

– Is the State a credible provider of basic education services? The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo ☐

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Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa. It has a fast-growing population, reaching the threshold of 100 million inhabitants in 2020 and is projected to grow to 200 million by 2050. Forty per cent of the population lives in urban areas, with a high concentration in the capital city. Under 15-year-olds represent 48% of the population.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, 77% of the population lived below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day⁴³. In 2020 the DRC was 175th out of 189th on the HDI.⁴⁴

In 2021, the DRC was the 5th most fragile country in the world, with a deterioration in specific indicators related to the State's legitimacy, human rights, social groups' demands, and the elites' fragmentation⁴⁵. It is 47th of 54 African countries in the Ibrahim Index on governance and was ranked 170th of 180 countries in the corruption index in 2020⁴⁶. Finally, due to important population movements, the Great Lakes subregion's highly volatile political and economic context continues to influence the humanitarian situation in general and the educational situation (Government of DRC, 2022).

Religious networks have managed approximately 80% of public primary schools since the 1970s through an agreement⁴⁷ signed after an almost total collapse of state provision. Public education has thus been in the hands of non-state actors for the last 50 years, leaving the Government with minimal power to direct the governance,

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⁴³ 2019 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

⁴⁴ 2020 Human Development Index

⁴⁵ 2021 Fragile State Index, Fund for Peace

⁴⁶ 2020 Ibrahim Index on African Governance

⁴⁷ 1977 Convention between state and main religious networks, which has been reviewed in 2022.

management and performance of the education sector aside from its normative role. Faced with a fast-growing population and a reduced budget, the DRC cannot meet the demand for free,⁴⁸ inclusive, quality public education. In the more densely populated areas, the absence of public schools leads to a rapidly growing low-cost private education sector to fill the gap. Private schools dominate Lubumbashi (over 70%) and Kinshasa (80%), providing an alternative to public education for disadvantaged families or families looking for what is perceived as quality education.

Free education provided by the Constitution and finally implemented by President Tshisekedi in 2019 was hardly prepared and suffered from a lack of finance, technical vision, proper planning, management and control mechanisms.

Parents still pay illegal fees for the education of their children four years after the launch of Free Education. Free education has also highlighted the contradictions and tensions within the religious networks that manage most public schools and own most private schools, creating power struggles and alliances (Hill and Jochim, 2009).

Based on studies and data from the ACCELERE! programme (a UKAID/USAID-funded education programme in DRC⁴⁹), along with academic and grey literature, this chapter sheds light on the challenges faced by the State in managing the education sector and delivering quality basic education services.

As part of the ACCELERE! implementation team, the authors have focused on improving governance of the education sector, and by doing this, have gained a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape and challenges, which are reflected in this article.

This paper shows who the leading non-state education providers in the DRC are, how and why they are engaged in providing core education goods and services, how they are funded, and how the State is managing them. We describe how these arrangements impact education delivery and quality and propose critical points for consideration if the State is to regain credibility as the guarantor of free public education for all.

⁴⁸ Free primary education was introduced in 2019.

⁴⁹ ACCELERE! Had four components: ACCELERE!1 focusing on early-grade learning in mother tongue, ACCELERE!2 focusing on governance in the education system, ACCELERE!3 focusing on girls' education and ACCELERE!4 in charge of monitoring, evaluation and learning. This chapter uses evidence produced by ACCELERE!1 and 2.

I – THE DRC EDUCATION SYSTEM: A HYBRID SYSTEM WITH BLURRED LINES BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ACTORS

A fragmented public education system with a significant role for religious networks.

One key particularity of the DRC education system is that most public schools are managed by faith-based networks. Public pre-primary, primary and secondary public schools are usually divided into two types: 1) state-run public schools (called ‘*non-conventionnées*’) and 2) public schools run by faith-based networks (called ‘*conventionnées*’). State public schools are managed and funded directly by the State. Faith-based public schools are managed by a private religious entity which has received a mandate from the State for this work but is funded directly by the State (school staff salaries and monthly school allowance).

During the colonial period, Catholic and Protestant churches played a significant role in the DRC education. Aiming to spread Christian values and convert the population, they created education centres to raise Congolese children in the Christian faith and became the primary means of formal education. However, in 1974 President Mobutu nationalised all religious schools to reaffirm the State’s power and control student protests against his regime. Mobutism⁵⁰ removed religious symbols and instruction in schools, leading to the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo becoming one of the prominent opposition figures during the Mobutu regime.

Nonetheless, without the support of religious networks, the entire education system collapsed. Amid a generalised economic crisis with extremely high inflation, teachers were no longer paid, and school infrastructure quickly deteriorated. In response to the chaotic situation, Mobutu required the churches to resume managing public schools as formalised by the 1977 Convention. This agreement established a state-regulated education system where the State and four main churches (Catholic, Protestant, Kimbanguist⁵¹, and Muslim) jointly managed public schools. Religious classes resumed, leading to the Catholic Church emerging as an almost equal partner with the State in managing the education sector.⁵²

⁵⁰ Mobutism was the state ideology of Zaire during the latter half of the 20th century, under the ruling of Mobutu and the Popular Movement of the Revolution.

⁵¹ Kimbanguism is a Christian new religious movement professed by the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth founded by Simon Kimbangu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) in 1921.

⁵² Since 1977, the Ministry has recognised 19 religious’ networks, some very small, through the signing of creation decrees for their public schools (Brandt, 2020).

In 2022, a new Convention was signed, strengthening the presence of faith-based public schools. They now make up 80% of all public schools, with Protestant schools accounting for 41%, Catholic schools accounting for 20% and state schools accounting for 20% of all public schools (DRC MEPSP, 2020). Although smaller, several faith-based networks have been added to the 2022 Convention. As a result, this has led to an unprecedented number of faith-based actors with over a hundred different networks involved in education provision. As in many other countries, the large share of enrolment in faith-based has an important influence on Faith-based organisations (FBO)' governance and accountability (Wodon, 2021a).

A growing number of low-cost private schools, especially in highly populated urban areas

Since the 1990s, against a backdrop of high demographic pressure and persistent economic crisis, the public education system in the DRC has suffered from a shortage of schools, poor existing education infrastructure, low remuneration of teachers, and weak school management, unsurprisingly leading to poor education quality. As a result, the number of private schools has grown to respond to parents' demands. More than 101,000 schools (Government of DRC, 2022) provide general education services at the preschool, primary and secondary levels. Seventeen per cent of them are private schools. But there are critical geographical discrepancies. According to the latest statistical yearbook (Government of DRC, 2019), two educational provinces account for more private than public schools at the primary level: in the educational provinces of Kinshasa and Haut Katanga, private primary schools account respectively for 66.4% and 54.8% of all primary schools (Government of DRC, 2019). Private schools are managed by a private school owner (an individual or a legal person). The functioning of these schools relies on funding from different sources, mainly parents' contributions and the school owner's funds. Most religious private schools also receive support from the Church they belong to, either nationally or from other countries.

However, school creation is not aligned with education needs

The official procedure for creating or establishing new public and private schools requires a needs assessment at the local level, based on an accurate school mapping, and a request to create a new school originating from the sub-division with approval at the provincial and central levels.

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However, this approval process is currently bypassed at all levels by private school owners, state administrative offices and the Ministry. School creation is used for patronage, partially explaining the rising number of schools (Brandt, 2020).

All schools should have a decree signed by the Minister of Education confirming their accreditation and enabling them to be officially opened. Nonetheless, 30% of schools and education offices have no existing decree confirming their existence – and an estimated 11% of the existing decrees are fake (MEPST, 2020). For private schools only, a recent pilot evaluation in Kinshasa undertaken by the Directorate for the Administration of Private Education showed that 49% of the private schools visited either did not have an accreditation decree or had an incorrect one (DAPE, 2022). Moreover, when there is such a decree, in many cases, the number of classrooms and teachers does not match the reality, as schools have allowed themselves to grow bigger without any authorisation, having used school fees collected from parents to fund this expansion.

The lack of oversight by the State makes it easy to transform private schools into faith-based public schools and falsify school accreditation decrees (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011). Private schools on their side may be tempted to join a religious network in the hope that the State will provide a monthly allowance and cover their teachers' salaries. Communities may also take the initiative to create a community school which may be acquired later by new religious school networks. School trafficking also exists between religious networks (Cambridge Education, 2016). The networks may transfer their 'schools in the bank', meaning schools with a legal administrative licence but no existing infrastructure, to any other network willing to pay for it.

Private schools sector regulation exists only in theory

According to Government regulations, all private schools must be registered or accredited by the Ministry of Education (Government of DRC, 2014). The Education Framework Law sets the criteria and process for establishing private schools. Private school owners submit their application files to the central Directorate for the Administration of Private Education (DAPE). Once approval is granted, private schools become integral to the national education system and should function according to the *Law*. These schools must follow the national education curriculum, have a school management and parent committee, the teachers recruited must have a recognised diploma, etc. In return, the MoE should provide textbooks and owes supervisory services to these schools through regular inspections and support to teachers' continuous professional development (DAPE, 2022b).

Within the central Ministry of Education, the DEPA has no representation in the Provincial or sub-provincial education administrations. As a result, the Directorate does not have reliable data on the different private schools, nor visibility on their governance or the teaching and learning conditions in these schools. Moreover, it is very poorly staffed (DAPE, 2022). Providing oversight for the accredited private schools in the country is thus almost impossible. Private school owners are represented by several associations that operate nationwide. But these associations' oversight is also very weak, and private school owners are not all members. A union also represents private school teachers, and there is a union for parent associations in private schools.

Similar teacher qualifications and experience in public and low-cost private schools

To be employed as a teacher in primary schools in DRC, candidates need to have a *Diplôme d'Etat en pédagogie générale*, which is one of the most popular options for the secondary school leaving diploma; therefore, many young people qualify as primary school teachers.

An annual data collection was undertaken in 2019 (Cambridge Education, 2020b) by the ACCELERE!1 project in 715 low-cost private schools in Kinshasa. It confirmed that all teachers employed in the targeted schools had the diploma required. Regarding teacher qualification, there was no significant difference between public and private schools in Kinshasa at the time of the survey. However, this might change over time, given low-cost private schools' rapid and uncontrolled growth.

Regarding the seniority and experience of teachers, the ACCELERE!1 annual data collection of 2019 shows that private school teachers had a similar level of experience and age compared to teachers in public schools. Low-cost private schools have the reputation of having a significant turnover in their workforce. Our 2019 data shows that 30% of the private school teachers in this sample had only spent one year in the school or had just started. On the other hand, another 30% had 5 to 10 years of seniority. So, while there is a turnover of teachers, it does not seem to be at a critical level.

In conclusion, chapter II shows there are blurred lines between private and public actors in a generalised context of weak oversight by the State for public and private school. The education system in the DRC is fragmented, with a significant role played by non-state actors in the form of religious networks. These networks manage public schools with a wide degree of autonomy.

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II – DRC EDUCATION SYSTEM: A COMPLEX NETWORK OF INTER-TWINED INTERESTS IN WHICH EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY IS NOT A PRIORITY

A complicated and top-heavy public-school administration

According to the Constitution, education is decentralised to the Governor and Provincial Ministry of Education. However, it remains highly concentrated due to the dual administrative structure involving state and faith-based organisations (FBOs), resulting in a fragmented system. In practice, faith-based public schools are managed by both religious and state administrative offices at the provincial or sub-provincial level, leading to complex management and a top-heavy education system organisation. Furthermore, whether state administrative offices have authority over faith-based offices is unclear. As a result, the latter often bypass state actors, communicating and reporting directly to their church hierarchy without providing the necessary information to the Ministry of Education and its ‘deconcentrated’⁵³ structures.

These blurred lines between different actors (Zancajo et al., 2021) make it difficult for the Ministry of Education to implement central-level measures. Catholic public schools, for example, do not use the official curriculum for the Family Life education subject and prefer to use their curriculum based on conservative values, refraining from discussing contraception or sexuality for example (CENCO, 1970). Furthermore, there is little communication between the central level and the provinces and between state actors and religious networks (Titeca and De Herdt, 2011). This allows FBOs to find practical arrangements regarding education management with local and provincial authorities depending on their sphere of influence and balance of power.

In addition, due to a highly concentrated system and the temptation to create new jobs for patronage, the central administration continuously creates more administrative offices to administer schools. Over the past seven years, the central MEPST has created dozens of new educational provinces (from 27 in 2015 to 60 currently), resulting in hundreds of state administrative offices and thousands of additional civil servants. Some of these administrative offices manage as little as ten schools each.

⁵³ Refers to the delegation of administrative powers and functions to provincial or local authorities that are directly managed by central authorities.

Consequently, the number of administrative staff has multiplied by 16 in 30 years, while the number of teachers was multiplied by three only⁵⁴

In reality, few of those offices have the resources and technical capacity to support schools. However, they attract a large proportion of state funding and receive a share of school fees paid by parents, as detailed in the next section.

Education funding: between opacity and absence of accountability

In 1992, as the Mobutu regime was falling apart, Congolese teachers went on strike demanding payment of their salaries. To avoid a lost year of schooling, the Catholic Church and the parents' associations offered to complement teachers' salaries by creating a salary top-up system called a 'motivation bonus' paid directly by parents. While this was supposed to be a temporary coping mechanism, it became an institutionalised practice. The State and religious networks raised fees to cover costs, unpaid teachers' salaries, school repairs, officials' school visits, etc.

Free primary education was enshrined in the 2006 Constitution, but even then, the education system was still mainly financed by parents, who covered around 80% of the costs (Verhaghe, 2017). School fees were levied at the school level and redistributed to all system levels. Parents financed the education system for decades through legal and illegal school fees. In a sample of Catholic schools surveyed in 2015, 20% of the school fees raised at the school level were transferred to the general Church budget (Verhaghe, 2017). There was no state control over the level of fees charged to parents, and discussion of this matter was largely taboo.

In 2019, the Government decided to enforce free primary education and officially end all school fees requested from parents for primary education. However, this practice continues unofficially as a mechanism to cope with the lack of a state budget and low teacher salaries. In many cases, teachers, who either earn a small state salary or no salary if the State has not officially registered them, ask students in their classroom to pay for some small things, photocopies, a correction of their work, a better grade, etc. The State has little oversight of school management, leaving school staff to their own devices (Bourges, 2022).

For the other levels of education, Early Childhood Education (ECE) and secondary education, school fees are still legal for all public schools and can be high, ranging from 70 to 190 USD/year, depending on the grade and the network. The provincial

⁵⁴ Data from the Teachers Payroll Department- SECOPE, 2019. Unpublished document.

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Governors fix a maximum annual amount (170 USD in Kinshasa for 2021/2022), but schools can request a special authorisation to charge higher fees.

School fees are also a complicated and opaque matter for private schools: the Ministry of Education has no control over how much the schools request from parents. Data collected from 731 private schools in low-income neighbourhoods in Kinshasa under the ACCELERE!1 programme⁵⁵ shows a considerable variety of amounts, ranging from 8 USD per year to several hundred dollars. Only recently, the Minister and the associations of private school owners agreed to share fees: 10% allocated to the school, 30% to the school owner, and 60% to pay for teacher salaries (Directorate for the Administration of Private Education (2022).

Accountability and transparency in school management are still lacking

According to the law, accredited private schools have the same obligations as public schools: they should have a Parent Committee (COPA) and a School Management Committee (COGES). The COPA president should systematically participate in the COGES, which should be a pivotal piece of the decision-making process at the school level: it must develop the annual operation plan and the annual school budget accordingly. Both private and public schools are also meant to hold quarterly General Assemblies with parents.

In the past, the concept of accountability and parental participation in school management has been closely linked to the payment of school fees: the general idea was that parents had the right to know how the school fees they were paying were used. However, there is less justification for parents asking for accountability in the new context of free primary education in public schools.

According to a parent perception study undertaken under the ACCELERE! project (Cambridge Education, 2020b), all parents surveyed in private and public schools said they had already participated in a general assembly for the on-going school year. 48% of private school parents said they knew how the school fees were used. However, 82% of parents in private schools said they had never seen a report on how funds were spent. They admitted that meetings were held to fix the amounts at the beginning of the year but that nothing was done to report on using the funds at the end of the school year. Interestingly, half of the parents in private schools believe that the school owner is the unique proprietor and that parents have no right to interfere with the management and expenditure of school fees. Despite being the primary funding

⁵⁵ ACCELERE!1 (2015-2020)

source, parents feel they lack the authority to ask for accountability and transparency in school and financial management (Cambridge Education, 2020b).

III – HOW PARENTS VIEW PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACTORS

The reasons for choosing private or public schools are diverse. Privileged families opt for private schools paying high fees for quality education. Some religious networks utilise schools with poor-quality education to showcase their development among the communities offering an option to poor parents who want to educate their children. In poor urban neighbourhoods, low-cost private schools are often the only option, offering proximity and affordability and meeting the community's needs.

Private schools as a choice to access quality service delivery

Private schools in the DRC offer an alternative to public education for many poor and vulnerable families, especially in densely populated urban and peri-urban areas where the State has not kept up with demand. These schools charge low fees and are thus affordable to impoverished households.

Given the little difference in quality between public and low-cost private schools, how parents' decisions to send their children to private schools can be explained? This question is even more relevant now that education is supposedly free: low-cost private schools imply a higher financial burden than public schools. The demographic context and insufficient public offer do not fully explain the current situation in provinces like Kinshasa or Haut-Katanga.

To better understand this issue, the parent perception survey mentioned above investigated the reasons behind parental decisions when choosing private or public schools; it sought to identify what features of a school are essential to parents and influence their choice and what knowledge parents have about the teaching and learning conditions in the school their children attend (access, safety, cost, education quality, school management, etc.). Specific attention was given to the financial aspect and understanding of how parents compare private to public schools.

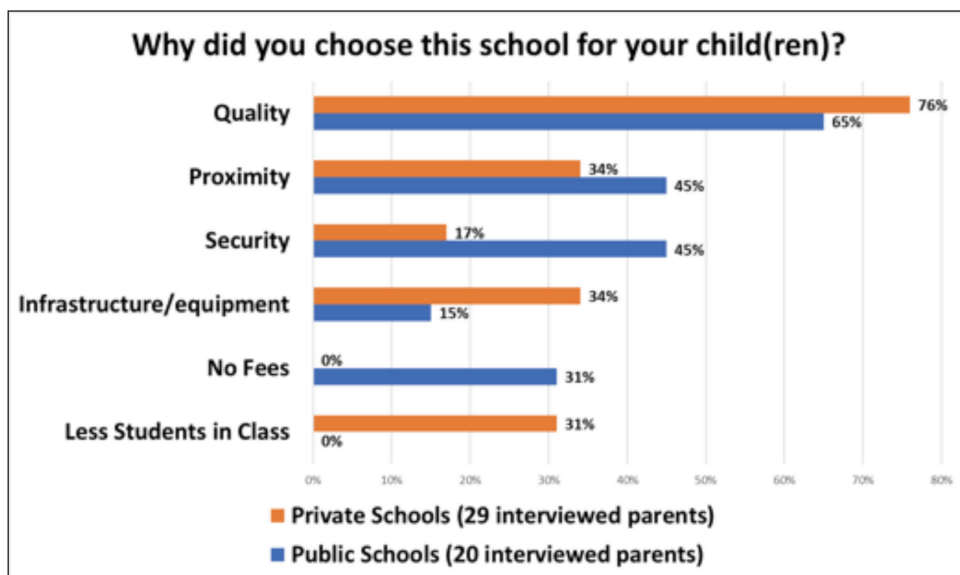
Important academic literature discusses school choice, especially in public vs. private schools (UNESCO 2021). However, while this literature discusses demand-side and supply-side factors at length, it does not consider parents' perceptions of the alternative options available to them in making school choices (Ahmed, H, Amjad, S, Habib, M and S. Ahsan Shah 2013). As parental perceptions are rarely based on evidence, as school performance data is often unavailable to parents, these perceptions

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tend to be overlooked. They can, however, provide interesting insights into the dynamics of the school market.

The primary perception of the parents interviewed in the DRC was that private schools provide ‘better quality’ education. How quality is perceived, however, differs from one context to another: the quality of teachers is often put forward but is not necessarily linked to their qualifications. Another critical factor is the number of students per classroom. A further widespread perception is that private schools are better managed and have stronger leadership (and that this is related to less teacher absenteeism). On the other hand, public schools are often regarded as less reliable regarding teaching quality, infrastructure, equipment, or availability of learning materials.

Figure 5: Main features listed by parents to explain their school choice



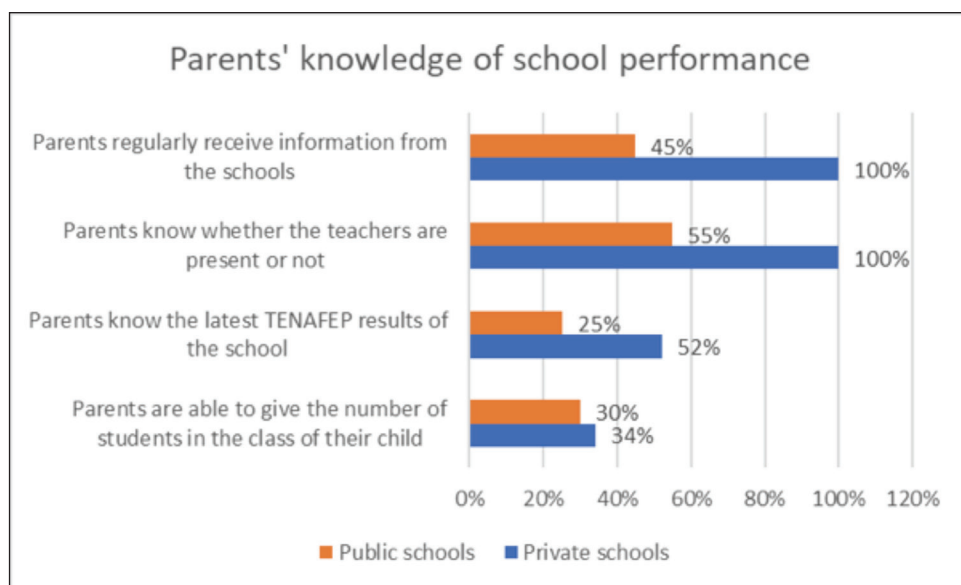
Source: Parent perception survey (Cambridge Education 2020b)

Better information management in private schools

The survey in Kinshasa included a question inquiring whether parents regularly get information from the school. All parents in private schools confirmed this was the case through regular meetings, communication bulletins and regular visits to the school.

On the other hand, 55% of public school parents said it was difficult to get information. Mainly because the communication booklet used by the teacher and school director to pass information was no longer used. Since the inception of free primary education, parents reported that no budget had become available to purchase these booklets—another reason being the increased number of students in public schools preventing personalised monitoring.

Figure 6: Parents’ knowledge of school performance



Source: Parent perception survey (Cambridge Education 2020b)

When asked whether they regularly get information on their child’s progress in school, all private school parents confirmed this was the case against 12 out of the 20 public school parents. The other eight had been requested a fee before handing over the school report.

Negotiating school fees to remain no matter what in private schools

Until 2019, before free primary education, the average amount asked for in public schools in Kinshasa was around 95 USD per year (Verhaghe, 2017), much more than

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in many of the low-cost private schools in the city. Some schools seem to function with as little as 8 USD per year.

Out of the 29 private school parents interviewed, 11 reported having difficulties paying the school fees. Although most parents mentioned that they could negotiate with the school directors to find an alternative for delayed payments, these data show that choosing a private school represents a financial challenge for many families. All parents in Kinshasa mentioned that private school owners put measures in place to accommodate parents with payment issues. School principals declared that they usually ask for school fee payments by quarter. However, they all mentioned that they allow payments in small amounts whenever money is available and in instalments until the end of the school year. Forty per cent of private school parents reported that their child had been excluded because of a failure to pay the school fees during the last school year. This measure, known as ‘children hunting’ was frequently used in public schools before free education launched. Private school owners show more flexibility as they have a greater personal interest in keeping the children in the school and ensuring that families will pay even if this is late.

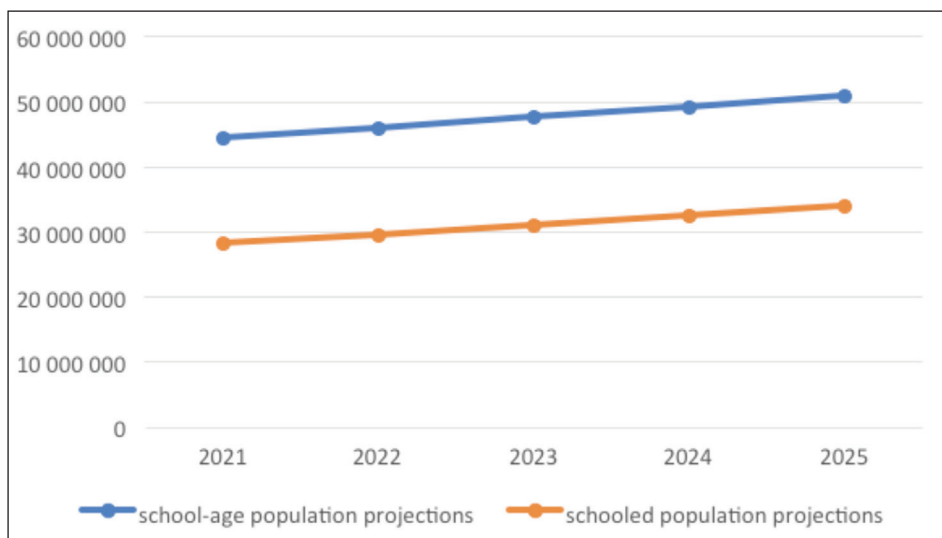
The broader impact of the free education policy on education access and quality is yet to be determined. However, first evaluations show a significant increase in the number of students in public schools, especially in the first grades. Even though school fees are not always affordable for the parents who choose to keep their children in private school, their negative perceptions of the public sector school might prevent them from switching even if their child will miss a few school days until they can pay again.

IV – CHALLENGES FACED BY THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE DRC: WHAT ROLE CAN THE STATE PLAY?

The DRC is facing current and forthcoming key challenges impacting its ability to meet the demand for quality education.

Meeting a growing demand for education: The demand for education will likely increase sharply in the future: the Education for All campaigns have already brought many children to school in the past decades, and high demographic growth in the DRC means these figures will increase rapidly. School-age population projections show that there will be around 7 million more school-age children in 2026 and around 5.7 million more children enrolled in school.

Figure 7: School-age and schooled population projections



Source: INS and A!2 school-age population projections.

The analysis of the current teaching workforce shows that it is ageing.

As the number of children increases, new teachers must be budgeted for, recruited and trained to fill the gap. This need will increase sharply from 2025, reaching an additional 300 000 teachers by 2040 (IIEP, 2022). In addition, more than 50,000 new pre-primary, primary and secondary schools will also be required by 2040. The State alone will not be able to cover this additional cost. That means ensuring free primary education will only be possible if preschool and secondary education remain paid for, if public expenditure on education significantly increases, and if the education system can also count on many private schools to accommodate this growing demand (Peano, 2021).

Growing inequalities in the education sector: The variety of education providers and the lack of oversight by the state lead to significant provincial differences in the school system. Some wealthier provinces like Haut Katanga and Lualaba have private mining companies that invest in their future employees' education and have good-quality private schools. Provinces with fewer resources have almost no private schools,

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and their public schools require investment. Only a few provinces have some of the so-called 'prestigious schools' in the large cities, which are public Catholic or Protestant schools that benefit from a larger state allowance. These schools usually provide quality education but are extremely expensive for secondary level parents.

Meanwhile, as highlighted earlier, in the highly populated parts of the fast-growing Congolese cities, parents do not have any choice but to send their children to a private school as there is simply no public school available.

In addition, the DRC has been suffering from multiple complex emergencies and protracted crises, either due to conflict, epidemics (Ebola, etc.) or natural hazards. In general, the education system has not been able to cope well with these crises. There is no education in emergency strategy, and education in crisis-affected provinces is primarily left to non-state actors, whether development partners, local communities or civil society. This situation has resulted in an unequal education system, with a rural-urban divide and significant differences between provinces (UNESCO, 2022).

The quality of education service delivery and learning outcomes are lower than in other sub-Saharan African countries: According to the 2019 PASEC⁵⁶ assessment, on average, at the beginning of their schooling, 41.6% of Congolese students reach the minimum proficiency level in literacy, which is three points lower than the average of countries assessed through PASEC. Moreover, the gap widens during primary schooling, and in grade 6, 73% of students do not achieve the minimum proficiency levels in literacy, against 52% on average for all PASEC countries (UNESCO, 2022).

With a growing school-age population and an education system already delivering poor quality with limited learning, the State cannot be the guarantor for free public basic education for all children in the near future – and probably not in the longer term, either. The country will need private and faith-based public schools to answer the significant demand for basic education.

Considering those challenges, below are key points to switch perspectives to support better the state's capacity to offer quality education across the country.

Consider national education rather than public and private education: The DRC Education Law (Government of DRC, 2014) provides an interesting perspective as

⁵⁶ PASEC is the regional standardized learning assessment managed by CONFEMEN, the Conference of the Ministers of Education of Francophone Countries. It assesses learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy at the beginning and at the end of primary education.

it states in the introductory paragraphs that public and accredited private schools provide national education. The State oversees this education provision and guarantees access to the same education services for public and private students.⁵⁷ The oversight and governance lacking in the current management of the education sector should be a priority entry point to regain credibility for national education provision. The DRC education sector has a legal framework and tools in place⁵⁸ for the education actors at a central and ‘deconcentrated’⁵⁹ level to control education provision. These need to be implemented and used to hold education actors at the school level to account (Baum et al., 2018).

Enhancing education governance: promote accountability and transparency in private and public education: As described, private education provision is an integral part of national education provision in DRC and fills a gap that public education providers will not be able to cover in the near future. Public schools run by private actors (FBO) represent the largest part of public education provision. It is thus vital for the DRC Government and its technical and financial partners to support the efficiency of education provision by improving governance in the education system for both private and public schools. All schools need to be held accountable by the State through improved education sector management based on reliable data. The existing legal framework, norms, and standards must be accompanied by control mechanisms reinforcing all actors’ transparency and accountability. The State should play an oversight role, ensuring private actors and faith-based organisations respect the existing rules that regulate the education system.

Building a coordinated steering system for National education. Promote a shared vision of ‘national education’ to foster robust partnerships and a sense of unity within the education system. A shared vision will create an enabling environment that enhances ecosystem collaboration, leverages stakeholders’ synergies, and strengthens the overall system. Furthermore, if concrete tools such as school mapping and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes are implemented at all system levels, evidence will be generated that can support decision-making and planning. There is also a

⁵⁷ Ibid. introduction.

⁵⁸ Minimum criteria for quality schools, regulations for school administration, for oversight by education offices at district and regional levels, etc.

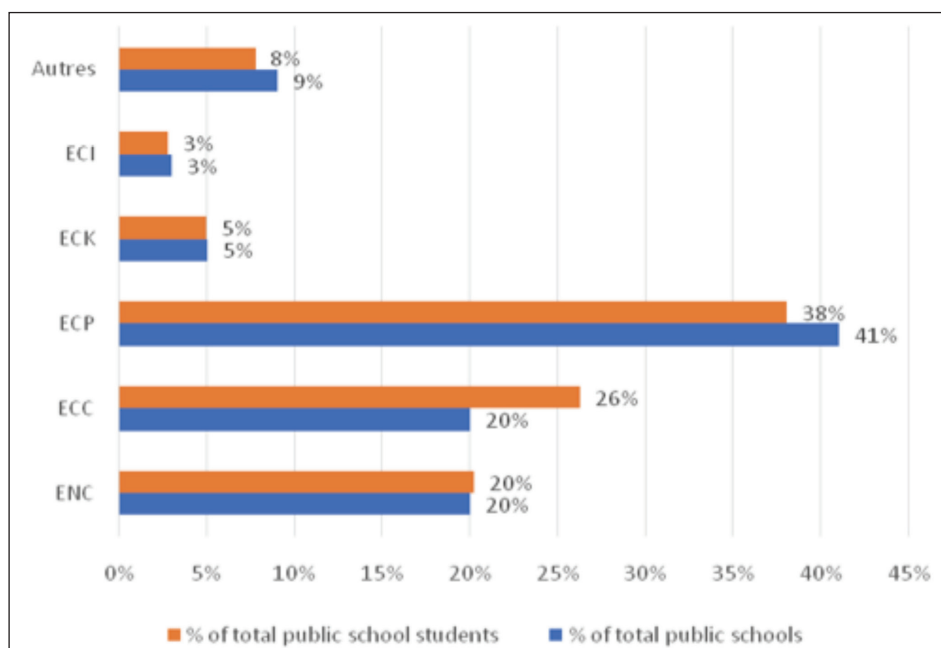
⁵⁹ Refers to the delegation of administrative powers and functions to provincial or local authorities that are directly managed by central authorities.

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pressing need to work with all relevant actors to strengthen synergies and reduce the power imbalances. From that perspective, a key step would be the implementation of genuine decentralisation with a strong governance framework.

ANNEXES

Figure 1 Distribution of public schools and students per network



Legend: ENC: State public schools, ECC: catholic public school, ECP: Protestant public school, ECI: Islamic public school, ECK: Kimbanguist public school.

Source: DRC RESEN 2022/ DRC MESP Statistical Yearbook 2019-2020

Table 1: Number of schools, 2019-2020

	Public schools		Private schools		Total
	n°	%	N°	%	
ECE	4192	51%	4058	49%	8250
Primary school	52092	87%	7895	13%	59987
Secondary schools	27535	84%	5252	16%	32787
Total	83819	83%	17205	17%	101024

Source: DRC RESEN 2022

Table 2: Distribution of primary schools per management mode in each province from the Annual Statistical yearbook 2017-2018

Province	Public								Total Public	Total Privé	Total Général	%
	ENC	ECC	ECP	ECK	ECI	ECS	ECF	Autre				
Kinshasa	246	404	544	74	28	51	21	125	1493	2950	4443	8,3
Kongo-Central	330	603	502	242	13	80	23	68	1861	523	2384	4,5
Kwango	585	431	616	91	13	1	2	52	1791	5	1796	3,4
Kwilu	520	952	1347	280	31	6	1	52	3189	40	3229	6
Mai-ndombe	448	345	624	118	77	7	1	36	1656	11	1667	3,1
Equateur	482	427	706	119	206	2	40	40	2022	53	2075	3,9
Tshuapa	299	322	392	133	70	2	0	26	1244	18	1262	2,4
Mongala	352	312	418	82	76	47	3	25	1315	64	1379	2,6
Sud-Ubangi	422	353	550	186	67	3	8	21	1610	99	1709	3,2
Nord-Ubangi	327	236	243	58	20	9	0	16	909	77	986	1,8
Tshopo	322	342	702	176	21	50	12	66	1691	347	2038	3,8
Ituri	330	832	775	29	8	0	4	62	2040	140	2180	4,1
Haut-Uele	166	461	259	13	2	0	0	14	915	80	995	1,9
Bas-Uele	128	293	229	18	1	1	0	12	682	26	708	1,3
Nord-Kivu	480	868	1450	67	65	3	5	275	3213	712	3925	7,3
Sud-Kivu	377	678	2135	86	28	5	5	149	3463	707	4170	7,8
Maniema	255	345	706	125	147	3	0	17	1598	95	1693	3,2
Kasai-Central	413	623	791	146	93	19	2	501	2588	108	2696	5
Kasai	610	513	1034	222	90	6	4	152	2631	170	2801	5,2
Kasai-Oriental	131	161	161	45	48	0	1	56	603	388	991	1,9
Sankuru	328	369	308	113	78	0	0	110	1306	26	1332	2,5
Lomami	448	422	577	56	29	0	0	6	1538	123	1661	3,1
Haut-Katanga	140	374	323	17	2	5	2	195	1058	1282	2340	4,4
Lualaba	190	178	293	65	0	0	1	101	828	335	1163	2,2
Tanganyika	362	354	680	35	9	3	2	117	1562	83	1645	3,1
Haut-Lomami	336	364	1303	65	0	2	1	93	2164	39	2203	4,1
Total	9027	11562	17668	2661	1222	305	138	2387	44970	8501	53471	
%	16,9	21,6	33	5	2,3	0,6	0,3	4,5	84,1	15,9	100	

Legend: ENC: State public schools, ECC: catholic public school, ECP: Protestant public school, ECI: Islamic public school, ECK: Kimbanguist public school. ECS: Eglise Chrétienne du Salut.

Source: DRC Annual Statistical Yearbook 2017-2018

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