



**EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE DRC: A CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTER OF
EDUCATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Tuesday, April 16th, 2013

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST

Facilitator

Patrick Hynes, Education and Workforce Development

Program Participants

H.E. Maker Famba Mwangu, Minister of Education for the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Jean-Marc Bernard, Global Partnership for Education

Overview

The meeting began with remarks by Patrick Hynes and Karina Nagin of CGI. They spoke about the unique opportunities available to participants through CGI's platform, and specifically through the DRC Action Network, within the larger Response & Resilience track. The DRC Action Network was launched in 2011 to coordinate CGI members' efforts in the DRC relating to a variety of topics from health to economic empowerment and education. Jean-Marc Bernard of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) introduced H.E. Maker Famba Mwangu, The Minister of Education for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who commented on the significance of his time in office, particularly the development of a long-term strategy for the education sector.

The Minister presented on the educational challenges in the DRC and the steps the Government is taking to address them.¹ Despite the many challenges, the Minister said that much progress had been achieved towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education, including the addition of over \$100 million in extra budgetary funds for schools. Further, he concluded that macroeconomic and political stability would enable the DRC to make even greater strides in the coming year, such as the enrollment of an additional two million children in two to three years, improvements in curriculum and teacher quality, and implementation of school governance reform. He also drew attention to a roundtable scheduled to address the issue of education in conflict areas taking place during in Goma in June 2013 to raise awareness and attract non-conventional donors. The Minister closed his presentation by reaffirming the Government's commitment to education at both the primary and secondary levels, and that policy would continue to focus on rural areas, conflict zones and areas of high mineral production; increasing qualified teachers, particularly women; expanding girls enrollment; improving curriculum quality; inclusion of vulnerable populations; increasing institutional capacity and providing greater access to technology.

Jean-Marc Bernard was invited to discuss the GPE's work in relation to the priority areas discussed by the Minister. Jean-Marc explained the GPE's partnership with the DRC, including a recent \$100 million grant, and efforts to address education systemically. Eighty percent of schools in the DRC are run by churches,

¹ See, "Education Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Presentation by H.E. Mr. Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education, to the Clinton Global Initiative. April 16, 2013.



due to a historic inability of the Government to adequately fund education, he marked, however, the country was undergoing a transition back to public funding of education. Jean-Marc reflected on the importance of the Government maintaining its commitment, as well as focusing on monitoring education through data to ensure quality.

The meeting segued into a presentation by Marie Lichtenberg of Humana People to People, who provided background on her organization's commitment to construct and operate fifty-four teacher training colleges (TTC) in partnership with the Government of the DRC. The TTC model derives from Humana's extensive experience in other countries, namely Malawi, and focuses on preparing teachers for the difficulties of teaching in rural areas. TTCs provide hands-on experience by partnering with local schools and using training modules on community engagement and local development initiatives, including adult literacy classes, HIV/AIDS campaigns, and garden farming. Marie emphasized the importance of rural areas, since they contain the majority of people, have the highest rates of poverty and greatest need for teachers. The TTC model will enable this need to be addressed, as the Ministry of Education has committed to providing diplomas and employment to TTC graduates. Thus, the large Government buy-in, coupled with Humana's permanent TCC infrastructure and growing cadre of committed teachers holds immense promise for drastically improving education in rural areas. For those interested in participating in this project, Marie noted CGI's key role in generating such collaboration, and listed the various ways individuals and organizations could get involved, including sponsoring a college; donating computers and software; establishing a library; providing scholarships for students teachers; or other forms of support.

The discussion was then opened up for questions. The first question addressed the introduction of specific educational approaches through School Management Committees. The Minister noted that the education system was not currently structured well enough to introduce country-wide initiatives, due to the decentralized nature of the school system, with churches and communities as significant decision makers. School fees were discussed, along with the complex national, provincial and local context in which they are decided. However, the Minister noted the provision of free education up through the fifth grade now. He also sought to clarify that while a large percent of services are provided by churches, many church-run schools are organized and funded similarly to public schools, offering the same curriculum and constituting no major difference to state schools.

School construction and land use was also raised. The Minister discussed ongoing efforts to reconstruct classrooms and how land was granted to private organizations; he emphasized that no single approach prevailed, but that the Ministry worked directly with communities, private firms or NGOs based on the case at hand. Gerome Masankisi, a senior advisor to the Prime Minister of the DRC, explained that operating on a case-by-case basis was required in order to increase access to education and encourage a pragmatic approach to working with all parties, including private organizations. One questioner inquired whether or not the Minister anticipated a destabilization from the increase in access to universal primary education and what efforts were being taken to ensure the retention of girls. The Minister offered that the country was in the midst of a surge in enrollment which began in 2010 when the country eliminated school fees as part of the strategy to achieve universal primary education. While attendance is not mandatory by law, the country has been dealing successfully with the increase in students and ensuring attendance. He discussed the need to address quality as one of several retention mechanisms, as well as school feeding programs, and proposed the need for greater collaboration with NGOs to address gender-specific pedagogy. Mr. Masankisi suggested that continued progress would be made along these lines given the DRC's new

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priority on education, the large increase in funding it is receiving, and the Government's firm acceptance of education-driven economic growth.

Teacher support and development was raised. The question of increasing teacher salaries to incentivize working in rural areas or improving performance was addressed. Mr. Masankisi discussed a recent salary increase for teachers and that more were likely given the country's economic outlook. The Minister assured that the Government was prepared to allocate as much as was needed to ensure that teacher's got paid. Another questioner raised the point of data collection and finding out more about what children were learning not just in school, but throughout their day. While some evaluation has taken place, the Minister acknowledges that there is great need of developing a more comprehensive system to do so, and that it was working on this issue with GPE. As for business opportunities and the role of the private sector, the Minister explained that the DRC particularly needs support employing new forms of technology to improve teacher training and as a tool for managing such a complex and decentralized education system that does not have standardized operating structures.

When vocational training was raised the Minister explained that the education plan was currently focused on primary education but that efforts were underway to make increased vocational training available in existing schools, and that the DRC hopes to receive additional funding for vocational training starting in 2014. As the Minister sought to explain these developments, the Minister emphasized the increased attention of political leaders to MDG messaging. The Minister suggested that the primary message he wished to convey in the lead up to 2015 was that great progress was underway, but that there is a need to focus on teacher recruitment and payment as a way of lowering the financial barriers that keep so many out of school.

The meeting drew to a close with the Minister offering his thanks for everyone's attendance and asked that they strongly consider increasing their support for education in the DRC and to view this as a commitment not just to children but national peace building as well. Marie Lichtenberg closed by recognizing unique opportunity afforded to all by CGI and asking those interested in Humana's work to contact Patrick Hynes.



Participants List

Cameron Sinclair, Architecture for Humanity
Xanthe Ackerman, Center for Universal Education at Brookings
Sandra Spence, Camfed International
Marsha Singer, Caterpillar Inc.
Karina Nagin, Clinton Global Initiative
Anku Nath, Deere & Co.
The Honorable Faida Mitifu, Ambassador of the DRC
H.E. Maker Famba Mwangi, Minister of Education of the DRC
Gerome Kamwanga Masankisi, Office of Prime Minister of the DRC
Sylvia van den Brink, En Classe
Christine Dranzoa, FAWE
Noella Coursaris Musunka, Georges Malaika Foundation
Alain Pakabomba, Georges Malaika Foundation
Jean-Marc Bernard, Global Partnership For Education
John Nagiecki, Humana People to People
Marie Lichtenberg, Humana People to People
Elizabeth Sheehy, Humana People to People
Kathryn Spanogle, Humana People to People
Elizabeth Chiapa, Humana People to People
Jesper Wohlert, Humana People to People
Jessica Ramsel, International Medical Corps
Jennifer Sklar, International Rescue Committee
Debra Wheat, The Oath Project
Meredy Talbot, Save the Children
Heather Simpson, Save the Children
Natasha Marcken, USAID
Julianna Lindsey, Women for Women International
Laura Henderson, Women Thrive Worldwide