



WAITING IN LINE

—MUZABEL WELONGO

JESUIT COMMONS HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE MARGINS—
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Having the only choice to wait in line, I spent five hours at water tap in a long line under a hot sun, so that I can get water. When there is no water taps in a village, rivers is the only hope. What happens when rivers also dry at same time?

I visited my uncle in dry season. In Kabare, my uncle's village, people stayed five days without water. The river had muddy, non-potable water. After struggling for five days, there was somewhere to find water. Everybody in the village needs to fill their water. The servant of the tap, with a little pride, commanded us to stay on a line and that everyone fetch only 20 liters. We were served in order of first come first served basis. I was the last on the line. I had to wait in line because we had no water to prepare food at home. In my line, there was an old woman behind me who looked vulnerable. I felt the responsibility to help her get water as soon as possible to allow her go back earlier. Nobody on the front line accepted to let her pass. I left my line and went to the servant of the tap asking him to help the old woman. The woman was given a chance to fill her container without waiting. When I joined my line someone occupied my place and people in the whole line told me to restart at the end.

The time I wasted to help the woman was a grace that day. I stayed at the end of the waiting line waiting for my turn. Touched by my kindness toward the old woman, the tap servant allowed me to fetch water immediately. I had three containers of 20 liters each; all were filled.

Honesty and patience are essential when waiting in line. With patience, people at tap said I am kind and honest. Flexibility is also important: we all suffered of lack of water, but some of us were more vulnerable than we. I made sure my neighbors on the line are served as I wanted to be served.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Muzabel Welongo is a young man from the Democratic Republic of Congo who speaks French, English, and Swahili. He holds a Form 6 Secondary Education Certificate in Science (Mathematics, Physics, and Biology). Welongo studies with the Jesuit Commons Higher Education at the Margins, a program providing educational opportunities for people living in refugee camps.