DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Fragile State: YES
Conflict-Affected: YES. Although there is relative stability currently, outbreaks of violence have occurred in conflict affected areas. Additionally, DRC continues to be home to the largest UN peacekeeping force in the world. (Democratic Republic of Congo, Country Specific Information, US Department of State Travel Advisory, January 23, 2012)
Refugee Camps: YES “At the end of 2010, the DRC hosted some 166,300 refugees * * * Most of those who remain are from Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sudan.” 2012 UNHCR country operations profile - Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNHCR, 2012; available at http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c366.html
EFA-FTI Partner: NO
Special Status: NO
On-Track for EFA by 2015: NO

Analysis:
The educational system of the DRC is marked by its resilience. Despite its decades’ long history of brutal violence and political transition, the educational system has emerged relatively intact. The percentage of children who have never attended school is lower in Congo, than the average for Sub-Saharan African region. This is true despite the fact that Congolese households fund approximately 80–90% of educational spending.

Academics and practitioners alike attribute the sector’s resilience to the demand for education in Congo and the public perception that education elevates out of poverty. This means that the culture around the importance of education is present, ready to be leveraged. There are many challenges, however, in marshaling resources at a national level to achieve optimum impact on access, equity, and quality.

Because of the decades long history of conflict and transition, the power center for education services delivery exists at the local levels. The system is de facto decentralized, but in a manner that exacerbates problems of equity and quality for all Congolese students. Accordingly one of the principle challenges for the DRC is determining how the nation-state can effectively re-engage within the sector. At a minimum, there is a need for national educational policy and standards and national resource investment to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to access quality education. Ironically, however, one of the strategic focus areas of the DRC’s Education Sector Plan (ESP) is continued decentralization.

A second key challenge is mapping a reliable and cost-effective method for delivering information, training, and physical resources (including construction materials and teaching and learning materials). Without a plan for accessing schools and their teacher and student populations, the opportunity for standardizing quality and for monitoring and evaluation is severely compromised.

A third key challenge would be to use education to counter the DRC’s culture of accepted violence against women. Sexual violence against women is prevalent in the DRC. The extent to which DRC’s history and culture in this regard will affect country goals on gender parity is unclear.

Overall, DRC’s education sector plan acknowledges its long history of conflict as leading to unique problems to solve in rebuilding its educational system. Yet a plan for using education as a tool to mitigate future conflict or to facilitate national healing remains unclear.

Finally, relative to other SSA countries, the DRC’s education sector documents appear to be at an early stage. The current ESP identifies problems and possible responses broadly and vaguely. Much of the responses appear to follow solution trends in the education sector, but the extent to which popular solutions will effectively answer DRC’s needs is unclear.
Advocacy Issues:
- Research on how decentralization should be interpreted in the DRC Context
- Innovations for reliable access to schools
- Using education to change the culture of violence against women
- Using education to mitigate future conflict
- Adequately reaching marginalized groups

### Policy and Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Facts</th>
<th>Priority Policies and Reforms</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles guiding the Government of DRC (GoDRC): Equity, Efficiency, Dialogue, Partnership and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I. Increasing access, equity, and retention</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Phasing out school fees</td>
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<td>B. Identifying and integrating children excluded from the educational system</td>
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<td>C. Reducing geographical disparities and gender inequality</td>
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<td>D. Increasing capacity</td>
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<td>E. Supporting local communities in expanding early childhood education with the objective of increasing primary school enrollment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>II. Improving teacher quality and effectiveness</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A. Improving internal efficiencies</td>
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<td>B. Reevaluating the teacher function — to address issues such as recruitment, retention, deployment, training</td>
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<td>C. Supplying instructional materials</td>
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<td>D. Optimizing and updating curricula</td>
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<td>E. Strengthening technical and professional education</td>
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<td><strong>III. Strengthening governance capacity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Improving efficiency through continued decentralization (including revamping the legal framework, reducing school fees, institutional and technical reform of the agency responsible for teacher salaries, strengthening DRC’s EMIS)</td>
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<td>B. Strengthening human and institutional capacity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Contextual Challenges</th>
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<td><strong>Over two decades of conflict and civil war:</strong> DRC ranked as one of top 10 failed states according to Foreign Policy Magazine and the Fund for Peace (Bender 2010 and Foreign Policy 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Natural landscape:</strong> dense forests cover more than 50% of the land, rendering some populations inaccessible except by riverboat; Vastness and difficulty of traversing terrain make supporting and improving school operations difficult (e.g., data collection, teacher training, and delivery of construction materials, school supplies, instructional materials) (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td><strong>Inadequate financial infrastructure:</strong> inadequate banking system complicates delivering funds to schools and salaries to teachers (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td><strong>Geographically reinforced independence of provinces:</strong> vastness of territory and significant autonomy of provinces also make it difficult for national office to monitor, supervise, govern local offices in context of decentralization (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Poverty: over 70% of the population lives in poverty — the highest rate in Africa (ESP 2010); “More than 71% of the population survives on less than a dollar a day and over a third of the population eat only once a day. The current GDP per capita is lower than in 1960 when the country gained its independence” (Bender 2010 (citations omitted)).</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS: prevalence of 4.7% among 15–49 year olds (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Sexual violence: creates unsafe environment for children getting to school; “18,505 cases of sexual violence were reported in Eastern Congo during the first 10 months of 2008, 30% of whom were children. However, the number of incidences of sexual violence is known to be far higher than the number reported. Even in zones that are not conflict affected, over 60% of victims of sexual violence are children. 35% of victims registered were students, with one in five rapes taking place at school. 20% of aggressors were also said to be students” (Bender 2010 (citations omitted)).</td>
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<td>Macroeconomic instability (e.g. weak economic growth, high inflation rate) (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Economic crisis (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Continued internal conflict and external aggression (ESP 2010)</td>
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| EPM Challenges |
| Personnel turnover at education ministry (ESP 2010) |
| Parental disillusion over “free” primary education has caused some to retreat from the system (ESP 2010) |
| Resistance to change within the sector (ESP 2010) |
| Clash of competence levels between state government and local government (ESP 2010) |
| Social tensions within the sector (teachers and strikers, for example) (ESP 2010) |
| Coherence of sub-sector strategies across ministries touching education (ESP 2010) |
| Institutional and technical mechanisms for implementing strategic objectives lack effectiveness and relevance (ESP 2010) |
| Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity (ESP 2010) |
| Corruption within government (ESP 2010) |
| Communities manage schools without proper support from government or sufficient technical competence: “Due to lack of resources, political will and the vast territory in DRC, school management relies heavily on community participation.” (Bender 2010) |
| School fees continue to suppress school enrollment and completion (ESP 2010) |
| Undertrained teaching force: lacks proper training, encouragement; overwhelmed by need (Bender 2010) |
| Donor and project-driven investment in education sector: limits efficiency and ability to achieve long-term sustainable results from investments (Bender 2010); also seems to limit ability to optimize investment of each dollar particularly given cost of delivering services/supplies/expertise over DRC terrain |
| Lack of coordination or innovation in donor funded education projects: “donors are continually funding the same stock interventions: emergency classrooms, kit distributions and some limited teacher training. While necessary, these temporary solutions do not contribute to sustainable recovery” (Bender 2010) |
| Limited scalability/interpretive value of successful donor education projects: “The vast majority of education projects in Eastern Congo are short term and impact relatively small target populations. Limited resources for comprehensive follow-up evaluations limit the strength of findings and the ability to generalize efficacy of interventions” (Bender 2010) |
| Lack of a coherent legal framework for managing sector and lack of enforcement (Herst 2010) |
| Lack of audit of salary payment system means there could be leakage and donors are unwilling to support teacher wages in this context (Herst 2010) |

| Successes |
| Number of schools and teachers increased significantly: between 2001 and 2007, the number of registered school increased by 65% and the number of registered teachers increased by 61% (Herst 2010) |
| Specifically targeted programming that builds local capacity to meet education needs: “Much of the value added of
international NGOs in Eastern DRC came in the form of programming specially targeted to the consequences of the crisis (e.g. catch-up classes, assistance with exam fees, accelerated learning programs and teacher/student kit distribution help encourage schools to restart and to increase efforts to recover from emergencies. They also help students to finish school) (Bender 2010 (citations omitted))

- **AVSI (Italian NGO) reported to offer very successful education programming in Eastern Congo**: programming includes “Program of Expanded Assistance to Returnees Plus, Rapid Response Mechanism, and teacher training programs”; “AVSI’s mobile teacher training program * * * has been noted as one of the most successful programs in Eastern DRC and has been adopted and expanded by other organizations” (Bender 2010); possible reasons for success include stable, long-term funding; strong government and community relationships; and long-term staff commitments

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<th>Worth Noting</th>
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<td>• During conflict, 50% of the approximately 5.4 million who died were children under age 5 — dying from malnutrition and disease, in addition to warfare</td>
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<td>• The nation effectively began to withdraw from the education system in the 1980’s, as structural adjustment programs drove down national spending on education (Herst 2010)</td>
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<td>• Only 16 and 22 percent of boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 16 respectively never went to school (compared to SSA averages of 24 and 27 percent, respectively) (Herst 2010)</td>
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<td>• Education sector accounts for nearly 1/3 of all public employment in DRC (Herst 2010)</td>
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**Key Issues**

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<tr>
<th>Early Childhood</th>
<th>• ESP focuses on investing in early childhood education as a means for ensuring succession to primary school (ESP 2010)</th>
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</table>
| Free Primary Education | • **YES — Constitution - Article 46 (ESP 2010)**  
  ➢ **The reality is that households still bear a significant portion of the costs of primary education due to school expenses.** To ameliorate this problem the government plans to progressively phase out school expenses — primarily the “Minerval et de la Promoscolaire” and the expense associated with taking the National Exam to graduate from primary school (TENAFEP). The state will also take responsibility for the insurance expenses (SONAS), and printing and administrative expenses paid to schools and administrative offices. The government expects that by the year 2015/16, school expenses will disappear totally. (ESP 2010); (Minerval akin to registration fees (Herst 2010))  
  ➢ **Additionally, the government is taking action to eliminate motivation fees for teachers.** The government plans to take a census of all teachers, require teachers to register with the state, and establish uniform salary zones. |
| Compulsory Education | • **YES — Constitution — Article 46 (ESP 2010)** |
| Lifelong Learning/TVET | • ESP 2010 indicates specific focus on evaluating technical and professional education through the following:  
  ➢ Rehabilitating infrastructures  
  ➢ Modernizing equipment  
  ➢ Revamping curricula to ensure alignment of education with the needs of the national economy and local job market |
| Literacy | • Not addressed specifically in ESP |
| Gender parity | • Addressed through elimination of school fees and generally as an initiative to reduce gender disparity |
| EMIS | • Does not have a strong presence in ESP |
| Alternative Strategies and Programs | • Not addressed specifically in ESP |
| Education for Conflict Mitigation | • From the ESP, it is clear that the history of conflict is the motivational context for rebuilding the educational system, but the conflict itself is not necessarily one of the social stresses that the educational curriculum specifically aims to mitigate. |
| HIV/AIDS | • Addressed through a national strategy outside the education sector |
To accommodate increased enrollment, government plans to focus on classroom construction to expand capacity (ESP 2010)

IRC investing in building community capacity for school governance -- “IRC has multi-million dollar funding from the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) to implement community-driven reconstruction programs ‘whereby communities apply principles of good governance to elect village/community development committees, identify priority needs and implement projects to address those needs. Through this process...over 45% of all villages have chosen projects related to education. Education-related projects usually focus on one of three different areas: construction of classrooms, rehabilitation of classrooms and/or equipment of classrooms’” (Bender 2010 citing IRC Sector Strategy, 2010)

### Sector Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing Agency</th>
<th>Ministère de l’Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel (EPSP)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other agencies with responsibilities in education:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire (ESU) — higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministère des Affaires Sociales (MAS) — non-formal education and literacy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sector Coordination Groups</th>
<th>Unclear from ESP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring Frameworks</td>
<td>Unclear from ESP</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Non-state Actors</th>
<th>Schools are managed by religious networks, due to colonial history; Catholic Church has 50% of all pupils (Herst 2010)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State role: define pedagogical programs, oversee and guarantee quality, and subsidize public schools (drafting legal framework to organize sector, organize administration, pay personnel, organize inspection service)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Religious institutions’ role: manage schools (hire teachers, mobilize resources, may have their own inspection services)</td>
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### Financing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPE Information</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tr>
<td>GPE Coordinating Agency</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPE Commitments and Disbursements</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>What GPE Funding support relative to ESP</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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| Other financing Information | DRC has received significant donor financing in the way of replacement of debt service — that is, debt cancellation in exchange for converting debt service into expenditures in education sector; in this way education sector budget has increased from 20 million in 2003 to over 170 million (or from 2% to 12% of total government expenditure (Herst 2010) |
|                           | System may be financed in part by test fees -- National test to graduate from primary education is viewed as another way to finance the system (Herst 2010) |
|                           | Herst (2010) argues that the current manner of financing schools effectively renders them as tax units — Herst shows that donor funding does not lead to lower household expenditures on education because the freed up resources are absorbed by increased allocations to administrative units and by teacher salaries; He concludes that current configuration maximizes quantity over quality |
|                           | Donors: DFID, UNICEF, UNESCO, AVIS, IRC (Bender 2010) |
|                           | Donors: United Kingdom, Belgium, Spain, France (Herst 2010) |

### Important Links

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<tr>
<td>GPE Country Profile</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank Country Profile</td>
<td><a href="http://www.worldbank.org">Click here for general country page</a></td>
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### Key Documents
Strategie Pour Le Developpement Du Sous-Secteur de L’EPSP – 2010/11 – 2015/16

Utilized an independent commission to develop DRC’s strategy on education in preparation for drafting the ESP Document de Strategie de Croissance et de Reduction de Pauvrete

Principal focal points of the DSCR P 2006 (ESP 2010):

• Improved access to quality education;
• Improving access, equity and retention, particularly for marginalized groups and girls;
• Improving education quality;
• Improving the relevance of educational content, particularly to national and international needs;
• Improving the administrative aspects of the educational system, management, and training;
• Decentralizing the educational system; and
• Improving human resource management by establishing a career evaluation and promotion system for teachers.

Follow-up

Issues for International Discussion

Misc. follow-up questions

Key Contacts

Confidential Information

(Must redact before public dissemination)

References