we have received a donation of a truck of corn and beans. We will be having food again as of tomorrow. Even though we still need to do a lot, these aids should help us along the way. Keep me posted about the campaign.

Mwalimu: Well, we'll talk soon. (He leaves the phone and went to talk to his children about the campaign. They exit to announce around the town.)

Mwalimu's Announcement:

"Hello! Hello! To all patriots and residents of Masisi. To men, women, ladies and gentlemen who are listening. I'm Mwalimu in association with Daktari and all other stakeholders. As you know we have had a lot happen in our country. We don't have a remedy to all these problems. It is like we have gone from the frying pan into the fire. All hospital workers have resigned because of exploiting them in terms of their salaries. Think of how difficult it is for us as a community. If the hospital is closed, then we will be finished. What about our brethren who are currently admitted there? The point is that we are requesting people to volunteer at our hospital without expecting salaries. If we think of salary we will be deceiving our own selves because the government won't pay us. It is the time to speak the truth. A time when every citizen should arise and shine. How do we shine? It is through your voluntary services ladies and gentlemen.

Let's go to the hospital and massively support our fellow citizens who are dying. For those who can make it to the hospital now, your contribution will be highly appreciated. It doesn't matter what you have, it could be food, water, money or anything you wish to give. We have youths ready in the town to gather your contribution. It is good to help ourselves with what we have with us now. Little by little we will fill the measure. Don't worry about tomorrow, it will worry for itself. I can assure you that we will change the situation only if we unite. Together we will shine against our corrupted leadership. For how long should we be down? We need to grow wings and start flying. I can see good signs showing that you are listening to the message. Thanks a lot. We are all one. Unity is strength.

Daktari: (Calling Mwalimu) Hello! Congratulations for the great job. With me so far so good. There are fifty people ready to work. I highly appreciate what you've done. We have also received a lot of food, water and some financial support.

Mwalimu: You don't have to thank me, as a patriot I'm responsible. Perhaps, we should appreciate these who volunteered. My boys are still announcing and collecting contributions. I'm coming to help you.

Daktari: Alright.

Scene Five

(It is Monday morning, Daktari and Mwalimu are at the office of Masisi local government waiting for the government representative to discuss the violence and crisis in the country)

Daktari: Today we will make sure they listen to us and help us.

Mwalimu: With all that has been happening, if we express ourselves well they may listen.

Daktari: Let's wait and see how it will go, but a dying ear doesn't accept treatment. They should be here in a while. It is time.

(The government representative arrived and sat by their side. They are escorted by four police officers; two at the door and two where they sat.)

Mnenaji: Well we are all here. We are starting by asking the police officer to lead us in singing the national anthem. (They all stand as they sing and sit as they finish.) You are all welcome to this meeting and feel free to express your ideas. I'm the speaker of the day and I'm with other people from the government. I want you to take this opportunity to present yourselves.

Daktari: Thank you very much. I'm Daktari and my friend here is Mwalimu. We work together to help other citizens suffering. Thank you again for coming. I wish that this meeting will help us reach a solution to our problems.

Mnenaji: We are here today following your request. You are going to tell us your complaints and we will tell you our opinion. Welcome.

Daktari: The difficulties and suffering we are going to tell you is something you should have been aware of as responsible leaders. You are the fathers and we are the children. You should be able to solve our problems. You failed to do your part that is the reason we are here. I am a doctor and he is a teacher. We are not affiliated with leadership but seeing how our brothers and sisters are suffering out there, we couldn't prevent ourselves from becoming involved. Before I discuss this further I want you to know that we blame the government for failing to do its part. This is the time when people need inspiration and motivation to move on, but you have not even showed up. Even one of you didn't show up until we called upon you.

Mnenaji: Wait one minute man. What do you expect us to do? Come and watch your homes that you may see we are responsible. You must

be thankful, that is the mistake of people. Always complaining and failing to realize the good done for them. If we were not concerned, we would not have come. Stop that story and tell us your problem.

Daktari: That is among our problems even if you don't think so. Remember that I'm representing people. Because of that, I'm going to tell you their opinion even if you are offended. Among the issues we have, is rape perpetrated by the Hutus (FDLR) rebels. Everyone is aware of this and we need to solve it. People are suffering. There has not been a single day without rape cases. We are tired of these inhumanity done to our people. These are the same people killing and robbing us. Many people are starving today not that they didn't own anything, but all their property was taken away.

Mnenaji: We are sorry for all that have been affected. We will try to find a solution to that.

Mwalimu: It sounds good but when are you going to solve this. Because for years now, things have been the same and people are continually dying.

Mnenaji: You should understand that we are not just sitting down. Rather we are working to bring solutions. It is not easy. How do you suggest we solve this?

Mwalimu: The solution is that you should protect us from the Hutu (FDLR) rebel groups. The purpose of any government is to protect the people. Although it is not easy, a true leader is the one who is ready to die for his subjects. If the FDLR can't go back to their country, why can't they surrender their weapons to the authorities and we all live together in harmony? They claim that they can't be safe in Rwanda. If that is the case, they should respect our safety too. The government needs to give this a scrutiny. All we need is to enjoy peace and be able to keep our properties to pass on to our posterity. 80% of the public opinion is that this cannot exist as long as the FDLR are still in Congo forests. What they did in their country, they have continued here. Violence is in their blood.

Mnenaji: We have heard all that. We will work to solve it. Everyone has their own problems including ourselves. Do you have any other complaint other than that?

Daktari: We still have many. Sadly about 85% of those raped have HIV/AIDS. Our country is also afflicted with epidemics. As we are talking right now, we have hundreds of patients despite the fact that we currently have no medication. People are dying not because we don't have qualified medical staff, but because we have no drugs. A few months ago, the government promised to take care of that but failed. Last week we almost closed the hospital because we ran out of food and water. The electricity was disconnected. So far we have got some aids and donations from friends that are keeping us opened. We beseech you to budget for medication and pay all the workers who left because of their salaries not being paid. It is sorrowful to note that many young people can't go to school. We have many schools but parents can't afford the fees. We need the government to support the education of our children. They are the pillar of our society, the future of Congo. Our country's economy is declining. Yet you are decreasing our salaries and increasing yours. The cost of living is expensive. It will be helpful if you create employment opportunities for unemployed people. Our country is very rich with natural resources but the beneficiaries are only those in power. Let's talk the truth. I have five children and all have dropped out of school. Yet yours are in school and well fed. Long ago we all benefitted from mining minerals. Now you have restricted people and brought foreign companies in. They are taking all the wealth of our country away without giving back enough to the community. We want you to give us back the freedom of mining for ourselves the diamonds, silver, coltan, gold and many other minerals in abundance in this country. The Democratic Republic of Congo, God bless us with many wonderful gifts of nature which can benefit all of us and rank our country among the world's richest countries but only if we use them wisely and stop corruption. I would like to end by saying that the government should not be using power and intimidation to

prevent us from expressing our opinions or demonstrating. This year many cases have been reported. The president is sending troops to abuse and kill people demonstrating for their rights. Remember that our country by name is called Democratic Republic of Congo. Democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Mnenaji: (Looking at his note) We've heard your complaints and know that we are not quiet. We are helping, but you are not seeing. If we were not doing anything, you could all have been finished. We have an in depth plan for employment for all and better salaries. All children will receive education, only you must be patient. Medication will be taken care of as well. The money that we have for that, his excellence the president borrowed it to take his mother for treatment overseas and bought her a home there since she could not come back because of her deteriorating health. That is the emergency which caused us not to donate anything in that case. I think the money still was used for medication for his excellence's mother. The question of safety is still a big challenge to us but let's work together. We are the ones who decide that all mining should be done by foreign companies, you must respect your leaders' decision and we should also respect you too. Very soon everyone will be alright but you should be thankful for our efforts and determination. What is happening here, does not happen everywhere else. The programs we are planning for you are not found in any country apart from a few developed one. When you go back to meet with the people tell them of all our efforts and commitment to them. Represent us as exemplary leaders.

Daktari: Sir, you always have empty promises, but your promises are never fulfilled. Now the people are no longer deceived by your assurances. This is the time to act, action speaks louder than words. What you have just told us, may take a lifetime to fulfill. Even my grandchild may not see these changes realized. (The meeting ends; Daktari and Mwalimu are not happy but the government representatives exits laughing mischievously and talking)

SCENE SIX

(Daktari, Mwalimu, Mama Shauri, and Sauti Mama meet to talk and encourage each other.)

Daktari: How are you our mothers and sisters?

Sauti Mama: We are fine our dear brother!

Daktari: I'm glad to have so many women from here in Masisi together and to meet my team working for the rights and safety of each one of us. (They all clap and cheer.)

Daktari: We all know how our country is doing: violence, robbery, corruption, famine, and epidemics. We have tried much to fix the condition, but we have not achieved our goal. We have discussed with our leaders who could not agree with us in many things because of their corruption and selfishness. Despite that we should know that everything lies in our hands. We are the one who can bring a change. That is why we are here to discuss plans to get us through these crises. We want to hear what women are doing to help themselves and our whole society. Mama Shauri guide us through that please.

Mama Shauri: (They applause and clap as she stood up.) I'm very glad to be here with you brothers and sisters. According to the way we live today, if political instabilities and rape end, we the women of Congo shall rise and shine. We will reclaim our roles in the society and build our country like other women in other parts of the world.

Daktari: Good vision. We would like to hear how you are trying to save yourselves from the bad situation we have today.

Mama Shauri: We started by creating a women's union which I lead. We offer to work together as there is strength in unity. We do tedious and risky works to help each other. We go to the field in groups which has helped to reduce the fear and number of rape cases.

Mwalimu: I would like to know how you feel about violence subjected to women.

Mama Shauri: Obviously it's bad. We feel oppressed, despised and abused. It is shameful, for your information, many women are raped and fail to disclose. Some fear that their marriage may be ruined. What we do as a union is to motivate and encourage each other despite what we are going through. Today our country Congo is the most dangerous place in the world to be a woman.

Daktari: Here in *Masisi* how do you get all women together?

Mama Shauri: Our union is very solid and so far not only centered here. The same idea has spread in different parts of Congo. I'm sure that when the whole country will attain that unity, a change will be inevitable. We have representatives of the women's union in the forests. If there is anything wrong, they will inform us and we intervene. Not long ago our sister, Masumbuko, was raped by four soldiers while she was six months pregnant. The condition was very serious and she would have died if not for the help of the representatives and women counselors in the forest. Those counselors brought her to the hospital. Even though she lost her baby and contracted HIV/AIDS, she is still alive.

Mwalimu: What are you able to do for our children when you are so occupied with these activities? It is a question we should all look into because our children are our future leaders.

Mama Shauri: That is fundamental to our objective. We are trying. In our country the majority of the children are orphaned because parents are either killed or permanently disabled. As a result, our union has built an orphanage to take these children and violated women who are afraid to live alone. The produce we get from the field feeds them. Even though we are doing our best, the biggest challenge we have is providing education. We look forward to the government taking that responsibility. Our main objective is to preserve their lives of our children. We can't afford to send them to school.

Daktari: Without education for children it may be impossible to achieve our goals and establish a strong society. We the Congolese people have the spirit of overcoming but we still have to do a lot.....

