

# Global Partnership for Education

## Thematic and Country-level Evaluation

### Democratic Republic of Congo Case Study (2024)

#### Transformation potential of the priority reforms, country's position to implement these reforms, and GPE support to the reform process up to the compact

#### Introduction and background

This report is a part of the Thematic and Country-Level Evaluation (TCLE)<sup>1</sup> of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)'s global and country-level support to its partner countries as part of its [Strategic Plan for 2021–2025](#) (GPE 2025). To operationalize this strategy, GPE's operating model seeks to support governments to transform their education systems. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was selected as one of eight country cases for study as part the evaluation,<sup>2</sup> which explores the DRC's potential for transformative reform by closely examining the process of the partnership compact development, selection of its priority reform, and potential for implementation. This case study uses evidence from primary data (interviews with key country-level stakeholders with fieldwork conducted between 4 and 8 September 2023 in Kinshasa, DRC) and a secondary document review. A stakeholder map, list of respondents interviewed, and a full list of documents reviewed can be found as annexes.

#### Current education situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The education system in the DRC is characterized by a high degree of decentralization, in which education is administered at the provincial government level across the 26 provinces. Each ministry is headed at national level by a minister appointed by the President of the Republic and accountable to Parliament, and at provincial level by a provincial minister appointed by the Governor and accountable to the provincial Parliament. The central level is responsible for setting norms, school inspection, and national statistics.

Political instability and armed conflicts have impacted the DRC since the 1990s and resulted in the death of more than 5 million people. At the time of data collection, the security situation had seriously deteriorated in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, where thousands of people had to flee clashes between the Congolese army and armed groups. In November 2024, new clashes took place between M23<sup>3</sup> rebels and pro-government armed groups in North Kivu, near Goma. Escalating violence in the province has now pushed the number of internally displaced people to a record 6.9 million.<sup>4</sup> This political instability also contributes to keep the country among the world's poorest. Nearly one person in six living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa lives in the DRC. According to the DRC Humanitarian Response Plan, in 2020 approximately 25.6 million people (including 12.9 million women and girls) needed humanitarian assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> The TCLE seeks to progressively assess how GPE's operating model and 2025 strategy support partner countries to select and implement a chosen transformative reform, and assess the likelihood of achieving the intended impact and its potential for sustainability. The evaluation involves longitudinal country-level case studies using a mixed-methods approach for data collection, analysis, and synthesis. The evaluation is being conducted by a consortium, led by Triple Line with partners Learn More and Technopolis.

<sup>2</sup> The other seven partner countries sampled are Cambodia, El Salvador, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, and Tanzania – Mainland, Uganda.

<sup>3</sup> The March 23 Movement (M23) is a rebel movement created in the aftermath of the Kivu war and supported by Rwanda.

<sup>4</sup> [The Guardian, 'It's always us who pay the price': displaced by DRC's endless cycle of war, 20 November 2023.](#)

The education landscape in the DRC is made up of numerous actors (public, private, religious, associations, etc.). It includes international actors such as international donors and organizations (i.e. World Bank, UNICEF), national actors (ministries, national religious authorities), and 58 Educational Provincial Offices (PROVED) across the 26 provinces, the provincial and sub-provincial education committees, school principals, teachers, and parents. A framework for consultation has been set up between education partners in the DRC, known as the "Cadre Partenarial du Secteur de l'Éducation" (CPSE). The CPSE is made up of the following sectoral bodies: the Education Thematic Group (GTE), Sectoral Steering Committee (COPIS), Sectoral Concertation Committee (CCS), Thematic Consultation Committee (CCT), and Provincial Technical Committee (CTP). The CCS is the local education group (LEG) and is responsible for education sector policy dialogue and coordination. It is supported by SPACE – 'Secrétariat Permanent d'Appui et de Coordination du Secteur de l'Éducation', a key counterpart for the GPE, in charge of sub-sector coordination, harmonization and alignment.

Poor teacher performance is a notable issue. Teachers in the DRC have been found to have low levels of literacy and numeracy comprehension.<sup>5</sup> The teaching profession is undervalued, with teachers being paid low salaries, and regularly facing delays in salary payments. Historically, teacher salaries have been reported to vary by province, grade, seniority, and households' contributions. In 2015, the lowest monthly salary for a teacher (Grade 32 outside of Kinshasa<sup>6</sup>) was US\$ 94.05,<sup>7</sup> however, we were unable to find more recent data to confirm the current state of teacher salaries. Because it fails to attract the most competent candidates, the profession lacks the skills needed to provide quality teaching. DRC grapples with significant challenges in teacher training, including limited access to quality initial training due to scarce teacher training institutions and resources, which hinders aspiring educators.<sup>8</sup> Training quality varies, with programs often not meeting practical needs, and ongoing training is hindered by logistical and financial constraints.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, teaching and learning conditions are poor, with insufficient teaching materials and basic school supplies available.<sup>10</sup> The Stratégie Sectorielle pour l'Éducation et la Formation (SSEF) 2016-2025 reports that less than 40% of schools have water points, 8% of schools consider that all their classrooms are in poor condition, and the average ratio of French and math textbooks in the public sector is just 0.13 textbooks per pupil.<sup>11</sup>

## GPE partnership in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The DRC joined GPE in July 2012 after its Interim Education Plan 2013-2015 was endorsed. Since 2012, the DRC has received a total of USD \$376,282,928 in grant support from GPE, across 11 grants.<sup>12</sup> Previous funding includes \$234,924,060 of education sector program implementation grants (ESPIG) and COVID-19 accelerator funding received between 2017 and 2022, and \$87,102.31 of education sector plan development grants (ESPDG) received between 2015 and 2016.

## The Democratic Republic of Congo's engagement with GPE 2025

DRC was part of the pilot cohort which began rolling out the GPE 2025 operating model in January 2021. The final enabling factors package was submitted in October 2021, and the independent technical advisory panel (ITAP) assessment was completed in December 2021. The compact was finalized in March 2022, and the GPE Board approved the strategic parameters for GPE engagement in September 2022. At the time of data collection, the system transformation grant (STG) and Girls' Education Accelerator (GEA) grant of \$137,500,000 were still pending, but were effective from January 2024 with AFD as grant agent. Two system capacity grants totaling \$3,072,037 are currently active.

DRC is part of the KIX Africa 21, a regional hub that oversees activities in 21 GPE partner countries,<sup>13</sup> and which has funded six research projects which benefit DRC. The Education Out Loud (EOL)

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<sup>5</sup> PASEC (2019). Quality of Education Systems in French-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>6</sup> Grade 32 is a teacher who finished four years of secondary school.

<sup>7</sup> Cyril Brandt, Review of Teacher Salary Payment System in the DRC, May 2016.

<sup>8</sup> DRC Partnership Compact, 2022

<sup>9</sup> GPE, Operating Model simulation – Rapid Country Analysis

<sup>10</sup> DRC Partnership Compact, 2022

<sup>11</sup> Stratégie Sectorielle de l'Éducation et de la Formation (2016-2025), December 2015.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/democratic-republic-of-congo>.

<sup>13</sup> Primarily in West and Central Africa and the Indian Ocean.

initiative supports three civil society advocacy and social accountability efforts in the DRC, including: the Coalition Nationale de l'éducation pour tous en République Démocratique du Congo (CONEPT DRC) for the 2020-2023 period, the Centre de Recherche sur l'Anti-Corruption for the 2022-2024 period, and Adolescent Mothers' Education Initiative (AMEI) led by World Vision UK for the 2021-2024 period.<sup>14</sup>

The focus of the partnership compact's priority reform is "quality education and teachers" with an objective to "provide the Congolese education system with competent, motivated and available teachers" who are "actors in the transformation of the education system." The priority reform is organized around three Pillars:

- **Pillar 1:** Revalorize and revitalize the teaching profession to better motivate teachers and attract more women to the profession.
- **Pillar 2:** Promotion of merit-based recruitment and strengthened teacher professional development system.
- **Pillar 3:** Improving conditions of teaching and learning at the school and classroom levels, especially for girls.

## **1. Did the GPE model help with policy dialogue, identification of system bottlenecks, and solutions to address these bottlenecks for better education outcomes?**

### **How inclusive is the policy dialogue in the Democratic Republic of Congo?**

Interviews conducted across all stakeholder types agreed that the operating model supported an inclusive dialogue with all key groups of stakeholders involved (national, international, CSOs, faith-based organizations, etc.), including at decentralized levels during the development of the compact. The compact development process was underpinned by consultations with a wide range of key stakeholders in the Congolese education sector, reflecting the inclusive composition of the DRC LEG. Consultations included the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education (MEPST) and the Ministry of Finance, representatives from the different faith-based organizations managing schools in the country, representatives from civil society organizations, provincial education actors and elected officials, and international development partners. This process was suited to the needs of the DRC, where education is decentralized, requiring a large number of stakeholders to be involved in and build consensus around the selected priority reform, as confirmed by most stakeholders interviewed in country. Interviews with CSOs and trade unions revealed, however, that meaningful participation of stakeholders was not always possible due to logistical and capacity constraints.

The compact development process does not appear to have been strongly government-led, with all stakeholders interviewed suggesting that the compact was largely led, shaped, and drafted by donors (UNICEF, AFD, World Bank, UNESCO) and SPACE; with limited broader government leadership outside of SPACE. There was a lack of clarity around who "owns" the compact (beyond SPACE) and who is accountable for its delivery. Indeed, one external expert in the DRC education sector expressed that the compact was perceived as a GPE initiative, rather than government owned. Stakeholder representatives from religious schools, CSOs, and trade unions felt that for the reform to achieve its objectives, political will was essential. Given the low level of government participation in the process of compact development, stakeholders were not convinced it would be sufficiently appropriated by the government, and therefore risks not meeting its objectives. Finally, international stakeholders tended to report that the compact development process was overly centralized and donor-led, with less strong involvement and steer from decentralized levels of government.

Following the completion of the compact, there was less evidence of continued policy dialogue, government leadership, and mutual accountability around the priority reform. Several interviews with international development partner stakeholders reported that the collective momentum significantly slowed down once the compact had been endorsed and that efforts related to the priority reform were now mostly being carried by the handful of key stakeholders directly involved in the design of the

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<sup>14</sup> GPE website, Democratic Republic of Congo.

grants (AFD, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, and SPACE). At central level, most national stakeholders who had participated in the compact process from the MEPST had not reengaged with the priority reform since its endorsement, and were waiting to see what would come out of the GPE process in terms of concrete implementation. Beyond that circle, both at central and decentralized levels, interviews with all stakeholders (except development partners) showed that the level of awareness about the compact and the priority reform was low. Overall, the interviews reflected a sense that “business as usual” was returning, with little change in practice resulting from the compact development process.

### **What enabling factors bottlenecks were identified and what policy actions/interventions were chosen to address the bottlenecks in the Democratic Republic of Congo?**

The enabling factors analysis (EFA) and ITAP assessment uncovered a broad range of significant gaps in the enabling factors for system transformation, with all four enabling factors rated as high priority. The compact outlines various actions and interventions needed to address these gaps, which have been in large part mapped against the three pillars of the priority reform. These actions (described below and in Annex 4), are relevant to the context and aligned with DRC priorities and the identified bottlenecks. However, not all of the gaps or recommendations from ITAP have been clearly addressed, likely due to the significant number and scale of challenges identified. Below, we discuss the assessment of, and response to, each of the enabling factors in turn.

**Data and evidence (high priority):** The EFA and ITAP assessment identified multiple gaps relating to the production of regular, relevant, and reliable data. The production of education data has historically been irregular. Data does not allow for sufficient analysis of important groups such as refugee children, children with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Similarly, data across different levels of education is incomplete. These weaknesses have a knock-on effect on the country’s ability to adequately inform decision making and monitor policy and plans. The gaps are underpinned by weaknesses in education management information systems (EMIS) capacity, infrastructure and funding, and a lack of harmonization across databases. Capacity building support is over reliant on external partners, worsened by fragmented funding and approaches in MEPST support.

The compact recognizes these weaknesses and sets out actions to address them, which largely focus on the increased production of data to better inform decision making and resource allocation, and to monitor both teacher and learner performance. The compact also includes actions to improve data collection and management systems, including ‘modernizing’ data collection systems and harmonizing databases relating to students and teachers, and the compact lays out plans to use system capacity grant (SCG) funding to build capacity in EMIS. STG funding includes a top-up trigger specifically linked to the data and evidence enabling factor, which aims to incentivize the government to allocate national funding towards data collection, publication, and dissemination of the statistical yearbook. Given that limited availability of data also underpins several gaps in the remaining three enabling factors (particularly gender responsive planning, policy and monitoring, and equity and efficiency of domestic financing), the inclusion of a top-up trigger linked to data and evidence is relevant and justified.

While the EFA process clearly identified notable gaps in data and evidence, the activities set out in the compact do not provide much detail on how, by whom, and when these activities will be implemented in practice, and do not clearly describe how the systematic constraints which have limited evidence production in the past will be overcome. The STG top-up trigger is intended to incentivize actions to address these gaps, however our analysis was not able to confirm at this stage whether this incentive will be sufficient to mobilize the necessary efforts to address gaps.

Some ITAP recommendations are not clearly addressed, such as the need for more systematic data collection on parents and home factors, and the need for regular conflict-sensitive vulnerability or equity analysis.

**Gender responsive planning, policy, and monitoring (high priority):** EFA and ITAP reviews report multiple and significant barriers to effective and gender responsive planning, policy, and monitoring, some of which are described here and in Annex 4. These challenges present themselves in an education system which is characterized by a complex, decentralized, and hierarchical structure with different management structures and financing guidelines that further exacerbate the identified

challenges. ITAP highlights a gap in any form of functional analysis to understand the root causes of system dysfunctions relating to this complexity.

The EFA and ITAP noted that the design, implementation and, monitoring of realistic planning which meets 'needs on the ground' remains a major and essential challenge in the DRC. Although recent efforts to strengthen sectoral planning are demonstrated by the production of a comprehensive legislative, political and strategic framework, and supporting tools and resources, in practice the uptake of this has been difficult and slow to implement. The most recent action plan for SSEF was drafted in 2015 (covering 2016-2020), with no evidence of an annual review or planning process. ITAP recommends that annual operational plans are put in place, particularly at the provincial level, to reflect the realities of the decentralized education system. There also remains a lack of prioritization around strategic activities, and roles and responsibilities are ill defined. The simulation model for SSEF requires further strengthening and anchoring in the Medium-Term Expenditure Forecast (MTEF), and budget monitoring and tools need to be strengthened to support better targeting and efficiency of resources (including the allocation of teachers).

Ineffective planning and monitoring are further hampered by the lack of reliable and timely data, as highlighted in the summary of the 'data and evidence' enabling factor. ITAP notes that weaknesses in the availability of quantitative data have not been directly addressed in the SSEF. There is a need to identify and address capacity gaps for planning and management, particularly at provincial levels, to improve system functionality.

Policy actions and interventions are presented in the compact and are mapped against the three pillars of the priority reform. These mostly focus on improved teacher management and monitoring. Through the SCG, UNESCO is working with PROVED staff to strengthen its capacity to conduct gender-sensitive policy planning through an intensive course. The actions presented respond to some of the challenges identified, however, the ITAP report highlighted a number of issues that are only partially addressed in the compact. For example, the ITAP report highlights that planning should be less hierarchical and that annual operational plans (particularly at the provincial level) responding to the specific needs of local operating environments and conditions, including conflict conditions, would better reflect the realities of decentralization. However, while the compact states there are plans to draft and implement crisis education plans, it does not specify if these are to be decentralized. It also states that there will be a reinforcement of planning capacities at central and provincial level, especially for girls, but without any concrete details of how this will be achieved.

**Sector coordination (high priority):** The EFA and ITAP assessments acknowledged past steps taken to strengthen sector dialogue and coordination, specifically referencing the various bodies that are broadly inclusive and steered by the government. For example, SPACE was recognized as a body facilitating inclusive coordination and which has gradually won the overall support and confidence of relevant stakeholders. Additionally, the elaboration of the MTEF was seen a positive step towards improving the management of public finances and alignment of funding. However, significant challenges were identified which have an impact on the country's ability to effectively plan, manage results, and mobilize financial resources. The complexity of sectoral coordination in the DRC makes it difficult to ensure regular, meaningful, and inclusive dialogue and consultation. Coordination across the four ministries responsible for education is challenging, with each of these have differing objectives and strategies. While coordination bodies are inclusive, this is not always reflected in consultation meetings, where in practice many partners are either inactive (sometimes due to a lack of resources necessary to meaningfully participate), or the priorities of different partners are misaligned. There is limited technical, human, and financial resources and capacity to effectively run coordination bodies. The ITAP further highlighted the lack of engagement with provincial level government in the implementation of education sector plans, and the limited participation of important stakeholder groups such as religious organizations and communities in the monitoring of these plans.

Similarly, several weaknesses in coordinated financing were identified. There is limited harmonization across donor-funded programs, which are largely project-oriented. This, according to the EFA and ITAP, is exacerbated by poor public financial management which results in an unwillingness of many international partners to consider budget support or aligning with national systems, leading to the projectization of funding and development of parallel systems. However, the \$800 million World Bank combined loan and grant for its Emergency Equity and System Strengthening in Education (EESSE) project (2020-2024) is using government financial systems and links payments to the verifiable

achievement of results – it is hoped that this may be an opportunity to build the confidence of other development partners to use country systems. Another constraint identified relates to the lack of funding and management autonomy within SPACE, which is financially and physically dependent on donor funded projects, signaling potential threats to its sustainability.

Actions and interventions proposed in the compact to address some of these challenges include: strengthening interministerial coordination and donor coordination and communication (particularly around key issues such as teacher management and the free school policy); better defining the roles and responsibilities of those involved in teacher training; strengthening SPACE to support sectoral coordination, planning, and monitoring; and improving coordination between central and decentralized levels. The compact itself did not provide precise details of how some of these actions would be achieved - for example “Better coordination between the central and decentralized levels and between administrative offices” is included in response to the sector coordination gaps, but there is not further information provided about how this will be achieved. Overall, there are numerous relevant actions identified, but these are not always clearly defined, and it is often unclear how they will be achieved in practice. Therefore, it is difficult to assess whether these actions will be sufficient.

**Volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic public education expenditure (high priority):** Significant and wide-ranging challenges were identified relating to the volume, equity, and efficiency of public expenditure on education. There have been some promising trends in the volume of budget allocation, with significant improvements in the share of budget earmarked for education since the re-launch of the free primary education policy, which reached the GPE recommended 20% share of state budget allocated to education in 2019. However, significant volume challenges remain. Low GDP and limited capacity to collect taxes, combined with a growing school age population, means that resources are still too low to meet development needs. Available data suggests the execution rate for education often does not align with the approved budget, with the ITAP assessment reporting this is around 80% in recent years.

Several equity related challenges were identified in terms of domestic financing, with disparities by gender, geography, socio-economic background, and school type specifically highlighted, and a complex system of transfers between central and decentralized levels that does not use an equity focused allocation formula to target more disadvantaged provinces. Efficiency challenges result from the complex education structures across central and provincial levels, and insufficient coordination across levels, leading to duplicated monitoring and supervision responsibilities. Internal inefficiencies are reflected by class sizes, high repetition and drop out, and unmanaged and unplanned late entry of overage students into the education system.

Identified actions relating to volume of domestic financing include ensuring that essential costs are covered by the national budget, such as the implementation of the Free School Policy, costs associated with data collection, and investment in school equipment. Equity actions include ensuring that budgeting is aligned with needs in terms of teachers and administrative staff and ensuring the equitable recruitment of teachers. Efficiency related actions are linked to rationalizing support for administrative offices, strengthened monitoring of teacher payroll, more efficient construction projects, and teacher material distribution. Two top up triggers were proposed in September 2023 linked to efficiency of domestic financing, including: 1) establishment of a unique identifier for the MEPST staff on the budget to improve control of MEPST’s payroll by 2024 (\$20 million); and 2) Effective retirement of 4,000 overaged teachers by 2025 (\$15 million). Some key ITAP recommendations which do not appear to have been specifically addressed include the suggestion to implement and monitor equitable distribution of funds at the provincial level, or to devise an equity focused formula and associated financial allocation system.

## How useful were the enabling factors analysis and ITAP processes?

The EFA and ITAP assessment processes were useful overall in identifying multiple bottlenecks to system transformation and gaps in the enabling factors in the context of DRC. National and international stakeholders saw value in collectively thinking through the constraints to effective reform, which was seen as an innovative and useful way of instilling a more transversal “systemic” way of thinking in a sector that is fragmented and characterized by a multitude of actors and parallel initiatives.

There were, however, concerns among stakeholders about the overwhelming number of bottlenecks that were identified and the resulting need to identify the gaps to address most urgently. While actions and interventions to address gaps addressed many bottlenecks and were relevant for the context, they were often broad and ambitious, with little evidence of these being sequenced and prioritized effectively, and lacking in explicit detail on how these would be implemented in practice. This view was shared by international development partners interviewed. Important gaps were also not clearly accounted for or addressed in the compact. For example, challenges with political ownership, low capacity, and ineffective governance of the system are insufficiently addressed by the compact, casting doubt on the effectiveness of the compact development process and the ability of the model to foster transformative reform in practice in DRC.

The ITAP assessment was welcome and provided an informative external expert view to the DRC stakeholders. However, several recommended actions identified by ITAP were not addressed in the compact, despite acknowledging its usefulness. To a certain extent this is likely the result of all the enabling factors being rated high priority and the sheer number of actions which would need to be taken, and as highlighted above, the need to prioritize those which were most urgent, which proved difficult in practice and was a concern voiced by several stakeholders including the MEPST, local education experts and international development partners.

In the context of the pilot stage involvement of the DRC in the GPE 2025 model roll out, international stakeholders felt that some features of the operating model were less well suited to the DRC context.<sup>15</sup> DRC was the only country in the sampled case study countries where all four enabling factors were assessed as “high priority”, and stakeholders felt it was difficult to prioritize and focus resources to address the identified gaps, or for GPE to provide sufficient incentives for action. The first list of trigger indicators proposed by the LEG in the DRC compact provides a good illustration: ten trigger indicators were proposed in order to cover all four enabling factors, each attached to relatively small amounts of funding (e.g. USD \$8 million for the design and dissemination of a gender-sensitive teaching policy).<sup>16</sup> These top-up triggers were not approved by GPE’s board of directors in September 2022, and as a result stakeholders were provided with additional time to identify a more targeted and manageable number of top-up triggers following the GPE Board’s approval of their initial allocation and strategic parameters, as part of the design and implementation of the STG grant to support the priority reform.

## 2. Do the priority reforms demonstrate potential for transformation?

### What is the Democratic Republic of Congo’s understanding of system transformation and the need for transformation?

The concept of system transformation was not clearly defined in the compact. It mentions some aspects of GPE’s definition of system transformation,<sup>17</sup> especially the concept of the alignment of actors around a priority. The compact itself is defined as being “*a framework for dialogue with a view to joint action on a consensual reform that should act as a catalyst for ‘domino effect’ transformations, with a view to building a resilient, high-performance education sector in the DRC.*” When outlining the change pathways of the reform, the compact states that change is based on the assumption that “*When, through inclusive dialogue and contractual commitment, the stakeholders and partners of a school system pool their interests, resources and actions to focus on a clearly defined priority objective, this synergistic force is not only capable of transforming the component in question but also to have a catalytic effect on the system as a whole.*” However, the ideas of diagnosing and assessing, as well as implementing through learning and adaptation, are less present.

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<sup>15</sup> Interviews with GPE Secretariat and development partners.

<sup>16</sup> Source: GPE DRC Compact, section 3.3.2.

<sup>17</sup> System transformation is defined here as “a process through which education system stakeholders assess, diagnose, and prioritize a key reform to catalyze learning improvements, align system actors and elements (including relevant subsystems) around the priority reform, and implement the reform iteratively through learning and adaptation”, as outlined in GPE 2022-2026 study country-level and thematic evaluation inception report, p. 18, adapted from GPE 2025 Strategic Plan and the RISE program: <https://riseprogramme.org/publications/system-coherence-learning-applications-rise-education-systems-framework>.

There was a lack of consensus on the meaning of system transformation in the context of the DRC. When asked about how they understood system transformation in education, all stakeholders interviewed had difficulties responding and the answers provided were inconsistent. For example, some stated simply that it consisted of transforming the education system (as described by a local education expert), others (MEPST) understood it as referring to breaking gender codes around education, and still others (a civil society organization) understood it to refer to the transformation that would occur in the lives of pupils as a result of education reforms. There was sometimes a degree of skepticism around the idea of system transformation, with one local education expert and former MEPST senior official describing it as “another magic word from the international community.” However, all stakeholders broadly understood and agreed with the need for broad-ranging and substantial change and the need to “do things differently” for the education sector in the DRC. This was thought to be necessary given the scale of the challenge to improve the quality of education in the country. This may suggest that, while there is not a strong or consistent understanding of the granular elements of the concept of system transformation in practice, there is broad agreement and buy-in to the idea that there is a need for systemic change.

### What is the Democratic Republic of Congo’s priority reform?

DRC’s selected priority reform centers on quality teaching and teachers, with the overarching aim of providing the Congolese education system with competent, motivated, and available teachers. These teachers will be key players in the transformation of the education system, as they will be fully committed to a culture of quality to ensure the academic success of all pupils, girls, and boys, rural and urban, rich and poor, regardless of the province in which they live or their vulnerability (displaced children, refugees, children living with disabilities, etc.).

All stakeholders perceived that the compact development process resulted in a priority reform that was more focused than the broader SSEF 2016-2025, which focused on broader issues of access, equity, quality, and improved governance and oversight. The narrower focus of the reform was welcomed; however, many stakeholders still perceived the priority reform to be very wide-ranging. The priority reform selected for the compact builds heavily on previous reforms and pre-existing initiatives and is well aligned to the existing education sector plan, in particular “Outcome 2: Improving the quality of learning”. While the compact is aligned in content with the SSEF 2016-2025 and the MEPST’s priorities, there was some confusion in country over how the two documents should work together in practice; whether the compact was intended to be a replacement of the sectoral strategy, an addendum or other. This concern was raised explicitly by international development partners. Except for a small number of key actors (SPACE and the MEPST planning department), most national stakeholders were also unclear about how the two documents were to interact in practice and how the priority reform would impact ongoing programmes, which follow the SSEF 2016-2025.

There does not appear to have been an in-depth review of previous reforms and the reasons they have not succeeded in the past. This was postponed to the next phase of implementation, i.e., the design of the GPE-funded programmes, when a more intensive and thorough process of evidence-review was planned.

### Does the priority reform meet the criteria of system transformation?<sup>18</sup>

The compact does not explicitly mention ambitions or plans to achieve greater **speed** than past reforms, although there are references to time scales – for example, the priority reform is to be rolled

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<sup>18</sup> These criteria are set out in our inception report. The criteria include:

- Whether the reform endeavors to achieve improvements to learning with greater speed, scale, and inclusion than past and/or business-as-usual reforms.
- The reform addresses multiple system constraints through a multi-faceted approach to change.
- Whether the reform aligns relevant subsystems, policies as well as practices such as those related to teacher professional development, curriculum, assessment systems, EMIS and more, to achieve the intended outcomes.
- Whether the reform aligns the incentives of actors from all relevant levels and aspects of the education system (e.g., national, regional and district).



out at the primary level between 2022-2026, and then rolled out to the remainder of basic education from 2027-2030. The impact statement in the results framework also makes a reference to a 'qualitative leap,' implying an acceleration. Interviewees expressed that they did not believe the process would contribute to greater speed, as "this kind of changes need long and lasting efforts and investments." The compact includes some baseline and target figures for indicators, but these are not systematic enough to imply ambitions for speed or scale.

The intention for **scale** is clear in the problem diagnosis. Scale was considered a challenge to past reform attempts, due to the size and complexity of the education system. The compact explicitly includes plans for the priority reform to be scaled to all provinces and levels. It will first be rolled out for primary education, and then to cover all basic education after years 7 and 8. These plans intend to sequence the rollout of the priority reform through to 2030. Some of the planned interventions are intended to achieve changes at scale as demonstrated by the way they have been planned (e.g., centralized changes that will have effects more broadly): for example, the improvement of payroll management or the interventions targeting the pension system for teachers.

However, several stakeholders (especially national stakeholders) were skeptical about whether the reform could feasibly be carried out at scale, as typically in DRC interventions tend to focus on a few key provinces and generally fail to be rolled out at the national level. Interviews with technical and financial partners (TFPs) specified that some of the interventions planned through the GPE programmes are likely to have transformative effects on the system at scale (indeed some do already), such as the improvement of payroll management or the interventions targeting the pension system for teachers at the end of their careers, or the competitive recruitment of teachers. AFD's program documents describe, for some of its components, the expected at-scale impact of the reform. This is the case for component 1.2 "Improving the management of teachers' end-of-career careers": "The mechanism put in place has a transformational value. By allowing teachers to finally retire, it accelerates the recruitment dynamic and enables the arrival of younger, more female staff." The majority of activities will however focus on a few target provinces, repeating the general practices of international programming in the country.

There is a stronger emphasis on **inclusion** than in past reforms. This is made explicit through references to education in emergencies and the focus on the "securitization" of school spaces (for girls in particular). \$3.4 million via the STG and \$2.5 million via the GEA have been delegated to the grant agent AFD to manage the action on the "continuity and improvement on education in emergency situations", which will be implemented by UNICEF.<sup>19</sup> The aim of this action is to ensure continuity of learning for children affected by crisis and conflict, with a view to improving the equity and quality of the system. It is also intended to strengthen the resilience of the overall education system, through a humanitarian approach.<sup>20</sup> The part of the STG delegated to the World Bank also integrates inclusion, notably through the following action: "newly constructed and equipped classrooms, including WASH facilities in most disadvantaged communities, in five focus provinces".<sup>21</sup> Several activities set out in the compact also aim to support female teachers. Some indicators in the compact are disaggregated, but not always systematically to imply ambitions for inclusion.

The compact contains evidence of both a **multi-faceted approach to change** as well as intent to **align subsystems**. Through its three pillars of interventions, the priority reform addresses multiple dimensions of the education system that impact teachers and the quality of teaching, from the management of the teaching staff to their initial and continuous training, their salary, their ability to retire with a pension, and the teaching conditions. The planned actions are relevant to the context, aligned with the priorities of DRC and the identified bottlenecks. They form an overall set of interventions that has a potential transformative impact on the system, by addressing some of the key

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One further criterion (whether the reform endeavors to achieve learning improvements through approaches that are evidence-based) is set out in the section below.

In addition to these five criteria to define a transformative reform, there are three additional transformative reform criteria which examine the implementation of a transformative reform as well as five criteria which define the process required to design a transformative reform.

<sup>19</sup> Program documents – Annexe 1.B – Detailed STG and GEA funds allocation AFD and World Bank.

<sup>20</sup> Program documents – Annexe 3.1 AFD.

<sup>21</sup> Program documents – Annexe 3.3 World Bank.

sub-systems to achieve progress on learning outcomes: teacher recruitment, teacher professional development and end-of-career, payroll management, and assessment systems (EMIS, in particular). However, there are no further details on the feasibility of the proposed alignment or how its effectiveness will be measured.

Finally, the compact shows intention of **aligning actor incentives** across multiple levels with a focus on the incentives for teachers and teaching at the provincial level. However, while the compact discusses multiple subsystems, it does not necessarily provide detail on whether alignment of incentives is being addressed across the multiple subsystems.

### **Is the priority reform evidence-based?**

DRC underwent a process of problem identification and prioritization during the compact development, but the strength of the underlying evidence base, and the depth and quality of this process, was hindered by the lack of systematic and up-to-date data (a critical gap identified by the EFA process, as discussed above). Similarly, there was no in-depth review of previous reforms and the reasons they might have not succeeded, or a thorough review of the issues hindering gender equality in the education sector in the DRC during the compact process. This was postponed to the next phase of implementation of the reform, including STG-funded activities. The proposed solutions are similarly not strongly evidence based, although the compact does make some references to globally recognized and evidence-based approaches relating to the provision of structured teaching guides and teaching materials, however, this is limited.

### **Is there a credible theory of change for the priority reform?**

The compact does not contain sufficiently clear causal pathways which limits its ability to function optimally as a strategic planning document. There is a lack of coherence between the theory of change (ToC) - or “chain of results” diagram contained in the annexes of the compact - and the list of indicators. The ToC is abstract and lacks a level of detail that would guide the implementation of the theorized reform, often containing large leaps in the causal chain (e.g., salary raise will lead to motivated teachers). The original list of 10 key indicators around the prioritized reform which are detailed and benefit from clear time-bound targets, do not clearly map onto the ToC. There are an additional four indicators relating to the enabling factors, but these are different from the trigger indicators, and it is not clear how the two sets of indicators should be used. In addition, there is a lack of any indicators relating to gender.

Stakeholders questioned the likelihood that two key assumptions underlying the ToC would materialize: a) substantial and lasting domestic funding to support and roll out the reforms; b) the strong ownership needed by the government over the priority reform to reach inclusive outcomes faster and at scale. While these are both listed as risks in the compact, the solutions cited to address the risks are vague and lack sufficient concrete details of how they will be implemented. For example, to address political will, the compact suggests to “Strengthen policy dialogue on PR’s [priority reform] contribution to achieving national development goals by strengthening strategies and accelerating processes to achieve the objectives of the SSEF 2016-2025”, which may be too broad to clearly guide joint monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL).

## **3. What is the Democratic Republic of Congo’s readiness to implement its priority reform?**

### **To what extent are implementation plans for the priority reform in place and how credible or feasible are the plans?**

At the time of analysis, we did not find evidence of clear implementation plans with defined roles and responsibilities, either in the document review or through stakeholder interviews. In order for the priority reform to be prioritized by the various MEPST departments and PROVED, it will need to be integrated into annual plans for each department and PROVED. According to stakeholders in the relevant departments at the MEPST, this had not yet been completed, and it was unclear whether and how this would occur. The level of awareness within the MEPST of the priority reform and the content of the compact was limited and lacking in detailed understanding. This may present a risk to the

necessary ownership and operationalization of the reform. Only the managers of the departments closest to the compact at central level were able to speak about the priority reform in precise terms. However, the compact builds heavily on existing externally funded programming, and certain components of the priority reform are covered by pre-existing interventions, such as the merit-based teacher recruitment, which has already been targeted via the EESSE project,<sup>22</sup> funded by the World Bank. In contrast, other components would be directly addressed by the recently approved STG and GEA.

### **To what extent are priority reforms costed or resourced?**

At the time of analysis, the priority reform had not been fully costed, budgeted, or clearly financed. There was no information related to the cost of the priority reform in the compact, and stakeholders engaged in interviews confirmed that this was not yet in place. Related to this, SPACE, which relies on donor funding, lacked the required technical expertise to cost the reform at the time of this evaluation, as SPACE's resources were impacted by the time lag between GPE grants and overall insufficient funding, to lead on reform costing. SPACE was at the forefront of the design and the operationalization of the priority reform, and this funding gap limited its ability to drive this process.

### **Are stakeholders aligned around the priority reform?**

Numerous partners have ongoing or upcoming programs that will touch on dimensions of the priority reform, such as the World Bank's \$800 million EESSE project, as outlined above, but there was no existing mapping of development partners' planned programming against the components of the priority reform. Interviews with SPACE, the GPE Secretariat Country Team Lead (CTL) and some development partners indicated that a mapping was planned but not available at the time of the in-country data collection, and this may have been completed since then.

There is limited evidence pertaining to the alignment of resources of key stakeholders behind the priority reform. The compact identifies TFPs who will contribute to the priority reform but does not specify funding or the elements of the reform that will be supported programmatically, stating that a detailed analysis of potential overlaps and redundancies of funding from the different TFPs would be carried out by the government under the supervision of the SPACE, possibly with support from SCG funding. In particular, there is very little specification of which TFPs will support Pillar 1 concerning revalorization of the teaching profession. At the same time, the compact also does not specify how the government will contribute financially, other than through the commitments that would trigger top up funding. In line with this, stakeholder interviews (MEPST, development partners, representatives of religious schools, CSOs, and trade unions) did not observe any signs of "proactive" alignment of resources behind the priority reform, beyond programs that were designed to access GPE grants. However, although not necessarily explicitly mapped against the priority reform, most international organizations working on education programs in the country address various aspects of the priority reform de facto. Interviews with the MEPST and development partners in country suggest that a clearer mapping of funding against each component of the priority reform may help to hold the relevant partners to account.

### **To what extent are monitoring, evaluation, and learning frameworks in place to support the priority reform?**

The compact does not contain a robust MEL system or lay out the specific provisions needed for effective MEL, and at the time of analysis (one year after the endorsement of the compact) there was no clear system to monitor the progress of the priority reform. SPACE was reported to have limited internal resources and capacity to develop this. However, interviews suggested that setting this up was an upcoming priority and that this would be in place ahead of the planned mid-term review of the compact. Although the compact does not contain clear and specific provisions for effective MEL, there are strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms planned for the GPE-funded programs.<sup>23</sup> During the data collection phase of this study, the GPE Secretariat confirmed that setting up a robust MEL

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<sup>22</sup> Emergency Equity and System Strengthening in Education (PERSE, or *Projet d'Urgence pour l'Équité et le Renforcement du Système Éducatif* in French).

<sup>23</sup> STG-GEA grant documents.

system was an immediate priority for the DRC, particularly in the lead up to the mid-term review of the compact, although it was unclear which consolidated data the mid-term review will be based on. There is funding for joint sector reviews in the SCG and some discussions around joint management committees and joint supervision missions for the AFD and World Bank components of the STG.

## 4. Domestic financing

### What is the status of domestic financing in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

The **volume** of domestic expenditure on education has seen significant increases in recent years following historically low budget commitments in the past (averaging 10-16%). In 2016, the government committed, via the SSEF 2016-2025, to implement free basic education. The SSEF highlighted the need for increased national spending on education to support the implementation of this policy. Following the Presidential announcement prioritizing the delivery of the Free Primary Education Policy in 2019, there was a notable increase in domestic financing for education. The Domestic Financing Matrix completed as part of the EFA reports that government expenditure increased from 16% in 2018 to 20% in 2019, therefore meeting the GPE recommended proportion of spend. Despite these important gains, volume related challenges continue to affect the government's ability to sustainably resource free basic education due to the limited fiscal space, low GDP, and limited capacity to collect taxes, which was exacerbated by the economic impact of COVID-19. Execution rates for capital and non-salary expenditures are weak and the share of budget of the MEPST dedicated to investments has been declining, despite the increased need for investment into the free education policy. The ITAP report reflected that available data suggests the average execution rate averages at around 80%, with most of the executed funds going towards salaried expenses. In 2020, 96% of the actual spend of the MEPST was used to pay staff salaries, leaving little room for operating costs and investments.<sup>24</sup>

**Efficiency** related challenges highlighted in the EFA and ITAP assessments included likely inefficiencies caused by the complex structure of the education system in DRC, which operates across multiple ministry departments at central, provincial, and sub-provincial levels with overlapping responsibilities, mandates, and parallel systems. The 2015 Public Expenditure Review (PER) highlighted internal inefficiencies relating to low student-teacher ratios, high repetition and drop-out rates, and unmanaged recruitment into the education system. Given the substantial portion of the education budget allocated to teacher salaries, enhancing teaching effectiveness and teacher capacity could significantly improve the system's efficiency, yielding a considerable return on the substantial investment in teachers.

There are significant issues in terms of **equity** of public spending, with disparities reported across gender, geography, socio-economic background, and type of schools. Public spending is not equally spread among the regions and the ratio between the number of students enrolled and the number of teachers on public payrolls can vary significantly from one province to another. The Kinshasa province stands out in terms of per capita public spending, but this is entirely due to larger compensation for teachers and staff (up to 75% more).<sup>25</sup> ITAP notes that the DRC has a complex system of financial transfers from central to decentralized levels, and that there is no equity-based formula to ensure that resources target the most disadvantaged provinces.

### Do the domestic financing-related policy actions have the potential to support the enabling conditions for transformation?

The compact sets out various actions (described in Annex 4) linked to improved volume, equity, and efficiency of public spending on education, building on previous and ongoing reforms. Findings from the desk review and interviews conducted in country with national education stakeholders and TFPs suggest that these measures were relevant and aligned with the needs of the sector. We note, however, that some of the key measures identified by the ITAP report at system level to strengthen

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<sup>24</sup> GPE – revised list of top up triggers, 2023.

<sup>25</sup> DRC Public Expenditure Review of the Primary Education Sector, 2021, p. 84.

equity in domestic funding, such as a targeted equity-focused fund allocation per province, have not been taken on board in the compact.

Several stakeholders, including national education experts and practitioners and TFPs, highlighted the essential sustainability challenges that previous domestic financing reforms have faced in the education sector, with initiatives that have then not been rolled out or sustained by government. Most stakeholders – especially national stakeholders – highlighted the pressing need for governance reforms that would help increase the efficiency of the system and the equity of public spend. Among the most urgent needs, we note the following:

- Rationalizing administrative support staff at provincial levels (bureaux gestionnaires), in line with the standards established centrally
- Suppressing non-essential structures
- Revising the school creation process and aligning it with the identified needs (carte scolaire)
- Strengthening control and compliance mechanisms on the use of funds.<sup>26</sup>

In the policy actions identified as enabling measures in the compact, the rationalization of administrative support structures at provincial levels is explicitly mentioned and so is a more equitable distribution of teachers based on needs, though revision of the school creation process is not mentioned explicitly. Strengthening control and compliance mechanisms on the use of funds is also not clearly addressed by the compact.

Actions set out in the compact mainly focused on improving system efficiency by building on an array of existing program and policy actions, in particular in relation to the management of the teaching workforce and payroll. The policy actions include some measures which are fairly targeted and precise (e.g. ensuring that the Congolese state pays for the collection of data for yearly statistical yearbooks or ensuring that the budget of the Commission indépendante des acquis scolaires is integrated in the national budget). Some measures are much broader and far-reaching, as is the case for example for the review of the administrative structures and staff at provincial level.

Two of the proposed top-up indicators were linked to relevant measures to improve the efficiency of the system, which include: 1) establishment of a unique identifier for the MEPST staff on the budget to improve control MEPST's payroll by 2024 (\$20 million); 2) effective retirement of four thousand overaged teachers by 2025 (\$15 million). These triggers are appropriate and relevant to address some of the efficiency related challenges to domestic financing and are aligned to with the gaps identified in the EFA process.

### **To what extent did the GPE operating model help the Democratic Republic of Congo identify and address system bottlenecks in domestic finance?**

The EFA and ITAP process provided a good general overview of DRC's domestic financing status and the related challenges, but this did not seem to easily translate into actionable actions or roadmaps, particularly in a context involving many complex and systematic constraints. The potential impact of proposed actions will depend on their resource allocation and implementation, as well as how these actions relate to other factors influencing domestic finance.

The inclusion of top-up triggers linked to the efficiency of domestic financing aim to incentivize progress towards more efficient domestic financing. The decision to focus the top-up triggers on domestic financing is relevant given the highly political nature of the reforms necessary to improve the efficiency of the system. However, it was not clear from this analysis whether the additional top-up funding (\$50 million) unlocked by the trigger indicators will be a sufficient incentive to address gaps in domestic finance. Perceptions from interviews with stakeholders in the compact task force and LEG cast doubt on the idea, but this is yet to be seen.<sup>27</sup> It was, however, unclear from interviews what would constitute as a sufficient incentive to induce the desired behavior. Although not approved by the Board, the compact included initially a set of proposed trigger indicators linked to precise actions

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<sup>26</sup> [UNICEF. Pour un financement soutenable de la gratuité de l'éducation de base en RDC. août 2021.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Especially but not exclusively by development partners.

related to public financial management and efficiency of expenditure. It is not clear if these actions will continue to be implemented.<sup>28</sup>

The SCG application describes plans for activities that are not directly related to domestic finance but have the potential to positively impact on this area, such as capacity-building activities and sector reviews with analysis of education sector costs. For instance, DRC proposes plans in its SCG application to conduct research, collect, and consolidate financial data from various education sector stakeholders.

There is little to no evidence to conclude that the compact development process contributed to increased alignment among partners behind domestic finance policies. In some cases, alignment pre-existed, where one of the trigger indicators built on the ongoing reforms launched by the government with the support of development partners. Through its operating model, it is likely that the GPE contributed to deepening this pre-existing alignment.

## 5. Gender equality

### What is the status of gender equality in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

DRC has significantly closed the gender gap in access to primary education, with a gender parity index (GPI) of 0.99 at primary level, however the gap increases from secondary level and beyond, with the GPI reducing to 0.90 at lower secondary, and 0.75 at upper-secondary. As many as 40% of adult women are reported to be illiterate compared with 19% of men (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, MICS, 2018). Sexual and gender-based violence is a considerable issue, with as many as one in two women reporting that they have experienced violence at least once in their lives (DHS, 2014). Girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school because of harmful social norms that encourage early marriage and pregnancy, but also to other negative effects such as gender-based violence.<sup>29</sup>

The ITAP report highlights that there is limited analysis or understanding in the country around the causes of female underperformance in post-primary education, with little examination or understanding of the factors inside the classroom that impact learning for girls. There is also limited analysis of the issues which intersect with gender, such as geographical location or socio-economic status, when attempting to address gender related constraints.

In September 2000, the DRC signed up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in particular committed to MDG 2: "Achieve universal primary education". In 2010, MEPST (MEPS-INC at the time) adopted a strategy for the development of the primary education sub-sector, and the 2012-2014 Interim Education Plan (Plan Intérimaire de l'Éducation - PIE) was drawn up for operationalization.<sup>30</sup> The two documents address the issue of girls' enrolment within the "Progressive universalization of primary education" component. To achieve MDG 2, the PIE identifies the need to provide support for girls to enable them to complete primary school. In 2015, MEPS-INC developed a national strategy for girls' schooling in the DRC with three aims:<sup>31</sup>

- Harmonize donor interventions;
- Guarantee the effectiveness of project actions;
- Accelerate girls' enrolment in the DRC.

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<sup>28</sup> Among them: By 2024, at least 50% of funding for the independent commission on the evaluation of learning (CIAS) is executed; from 2025 onward, at least 25% of the provincial education departments have a triennial budgeted action plan, 10% of which should be funded through the provincial budget; support of the government to provide adequate offices to SPACE in 2025; by 2024, all sectoral coordination bodies work on the basis of operational budgeted action plans; by 2024, at least 80% of public primary schools receive subvention for operating costs aligned with a funding breakdown based on the socio-economic characteristics of schools and the profiles of pupils; in 2025, the share of budget allocated for the education sector increases by at least 1% compared to 2020 (20.2% to 21.2% minimum increase).

<sup>29</sup> [UNICEF. Les enjeux de l'éducation en RDC: priorité sur les filles. 2018.](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Consortium international de développement en éducation. Document de la stratégie de scolarisation des filles en RDC et plan d'action global. Mars 2015.](#)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

The strategy was accompanied by a comprehensive action plan (2015-2020) to provide operational tools for both planning and monitoring project implementation. However, this strategy has not been followed up.<sup>32</sup> In addition, a MEPST national gender strategy was also drafted in 2018, but this has not been validated to date.<sup>33</sup>

The issue of gender equality is absent from the Democratic Republic of Congo's Education and Training Sector Strategy 2016-2025 (SSEF). None of the strategy's pillars or objectives specifically target gender equality. Only one sub-objective addresses this issue:

- Pillar 1 'Promote a more equitable educational system in service of growth and employment.'
  - Objective 5 'Provide all children with a complete and free primary education'.
    - Sub-objective 5 'Schooling for young girls from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds.'

### **Do the gender equality-related policy actions have the potential to support the enabling conditions for transformation?**

The compact made limited reference to gender issues, and policy actions outlined in the compact did not explicitly address gender concerns. Pillar 1 of the reform aims to “Enhance the status of the teaching profession and revitalize the teaching body to better motivate teachers and attract more women into the profession”, but most of the challenges identified and addressed through the reform relate to the status of the teaching profession in general, with the exception of one of eight identified challenges (“The composition of the teaching staff is less favorable to women”). Similarly, Pillar 3 aims to “improve teaching-learning conditions at school and classroom level and prepare children, particularly girls, for successful schooling”, but only two of the 12 listed challenges and associated solutions are related to gender equality, including the deficit of teaching and learning time linked to teacher and student absenteeism (especially girls), and the school-age population including high numbers of highly vulnerable children (including girls who are victims of early pregnancy and sexual violence). Gender was mostly integrated in the compact around the issue of retention and safety at school, from a gender-based violence perspective in particular, although this is not explicitly included in the ToC.

DRC lacked significant gender analysis in the compact documents and drew upon a limited evidence base relating to gender issues to prepare its partnership compact, relying on UNICEF reports and the State Report of the DRC's National Education System (RESEN) data to support discussion and dialogue. The compact also lacks clear evidence of specific dialogue and analysis around gender equality and the gender-related barriers to education.

There is stronger evidence that relevant gender-equality related actions were addressed in the GPE grant planning process. As part of the allocation of these funds, additional work was carried out to strengthen the gender approach and promote gender equality, including a gender analysis and a theory of change promoting gender equality linked to the STG program's general theory of change to inform the choice of activities proposed to accelerate girls' education.<sup>34</sup> The presentation document for GPE's STG-GEA funding program mentions that the program will adopt a multi-dimensional approach, in line with the identification of persistent barriers to girls' education in the DRC. According to the document, the program emphasizes:<sup>35</sup>

- Strategies to reduce financial barriers to girls' access to and retention in school;
- Strategies to improve the school environment and learning conditions;
- Strategies to prevent violence;
- Strategies to combat early pregnancy;
- Gender strategies for emergency situations;

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<sup>32</sup> Document de présentation du programme financements STG-GEA du GPE en RDC – Part déléguée à l'AFD de juillet 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> It is noted that since the analysis was completed for this study, the program has since been approved and started implementation

- Strategies for greater gender equity among teachers in general;
- Strategies for developing gender-sensitive pedagogy.

Through the SCG, UNESCO is working with PROVED staff to strengthen capacity to conduct gender-sensitive policy planning through intensive 3-4 months courses, designed by the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), which will target 150 people. In 2023, GPE approved a \$25 million GEA, which will support various objectives of the World Bank and the AFD's wider programs, in particular reforms on teacher effectiveness, on the creation of teacher training institutes, the professionalization of pedagogical humanities training, the continuity of education in emergency situations, and improved conditions for girls' schooling. It will also work through UNICEF to deliver several interventions related to gender equality in education, especially related to learning conditions (gender-sensitive WASH, menstrual hygiene, social norms, especially around early pregnancy and early marriage, and community awareness programs). Policy actions planned through the SCG are aligned with country needs and address capacity gaps related to gender-sensitive planning. However, it will be limited to 12 provinces out of 26 and will target only 150 people, which raises questions around scale and long-term sustainability.

### **To what extent did the GPE operating model help and incentivize the Democratic Republic of Congo to identify and address challenges in gender equality and hardwire gender equality into its priority reform?**

The insufficient treatment of gender in the compact indicates that GPE support was not sufficient to ensure the identification of a transformative reform that address gender equality and align resources behind it in DRC. International donors were not convinced that GPE's process explicitly supported gender hardwiring. The GPE Secretariat was reportedly stricter in its discussions with grant agents for program development to ensure that the expectations related to the operating model, including on gender hardwiring, were being met. This created some tensions with the grant agents who felt that some of these features should have been tackled by the country-level partners as a whole through the LEG-approved compact process, and that programs cannot entirely compensate for gaps in the compact. It was also felt by some that this somewhat limited these issues to GPE-funded programs.

The limited focus on gender in the compact may in part reflect that there was limited guidance available during the piloting phase of the 2025 operating model, and expectations for gender hardwiring in the compact development process were not always well understood.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the GEA was reported to be difficult to design, and that there was a lack of clarity on expectations from the Secretariat and lack of understanding from development partners on how to "hardwire" gender, whilst having targeted actions to support gender equality.

The top-up triggers put forward in September 2023 focus on national budget for data collection, teacher retirement, and the consolidation of teachers' databases. They do not include any gender specific indicators. The originally proposed set of 10 indicators presented in the compact did, however, include one indicator related to gender equality (to develop, disseminate and implement a gender-sensitive teaching policy by 2024), indicating some intent to address an important gender issue as part of the priority reform. Gender issues are instead more directly addressed and incentivized through the GEA funding. However, some stakeholders felt that \$25 million was insufficient given the scale of the education sector challenges, and therefore felt it was not necessarily a strong incentive to tackle gender equality.

There is limited evidence to suggest that the compact processes led to greater alignment of activities behind gender-equality related policy actions and priorities in DRC. A few international stakeholders reported that some key actors on the topic (UNICEF, UK, AFD) pushed to better integrate gender to the discussions but there was an overall shared view that it was limited and the data was too patchy and inconsistent for a thorough analysis. However, there is emerging evidence of progress towards resource alignment behind gender activities. At the time of analysis, the DRC had only three gender-related projects, with two of those being joint projects involving at least five partners, which shows a good case of strong alignment of stakeholder resources. Thematically, three projects in the DRC also

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<sup>36</sup> It is noted in the wider TCLE evaluation that the available guidance strengthened in later cohorts, particularly relating to gender hardwiring.



demonstrate relative alignment in terms of a gender focus: two focus on teaching (gender-sensitive teaching policy and the reevaluation of the teaching function to attract more women to the profession); and the third project aims to enhance teaching-learning conditions at school and classroom levels, specifically preparing girls for successful schooling.

## Annex 1. Summary background tables

What is the priority reform that the Democratic Republic of Congo is planning to undertake?<sup>37</sup>

Summary description the priority reform in DRC	
<b>Focus area and strategic parameters for GPE funding</b>	<p>The focus of the partnership compact's priority reform is "quality education and teachers" with an objective to "provide the Congolese education system with competent, motivated and available teachers" who are "actors in the transformation of the education system." The priority reform is organized around three Pillars, which also serve as the focus areas for GPE funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pillar 1: Revalorize and revitalize the teaching profession to better motivate teachers and attract more women to the profession,</li> <li>• Pillar 2: Promotion of merit-based recruitment and strengthened teacher professional development system,</li> <li>• Pillar 3: Improving conditions of teaching and learning at the school and classroom levels, especially for girls.</li> </ul> <p>GPE funding is proposed to finance a subset of the activities identified in the partnership compact</p>
<b>Levels targeted</b>	Primary
<b>Thematic areas covered</b>	Learning, Quality Teaching
<b>Description</b>	<p><b>DRC's selected priority reform is quality teaching and teachers, with the overarching aim of providing the Congolese education system with competent, motivated, and available teachers.</b> These teachers will be key players in the transformation of the education system, as they will be fully committed to a culture of quality to ensure the academic success of all pupils, girls and boys, rural and urban, rich and poor, regardless of the province in which they live or their vulnerability (displaced children, refugees, children living with disabilities, etc.).</p>
<b>Priority reform intended outcomes</b>	<p>The partnership compact outlines three outcomes to be delivered to ensure the achievement of the priority reform's main objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Teachers embrace a culture of quality:</b> every learner can succeed if the teacher provides learning opportunities appropriate to their level and specific needs.</li> <li>• <b>Teachers have raised the level of learning, significantly reduced inequalities in learning and improved retention, promotion, and transition rates,</b> particularly for girls and poor, rural, conflict-affected, and more vulnerable children.</li> <li>• <b>Schools have become learning communities,</b> serving to continuously improve quality and <b>classes are organised in such a way as to encourage diversification of learning opportunities and success for all,</b> especially girls and the most disadvantaged; Learners have become more active and independent learners.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority reform main activities and pathways of change</b>	<p>The outcomes will be achieved through three strategic actions or pathways of change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the status of teachers and re-vitalizing the teaching profession;</li> <li>• Merit-based recruitment and enhanced professional development for teachers through reform of initial and in-service training;</li> <li>• Alignment of factors and conditions relating to the school, the classroom, and the learner on improving the quality of teaching and learning.</li> </ul>

<sup>37</sup> The source for this table is the partnership compact.

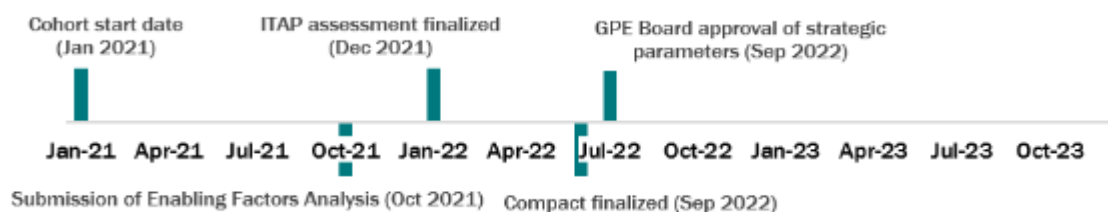
## What GPE support has the Democratic Republic of Congo received to identify transformative priority reforms and align partners and resources to them?<sup>38</sup>

### GPE engagement

Year joined GPE	2012
Coordinating Agency	UNICEF
Total grant support	US \$376.3m over 11 grants in previous years

### Key GPE 2025 timelines and grants

Cohort	Cohort 1 (Pilot)
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### Status of GPE grants to support the priority reform

GPE grants	Grant agent	Maximum allocation	Current status	Start date	Duration
System Transformation Grant	African Development Bank (AFD), World Bank	US \$137.5m	Pending – Grant approved September 2023	Estimated March 28, 2024	5 years, 2023 – 2028
System Capacity Grant	UNESCO	US \$2.3m	Active - Grant approved October 2023	November 1, 2023	2 years, 2023 – 2025
Multiplier Grant				N/A	

**Eligible grants** System Transformation Grant (STG), System Capacity Grant (SCG), Multiplier, Girls' Education Accelerator

### Priority ratings from the enabling factors analysis

Enabling factor type	Self-analysis	ITAP
Data and evidence	High	High
Gender responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring	High	High
Sector coordination	High	High
Domestic financing	High	High

## Annex 2. Strength of evidence ratings for the Democratic Republic of Congo case study

Question	Rating	Description of sources of evidence
1. Did the GPE model help with policy dialog, identification of system bottlenecks, and solutions to address these bottlenecks for better education outcomes?	 High	Findings were informed by a review of documents including EFA package, the ITAP report, the compact, STG and SCG programme documents, GPE Board documents on the allocation and strategic parameters, recent joint sector review, and SSEF 2016-2025, previous evaluations. The desk review was triangulated with interviews with government, development partners, GPE Secretariat, and the LEG members,
2. Do the priority reforms demonstrate potential for transformation?	 High	Sources of evidence from the desk review include a review of the partnership compact, EFA and ITAP documents, triangulated with interviews with government, development partners, and the LEG members. The findings are supported by multiple sources of credible and complete data.
3. What is DRC's readiness to implement its priority reform?	 High-Moderate	Sources of evidence include a desk review of the compact, EFA and ITAP documents, SCG and STG grant documents, GPE Board allocation documents, and triangulated with interviews with development partners, government stakeholders, and representatives of religious schools, CSOs and trade unions. Evidence around stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and costing and financing of the prioritized reform, are strong, based on consistent evidence from interviews backed up by document review. However, evidence on the support available to ensure adequate capacities is low and based on general statements from stakeholders with little concrete detail - documents did not provide additional detail. There was a lack of existing data or mapping on the contribution of key partners to aspects of the priority reform.
4. Domestic financing	 Moderate	Findings were primarily based on a document review, including the compact, EFA and ITAP reports, STG and SCG program documents, GPE Board allocation documents, the DRC Public Expenditure Review of the education sector 2021, UNICEF, 2021, the Domestic Financing Matrix, Where possible, findings were triangulated with interviews, but few stakeholders were able to go into depth on the subject, and it was not possible to secure interviews with relevant members of the Ministry of Finance.
5. Gender equality	 Moderate-Low	Findings are primarily drawn from a review of documents including the compact, EFA and ITAP reports, Board allocation documents, STG-GEA programme documents. Where possible, findings were triangulated with interviews, but this was limited due to the limited understanding across stakeholders around the concept of gender hardwiring.

## Annex 3. Depiction of the Democratic Republic of Congo's priority reform theory of change

Résultat final	Le système scolaire congolais a résolu la crise de l'apprentissage et s'est transformé en accomplissant un saut qualitatif d'une faible à une bonne performance, saut qui est censé permettre au pays d'impacter positivement sur l'indice de capital humain, les opportunités d'emploi et de revenus, la productivité du travail et la croissance ainsi que de renforcer la citoyenneté démocratique et la cohésion sociale dans la perspective d'un développement durable		
↑	↑	↑	↑
Résultats intermédiaires	Les enseignants intègrent la culture de la qualité : chaque apprenant peut réussir si l'enseignant lui offre les opportunités d'apprentissage correspondant à son niveau et à ses besoins spécifiques	Les enseignants ont élevé le niveau des apprentissages, réduit significativement les inégalités d'apprentissage et amélioré les taux de rétention, de promotion et de transition, notamment en faveur des filles, des enfants pauvres, ruraux, confrontés aux conflits et plus vulnérables	Les écoles sont devenues des communautés apprenantes au service de l'amélioration continue de la qualité Les classes sont organisées pédagogiquement pour favoriser la diversification des opportunités d'apprentissage et la réussite de tous, notamment des filles et des plus défavorisés ; -Apprenants devenus plus actifs et plus autonomes dans l'apprentissage
↑	↑	↑	↑
Résultats immédiats	Les enseignants sont conséquemment plus disponibles et plus engagés dans leur mission d'éducation en termes de qualité et d'équité de l'enseignement	Les pratiques d'enseignement et d'évaluation sont plus efficaces parce que plus adaptées aux niveaux différents des élèves et plus inclusives (réduction des biais de genre, prise en compte des enfants à besoins spéciaux et des apprenants en difficulté, confrontés à des conflits...)	Ecoles : Directions pratiquent un leadership pédagogique et transformationnel ; Classes offrent un environnement incitatif pour l'apprentissage continu et des modes d'organisation pédagogique qui soutiennent les apprenants en difficulté ; Enfants comprennent mieux ce qui est enseigné et sont prêts à apprendre
↑	↑	↑	↑
Extrants /produits	La RDC dispose en parité d'enseignants et d'enseignantes valorisés et motivés, mieux imprégnés de leurs devoirs et obligations déontologiques, adéquatement gérés et pris en charge financièrement par l'Etat	La RDC dispose d'enseignants et d'enseignantes recrutés parmi les meilleurs candidats, mieux préparés et mieux soutenus pour assurer un enseignement de qualité et inclusif en faveur des filles et des plus vulnérables	Ecoles dotées d'infrastructures et d'équipements en meilleur état et adaptées aux filles, aux enfants à besoins spéciaux et affectés par les conflits, avec des directeurs formés; - Classes disposant d'un temps et d'intrants essentiels suffisants pour couvrir les programmes d'études ; Enfants préparés pour apprendre
↑	↑	↑	↑
Axes stratégiques d'action	Revalorisation de la fonction enseignante et revitalisation du corps	Recrutement basé sur le mérite et renforcement du développement professionnel des enseignants à travers la réforme de la formation initiale et continue	Alignement des facteurs et conditions relatifs à l'école, à la classe et à l'apprenant sur l'amélioration de la qualité des enseignements-apprentissages

## Annex 4. Summary of the Democratic Republic of Congo's enabling factors

Enabling Factor	Priority Level	Identified bottlenecks	Planned activities to address bottlenecks in the PC	Remaining gaps
Data and evidence	High	<p><b>Limitations in the production of relevant data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The production of education data is irregular and does not systematically cover desired themes or subsectors.</li> <li>There is limited data collected on the schooling of refugee children, children with disabilities, and marginalized children.</li> <li>Data across different levels is incomplete.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limited use of data to inform and monitor policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of timely data collection limits its use for decision making.</li> <li>Limited use of data collected by central and / or decentralized ministry departments leading to a risk of ineffectively informed sectoral steering and monitoring.</li> <li>Insufficient use of data on parents and home factors which can be heavily influential in improving education access and outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weak EMIS capacity and infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity in EMIS department requires strengthening, and EMIS not sufficiently operational in all provinces.</li> <li>Insufficiently harmonized databases leading to incoherent, uncredible, and unreliable systems.</li> <li>Capacity building support is limited and reliant on external partners and funding, worsened by the fragmentation of funding and approaches in MEPST support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Improve infrastructure for data generation and management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modernization of the data collection and dissemination system for education, including of data related to teachers.</li> <li>Harmonization of databases on students and teachers to improve system management</li> </ul> <p><b>Production of data to inform decision making:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial forecasting to inform the required support and management of teachers.</li> <li>Production of audits, evaluation, and analyses on teaching staff management,</li> <li>Collection and dissemination of data related to learning outcomes and to monitoring and training of teachers.</li> <li>Production of surveys, evaluations and analyses on teacher and student performance.</li> <li>Collection and analysis of data relating to teacher monitoring and in-service training.</li> <li>Analysis and forecast of educational resources (such as teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the compact sets out multiple actions to address gaps in the enabling factor, it is unclear how the country will overcome the root causes of these gaps, particularly relating to the regular generation of timely data to support decision making.</li> <li>The ITAP report recommends more systematic collection of data on parents and home factors to inform education progress, which does not appear to feature strongly in the compact.</li> <li>ITAP recommends regular conflict-sensitive vulnerability or equity analysis to close gaps in school access and learning, and to build resilience in the education system, which is not clearly addressed.</li> </ul>

			<p>equipment) required to ensure equitable learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of real-time data for teacher and student management</li> </ul> <p><b>Improving system capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMIS capacity building to be supported through SCG funding.</li> </ul>	
Gender-sensitive sectoral planning, policies, and monitoring	High	<p><b>Lack of updated, contextualized, and prioritized action plans and implementation mechanisms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite efforts to improve sectoral planning, there remain gaps in the prioritization of activities, and definition of roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• The most recent action plan for SSEF was drafted in 2015 and runs until 2020. ITAP flagged a need for annual operational plans, especially at provincial levels, which address the particular needs of local operating environments and conditions, including conflict conditions, to better reflect the realities of decentralization.</li> <li>• Implementation mainly takes place in provinces with varied management regimes. There is a need to clarify and strengthen implementation mechanisms.</li> <li>• Need to formulate new budgeted long-term strategic plan, co-constructed with all stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b>Weaknesses in tools and systems to support effective and efficient budgeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial simulation model for SSEF needs to be strengthened and anchored in the MTEF forecasts</li> <li>• Budget monitoring and tools need to be strengthened to support targeted and efficient resource allocation (including allocation of teachers).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design of a career development policy for teachers;</li> <li>• Planning and monitoring of recruitment needs for teaching and supporting administrative staff based on needs and standards;</li> <li>• Budget planning and monitoring of transfer onto centralized payroll;</li> <li>• Planning and monitoring of a pension scheme for teachers;</li> <li>• Planning and monitoring of the implementation of the reform of teacher training and training institutes;</li> <li>• Strengthening inspection services to follow teachers' career trajectories;</li> <li>• Design of a multi-year investment plan for education equipment and inputs</li> <li>• Management of teaching force to ensure an optimal supervision rate</li> <li>• Transparent and respected “school map”</li> <li>• Development plan for pre-school.</li> </ul>	<p>Although numerous actions and interventions are identified, these do not always clearly map onto the bottlenecks outlined by the EFA and ITAP. For example, plans for improving the development of implementation and monitoring plans are touched upon, but not described in detail. Most actions focus specifically on teacher management policies, and less on the challenges across the wider system.</p>

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**Complex and decentralized organizational context:**

- Organizational context for SSEF implementation is decentralized, deconcentrated, and hierarchized with multiple levels of authority and with different management structures that have different financing guidelines.
- Need to understand how organizational issues along with the co-existence of several management regimes for the government (non conventionnée) and religiously affiliated (conventionnée) schools might contribute to bottlenecks during implementation

**Lack of analysis to understand root causes of system dysfunctions:**

- Lack of detailed, functional analysis to identify dysfunctionalities that cause bottlenecks
- Need to identify challenges relating to the capacity of the variety of organizational / management entities (national and local government) to effectively delivery 457 activities identified for implementation during 2016-2020.

**Need to identify and address capacity gaps for planning and management, particularly at the provincial levels:**

- Weaknesses of national funding and pressing need for capacity building – planning, programming, and sector monitoring is too dependent on external funding.
- Need to identify and address weaknesses in the articulations between human, organizational/managerial, analytical, legal, and financial capabilities, and resources to improve systemic functionality.
- Capacity development for planning and management at the provincial levels may be the most effective way to improve implementation effectiveness.

**Limited understanding / analysis around the causes of female underperformance in post-primary:**

- Support for strategic and operational planning and regular sector monitoring
- At least 25% of ProvEd will have a three-year action plan budgeted for 2024/2026, 10% of which will be finances by resources from the provincial budget
- A gender-sensitive teaching policy drawn up, disseminated, and implemented.
- Development and effective implementation of emergency education plans
- Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs) to support strategic and operational planning exercises, monitoring of SSEF implementation, annual reviews of ministry performance, capacity building for planning at central level and in the educational provinces.
- SCG expected to support capacity building in gender-sensitive planning and monitoring.
- SCG funding used to conduct joint sector reviews



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic and socio-economic heterogeneity not taken into account when attempting to address constraints associated with gender, and closer monitoring of the relationship between female school retention and learning achievement needed.</li> <li>• There is little examination or understanding of the factors inside the classroom that impact learning for girls and young women.</li> </ul>		
Sector coordination	High	<p><b>Weak coordination mechanisms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complexity of sectoral consultation and coordination bodies makes organizing meetings difficult.</li> <li>• Although improving, difficulties coordinating between the four ministries responsible for education which have differing objectives and strategies.</li> <li>• Inclusive nature of sectoral dialogue not always reflected in various consultation meetings, either because partners are inactive, or because the priorities of some are not aligned with others.</li> <li>• Most dialogue and monitoring structures and mechanisms function poorly or are not operational</li> <li>• Limited technical, human, and financial resources required to run coordination bodies</li> <li>• Coordination bodies and structures not able to perform functions adequately due to lack of financial and human resources, and political disruption.</li> <li>• Weak engagement of provincial level government in the implementation of sector plans, and limited participation of key stakeholders such as religious organizations and communities in monitoring education sector plans.</li> <li>• There is scope for improved collaboration and coordination with Education Cluster groups especially at the local 12 level to ensure that children affected by conflict and natural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened interministerial coordination for better teacher career management</li> <li>• Better donor coordination to support Free School Policy</li> <li>• Strengthened social dialogue in support to better management of careers</li> <li>• Definition of roles and responsibilities of division in charge of teacher training within the Ministry in charge of training.</li> <li>• Strengthening SPACE to ensure better sectoral coordination between CCS members</li> <li>• Analysis of effectiveness and sustainability of various development partners' support for teacher training</li> <li>• Better coordination between the central and decentralized levels and between administrative offices</li> <li>• Strengthened development coordination on infrastructure projects</li> </ul>	<p>Numerous relevant actions, interventions and ambitions are identified; however, these are not always clearly defined, and it is often unclear how they will be achieved in practice.</p>

		<p>disasters are not excluded from improvements to the education system.</p> <p><b>Weak coordinated financing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of harmonization across programs financed by international partners, which are project oriented.</li> <li>• SPACE struggles lack of funding and management autonomy, and is too financially and physically dependent on a single sub-sector. It lacks its own fiduciary unit and loses effectiveness because it is dependent on projects to fund it.</li> <li>• Weaknesses in PFM and government accountability mechanisms have resulted in limited willingness to consider budget support or aligning with national systems – most external funding is projectized with parallel systems in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving lessons learned and coordination between development partners.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a plan to strengthen SPACE for planning and monitoring the implementation of reforms and sectoral policies, interministerial coordination, and facilitation of sectoral dialogue, as well as resource mobilization.</li> <li>• Support from development partners to support the coordination and synergy of various partners and the facilitation of dialogue on public policy in the field of education.</li> <li>• SCG funding to support capacity building in sectoral coordination</li> </ul>
<p>Volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic financing on education</p>	<p>High</p>	<p><b>Volume:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite 20% of the state budget being allocated to education, low GDP, limited capacity to collect taxes, and the increasing school population means resources allocated are still too low to meet development needs.</li> <li>• Available evidence shows execution rate for public expenditure on education does not always align with the approved budget. Available data suggests the execution rate has historically been around 80%, with non-salaried recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure for infrastructure improvements often poorly executed.</li> <li>• Credibility issues with the education sector budget preparation process, as allocations often vastly different from what is executed, and is often poorly aligned to SSEF priorities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Volume</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs of data collection for the DIGE covered by the Congolese state</li> <li>• Functioning costs of CIAS covered by national budget</li> <li>• Enough budget set aside to support the implementation of the Free School Policy</li> <li>• Ensure a sufficient national investment budget to fund school equipment</li> </ul> <p><b>Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No explicit mention of activities to address bottlenecks around the implementation and monitoring of more equitable disbursement of funds at the provincial level. Only indirectly through “budget programs facilitating execution at the level of responsibility centers.”</li> <li>• No explicit actions to respond to ITAP recommendation to consider devising equity focused formula and</li> </ul>

- Household expenditure on education remains high, contributing to inequalities.
- Fiscal deficit has widened due to COVID-19, leading to doubts around the feasibility of forward-looking projections for education.
- Funding from international partners is often scattered due to the broad spectrum of reforms combined with the size of the country. Loses effectiveness.

#### Equity

- Disparities in funding found by gender, geography, socio-economic background, and type of school.
- Need for government commitment, execution, and monitoring of the disbursement of more equitably targeted finances at provincial level.
- Complex system of financial transfers from central level with a certain proportion linked to revenue raising at decentralized levels, means there is no equity focused formula for targeting more disadvantaged provinces with higher proportion of funds.
- LEG should consider targeting the enrolment of out-of-school children.

#### Efficiency

- Complex structure with four ministries at central level responsible for different aspects of education, of which three have provincial and sub-provincial structures. Important aspect of decentralization, but risks overlap in mandates. Religious and government schools have their own parallel structures at national, provincial, and sub-provincial levels.
- Insufficient coordination at sub-national level between provincial ministries and national coordination committees, resulting in duplication of monitoring and supervision.

- Adequate budget aligned with needs in terms of teachers and administrative staff

- Equitable recruitment of teachers

#### Efficiency

- Rationalization of supporting administrative offices to lower costs
- Strengthening controls and monitoring of the teachers' payroll
- Rationalization of supporting administrative staff in charge of training and monitoring teachers
- Gain efficiency in implementing construction projects and acquisition of teaching material.
- Top up triggers linked to STG funding: 1) Establishment of a unique identifier for the MEPST staff on the budget to improve control of MEPST's payroll by 2024 (\$20 million); 2) Effective retirement of 4,000 overaged teachers by 2025 (\$15 million)

associated financial allocation system

- No explicit actions responding to ITAP recommendation to consider how to address the enrolment of out of school children.

- 
- Review of structure and governance of centralized and decentralized funding to reduce overlap and duplication needed.
  - Internal efficiencies include low student-teacher ratios and class sizes; high repetition and drop out; and unmanaged and unplanned recruitment into the education system, with indicators varying across provinces.
  - Wide age range in classrooms due to late entry and repetition, which make it more challenging for teachers to manage classes.
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## Annex 5. Stakeholder map and list of respondents

Table 1. Stakeholder map

Type/ group of stakeholders	Stakeholder (names, specific titles, and roles)	Role played in system (including role played in the compact development process, where applicable)
<b>Government</b>	Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Initiation à la Nouvelle Citoyenneté (MEPS-INC)	Chairs the Local Education Group (Cellule d'Appui Technique à l'Éducation CATED) transformed into Secrétariat Permanent d'Appui et de Coordination du secteur de l'Éducation (SPACE)  Main partner for GPE grant design and implementation.  Responsible for shaping and implementing education sector policy and managing related financing.  Responsible (together with MESU, MFPMA and MAS) for implementation of the SSEF (2016-2025)
	Ministry of Finance	Ensure financial execution of the PRGSP <sup>39</sup> .  Responsible for budget allocations to the education sector.
	Ministry of Budget	Responsible for the budget programming and execution of the actions and projects selected under the MTEF (Medium-Term Expenditure Framework) with the sectoral ministries.  Ensures effective allocation to the sectors and priorities identified by the Government.
	Ministry of Planning	Deals with physical execution of the PRGSP in close coordination with the sectoral ministries, the DPs, CSOs, NGOs, and the private sector.  Guarantees the establishment of sectoral policies within each ministry and of the economic recovery and poverty reduction programs and projects in partnership with all development stakeholders.
	Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel (MFPMA)	MFPMA and MESU : together with MEPS-INC responsible for formal education, while MAS is responsible for non-formal education.
	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire (MESU)	MESU, MFPMA and MAS: together with MEPS-INC are responsible for the implementation of the ESSP.
	Ministère des Affaires sociales, Action Humanitaire et Solidarité Nationale (MAS)	
	Provincial Governor	Responsible for administration of all sectors at provincial level
Provincial & Sub-Provincial Education Committees including the Provincial Office for Teacher Salaries and Monitoring (SECOPEP = Service de Contrôle et de la Paie des Enseignants Provincial)	Important role in service delivery, also regarding teacher's salaries, school fees etc.	
<b>Local Education Group</b>	SPACE	Chaired by the MEPS-INC

<sup>39</sup> Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper.

Type/ group of stakeholders	Stakeholder (names, specific titles, and roles)	Role played in system (including role played in the compact development process, where applicable)
		Responsible for leading, coordinating, and guiding education sector programs, initiatives, and reforms.  Also acts as an interface between national and provincial Government, DPs and CSOs.
<b>Grant Agent</b>	World Bank	Key in ensuring that the GPE grants are appropriately managed and fully aligned with broader education sector developments and add value to the country level processes and results.
<b>Coordinating Agency</b>	UNICEF	Key role in ensuring harmonized support for development effectiveness, as well as mutual accountability and transparency across the partnership
<b>Other Development Partners</b> (not exhaustive)	Belgium Technical Cooperation, French Development Agency (AFD), Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF, USAID, World Bank, UNESCO, WFP	Participation and contributions to the LEG and to GPE grant implementation and monitoring, as well as through other development partner activities in the education sector and degree to which these are harmonized with the Education Sector Plan and implementation activities funded through the ESPIG <sup>40</sup> .

**Table 2. List of respondents**

#	First Name / Last Name	Role / Division	Organization
<b>Government</b>			
1.	Mme Christine Nepa Nepa Kabala	MEPST/SG	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
2.	M. Valère Molomb Munsya	MEPST/SPACE, GPE focal point	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
3.	M. Michel Lumengo	MEPST/DEP	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
4.	M. Mathieu Mukenge	MEPST/DRC	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
5.	M. Cédric Wakandwa	MEPST/DIGE	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
6.	M. Jonathan Lelo	MEPST/DAF	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
7.	M. Yoka	MEPST/DIFORE	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
8.	M. Papy Mangobe	MEPST/SCOPE	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
9.	M. Albert Lubanzadio Kheto	MEPST/MAS	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
10.	M. Wali Belade	MEPST/PAQUE	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
11.	M. Odia Musungayi	MEPST/IGE	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
12.	M. Gervais Songa	MEPST/SERNAFOR	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
13.	Mme. Régine Kabedi	MEPST/SERNAFOR	Ministry of Education (MEPST)
14.	M. Yves Mafongo	MoF/CSPP	Ministry of Finance

<sup>40</sup> Education Sector Programme Implementation Grant

#	First Name / Last Name	Role / Division	Organization
15.	M. Simon Zono	PROVED/Sud Kivu	Educational province bureau
16.	M. Arthur Mputu Mutombo	PROVED/Kongo Central	Educational province bureau
17.	M. Joseph Miwinkeu Tshierend	PROVED/Haut Katanga	Educational province bureau
18.	M. Yoyi Bokete	PROVED/Lukunga	Educational province bureau
<b>Representatives from faith-based organizations</b>			
19.	M. Abbé Noel Bisibu Ntungu	Representatives	Catholic schools
20.	M. Bamanga	Representative	ECS – Armée du Salut
<b>MPs, senators</b>			
21.	M. Modest Baloyi	Provincial MP for Haut Katanga	Provincial parliament
22.	M. Arthur Mutu	Provincial MP for Kasai Central	Provincial parliament
23.	M. Blaise Miahumba	Provincial MP for central Kongo	Provincial parliament
24.	M. Robert Mwanba	MP	National parliament
<b>Development partners</b>			
25.	Mme Valérie Lefebvre	Education Programme Manager	Agence française de développement
26.	M. Saïp Sy	Chief, Education Section	UNESCO
27.	Ms. Helena Murseli	Chief, Education Section	UNICEF
28.	M. Kokou Sefako Amelowonou	Senior Education Specialist	World Bank
29.	M. Pascal Tshimanga &	Senior Education Programme Manager	USAID
30.	M. Ezra Simon		USAID
31.	M. Isla Gilmore	Education Advisor	FCDO
32.	Ms. Laurence Parry	Cooperation attachée	Ambassade de France
33.	M. Mabilia Ma Umba	Representative	Francophonie
<b>CSOs / INGOs / Associations / unions</b>			
34.	M. Jacques Tshibalanga	National coordinator	CONEPT
35.	Ms. Espérance Mawamzo	Director	Observatoire de la parité et de l'égalité F/H
36.	M. Serge Bondedi	General Secretary	YMEA
37.	M. Godefroid Matondo	Spokesperson	Intersyndical EPST
38.	M. Augustin Tumba Nzuji	General Secretary	FENECO
39.	M. Valéry Nsumpi	General Secretary	Confédération Syndicale du Congo (CSC)

#	First Name / Last Name	Role / Division	Organization
<b>Experts / Academics</b>			
40.	M. Maker Mwangu Famba	Former Minister of education	Formerly MEPST
41.	Ms. Virginie Briand	Former programme director	ACCELERE
42.	M. Michel Otto	Coordinator for APE	APE
43.	M. Tanvir Muntasim	Senior Education Specialist and Lead	Education Out Loud
44.	M. Lars Udsholt	Global Programme Manager	Oxfam
45.	Mme. Stephanie Ngongo	Regional Programme Manager	Oxfam

## Annex 6. List of references

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