

## Country Fact Sheet: Democratic Republic of the Congo

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### Background

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa by area and the eleventh largest in the world. With a population of over 75 million, DRC lags far behind most of its neighbors in infrastructure, governance, and socio-economic indicators. In the last decade of post-conflict, the DRC has maintained solid macro-economic growth, reduced inflation, and expanded exports of minerals. In the first democratic election in 2006, Mr. Joseph Kabila won the presidency and was lauded for his quality. The second national election in 2011 was marred by fraud and the current government faces severe challenges maintaining legitimacy and managing the continued armed conflict in the eastern part of the DRC.



Source: Education International

### Present Status

The country's agriculture sector has potential for fostering economic prosperity. This sector generates 44.9% of DRC's GDP and employs more than 70% of the total labor force. About 40 million people depend on farming for their livelihoods. However, the country's agricultural potential remains largely untapped. With eighty million hectares of arable land available, only 10% is being used for production agriculture. The agricultural production has fallen by 40% since 1990; productivity has suffered from the steady shift of labor to the more lucrative mining sector, and rural agricultural labor force has been displaced to the urban areas for off farm work. Underinvestment in agricultural research and development is a serious challenge for future development. Spending in all research as a share of agricultural GDP is only 0.17%. Participation of women in research is only 9% despite making up 50.7% of the population. Moreover, full time researchers per 10,000 farmers are only 2.94, which imply that there is a high demand of trained manpower in the field of agricultural education and training. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions have potential to help meet these challenges. But they are organized and managed by several different entities including several ministries in the education sector, social affairs, youth, and public health. Several NGOs and members of the private sector conduct training. The management and coordination of TVET are complex and inefficient, and hence, warrant appropriate attention.

The infrastructure is dilapidated and the educational tools and equipment, materials and textbooks in most of the institutions seemed to be obsolete and in of poor condition. Most of the institutions the Congolese State created in the past years to provide TVET are in a state of severe disorder. The national school of administration, the vocational training institute and the inter-disciplinary continuing education center must operate on limited resources to fulfill their missions. Yet in the 1970s and early 1980s, these institutions were able to provide the country with adequate numbers of skilled workers for specific occupations, which have a negative impact on enrollment capacity and the provision of



Source: Next Billion

specialized training at secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. How can the curriculum be best updated?

## Challenges and Issues

The growing indifference by employers towards TVET programs and lack of graduates is evidenced by the lack of relations between the various TVET institutions and enterprises that employ them. Teaching staff lack motivation, are largely under qualified, and do not meet the labor market's changing needs. Compulsory school attendance is no longer required. Older experienced teachers

retain their positions and neglect giving practical or experiential training in favor of theoretical, rote learning that is not up to date and does not include current technologies. Enterprises, potential employers, and students show a lack of interest in TVET because of this sector's current weak performance nationwide. How can the system be upgraded so that it is more responsive to current needs by employers? How can students gain skills to develop and manage their own enterprises?

## Next Steps

- Graduates need current knowledge and skills
- Increase support to teaching staff
- Ease admission requirements
- Improve career prospects for students
- Increase infrastructure development
- Introduce equipment and new technologies
- Adapt curriculum to current needs
- Establish inter-school partnerships
- Strengthen communication between private industry and educational institutions
- Engage in discussion how to improve TVET system through assessments or participation in a community of practice



Source: Larry C. Price