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# APPRENDRE TOUS ENSEMBLE! (LET'S LEARN TOGETHER!)

AUGUST 2021 – AUGUST 2026 | IMPLEMENTER: EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CENTER (EDC), INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC) AND ALFALIT INTERNATIONAL | PLANNED BUDGET: \$25,000,000

The Apprendre Tous Ensemble activity is committed to increasing the accessibility, quality, and inclusivity of education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The activity aims to ensure that children ages 6–9 from marginalized and vulnerable populations, including the Batwa indigenous group, girls, and children with disabilities, gain foundational literacy and social and emotional learning (SEL) skills to enable them to succeed in school at a grade 2 level or above. The activity focuses on the provinces of Équateur, Maniema, Tanganyika, and Kinshasa.

## BACKGROUND: KEY CHALLENGES

The DRC adopted a policy of fee-free primary education during the 2019-20 school year, enabling more than 4.5 million children to join school. Nevertheless, over 7 million children aged 5-17 remain out of school. With the increase in school enrollment and no corresponding increase in hiring qualified teachers, classrooms are overcrowded, and the quality of instruction remains a significant challenge. National and regional data indicate that 67 percent of children who enter first grade will complete sixth grade and only 3.4 percent of ten-year-olds can read a simple text with comprehension.

Significant disparities persist between genders, geographic zones, and socioeconomic groups. The Apprendre Tous Ensemble activity considers the unique additional barriers to education that affect girls, children with disabilities, and the Batwa population. Early and forced marriage and adolescent pregnancy often prevent girls from completing school, as do household labor, long distances to school, and sexual harassment by teachers. Most schools make no accommodations for children with disabilities, and many of these children never attend school. The Batwa have long faced systemic discrimination and marginalization. Batwa children are more likely than others to have never attended school, and those who do attend often face discrimination from both teachers and other students.

## IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

To improve the accessibility and quality of education, the Apprendre Tous Ensemble activity:

- Works with community leaders, parent committees, and school management committees to enroll children into formal and non-formal learning pathways and support the retention of students in these learning pathways.
- Works with school, district, and provincial leaders to ensure that children are not charged fees to attend public schools and catch-up learning centers (CRSs).

- Develops a basic literacy model to improve teacher instruction and student performance in reading and literacy.
- Adapts existing teaching and learning materials in both formal and non-formal schools to improve quality and enhance learning gains.
- Uses interactive audio instruction to provide high-quality, learner-centered literacy and SEL content to promote continuity of education and system resilience.

## PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY IN SCHOOLS

To promote inclusivity in schools for marginalized and vulnerable populations, the Apprendre Tous Ensemble activity:

- Recruits and trains volunteer teachers in literacy instruction for the education of out-of-school children and over-aged children in CRSs.
- Implements SEL curriculum that helps teachers promote positive, nurturing learning environments and teach students about bullying, discrimination, and harassment.
- Implements a social and behavior change campaign within the communities to facilitate anti-discrimination messaging, reduce tension between groups in support of their children's education, and address attitudes toward violence against girls.
- Adapts existing teaching and learning materials to incorporate content and language resources relevant to the Batwa and Bantu communities.
- Provides school-based training and support to promote specialized and inclusive teaching approaches and materials for children with disabilities.
- Provides teacher training to ensure the equitable and positive participation of girls in the classroom and promote the protection of female students.

## RESULTS TO DATE

As of July 2023, the Apprendre Tous Ensemble (ATE) has achieved the following results:

- 11,372 learners enrolled in 85 project-supported schools and CRSs in grades 1, 2 and CRS level 1.
- 83 school director and 73 ministry officials were trained on reading-writing, social and emotional learning, Interactive Audio Instruction, and on school management.
- 103 Interactive Audio Instruction kits distributed to 81 intervention communities including 10 project-produced IAI recorded lessons in both Lingala and Kiswahili.
- 85 youth volunteers trained on facilitating Interactive Audio Instruction lessons in small groups.
- 85 community leaders trained on how to operate a community library.
- 227 members of parent school committees trained on governance of schools, parenting skills, and management best practices.
- Development of grade 1 and CRS 1 supplemental teacher guides and student manuals in Lingala and Kiswahili incorporating principles of social cohesion, gender inclusion, SEL, and diverse representation of learners and teachers alike.
- 244 teachers trained on learning materials adapted by the project for grades 1 and 2 in the formal school system and level 1 in CRSs. 20 Teachers coached on the reading-writing approach using the ATE model.
- 210 community leaders and parents of learners in the project's intervention areas have been trained on Peace, social cohesion, gender, and inclusion to support their children's education.
- 250 parents identified to participate in adult literacy programming to support children's learning in Equateur and Kinshasa provinces.
- 6,784 grade 1 teaching and learning materials distributed in cohort 1 intervention communities.
- 23,269 books donated by Books for Africa distributed in intervention communities and community libraries.