



The East-Central Africa Division (ECD) is one of the new territories created by the realignment of the African divisions in 2002.

The division covers the countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)—formerly Zaire.

Five of these countries comprise what is referred to as the great lakes region in Africa, which has been plagued by civil wars and strife. Despite this, Adventist education has continued to thrive in almost all territories and to contribute to the growth of the church in these countries.

Challenges, in addition to wars, include inadequate roads, which make travel very difficult. On one occasion, two teachers reported spending two weeks walking back and forth more than 200 kilometers to an education meeting in Tshikapa, DRC.

We have primary schools in all but two of the countries in the division territory, secondary schools in all but three, and six tertiary institutions. These schools and their teachers have accounted for 6,903 baptisms during the two years of the division's existence.

Challenges

The church is facing a number of educationally related challenges in the new East-Central Africa Division:

- Wars in seven of the 10 countries of the division, including conflicts

Looking at the Challenges With Hope

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within and between various countries.

- Devastating poverty, which makes it difficult for people to afford food and other necessities, as well as education.

- A large number of refugees, including children whose parents cannot afford education and who are constantly on the move to avoid the fighting.

- Lack of adequate training for many of the teachers.

- The need for vocational training to equip the youth, who make up more than 75 percent of the church membership, with skills to survive and to support the church.

- The need to provide more pastors with higher levels of education.

- The demand for Adventist educa-

tion by a fast-growing church membership. The number of students studying in Adventist schools represent less than 83, 24, and 2 students per 1,000 members in primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education respectively, even though the church membership is more than three-quarters young people.

- The need to promote Adventist education among the church members.

- Competition with numerous privately owned schools in many of the countries.

- The challenge of unentered areas, some of which present obstacles because of their traditions and religious beliefs.

- HIV/AIDS devastation in the region.



Graduation at Adventist University at Lukanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Achievements

Despite the above challenges, the division has achieved the following:

- We are providing education in most of the countries.

- We have six tertiary institutions (in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and DRC), four at senior level. The other two either have obtained or expect to soon receive International Board of Education (IBE) and government approval to offer university-level programs.

- Many schools continue to perform well in government examinations and receive praise and honor from state leaders. On one of his trips, the division president met the minister of education for Uganda at the airport. When he mentioned that he was a Seventh-day Adventist leader, the minister told him



Inside a primary classroom in the DRC, the students look forward to the future with hope.

how much he appreciated the church's educational efforts.

- During its short existence, the division has already sponsored, in its bursary program, more than 136 individuals for upgrading, including some 56 for Master's degrees, 15 for doctoral degrees, and more than 60 for bachelor's degrees.

to being involved in in-reach programs that yielded 6,903 baptisms, are also actively involved in outreach programs in the communities close by and far from their campuses, which bring many souls to Christ. UEAB, for example, baptizes on average of 500 students from public secondary schools each year as a result of

- Several new programs have been approved and introduced at our universities and colleges.

- After the destruction of the campus of the Adventist University of Central Africa at Mudende, Rwanda, the university acquired a new campus at Masoro near the capital, and construction has begun.

- Many of the institutions have made strides in acquiring Internet and electronic media facilities, despite their rural locations.

- All schools, in addition



Graduation at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

student and faculty witnessing programs.

- Seminars have been conducted to assist the teachers on the integration of faith and learning, faith and science, and collaboration.

- Institutions are being evaluated, and several have achieved denominational accreditation. Plans are being made for the rest. In the past two years, four of the tertiary institutions—Bugema University, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (Kenya), Adventist University at Lukanga (in DRC), and Ethiopian Adventist College—have had their accreditations renewed after evaluation visits.

Looking to the Future

- One of the ECD focus issues is nurturing the members, and education is an excellent avenue of nurture. Therefore, the division is emphasizing quality primary and secondary education. When the country's schools were nationalized, Tanzania had only one Adventist ele-



Library, University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya.

mentary school, but now has eight. The division has set aside funds to supplement and encourage giving by church members.

- We plan to improve the working

conditions of teachers, who have dedicated their lives to serving the church.

- We will continue to conduct seminars for teachers, as many of them have received training in non-Adventist edu-



Baptism at University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.



Groundbreaking for a new campus at Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) in Rwanda.

cational institutions.

- We will make promotional materials available in the major languages of the division, including English, French, and Swahili, to educate church members about the value and benefits of Adventist education. The book *Education* has already been provided in English and French.

- We will continue to emphasize the need for cooperation and collaboration to ensure maximum and equitable utilization of resources.

- We are encouraging schools and church organizations to establish bursary funds for needy students. Such funds will assist students who have been disowned by their parents for accepting Christ and others who may have been orphaned due to HIV/AIDS and wars.

- We are working to ensure that all secondary and tertiary institutions have current denominational accreditation.

- We are planning to establish a school in Djibouti. Already, a language school is reaching many families from the grounds of the dental clinic.

- We are seeking additional ways to use education as an entering wedge into some of the difficult areas.

Despite all the challenges, the East-Central Africa Division looks to the future with hope, having adopted as its theme "God's Ability Is Our Ability." ✍



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Ethiopian Adventist College administration building and classroom block.



Tanzania Adventist College administration building.



East-Central African students praising God in song at their school worship.