

Country Context Report - Democratic Republic of Congo

General Country Information

Africa Education Initiative Program Activities

Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program
Innovative Activities
Teacher Training

Primary Language(s)

French: National, Official, Instruction Grades 1-4, Instruction Grades 5-7/8

Kikongo: National

Lingala: National

Kingwana: National

Tshiluba: National

Sources

CIA World Factbook website - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html>

Population

	Total	Male	Female
Total	58,317,930	28,809,800	29,508,130
Under 14	28,130,891	14,122,237	14,008,654

(July 2004 estimate)

Sources

CIA World Factbook website - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html>

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USAID Website: <http://www.usaid.gov/cg>

Basic Education General Information

Breadth of Basic Education Activities

Length of Primary School Cycle: 6 Years

Sources

UNESCO website -
http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/5a4d022ff7d20aaa539c844566a718a7Women+in+contexts+of+crisis.+Gender+and+conflict..doc

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is provided.

In 2000, the gross enrollment rate for Early Childhood Education (ECE) was less than 1% (0.73% for males and 0.72% for females).

Sources

Association for the Development of Education in Africa -
http://www.adeanet.org/biennial2003/papers/5D_ECD_%20ENG_final.pdf

National Curriculum

A national curriculum exists.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

National Exams - At what level are national exams written?

At the end of primary education (grade 6), pupils take the End of Cycle Exam (Examen de fin de cycle) and if successful are awarded the Certificate of Primary Studies (Certificat de`Etudes Primaires). This diploma gives access to secondary education.

At the end of secondary education (grade 12), pupils take the Diploma of Secondary Studies - Long Cycle (Diplome d`Etat d`Etudes Secondaires du Cycle Long).

Sources

Childrens Legal Centre - www.childrenslegalcentre.com/.../uploadedfiles/%7B01D54CB1-2996-452F-8DE9-9147D1E31E4F%7D_DRC.pdf

What are the key basic education challenges?

There is a general deterioration of public sector education, in particular the inadequacy of facilities, the dilapidated infrastructure, the dearth of pedagogical materials, the lack of motivation of teachers, the poor returns reflected in high drop-out rates, the poor performance of students at every level, and the mismatch between the training imparted and the skills required by the labor market.

Generally speaking, although the admission rate is high, it is declining, which suggests that the enrollment rate in the DRC is falling. The percentage of children entering school at the legally required age (6 years) has plummeted from 22.5% in 1995 to 13.9% in 2001. In 1995, the net admission rate for the first year of primary school was 42.8% in urban areas and only 14% in rural areas. The enrollment rate was 76.8% in urban areas and 51.5% in rural areas. The retention rate in the fifth year of primary school was estimated at 60.3% in urban areas, compared to 15.1% in rural areas.

Sources

The Worldbank website - http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/DRC_IPRSP.pdf

Is primary education 'free' (legally)?

In practice primary education is not free and many parents have to pay school fees as well as related costs such as for uniforms and equipment, which remain too expensive for most families.

Parents pay fees that consume a significant portion of their income. School fees are normally US\$ 1 per child per month for most students, and US\$ 10 for private schools. This is a significant portion of a per capita income estimated at US\$ 200 or less annually.

Sources

Action Canada for Development and Population website - http://www.acpd.ca/compilation/CRC_C_2.htm
USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

What are the barriers to student access and participation in basic education?

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is moving, slowly and haltingly, towards reunification of the country, national elections, and the end of conflicts involving both external and internal parties. However, the depth of poverty and the scale of need in the DRC remain enormous, with roughly two-thirds of the population living in rural areas and ensnared by desperate poverty. This poverty manifests itself in extremely low incomes and purchasing power, abysmal access to and availability of fundamental health services, and a near total lack of basic education. The capital, Kinshasa, with an estimated eight million people, already is dangerously overcrowded, with most people lacking access to basic services. A United Nations human development report in 2002 ranks DRC 155 out of 173 countries.

Sources

USAID website - http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/drcongo/

In what ways is the education system addressing the needs of marginalized groups? Are there special schools?

Special schools exist.

Street Children

An estimated 1,500 street children live in neighboring Republic of Congo, 60% of whom originate from the DRC. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) office in Brazzaville works closely with IRC Kinshasa to conduct a program for the care, tracing and re-unification of these children with their families.

Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) receives US\$ 3-4 million annually in Displaced Children and Orphans funds, and Other Vulnerable Children funds, and implements an ambitious program in child protection. In Kinshasa, Save the Children Foundation (SCF) and its non-governmental organization (NGO) partners currently operate the USAID-funded Social Welfare, Protection, and Inclusion Program, which targets demobilized child soldiers, ex-prostitutes, street children, and children treated as witches. The program offers protection for the children and provides education, health care, and income-generation activities. Scholarships are also provided to children so they can afford to attend school. The demobilized soldiers living with their families raise rabbits and vegetables and participate in other income-generation projects to increase their family income. Rabbits are provided to children who enroll in the school program.

Sources

International Rescue Committee website - <http://www.theirc.org/DRcongo/>
USAID/DRC - http://www.usaid.gov/ftp_data/pub/OP/PSC/623s03005.html

What is the stage of development of the education system?

Of the nine million children of primary school age in the DRC, only 50.3% were enrolled in 2000-2001, due to a lack of adequate infrastructure and teaching staff, and to the fact that parents could not afford to pay for their children's studies. 24% of people aged 15 years and over have never been to school, 39.1% dropped out at primary level, and only 37% reached secondary level.

One-third of the DRC population aged 15 and over cannot read or write. Illiteracy rates are much higher among women (44%) than men (19%), and in rural areas (55% of women versus 21% of men) than in urban areas (20.6% of women versus just 7.3% of men).

The scale of illiteracy shows the limited scope of efforts on the part of the government and the international community to progress towards the ideal of education for all. Regional disparities

broadly divide the country into two unequal parts. In the following provinces more than 50% of the education demand is being met: Kinshasa, Bas Congo (66.6%), Bandundu (79.4%), Equateur (58.6%), Orientale (55.9%) and Western Kasai (56.2%). In the other provinces less than 50% of the education demand is being met: Maniema (47.3%), Katanga (29.4%), Eastern Kasai (29.7%), North and South Kivu (39.5% and 45.8% respectively).

These statistics confirm that the serious deficiencies in the DRC population's overall level of education could tie in with the education system's continuing inability to cater to the demand. Classrooms are increasingly overcrowded and ill-equipped, with pupils forced to sit on the floor, and teachers are underpaid and financially dependent on students' parents.

The government, which used to have sole responsibility for delivering education in the DRC, currently shares that responsibility with other partners, such as religious organizations, companies, and private individuals. Educational structures have been growing in number and there has been an increase in the potential for delivering education. Yet the Ministry of Education and Sports' Direction de la Planification et des Statistiques Scolaires (DPSS) shows delivery of education to be falling well short of the demand.

Sources

UNESCO Research Paper - http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/2a43e64647654bc56be80fea2e9c679bEducation+demand+in+Democratic+Republic+of+the+Congo..rtf

Primary School Enrollment by Year and Grade

Year	Grade	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
2004 (1)	Total	10,850,000				
1998 (2)	Total	4,827,679	2,776,487	2,051,192		

(1) - In total, 66% of males of primary school age and 51% of females of primary school age were enrolled in 2001. The attendance rate is likely to be much lower. Three to 3.5 million children between ages six and 11 in DRC did not have access to basic education in 2000-2001. This means that approximately 50% of children of primary school age are completely outside the educational system. Estimates of children who do not have access to school are as high as 70% in the East. Some areas of forced displacement, desertion or recent return of displaced persons do not have any functioning schools. Schools in Fizi, Bunyakiri, Mwenga and Shabunda in South Kivu often do not function. Only 64% of enrolled children make it to grade five.

(2) - The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) of girls in primary school has declined overall from 61.4% in 1990 to 51.37% in 1998. In four provinces, the GER in primary school for girls in 1998 dropped below 50%: Nord-Kivu 31.5%, Sud-Kivu 40.3%, Katanga 42.5% and Kasai-Occidental 43.9%.

Sources

UNESCO website - http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/5a4d022ff7d20aaa539c844566a718a7Women+in+contexts+of+crisis.+Gender+and+conflict..doc
 Women's Commission Website - http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_drc.pdf
 USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

Enrollment Age

Year	General	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
0	6	6	6	6	6

Sources

The Worldbank website - http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/DRC_IPRSP.pdf

Drop Out Rates

Year	General	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
1995 (1)	60	55	75	40	85

(1) - (For grade 5)

The numbers above are percentages.

In 1995, the drop-out rates through grade 5 were so high that literacy was not achieved for even half of school-age children.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

Are there alternatives to traditional schools?

There are vocational/technical schools. These courses last up to five years in areas such as trade and crafts, at the end of which a "Brevet" is awarded.

Sources

Childrens Legal Centre - www.childrenslegalcentre.com/.../uploadedfiles/%7B01D54CB1-2996-452F-8DE9-9147D1E31E4F%7D_DRC.pdf

How is the country addressing HIV/AIDS issues?

The HIV prevalence rate among people aged 15-49 was estimated by the Joint United Nations AIDS Programme (UNAIDS) to be 5.07% in 1999. By the end of 1999, 1,100,000 adults and children were living with HIV and AIDS in DRC and more than 680,000 children had been orphaned due to AIDS.

In response to the epidemic, the government developed the Programme National de Lutte Contre le SIDA et les MST, 1999-2001 (National Program to Combat AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases). According to this plan, the government has developed strategies and programs in 17 different areas to address the epidemic. Some examples of these activities are programs that focus on illiteracy, substance abuse, human rights, orphans, and mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Special programs have been developed to target prisoners, religious leaders, commercial sex workers, truck drivers, military personnel, and youth.

Sources

National Program to Combat AIDS - http://hivaidsclearinghouse.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=2898_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

Are there political conflicts and what is the impact of these conflicts on education?

More people have died as a result of the war in the DRC than in any other conflict since World War II. Despite a tenuous peace agreement and the installation of a transitional government in 2003, much of the DRC remains dangerously insecure. The conflict in DRC erupted as seven nations, three main rebel groups and numerous militias began fighting over a complex mix of economic, ethnic, state and factional interests, plunging the country into a devastating humanitarian crisis. A 2002 mortality survey conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) found that between August 1998 and August 2002, approximately 3.3 million people died from the ongoing conflict. That is approximately 2,000 war-related deaths every day for four years. The current conflict has displaced over 2.7 million people, most of whom find shelter in already-impooverished communities. In these communities, resources are stretched even further by the influx of the refugees. The war has also closed important trade routes and disrupted normal economic and agricultural activities. The ongoing armed conflict, coupled with 30 years of misrule under the dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko and four years of mass inflation under his rival and successor, Laurent Kabila, has left the DRC with extremely limited infrastructure and means to support basic health, food, water, sanitation and education needs.

Despite all major warring factions entering into a transitional government in July 2003 and the withdrawal of foreign armies, fighting continues in parts of the east, population displacements are ongoing, the country's natural mineral wealth continues to be pillaged, and basic health facilities, safe drinking water, and schooling remain limited. Moreover, many families have been terrorized by armed groups.

Sources

International Rescue Committee website - <http://www.theirc.org/DRCongo/>

Are there on-going, recently completed projects relating to the following areas?

Girls' Education

The SAGE program will contribute to improving girls' education in the DRC by increasing girls' attendance and performance in primary schools in the Katanga Province (main city: Lubumbashi) through a multi-sectoral approach.

Based on discussions with counterparts, project and school visits, the following four main activities were identified to address local economic and girls' educational needs:

- Teacher training for a friendlier school environment for girls
- Community sensitization for greater support of girls' education
- Income generating activities for reduction of parents' educational burden
- Information and communication strategies for greater coverage and experience sharing on efforts

to promote girls' education.

Sources

SAGE Website - <http://sage.aed.org/>

What is the status of Muslim education?

10% of the DRC population are Muslim.

Sources

CIA World Factbook website - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html>

Additional Basic Education General Information

Donor Information

Belgium Government - 2003

US\$ 320,000

Educational support for teacher training in Kivu and Kinsangani East Provinces

Japanese Depot Foundation - 2004

US\$ 113,000

Educational support of secondary level schools in Goma Province for training of teachers in French, mathematics, physics and psychopedagogy

UNESCO - 2004

US\$ 50,000

Emergency assistance for purchase of school materials in Goma

Sub-regional conference on schooling of refugee children in Central Africa

USAID - 2001

US\$ 2,000,000

2003

US\$ \$1,760,000

Teacher training, community learning centers, interactive radio programs, maximize girls` entry and retention, more girl-friendly schools, building separate girls` latrines, and increasing the number of female teachers

2004

US\$ 2,880,000

Basic education

2005

US\$ 3,270,000

Basic education

The USAID basic education objective in the DRC is focused on improving quality, access, and student retention, especially for girls by concentrating on improving community participation in education, improving teacher skills, and increasing the supply of appropriate texts and other learning materials. USAID/DRC expects to promote sustainable improvements in these educational areas by introducing innovative programs that generate enhanced educational impact and increased community participation.

World Bank - 2003

US\$ 60,000,000

Emergency Social Action includes the implementation of two education initiatives: a scholarship program that provides awards to top-performing, university-level students, and a literacy program which establishes community and classroom libraries, promotes low-cost literacy activities for children and adults, as well as trains teachers and librarians.

Sources

UNESCO website: Emergency, Crisis and Reconstruction -

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14448&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

USAID/DRC - http://www.usaid.gov/ftp_data/pub/OP/PSC/623s03005.html

Teacher Training

Number of Teachers by Level

Level	Number
Secondary (1)	89,461
Primary (2)	158,086

(1) - (1998 estimate)

A total of 9,045 (10%) of teachers were female.

(2) - (1998 estimate)

A total of 33,198 (21%) teachers were female.

Sources

UNESCO Statistics -

http://esdb.cdie.org/cgi-bin2/broker.exe?_program=gedprogs.ged_country_une_2.sas&_service=default&cocode=6ZAR+&sscode=R+

Number of Primary Teachers by Gender

Total	Male	Female
158,086	124,888	33,198

(1998 estimate)

Sources

UNESCO Statistics -

http://esdb.cdie.org/cgi-bin2/broker.exe?_program=gedprogs.ged_country_une_2.sas&_service=default&cocode=6ZAR+&sscode=R+

Pupil/Teacher Ratio

Level	Total	Urban	Rural
Total	40:1		

In Katanga province, there are between 50 and 126 students per teacher.

Sources

UNESCO website -

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/5a4d022ff7d20aaa539c844566a718a7Women+in+contexts+of+crisis.+Gender+and+conflict..doc

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

What are the barriers to teacher sufficiency?

There is almost no budget to implement, oversee and control the state education system. This results in very low wages for teachers, over-crowded classrooms and a drastic shortage of learning materials.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

What is the design of pre-service teacher training programs?

Pre-primary and primary school teachers are trained in four to six years at secondary level in Ecoles normales or Ecoles pédagogiques. They obtain the Brevet d'Instituteur or a State Diploma in Pedagogy. Courses include general and educational studies and practical teaching experience.

Secondary school teachers are trained at the Institut supérieur pédagogique (ISP), the Institut supérieur technique or education faculties. Candidates must hold the Diplôme d'Etat d'Etudes secondaires du Cycle long. Courses are offered in all subjects taught at secondary level. The courses last for five years and are divided into two cycles. The first cycle lasts for three years and leads to the qualification of Gradué en Enseignement. The second lasts for two years and culminates in a competitive examination. Successful students are awarded the Licence d'Enseignement. Holders of the title of Gradué are qualified to teach the first four years of secondary school. Holders of the Licence d'Enseignement are qualified to teach the final two years of secondary school.

Sources

Loyola Marymount University - <http://www.lmu.edu/globaled/wwcu/background/zr.rtf>

What is the design of in-service teacher training programs?

There is little or no in-service training for teachers, except as provided through donors.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

Minimum Requirements for Teacher Training Recruitment

General

Primary school teachers are required to obtain the Brevet d'Instituteur or a State Diploma in Pedagogy.

Secondary school teachers are required to obtain a Licence d'Enseignement. Holders of the title of Gradué are qualified to teach the first four years of secondary school. Holders of the Licence d'Enseignement are qualified to teach the final two years of secondary school. Students who have completed a non-pedagogical first degree course and who wish to teach can qualify by completing a one-year course leading to the Agrégation de l'Enseignement secondaire supérieur.

Early Childhood Education

Pre-primary teachers are required to obtain the Brevet d'Instituteur or a State Diploma in Pedagogy.

Sources

Loyola Marymount University - <http://www.lmu.edu/globaled/wwcu/background/zr.rtf>

Demand for Teacher Training

It is doubtful that Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) would be able to recruit a sufficient number of students to study primary education as the salary after graduation is too low to attract new teachers.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

Is there evidence of curriculum revision?

Innovative teaching practices

The delivery of instruction is outdated and child-centered learning is generally not practiced.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

Are alternative routes to teacher certification available?

Alternative routes for teacher training exist.

Distance education is available to a limited extent through private institutions.

Sources

South African Institute for Distance Education -

http://www.saide.org.za/ur/Policy_and_Systemic_Interventions/Systemic%20Interventions%20-%20including%20Systems%20Reviews/2002/Credit%20Transfer%20in%20Southern%20Africa/credit%20transfer%20report.pdf

Efficiency of TTCs

The TTCs have little or no input in the preparation of primary school teachers as most focus on secondary pre-service training.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

Proportion of New Graduates Employed as Teachers

Many graduates from TTCs do not enter the teaching profession as the salaries are very low, in particular for primary school teachers.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

Percentage of Teacher Salary from Private/Non-Government Sources

In most, if not all areas in the DRC, parents are expected to contribute to school costs.

Since 1995 in North Kivu, it is the schools` responsibility to collect enough money to pay teachers` salaries and cover other costs.

Sources

Women`s Commission Website - http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_drc.pdf

Are there incentives for teachers to teach in rural areas?

There are no incentives for teachers to teach in rural areas. Roads between Kinshasa, the provinces and schools are few. Regular visits by inspectors are impossible in many areas.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

Are there programs for the professional development and support of head teachers and school administrators?

There is little or no in-service training for inspectors or school officials.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

Girls' Education

What are the primary reasons for girls' low enrollment and completion rates?

The current conflict situation in DRC means that education is at a standstill in many areas. Enrollment figures indicate a 15% differential between boys and girls (66% of boys, and only 51% of girls) but the actual attendance rates are likely to be much lower. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that of the 3 to 3.5 million children aged between six and 11 without access to basic education, two million are girls. Conflict can exacerbate the factors which contribute to low school enrollment of girls. These include parents being unable and unwilling to spare the direct and indirect costs of sending girls to school, such as girls' regular participation in household and farming duties. Moreover, the patriarchal nature of the society prompts many families struggling with scarce resources to send boys to school at the expense of girls. In addition, parents are concerned for the safety and security of their daughters traveling long distances from home to school, and then being at risk of sexual harassment from teachers.

Sources

UNESCO website -

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/5a4d022ff7d20aaa539c844566a718a7Women+in+contexts+of+crisis.+Gender+and+conflict..doc

Women's Commission Website - http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_drc.pdf

Is there evidence of curriculum revision?

General

The curriculum has not been adapted and is irrelevant to the living conditions of children in the DRC. Textbooks do not adequately portray either girls or boys in gender fair ways.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

Life Skills

Life skills are not adequately discussed in textbooks.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

What are the reforms most likely to stimulate the enrollment and persistence of girls in school?

- Strong re-entry policies for teenage mothers
- Special intensive, accelerated basic education classes for adolescent girls
- Specific classes for young wives, teenage mothers and pregnant girls, with food, child-care, and space for young women and their babies
- Flexible school schedules, for example second, afternoon shifts specifically for girls
- Innovative distance and home-based education, for example radio education programs
- Independent study centers / buddy systems and study groups, and young girls' clubs to promote peer education and support
- Careful location of schools close to women and girls
- Provision of secure, school dormitory accommodation for girls and young women
- Specific attention to "safe spaces" and "safe schools" for girls and women
- Placement of female classroom assistants where there are mostly male teachers
- Organized, accompanied and safe travel to and from school
- Community sensitization on gender-based violence, such as home visits to talk with parents and community members and media, radio and community campaigns
- Clear disciplinary guidelines and procedures for girls' protection
- Separate toilets for women and girls
- Recruitment and support of women teachers
- Teacher education on gender-sensitive teaching and learning strategies
- Gender sensitive curriculum, teaching and learning materials
- Community participation in decision-making and planning
- Programs which combine literacy and numeracy with vocational skills and training which allow women to generate income
- Early childhood education provision
- Provision of uniforms, sanitary supplies, school books and supplies
- Food incentives for girls and their families
- Scholarships targeted for girls
- Income generation projects for mothers
- Assistance to reduce time spent on household tasks.

Sources

UNESCO website -
http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/5a4d022ff7d20aaa539c844566a718a7Women+in+contexts+of+crisis.+Gender+and+conflict..doc

Are schools safe for girls? What is the most common threat to the safety of schoolgirls?

Schools are not safe for girls.

Some parents choose to keep their daughters at home due to safety and security considerations. Schools are often a long distance from home, the conditions of the schools are extremely poor, and there is increasing evidence of sexual harassment of girls by their teachers. In addition, the learning environment is generally not conducive to girls' achievement.

Sources

Women's Commission Website - http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/wl_drc.pdf

Textbooks and Other Learning Materials

Perception of Adequacy of Learning Resources

There are practically no learning materials in classrooms for student or teacher use. Students copy portions of the textbook from what the teacher writes on the blackboard.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women's Education DRC - USAID

To what extent is information communication technology available/used in basic education?

ICT Available

Telephones - main lines in use: 10,000 (2002 estimate)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 1 million (2003)

The telephone system has barely adequate wire and microwave radio relay service in and between urban areas.

Television broadcast stations: 4 (2001 estimate)

Internet hosts: 153 (2003 estimate)

Internet users: 50,000 (2002 estimate)

Sources

CIA World Factbook website - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html>

Description of Transportation Systems and Projected Improvements

Railways: 5,138 kilometers (km)

Highways: 157,000 km

Waterways: 15,000 km (navigation on the Congo curtailed by fighting)

Ports and harbors: Banana, Boma, Bukavu, Bumba, Goma, Kalemie, Kindu, Kinshasa, Kisangani, Matadi, Mbandaka

Airports - with paved runways: 24

Sources

CIA World Factbook website - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cg.html>

Community Participation in Basic Education

In what ways is the community involved in basic education?

Provision of labor

In West-Kasai, 90% of the 150 primary and 52 secondary schools lie in rural areas and most were built by the efforts of parents.

Serving in committees for school development, Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Community and parental involvement in school is common and valued. Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) exist and help mobilize the community to repair or build schools and administer fees.

Paying fees

Many parents have to contribute to paying teachers` salaries as the state-paid salary is rarely paid on time and is very low.

Sources

Association for the Development of Education in Africa -
http://www.adeanet.org/biennial2003/papers/5D_ECD_%20ENG_final.pdf
USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

What is the level of community participation vs. government share of social and financial responsibility for basic education?

There is a strong tradition of church run schools and they continue to function throughout the country. They teach the state curriculum, use state-certified teachers and cooperate closely with government officials. It is widely acknowledged that the church schools (covenant schools) deliver higher quality education than state run public schools.

Sources

USAID Assessment Needs in Girls and Women`s Education DRC - USAID

Are NGOs and civil society involved in education? What role do they play? Who are they?

NGOs and civil society are involved in education.

The following NGOs are active in the DRC:

- Avocats Sans Frontières/Belgique
- CARE International
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- Christian Aid,
- Concern
- Développement et Paix (Development and Peace)
- Diakonia
- International Human Rights Law Group
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Oxfam-Québec
- Save the Children

Sources

International Rescue Committee website - <http://www.theirc.org/DR Congo/>

Impact of HIV/AIDS on Basic Education

Is there provision for the education of orphans and vulnerable children?

There is provision for the education of orphans and vulnerable children.

The ongoing conflict and years of neglect in the DRC are impairing the capacities of communities and families to care for and protect their children. Since 1998, an estimated 2.5 million lives have been lost in the DRC, 86% of which are attributed to disease and malnutrition. The average life expectancy for Congolese people is 46 years. With a per capita income of 23 U.S. cents a day, the country figures among the 10 poorest in the world.

The stability of the family as the guardian of a child's safety and primary source of care is being shaken by economic and social factors, which taken together create conditions for the separation and abandonment of children. Forms of separation include, but are not limited to, street children, displaced unaccompanied minors, child soldiers, child laborers, children accused of sorcery and witchcraft, children in conflict with the law, child mothers, and children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

The hardships created by abject poverty and prolonged conflict, when combined with other factors such as the powerless position of women in society, are seriously weakening the family unit. Children may be at risk of abandonment or separation for some time before it actually occurs, particularly in situations where the support offered by extended families is curtailed, young mothers are estranged from their partners, and the pressures of ever-deepening poverty overcome families.

USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) supports programs that not only find a means for protecting separated and abandoned children but also strive to repair the broken link between family and child. This is achieved by building community response around the needs of children and recreating the underlying fabric of protection and social commitment to the welfare of children. Based on the success of a DCOF-sponsored Save the Children/United Kingdom (UK) program to assist children who are at risk of separation or abandonment, USAID will fund three new programs through DCOF. In addition, DCOF recently began underwriting a unique Save the Children/UK program to stop the persecution of Congolese children perceived to be practicing witchcraft. By taking a comprehensive approach and examining all the conditions that place children at risk rather than focusing on just one cause, DCOF and its implementing partners aim not only to reduce child abandonment and separation but to make the practice unacceptable in Congolese society.

Sources

USAID DCOF Program website - http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/the_funds/dcof/droc.html