Komera. Be Brave.

A curriculum centered on a young boy from the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s journey as a refugee to the US teaches students about the importance of community and belonging.

Introduction

In this unit, students will follow the story of Aleze, a refugee of the Second Congolese War, as he moves from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to Burundi and finally the US. Through Aleze’s story, students will understand some of the factors that contribute to the Congolese wars, and empathize with individuals whose lives and education are disrupted by war. The ultimate goal of this curriculum is for students to make a connection between the importance of community in Aleze and other refugee’s lives and their own experience of community and belonging, particularly during challenging times.
Essential Questions

1. What does “community” mean? Why is it important?
2. What does “belonging” mean? Why is it important?
3. How can we create communities of belonging?

Our Mission & Vision

At Success Academy, we equip our scholars with both academic knowledge and the non-cognitive and social-emotional skills they need to thrive in college, career, and life. Each module in the curriculum notes how it is aligned to the New York State New Generation Grade 4 ELA Standards and Success Academy’s ACTION values.

**Action:** Every member of our community takes ownership! We take responsibility for making sure that our schools and scholars are reaching the highest possible standards across the board.

**Curiosity:** Our schools are fueled by wonder. Scholars, teachers, and staff always ask, “What if?”

**Try & Try:** Our entire community understands that tackling tough challenges takes elbow grease, grit, and perseverance.

**Integrity:** We are honest, open, and transparent.

**Others:** We never forget to look out for each other. From helping someone on a project to smiling in the hallways, we build a community of mutual respect and support.

**No Shortcuts:** Excellent learning takes time and effort.
Structure

There are 4 sequential modules in the unit. Each module is intended to be implemented over one week in a series of 1-3 30-60 minutes lessons. Teachers should use their discretion to determine how to allocate time for each module. The modules are designed to be incorporated into the existing ELA block.

For Teachers

Teacher Preparation

Read background materials on DRC conflict

- Conflict & Education Analyses

Read “Komera. Be Brave.”

- Identify any themes that connect to prior readings or topics discussed in class

Review guidance for discussing violence and war with students

The unit has been designed to discuss issues of war and conflict in a sensitive, relevant, and age-appropriate way. However, the content of this unit may evoke a variety of cognitive and emotional responses from children, including sadness, fear, confusion, anger, and emotional distancing. Some general guidance is noted below for how to approach discussions of war, conflict, and violence with young children. You can find more resources in the Appendix.

- Create a time and place for children to ask questions, but don’t force them to talk until they’re ready.
- Help children find effective ways to express their thoughts, feelings, and fears. This may be through art, play, writing, and reading. Let the child know their questions and concerns are important and understandable.
- Use words and concepts at the level of the child’s understanding. Be prepared to repeat explanations, as some information may be hard for children to accept or understand.
- Avoid stereotypes about race, nationality, or religion. Use this as an opportunity to teach tolerance.
Module #1: History & Conflict in DRC

Guiding Questions
1. Where in the world is the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)?
2. What were the causes of war and conflict in DRC?

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to...
1. Identify major events in DRC history from 1990s to the present.
2. Explain how 4 major factors contributed to the Congolese Wars.

New York State New Generation ELA Learning Standards: Grade 4

Reading Standards: Key Ideas and Details
- 4RI: Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences (RI&RL)
- 4R2: Determine a theme or central idea of text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize a text. (RI&RL)
- 4R3: In informational texts, explain events, procedures, ideas. (RI)

Writing Standards: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
- 4SL4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace and volume appropriate for audience.

ACTION value(s)
1. Curiosity - Students will learn about a new context and conflict through their own exploration of a non-fiction text.
2. Try & Try - Students will learn some new challenging vocabulary and will practice using it in multiple contexts.

Activities
1. Map activity: Where is DRC?
   - Asks students if anyone has heard of a country called “Democratic Republic of the Congo” or “DRC”. Ask students

Resources (in Appendix)
- 1a. Map of Africa
- 1b. Teacher Presentation: Introduction to DRC & Unit Vocabulary
- 1c. DRC worksheet
- 1d. “Conflict in DRC” article

Teaching Notes
- Students may have limited or superficial understanding of Africa and DRC. When asked what they know, they may reference poverty, hunger, violence, war, etc. Encourage them as they read to look at the facts presented in the text and consider how it is similar or different from their expectations.
- After reading about the conflict, students may have a variety of reactions, including surprise, confusion, anger, and sadness. In the whole group discussion, provide time for students to share and process their reactions and ask any questions. See the
what, if anything, they know about DRC. Write answers on board.

- Project map of Africa. Ask 1 student to come up and locate DRC on map.

- Introduce new unit: “We will discuss the experience of a young boy who moved from DRC to the US as a **refugee**. A **refugee** is someone who is forced to leave his or her home country because of violence or **persecution**. Persecution is when people are treated badly, often because of their race or religion. We will start today by learning about some of the reasons why this boy had to leave his home in DRC.”

2. Teacher presentation: Introduction to DRC & Unit Vocabulary

- Teacher will present an interactive PPT (with photos and a short video) to introduce students to the DRC and key vocabulary in the unit.
  
  - The PPT will have the vocabulary words and definitions in **bold**. Students will copy down the vocabulary and definitions during the presentation into their notebooks.

3. Individual work: DRC Worksheet

- After the presentation, students will individually complete a vocabulary worksheet with a combination of word scrambles, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answer questions to assess their knowledge of the vocabulary and content.

4. Paired and whole class discussion

- After completing the worksheet individually, students will pair up and discuss their answers.

- Then, the teacher will review the worksheet with the full class, calling on students to provide answers, and asking students to correct their answers as they go. This worksheet will be a useful reference document throughout the unit.
5. Homework: Independent reading
   ● Student independently read the non-fiction article “Conflict in DRC”.

5. Quiz
   ● Students complete quiz (see “Assessment” below)

Assessment 1. Quiz: “Conflict in DRC”: After reading the article for homework, the next day students will complete a short quiz with multiple choice and short answer questions to assess their understanding of the causes of the war.
Module #2: Education in DRC

Guiding Questions
1. How does school look similar and different for children in other parts of the world?
2. How did the war impact education for children in DRC?

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to...
1. Conduct research on what school was like for children during the Congolese Wars using a variety of sources.
2. Write a newspaper article synthesizing what school was like for children during the Congolese Wars.

New York State New Generation ELA Learning Standards: Grade 4

Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes
- 4W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.
  - 4W2a: Introduce a topic clearly and organize related information in paragraphs and sections.
  - 4W2b: Develop ideas on a topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, or other relevant information; include text features when useful for aiding comprehension.
  - 4W2c: Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary.

Writing Standards: Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- 4W6: Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge through investigating multiple aspects of a topic.
- 4W7: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from multiple sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

Resources (see Appendix):
- World Factbook: DRC – already in classroom
- 2a. Images of DRC classrooms
- 2b. Journal entries

Teaching notes
- Prior to this class, it is recommended to have a session with the school librarian to show students how to conduct basic research using school databases.
- This activity is designed to encourage inquiry-based learning. While monitoring students during stations, ask questions to inspire empathy and connect to core unit themes of community and belonging. (e.g., How do you think students felt having to leave their home school? What do you think it is like to start school in a whole new place?)
- For instructions for teaching students to write newspaper articles, see the following
**ACTION value(s)**

1. **Action** - Students take action by writing about an issue of global importance for an identified target audience.

2. **Curiosity** – Students conduct their own research to investigate what education was like in DRC during the war.

3. **Others** - Students practice empathy and engage in perspective-taking by envisioning how children are impacted by having their schooling interrupted.

**Activities**

1. **Stations: Investigating education in DRC**

   - **Introduction:** "Imagine you are a reporter for the *New York Times*. You have been asked to write an article about what education was like for students in DRC during and just after the Second Congolese War (1998-2002). Before writing your article, you must conduct some research to answer questions such as:
     - What people, organizations, and events were important for education during the war?
     - What was school like for students during the war?
     - What children go to school? What children do not?
     - How did students and families feel about school during this time?

   - Working in groups of 3-4, you will spend 20 minutes at each of the following “locations” [stations around the classroom] to collect some of the information you need. Take notes on what you learn so you can write your article.
     - Station 1: Review the *World Factbook: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)* and images of schools in DRC.
     - Station 2: Read journal entries of children from DRC.
     - Station 3: On your tablets, conduct a *Google Scholar* search for any articles about education in DRC. The

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**resource:**
[https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/writing-newspaper-article/](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/writing-newspaper-article/)
school librarian will work with your group to conduct the search using the school research database.

**Assessment** 1. Independent writing: Article on “Education in DRC”: For homework, use the information you gathered in class today to write a 3-paragraph article about education in DRC during the war. Consider you are writing your article for Americans who may not know much about DRC.

You should answer the guiding questions below in your article:

- What people, organizations, and events were important for education during the war?
- What was school like for students during the war?
- What children go to school? What children do not?
- How did students and families feel about school during this time?

You should include the following in your article:

- **Lead sentence** - get the attention of the reader
- **Introduction paragraph** - Which facts and figures will ground your story? You have to tell your readers where and when this story is happening.
- **Main body paragraph** - Answer the guiding questions
- **Conclusion** - Summarize your main points
Module #3: Aleze’s Story: Komera. Be Brave.

Guiding Questions
1. How do people, places, and traditions shape community?
2. How is Aleze’s experienced impacted by his different communities?

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to...
1. Describe the people, places, and traditions that helped Aleze feel a sense of belonging and community, both in DRC and in the US.
2. Provide advice to Aleze about life in the US.

New York State New Generation ELA Learning Standards: Grade 4

Reading Standards: Phonics and Word Recognition
- 4RF3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
  - 4RF3a: Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.

Language Standards: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- 4L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- 4L6: Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).

ACTION value(s)
1. Try & Try - Students will read the story of Aleze - a young boy who perseveres in the face of all odds to come to attend school in the US.
2. Others - Aleze’s story demonstrates the importance of extending kindness and compassion to others in our community.

Resources (see Appendix)
- Africa map (Unit 1)
- 3a. Komera vocabulary worksheet
- Komera. Be Brave book - see attached

Teacher Notes:
- In the whole class discussion, consider starting by asking students if they were in Aleze’s position, how they would feel walking into their first day in their new school.
- Also encourage student to make connections between what they learned in the previous 2 units and Aleze’s story. Some guiding questions may include:
  - Which of the factors we discussed contributing to the Congolese War do you see in the book? How do they impact Aleze and his family?
  - What people, organizations, and events
Activities

1. Map review: From DRC to New Jersey
   - Project Africa map to class on PPT.
   - Ask 1 student to come up and identify DRC. Then ask another student to identify Burundi. Then draw a line between the 2 countries. Ask a third student to come to the map and identify New Jersey. Note close proximity of New Jersey to NYC. Draw a line between Burundi and New Jersey.
   - Introduce Aleze - story of a young boy who followed this journey around the world we just outlined.

2. Vocabulary
   - Hand out list of Komera vocabulary terms and definitions.
   - Ask students to (1) read aloud word and definitions (2) Write a sentence with each word, (3) Read aloud their sentences to a partner.

3. Read aloud “Komera. Be Brave”
   - Prior to reading, teacher will read aloud discussion questions below. As teacher reads, students to take notes on questions.
   - Discussion questions:
     ■ 1. Why does Aleze leave his home? How does this connect to the causes of the wars in DRC we previously learned about?
     ■ 2. What happens to Aleze’s education during the war?
     ■ 3. What people, places, or traditions help Aleze feel a sense of community in his new school?
     ■ 4. If Aleze came to our class, how would we help him feel welcome in our community?

4. Pair-and-share
   - With a partner, students will discuss the discussion questions.

   - In the whole class discussion, also ask students about what is important to them in a community. See if they can describe a time when having a community helped them through a challenging time. You may provide the example of Aleze’s cousin JD as an example of a person who was important in his community. This will connect well to the next module.
5. **Whole class discussion**
   ○ As a full class, teacher will facilitate a discussion of the discussion questions.

### Assessment

1. **Write a letter to Aleze**
   ● Imagine your teacher tells you next week, a young boy named Aleze will be joining our class. He is a refugee from DRC. You want to write him a letter to welcome him and tell him a little bit about your school and classroom. In the letter include:
      ○ What is special about our school and classroom community? How is it similar and different from schooling in DRC?
      ○ Where can he find support and belonging in our community?
      ○ What other advice do you have for him?
## Module #4: Communities of Belonging

### Guiding Questions
1. How does community impact one’s sense of belonging?
2. What aspects of community are important to belonging?

### Learning Objectives
*Students will be able to…*
1. Analyze how community can impact the lives of people who have experienced conflict.
2. Create a representation of their own community.
3. Compare and contrast what community and belonging mean for themselves, their classmates, and the stories of refugees we have read during the unit.

### New York State New Generation ELA Learning Standards: Grade 4

#### Reading Standards: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- 4R7: Identify information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, illustrations), and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text. (RI&RL)
- 4R8: Explain how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence. (RI&RL)
- 4R9: Recognize genres and make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, era, personal events, situations. (RI&RL)

#### Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes
- 4W4: Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.
- 4W5: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to respond and support analysis, reflection, and research by applying the grade 4 Reading Standards.

### Resources (see Appendix)
- Open Societies Foundation: *Meet the Somalis* videos: [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/multimedia/meet-the-somalis#all](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/multimedia/meet-the-somalis#all)
  - Teacher should select 2-3 videos to show class
- Worksheet: “Defining My Community”

### Teaching Notes
- Teacher should add any other vocabulary from *Meet the Somalis* videos they select
- It is suggested to give students 30 minutes to complete the “Defining my Community” worksheet in class. Then, over the next week, provide time for students to work on their community map in class.
- In creating the community map, encourage students to be creative in the medium they
### ACTION value(s)

1. **Others** - Students will demonstrate empathy for others by describing the community of Somali refugees.

2. **No Shortcuts** - Students will describe their own community in a different medium than they are used to, which will require great time and effort.

### Activities

**1. Introduction: What is belonging?**

- **Teacher introduces concept of belonging:** to feel happy, comfortable, and/or connected to a particular person (or group), place, or tradition
  - To connect back to story, teacher asks: How does Aleze feel belonging in DRC? How does Aleze feel belonging at his new school?
- **Students complete a 5-minute free-write for the prompt:**
  - One person/place/tradition where I feel a sense of belonging is ________________ because ____________________________________.
- **Students watch video of children and young people who are refugees reflect on what “belonging” means to them:**
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfMXcAKxMRk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfMXcAKxMRk)
- **Discussion:**
  - Ask a few students to share what they wrote during the free-write. Write answers on the board under the columns “people”, “places”, and, “traditions”.
  - Ask: How are our class’ ideas about belonging similar and different from those mentioned by young people in the video?

**2. Animated videos: Meet the Somalis**

- As a class, we will watch a few videos of Somali refugees (from Somalia) Like Aleze in DRC, many people from Somalia were forced to flee their homes in Somalia due to war. The videos chose to represent their community. Some helpful examples to show may include more traditional maps ([https://images.app.goo.gl/wCSx5ZRLUxuYHugz7](https://images.app.goo.gl/wCSx5ZRLUxuYHugz7)) or more conceptual maps ([http://ilopez7english1311.blogspot.com/p/discourse-community-map-response.html](http://ilopez7english1311.blogspot.com/p/discourse-community-map-response.html)).
show Somali refugees living in Europe describing their experience leaving one community and settling in another.

- After each video, the teacher should ask students the following discussion questions:
  - Do you think this individual feels a sense of belonging in their new community? Why or why not?
  - How do the refugees actively create a sense of belonging in their new community?
  - How was this individual’s experience of community and belonging similar to Aleze? How was it different?

3. **Vocabulary review: Flashcards**
   - In pairs, students will create flashcards with all of the vocabulary words from the unit. The flashcards will include (1) word (2) definition (3) word used in a sentence.
   - Once they have created the flashcards, students will quiz their partner on the vocabulary. During this time, the teacher will walk around and listen for any common words students are still struggling with and end this activity by reviewing these words with the full class. This vocabulary review is designed to prepare students for their final project.

4. **Project and presentation: “Defining My Community”**
   - See “Assessment” below

5. **Class reading and final discussion**
   - The class will re-read *Komera: Be Brave*
   - The teacher will facilitate a unit wrap-up discussion with the following questions:
     - What similarities exist across our maps and Aleze’s?
     - What can we do to create a sense of belonging for all people in our communities?
Assessment 1. **Project: “Defining My Community”**

- Students will create a “community map” to describe the people, places, and traditions that are important to them in their community.
  - First, they will complete the worksheet: “Defining My Community”
  - Then, students will create a visual depiction of their community. It may be a piece of art, poster, diorama, song, poem, etc.

2. **Presentation of community maps**

- Gallery walk and student presentations of their community maps.
- During the gallery walk, students will interview at least 3 classmates and take notes on their responses to the questions:
  - What makes you feel a sense of belonging in your community? Why?
  - How has your community helped you during a challenging time?
Appendix

Teacher Pre-Unit Preparation

Additional Resources for Talking about Violence and Conflict with Young Students


Module 1: History & Conflict in DRC

1a. Map of Africa

![Map of Africa](image.png)
1b. Teacher Presentation: Introduction to DRC & Unit Vocabulary

- Start by showing video to introduce students to geography, climate, and people of DRC
  
  o Democratic Republic of Congo - CBSE Class V Lesson: [https://youtu.be/qjYw4JTsSy](https://youtu.be/qjYw4JTsSy)

- Introduce vocabulary by projecting definitions and images below on PPT, grouped below by topic:
  
  o About DRC
    
    - **Congolese**: a person from the DRC
    
    - **Great Lakes**: a region in East Africa with a number of lakes, including Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Malawi.
    
    - **Congo River**: the second longest river in Africa which flows through DRC.
    
    - **Agriculture**: farming and raising animals to make a living. Many people in DRC farm cassava, maize, and rice.
    
    - **Natural resources**: materials such as minerals, plants, water, or land that occur in nature and can be sold
    
    - **Minerals**: a non-living natural resource (For example: gold, diamonds)
    
    - **Hutu**: an ethnic group in the Great Lakes region of Africa
    
    - **Tutsi**: an ethnic group in the Great Lakes region of Africa

  o Conflict
    
    - **Refugee**: someone who is forced to leave his or her home country because of violence or persecution
    
    - **Persecution**: when people are treated badly, often because of their race or religion
    
    - **Causes (of war)**: the reason why something happened
    
    - **Devastating**: extremely sad and powerful
    
    - **Disease**: something that makes someone sick
    
    - **Rebel**: a person or group who acts out against the government
    
    - **Neighboring**: next to or very near another place
    
    - **Valuable**: important, worth a lot of money
Great Lakes

Cassava (yuca)

Maize (corn)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lake Tanganyika</th>
<th>Gold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Lake Tanganyika" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Gold" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congo River</th>
<th>Diamond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Congo River" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diamond" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1c. DRC worksheet

Part I: Word Scramble

1. elseognoc ____________________________
2. egtra skeal ____________________________
3. oogen rrvei ____________________________
4. elrgituucar ____________________________
5. Inaruta ocurresse ____________________________
6. nnaeirls ____________________________
7. uuht ____________________________
8. itust ____________________________
9. geeefru ____________________________
10. suitrecopne ____________________________
11. sseuac ____________________________
12. iesdsda ____________________________
13. bleer ____________________________
14. ongnihigber ____________________________
15. laevbula ____________________________

Part II: Fill-in-the-Blank

1. The ________________ is the longest river in Africa.
2. New Jersey is a ________________ state to New York.
3. Many ________________ were forced to leave their homes during the Congolese wars because they were ________________ based on their race or religion.
4. The 2 main ethnic groups in DRC are the ________________ and ________________.
**Part III: Short Answers**

1. What are 2 examples of natural resources found in DRC? Why do you think these natural resources are so valuable?
2. What are 2 examples of food that are farmed in DRC? What are 2 examples of food that are farmed in the US?
3. Describe an example from history or your own life where an individual or group has faced persecution. What was this persecution based on? How did it affect the group or individual?

**1d. Article: “Conflict in DRC”**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the third largest country in Africa. It is located in the Great Lakes region and neighbors the countries of Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Zambia, and Angola. As of 2019, the population of the DRC is 86.1 million people.

Since the 1990s, a series of wars, known as the Congolese Wars, have occurred in the DRC, which have had a devastating impact on the Congolese people. During the wars, many people were hungry, became sick with disease, and were unable to work or attend school. As a result of violence between the government and rebel groups, many people were also forced to flee their homes and became refugees. These refugees moved to neighboring countries in Africa, like Tanzania and Burundi, as well as to other parts of the world. When they left their homes, people had to leave their jobs, families, and communities. Children also had to leave their schools. Some children attended new schools for refugees, while others were not able to attend school at all.

There were four major causes of the war in the DRC. First, the government was not able to provide services like education and health for people. People did not trust the government because it also did not protect them from violence. Second, other countries in the Great Lakes region chose sides and joined in the war. These countries gave money and soldiers to both sides of the war to support their own goals. Third, the war was fought for control of natural resources, such as wood, diamonds, and gold. These minerals were very valuable to sell to other countries around the world. Fourth, there was conflict between two ethnic groups in DRC, called the Hutu and Tutsi. These two groups joined rebel groups based on their different identities. These are the four major causes of war in the DRC.
Module 2: Education in DRC

2a. Image of DRC classroom

Refugee children from Central African Republic attend a primary school in Democratic Republic of the Congo (Source: UNHCR)

2b. Journal entries

Journal 1: A young boy (age 10) who remains living in DRC during the war

Dear diary,

I was supposed to go to school today. But my mother says it is not safe because the rebels are in our village. I can hear the guns from our house so I know she is right. But still, I want to go to school. I miss seeing my friends, reading, and playing games outside at the end of the day. I even miss sharing my math textbook with five other classmates. The past few weeks, some days it is
quiet and I am able to go to school, other days mother says it is too dangerous. I wonder if it will ever be normal again. I wonder why the rebels don’t want us children to learn.

I attend a Catholic school, but the school is running out of money because so many families have fled our village. My mother says the school may close down soon anyway because there are not enough families left to pay the teachers. I feel sad thinking about not going to school everyday. At home it is boring and I have to help with the chores. When will I be able to go to school again?

Journal 2: A young girl (age 8) who is a refugee living in Tanzania

Dear diary,

My mother, father, younger sister, and I fled our home in DRC three months ago. The rebels were getting close to our village and my father was worried. So we left in the middle of the night. I was so frightened and my little sister was crying quietly. It took many weeks, but my mother says we should be grateful to be in Tanzania now. Many in our community were not so lucky.

Every day I walk 15 minutes to attend school. My class has one teacher and about 50 students. The students come from many different places and speak different languages. Back home, I was in my 3rd year of primary school, but the students in my class here are all ages, from 1st year to older secondary students. The class is loud and full of students.

My teacher is from Tanzania. She says we are learning the same things we would in DRC. I am happy about this. I don’t want to fall behind my classmates in my village when we return home. But sometimes it is hard to learn here. Even though I know I should be grateful as mother says, sometimes I still feel sad. I want to return home. This school is not like home.
Module 3: Aleze’s Story: Komera. Be Brave.

3a. Komera Vocabulary

- **Anxiously**: Nervously
  - Sentence:

- **Squirming**: Moving or twisting your body in a nervous way
  - Sentence:

- **Tribe**: a social group or community
  - Sentence:

- **Informal**: casual, relaxed, unofficial
  - Sentence:

- **Fearless**: without fear
  - Sentence:

- **Wafting**: to pass through the air
  - Sentence:

- **Crossfire**: gunfire from many directions
  - Sentence:

- **Community**: a group of people with shared experiences, culture, and/or values
  - Sentence:

- **Tradition**: A belief or behavior passed down over time that has special meaning
  - Sentence:
Module 4: Community

4a: “Defining My Community” Worksheet

Community: a group of people with shared experiences, culture, and/or values

1. Write a list of the communities to which you belong.

2. Pick one community and answer the following questions about it:
   a. What people are a part of the community? What do you have in common with other people of the community?
   b. What places are important in your community? (e.g., home, school, neighborhood, city, country, etc.)
   c. What traditions are important in your community? (e.g., food, celebrations, etc.)
   d. What makes you feel a sense of belonging in your community?
   e. Describe a time when your community helped you during a challenging time. (e.g., Aleze’s cousin JD encourages him in the camp, the classmate who takes Aleze’s hand when walking to class)

3. With the template on the next page, draw a “map” of your community. First, draw yourself at the center. Then in each circle, draw or write the people, places, and traditions that are a part of your community. Put people, places, and traditions on the map based on how “close” they are to you, or how much they impact your life.