

Contract No. DPE-3035-C-00-6062-06

Activity No. 660-0094

OPTIONS I: ZAIRE FINAL REPORT

Prepared by:
Jean De Malvinsky

Submitted to:
Martin Brockerhoff
Technical Monitor

Date:
March 9, 1992

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

A. Summary: Project and Contractor Number; Contract Dates and Amounts

The OPTIONS project (Contractor No. DPE-3035-C-00-6062-06) initiated activity no. 660-0094 in Zaire on September 29, 1986 in the amount of \$680,000. The scheduled completion date was September 30, 1991.

B.1. Summary Description of Project

Options for Population Policy, a project of the U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Population, assists developing countries in formulating and implementing policies that increase access to and use of voluntary family planning services. The basic policy choices that countries make with respect to goals, financing, organization, legal framework and mix of service delivery strategies will determine the impact of the family planning program. OPTIONS provides the assistance needed by developing countries in addressing these fundamental issues.

Strong pronatalist sentiment in Zaire moderated in the 1970s with acceptance of a "desirable births" approach to child spacing. In the 1980s, support of measures to reduce fertility grew rapidly. President Mobutu's December 5, 1985 speech calling for intensification of research to raise living standards was seen as directly linking the nation's low development performance to rapid population growth. In 1986, a national population conference was held and in 1987 a draft National Population Policy (NPP) was prepared following a Presidential order creating the National Population Committee to carry out the national policy.

B.2. & 3. Summary Description of Contract SOW and Expected Contract Outputs

Since an NPP had already been drafted, the OPTIONS project focused on its provisions that related to developing support for the NPP and planning for its implementation. Those objectives were to be achieved through the specific steps of:

- Identifying requirements and assembling the resources to meet them, working with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Plan and the Director of the Office of Planning and Coordination of the Population program (CECAP);
- Assisting the GOZ in establishing the organizational structure for implementation of the NPP and managing the action program under it. This included the establishment and operation of the National Population Commission, the Office for Planning and Coordination and an Intersectoral Technical Commission;
- Providing technical assistance for initiating a program of staff development and training for the three organizations referred to above, especially

management training for senior officials;

- Strengthening and extending awareness of population and development interactions and the need for support for the implementation of the NPP through workshops and seminars nationwide;
- Supporting the preparation of qualitative and quantitative tools for policy analysis and development and for planning for implementation, particularly the development of outlines to be used to draft sections of the action plans for implementation of the NPP;
- Providing OPTIONS project personnel and expert consultants to CECAP and GOZ Departments to draft sectoral plans required for the budget preparation and implementation of the NPP;
- Assisting the Coordinator in selecting the research and analysis projects to be undertaken and the funding, and direction of a few, highly selected projects on key subjects;
- Providing for the organization and funding of observational travel for key persons involved in planning the implementation of a national population policy; and,
- Developing support and action in the private sector, partly through encouraging the development of a private sector "National Council" to be supported in part by the UNFPA and in part by the OPTIONS project.

The OPTIONS project also assigned a one-year, resident population and management technical advisor in Zaire to provide a range of population-related, technical assistance skills to the GOZ, particularly to the Department of Plan and its population unit, CECAP, as well as to the Department of Public Health and its family planning unit, PSND. The population and management technical advisor was to assist both CECAP, which is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of all population activities under the NPP, and PSND, which is responsible chiefly for the development and delivery of family planning services in the public domain, by:

- Advising CECAP relative to the continuing program planning and implementation of population activities under the NPP;
- Assisting PSND in enhancing its existing management capabilities for implementing its sector of the NPP, and to plan, program and budget for the eventual expansion of its Family Planning (FP) service delivery coverage. Specific technical assistance interventions included:

- analyzing and making recommendations regarding PSND organizational structure and management and administrative functions of central, regional, and local levels;
 - analyzing PSND policies and procedures relative to the NPP and proposing nationwide service delivery expansion, including commodities procurement and distribution, subsidization issues, potential revenue generation schemes, service through the private sector, etc.;
 - diagnosing and proposing improvements regarding financial management, budgeting, accounting and inventory control;
 - assessing human resource development and training needs using a competency-based approach for management, programming, budgeting, and administrative functions;
 - advising in the expansion and improvement of the management information system, especially through the computerization of management and administrative functions; and
 - assisting in development of systems to coordinate outside technical assistance provided by centrally-funded FP projects, collaborating agencies and other donors;
- Assisting the GOZ in its development and implementation of the NPP and the OPTIONS project in Zaire through selected site visits to other African countries where parallel developments were underway so that GOZ efforts would be strengthened; and,
 - Serving as the CECAP and PSND liaison to the USAID Population Officer.

As most of the OPTIONS project's expected outputs were in the realm of constituency building and staff training, they were not always immediately visible. OPTIONS did, however, take part in such activities as the National Workshop in Programming and Budgeting, the National Conference on the National Population Committee, and the National Workshop on Managing Projects Related to the Implementation of the NPP. The project also conducted training programs for and gave commodities assistance to CECAP whose members developed "POPZAIRE" as a computerized policy tool. It was also instrumental in lending support for World Population Day activities and assistance for the Inaugural Seminar of the National Population Committee. In addition, OPTIONS was successful in: equipping CECAP with office equipment, supplies and a vehicle indispensable to its functioning; participating in a National Workshop to draft full and comprehensive budgets and plans for each of the 9

sectors of the NPP; developing a national action plan for the implementation of the NPP that includes detailed sectoral guidelines with regard to efficient resource allocation; and having the NPP designated as an official GOZ working document to be used by all national and international agencies involved in population issues.

B.4.a. Evolution of Sectoral Environment

With the preparation of the draft NPP and the presidential mandate for the creation of a National Population Committee, the OPTIONS project seemed to be initiating work in Zaire under ideal conditions. Yet, as work progressed, it became apparent that great effort would be required to effect any meaningful change in Zaire's lingering pronatalist attitudes and extremely low contraceptive prevalence rates. At its inception, in view of official declarations, the OPTIONS Project failed to recognize the limited value of the NPP draft document. Therefore, the activities that followed the needs assessment visit, although possessing an internal logic, were not based on recognized ground. This much needed underlying foundation would have given them the needed legitimacy and exposure that they deserved. This absence of official legitimacy explains partly why the sectoral environment did not evolve as fast as was originally expected.

On the other hand, tangible progress became manifest with the establishment of both the Cellule des Etudes et de la Coordination des Activités en Matière de Population (CECAP) which was to coordinate all actions regarding the NPP, and the National Committee on Population (CONAPO), which was responsible for implementing the NPP. These two institutions required an extended length of time before they became operational. This is due in part to the very limited number of willing and charismatic professionals involved in the CONAPO and CECAP, although a special adviser for population issues was named to the Minister of Plan. Furthermore, the GOZ, did not allocate resources necessary for the proper functioning of these institutions, leading to a shortage of trained personnel backed up by facilities and a support system.

Work towards implementation of the NPP related activities progressed as two separate workshops produced full and comprehensive budgets and plans for each of the 9 sectors of the draft Policy, and a Consolidation of Sectorial Plans into an overall national action plan. Awareness activities directed toward Government officials were still of critical necessity as the sectoral leaders were not directly involved in these events. The NPP draft was submitted to and passed through the Comité Economique et Financier in May, but was not accepted by the Comité Restreint. Changes within the GOZ affected approval of the policy because most of the Ministers could not be reached by awareness raising presentations. This was due to the volatile nature of their appointment as department heads.

The first scheduled meeting of CONAPO since its establishment had to be suspended when Citoyen Mikobi, Secretary General at Plan and main advocate for the development and adoption of a NPP moved to another position outside of the Ministry of

Plan. Under the new Secretary General, Citoyen Botswali, CONAPO did convene after preparatory work conducted by CECAP. CONAPO members reviewed the NPP draft revised by CECAP with OPTIONS assistance, completed the proposal and declared the document to be legally acceptable. Due to the interim nature of the GOZ, and instead of pushing for the adoption of the NPP as the official Zaire Policy, the chosen strategy was to have the NPP designated as an official GOZ working document to be used by all national and international agencies involved in population issues. This step was swiftly taken, and at this point activities in Zaire stopped as a result of the Congressional restriction on transfers of resources to the GOZ.

B.4.b.1. Implementation Problems Encountered Along the Way

The main obstacle, one faced repeatedly by OPTIONS in Zaire, was the shortage of resources, both in terms of personnel and in terms of necessary facilities and support systems. CECAP, particularly, has not been able to acquire the breadth and depth of staff, the authority or the institutional vigor originally envisaged. Numerous changes in government personnel were also hindrances to the goal of providing Zaire with its official population policy. For example, there have been eight different Commissaires d'Etat au Plan since OPTIONS began work in Zaire. Another obstacle is that the educational and awareness building activities designed to promote the NPP had not yet overcome unfamiliarity with population issues among Zaire's policy makers. Resistance to dealing with population issues and implementing relevant programs is still prevalent among national leaders. Thus, with the end of over four years of OPTIONS assistance, the principal goal of an official Population Policy has only been partially achieved.

B.4.b.2. & 3. Achievements Toward Accomplishing Outputs and Pending Achievements

The accomplishments of OPTIONS in Zaire, however, cannot be ignored. The project participated actively in the workshops that produced the NPP budget and the overall national action plan. OPTIONS placement of a Population and Family Planning resident advisor was highly successful in accomplishing its goals of assisting the GOZ family planning project in expanding, decentralizing and strengthening existing family planning services. The resident advisor also helped CECAP in planning the implementation of the Policy by developing programming and budgeting tools. In addition, OPTIONS revised a presentation appropriate for awareness raising and constituency building relative to the NPP among key GOZ officials. The OPTIONS project also built upon World Bank structural adjustment efforts to convince the GOZ of the timeliness and need for the NPP, as well as collaborated and coordinated with the UNFPA project in order to reinforce mutual efforts to win approval of the NPP.

On the institutional ground, CECAP and CONAPO have demonstrated the ability to function and produce results to the extent that recurring technical assistance was provided. Of course organizational development work will need to be continued for the institutional development of these two important bodies. Both institutions will have a role

to play in promoting the NPP adoption and in the revision and development of an implementation plan. One of the steps toward the achievement of this goal is the implementation of the awareness raising program developed just before OPTIONS ended its involvement in Zaire. This program addresses both the private and public sectors' leadership as key targets for the adoption and implementation of the NPP. Besides the executive branch of GOZ, the National Assembly is a potentially key institution that may play a key role in the future.

B.4.b.4. Lessons Learned

1- Regardless of the intrinsic validity of the OPTIONS plan of action in Zaire it was based on some assumptions that through time did not prove to be as valid as originally thought. We believe the original plan of action still embodies some of the essential elements that could be applied in the future, but the activity sequence will have to be reviewed, target groups will need to be expanded and a two-level strategy will be most likely to succeed.

a. The program could not move quickly to build on the sentiments which motivated creation of the PSND in 1972 and the CONAPO after the National Conference on Population held in 1986. The perception that Zaire would move quickly away from a pronatalist stand, although shared by many foreign and some Zairian organizations, was in no way accepted by many of the influential people of the country. As an example of this later attitude, in 1987, the then PSND Director was called in by the Prime Minister (Premier Commissaire d'Etat) who asked for some suggestions as to how PSND could contribute to the rapid increase of the Zaire Population. As a further and more recent indication of this attitude favoring rapid population increase in Zaire is the pronatalist stand taken by the person in charge of the World Bank-sponsored Structural Adjustment Social Program during meetings held with the OPTIONS representative. This view held by many in Zaire will have to be taken into consideration during the needs assessment activity and when dealing with programs aimed at National leadership groups. To several leaders, the pronatalist position is justified when dealing with several underpopulated areas and the regions of Zaire bordering Rwanda and Burundi from which large populations may be tempted to migrate (adding to the already large number of immigrants).

b. The assumption as to the validity of the NPP expressed in the first document was, in retrospect, overstated. In fact, none of the decision making bodies had validated the Policy document. To base a program of activities on this context led to a lack of credibility. It seems appropriate to remember that policy decision making, when not simply conducted by the president, was the responsibility of the Party Central Committee, and the Party General Assembly, limiting the role of the Government in policy making. Most likely some changes will take place in the Zaire policy decision making process in the future. Nevertheless, parallel to the development of the NPP by technical bodies, policy awareness activities will be essential to gain policy approval of the specific bodies in charge.

A thorough needs assessment will be crucial to determine potential specific obstacles to the NPP acceptance process and to discover the enabling factors that will be instrumental in the policy implementation.

2- As an unanticipated result, OPTIONS' work in Zaire contributed greatly to the family planning activities conducted by PSND, SANRU and other organizations. In several instances their administrators and mid-level service providers indicated that "our work was facilitated, and our services more credible because a Population Policy is in preparation". Specific activities, due to their chronological positioning had a dual and somehow contradictory effect.

The budget development for the 9 sectors at that time included in the NPP draft and the drawing of the National Action Plan were most certainly instrumental in raising awareness of population issues among numerous mid-level national cadres, but they also raised expectations that have yet to be fulfilled. It will be necessary for the chronology of steps to be applied in the future. That is, activities such as the ones mentioned above, which are the programmatic expression of the NPP, will have to follow the Policy instead of representing a draft document that did not receive official credibility. This is not to say that no similar activity may be conducted without an official NPP, but, in the absence of such policy, a background of legitimacy must be provided.

3- Due to the charisma and highly professional competence of some of the key Zairian individuals in leadership positions, a reasonably optimistic outcome of the OPTIONS program was expected. Unfortunately, the momentum gained during the first activities slowed down drastically when these counterparts moved to other positions. In the future, during the organization development phase, in addition to performance analysis and human resource development of the CONAPO, CECAP and other organizations involved in policy activities, it will be vital for the long term success of the NPP implementation to institutionalize these units. This will help them to be able to carry out their mandate regardless of the presence or absence of just a few individuals.

4- In the Zairian context, it seems to make more sense to be allied with the Ministry of Plan (A National institution for conception and coordination) than to PSND (A service provider agency). For long term credibility and in order to avoid the perception that the NPP is equal to "Naissances Desirable" the technical adviser should be "housed" at CECAP if he is to provide technical assistance to both. One has to remember that CECAP's mandate is to coordinate agencies like PSND.

5- Zaire has adopted the Primary Health Care Policy and is implementing the PHC strategy. In this context the PSND activities are fully legitimized and must be shown to be one of the eight PHC components. For this reason, awareness raising of the population issue among services providers and community leaders can readily be accomplished through the "Health" channel. We were able to experience this approach with the SANRU national and regional representatives. At this point, family planning has to be shown as a health

policy issue in the framework of reproductive health, child survival and MCH, while the population policy will address the demographic impact on family welfare and include family planning as a population policy implementation tool.

6- Looking at CECAP's activities in retrospect it appears that its personnel would gain in efficiency with a long term plan divided in stages. Each one of these stages would need to be completed before the activities of the next stage are undertaken. This plan should include among other things: support for CONAPO as its executive secretariat; a workplan to initiate and coordinate population activities in the public and private sector; an internal professional and organizational development program; a policy awareness raising program directed toward the national leadership, and a decentralization process including the support of regional and local activities whenever possible.

7- There is no doubt that a country as large and as diverse as Zaire ultimately needs to have its services decentralized. Again, looking back at CECAP's work, the past decentralization activities appear today to have been premature. There was no content to the decentralization as the policy had not been adopted at all levels of the government. Before decentralization is to be initiated in the future, CECAP must gain high visibility and, more importantly, be seen as a credible organization that can provide support to the decentralized units. One way to engage the decentralization process will be to give the mandate and provide technical support to regional units so that they can raise the awareness of regional leaders once a similar program is conducted with National Leaders.

8- One of the reasons why the CONAPO did not produce a credible document in the eyes of the "Conseil Restreint" is due to the lack of continuity and administrative homogeneity of its members. The future CONAPO will gain in acceptance once the participants will all be at a level that will allow each one to speak in the name of his or her institution. To insure such a selection, criteria will have to be developed and sent to the heads of the CONAPO making agencies.

9- Donor agencies directly or indirectly involved in population issues must create a forum in Zaire where they can positively contribute to the Population Policy without overlapping and with cumulative benefit. Such a forum can be located at a rebuilt CECAP.

10- Given the observed demographic trends, it will be crucial for Zaire to conduct population policy activities as soon as the situation will allow. Activities will have to be designed for each identified target group representative of the national leadership. The national campaign will be supported by a regional strategy.

11- The population needs assessment to be conducted in Zaire will have to be conducted simultaneously with a health assessment for the benefit of a clear relationship and to attribute responsibility at the policy level, at the technical level and at the operational level, including the provision of reproductive health services and the impact of AIDS on

demographic trends.

12- OPTIONS program will have to expand its focus beyond the Ministry of Plan. In fact, eight Ministries have been identified as being directly concerned with the NPP. Therefore, these departments will be instrumental in the policy adoption and must play a greater role in its promotion.

13- Once key national leaders for population activities have emerged, well planned study tours will help these individuals to understand the positive impact of an NPP as illustrated by several countries that are presently experiencing some of the highest economic growth among developing nations. In fact, the establishment of a working relationship of Zairian leaders with, for example, counterparts from the Panafrican Parliamentarian Group, may provide a role model opportunity whose benefits may go beyond population issues. (This phenomenon has been observed in several instances). Such study tours may be undertaken by policy leaders and technical personnel as well, although with different objectives for each group.

14- Any kind of training, in spite of the high attrition rate of able professionals, will have to take into account the critical mass effect. This will ensure that the investment made through training will not be lost when one or two individuals move to different positions that are in no way related to population activities.

B.4.c. Status of the Principal Zairian Counterpart Agencies

Establishment and institutionalization of agencies capable of implementing the National Population Policy, particularly with its articulation at the regional level, remains a necessity. This includes re-establishment and training of CONAPO, CECAP, and CTIP, as none of these agencies ever achieved the level of autonomy or ability originally envisaged in the strategy. Nevertheless, one must note that during the last OPTIONS visit to Zaire, CECAP was notified by the Ministry's Office that it had been granted a larger office space in a different building. This was seen by CECAP staff as a recognition by higher authorities of the importance of its mandate and the relevancy of demographic issues to social pressures. It will be equally necessary to contribute to the understanding of population issues by leadership groups, so they can become instrumental in long-term constituency building and act as intermediaries between the agencies supporting population programs and their constituencies. Five of these groups have been contacted as target groups for the IEC policy program, but no activity had been undertaken as OPTIONS withdrew from Zaire. Their potential strength will have to be assessed and their specific roles defined. They include: The Episcopal Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Council of Churches, the Association of Zairian Business, the Media and the Legislative Body. During the last OPTIONS activity (Dec. 1991), the Vice-President of the National Assembly asked CECAP to organize a two-day program on population issues and announced the creation of a Parliamentarian Group for Population and Development to become formal at a later date. This will of course need to be explored in the future.

C. Administrative Status

The OPTIONS project had no personnel or materials in Zaire at the time of the evacuation; however, the vehicle assigned to CECAP has not yet been returned to its original use by the former CECAP director.