



EASTERN CONGO INITIATIVE

2012 YEAR-END REPORT



Call to Action “Saving children’s lives cannot be just a job for governments. Eastern Congo Initiative, a tireless partner in this effort, is supporting civil society groups to meet some of the biggest challenges in the Democratic Republic of Congo.”

—U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

Congo Bars

“Theo Chocolate’s Congo bar series forges a connection between the cocoa farmer abroad and the consumer here at home. When this connection is made and people start to care about each other, great things can happen.”

—Theo Chocolate founder and CEO Joe Whinney



HEAL Africa

“HEAL Africa means Health, Education, Action in the Community and Leadership. When you tackle these things, then you will really have healed holistically—the wives, the community and the country.”

—HEAL Africa Co-Founder Dr. Jo Lusi



Security Sector Reform “There is a close connection between the security sector and every other sphere of life...without security, nothing can work in society.”

—Congolese Policeman



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Landscape Analysis “USAID is pleased to recognize organizations like Eastern Congo Initiative that are leveraging technology in the service of international development and working to increase access to information that will lead to more informed funding and programming decisions.”

—USAID Chief Innovation Officer Maura O’Neill



Green House

“ECI’s investments in cocoa production through the local Congolese association Green House have helped household incomes to significantly increase, giving farming families the opportunity to take their kids to school and improving their access to healthcare.”

—Congolese cocoa farmer and cooperative member Atandi Isaka

Letter from Ben

Three years ago I created Eastern Congo Initiative with the goal of increasing the quantity and quality of investments into eastern Congo and influencing increased public policy engagement.

Congo is a region where generations have struggled under a cycle of violence and poverty, but also where people hold an unrelenting desire to realize the extraordinary potential of their country. These are a people who refuse to be defined by circumstance or history.

As an advocacy and grant-making initiative focused entirely on working with and for the people of eastern Congo, ECI supports heroic local organizations and entrepreneurs who are creating lasting change in the lives of vulnerable children and survivors of sexual violence, unlocking economic opportunity and working with communities seeking peace and reconciliation.

Sadly, in late 2012 we witnessed renewed militia activity and one of the worst surges in violence that the region has seen in years—yet the Congolese remain resilient. Amid this violence, the surgeons, doctors, nurses and hospital staff at ECI partner HEAL Africa, a specialized hospital in the center of Goma, worked around the clock to receive and treat patients from all around the city. Meanwhile, the journalists and radio technicians at our grantee news organization, Mutaani FM, kept news and information flowing even with limited power sources and cut radio tower lines, ensuring that people in the city and surrounding communities had a trusted and independent source of information.

Back in the U.S., ECI continues to draw direct significant attention to these and other issues through media and high-level, bipartisan outreach. We were encouraged to see the DRC crisis squarely on the agenda for senior elected and appointed officials, as well as a focus of coverage from prominent national news media. But the urgent needs of Congo's people will remain long after attention is turned to the world's next crisis. So there is more to be done.

- Developing economic opportunity—Training rural farmers in sustainable cocoa cultivation, bringing the quality of their crop up to international standards and opening an international market by creating private sector partnerships. In 2012, ECI developed a robust partnership with Theo Chocolate, an award-winning

industry leader. ECI introduced Theo to the potential of the Congolese market, resulting in the purchase of Congolese cocoa and the creation of the first in a series of high-quality ECI-Theo branded chocolate bars made entirely from Congolese cocoa, vanilla and chili pepper. Our success with Theo is paving the way for increased corporate investment in the region.

- Encouraging policy change—Leading efforts to encourage security sector reform, improve stability in the region and create a robust civil society. In 2012, our efforts helped encourage U.S. engagement by senior leaders in the Administration and Congress to help resolve the crisis brought on by the outbreak of violence in November. In testimony before two key congressional committees, ECI laid out an agenda for U.S., UN and international policy makers to address the underlying causes of persistent instability in the DRC and the surrounding region.
- Improving access to healthcare—Decreasing the number of women that die in childbirth, increasing the survival rate of newborn children in the DRC and increasing access to healthcare for women and children. ECI worked closely with the State Department and USAID, as well as Congolese leaders from government, civil society, the faith-based community, health practitioners and NGOs working on the ground to help turn the tide on child mortality and keep more kids and their moms alive.

The stories in this report offer just a glimpse at the incredible ability of the Congolese people to shape their own future—they just need the opportunity and tools to do so. ECI will continue to help uncover those opportunities, to offer those tools and support those efforts wherever we can, both on the ground in the DRC and in Washington. But we can't do it on our own. With your continued support, together we can invest in the vision of the Congolese people, and together we can help ensure the DRC is never again a footnote in history.

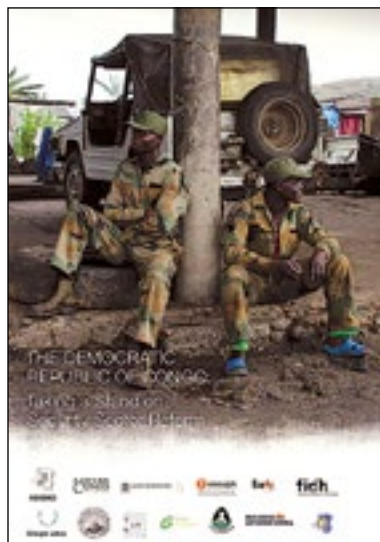


Ben Affleck, Founder

Security Sector Reform

In partnership with an international coalition of civil society organizations, ECI released a joint report on security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo in April 2012, sparking a global dialogue on the most critical aspect of the future of the DRC—reform of the security sector. The report discusses the opportunity that now exists for the international community to partner with the government of the DRC to reform the security sector and, in doing so, take concrete steps towards creating a more stable future for the country. The report maintains that the underlying reason for many of the problems in the DRC is the pervasive lack of security throughout the country and offers a critical look at the symptoms that weak military, policy and judicial sectors project on the population. The report also proposes a path towards greater security where reforms of the military, policy and judicial sectors are supported by firm commitments from the government of the DRC and the international community.

ECI officially launched the report in partnership with the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., and hosted panel discussions featuring the voices of civil society, policy experts and government officials in New York City, Goma, The Hague and throughout the EU.



“The central cause of Congo’s suffering is continued insecurity. The Congolese government’s inability to protect its people or control its

territory undermines progress on everything else. An effective security sector—organized, resourced, trained and vetted—is essential to solving problems from displacement, recruitment of child soldiers and gender-based violence to economic growth or the trade in conflict minerals.”

—Executive Summary, *Taking a Stand on Security Sector Reform*



“Without persistent, high-level leadership by the United States, the key players will not come to the table and do their part.”

—Ben Affleck, U.S. Armed Services Committee Testimony



Grantee Spotlight—Mutaani FM

ECI helped found and continues to support Mutaani FM, an organization that trains young journalists and promotes the freedom of expression and informed, independent dialogue on core issues affecting the country's development and the daily lives of DRC citizens.

When 26-year-old journalist Thierry Kayandi woke up one Sunday in late November, he didn't envision that he would spend the next two days sleeping at the Mutaani FM radio station, without food and water, heavy artillery shelling around him. That morning, Mutaani called an emergency staff meeting for its ten journalists and four radio technicians to ensure the station would persevere

through the crisis and remain the leading independent source of information and stability for the city and surrounding rural communities.

Mutaani swiftly changed from normal programming to an open format where listeners could share real-time updates from their neighborhoods and send messages of reassurance to one another. The radio broadcast became a timeline of trusted information and a lifeline of encouragement to neighborhoods most affected by gunfire and shelling.

In spite of the challenges Mutaani faced in the wake of the November violence, Mutaani journalists are committed to capturing accurate information and the experiences of people caught in the crossfire.

On December 19, 2012, ECI founder Ben Affleck testified before the House Armed Services Committee as part of a hearing on the "Evolving Security Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Implications for U.S. National Security." In response to the recent violence that culminated in the rebel takeover of Goma, ECI called on U.S. policymakers in Congress and the Obama administration to take a leading role in international efforts to end the violence and address the underlying causes of instability in the DRC and the region.

During his testimony before the House, Mr. Affleck specifically asked congressional leaders to raise their voices on behalf of an ambitious agenda of action and reform, including: appointing a Presidential Special Envoy;

supporting the revision of MONUSCO's mandate; engaging NATO allies and other U.S. partners to provide police, judicial and military training to the DRC; and directing AFRICOM to train a second unit of the DRC army once provincial elections have been organized and President Kabila has committed to a plan for implementing comprehensive security sector reform.

Mr. Affleck's testimony was part of a larger advocacy engagement that included a closed-door meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and briefings with high-ranking State Department officials. In addition to raising awareness among U.S. policymakers of the ongoing violence in the DRC, this effort succeeded in refocusing attention on the need for U.S. leadership in supporting concrete security sector reform in the DRC.

Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

In June 2012, ECI founder Ben Affleck joined U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and other global leaders in Washington, D.C., to deliver commitments to ending preventable child mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the Child Survival: Call to Action Forum. Mr. Affleck was joined at the event by Dr. Jo Lusi and Dr. Denis Mukwege from ECI partners HEAL Africa and Panzi Hospital, respectively, who shared Congolese voices and commitments to eliminating needless child mortality.

With support from USAID and building on ECI's groundbreaking *Landscape Analysis of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)*, ECI launched in 2012 an innovative online database that gives policy leaders, investors and analysts much-needed insights into the work being done to create sustainable and successful change around improving child and maternal health outcomes in eastern Congo. The database is an online, searchable tool that enables potential funders in the aid and development community to target and better support viable community-based organizations working on the ground in eastern Congo. Explore the CBO database on ECI's website at www.easterncongo.org.



“This isn’t only about building a more just and equitable world: bringing down child mortality rates makes the world more prosperous and stable. If we drive down child mortality, along with investing in girls’ education and voluntary family planning, eventually there will be more working adults supporting fewer dependents, which makes it easier for a country to make investments that drive sustained economic growth. And with that growth, the country is likely to be more stable, less prone to political crises and more apt to become a partner in solving global problems. For all these reasons—political, economic, and moral—we see the benefits of saving children’s lives.”

**— U.S. Secretary of State
Hillary Clinton, Child Survival:
Call to Action Forum**



Grantee Spotlight—HEAL Africa

One of ECI's partner organizations, HEAL Africa, takes a holistic approach to improving maternal and child health in eastern Congo. HEAL Africa partnered with ECI to address the financial and social deterrents that discourage women from delivering at a health center through maternity health collectives, community banking and training rural healthcare professionals. The program worked through multiple layers, from traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and health professionals to women and their families. 2,200 women were given micro-grants in groups of 8 to 10 to invest in their farms and small commerce, increasing their monthly income. At the end of every month, each woman in the group contributes \$1 to a maternal insurance fund, which is then used for medical care relating to pregnancy and birth. This gives women who normally could not afford healthcare the opportunity to receive treatment throughout their entire pregnancy.

HEAL Africa also trained 96 traditional birth attendants to identify warning signs of birth complications that would require a woman to give birth in a health center instead of relying on a traditional birth attendant. Additionally, HEAL Africa worked with the personnel of 15 health centers to provide training in emergency obstetric care, including the use of partographs and other simple interventions that are known to reduce maternal and infant mortality.



Despite considerable progress in reducing child mortality globally over the past half-century, particularly in the past two decades, high rates of under-five deaths in the DRC persist. In what can be described as nothing less than an epidemic in the DRC, 140 out of 1,000 children will not reach five, according to USAID.



“This is a chance for the U.S. to lead on this critical issue in the Congo. We wouldn’t allow our five-year-olds to die from preventable diseases in the U.S.—nor should we let it happen in Congo or anywhere else.”

**—Ben Affleck,
Child Survival: Call to Action Forum**

Economic Development

“Cocoa is a fast-growing, sustainable, high-yield crop that commands high global prices, requires minimal re-planting, prevents deforestation, supports food security and is a major source of income for women. It’s also ‘militia-proof’.”

—Dhena Bassara, Director of Green House, Congolese cocoa cooperative

Investment in creating income-generating opportunities for the Congolese people is the fastest and most sustainable way to lift citizens out of the cycle of poverty, offers tremendous potential for increasing stability in the region and opens doors to improved health, education and a more just society.

One area ripe for investment is agriculture. ECI believes that potential for change in Congo is abundant. Nearly 90 percent of all arable land remains uncultivated, largely due to insecurity. Once a breadbasket of Africa, this virtually untapped resource could return and transform the lives of millions of children and countless communities in central Africa.

Encouraging farmers to grow commodity crops like cocoa in addition to their food crops through the provision of training and seeds will increase the production in the region and the annual income of the farmer, ultimately helping to lift thousands of Congolese people out of poverty.

In addition to agricultural investment, ECI seeks economic development through the vocational training of teenage youths, former child soldiers and teenage mothers in fields including sewing, carpentry, electrics and masonry. Through this and other efforts, ECI is helping create the next generation of Congolese entrepreneurs.

“The DRC is one of the largest countries in the world in terms of arable land: if that land was farmed successfully, it could feed one-third of the global population.”

—International Food Policy Research Institute

The DRC has
300,000 square miles
of farmable land



(roughly
the size
of Texas)

but only
2% of its land is being farmed,
due to **conflict** in the DRC.



Grantee Spotlight—Green House

ECI makes grants to Congolese-led community based organizations like Green House—a Congolese organization that helps provide training to rural cocoa farmers on how to improve the quality of their cocoa crop, while also helping farmers produce healthier and more nutritious subsistence crops.

In 2012, ECI developed a robust partnership with Theo Chocolate, a Seattle-based company that makes premium, fair trade organic chocolate. ECI and Theo work together

with Green House to improve their cocoa crops and expand their access to international markets. In October 2012, Theo Chocolate and ECI launched their first-ever series of chocolate bars made entirely from Congolese cocoa. The cocoa, vanilla and spicy peppers (pili) in these chocolate bars are all grown in eastern Congo by dedicated farmers focused on quality and sustainability.

A portion of the proceeds from these chocolate bars is donated to ECI, so Congolese farmers can continue to improve their crops and strengthen their business. These chocolate bars are a real, tangible result of progress in the region.



Theo's first Congolese harvest yielded **340 tons** of cocoa, potentially **DOUBLING** the income of **2000 farmers** to help **20,000 Congolese** people.



Grantees in 2012

Panzi Hospital

HEAL Africa

Mutaani FM

Children's Voice

Universite Chretienne Bilingue du Congo /
Bilingual Christian University of Congo
(UCBC)

Green House

Laissez Afrique Vivre / Let Africa Live (LAV)

Reseau Pour la Reforme du Secteur de
Securite et de la Justice / Network for
Security Sector Reform and Justice (RRSSJ)

Institut Congolais pour la Conservation
de la Nature / Congolese Institute for Nature
Conservation (ICCN)

Dynamique des Femmes Juristes /
Dynamic of Female Lawyers (DFJ)

Grantee Spotlight—Let Africa Live

Sosthène Kubisa, a former secondary school teacher, founded Let Africa Live (Laissez L'Afrique Vivre, or LAV) in 2001 with a vision to equip vulnerable youth—including former child soldiers, sex slaves and orphans who did not attend school—with viable economic opportunities.

LAV provides a variety of support services and resources to vulnerable youth in South Kivu, including vocational training programs in auto mechanics, masonry, sewing, electrics, IT and carpentry. Small class sizes allow teachers to provide support and personalized attention to students, providing the counseling and psychological support necessary to ensure students have both the technical and social skills to fully integrate into their communities. Beyond skill-building education, LAV also provides graduates with a micro-grant at the end of their training, allowing them to invest in their own small enterprises and utilize their newly-learned skills.

In addition, LAV works in partnership with smaller local organizations in order to train their personnel on the rights of the child, psychosocial assistance for troubled youth and administrative skills. These organizations are based in rural areas and convey messages on children's rights and opportunities for vulnerable youth in areas that LAV cannot consistently reach. These partnerships serve to enhance both the capacity of smaller organizations as well as enable LAV to reach a larger population.



Media Highlights

HUFFINGTON POST 4/24/12

Congo Security Sector Reform Urgently Needed, Report Says

This article marks the release of ECI's collaborative security sector reform (SSR) report, which calls on the international community to adopt SSR as one of the goals of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC.

POLITICO 6/13/12

Opinion: Ending Child Mortality

Written by ECI founder Ben Affleck and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, this article highlights the global progress made towards ending child mortality and demonstrates the successful partnership between ECI and USAID, which addresses Congo's child mortality challenges by investing in Congolese community-based organizations.

NBC NIGHTLY NEWS 6/14/12

Ben Affleck: 'Help children around the world live long and healthy lives'

NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams fully recaps ECI founder Ben Affleck's remarks at the Child Survival: Call to Action event in Washington, D.C.

FOREIGN POLICY 6/14/12

Hillary Clinton and Ben Affleck Team Up to Eliminate Preventable Child Death

An overview of June's Child Survival: Call to Action event, where ECI founder Ben Affleck was joined by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other world leaders to lend their voices to the call for an end to preventable child mortality.



to eastern Congo, giving a behind-the-scenes look at ECI's work and introducing the ECI-Theo partnership and the Theo Congo chocolate bar.

CBS NEWS 10/9/12

Affleck Uses Celeb Power to Help African Nation

CBS News correspondent Seth Doane travels with ECI founder Ben Affleck



ABC THIS WEEK

11/25/12

Ben Affleck & Rep. Adam Smith on the Congo

Responding to the M23 rebels' takeover of Goma

in November 2012, ECI founder Ben Affleck joins ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), to discuss a ceasefire, security sector reform and the abundant possibilities that eastern Congo holds for direct investors.

WASHINGTON POST 11/29/12

Opinion: Congo Urgently Needs US Help

In an op-ed for the Washington Post one week after the M23 rebel takeover of Goma, ECI founder Ben Affleck urges the Obama Administration to make Congo a priority in its foreign policy agenda by appointing a presidential-level envoy to eastern Congo, increasing technical assistance to the Congolese government and using diplomatic pressure to call for an immediate ceasefire.



CBS NEWS 12/2/12

Chocolate That Makes a Difference

CBS correspondent Seth Doane provides an inside look into the ECI-Theo

Chocolate partnership. "Congolese farmers are selling to a chocolate company in the United States," said ECI founder Ben Affleck. "These markets have been completely closed off to them in the past. This is not just aid, it's investment."

CSPAN 12/19/12

ECI Founder Ben Affleck Testifies Before House Armed Services Committee

Nearly a month after the M23 rebel takeover of Goma, ECI founder Ben Affleck joined a panel of experts to brief members of the House Armed Services Committee on the evolving security situation in eastern Congo. Mr. Affleck reiterated ECI's call for security sector reform and urged Congress to increase diplomatic efforts in the region.



CBS FACE THE NATION 12/23/12

Ben Affleck on House Testimony and Security Situation in Congo

ECI founder Ben Affleck

sits down with CBS' Bob Schieffer to discuss his recent testimony before the House Armed Services Committee and the ongoing security crisis in eastern Congo.



To learn more about Eastern Congo Initiative,
visit www.easterncongo.org.

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