

**Mission d'Evaluation Externe du Plan Intérimaire de l'Education/  
External Evaluation of the Interim Education Plan**

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**Rapport général final / Final General Report**

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## Glossary/abbreviations

AFD	Agence Française de Développement
APEP	Appui à l'Enseignement Primaire (CTB/AFD)
BSI	Budget Strengthening Initiative
CAT	Cellule d'Appui Technique
ComCon	Comité de Concertation
CTB	Coopération Technique Belge
DSCRP	Document de Stratégie pour la Croissance et le Réduction de la Pauvreté
EADE	Enfants et Adolescents en dehors de l'Ecole
EPSP	Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel
ETFP	Enseignement Technique et Formation Professionnelle
GPE	Global Partnership for Education (PME)
GOTEC	Group of NGOs supporting education
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (PPTE)
HP	Humanités pédagogiques
IEP	Interim Education Plan (PIE)
MAS	Ministère des Affaires Sociales
MEPSP	Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel
MESU	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicators Clusters Survey
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (London)
PARC	Plan d'Action complémentaire pour le renforcement des capacités de gestion et planification de l'éducation
PARSE	Projet d'Appui au Redressement du Secteur Educatif
PASEC	Programme on the Analysis of Education Systems
PAQUED	Projet d'Amélioration de la Qualité de l'Education
PIE	Plan Intérimaire de l'Education (IEP)
PME	Partenariat Mondiale pour l'Education (GPE)
PPTE	Pays Pauvres Très Endettés (HIPC)
PTF	Partenaire Technique et Financier
PTF-E	Key Partenaires Technique et Financier in Education
RECs	Recensement des Enseignants et Carte Scolaire
SECOPE	Service de Contrôle et Paie des Enseignants
SIGE	Système d'Information pour la Gestion de l'Education
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TENAFEP	Test National de Fin d'Etudes Primaires

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## Résumé executive / Executive Summary

The External Evaluation Team congratulates MEPSP for such a well prepared, ambitious and comprehensive Interim Education Plan (IEP). The Team was impressed by the overall quality, creativity and clarity of its structure and content. It not only represents a first step towards reconstituting and reforming the education pyramid, but it is also a first step towards the development of a sector wide approach involving all Ministries who cover education. Given the level of ambition of the Plan, it may not be possible to implement all its programmes over the next 3 years, and so some hard choices will have to be made in policy priorities between short term and long term trade-offs.

In terms of improvements, more attention should be given throughout the Plan to access, inclusion and equity issues. The financing section, where there is estimated to be a substantial gap between domestic and external resources, should also be strengthened. Apart from a few areas where the IEP's key messages could be reinforced; the main challenge is whether there is sufficient political will, leadership and financial commitment, alongside sufficient technical and administrative capacity, for its implementation? Key issues that need to be addressed by the Government are how to progressively increase the low allocation in the national budget to education and the how to improve the slow disbursement of external resources.

For the first time, the République Démocratique du Congo (RDC) has a much needed framework against which all education activities and interventions can be aligned and harmonised, with implications for 'a new way of doing business' for all parties concerned. This not only has implications for Government and its financing partners, but also for all levels of the education system from school communities through to districts, provinces and central government. It is evident that the implementation of the Plan will both foster and promote the decentralisation process, at the same time as reinforcing the need for greater accountability throughout the education system. Although the conclusion is that the risk of providing external support to the IEP is, on balance, worth taking; this must be contingent on satisfactory political leadership and commitment - including a zero tolerance policy on malpractice and under-performance.

### Recommendations

The following matrix divides the **recommendations** from this Evaluation between those recommendations that are the primary responsibility for the MEPSP team who will be improving the IEP, those recommendations on which MEPSP needs to take action and those recommendations that the Development Partners need to implement. It should be noted that although the first recommendation in each section is the first priority, the subsequent recommendations are in no particular order because they all are equally important.

<b>Recommendations for IEP improvement</b>	Paragraph
(i) A clearer statement at the beginning about the vision and purpose	4

	of the Plan.	
(ii)	A box at the beginning of the IEP listing the main characteristics of ‘fragility’ in RDC.	4
(iii)	A box summarising the main education challenges in a post-conflict country like RDC.	4
(iv)	Annex 13 relating to the implementation of the IEP to be adapted as the conclusion.	4
(v)	Policy trade-offs between short term, urgent post-conflict related needs, and longer term reforms, should be taken into account in ways that lay the foundations for change.	4,5,6,7,8,43
(vi)	Recent progress in technical preparedness for implementing the IEP should be highlighted.	9
(vii)	A few key themes could be more strongly emphasised, including a stronger emphasis throughout on access, equity and inclusion.	10
(viii)	Some of the background studies and technical notes could be cross-referenced.	11
(ix)	A separate section on financing would strengthen coverage in a number of ways (eg including alternative budget projections, explaining low disbursement of external resources, explaining the development of the salary budget, clarifying budget priority by level of education, clarifying the role of HIPC funding, showing how parents’ contributions will progressively decrease, etc.).	12
(x)	Consistent disaggregation of statistics by gender to highlight girls’ disadvantage.	13
(xi)	Those indicators that are the most feasible and realistic, in terms of achievement over the next three years, to be highlighted in the new concluding section.	14
(xii)	A more detailed plan clarifying how national language policy will be implemented needs to be undertaken.	32
(xiii)	A national plan needed that addresses the challenge of adult literacy as well as the promotion of children’s reading.	33
<b>Recommendations for MEPSP</b>		
(i)	Restructuring the MEPSP architecture is the fundamental reform needed to overcome current dysfunctionalities in the education system.	16
(ii)	Priority to other important legal and administrative reforms, such as the revision of the 1986 Loi Cadre de l’Enseignement national, the Convention with the Religious Associations, the Teacher’s Statute, the re-structuring and modernisation of SECOPE, school mapping and the teachers’ census.	17
(iii)	Prioritisation needed in implementation of IEP activities, taking into account policy trade-offs between short term, post-conflict needs and longer term reforms that lay the foundations for change.	4,5,6, 7,8,43
(iv)	Urgent consideration to be given as to how to mainstream ‘second chance/catch-up’ programmes in collaboration with MAS.	10
(v)	The need to reinforce capacity at central and provincial levels for the regular and timely production of accurate and reliable	19

	educational statistics, so that PTFs, as well as Government, can use them.	
(vi)	Teacher accountability for learning outcomes should be built into their enhanced status.	20
(vii)	The ‘ <i>Gratuité</i> ’ task force should continue to monitor the complex process of reducing school fees in ways that are equitable and inclusive.	21
(viii)	CAT to take responsibility for establishing what clarification of different types of external funding would be constructive.	30
(ix)	Geographic area of focus, distinction between confirmed funding and pipeline funding and other channels for supporting education should be captured in matrices of external support for education (in collaboration with PTFs)	29
(x)	CAT’s technical resources in financial planning and management should be strengthened.	31
(xi)	MEPSP needs to seize the opportunity to provide leadership in developing a more coherent inter –ministerial ESTP policy.	37, 38
(xii)	MEPSP should develop a stronger communications strategy in order to enhance ownership of the IEP.	41
<b>Recommendations for Technical and Financial Partners</b>		
(i)	Development Partners should continue to encourage Government to progressively make more substantial allocations to education in the national budget.	12, 42
(ii)	Technical and Financing partners should use the results of the current UNESCO consultancy for the establishment of a common MEPSP monitoring framework to be used in future Joint Annual Reviews.	15
(iii)	Lessons learned from project failure, as well success, should be shared with MEPSP and other PTFs, so that the Ministry can learn lessons and move forward.	18
(iv)	The opportunity for revising the mandates of the various forums for different stakeholder groups should be grasped.	25
(v)	Geographic area of focus, distinction between confirmed funding and pipeline funding and other channels for supporting education should be captured in matrices of external support for education (in collaboration with CAT).	29
(vi)	PTFs should continue to support technical assistance in ways that build national capacity and systems, and encourage synergy rather than parallel channels or systems.	44
(vii)	PTFs should assess the most urgent technical capacity needs for supporting the effective implementation of the IEP.	44

## Introduction

1. The overall objective of the external evaluation of RDC’s draft **Plan Intérimaire de l’Education** (November 2011) was to support the Education partners in the critical analysis and quality assurance of its relevance and coherence. Specific objectives covered the

coherence of the Interim Education Plan (IEP) in relation to the **Stratégie de Développement de l'Enseignement primaire, secondaire et professionnel, 2010/11 – 2015/16** (March 2010) and the **Plan d'Action complémentaire pour le renforcement des capacités de gestion et planification de l'éducation (PARC)**, the feasibility of the financial estimates and the particular options chosen, and the capacity needs for the reinforcement of the financial management of its implementation. In particular, the External Evaluation team were asked to make proposals for the improvement of the Interim Education Plan (IEP) in the light of the forthcoming request to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for external support in its implementation.

### **Evaluation du Plan et le processus de suivi / Evaluation of the Plan and the monitoring process**

2. The draft Interim Education Plan (November 2011) complements the 5 year Sub-Sectoral Strategy and is the logical consequence of translating the Strategy into more detailed programme activities. In the words of the team member with the longest experience of working in RDC, "It is perhaps the best strategic document produced by the Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel (MEPSP) since Independence". It is a lot more than an interim plan. It can be praised "for the coherence of its 11 programmes, the thoroughness of the study made of each component programme, the lucidity with which the pedagogic situation facing Congolese youth is analysed, the courageous attempt to find solutions and finally the creativity of some of the strategies that are proposed to remedy unsatisfactory situations". It therefore not only represents the first step in a genuine attempt to reconstitute and reform the educational pyramid, but also a first step towards developing a sector wide approach involving all Ministries who cover education. The External Evaluation Team is impressed to find that the Government is prepared to embark on some dramatic and far reaching institutional and educational policy reforms<sup>1</sup>, in order to address some of the fundamental shortcomings and dysfunctionalities that currently undermine education provision in the République Démocratique du Congo.

3. In terms of structure, there is an appropriate balance in the Interim Education Plan between the three programmes that seek to increase and improve the supply and demand for education, the four programmes that focus on improving the quality and relevance of education, the three programmes that aim to strengthen institutional capacity at all levels of the of the education system and the final programme that targets the coordination, management and monitoring of its implementation.

4. In consequence, the Team recommends only a few slight changes to the structure of the IEP, such as a clearer statement at the beginning about the vision and purpose of the Plan, using for example the statement about EPSP's mission in the Sub-sectoral Strategy.<sup>2</sup> The presentation of the context of the IEP could also be strengthened by a box at the beginning listing the main aspects of 'fragility' that characterise RDC, using information from Chapter 1 of the Sub-Sectoral Strategy and/or the **Document de Stratégie pour la Croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté (DCSRP) 2<sup>nd</sup> generation** (May 2010). In addition, discussion of fragility in the context of RDC could cover specific questions raised by the peace building agenda, such as the impact on teachers on war torn areas, how land disputes affect the siting

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<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to MEPSP (March 2010), **Stratégie de Développement de l'Enseignement primaire, secondaire et professionnel (2010/11 – 2015/16)**, p.6 and MEPSP (November 2011), **Draft Plan Intérimaire de l'Education**, paragraph 15.

<sup>2</sup> MEPSP (March 2010), *op.cit*, Chapitre III, 3.1 paragraph 94.

of new schools, and how education can contribute to the peace consolidation process. There could also be another box summarising the main education challenges in a post-conflict country like RDC needs (eg. estimated number of children out of school, disparities between achievement of girls and boys at primary and secondary levels, school financed by households rather than the State, poorly trained teachers, peace building, trade-offs between immediate short term needs and longer term reforms, etc.). Finally, in terms of structure and presentation, annex 13 relating to the implementation of the IEP, could be adapted into the main body of the text as the conclusion.

5. In terms of content, the External Evaluation Team consider the IEP to be ambitious in relation to both policy reforms and physical investments. This has implications for the optimal use of existing capacity. The IEP includes many studies (about 50) needed to underpin the preparation of policy reforms. All the studies seem to be well justified in the RDC context; indeed, many are fundamental to ensure that the efforts to develop policies and systems benefit from current global knowledge and experience, rather than mainly reviving programmes and structures that were established several decades ago. However, given that both preparation and implementation of policy reforms can be very time-consuming, it is recommended that some priorities should be established between the different studies and policy development activities. This should take into account the **balance between the short term and long term**. The trade-offs between addressing urgent, peace building needs and laying the foundations for the future becomes very difficult in a country that has suffered very poor governance and conflicts for so long. In particular, it is important to address short term needs in a way that does not set the sector on a track that will complicate desirable future reforms, and to grasp opportunities for reforming - rather than just restoring past policies and systems.

6. Both the examples of textbooks and teacher training taken from the IEP can be used to illustrate this policy trade-off. In response to the immediate need for textbooks, these may be imported (as has been the case recently in RDC) but the longer term challenge as the IEP rightly anticipates (Sub-programme 2.3) is for a national textbook policy whereby books are written locally, but production may be done internationally, regionally or locally – depending on cost effectiveness and capacity. A study of the options for a partnership with the private sector has become an urgent necessity, as the IEP proposes.

7. In the case of initial teacher training, the IEP plans to introduce reform of the approach in the '*humanités pédagogiques*' (HPs) later this year (IEP Sub-programme 2.2, anticipated result 4). The strategic choice is between (i) strengthening the existing HPs in their current structure, or (ii) gradually developing new training programmes that recruit students with a higher level of general secondary education and shorter by better pedagogical training. Furthermore, the choice made now will cement the structure of initial teacher training for the next decade or two. The second option offers possibility of better quality teachers, both because they have better quality pedagogical training and because they have much better general knowledge since they have successfully completed general secondary education. It also offers employment opportunities for the rapid expansion of secondary school graduates. Training costs may also be lower since unit costs of general secondary schools normally are lower than in teacher training institutions. And the HPs could be transformed into general secondary schools for which there is a rapidly increasing demand. The main cost issue is the **common link between teacher salaries and the level of the diploma held**. But if the HPs are strengthened maintaining their present programs, it may complicate later reforms. The question of how teacher training and the Ecoles Normales

should be reconstituted is of immediate and long term concern, a debate to which the recent report commissioned by UNESCO contributes<sup>3</sup>.

8. Differentiating between short term needs and longer term reforms requires more emphasis on prioritisation, and staggered programme implementation than is evident in the Interim Education Plan. School construction is a good example. More than one-quarter of the non-salary costs of the IEP comprises primary school construction and renovation. Implementation of this programme is associated with major reforms in the modalities of school construction, including transferring the responsibility to regions and local communities as well as establishing construction standards and mechanisms for financial and technical monitoring. Although this work has begun (see paragraph 24), the introduction of these reforms and the development of the capacities required will take time. In addition, the contracting process for school construction is often quite long. Thus, the current implementation schedule whereby the construction is split evenly between the three-year IEP duration will need to be modified to shift most of the costs towards the end of the period. Likewise the plans to transform 60 ETFP schools into ‘*Centres de reference*’ (2 per educational province) is unrealistic in the light of their current parlous state (IEP, paragraph 89) and in the timescale of the IEP, and therefore should be reconsidered perhaps beginning with one per 11 province, as Matthias Risler has suggested.<sup>4</sup>

9. In terms of content, the Evaluation Team consider that the IEP does not highlight recent progress in technical preparedness for implementing the IEP in RDC sufficiently, and thinks that this could be summarised in the introduction, in the main text and in the concluding section (annex 13). The credibility of the IEP report would be enhanced by better explaining the state of preparedness for the main activities included in the Plan. In general, the Evaluation Team felt that the IEP document ‘undersells’ the level of technical preparedness of the Plan, given that many studies and technical notes have already been written (see paragraphs 16 & 24).

10. Most of the main recommended changes in content relate to areas where the message could be more strongly emphasised. The cross cutting themes are one of the strengths of the IEP, but equity and inclusion issues (eg gender, vulnerable and marginalised out of school young people, HIV and AIDs, language policy, literacy, peace building) could be more strongly mainstreamed throughout the document. Given that current provision for ‘catch-up’ programmes for out-of-school youth is very limited, there is an evident need for MEPS and MAS to work together to ensure that such ‘second chance’ programmes are adequately mainstreamed. Other themes that could be reinforced throughout the document are pre-service as well as in-service teacher training, girls’ education, inter-ministerial collaboration (eg with the Ministère de la Santé and the Ministère du Genre et de la Famille in early childhood development, including nutrition) and learning outcomes (with particular emphasis on reading, drawing on the assessments undertaken by CONFEMEN<sup>5</sup> and USAID<sup>6</sup> in 2010). In conclusion, a stronger emphasis on access and inclusion could be demonstrated through a box summarising the different programmes to promote equity and inclusion, such as the draft national policy on early childhood education, the on-going fee reduction programme, the

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<sup>3</sup> Ndandu Mukondo, D., Ingwa Lofinda, H. & Bui, J-E. (April 2012), **Rapport d’Etude sur la formation initiale des Enseignants du Primaire en RDC.**

<sup>4</sup> Risler, M (March 2012), **Mission d’Appréciation du Plan Intérimaire de l’Education (PIE) – sous-secteur de l’Enseignement technique et de la formation professionnelle (ETFP)**, p.19.

<sup>5</sup> Through the **Programme on the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC)**.

<sup>6</sup> Under USAID’s **Projet d’Amélioration de la Qualité de l’Education (PAQUED)**.

planned abolition of the TENAFEP fee, extending ‘*second chance*’ programmes for out-of-school youth and the free distribution of textbooks.

11. Some of the extensive background studies and technical notes could be better cross-referenced in the IEP in order to give the reader a better understanding of the justification that underpins many of the proposed actions. There also are a few places in the Interim Education Plan where the connection between studies that have been completed, or are in the pipeline, need to be linked to future Education policy (eg. Programme 1.1: National policy for early childhood development; Programme 2.1: National policy to address the needs of children out of school).

12. The financing aspect is perhaps the area of the IEP that is in the greatest need of strengthening in order to demonstrate the likelihood of implementation. The External Evaluation Team had some difficulties in assessing the information available, and discussed with the CAT team options for how both the data for past years and the prospects for the future could be strengthened. Presently, the data on financing includes some past data on the MEPSP budget for 2010 and 2011 and some projections for the period 2012-14, and a one-page annex (Annex 1) showing how the estimated IEP costs for the three year period 2012-2014 would be financed by, respectively, the government, existing agency commitments and a financing gap that needs to be filled (including by the proposed support from the GPE). The IEP team should consider whether to have a separate section on IEP financing and could strengthen the present coverage in a number of ways, including by:

- **Ensuring data consistency:** For example, the cost and budget figures presented are sometimes in FC, sometimes in US \$; clearly distinguish between when budget figures include and exclude external financing, and review and update figures as needed. Also, the estimated financing by the Government as now shown in Annex 1 should be related to the projected government budget to show the implication in terms of the share of the Government’s total budget allocated to the MEPSP (see discussion below);
- **Including alternative budget projections:** The CAT team presented a set of preliminary MEPSP budget projections for the period 2012-2015 based on different hypotheses on the increase in the share of the government’s budget (excluding external financing) allocated to MEPSP (varying from 14% to 17% in 2015). The figure of 14% was quoted as an objective by some senior government officials. It would be good to include these in the IEP document along with comparable estimates for past years to be able to assess the effort needed on part of the Government to reach the objectives for future years. For example, Table 1 (p. 13) of the IEP shows that, in 2011, the approved MEPSP budget for 2011 (**including** external funding) was only 6.73% of the Government’s budget (i.e., about **one-third of the average for SSA**). Data presented in one of the background studies provided to the team suggest that **only 60%** of the MEPSP budget approved for 2011 was on domestic resources, thus further reducing the share of the Government’s own resources devoted to education<sup>7</sup>. Given this very low allocation, it would be good to explain better how the Government plans to make the projected major increase in MEPSP’s budget. Stronger

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<sup>7</sup> Dom, C (March 2012), **Appui à l’amélioration de suivi de l’exécution budgétaire dans les secteurs prioritaires**, ODI Programme BSI en RDC, p.2.

Government political priority for education (as suggested by some senior officials) will only be real when translated into higher budgetary allocations.

- **Other factors affecting the Government's Education Budget:** Naturally, in addition to the share of the budget allocated to MEPSP, the size of the budget also depends crucially on

- (i) the level of economic growth;
- (ii) the share of the GNP mobilized through various types of taxations; and
- (iii) the share of MEPSP in the overall education budget.

If any new information is available on these key budget determinants, this should be used when updating the MEPSP budget estimates.

- **Explaining the very low rate for disbursement of external resources:** Table 2 (paragraph 18) indicates abnormally low disbursements rates (6,2% for 2010 and zero % for January –June 2011). This needs clarifying because slow disbursement could adversely affect any substantial request for external support, such the Global Partnership for Education.

- **Explaining the development of the salary budget:** Given that teacher salaries account for 62% of the total costs of the IEP, it would be very useful for the IEP document to explain how each of the following three factors affect the increase in the salary budget during the IEP period: -

- (i) Net recruitment of new teachers to cater to enrollment growth. As already mentioned, the reduction of school fees is likely to spur strong enrollment growth in all grades. Furthermore, the enrollment projections given in Annex 6 are the same as those provided in the MEPSP Sub-Sectoral Strategy which was prepared in 2010. More recent enrollment data are now available, so these projections need to be updated. This will affect cost estimates. The IEP states that the costs of the Sub- Sectoral Strategy have been updated (paragraph 26). The CAT team said that this also applies to the enrollment projections. This update needs to be reflected in Annex 6.
- (ii) Increased registration ('mécanisation') of teachers.
- (iii) The planned increase in teacher salaries. Would not a good part of the projected increase in the MEPSP budget be required to cover the associated costs?

- **Clarifying budget priority by level of education:** In relation to the submission to the GPE for support, budget priority for basic education is important. The IEP states (paragraph 27, p.16) that clear priority is given to primary education (66.9% of IEP costs). However, Annex 7 shows that primary education's share of education costs in the EPSP strategy is projected to decline from 61% in 2010/11 to 52.8% in 2015/16. The difference needs to be explained.

- **Clarifying role of HIPC funding:** The Evaluation Team was provided with figures showing that, starting in 2005 and especially during the three year period 2008-2011, HIPC resources accounted for most of domestic financing of the MEPSP budget (amounting to some FC 180 billion in 2011). It would be good to explain the relation between education financing and these resources.

- **Showing how Parents' contributions will progressively decrease** over the IEP period. In this connection, fee reduction has been implemented grade by grade,

now covering Grades 1-4 (see also paragraph 21). The IEP states that the Plan has the objective of reducing the average contribution by parents from US\$ 18 per pupil in 2011 to US\$ 10 in 2015 (Sub-programme 2.1, Specific objective 5). If fee reduction continues progressively by grade, which fees will remain in 2015 to explain the \$10? Does the average quoted include pupils in the grades which benefit from fee reduction? According to IEP Annex 6, public primary schools enrolled 13,277,452 pupils in 2011/12. This would imply that parents paid US\$ 239 million in fees that year, which would approach the magnitude of funding provided by the Government on its own resources. In short, it would be good to explain (in a box?) (i) how fee reduction affects parents' contribution to overall education funding, (ii) which fees will be reduced/abolished during the IEP period, and (iii) what will be done to ensure that fees replaced by public funding (from domestic and external resources) are no longer collected from parents.

- **Total Education Budget:** Table 1 includes a line showing the share of the Government's budget allocated to the education sector **in total**. This is a useful indicator and, to the extent possible, it should also be shown in other financing tables.
- **Financing gap** (see paragraphs 26-28).

13. The statistical indicators that are used throughout the IEP are similar to those used in other sector plans, except that consistent disaggregation by gender throughout the document would highlight the areas where girls are particularly disadvantaged. The most glaring statistic in this respect is the one used to measure both MDG 2 and progress in the GPE/Fast Track indicative framework: the primary school completion rate – which, in RDC, is particularly dramatic, if one cites the gap in performance between girls and boys in high and low performing provinces. The other '*needs*' indicators, that are likely to be significant in relation to funding from the Global Partnership for Education, are the number of school age children (girls and boys), the gender parity index, external financing (see subsequent section on 'the need for external financing'), '*fragility*' and per capita income. The last two could be addressed together in the proposed box at the beginning of the IEP summarising 'fragility' characteristics in RDC (see paragraph 4). However it is also recommended that the estimated 7,6 million<sup>8</sup> children out of school should be emphasised (highlighting the estimated number of girls) - as the number of young people out of school reflects a problem on a scale only evident in one other African country (Nigeria).

14. Among the programmes, for which it is difficult to identify suitable performance indicators, are those that relate to governance and institutional reform. Although the Global Partnership for Education uses progress in primary completion rate (disaggregated by gender) and the percentage of domestic resources allocated to education as performance indicators; it is recommended that the IEP highlights in the proposed new concluding section those indicators that are the most feasible and realistic, in terms of achievement over the next three years. These could be picked out from the preceding two sub-programmes, eg.

- In Sub-programme 3.1. 'Accompagnement et mise en oeuvre de la décentralisation pour une gestion efficace', for **Anticipated result 1** : Redefinition of the mission and responsibilities of the central EPSP Directorates and Inspection

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<sup>8</sup> MICS (2010) cited in Université de Ouagadougou, ISSP (July 2011), **Recherche sur les Enfants et Adolescents en dehors de l'Ecole en RDC**, Rapport sur l'Etat des Lieux, for MEPSP, UNICEF, UIS, DFID.

following the recommendations of the organisational audit of the MEPSP, the indicator could be ‘ At least 5 (?) Directorates in MEPSP with a redefined mandate by 2014/15’.

- Another indicator could be applied to **Anticipated result 6** : Establishment of Provincial Action Plans linked to IEP priorities - ‘At least 9/11 provinces with a viable Action Plan by 2014/15’, and for **Anticipated result 7** relating to performance contracts - ‘At least 5’ could be cited.
- Likewise for Sub-programme 3.2. ‘Renforcement des capacités institutionnelles et humaines’, indicators could be identified for the **Anticipated results** arising from the local management offices - ‘At least 20 operating according to performance contracts’ and Parents’ Committees involved in school management on a regular basis – ‘At least 20 by 2014/15’.

If the GPE require these indicators to be converted into annual targets or ‘milestones’ for the release of finding tranches, then these indicators could become cumulative.

15. These indicators could likewise be used for monitoring the impact of the implementation of the IEP. Given that AFD/CTB’s **Appui à l’Enseignement Primaire (APEP)** is currently supporting a mission through a UNESCO contract to help MEPSP’s Cellule d’Appui Technique (CAT) in the implementation of the IEP and the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan; it is recommended that the Technical and Financing partners should use the results of this UNESCO consultancy for the establishment of a common MEPSP monitoring framework. This would then feed into the Joint Annual Reviews of progress in implementing the IEP, against which all other project evaluation missions should be aligned in future.

### **Evaluation de l’Etat de Préparation (administrative, technique, financière) de la RDC pour la mise en œuvre du PIE / Assessment of the preparedness (administrative, technical, financial) in DRC for the implementation of the IEP.**

16. A large number of studies have been commissioned over the past three years, or are in the pipeline. One of the impressive aspects of the Strategy and the Interim Education Plan is the way in which various key diagnostic studies have been used to underpin the proposed new policies or strategies. For example, the **Diagnostic Organisationnel du Ministère de l’EPSP** (January 2009) and the subsequent **Plan National d’Actions pour le renforcement des capacités de planification et de gestion de l’Education (PARC)** developed by MEPSP, MESU and MAS in June 2011, draw attention to the weaknesses and constraints that undermine the efficient governance of education.<sup>9</sup> This leads to the conclusion in the Interim Education Plan that the **restructuring of the architecture, relating to the management of EPSP** through the rationalisation of the organigram of the Ministry and the redefinition of responsibilities at central and provincial levels, **represents the fundamental reform needed** to overcome the dysfunctions of the management and administration of the current education system. The reduction in the number of directorates (22) should emanate from a more rational regrouping of directorates with similar functions: on the one hand, between those responsible for setting norms in relation to all aspects of education, and, on the other hand, between those responsible for their application. The current overlap between some of the functions of

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<sup>9</sup> Other studies that appear to have influenced new policy directions include BIEF (November 2011), **Etude préparatoire à l’identification du Programme d’Appui à l’Enseignement Technique et à la Formation Professionnelle de la Coopération belgo-congolais** and Université de Ouagadougou ISSP (July 2011), **Recherche sur les Enfants et Adolescents en dehors de l’Ecole en RDC**, Rapport sur l’Etat des Lieux for MEPSP, UNICEF, UIS, DFID.

the Secrétariat Général and the Inspection Générale de l'Éducation needs to be streamlined at central level in relation to the 2006 Constitution and the programmes of the Interim Education Plan (paragraph 119). This restructuring is particularly urgent, because it is in direct relationship to the decentralisation process - which the implementation of the IEP both fosters and promotes. It will require the redefinition of the mandate of each directorate, starting with the Inspectorate whose role has expanded beyond pedagogic and administrative supervision of the quality of education. There are also problems with other Ministries having or developing parallel inspection systems with different criteria (eg in ETFP), which MEPSP needs to address through the relevant Commission Interministerielle<sup>10</sup> (see paragraphs 37,38).

17. A revised version of the 1986 **Loi Cadre de l'Enseignement national**, relating to the way Education functions in RDC, is in the final stages of ratification through the next session of the Senate. This will pave the way for up-dating two other important aspects of Education, the '**Convention**' (agreement for the contracting out of the management of public schools to Religious Associations), and a new policy to enhance the professional status of teachers, which will emerge from a study to be undertaken by MEPSP, the Ministère de la Fonction Publique and the Teachers' Unions (IEP, Sub-programme 2.2, paragraph 66).

18. Other key aspects of institutional reform, relating to the on-going registration of teachers and schools and the restructuring and modernisation of SECOPE (IEP, Programme 3.2, 159) are contingent on the school mapping exercise, and a systematic census of teachers in public and private schools and administrative personnel at central and provincial levels. The school map will be important for catering not only for young people out of school, but also for implementing the school construction component. The teachers' census will provide a much needed data base for education planning (IEP, Sub-programme 2.2, 65), being essential for teacher projections, as well as the salary and training needs. Lessons learned from the failure of the **Recensement des Enseignants et Carte Scolaire** (RECS) project in 2011 need to be shared with MEPSP and other PTFs, so that the Ministry can learn lessons and move forward on this important exercise. Likewise the cleaning up of the payroll, as a result the census of teaching and administrative personnel, is a necessary pre-condition for the preparation for decentralisation of responsibilities and budgets during 2012 and 2013.<sup>11</sup>

19. This will feed into the development of a reliable and accurate data base for a viable Education Management Information System (**Système d'Information pour la gestion de l'Éducation – SIGE**). Although the establishment of SIGE is a welcome step in the right direction, the Evaluation Team strongly supports the need identified in the Interim Education Plan (paragraph 36) for the reinforcement of capacity at central and provincial levels for the regular and timely production of accurate and reliable educational statistics. It does not make sense for some agencies to continue to be collecting their statistics themselves outside the central and provincial government SIGE systems.

20. A new approach to accountability is evident in the introduction in the IEP of performance based contracts. This sensitive area is being piloted in the first instance in the '*Bureaux Gestionnaires de proximité*', and will in the long term be applied to all education personnel, including teachers. Likewise, the two new 'arrêtés' (decrees) that were passed in

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<sup>10</sup> Risler, M (March 2012), **Mission d'Appréciation du Plan Intérimaire de l'Éducation (PIE) – sous-secteur de l'Enseignement technique et de la formation professionnelle (ETFP)**, p.21.

<sup>11</sup> See Dom, C (January 2012) '*Composante 'Appui à l'amélioration du suivi budgétaire'*', Note préparée le 24 janvier 2012, ODI Programme Budget Strengthening Initiative en DRC, p.8.

September, 2011, relating to the role of school management committees and parent committees, seek to ensure that there is more accountability at community level for the management of school resources. However, although a number of actions to enhance teacher professionalisation, career prospects, better teaching environment, initial and in-service teacher training policy and deployment are evident (IEP, paragraph 58); the need for accompanying measures to increase the accountability of teachers for learning outcomes is missing. For example, have studies been undertaken in RDC of teacher absenteeism and use of instructional time (including respect for the school calendar)?

21. The implementation of ‘free’ primary education over the last three years represents a significant policy shift in the way education is financed by gradually transferring the fees paid by households back to the Government. In August 2010, the President asked the Government to take all necessary steps to make free primary education effective in public schools, in accordance with the Constitution<sup>12</sup>. This policy is a key part of the Sub-sector Strategy’s focus on building an education system that is both inclusive and qualitative,<sup>13</sup> but, in September 2010, the Government opted for the strategy of progressively removing most school fees for grades 1, 2 & 3 (except in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi), with grade 4 added for 2011/12. At the same time the Government introduced a uniform salary system for teachers in order to eliminate the ‘*frais de motivation*’ bonus to teachers in rural areas and started the process of registering additional teachers in public schools (28,620 teachers in September 2010 and 13,000 teachers in 2,500 newly registered schools through the World Bank financed PARSE project in January 2011). The progressive removal by grade of some of the fees paid by households in the Interim Education Plan departs from the approach proposed in the Sub-sector Strategy (paragraph 101, p.38) that targets specific types of fees, and anticipates that all fees will be removed by 2015/16 (Performance indicators at primary level, p.38). The External Evaluation Mission found that this staged strategy for reducing school fees is leading in some parts of the country to an increase of other fees in higher grades (eg. the increase of the TENAFEP this year from 4,500 to 5,500FC in Bas-Congo), which is likely to have an adverse effect on the numbers of children families can send to school and the numbers of girls completing primary school successfully. Other inconsistencies are evident as a result of this staged strategy, such as the doubling of the education tax ‘minerval’ this year in the upper grades and the channelling of these funds to the Fonds de Promotion de l’Education Nationale (a quasi ‘*établissement public*’ whose running costs are on the MEPSP’s planned budget for 2012 but which appears to operate outside the education budget). The contradictions in the implementation of the programme of ‘free’ primary education need to be addressed in the implementation of the Plan through greater emphasis on better communication and transparency concerning which fees are being removed, how those fees still being collected are being used, and the extent to which current practice is preventing poor families from sending their children to school.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore recommended that, given the complexity of the process of reducing school fees paid by households, the ‘*Gratuité*’ Task force should continue to monitor the situation closely, with particular responsibility for checking that changes in school fees have been communicated adequately to all parties concerned, and for ensuring that anomalies in the implementation of ‘free’ primary education are rectified by the appropriate mechanism.

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<sup>12</sup> MEPSP (March 2010), **Stratégie de Développement de l’Enseignement primaire, secondaire et professionnel, 2010/11 – 2015/16**, 2.1.1. Cadre légal et contractuel, paragraph 23.

<sup>13</sup> MEPSP (March 2010), *Idem*, Chapter 3, 3.1.Vision et mission pour l’EPSP, paragraph 94.

<sup>14</sup> MEPSP (March 2010), *Idem*, paragraph 47 - Une gestion plus transparente des frais scolaires.

22. A noteworthy aspect of the Interim Education Plan, that has significant implications for its implementation, is the participatory way in which it has evolved, building on workshops and Round Tables that have fed into MEPSP's Stratégie de Développement de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel. The Commission Indépendante du Secteur de l'Education produced a number of technical reports on the key challenges in the education sector (eg. costs of education, legal framework, education quality), based on extensive country-wide consultations. The Task force on 'Gratuité' (with representatives from different Ministries as well as Development Agencies) analysed different scenarios for removing school fees. The EPSP Sector Strategy was approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2010 and the draft Interim Education Plan received Ministerial endorsement in February 2012. A Ministerial/PTF/ NGO Partenariat Mondial pour l'Education (PME) task force has been supporting the Government in the process of developing their application for GPE support. This has established a road map for different stages of the process and has started encouraging the process of greater harmonisation and alignment behind the Plan. Such synergy is evident, for example, in some of the studies identified in the November version that are now being supported by Development Partners.<sup>15</sup>

23. Following Minister Maker Mwangu Famba's visit to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat in Washington in November 2011, agreement was reached with the Technical and Financing Partners on priority programmes in the Interim Education Plan for GPE financing support. These priority areas, relate to

**Access and Equity (4) :**

- Poursuite et consolidation des acquis de la gratuité *de l'enseignement primaire*
- Construction et réhabilitation des infrastructures scolaires
- Soutien à la scolarisation des jeunes filles
- *Insertion des enfants en dehors de l'école*

**Quality (3) :**

- Acquisition et distribution des manuels scolaires
- Formation initiale et continue des enseignants
- Renforcement des apprentissages

**Gouvernance (2) :**

- Accompagnement de la décentralisation
- Renforcement du SIGE

24. The subsequent establishment of 9 thematic working groups to ensure that the technical ground work is underway has given a new impetus to MEPSP strategic directorates, evident in the 'fiches techniques' that some of these working groups have produced (eg. on construction scolaires, formation continue, manuels scolaires, réforme du SECOPE, etc.). Likewise the Ministry's exercise of its regulatory function has been evident in the development of several guides, with support from the **Projet d'Appui au Redressement du Secteur Educatif** (PARSE), on norms and regulations. These include one that provides guidelines for low cost school construction (August 2011) and three relating to salaries and SECOPE (October 2011), designed to help School Principals. In tandem, with the other World Bank financed PURUS project, PARSE has been piloting the transfer of budgets to schools and local management offices ('*Bureaux gestionnaires de proximité*'). The IEP will be building on this pilot experience as part of its programme for improving

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<sup>15</sup> eg **Rapport d'Etude sur la formation initiale des Enseignants du Primaire en RDC**, UNESCO, April 2012; **Enfants et Adolescents en dehors de l'Ecole**, UNICEF/DFID.

education management through decentralisation to local level (IEP, Sub-Programme 3.1) and is also piloting performance contracts in local management offices, as a first step in an ambitious plan to improve the efficiency, professional commitment and accountability of Ministry personnel at local, provincial and central levels.

25. However, despite the participatory process that has characterised the development of the Strategy and the Interim Education Plan over the last three years, the consultative forums for bringing together different groups of stakeholders in the education sector have not always been as effective as they could have been. The Groupe Thématique Education is supposed to bring together four different types of stakeholder (Government<sup>16</sup>, PTFs, Civil society, Private sector) under the chair of the Ministère du Plan, but has not met for over a year. GOTEK, the national coalition for international NGOs working in RDC, also does not seem to be very active at the moment. The Plan Intérimaire de l'Éducation provides the framework and the opportunity for revisiting the mandates and the membership of these different forums (including the Comité de Concertation and the Groupe des PTF Clés en Éducation (PTF-E) and how they inter-relate to each other. The designation of the World Bank as supervising entity for the GPE funds, with UNICEF playing a coordination role, and Belgian Cooperation recently assuming the Chair of the PTF-E, provides the opportunity for a revision of their respective terms of reference - which is currently being addressed. There nevertheless appears to be occasional overlapping or duplication of functions which needs streamlining. For example, it is apparent that these different structures will continue to function less effectively than they could do, if their membership does not grasp the opportunity to use these forums for harmonisation and alignment purposes.

### **Une estimation du montant de financement extérieur / An estimate of the need for external financing**

26. As has already been discussed (paragraph 12), several aspects relating to the financing of the IEP need further clarification and strengthening. The Evaluation Team can do no more than to identify a number of issues that need to be addressed, with MEPS and the CAT Team taking the necessary action. A key step is to map out more accurately what bilateral and multilateral funding is already committed or likely to be committed for the three year period covered by the IEP (see next section).

27. Annex 1 of the IEP document estimates that about 70% of total IEP costs would be financed by the Government and 8% by existing development agency commitments, leaving a financing gap of about 22% (US\$ 371 million). But, if solid economic growth is achieved and the increased political commitment to education apparently expressed by the President translates into a higher share of the Government's budgets for education (2012 - 2014), this could result into a higher level of Government financing. Similarly, the efforts underway to update agency commitments could show higher multilateral and bilateral contributions (see next section). On the other hand, although this is taken into account by the IEP, it was not possible for the Team to assess how key factors governing the salary budget may develop over the period covered by the IEP (eg. net recruitment of teachers, increased registration of teachers, planned increase in teacher salaries).

28. Thus, as the Plan now stands, and even including a potential support of \$100 million from the GPE, **the PIE has a considerable funding gap.** If the gap cannot be closed,

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<sup>16</sup> In this case, the following key Ministries that cover Education: EPSP, ESU, MAS and RST.

priorities will need to be established. Normally, salaries payments will be given the highest priority, and salaries account for 66% of total PIE costs (Annex 2). Thus, **excluding potential GPE support, financing is secured for only about one-third of the PIE's investment costs.**

### **Une matrice des programmes actuels et planifiés / A matrix of actual and planned programmes**

29. The expectation that the External Evaluation Team would produce a matrix of external funding was abandoned, with UNICEF's agreement, when it was discovered that USAID had recently undertaken a survey (after the TORs for this Mission had been drawn up). USAID's survey updates the mapping exercise led by CAT last November. Although USAID's survey goes further than CAT's by identifying geographical focus, this could be even more specific by a map pinpointing the actual zones or districts where projects are operating. It is recommended that there should be two tables, one designating confirmed funding and another designating what is potentially in the pipeline. It also might be worth trying to capture what is being spent on education through other channels (eg. through the Humanitarian Pooled Fund, Cash Transfer programmes) and what is being spent in other sectors or programmes that has implications for education (eg. the ODI Budget Strengthening Initiative).

30. Having a matrix that is kept regularly up-to-date with confirmed funding from PTFs is essential for enabling MEPSP and the Ministère du Plan to make more accurate predictions about funding gaps. At the moment, this is not possible because not all Development Partners have been forthcoming about their intentions (or may fail to explain what internal agency problem prevents them from doing this). The survey undertaken by USAID is not completely clear regarding what is not yet fully committed or confirmed. It is recommended that the CAT should take responsibility for sorting out what matrices are needed and liaise with UNICEF to establish what sort of clarification of different types of funding would be constructive. What was apparent from this Evaluation, and from the valuable work being undertaken through the Budget Strengthening Initiative<sup>17</sup>, is that better, more accurate information about external resources is essential to help the RDC in its budget planning.

31. Given CAT's key role in the implementation of the IEP, and its pivotal role as the interface between the MEPSP and the external financing agencies; it is recommended that urgent consideration be given to strengthening CAT's technical resources, particularly in the area of financial planning and management. This observation fits in with a similar conclusion in relation to the reinforcement of EPSP's annual sectoral budget process by the Budget Strengthening Initiative<sup>18</sup>.

### **Une analyse de la connaissance critique et les écarts de développement des capacités qui ne sont pas couverts dans le PIE / Critical analysis of capacity gaps not covered in the IEP**

32. The areas of critical significance that are either not covered, or are given insufficient

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<sup>17</sup> See Dom,C (August 2011), **Prise en charge du Plan Intérimaire de l'EPSP (PIE) dans la réforme de la Gestion des Finances Publiques et le budget du gouvernement**, ODI Budget Strengthening Initiative en RDC, and Dom, C (March 2012), **Appui à l'amélioration du suivi de l'exécution budgétaire dans les secteurs prioritaires**, ODI Budget Strengthening Initiative en RDC, Annexe 1.

<sup>18</sup> Dom,C (March 2012), *Idem*, box 2, p.4

analytical underpinning, relate to language policy in national languages and adult literacy. Although language policy is mentioned (Sub-programme 2.4, paragraphs 79 & 81), the inter-related issues of learning to read in a familiar home language, and the need to reinforce teachers' ability to teach through the medium of French so that learning outcomes can be improved, are missing. The IEP therefore needs to include a more detailed plan about how national language policy will be implemented among its implementation activities.

33. The fight against illiteracy also makes a contribution to improving the quality of education. Adult literacy is an important aspect of basic education with continuing low levels of literacy in RDC representing a serious constraint on development for decades to come, if the Government does not give concerted inter-ministerial attention to this problem. Lack of basic literacy skills is a formidable factor of exclusion from many aspects of life and has strong gender and poverty dimensions. Whereas it may not be possible to launch a major literacy programme during the IEP period, in addition to expanding '*second chance*' programmes for the age group below 15; it is recommended that the IEP should include support for work to prepare an ambitious plan to address the challenge of promoting literacy among parents as well as children.

34. The other area of concern to the Evaluation Team arises from RDC's implementation capacity. Although this report has suggested areas where the IEP can be strengthened, the main challenge will be **implementation**, rather than further refinement of the Plan. As used here, this term goes beyond the administrative capacity referred to in the TORs to include both the human capacity and systems available to prepare and implement the Plan and the political capacity to handle the many difficult political economy constraints on implementing education reforms. During its short visit, the Team could not assess these aspects in any detail. However, drawing on the long-term experience of working in DRC by one of the Team members, and the extensive experience of the Team in assessing education development plans in other countries; it is safe to conclude that weak capacity in all the above areas poses a severe challenge to PIE implementation.

35. This relates to political will. The IEP is ambitious, containing many reforms ranging from revision of program content and strengthening teachers' in-service and pre-service training to reduction in school fees and improving sector management and accountability for results through, for example, performance contracts. Even if the technical and human capacity can be mobilized to prepare and implement these reforms, the political economy of education reforms – especially related to enhancing governance, strengthening teacher management and accountability and changing fee-charging policies and (especially) practices – are complex in the best of circumstances. This is particularly the case in a vast, post-conflict country where the Government for decades has neglected the education sector, where teachers are underpaid and rely heavily on user fees, where major issues remain to be addressed with respect to decentralisation, and where the institutional capacity remains extremely weak at all levels.

36. The implementation of wide-ranging reforms in this context requires strong political will **at the highest political level** and strong **leadership by the Minister of Education**. The new Government was not yet appointed at the time of the visit (and it would, in any case, have been difficult for the team to assess its political and financial commitment to IEP implementation). There were however some positive signs - for example, the officials we met all referred to the President's strong commitment to education and there has been steady progress in the sector over the last few years. However, it still remains to be seen whether

this increased verbal political commitment can be translated into the substantial increase in public funding needed to implement the IEP. After the departure of the Team, the former Minister of Education was reappointed. When the Team met with him informally during their Mission, he stressed the President's strong commitment to education and his own strong commitment to implementation of the IEP. The continuity represented by his reappointment will hopefully augur well for IEP implementation.

37. Strong political leadership from MEPSP will also be needed to re-inforce the existing inter-ministerial collaboration in order to avoid perpetuating parallel structures that different ministerial mandates for education. This applies in particular to collaboration with the Ministère des Affaires Sociales (MAS) in relation to young people out of school and adult literacy, and with the Ministère de la Santé in relation to early childhood education, nutrition and HIV and AIDs. Although Enseignement Technique Formation Professionnelle (ETFP) has not been chosen as a priority sector for potential funding from the GPE, the need for MEPSP leadership through a more inclusive inter-ministerial strategy emerges from Matthias Risler's in-depth study.<sup>19</sup>

38. Concerning ETFP, the Evaluation team found that although Coopération Technique Belge (CTB) is involved in this important sub-sector in Orientale, Katanga, Equateur and Kasai Oriental Provinces; current and planned support from external sources falls well short of the fairly large investments proposed in the IEP (US\$ 52 millions). Given that ETFP represents a crucial component for addressing the future skills needed to underpin RDC's economic development, more evidence is needed about the labour market and the demand side to justify the proposed expansion of supply. The proposed engagement of the African Development Bank is a welcome new initiative, as this programme plans to reinforce the link between skills training and employment, but Risler's constructive study of ETFP in the IEP draws attention to the lack of harmonized sub-sector strategy involving all Ministries that cover vocational and technical training, alongside representatives of the private sector. If MEPSP does not seize the opportunity in the IEP for developing this strategy through a restructured Commission Inter-Ministerielle, then the risk of fragmented, parallel ETFP programmes will continue.

39. In terms of institutional capacity, the quality of the IEP reflects an improvement in the analytical capacity at the central level (as compared with the earlier involvement of one of the Team members in assessing the preparation of the Stratégie Sous-Sectorielle on which the IEP is based) – albeit, starting from very low initial levels. Also, given that the Evaluation Team was only able to visit one region, they could not properly assess capacity at the provincial level. All indications are that, despite progress (eg. education statistics are now collected and published regularly, teachers are being paid, fee reduction is happening, etc), capacity remains weak. More broadly, despite all the tribulations RDC has experienced over the last two to three decades, the education system has proven remarkably resilient – largely due to support from the parents and religious congregations.

40. However, to implement the type of reforms foreseen in the IEP is going to need much more than 'survival *capacity*', ranging from stronger **technical capacity** to prepare and implement a variety of complex reforms and firm **political commitment** to address the often complex political economy constraints on reform implementation and to establish the implementation and monitoring accountability mechanisms needed, for example, to ensure

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<sup>19</sup> Risler, M (March 2012) *op.cit.*, pp. 22, 23.

that fees that are abolished by the government are no longer collected, and that improvements in teacher salaries and support to schools and local administrative offices are matched with accountability for improved service delivery. Also, the need for capacity strengthening goes well beyond the traditional education service delivery aspects. The work being undertaken under the Budget Strengthening Exercise, in which MEPSP is a pilot Ministry, indicates very severe capacity shortages in the preparation and execution of the MEPSP budget<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, successful implementation requires close cooperation with other Ministries, provincial authorities as well as with non-governmental organizations and, especially, the Teachers' Unions and Parents' Associations.

41. Although the Team was satisfied that many of these constituencies had been consulted in the preparation of the Stratégie sous-sectorielle and the IEP, it was impossible to adequately assess whether the level of **ownership** is sufficient to facilitate IEP implementation, during such a short mission. What was apparent, however, was that MEPSP needs a stronger communication strategy in order to develop greater ownership of the IEP starting with the school community. The challenge in implementing the IEP is to how make the education administration closer to the school and how to ensure that the school is closer to the community it serves. Involving all key stakeholders in the development of provincial education plans, based on the IEP, could be one way of doing this. This strategy needs to be closely linked to the decentralisation process that the IEP seeks to foster and promote, and can in turn help to build the accountability that should characterise all levels of a transparent, effective education system (see also paragraph 21).

## Conclusion

42. The External Evaluation Team concludes that the IEP is a well-prepared plan and that, after some minor changes, the focus needs to be on improving the conditions for implementation rather than on improving the technical quality of the plan. In turn, as noted above, this means ensuring that the professed higher political priority for education translates into the political will and sectoral leadership needed to both improve the quality and extend the coverage of education in RDC. The Team concludes that, despite the risks identified in the previous section, **the risk of providing external support for the IEP is, on balance, worth taking - provided that satisfactory political commitment can be obtained from Government.** Strong political leadership requires a zero tolerance policy on malpractice and under-performance as well as strong sector leadership and progressive increases in the education budget. Whether this will be done depends largely on the ability of the RDC authorities to match the priority given to education by most other Sub-Saharan African countries. Development partners should therefore continue to encourage the Government to translate its stated high political priority for education into more substantial increases in allocation in the national budget.

43. Given the level of ambition of the IEP, it may not be possible to implement all of it during the next three years. If choices have to be made, taking into account the discussion in this report about trade-offs between the short and longer term; it is evident that **activities, that have important long term implications, may need to be prioritised.** This should safeguard against programmes being launched without sufficient knowledge of the RDC situation in different provinces, and should also take into account regional and global

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<sup>20</sup> See Dom, C (August 2011) & (March 2012), *Idem*.

experience. The IEP draws attention to the need for other sub-sector strategies (eg. in ETFP) and paves the way for a more comprehensive Education Sector Plan in future.

44. Nevertheless, whereas the main responsibility naturally falls on the Government, external partners have important roles to play in providing financial and perhaps particularly, support for **technical assistance in ways that build national capacity and systems, and encourage synergy rather than parallel systems**. First, RDC is still in transition from conflict to non-conflict. In addition to the fragile security situation, RDC shares the common challenges of fragile states with respect to poor institutional capacity and governance, weak capacity to mobilize tax revenues, and vast unmet demands for basic social services including education. In this context, technical support for the development of evidence-based policies, better governance, stronger systems and more inclusive education provision are among the strongest comparative advantage of aid. It is therefore recommended that Development Partners give consideration to a rapid assessment of the most urgent technical capacity reinforcement needs to support the implementation of the IEP over the following two years (eg follow-up to the **ODI budget strengthening Initiative**).

45. Second, given the population and geographical size of RDC, its location in central Africa, and its enormous economic potential, the impact of success or failure in RDC – in terms of the number of people affected inside and outside the country – far outweighs similar impact of success or failure in any other fragile state in Africa. Given this **weight**, RDC's future in terms of peace and prosperity also impacts in a major way on the success of the development partners' assistance to a large part of Sub-Saharan Africa. Development of good quality basic education for all is a necessary condition for realizing RDC's potential, for its own people, as well as for Sub-Saharan Africa.

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