

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)  
APPRAISAL STAGE**

Report No.: PIDA554

<b>Project Name</b>	ZR SUPPORT TO BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM (P131120)
<b>Region</b>	AFRICA
<b>Country</b>	Congo, Democratic Republic of
<b>Sector(s)</b>	Primary education (100%)
<b>Lending Instrument</b>	Specific Investment Loan
<b>Project ID</b>	P131120
<b>Borrower(s)</b>	Republic Democratic of Congo
<b>Implementing Agency</b>	Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education
<b>Environmental Category</b>	B-Partial Assessment
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<b>Decision</b>	

## **I. Project Context**

### **Country Context**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a country with a vast natural endowment with the potential to underpin significant economic development, yet it remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Located in Central Africa, it is the third largest country on the continent with an area of 2.3 million square kilometers. Its population of nearly 70 million is widely dispersed with just under 40 percent living in urban areas. The country is extremely rich in natural resources, including diamonds, copper, cobalt, crude oil, and gold, and benefits from an abundance of fertile land. It has the potential to become one of Africa's richest countries and an engine for regional growth. Despite this abundant endowment of resources, the incidence of poverty remains stubbornly high with 59.2 percent of the population living on less than US\$1.25 a day. The International Food Policy Research Institute estimated that half the country is undernourished. The DRC performs most poorly of all countries assessed by the 2011 Global Hunger Index.

The DRC experienced decades of internal conflict and war, which was brought to an end through a tentative peace agreement in 2003. The country has made significant progress with regard to economic growth and political development in the intervening years, but peace remains fragile, and reconstruction and economic development will remain challenges for years to come. Economic growth slowed in 2009 due to the global financial and economic crisis but averaged a healthy 7 percent in 2010 and 2011. Inflation has been brought under control, falling to less than 10 percent

in 2010 from a high level of 53.4 percent in 2009. Improved macroeconomic policy management and performance facilitated the DRC accessing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in July 2010. Nevertheless, due to entrenched structural weaknesses, the country's economic recovery is expected to remain precarious for the foreseeable future.

Recent developmental improvements have moderately impacted the country's human development. Progress with regard to normalizing the political context, improving the business environment and strengthening service delivery have had an uneven impact, with only a marginal improvement in socio-economic conditions for the population as a whole. The vast majority of Congolese continue to live in conditions characterized by poverty; deprived of access to basic services like education; health; electricity; sanitation; drinking water; and critical commodities such as cooking fuel. The DRC was at the bottom of the 2011 Human Development Index (HDI) in 187th position, with an HDI of 0.286, well below the averages for countries in the 'low human development group' as well as comparator countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The resumption of hostilities in the east could interrupt continuation of recent progress with both long and short-term effects. The long term impact of the conflict is that it could undermine state institutions as the law is not enforced in those parts of the country. This could be avoided if proposed internal reforms to improve governance and initiatives to reestablish political stability which the government is trying to put in place with the support of the international community succeed. The short term impact has been a shock that threatens fiscal stability. The security situation in the east has indeed led recently to a rapid expansion in security related expenditure. However these increased expenditures have been absorbed by a reallocation from investments in infrastructure, current funding for education and other social sectors remains protected. Public service salaries are being paid, including teachers. The government has also started to transfer teachers who are now paid from household contributions to the budget. This trend is likely to continue as the government has made a commitment to increase allocations to the sector to finance teachers and other essential expenditures. These increases are likely to accrue since government revenues from its rich oil and mineral resources are likely to remain stable and increase slightly in the medium term. Resources from oil are stable at around 2.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (2.6 in 2011 2.4 projected in 2012), and mining revenues are likely to increase in the next 3 years with an improved governance environment and the expiration of accelerated depreciation agreements which allow some companies currently to pay little or no taxes.

## II. Sectoral and Institutional Context

Primary Education in the DRC is administered by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel - MEPSP) and is characterized by a de-concentrated managerial and organizational structure. In line with the country's administrative organization, the MEPSP is subdivided into eleven administrative provinces, and an additional thirty 'educational provinces' (PROVEDs), which have some administrative autonomy. PROVEDs are further divided into sub-PROVEDs at the district level. Religious networks that directly administer the majority of primary schools are structured similarly, with representations at the provincial and the district level. This dual structure reflects a deep-rooted tradition of education management shared between State and religious networks. In other words, a specificity of the DRC context is that faith-based organizations are part of the management of the education system.

In primary education approximately 72 percent of students attend schools owned and managed by

churches and religious communities but still receiving part or entire funding from the government (“Ecoles Conventionnées”). Secular public schools (“Ecoles non Conventionnées”) only account for 17 percent of the overall enrolment, with private sector schools accounting for the remaining 11 percent. The distribution of schools run by the various religious organizations is shown in Chart 1. The contract (“La Convention”) that has governed the partnership since 1977 grants the State a primary role in the administration of schooling with all non-private schools financed and controlled by government as part of the public system. However, churches retain significant day-to-day oversight and managerial independence over the schools in their networks.

In practice, the roles and responsibilities of State and religious organizations are unclear. Religious networks operate largely as autonomous, parallel structures inside the public system, resulting in a system that divides the management of public schools between “state-run” and “church-run” networks. This “out-sourcing” in the provision of education services ensured the survival of public education during years of the State’s absence and periods of severe public financing restrictions. In light of the vast size of the country, generally weak state administration and poor communications, the durability and distribution of these non-state actors throughout the primary education sector present multiple opportunities for collaboration and a division of labor that has not been fully explored. Despite these existing and potential benefits, the practical manifestation of dual management of the education sector has resulted in a system characterized by layers of administrative offices operating with significant efficiency and accountability deficits.

In an effort to address these weaknesses, government has invested considerable effort in increasing access to education with promising results. Over the course of the last five years, important investments have been made to expand the system, resulting in a rapid increase in enrollments in all levels of education. Between 2008 and 2010, the number of public and private education institutions increased from 47,000 to 51,000, and the number of students registered across the system, from primary to higher education, grew from 13.6 million to 14.6 million. In 2010, gross enrollment rates reached 94 percent in primary education, 38 percent in secondary education and 7 percent in higher education. The gradual introduction of a fee-free policy for primary education in September 2010 has further strengthened this positive trend in access, specifically for children from poorer households and has contributed to a reduction in gender disparity.

In spite of these achievements, challenges remain. Barriers to access and continued inequity are driven by high costs to households, poor infrastructure, and socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain access for girls, and children from low income groups and hard to reach areas. A poor learning environment, underpinned by poor teaching skills and the limited availability of textbooks, undermine the quality of student learning as demonstrated by student learning assessments. These challenges remain pervasive in the absence of capacity to carry-out regular assessments and the ability to analyze data to improve the teaching and learning interface. Finally, as mentioned above, deficiencies contingent to the dual character of education management impede efficiency and accountability.

### **III. Project Development Objectives**

In support of the implementation of the MEPSP Interim Education Plan the project objectives are to: (a) increase access and equity in primary education, (b) improve learning conditions in primary education and (c) strengthen sector management and promote greater accountability by introducing new management practices at the local levels.

#### IV. Project Description

##### Component Name

Component 1: Increasing access and equity at the primary level through Rehabilitation and Re-Construction of Classrooms

Component 2: Improving the Quality of the Learning Environment

Component 3: Strengthening Sector Management

#### V. Financing (*in USD Million*)

For Loans/Credits/Others	Amount
Borrower	0.00
EC European Commission	6.40
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	93.60
Total	100.00

#### VI. Implementation

##### A. Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

The detailed project implementation arrangements are shown in Annex 4.

##### Guiding principles

The implementation arrangements envisaged for this Project are premised on the de-concentrated implementation framework developed under the auspices of the IEP. Implementation will be mainstreamed through the existing structures and coordination mechanisms of the sector, and will be framed by the following principles: (i) responsibility and accountability; (ii) equity and (iii) performance-based agreements.

(a) A de-concentrated approach requires a stronger sense of responsibility and awareness of accountability at the lower levels of the education system, specifically the administrative offices at sub-provincial levels (S/PROVED, Inspool primaire and Sous-Coordinations) and schools. In return for financing from the government they will be expected to deliver quality public services.

(b) Equity: The principle of equity not only refers to issues of vulnerability and exclusion, but necessitates a more equitable distribution of resources, and the prioritization of those most in need. This requires establishing objective criteria for targeted interventions (e.g., choice of geographic locations) and institutional arrangements for equitable service delivery (e.g., number of inspectors proportional to the number of schools etc.);

(c) Performance-based agreements require periodic evaluations of work on the basis of established and agreed upon indicators. In line with the IEP, this Project will establish “performance” agreements at the sub-provincial level. This is a relatively new concept as very little accountability exists with regard to the management of school fees and the delivery of services.

In addition to a partnership agreement between the center and the PROVEDs, a results based performance agreement will be established between the sub-PROVED and school management offices regarding the administrative structure, operations and the supervision of schools to ensure that the required administrative and pedagogical standards are maintained

## Implementation at central level

MEPSP will ultimately be accountable for meeting the objectives of the project. Project implementation will be mainstreamed, using the MEPSP structure at the central and deconcentrated levels, with the large majority of activities executed at the deconcentrated levels.

Strategic oversight of project implementation will be ensured by the Steering Committee (SC, Comité de pilotage) composed of the Ministers of EPSP (President), ESU, MAS, Planning, Finance and Budget, the Donors Coordinating Agency and the Secretary General of MEPSP (Secretariat of the SC). The SC will approve annual work plans and reports, and endorse major decisions of the project. The committee will meet formally twice a year and invite the World Bank (as an observer). A Project Implementation Team will be established within the MEPSP by a ministerial decree (prior to Negotiations) as follows: Overall project management, supervision and coordination will fall under the Secretary General assisted by an executive officer for day-to-day decision making. Mechanisms will be established to monitor implementation progress. A Technical Committee (TC) and the Technical Advisory Unit (CAT) will work closely together, meeting on a regular basis, and reporting to the Secretary General. The TC will be comprised of a core group including the heads of the Directorates responsible for key project components, notably school construction, sector planning, pedagogical inputs, teacher training, teacher management and system governance. Other Directorates of the MEPSP will be seconded to the TC if the need arises. The CAT, composed of national and international experts, is already operational. It was involved in the development of the IEP and is a source of technical advice to the Directorates. Project management within the Secretary General's Office will be strengthened with the support of the fiduciary specialists of the PARSE. These specialists have accrued important expertise, and demonstrated satisfactory performance with regard to the procurement activities and financial management of the PARSE. The capacity of the recently created Procurement Services unit of MEPSP will be built through the course of the project to ensure sustainable results.

## Implementation at the-concentrated levels

At the provincial level, the PROVED, as cosignatory to performance-based agreements with sub-provincial offices, is ultimately responsible for project oversight. The PROVED will exercise this authority in line with a participatory process and within limits approved by the Provincial Committee (Commission provinciale de l'EPSP) comprised by provincial education officials, representatives of civil society, church-run networks and the donors coordinating agency.

The sub-provincial offices are directly accountable, from a technical perspective, for implementation of the Project. For this reason, their organigrams have been revisited and essential tasks redefined in order to ensure implementation at the school level. They will closely monitor the performance of school heads and teachers. Sub-provincial offices and schools will be responsible for reporting on results under the performance-based agreements. At the level of the school, parent committees will be actively involved in approving and monitoring local implementation plans. Existing operations manuals will be adapted and included in the project's operations manuals.

The execution of the school rehabilitation/reconstruction component will build on government's construction strategy promoting a low-cost approach using appropriate technology, local materials and through the outsourcing of the program to specialized executing entities and local communities. Local Executing Agencies (LEA) will be recruited at provincial level with support from central

level. LEAs will recruit general contractors (responsible for studies and oversight of the construction works), local enterprises to carry-out construction and firms to deliver furniture. Furniture will be procured locally through competitive bidding. Local communities represented by the school management committees (COGE) will receive initial training from the LEAs and will be responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and the furniture. The COGEs will be involved in implementation arrangements such as monitoring progress of construction works and the reception of buildings and furniture. The specific implementation procedures will be developed in operations manuals. The PROVEDs will be strengthened by a team composed of a financial person (minimum of Bac+3 level) and a qualified engineer (A0 level) to permit them to effectively carry out the planning and supervision of the ALEs, the construction firms and other contractors (general contractors, construction enterprises and furniture providers). A technical evaluation of buildings and furniture will be conducted by an independent consultant on an annual basis to ensure the quality of the investments made.

### Role of Partners

The collaboration among the donor group during the preparation of the IEP and of the project will continue during implementation. There will be direct involvement of other partners in the implementation of some components while for other components the project will benefit from the experiences of projects financed by other partners. USAID for example will work very closely with the MEPSP and the Bank team in the development of in-service teacher training system through the development of modules and for putting in place the mechanisms for distance education in the 2 provinces. The LEDG will also work jointly in developing the systems for promoting girls education and teacher management. Discussions are well advanced with UNICEF, USAID and DfID on issues related to girls' education and with AfD on the development of the teacher management system. Regular consultations will also take place at the informal and formal levels on the implementation of all components given the experience of other donors in the various activities included in the project to learn from their experiences and to ensure a coherent national approach. The systems that will be developed will be adopted by all donors in future programs, in the framework of the IEP. The role of the Technical Advisory Unit (CAT) as the coordinating unit for donor intervention will allow for improved coordination and minimize the potential for duplication. Recent developments and discussions demonstrate the commitment of donors to the alignment of new projects within the IEP framework (DfID, UNICEF, USAID and AfD).

Donors will jointly monitor project implementation in the context of the IEP. The Donors Coordinating Agency will be a member of the Steering Committee chaired by the Minister of MEPSP, which will provide strategic oversight of the project. This committee will approve annual work plans and reports and endorses major decisions. The Committee will meet at least twice a year. There will also be joint annual reviews of the implementation of the IEP during which the project will also be discussed as part of the IEP. The Donors Coordinating Agency will also be part of the Provincial Committees and participate twice a year in meetings organized by the Provincial Committee located in the "capital" of the administrative province, chaired by the provincial Minister of Education.

Donors and civil society representatives will also be members of the various platforms that coexist and serve as frameworks for dialogue and concerted action between the donors and the government. These include the Thematic Education Group (Groupe Thématique Education) and the Comité de Concertation. The Thematic group is a high-level body including the Ministers of Education (EPSP,

ESU and MAS); while the Comité is more technical, responsible for analytical work and the production of technical reports. The role of these groups will be to monitor government action and formulate recommendations.

#### B. Results Monitoring and Evaluation

At the central level, strategic monitoring of overall project progress will be ensured by the Steering Committee. To ensure effective monitoring, the project will provide funds for further development of school statistics, and for surveys to monitor the use and maintenance of textbooks.

At the national level, monitoring and evaluation will be supported by semi-annual implementation support missions from the Bank as Supervising Entity, and joint annual sector reviews organized by the government with the contribution of the Parent Teacher Associations. The results of annual sector reviews will be communicated to affected stakeholders through workshops. Information campaigns developed through the communication strategy will assist in disseminating information relating to project activities, and ensure more vigorous public monitoring of project activities.

Day-to-day project activities will be monitored and periodic evaluations undertaken, at the deconcentrated level with the first line of responsibility assumed by the “bureau gestionnaires de proximité” through the use of results agreements.

A prerequisite for efficient implementation is the existence of a reporting and monitoring systems at all levels. Sub-provincial offices will report to their counterparts at provincial level (for instance, Inspool to IPP). Provincial offices will compile these reports and formally transmit them to the PROVED who, in turn, will elaborate a synthesis report to be transmitted to the central level. The project’s operations manuals will establish the format and reporting periods for the compilation of reports.

Independent financial audits will closely monitor spending procedures at the sub-provincial and school level. Quality surveys will be conducted on a regular basis to assess the impact and quality of the public service delivery. As a forerunner of an independent watchdog body (as described in the IEP), the system will rely on groups already present on the ground (local and international NGOs, UNICEF, teacher unions, parent associations etc.) to collect qualitative data utilizing a uniform survey design. Finally, joint annual reviews will be organized involving all partners.

#### C. Sustainability

The sustainability of the project outcomes will depend largely on continued and deepening government commitment. Integral to the IEP, is an implementation platform for reform to which the government, partners and civil society are committed. Construction activities will utilize local resources and technology, while the teacher training and textbooks programs build on successful interventions. Strengthening the management offices is a key priority for the government in the provision of quality education on a sustainable basis. All of these initiatives support the DRC in building sustainable mechanisms to address access, equity, and quality challenges within the education system. The project, moreover, has the potential to serve as a catalyst for further financial commitment to education. A promising development in this regard was the written commitment on the part of the Ministers of EPSP and Budget to increase the MEPSP allocation of the national budget (domestic resources) to at least 12 percent (2012).

#### D. Key Risks and Mitigation Measures

The risk assessment and mitigating arrangements are detailed in the Operational Risk Assessment Framework (ORAF) contained in Annex 6.

The overall implementation risk (before mitigation) is “High”. While the likelihood of some of the risks being realized may be low, their impact on the project could be severe.

Some reforms envisioned by the project remains relatively complex given the institutional context and the diversity of stakeholders’ motivations. Capacity constraints across the edifice of the system for procurement, fiduciary oversight, data collection, and project management remain weak. However the WB and partners, together with government has identified these risks and will directly address them through the mitigation measures.

To mitigate the technical risks, especially with regard to institutional reforms, project interventions will be limited to the management offices closest to school in only two provinces. Mainstreaming of the project in the MEPSP will also ensure that line managers with intimate knowledge and experience of the issues will be responsible for implementation. This approach often raises the motivation level of managers and staff and permits the use of interventions tailored to the specific context and which take into account the technical, economic and socio-cultural. The technical weaknesses of line staff will be addressed by the support of the CAT. This combination will substantially increase the chances of successful implementation. It would also allow seamless oversight by the leadership of the ministry. Fiduciary management which is more technical and for it is difficult to find specialists to fill public sector positions will be addressed using the strengthened capacity of PARSE along with technical assistance and LEAs at the provincial level.

#### VII. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	x	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		x
Forests OP/BP 4.36		x
Pest Management OP 4.09		x
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	x	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	x	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	x	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x

#### VIII. Contact point

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