



CCPI Update



CCPI staff, Paul Dirdak, meets with the Democratic Republic of Congo United Methodist board of pensions' members and conference benefits officers.

Challenge goal: **\$25 million**
 Raised to date: **\$22.5 million**
 Percentage of challenge goal raised: **90.0%**

What are the United Methodist central conferences?

- The central conferences are those outside the United States.
- There are currently seven central conferences in three regions (Asia, Africa and Eurasia). They are composed of 72 annual and provisional conferences in 45 countries.
- The central conferences include more than 6,900 organized churches with more than 4.4 million lay members.
- More than 9,300 active clergy members serve this rapidly increasing population in our Church.

Self-Sustaining Pension Programs in the Central Conferences

As you know, pension programs are important to The United Methodist Church as they support the Wesleyan tradition of caring for those who serve. Eleven years ago, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, along with the General Board of Global Ministries, were called upon to begin a global pension task force. As a result, the Central Conference Pension Initiative (CCPI) was established to meet that challenge by contributing to dignity in retirement for dedicated United Methodist church leaders who would otherwise have little or no pension support when their careers in ministry ended.

The Initiative has two objectives. One is to provide pension support to central conference clergy and surviving spouses already retired or when they retire. The other is to help define and establish long-term self-funded sustainable pension programs, so all future retirees will receive support.

There are now six CCPI-sponsored pension projects across the central conferences (Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe), and seven more programs currently in development.

CCPI is focused on helping these conferences create pension plans they will fund themselves so that, over time, all pension plans will be self-funded and self-sustaining. CCPI-developed pension programs include required contributions from

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GENERAL BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Caring For Those Who Serve



Six Criteria for Establishing Central Conference Pension Plans

Elect and train a conference board of pensions.

Select and train a conference benefits officer and orient the assigned bishop(s).

Establish a separate pension account.

Provide the necessary conference legal documents.

Prepare and adopt a conference pension plan description.

Provide and maintain accurate clergy records.

Self-Sustaining Pension Programs... *(continued from page 1)*

active clergy in the central conferences. Similar to U.S. plans, these programs use a deferred compensation model—setting aside money from today's earnings for the participant's future security. Sustainability, dependability and self-governance are the principles that distinguish CCPI plans from the unsustainable charity programs that many retired central conference clergy have depended on in the past. Achieving self-sustainability requires steady progress over time, as well as the generosity of our supporters who have stepped forward to help fill the immediate gap.

Pension plan development in the central conferences is a careful and thoughtful process, with CCPI staff educating stakeholders on why saving for retirement is important; outlining the various plan options; and communicating the value of a self-sustaining model. Plans written by each conference area are sensitive to local economies, cultures and capabilities.

Read on to learn more about CCPI's efforts, and what you can do to help.

CCPI Performs First Annual Evaluation of Angola Pension Program

In May 2011, Central Conference Pension Initiative staff visited the two Angola annual conferences to perform the first annual evaluation of the pension program. The result of the visit was a successful evaluation of the program that verified timely distribution of all payments.

During the seven-day visit, CCPI staff examined 2010 financial records, interviewed retirees and surviving spouses who are receiving benefits, met with the conference benefits officers Alcides Arez Martins (East Angola) and Tomas Filipe (West Angola) to further develop best practices, and discussed plans for additional pension education.

Prior to CCPI's involvement, a long and debilitating war strained church resources and caused earlier pension programs to be discontinued. Today, only a few short years after a peace agreement, both annual conferences are now served under a single pension program covering 80 retirees and 85 surviving spouses. Each pensioner receives quarterly payments by wire transfer deposited directly into his or her personal banking account. A few individuals, however, receive funds paid in cash at the conference office.

Church leaders in Angola have expressed great appreciation to both individuals and churches throughout the denomination for their gifts and donations. Their generosity has made central conference pension support possible.



An Update on Two CCPI Programs Currently in Development

There are seven central conference pension programs in development. In this issue, we will highlight two—the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Moscow Episcopal Area—and report on the progress of each country’s pension program.



Democratic Republic of Congo Hopes to Finalize Pension Criteria by Year’s End

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), CCPI staff met with the board of pensions in April 2011 to discuss the credited years of service provision and

the implications of basing pensions on that service. The calculation of credited years of service was explained in detail so conference leaders understood the importance of having accurate start-of-service and end-of-service records for all pensioners.

Conference benefits officers (CBOs), having previously shared the draft plan description with their boards, discussed their questions and made suggestions for minor revisions to the original plan draft with CCPI staff during the two-day visit. Plans also were made to complete all necessary pension criteria, especially with regard to service records, before November 2011.

The Reverend Mulume (John) Maloba, CBO, North Katanga Episcopal Area.



Russian Pension Program On Track for Adoption

In July 2011, CCPI staff traveled to Moscow to resolve questions concerning the start of CCPI support for their existing pension plan. As in the United States, a church pension is seen as a supplement to the government’s social security system.

With a church full of young clergy and a conference only 20 years old, it was very important to manage conference expectations, specifically concerning the implications of raising the level of pension support provided, as well as future intentions. The main objective of the trip was to arrive at an understanding regarding the realistic limits on future adjustments to pension rates and the factors that lead to those limitations.

Under the draft plan, 116 clergy in the Eurasian (Russian) Conference will contribute 3% of their salary to the UMC pension program in addition to the mandatory 13% Social Security contribution, with funds being distributed annually by bank transfer or paid in cash at the conference office.

During the four-day visit, staff met with Bishop Hans Växby, Conference Benefits Officer Zhanna Kim and Board of Pension Chair The Reverend Tatyana Valdimorova. All expressed gratitude for the continued help and support of donors during the plan development process and look forward to initiating pension support soon.

2011 Annual Conferences Support CCPI Fundraising Goal

CCPI staff recently announced the initiative received at least \$500,000 in new contributions during this annual conference season. The program now has \$22.5 million in pledges toward its \$25 million challenge goal. CCPI’s objective is to provide sustainable pension payments to clergy and their spouses in 62 annual conferences in Africa, Asia and Eurasia. Nine annual conferences in Africa are already covered under the initiative, supporting 429 retired pastors and 547 surviving spouses.

The General Board is grateful that the denomination holds the efforts and intentions of CCPI in such high regard and continues to support this initiative. It will help assure lifetime pension payments in retirement to central conference ministers when their careers in ministry end and can also provide a benefit to their surviving spouses.

CCPI is now only \$2.5 million from achieving its challenge goal.

The General Board is grateful that the denomination holds the efforts and intentions of CCPI in such high regard and continues to support this initiative.

\$25M challenge goal
(\$22.5M raised to date)



Please continue your support for CCPI:

- Talk with your friends in the United Methodist community and share CCPI's story.
- Host a CCPI reception for friends and church members.
- Visit the CCPI website to download materials or contact the CCPI office to request materials to share with those you know in other churches and conferences.
- Encourage interested individuals to support the campaign.
- Consider increasing your pledge or gift.
- If your previous pledge is already paid-in-full, consider extending it or making an additional one-time gift.



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CCPI Pension Support Makes Life Better in African Conferences

During the spring 2011 visits in Africa, CCPI staff verified that payments are made in full and on-time, while learning first-hand how the lives of retired clergy and surviving spouses are improving thanks to sustainable pension support. The staff interviewed several pensioners and they continue to praise the good work of the Church and its Central Conference Pension Initiative. In addition to providing subsistent needs—such as food, housing and clothing—a number of central conference pensioners have begun to save small amounts over several months to pay for large expenditures. All current pensioners also reported never consistently receiving pension funds from the conference prior to the CCPI-sponsored program.

Testimonials from East Angola about how CCPI support is making life better for central conference pensioners, their families and communities follow. To read more inspiring stories, visit the CCPI website at www.ccpi-umc.org.



"This fund has helped a lot. I can now buy medicine, pay doctors, buy food and support the cost of school for my kids."

—Alfredo Pasciência, retired in 2001 after serving eight appointments



"I am thankful for this pension program. I use the funds to look after my own and my family's health. Before this program, the conference offered no help of any kind—no money, no medicine, no funeral cost support."

—Francisco Ferreira, retired in 2003



"Without this pension program, I do not know if I would still be alive. My kids help me every month and I grow my own food."

—Carlos Joaquim, retired in 2003, still helping the local bishop by serving the central church



"The last pension distribution was used so I could go to the hospital to get some health problems looked at. I also help raise my grandsons because my son passed away some time ago."

—João Joaquim Domingos, retired in 2003 after serving in five churches

Questions? Interested in Helping?

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