



## **Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa**

### **Regional Country Profiles**

**The Study Team are responsible for the choice and presentation of the data and facts contained in this document and for the opinions expressed therein, these are not necessarily those of SARUA nor the AAU and do not make any commitment for either association.**

The country study presented here was prepared as a part of the study “Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa” (SARUA, 2009). It forms the background data to that study and is published here as an appendix to that report. The Country Studies data has not been subjected to the same level of editorial scrutiny as the Report itself. However, we publish these country studies as supplemental information to that presented in the Report, and hope that they will be of value to other researchers in the region.

# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

## 3.1 Country Context

TABLE: 1. World Development Indicators

World Development Indicators	Yr 2006
Population, total (millions)	60.6
Population growth (annual %)	3.2
Surface area (sq sq km) (thousands)	2344.9
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	46.1
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	129
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	63.1
GNI (current US\$) (billions)	8.1
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	130
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population ages 15-49)	3.2

Source: *World Bank Democratic Republic of Congo: Quick Facts*<sup>1</sup>

After eighty years of colonial rule, internal conflicts in the immediate post-independence period, decades of corruption and mismanagement under the Mobutu Sese Seko regime (1965 – 1997), and protracted war the DRC is now attempting to rebuild its social and economic structures. The positive impact is evident in some of the country's key economic indicators. The DRC has experienced a positive growth rate of 3,5 percent post the transitional multi-party government that was established in 2002. GDP has since continued to grow at over 6 percent every year since. Inflation also fell significantly with restrained monetary and fiscal policies. To ease the economic crisis further the DRC debt burden has been reduced and restructured.

## 3.2 Planning Context

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<sup>1</sup><http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/CONGODEMOCRATICEXTN/0,,menuPK:349492~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:349466,00.html>, accessed 19 August 2008.

The President of the DRC, Joseph Kabila Kabange, has articulated his ambition for rebuilding the state through the 'Five Initiatives for the Democratic Republic of Congo'. These are infrastructure, health and education, water and electricity, housing and job creation. The focus of the second initiative – health and education – is on universal rights.

### **Vision 26/25**

This Vision's overall objective is to bring the DRC's human development up to the levels of middle-income countries and closer towards the Millennium Development Goals. This Vision emerged from the consultations on the poverty reduction strategy and outlines the values and principles that will underpin the DRC as a Society of Hope. The values are (i) national unity and territorial integrity; (ii) security, justice, equality and the rule of law; (iii) work, wealth, prosperity, and sustainable development and (iv) peace and national solidarity. The principles assumed in pursuit of the vision are the rule of law, a decentralised governance system, a pluralist and egalitarian democracy built fundamentally on people shaped by culture and formed by a liberating education. In keeping with these fundamental values and principles, Congolese society aspires to double-digit growth rates by 2030 with an equitable redistribution of wealth aimed at achieving the MDGs. (PRGSP 2006)

### **PRGSP 2006**

National dialogue on poverty strategies was initiated by the interim PRSP (I-PRSP) of 2001, providing an analytic and operational framework for pro-poor programmes. This was replaced by the full PRGSP in June 2006. This strategy is short term (three years) and modest in scope: 'to bring the DRC out of the long period of socio-political crisis and return it to the path of sustainable development with justice and wisdom'. The PRGSP is based on five major pillars:

- promoting good governance and consolidating peace through institution building
- consolidating macroeconomic stability and growth
- improving access to social services and reducing vulnerability
- combating HIV/AIDS
- promoting local initiatives

#### **PRGSP Pillar 3: *Improve access to social services and reduce vulnerability***

**Primary level:** Increase enrolment from 64,1 percent in 2006 to 80 percent in 2008 and to 100 percent by 2015.

**Secondary level:** Increase GER from 23 percent to 33 percent by 2015. Get more students to complete eight years of study; restrict access to the second cycle, and improve the quality of instruction.

Develop a national literacy training policy for non-formal education, with the specific objective of reducing the gap between literacy ratios of men and women. (PRGSP – 2006).

### **3.3 Education Context**

The Government has adopted a number of initiatives in an attempt to counter the years of conflict and economic recession that have seriously affected the DRC's education sector. As part of the social component of the Emergency Multi Sector Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project (PMURR) 140 schools were selected for rehabilitation through World Bank funding. Other reconstruction efforts include the Education Sector Support Project (PASE), financed by the African Development Bank, and the Congolese Education Sector Support Project (PARSEC), financed by the World Bank. These programmes share the broad priorities of expanding the education system and promoting equity of access in pursuit of universal primary education.

The DRC Government used the gap created by HIPC relief in 2005 and 2006 to provide grants for over 20 000 publicly administered primary schools (approximately US\$530 to each school). Most school fees were cancelled and teachers' salaries were increased, as part of an extended response to the teacher strikes that ended in 2005.

Efforts to address the resource constraints of the education system have received support from international donors. With UNICEF support, the MEPSP is targeting some 400 schools for intensive support to school management at local level, while also mounting a new campaign nationally to encourage girls' education. During the course of 2004-2005, the Belgian Co-operation helped with the delivery of textbooks for grades 5-6 across all primary schools in the country. The Government has used an estimated total US\$20-million from various IDA-financed multi-sector programmes (Emergency Multi-sector Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project, Emergency Early Recovery Project, Economic Recovery Credit and Emergency Trust Fund) to rehabilitate classrooms mainly in primary and secondary schools, and procure learning materials, furniture, and laboratory equipment for all levels of education. The MEPSP has also developed a new curriculum for primary level (PID 2007).

The education sector in the DRC is overseen by four ministries: (i) the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education (MEPSP); (ii) the Ministry of Higher Education and Universities (MESU); (iii) the Ministry of Scientific Research (MRS); and (iv) the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Solidarity (MASSN) which has the mandate to enhance literacy. (PID 2007 and World Bank, Project Report, 2007)

The education sector in the DRC has around 49 500 institutions, 458 000 teachers, and roughly 12,2 million students. The primary education level represents 59 percent of the system, the secondary education level about 39 percent of the total and the pre-primary and the higher education sub-sectors about 1 percent to 2 percent of the system. The personnel assigned to the education sector make up about half the public sector. This becomes an important factor in terms of the recurrent expenditures of the national budget, with the education sector bearing slightly more than half the public sector wage bill. There is a significant proportion of the population living in forest areas, which has implications for the education system, as does the large number of local languages. Officially, children are instructed in one of the four main regional languages up to grade two and thereafter solely in French. (*World Bank Educational Report 2007 and World Bank 2004.*)

**TABLE: 2. STRUCTURE OF GENERAL EDUCATION DRC**

Level of Education	Grades	Number of Years	Age Range	National Examination/Certificate
Pre-Primary		3	3-5 yrs	
Primary* (3 x 2 yr cycles)	Grades 1-6	6	6-11 yrs	Grade 6 - Terminal Examination (TENAFEP)
Lower Secondary*		2	12-13 yrs	
Upper Secondary		4	14-18 yrs	Examen d'Etat (to enter tertiary education) Professional aptitude certificate (from vocational channel)

\* *Compulsory education*

The majority of primary schools (70 percent) and a considerable number of secondary schools are managed by faith-based organisations. Secondary education consists of a short cycle, and a long cycle. The short cycle is purely a vocational stream. This is a four- year option, which commences immediately after primary education. The long cycle has three streams – general, pedagogical and technical. Most secondary schools offer all three streams and various options within each. There are as many as thirty options offered in the technical stream alone. Repetition is allowed by law only once in each two-year cycle of each stage.

**TABLE: 3. Situational Analysis of General Education in DRC**

<b>Information Type</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>Number of Institutions</b>		
2001	19,100	8,200
<b>Enrolment Total</b>		
2001	5.47 mill	1.6 mill
2003	5.59 mill (44% girls)	1.65 mill (37%)
<b>GER</b>		
2001	64%	23%
2002	64%	30%
2003	62%	
2006	64.1%	
<b>NER</b>		
2001	51%	
<b>Learner :Teacher Ratio (Government Schools Only)</b>		
2003	32:1	15:1
2006	34:1	
<b>Survival Rate</b>		
2004	86%	
<b>Repetition Rate (Grade 1)</b>		
2001	17%	
2002	18.5%	
<b>Drop Out Rate</b>		

	<b>2001</b>	9-20%	
<b>Completion Rate</b>			
	<b>2001</b>	29%	
<b>Transition Rate</b>			
	<b>2003</b>		

Source: PID 2007, World Bank Ed. Stats<sup>2</sup>, PRGSP, World Bank Education Report 2004 and Global Monitoring Report 2008

### 3.3.1 Focus on Higher Education

#### 3.3.1.1 Policy environment

**Vision 2020** ‘... developing a curriculum that responds to the national development priorities, thus promoting entrepreneurial life, and technical and vocational skills’. (Vision 2020 p.xii)

**PRSP** ‘to promote research and development in order to match scientific and technological training with the socioeconomic requirements of the company’.

**Objective** ‘to provide quality education to all students of the universities and advanced institutes, to promote research and development in order to match scientific and technological training with the socioeconomic requirements of the company, and to identify priority subsectors to be professionalised.

#### **Activities:**

- Thirty percent increase in rural girls’ access to higher and university level education by 2015
- Construction of five new university campuses by 2015
- Rehabilitation of the existing universities
- Establish mechanisms for distance learning

<sup>2</sup> <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/report.do?method=showReport>

- Awarding selective scholarships (for poor families, especially girls)
- Improved working conditions for academic and scientific staff
- Improvement by 2008 in the scientific and administrative supervision ratio
- Introduction of a credible quality control system. (PRSP 2007 p.82)

Education Policy: The Ministry of Higher Education and Universities' reform agenda (Pacte de Modernisation de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire, PADEM, was issued in 2003 and aims to reform the higher education sector. The specific education, university and development research goals include:

Complete higher education, university and development research reforms with a view to strengthening their efficiency and setting them up with ambitious yet realistic sectoral plans.

Strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions and universities to carry out their traditional mission of education/training, research and community service. From this perspective, the Government will create technical and teaching universities, as well as technical and teaching higher education institutions.

With regards to research, the government will improve conditions by modernising equipment, training and retraining staff and granting the necessary financing to this sector.

### 3.3.1.2 Profile of Higher Education

The first university, the Lovanium University in Kinshasa, was inaugurated in 1954 in the DRC.

- 3 Public universities: Kinshasa; Kisingani; Lubumbashi
- Plans to construct 5 university campuses by 2015 (Kindu, Mbuji Mayi, Goma, Kabinda, and Mbandaka) and rehabilitate existing (PRSP 2007, p.82)

### **State involvement in universities**

The DRC has a system of mixed public and private provision. Over the history of the DRC the state has vacillated in its involvement and funding of higher education. Since independence there were many church-run higher education institutions as well as a state-funded university. The state bore most of the running costs of the institutions. Under the influence of a doctrine of centralised control and power in the 1970s all universities were amalgamated into a unified University of Zaire with a central command structure under one Vice-Chancellor. This structure proved onerous and by the 1980s individual institutions were re-established, although the high level of state funding continued.

Together with the country's rapidly declining economy in the late 1980s, the state began to see the universities as a threat, due to anti-government protests and closed all public institutions for two years, accelerating the growth of the private university sector.

Participation: In 1999, 60 000 students were enrolled in tertiary education with a GER of 1 percent.

### 3.3.1.3 Governance

**Legislation:** The Higher Education is formalised by law in the Higher Education and Universities (Ordonnance-loi no 81-028 du 3 octobre 1981) and the Academic degrees in technical higher education institutions (Law Ordonnance-loi? no 82-004 du 6 février 1982).

**Higher Education Structure and Governance:** Ministry of Higher Education and Universities.

### 3.3.1.4 Research

The Government states a key objective of higher education is to promote research and development so that scientific and technological training can match socio-economic requirements of companies. However the Government acknowledges research and development is currently in an acute crisis because it has only recently been regarded as a leading force for the country's development. (PRSP. 2007)

## 3.4 Financing Context

### 3.4.1 Trends in allocation

**TABLE: 4. National Budget Allocations**

<i>Congolese Francs</i>			
<i>billions</i>	2006	2007	2008
Allocation	Actual	Estimate	Estimate
Total Expenditure	636,784	1,079,370	1,368,827
Education	77,392	166,904	229,134
% of budget	12.15%	15.46%	16.74%
Public Health	48,010	132,540	177,106
% of budget	7.54%	12.28%	12.94%

<b>Defence</b>	<b>45,894</b>	<b>53,734</b>	<b>63,948</b>
<b>% of budget</b>	7.21%	4.98%	4.67%

The proportion of the total budget allocated to education is expected to grow from 12,15 percent in 2006 to 16,74 percent in 2008. During this period spending on education grew at an average annual rate of 72,1 percent. Over the same period, public health spending grew from 7,54 percent of the total budget to 12,94 percent and grew at an average annual rate of 92,1 percent. Expenditure on defence, during this period, decreases as a proportion of the budget from 7,21 percent to 4,67 percent, growing only at an average annual rate of 18 percent. This gives an indication of the priority attached to health and education as opposed to defence.

### **3.5 Donor Context**

Post exclusion under the late President Laurent Désiré Kabila the World Bank and IMF returned its support to the DRC in response to the government's efforts to stabilise the economy and currency. Since the World Bank and IMF have agreed on millions of dollars' worth of loans, and a number of bilateral donors followed suit. The World Bank's involvement in the DRC is framed within the country's PRSP. Outcome indicators of the Project include reform of the teacher career structure (training, deployment, salary, incentive structure) and the development of a full education sector plan (including a medium term financing strategy) with agreed indicators. One of the sub-components specifically looks at the rehabilitation of the National Pedagogical University (UPN). US\$3,8-million has been allocated to finance the rehabilitation of UPN's classroom blocks, latrines, and equipment (desks, laboratory equipment). UPN is the only high level institution in the country that is exclusively focused on training teachers and tertiary level teacher educators. It is also engaged in pedagogical research. (PID 2007)

### **3.6 Issues and Observations**

Like all social institutions in the DRC, higher education has suffered as a result of ongoing war and political turmoil which dominated the country for over thirty years. Private HEI's are a major provider but have operated in an unregulated and a confusing policy framework with the result that degrees from private institutions were not officially recognised. The higher education system is reliant on household funding and therefore is inequitable. In public universities, there was no investment in infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries and curricula for many years. Students have limited access to textbooks or other materials and professional staff have very few opportunities for professional development, which earlier in the country's history were offered by exchanges with universities in Europe. The DRC has large mineral deposits. The country has the world's largest copper and cobalt deposits as well as largely untapped oil and diamond reserves. In this regard, the country needs to prioritise the training of skilled technical staff to ensure it has sufficient local capacity to explore, manage and capitalise on these resources. In addition, capital expenditure has risen from zero in 2000 to 3,5 percent of GDP in

**ESTHER ALISO BINDIMONO – English Teacher, Kinshasa**

*'I studied English at the University of Kinshasa for five years and graduated last year. It's not easy to study here. I had many financial problems when I was doing my studies and was unable to pay school fees. They were \$150 a year...*

*When I left university I didn't have a job... now I'm teaching English and History at a secondary school in Kinshasa. I have three classes in the fifth form. The first has 55 pupils, another has 57 and the last 38 pupils. I live alone and have little, little money for food or to pay for a house.*

*It's difficult for students to get jobs here. Some of my fellow students from university are*

2006. In the post-war reconstruction period, management and technical skills are a top priority for the country.

