



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 13-May-2020 | Report No: PIDA28018



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Congo, Democratic Republic of	Project ID P172341	Project Name DR Congo Emergency Equity and System Strengthening in Education	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 16-Apr-2020	Estimated Board Date 11-Jun-2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministere des Finances	Implementing Agency Ministere de l'Education Primaire, Secondaire, et Technique (MEPST)	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objective is to lower the burden of school fees on households and increase access to primary schooling in select provinces; and to strengthen core education systems.

Components

- Component 1: Enabling Free Access for All
- Component 2: Laying the Foundations for Quality
- Component 3: Strengthening Systems for Results

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.
Yes

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	4,212.00
Total Financing	4,212.00
of which IBRD/IDA	800.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS



World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	800.00
IDA Credit	400.00
IDA Grant	400.00

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Counterpart Funding	3,412.00
National Government	3,412.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

High

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)



B. Introduction and Context

Country Context:

- 1. Despite being endowed with abundant natural resources, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with extremely low levels of human development.** With a surface area the size of Western Europe, the third largest population in Africa, abundant mineral wealth, and largely untapped agricultural and hydropower potential, DRC is one of the most resource-rich countries in the world. Yet in 2018, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was only US\$562, and an estimated 72 percent of the population lived in extreme poverty on less than US\$1.90 per day. DRC accounts for 7 percent of the total population of extreme poor in the world and is third in absolute terms of number of extreme poor (about 62 million people), only after India and Nigeria. Human development indicators are correspondingly low: DRC is ranked 146th out of 157 countries on the Human Capital Index (HCI), and a child born today is only expected to obtain 4.7 learning-adjusted years of schooling. Climate variability and change likely exacerbate these concerns, particularly as most agricultural production, which provides livelihoods for the majority of the population, is rainfed.
- 2. Political instability, poor governance, and the resulting lack of basic service delivery all contribute to the country's limited development and persistent poverty.** DRC's turbulent history, including a prolonged civil war in the 1990s and continued active conflict in parts of the country, prevented the establishment of stable institutions and sustained elite capture of the country's resources and endemic corruption. According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators, in 2018 DRC's percentile rank on voice and accountability was 7.39 (where 0 corresponds to the lowest rank and 100 to the highest), 5.77 on government effectiveness, 5.77 on regulatory quality, 2.88 on the rule of law and 3.85 on control of corruption. All of these ratings are significantly below the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) averages. Instability and poor governance are important contributing factors to the lack of service delivery across sectors. DRC ranks near the bottom of global and SSA rankings in almost all measures of basic public services. With an annual population growth rate of 3.2 percent, even maintaining these low levels of services is a challenge in the fragile context of DRC.
- 3. The Government of DRC is in urgent need of support to finance free primary schooling and strengthen the systems that are essential for rolling out the policy successfully.** Limited planning was done ahead of the September 2019 implementation of the policy, in part due to the seven-month delay in forming a government. While the 2020 budget foresaw a doubling of education spending, domestic revenues will not increase rapidly enough to fully finance the additional costs in the short term and the economic impacts of COVID-19 are expected to significantly increase external financing needs. Moreover, the complex system of primary schooling and school fees that evolved over the past decades—as a result of the breakdown of the State and its inability to provide public services such as education—requires support to ensure that free schooling prioritizes the poor, builds on the sector's strengths and lessons from the past, and addresses sector inefficiencies. In parallel, assistance is needed to identify the resources that will fund the policy in the medium term through a combination of increased revenue mobilization and improved governance to increase efficiency.
- 4. The mounting health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic make the free schooling policy an even more critical priority to build the resilience of the Congolese people.** Experience with recent Ebola crises in the DRC and West African countries suggest that COVID-19 will have a long-term negative impact on human capital formation without strong and proactive countermeasures. Children lose substantial amounts of learning time while



systems are closed, and many will be unable to re-enter when systems reopen due to household financial hardships that will grow during the crisis.¹ Ensuring that access is free once education systems open again is one of the main ways to keep children attached to the education system and limit the effects of the pandemic on human capital.^{2,3} In the interim, while schools remain closed as a containment measure, the Government has developed an education response plan to consolidate and diffuse radio, television, and internet content for students and teachers with the coordinated support of development partners.⁴ Moreover, support to the free schooling policy even when schools are closed is critical to guarantee teachers are being paid—thereby ensuring continued income for at least one segment of the population during a time when many others will be subject to significant loss of income and limited access to safety net measures that could stabilize livelihoods.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

- 5. In 2018, approximately 17 million children were enrolled in primary education in DRC across more than 53,000 schools staffed by 540,000 teachers.** The estimated net primary attendance rate was 78 percent, with over 4 million primary school-age children out of school.^{5,6} Participation varied across provinces, from 55 to 84 percent. The 2018 primary completion rate was 67 percent and learning poverty (the share of 10-year-olds who cannot understand a simple text) stood at 86 percent.⁷ Primary participation and completion rates do not vary between girls and boys, but significant gender differences emerge at the secondary level.
- 6. Education quality is low, and the DRC faces a learning crisis.** About 64 percent of fourth graders are unable to read a single word of a simple text in French, and 63 percent are unable to correctly answer a single multiplication problem.⁸ There are several major contributing factors to poor learning outcomes. First, many students face significant learning challenges before entering school—43 percent of children under five years of age are stunted.⁹ Second, learning materials and physical infrastructure are inadequate. For example, only 30 percent of second graders have a reading textbook, and only 9.8 percent have access to a clean latrine. Third, a very small minority of teachers master the curriculum they are meant to be teaching and effective professional development is limited.¹⁰
- 7. Violence, sexual harassment, and abuse are prevalent.** According to a 2014 Demographic and Health Survey, 27 percent of women ages 15-49 reported having experienced sexual violence, among whom, 14.4 percent reported that the attack occurred before the age of 15. One percent reported that the perpetrator was a teacher.¹¹ The scarcity of female teachers is believed to contribute to this situation -- across all primary schools, only 29 percent of teachers are female.

¹ In Guinea and Sierra Leone, for example, the Primary Gross Enrollment Ratio in the year following school closures was two percentage points below what it had been in the year prior to school closures. UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

² For example, in Sierra Leone, fees were waived to encourage more children to return to school after the 2014 Ebola crisis. This was a precursor to the eventual enactment of the country's free schooling policy starting in 2018 (Azzi-Huck et al 2016; De la Fuente et al 2019).

³ World Bank Education Global Practice COVID-19 Response Strategy. Rogers and Sabarwal. 2020.

⁴ The World Bank is supporting the adaptation and diffusion of radio and television content for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education (including technical-vocational) through its existing education projects.

⁵ World Bank. 2018. Systematic Country Diagnostic; INS/UNICEF. 2019. DRC 2017-18 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

⁶ Since September 2019, the Government estimates that about 2.5 million children have entered the system.

⁷ INS/UNICEF. 2019. DRC 2017-18 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

⁸ Preliminary results of the EGRA and EGMA applied as part of the 9-province Service Delivery Indicator survey.

⁹ Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2014.

¹⁰ Data comes from a 9-province sample-based Service Delivery Indicator survey carried out under the PAQUE Project (P157922). Teacher mastery over the curriculum is defined as scoring at least 80 percent on an indirect assessment.

¹¹ In other words, of all women ages 15-49 in DRC, 3.9 percent report having experienced sexual violence before the age of 15, and 0.27 percent report having experienced sexual violence where the perpetrator was a teacher. The official ages for primary school attendance are 6-11 years old, but 22.6 percent of students are 12 years old or older (12.8 percent are 12 or 13 years old; 9.8 percent are 14 years or older) according to the 2012 Household Survey.



8. **About 84 percent of primary schools are publicly funded and are managed under two regimes: (i) écoles conventionnées and (ii) écoles non-conventionnées.** Conventionné schools account for 80 percent of public primary schools and are managed by faith-based organizations (FBOs) under a 1977 agreement. Non-conventionné schools are managed directly by the Government. Both types of schools are supervised by administrative structures known as management offices (*bureaux gestionnaires* (BGs)). Private schools make up 16 percent of all primary schools and disproportionately serve the better-off (30 percent of their students come from the top quintile, and only 11 percent come from the bottom quintile).¹²
9. **The primary education system's heavy dependence on fees disproportionately burdens the poorest and most vulnerable households, and limits children's access.** Annual cost per primary student in 2019 was US\$65, while public spending per primary student was about US\$25. Households in the poorest quintile spend close to 10 percent of their per capita consumption on public primary school fees per child. As a result, primary students from the lowest quintile are expelled on an average of 3.3 times per year for not paying their fees on time and have a lower than average primary completion rate (62 percent). The cost of primary education is also cited as the main barrier to schooling by 64 percent of households with out-of-school children.^{13,14}
10. **Prior to the free schooling policy, Government financing of the primary sector was insufficient and inequitably allocated.** DRC's public spending per primary student has been only 4.5 percent of GDP per capita in recent years, among the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa; 40 percent of the overall education budget is allocated to primary education (US\$430 million). Over 80 percent of MEPST's 2019 budget was for salaries and other recurring expenditures. Prior to the policy, the Government financed salaries for an estimated 60 percent of public primary teachers, with the remainder financed by households. Operating grants were allocated to 74 percent of public primary schools, without regard for school size or needs. Limited public support to the sector is due, in part, to a 2014 moratorium invoked by MEPST on adding new entities to its payroll. This has resulted in three groups of teachers: (i) those recognized by the payroll system and paid; (ii) those who are in the payroll system but not paid (NPs); and (iii) those not yet recognized by the payroll system, who are in posts with or without official decrees (*nouvelles unités*: NUs).
11. **More and better spending coupled with strengthened governance are the necessary foundations for addressing this learning crisis.** Management of the education system is weak, with a proliferation of administrative structures but limited focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of support provided to schools. In terms of data, MEPST's main systems have several strengths, but both are burdened by inefficiencies and limited controls. Across the Ministry, data from different systems are inconsistent and are not regularly used for decision-making. In terms of public financial management (PFM), budget planning and execution, there is misalignment between needs and priorities, as well as limited predictability, transparency and accountability. Better human resource management (HRM), including hiring processes for teachers and other sector staff, is also a critical area for reform. At the same time, a tradition of civic participation and existing local structures offer an opportunity to strengthen accountability in the management of the education system at the local level.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

¹² World Bank. 2015. *Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo*.

¹³ World Bank. 2016. *RDC Evaluation de la Pauvrete*.

¹⁴ The World Bank. 2015. *Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo*.



Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

12. The Project Development Objective is to lower the burden of school fees on households and increase access to primary schooling in select provinces; and to strengthen core education systems.
13. The core education systems the Project will strengthen include data systems, human resources management and public financial management. The select provinces are the following 10: Kongo Central, Kinshasa, Kwilu, Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Lomami, South Kivu, North Kivu, and Ituri.

Key Results

14. The PDO-level results indicators are as follows:
 - a. Reduction in per-student expenditure on primary school fees, among poor households in 10 provinces
 - b. Increased primary gross student attendance rate for the select provinces, by gender¹⁵
 - c. Percentage of newly hired public primary teachers who are recruited on the basis of merit (CRI)
 - d. Timely and reliable education system data publicly disclosed nationwide

D. Project Description:

15. **The Project responds to an immediate need to support the Government of DRC to roll out free primary education.** It is designed to address challenges in the primary education sector through short- and medium-term interventions organized in three mutually reinforcing components, two of which are results-based. The Project uses an IPF with DLIs modality that will put in place the building blocks of a more sustainably financed system which supports improved learning outcomes.
16. **The DLI targets in the Project will be for three years, with a focus on DLI results in ten provinces, and an additional fourth year of implementation for the input-based interventions to ensure key technical assistance activities are fully realized.** This approach will enable the government and the World Bank to evaluate and learn from the achievement of the DLIs and support sustainability and scale-up of the reforms.

Component 1: Enabling Free Access for All (US\$410 million equivalent)

17. This component aims to ensure fee-free public primary education is accessible to all children in the 10 provinces. The release of funds under this component will be contingent upon the Government taking critical steps to enhance the access, management and inclusiveness of the education system in the 10 provinces. These steps include strengthening access to education and the salary payments system; optimizing school networks coverage and reforming local management systems; and putting in place measures to increase safety and inclusion in school environments. The financial support under this component will boost overall resilience of communities to various shocks, including climate-related risks.
18. The objectives under this component will be achieved through DLIs. Specifically, the release of US\$410 million equivalent of IDA funds will be linked to four DLIs:
 - DLI 1 (three DLRs): Increase access to primary education
 - DLI 2 (three DLR): Strengthen accountability of salary payments system
 - DLI 3 (two DLRs): Reform local management systems

¹⁵ Derived from a household survey that asks if during the school year the child has been attending ('a fréquenté') school, and thus measures if the child is enrolled and has been attending regularly.



- DLI 4 (three DLRs): Create safe and inclusive school environments

Component 2: Laying the Foundations for Quality (US\$290 million equivalent)

- 19.** This component aims to strengthen the quality of free public primary education in the 10 provinces. The release of funds under this component will be contingent upon the Government taking critical steps to improve (i) the quality of the school environment and (ii) the quality of newly recruited primary teachers and school directors.
- 20.** The objectives under this component will be achieved through DLIs. Specifically, the release of US\$290 million equivalent of IDA funds will be linked to three DLIs:
- DLI 5 (three DLRs): Develop and implement an equitable school grants program
 - DLI 6 (three DLRs): Develop and implement a merit-based recruitment program for new teachers
 - DLI 7 (three DLRs): Develop and implement a merit-based recruitment program for new school directors

Component 3. Strengthening Systems for Results (US\$ 100 million equivalent)

- 21.** The objective of this component is to support the achievement of the PDO and overall capacity building of the sector. This entails strengthening national systems related to human resources, management information and public financial management. This component also supports the engagement of citizens, a safe and inclusive school environment and overall strengthened management of the sector. This component is input-based and does not use DLIs; it includes the technical assistance and equipment needed to support the achievement of the PDO. There are three sub-components.
- 22. Sub-component 3.1 Strengthening Critical Systems.** The objectives of this sub-component are to ensure that human resources are managed effectively and efficiently, that education system management information is reliable and nationally available on a timely basis, and that budgets are policy-based and effectively executed.
- 23. Subcomponent 3.2: Ensuring Safe and Inclusive Schools and Citizen Engagement.** The objectives of this sub-component are to lay the foundations for the creation of safe and inclusive primary school environments, and to enhance citizens' voices and participation in the Project's support of the free schooling policy.
- 24. Subcomponent 3.3 Project Management and CERC.** The objectives of this sub-component are to ensure efficient and effective project implementation and to address emergencies.
- a. 3.3.1 Supporting Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.** The objective of this sub-component is to ensure that capacities and systems are in place to achieve project results while adhering to corporate safeguards and requirements, including those pertaining to fiduciary functions and monitoring, reporting and evaluation, as well as DLR verification.
- b. 3.3.2 Contingent Emergency Response (CERC) (US\$ 0.00).** A no-cost CERC will be included in accordance with World Bank Investment Project Financing (IPF) Policy (paragraphs 12 and 13) for projects in Situations of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints. This will allow for rapid reallocation of project proceeds in the event of a natural or man-made disaster or crisis that has caused, or is likely to imminently cause, a major adverse economic and/or social impact.



Legal Operational Policies

Triggered?

Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50

No

Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60

No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The project is rated Moderate for environmental risks. Key environmental concerns are related to potential environmental risks related to the implementation of activities under Component 1 (Enhance system capacity for free schooling); and Component 2 (Emergency assistance for free quality schooling), especially. Potential environmental risks are related to the incremental environmental, health and safety impacts of more children being accommodated in existing schools, including use of classrooms and other school facilities, as well as the installation of temporary classrooms (not a project-funded activity). Risks and impacts related to incremental works/activities in existing schools include solid waste, water and sanitation, and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) for school workers. A Generic Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) will be prepared by the PIU, consulted upon and disclosed during project implementation for the incremental impacts in existing schools. The project is rated High for social risks. Potential social issues and risks (including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/H), labor issues, stakeholder engagement, grievances, inclusion, disability, social conflict, security, etc.) will be managed through targeted and complementary measures, including the carrying out of a Social Assessment which will assess social risks and identify mitigation measures to be integrated into project activities. An SEA/H Action Plan has been prepared prior to Appraisal.



E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

- 25. Project and sector (program) strategic oversight.** A Steering Committee (SC) will be established under the project, to provide overall direction during implementation and ensure that the different ministries coordinate as needed to achieve the PDO. The SC will be chaired by the Minister of EPST and will have as members the Secretary Generals (SGs) of MEPST, Ministry of Budget and Ministry of Finance; a delegate of the President's Office; a delegate of the Prime Minister's Office; and the Coordinator of the Permanent Secretariat of Support and Coordination of the Education Sector (SPACE).
- 26. Project coordination and implementation.** The SG of MEPST will be responsible for the regular, overall coordination of the project. SPACE will support the SG to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of project activities by the technical Directorates and Services of MEPST. A Project Coordination Team (PCT) will be created by a Ministerial Decree, and it will be constituted within SPACE to support the SG and the implementing Directorates and Services. The PCT will be constituted of a team of technical assistance and led by the SPACE Coordinator, who will report to the SG. The PCT will be assisted by a third-party verification agency(ies) to verify disbursement-linked results.
- 27. At the provincial level,** the MEPST Directorates/Services will ensure implementation of project activities at provincial and sub-provincial level through the regular administrative channels. Furthermore, a project oversight committee (POC) will be constituted in each of the ten administrative provinces targeted by the project. The POCs (10 in total) will be responsible to coordinate and oversee project activities at the provincial level, and will report to the SG, the PCT and the relevant technical Directorates and Services at central level; it will meet at least on a quarterly basis to review progress and resolve any implementation issues.

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APPROVAL

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