



## TEACHER MANAGEMENT, KEY CHALLENGE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (2010-2016)

Sifa Bura Huguettes<sup>1i</sup>,  
Zhang Kite<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Education,  
Economics and Management of Education,  
Central China Normal University,  
Wuhan, China

<sup>2</sup>Professor, School of Education,  
School-Based Management,  
Central China Normal University,  
Wuhan, China

### Abstract:

As the capital role of education for building a sustainable peace is increasing attention in international debates, it is important to analyze the main conditions under which education is taking place. The provision of education in conflict-affected and fragile countries remains a challenging policy. The Congolese education sector is characterized by a gradual retreat of the state in the provision of education and an increasing authority and decision-making power of local actors. The predominance of uncodified practical norms causes constant negotiations between different actors. Among these, teachers have the particular role of providing education to the students. They must do so in a multi-scalar context of reconstruction agendas, inadequate payment, erroneous administration, practical norms and competition between schools for students. Previous studies have outlined the structural impacts on teachers, but none focused on their agency. If teachers are still coping with their very basic needs due to their income situation, quality of education is not the primary or sole concern of their everyday actions. Hence, they have developed a range of strategies to exercise their agency in relation to their income. These strategies encompass the complex process of teacher and school registration and additional means of generating income. Any policies and reforms in the education sector and therefore in the broader peace building environment are doomed to fail if they do not take into account teachers' income situation.

**Keywords:** burnout, teacher's motivation, job satisfaction, well-being, education sector

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [huguettesifa@yahoo.com](mailto:huguettesifa@yahoo.com)

## 1. Introduction

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, “Teaching” is a stressful profession. In comparison with other professions, teachers show high levels of exhaustion and cynicism (Maslach et al., 1996; Schaufeli and Enzmann, 1998), and up to one-fifth of teachers in the United States report being burned out at any given time (Borg and Riding, 1991; Travers and Cooper, 1996). Burned-out teachers can create harmful learning environments that are associated with negative outcomes for students. High levels of distress can lead to teacher burnout and deteriorating teacher performance (Osher et al., 2007; Tsouloupas et al., 2010), as well as poorer classroom climate (La Paro et al., 2009). Furthermore, teachers who are burned out and have low motivation are also shown to have lower self-efficacy about their abilities to teach (Friedman and Farber, 1992).

The literature on teacher well-being from the United States shows that multiple aspects of teachers’ lives are related to their motivation, burnout, and job satisfaction, including individual and school characteristics. Positive outcomes such as teacher motivation and job satisfaction have generally been linked with the fulfillment of intrinsic factors such as working with children, while negative outcomes such as job dissatisfaction and burnout have been found to be associated with extrinsic factors such as poor pay, work overload, and deterioration of the status of the teaching profession (IIEP, 2004; see Spearetal.2000 for a comprehensive review).

Otherwise, there are several work-related factors that predict higher burnout rates, including high job demands with few job resources, lack of information, and lack of autonomy within the workplace. Such individual factors include a lack of social support (related to teachers specifically; Kahn et al., 2006), age (with younger, less experienced employees showing higher rates; related to teachers specifically; Klassen and Chiu 2010), and marital status (with unmarried individuals showing the highest rates). These findings suggest that the challenges teachers face in their lives in and out of work can affect them negatively in the classroom. Despite the challenges, recent years have shown some positive signs for the country’s economic stability and resource allocation for the social sector. The DRC has experienced economic progress in recent years with a growth in GDP over 7 percent and a decline in the inflation rate to below 10 percent (UNICEF, 2013).

Notably, efforts to improve educational access and quality are beginning to highlight the centrality of teacher well-being as a precursor for larger education improvement efforts. In a UNICEF report on out of school children, education stakeholders highlight inadequate and irregular payment of teacher salaries and lack of training for some teachers as having a negative impact on educational quality and contributing to children’s exclusion from school (UNICEF, 2013).

In addition, the government’s Intermediary Education Plan released in 2012 identified teacher demotivation as a major challenge to reforms of the education system. Government also recently declared that improving teacher training and teacher living standards was a top priority and recognized its important role in improving education in the DRC (UNESCO, 2014). When recent professional development activities have been

offered to teachers in the DRC, high participation and engagement rates are recorded, indicating that teachers are eager to improve their skills when offered the opportunity (EDC, 2013; Frisoli, 2013). Therefore, if education is playing a positive role in peace building processes, teacher remuneration is among the major challenges and prerequisites that need to be taken into consideration (Boak & Smith, 2009; Brannelly, 2012; De Herdt et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2012; Hoffmann & Kirk, 2013; Novelli, 2011). In other words, this study aims to underlay cultural political economy that constrains teachers' ability to deliver education and to become critical pedagogues (McLaren, 1998; Novelli & Smith, 2011; Robertson & Dale, 2014). What Government and Institutions can do to improve their teachers' situation, despite all the structural constraints? This is the main questions that this study intends to explore.

The introduction continues as follows: first, the historical context and governance structures of the Congolese education sector are presented in order to shed light on the conflict and its relation to educational governance and the teacher management system. Second, once the reader has gained an insight into these dynamics, we will highlight the lack of focus on teachers' practices in relation to their well-being. The research question follows from this gap in the debates.

## **2. Overview on Historical Context of the Congolese Education Sector**

### **2.1 General Background**

By the time of independence from Belgian colonialism in 1960, the delivery of primary education was in the hands of the churches (de Herdt & Poncelet, 2010). This situation remained until the 1970s when Dictator Mobutu initiated reforms called Zairianisation (Pearson, 2011). The responsibilities of the religious networks included to "manage" the schools by administering staff and providing administrative and pedagogical support (De Herdt et al., 2012, p.690). Actors in the school system have shown to be extremely innovative over the last two decades, mainly through teachers' adaptability and the local presence and partial autonomy of the religious networks and parents' financial contributions (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Mric-Garac, 2009; World Bank, 2005, p. ix).

In order to guarantee a functioning school system in their respective dioceses, the Catholic Church adapts and sometimes contradicts governmental rules and regulations, when they do not fit the local circumstances<sup>10</sup> (K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 16; Titeca et al., 2013). Initiated by the Catholic Church and the National Parental Committee, parents nowadays finance large parts of the school system via top-ups on teacher salaries as a result of the sector's decline in the 1990's (de Herdt, 2010, p. 35; Hofmeijer, 2011, p. 27; Pearson, 2011; Verhaghe, 2007a; Williams, 2012; World Bank, 2005).

Today, 'parental committees' (Comité des parents) are affiliated with their religious educational networks and are present at every school (Andre et al., 2010, p. 136). The top-ups, also called motivation fees and employment, are still paid today and make up a large portion of teachers' salaries. Alongside teachers, government and religious officials and parents, other actors at various scale levels are involved in the polycentric and negotiated governance process and relevant for a discussion on teacher management:

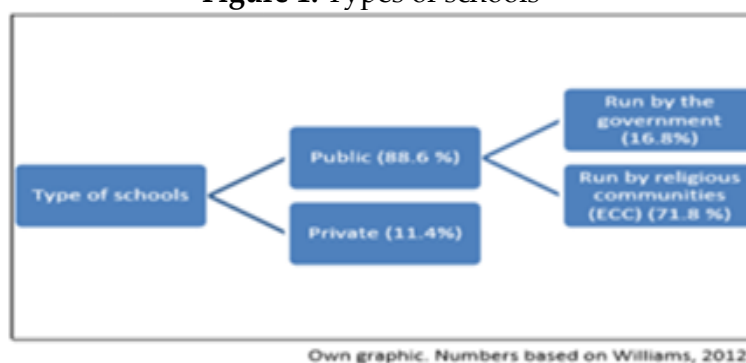
First, various donor organizations are involved in supporting the education sector. The French AFD and the World Bank are of particular interest for this study. Second, due to the current reform of bancarisation, which means the attribution of individual bank accounts for all public employees, the banking sector plays an important role in the provision of teacher salary. Third, school principals deserve particular attention as they are the main interlocutors for government and religious officials (Titeca & Nlandu, 2010). Fourth, teacher unions can be an effective instrument and forum for collective agency (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Verhaghe, 2006). Fifth, the government announced gratuité (i.e. free primary education), which is linked to donor's initiatives around free primary education (Andre et al., 2010; Ngongondu, 2013). Gratuité is anchored in the constitution, its implementation started in 2011 and official school fees have by now been abolished for the first five years of primary school (Andre et al., 2010; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012).

Despite this polycentric governance, the examples of gratuité and bancarisation show that the state remains with agenda-setting power and survived as the central frame of reference (K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 12).

## 2.2 Types of Schools

The cession of school management to religious network is the most important manifestation of polycentric governance. The following figure shows the manifold ways in which primary schools are managed in the DRC and gives percentages to show the distribution of this management among the different networks (Williams, 2012, p. 6):

**Figure 1: Types of schools**



In the view of the figure above, we see that teachers are still public employees and interviews clearly showed that they still hold the government accountable.

## 2.3 Teachers' Education Requirements

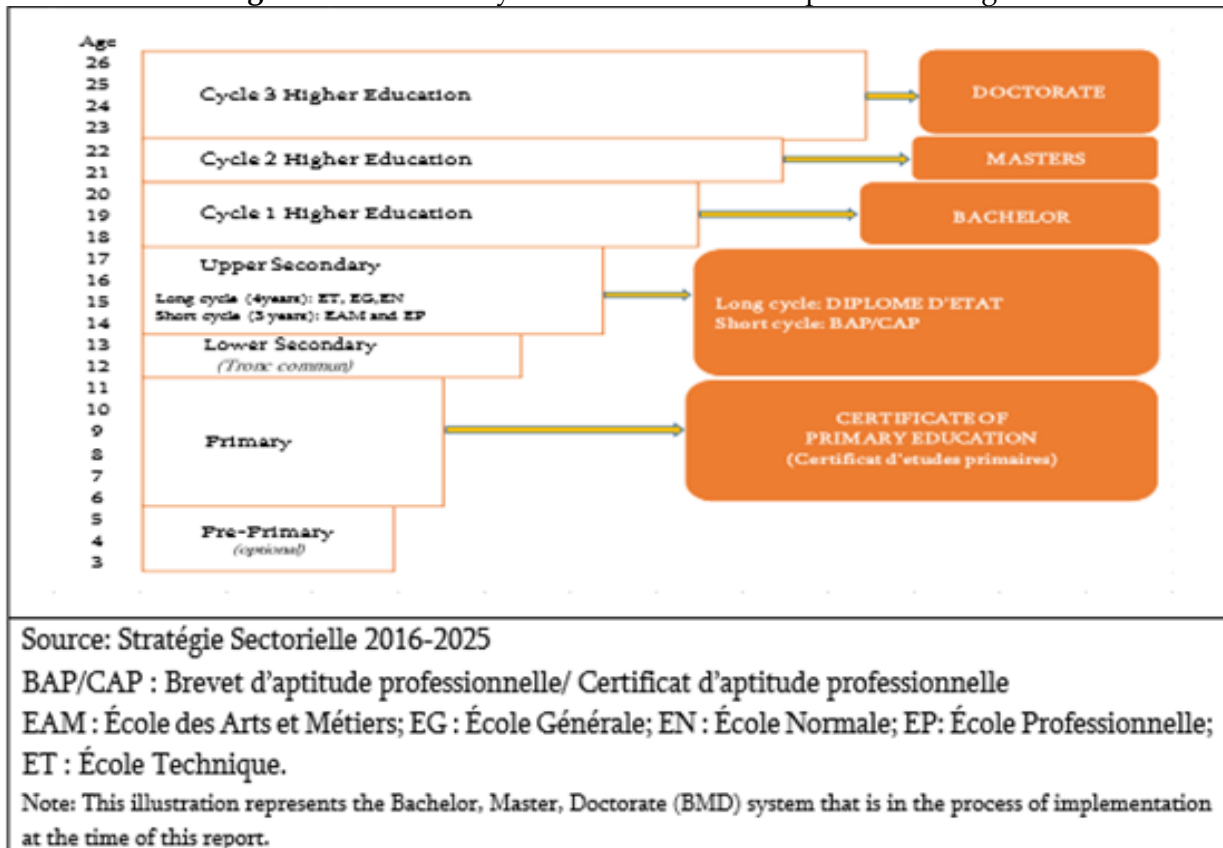
Recall that the education system in the DRC was plagued, not only by low coverage and poor quality, but also a legion of unqualified teachers and inefficient student teacher ratio compared to the class size in all country' levels of education. Thus, any policies and reforms in the education sector and therefore in the broader peace building environment are doomed to fail if they do not take into account teachers' income situation.

### 2.3.1 The Structure of Education System

A sound education sector, one of the main sectors of the Government national policies (education, health, infrastructure, social and energy), is fundamental for the economic, social, and political transformation of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The initial purpose was to instruct indigenous people so that they could read and write in the language of the administrative authority as well as advance religious education. Literature and languages present for students a chance to learn more about not only their own, but also that of other culture ideas and values. Development of student’s skills in this direction ensures students success not only in school, but also after graduation. In order to do so, a meaningfully increasing access, equity and quality of education in all levels, especially in primary school, still requires significant progress.

Indeed, the Congolese education system structure of schools is composed of four major level such as: kindergartner (pre-primary), primary, secondary (lower and upper) and higher education levels. All these educational levels are administered by three Ministries, such as: Ministry of primary, secondary and professional (vocational) education (PSPE); Ministry of higher education (and scientific research); Ministry of business humanitarian action and national solidarity/social affairs (non-formal education, literacy, remedial classes, technical training as well as adult education).

**Figure 2: Education system in Democratic Republic of Congo**



The education system in the DRC follows the structure: KG+6+2+4+3+2. This means:

- Kindergarten education: 3 years of study; Children aged from 3 to 5 years old; Free, noncompulsory and paying; No certificate after completion
- Primary education: 6 years of study; Children aged from 6 to 11 years old; Paying and compulsory; Children pass national examination and obtain Primary Certificate of Completion
- Secondary education: 2 years of study for lower secondary (Children aged from 12 to 14 years old; Paying and compulsory; Common for all students; Children pass school examination and opt into their specialization at the end of the common core), followed by 4 years of study for upper secondary (Children aged from 15 to 18 years old; Children pass national examination administered by Ministry of primary, secondary and professional/vocational education and obtain National Certificate "State Diploma" at the end)
- Higher education: Bachelor degree (5 years of study for high institutes (technical and pedagogical) and universities); 2 years of Master degree; 3 to 4 years of Doctorate

Note that the Democratic Republic of Congo has made significant progress in the education sector. For instance, the completion rate at different levels has substantially increased (e.g.: At primary level, we note an increase from 29% in 2002 to 70% in 2014). Yet, it is still one of the countries with the largest number of out-of-school children (26.7% = 3.5 million of primary age children out-of-school), of which 2.75 million live in rural areas.

Furthermore, the sector is facing a wide range of challenges with regard to quality, governance and disparities. In order to tackle these challenges, the Democratic Republic of Congo has developed its "Education Sector Plan for 2016-2025" with a focus on expanding access and equity, improving learning quality, and improving governance and management in the sector, transparency and fight against corruption. More engagements for an improved education system remain a priority for external and local government. Studies showed that there are good progress and a strong commitment by the government to keep education as a prior policy agenda. Taking note of the various reforms/measures, undertaken in recent years to reform the education sector concerning finance, the management of teaching staff, or information systems this workshop focused mainly on the following objectives:

- 1) New textbooks and new classrooms for progress, especially in rural areas
- 2) Engagement and training of qualified teachers, inspectors and school directors would participate also in the progress policy; even if training programs are still currently under development and impact their work.
- 3) Defining the education roadmap for the 10 next years: there remain challenges with the level and payment of teachers' salaries. One area of improvement as teachers are increasingly part of the formal system, is that they have access to banking services across the country. The country is finalizing a new 10-year education sector plan (2016-2025) and is gearing up, with strong engagement of teachers and other partners, to prepare an application for another major grant from the Global Partnership.

- 4) Parents' resilience and commitment to their children education is profound: they need better education for their children. Despite a policy guaranteeing free primary education to all children, the payment or supplementation of teacher salaries by families persists. Parent coalitions formed to support the payment of teachers' salaries. A recent World Bank report estimated that households carry on average 73% of the financial burden of educating a child. The government and the donors account for 23% and 4% respectively of total spending on education. But reform in a country the size of the DRC takes time, and I am hopeful that the new grant application currently under preparation will continue this important work.
- 5) GPE funding incentivizes results: At least 70% of a GPE implementation grant is disbursed to support a costed, evidence-based sector plan that partners have committed to implement. In order to receive the remaining 30%, a country must identify key strategies that would lead to accelerated progress in equity, efficiency and learning outcomes. The disbursement of the 30% is linked to achievement of performance indicators, which demonstrate that such progress has been made. I believe it is exactly countries like the DRC that stand to benefit the most from our funding model.
- 6) Financing needs are vast: The education sector in DRC suffers from chronic underfunding. While the government has almost doubled the share of its budget going to education over the past 5 years, the amount it spends on education is far below the needs of the sector. Thus, Financing is important but we also need to make the best possible use of the resources available. Core to that is strengthening the public financial management system and improving governance of the sector.
- 7) Gathering all partners around a shared vision for education: The DRC' Government must recognize the importance of education and that it has made it "the priority of all priorities."
- 8) A successful result of reforms/measures must also take into account transparency and fight against corruption. This means that authorities must:
  - Map out the major areas affected by corruption in the Congolese education system;
  - Elaborate a follow-up plan relative to the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey performed recently;
  - Discuss the recommendations of the audit of teachers that was carried out by the country's Court of Auditors;
  - Outline the content and development schedule of a code of conduct for teachers in DRC;
  - Reflect on the advantages and limits of an education sectoral strategy for fighting corruption in education.

All this allowed Government to formulate concrete proposals for follow-up, notably, to:

- Standardize procedures for resources management at the school level and ensure that statutory regulations are applied;
- Initiate a census of all teachers by an independent organization;

- Post on the internet the list of the teachers who are paid by SECOPE (Service that manages teachers' pay);
- Publish each term a directory of teachers per education province;
- Increase the number of teacher salary payment points, and secure the transportation of funds;
- Publicly post the amount of school fees and how they are allocated;
- Accompany the conclusions of the Court of Auditors with sanctions when poor behavior is evident;
- Review the composition and functioning of parents' associations, as well as of school managing committees, and strengthen the capacities of their members;
- Organize training sessions for members of parents' associations and unions;
- Involve teachers, parents, and students in the elaboration of a code of conduct, and organize forums for open discussion with the public on this theme, with OCEP's help;
- Raise public awareness of the importance of transparent resources management via radio and television networks;
- Organize a network of actors active in the fight against corruption.

In such context, we recognize that transparency and the fight against corruption are "everyone's business".

### **2.3.2 Institutional Arrangements in Education**

#### **2.3.2.1 Division of Powers**

Education is one area where powers are shared between the central state and the provinces. The distribution of the main responsibilities in PSPE is the following:

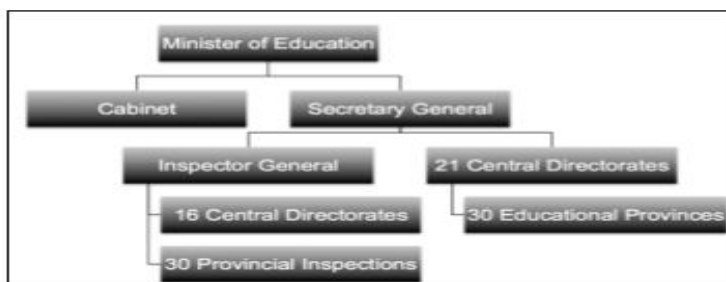
- Exclusive powers of the central state: the setting of educational norms, the nomination and deployment of school inspectors, national statistics and census, and national planning;
- Concurrent powers of the central state and provinces: statistics and census, the creation of educational facilities, international projects, programs and cooperation agreements;
- Exclusive powers of provinces: the operation of provincial public services and facilities within the boundaries of the national legislation, including PSPE, in accordance with the norms and regulations set by the central state.

#### **2.3.2.2 Administrative Structure of the Sector**

Congolese education schools remain a deconcentrated sector and are managed through the provincial and local structures of the MEPS-INC, with limited involvement by provincial education ministries.



**Figure 3:** Structure of the MEPS-INC



**Source:** Report of Ministry of primary, secondary and vocational education, 2013-2014

A distinguishing feature of the DRC education system is that “public” schools are composed of both state (“écoles non conventionnées”) and confessional schools (“écoles conventionnées”), which are run by faith-based organizations (FBOs). Confessional schools account for 7 out of 10 primary schools. State schools account for slightly less than 2 out of 10 schools, with private schools accounting for the remainder. For example, there were 48,147 primary schools, 13.5 million primary school students, and 383,207 primary school teachers in DRC according to the MEPS-INC statistical yearbook for 2013-14. The proportion of primary school students and teachers was distributed between the state, confessional and private schools.

### 2.3.2.3 Organizational Structure of the DRC Schools

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the organizational structure of schools is grouped into two parts. On one hand, we have Primary, secondary and professional education (PSPE) and on other hand, we have Higher education or Tertiary education, whose structural charges are presented below:

#### 2.3.2.3.1 Organizational Structure of PSPE

From the top to the bottom, we distinguish:

- **Ministry of PSPE** (responsible of education)
- **Principal** (head of school)
- **Adjoint Principal** (supplement the head of school)
- **Discipline Director** (take care of conduct and discipline) - **Studies Director** (take care of student training and teachers’ preparation of courses) - **Finances Director** (responsible of school finance, salaries payment and other financial charges) - **Personal - - Director** (take care of human resource management)
- **Teachers** (take care of training and student development skills and competencies)
- **Students** (development of the nation)

**Note:** The school director holds significant responsibilities and remains the central actor in school management. Generally, the description of his position consists of:

- 1) Create a healthy and respectful learning environment, understand and effectively articulate the school’s mission, vision, student profile and learning principles.

- 2) Collaborate together with faculty to provide leadership that is focused on supporting students, curriculum development and creating a culture of learning based on strong relationships.
- 3) Communicate effectively with students, parents and faculty through an environment built on trust where everyone is focused on the primary goal of individual student development.
- 4) Support the development of the IB program together with the IB Coordinator designate as we move towards authorization and implementation.
- 5) Work together with the leadership team to support the school's strategic initiatives and day-to-day operation, including budget, safety plan, and community relations.
- 6) Implement the professional growth process with faculty to provide feedback and support individual goal setting and development against a continuum of teacher development.
- 7) Support the process of transition to life by working together with the College Counselor.

From the outset, the application for this position requires to fulfill some conditions in order to be eligible (Chris Allen, 2016). These are in general:

- Direct the following materials as one PDF attachment to the Director of school and/or his email
- Cover letter expressing interest in the position and detailing reasons why this position would be a good fit.
- Current resume with education, experience and related professional experience including roles, responsibilities and accomplishments.
- Personal statement about being a leader in a learning focused, student-centered and innovative environment.
- List of four to five references with names, phone numbers and email addresses.

In principle, the school-based management committee ("conseil de gestion" or COGES) and the parent committee ("comité des parents d'élèves" or COPA) have a meaningful oversight role on school management.

- The COPA is the structure that ensures parent and community participation in school management.
- The COGES ensures management decisions for facilities are taken in consultation with representatives of parents, teachers and students.
- There are also a number civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in education, but they poorly represent parents and typically remain weak and ineffective.

### **2.3.2.3.2 Organizational Structure of Higher Education**

From the top to the bottom, we have:

- MESU

- General Secretary OF MESU

- Council of Administration: Universities, IST and ISP

- Rector/General Director (DG)

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- **Vice Rector/Adjoint General Director - Director of the Cabinet (DIRCAB) & DIRCABA** (adjoint DIRCAB)
  - **Academic General Secretary** (charged of academic personal and problems) –
  - **Administrative General Secretary** (charged of academic and administrative personal)
  - **Budget Administrator** (in charge of finance and budget direction)
  - **Dean and Vice-Dean of Faculties** (responsible in different faculties)
  - **Professor - Chief of Works – Assistant** (responsible of exemption courses and scientific training of students)
  - **Students** (statement of education and development of the nation)

### 3. Teacher Management in the Democratic Republic of Congo

#### 3.1 General Context

Teachers' well-being plays a crucial role in the observed low learning rates. In a sample illustration case, over 400 teachers in the same provinces, 25 percent reported going to bed hungry up to one-third of the time, and in a qualitative case study with 26 teachers, approximately one-third reported not feeling like a true teacher (Torrente et al., 2012; Frisoli, 2013). Theoretical and empirical literature on teacher motivation in the developing world is scarce. One of the most systematic attempts to understand these issues empirically was summarized in a report of 10–20 key education stakeholders from 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). This report found that a sizable proportion of primary school teachers over one-third had low levels of job satisfaction and were poorly motivated, and that in Sub-Saharan Africa there was a presence of chronically low motivation. There are many conditions that related to the current motivation “crisis” among teachers. The primary conditions included:

- 1) a cultural lack of accountability to schools, parents, and children.
- 2) concern over safety and security resulting from war and conflict;
- 3) overcrowded classrooms resulting from the universal primary education policies that have not been accompanied by increased resources for teachers;
- 4) poor and unreliable compensation for work;
- 5) deteriorating occupational status of the teaching profession;
- 6) poor work and living conditions;
- 7) poor school and teacher management. A theoretical review and situational analysis of teacher well-being in developing countries found similar results (Guajardo, 2011).

Specifically, in low-income and conflict-affected countries such as the DRC, teachers not only experience risks associated with poverty, but are more likely to have experienced war-related trauma themselves and are often dealing with the aftermath of the conflict in their personal lives. In other words, Fragile economic and security situations have negative effects on the development of the education system. While there was relative stability at the recent time of DRC data analysis, we still consider the area and the sample conflict-affected and political crisis. The reverberations of armed conflict

and political crisis affect everyone directly or indirectly, and it is likely that most teachers in the sample were directly affected at one point in their lives.

Even in times of relative stability, it is difficult to disentangle the lasting consequences of ongoing armed conflict. In states whose governing structures have been weakened by conflict, populations necessarily rely on more localized governance. In the case of the DRC, as a result of insufficient public funding in previous years, household resources have played a large role in sustaining the education system, and teacher salaries are among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. Teachers living in poor and disadvantaged communities are often unable to lift themselves above the poverty line and are likely to seek additional jobs or relocate to communities with more resources (UNESCO 2014). Though student enrollment continues to expand throughout the country due in part to community, religious, and private investments, approximately 29 percent of school-age children are not in school (UNICEF, 2013). Within the DRC, significant variation in school enrollment exists

In addition, schools may not only have few resources, but may also be located in high-conflict areas with low resources that can pose strains on teachers, students, and their interactions. In such contexts, individuals can be handpicked to become teachers in times of emergency, while having no teaching background or aspiration to become a teacher (Winthrop and Kirk, 2005). Thus, different teachers may need a range of varied support such as improved work conditions and content and pedagogical knowledge training in order to be effective teachers (Kirk and Winthrop 2008). Teachers in these settings may lack confidence in their ability levels, feel self-conscious about their role as teachers, and feel like they are in an unfavorable and temporary profession (Kirk and Winthrop 2007, 2008).

Thus, in such context, there are many factors and potential levers of change that need to be understood and targeted to improve teacher wellbeing in low-income countries. Understanding how various hardships may accumulate to overwhelm and affect teachers' abilities to support learning in the classroom is critical.

### **3.2 Teacher Training in Democratic Republic of Congo**

Notify that there is a similar teacher training in both public and private schools, but there is no specific curriculum for these different types of school.

#### **3.2.1 Establishments of Training for Teachers**

These institutions were established to train teachers, in theory train all teachers. In reality, specialists often fail to find jobs for which they are trained and teach other subjects. The rapid expansion of schools continues to force the DRC to staff many teaching positions with unqualified teachers. Teaching is not considered prestigious by youth, and this contributes to recruitment problems. Yet teaching is one area that offers hundreds of secure jobs yearly so people continue to train. Some view these jobs as "stopgap" employment that will temporarily tide them over until they can do better. High personnel mobility makes teaching in the DRC very unstable, and the turnover of teachers is a big issue. These are:

**A. College/ Institutes**

- Higher technical Institutes : 3 (graduate) + 2 (full bachelor) (23 options of chosen stream)
- Higher pedagogical institutes : 3 (graduate) + 2 (full bachelor) (26 options of chosen stream)

**B. Universities**

- Generalities : 3 (graduate) + 2 (full bachelor) + 2 (master) + 3 to 4 (PhD)
- Medicine : 3 (graduate) + 2 (full bachelor) + 3 (master) + 3 to 4 (PhD)

**3.2.2 Teacher Training Structure**

- Primary teachers: Primary school teachers are trained at the secondary school level in teacher training colleges. Instruction in primary schools is in the local language. Science and mathematics are only taught up to, but not beyond the primary school level. Certified and trained teachers are supplemented by a legion of unqualified teachers who require on the job training on a massive scale. Graduates of "écoles normales secondaires" provide education to students in upper primary schools, as well as lower secondary schools. The problem is that there are very few of these teachers in the system, and, due to the "brain drain" that siphons many of the most talented teachers off into industry to earn more money, the problem may grow worse in the future.
  - *After one year of training, they can be primary teachers.*
- Secondary teachers: Secondary school teachers are trained at the university and teacher training institutes. Three universities have departments that prepare future teachers for the agregation de l'enseignement secondaire through one year teacher training courses for students who already hold a final degree from a faculty. This course leads to the agregation de l'enseignement secondaire du degre superior. Teacher training institutes train gradues and licences in applied education. They teach lower and upper secondary classes as well.
  - *After 3yrs the first cycle higher education, they can be teachers in the first four years of secondary school. After 2yrs the second cycle higher education, they can be teachers in the last two years of upper secondary*
- Higher education teachers: are trained either in higher institutes (pedagogical and technical) and universities in the public and private sectors to provide higher level professional training.
  - *After completing 5 years bachelor, you can become assistant teacher attached to one or more professor: you have to distinguish at least 1-2 times in your bachelor cursus*
  - *After completing 2 years of master degree and 3 TO 4 years of doctorate, you can become university professor: you have to distinguish more times, publish articles in local and international revue, write a book or a syllabus*

**Note:** All instruction is in French as official language, but also in national language such Kikongo, Swahili, Tshiluba and Lingala, especially in rural areas.

### 3.2.3 Teachers' Human Resource Planning

Although the DRC constitution outlines there are shared responsibilities between the central and provincial levels in education, in practice, the education system remains highly centralized with the central Ministry of Education and its structures responsible for managing education sector. Moreover, there are too many individual structures and units at all levels, as is readily apparent in the different structures below. This is the case within the central MEPS-INC or at the levels parallel to the PROVEDs and Sous-PROVEDs. This makes the distance between policymakers, including local governments, service managers as well as service providers, and parents very long. This weakens the accountability chain in the education sector and undermines responsiveness. Given the size of the country and the scale of the sector, decentralization reforms could support the overhaul of the accountability framework for education in DRC. However, since much uncertainty remains about the decentralization process, a second-best solution would be to concentrate on a few key structures at the central and provincial levels to clarify responsibilities and lines of accountability in a manner that would support better performance.

The main policymakers, from the top to the bottom:

- **Ministry of Education (Proved and Sub-proved)**
- **Ministry of Finances and Budget, BCC**
- **SECOPE**
- **SSEF**
- **Institutions**
- **Parents & Communities**

- 1) In the DRC, the education system remains highly centralized with the central MOE and administered by 3 ministries: MEPS-INC/MPSPE; MESU (MESURS)/MHE (MHE and SR); MSA/MBHAS (charged of non-formal education, literacy, remedial classes, technical training, adult education). Moreover, there are too many individual structures and units at all level (proved and sub-proved)
- 2) & (3) they are charged of registration status of teachers, students and administrators and integration of teachers and administrators on the payroll
- 3) It is charged of PERSONALS' schools/institutions, teachers and students well-being
- 4) They are in charge of school management, teachers and students development of competencies (performance in and outside school)
- 5) They are advisors and participants in school management

### 3.2.4 Teachers' Employment

As the ambivalent role of education for sustainable peace building is gaining increasing attention in international debates, it is important to analyze the conditions under which education is taking place. The Congolese education sector is characterized by a gradual retreat of the state in the provision of education and an increasing authority and decision-making power of local actors. The predominance of uncodified practical norms causes constant negotiations between different actors (de Sardan, 2008; Titeca & de Herdt, 2011).

Among these, teachers have the particular role of providing education to the students. They must do so in a multi-scalar context of reconstruction agendas, inadequate payment, erroneous administration, practical norms and competition between schools for students.

Previous studies have outlined the structural impacts on teachers, but none focused on their agency. If teachers are still coping with their very basic needs due to their income situation, quality of education is not the primary or sole concern of their everyday actions. Hence, they have developed a range of strategies to exercise their agency in relation to their income. Teachers must invest time and money for different purposes in order to be registered and paid. Moreover, there is not one teacher employment status, but a range of de facto statuses. For instance some teachers are only paid locally by parents and do not receive any governmental money. Teachers' realities are disregarded at the policy level in favor of political slogans. Such events must not always be the case, but merit closer attention. These conditions are manifested in teachers' employment conditions (Lund, 2006; Raeymaekers, Menkhaus, & Vlassenroot, 2008; Titeca & de Herdt, 2011).

Teachers in the Democratic Republic of Congo face a range of difficulties: They teach in dilapidated facilities, receive little training and face an ever-decreasing reputation (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Verhaghe, 2006). Overall, the government does not pay one-third of all teachers. Teachers who are paid only receive a meagre income.

The sector is poorly regulated, and teachers might work for years before becoming officially registered and paid (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010).

In consequence, teachers' employment conditions do not allow them to concentrate on pedagogy, but that they constantly invest a considerable amount of time and energy in activities that are related to income-generating activities.

#### **3.2.4.1 Teachers' Recruitment and Payroll Management**

The issues noted on the recruitment of personnel, registration and inclusion on the payroll at MEPS-INC make it worthwhile to explore this aspect in more detail. In State schools, teacher recruitment is conducted at the school level, and it is the school director that is responsible for recruiting new teachers. The school director, in turn, is recruited at the Sous-PROVED level. In confessional schools, the Local Coordination instead of the school director is typically responsible for recruitment of teachers and school directors. However, the MEPS-INC has recently tried to remove the responsibilities for recruiting school directors from the local coordination, a contentious issue for confessional networks.

Formally, teacher recruitment is subject to certain norms, including minimum educational qualifications and a maximum number of students per class/teacher. The application and required evidence are prepared at the school level.

The local head of the proved or Sous-PROVED (or Local Coordination) approves or rejects the application for an official nomination ("commission d'affectation"), which confirms the recruitment and identifies the school the teacher will report to.

Once approved, the application documents and the nomination are brought to the local branch of the SECOPE for validation and then forwarded to the provincial SECOPE office, which digitally transfers the file to the central SECOPE office. The central office then processes the request and issues a registration number and integrates the new teacher into the payroll database. Newly registered teachers then start to receive a salary upon budgetary availability as determined by the Ministry of Budget.

Despite this process, the registration and inclusion process into the payroll database followed by the central SECOPE after recruitment remains opaque and unclear. The process that used to be in place, with specific approval responsibilities, is now typically disregarded, while it is not yet clear whether the newly promulgated process is effectively implemented. The result is that the few SECOPE officials who are responsible for the central database now have the de facto arbitrary responsibility for including, or not, registered personnel into the payroll.

As a change in status of a teacher, whether to a different school, salary grade or for employment termination, follows the same process from the local to the central SECOPE, the same arbitrariness prevails in those cases. In addition, the SECOPE database is not secure and anyone with access to the database can change the status of individual personnel files or add new personnel to the payroll, and this without leaving traces as to whom and when those changes were made.

Thus, teaching personnel is still transient and unstable. We cannot have better education schools until they are staffed with better teachers. Teacher quality has been neglected; that is how to attract good teachers in the first place and then how to retain them in the classroom. There are often inefficient student teacher ratio and class sizes that continue to persist:

- Primary schools: there were 35,915 primary school= 10,572,422 students and 46,000 out-of-school; the STR (number of pupils in PS/number of teacher in PS) =38,37students per teacher
- Secondary schools: There are 17,373 secondary schools= 3,484,459 students=1 teacher to 100 pupils per class
- Higher education schools: There are at least 31 recognized Congolese universities=only 2.58% are enrolled=1 teacher to more than 200 student

In remote education sector, this is often crucial for schools are likely to be small with one to three or four teachers only.

If poor teachers are recruited, they can make a disproportionately adverse impact on pupils; and if teacher turnover is high small schools are disproportionately destabilized. In order to do so, teachers may become more effective in the classroom and what competencies they need in order to enable their pupils to fulfil their potential.

**Table 1:** Registration status of teachers and administrators (MPSPE, 2016)

Status	Schools	Administrative structures	Teachers and administrators
	Number Teachers (% of total)	Number Personnel (% of total)	Number (% of total)
Registered	37 201 353 397	2 228 41 539	394 936



and paid	(72.0%)	(87.6%)	(73.4%)
Registered	9 155 49 878	578 4 964	54 8842
and unpaid	(10.2%)	(10.5%)	(10.2%)
Unregistered	12 519 87 684	73 915	88 599
and unpaid	(17.9%)	(1.9%)	(16.5%)
Total	58 875 490 959	2 879 47 418	538 377
	(100.0%)	(100.0%)	(100.0%)

Source: SECOPE Database.

The salary expenditures for teachers and administrators represent over 90% of PSPE spending, and are responsible for almost all the growth in expenditures over recent years. This growth has been driven in part by salary increases, but also by significant increases in the number of registered and paid teachers and administrators. Indeed, the total number of teachers and administrators active in the sector has increased by about 200,000 since 2006, attaining about 538,000 in early 2016.

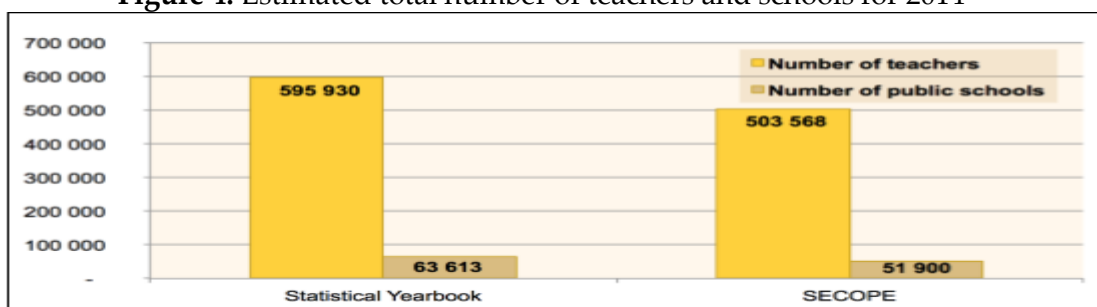
The SECOPE data is not meant to capture the entire mass of teachers active in the sector. It merely covers personnel from schools and administrative structures that are registered or those that are in the process of getting registered (more details on the registration process are provided in the next subsection). As a consequence, many unpaid staff in unregistered structures or those in registered structures for which an individual registration request has not reached the central SECOPE remain unaccounted for.

**Table 2:** Estimated total number of teachers and schools for 2014

	Number of teachers	Number of public schools
Statistical Yearbook	595.930	63.613
SECOPE	503.568	51.900

Source: Report of Ministry of primary, secondary and vocational education, 2013-2014.

**Figure 4:** Estimated total number of teachers and schools for 2014



Source : Report of Ministry of primary, secondary and vocational education, 2013-2014

The difference in the number of schools is also central, as teachers in unregistered schools cannot get registered. There are thus a much greater number of unregistered teachers than those reported by the SECOPE. This also highlights a clear need for more accurate data on the total number of schools and teachers in DRC, for both planning and management purposes. Nonetheless, based on the data contained in table 3.4 above, adding 90,000 teachers to the unregistered and unpaid teachers line would increase their numbers to over 177,000. This would decrease the ratio of registered and paid teachers

relative to the total number of teachers from roughly seven out of ten, to a ratio of six out of ten for 2014. There are data quality issues with both the SECOPE and the statistical yearbook data. Nevertheless, this difference in the estimated number of schools and teachers would have a huge impact on the ultimate cost of integrating all teachers on the payroll, as per the “politique de gratuite” and the SSEF. Table 2 below shows the comparative evolution between the number of paid and unpaid teachers and administrators over the 2011–2016 period. It shows a 38% increase in the number of paid administrators compared to an 11% increase in the number of paid teachers. Further, when looking at the ratio of teachers to administrators (paid and unpaid), we can see that there was a 20% decrease in this ratio.

**Table 3:** Evolution in the Numbers of Paid and Unpaid Personnel in PSPE

	Teachers	Administrators
	2011-2016 Variation	2011-2016 Variation
Paid	314.077-353.397 (11.1%)	25.693-41.539 (38.1%)
Unpaid	69.970-137.562 (49.1%)	5 191-5 879 (11.7%)
Total	384.047-490.959 (21.8%)	30.884 47.418 (34.9%)
<b>Ratio of Teachers per Administrator 12 10 -20.1%</b>		

Source: SECOPE Database

The ratios presented above highlight a problematic management of human resources at MEPS-INC and the SECOPE. These ratios further suggest a decrease in the actual workload of administrators over time. This is in direct contradiction with the SSEF engagements concerning free primary education and the integration of teachers on the payroll of the MEPS-INC. Indeed, the proliferation of administrative structures and administrators, while the number of unpaid teachers keeps growing and remains high, results in increased financial pressures on parents and households through high and growing school fees. This is a consequence of unpaid teachers relying on school fees for their salaries, while administrators prey on schools for a portion of those fees for supplementing their salaries and covering operating costs.

#### 3.2.4.2 Teachers' salaries payment arrangement

In the DRC, teachers continue to struggle for income and well-being (between Education and Remuneration). In 2005, statistical results have showed that teachers have been extremely underpaid, receiving approximately US\$20 per month, plus an extra US\$10 in transport allowance. The teachers' union demanded salaries in the range of US\$50 to US\$100 per month, although the minimum national salary should be US\$208 per month. With reforms, government agreement allowed for an increase in salaries by US\$45 per month for teachers in Kinshasa, US\$21 in Lubumbashi and US\$14 for teachers in other provinces.

Since 2011, the DRC government has been gradually rolling out the “bancarisation” reform, which is resulting in a significant share of public sector

employees receiving their salaries through the Congolese commercial banking system. In education, the SECOPE used to be responsible for distributing salaries to teachers after receiving them in cash from the provincial structures of the Ministry of Finance. Nonetheless, “bancarisation” remains a relatively recent reform, while commercial banks do not cover the entire territory. Since there is no systematic monitoring or evaluation of this reform, it is still difficult to assess how effective this system is at getting salaries to all public employees, beyond anecdotal evidence.

A number of problems have been identified and chief among them is the fact that numerous state employees located in rural areas and small towns do not have effective access to commercial banks. Because the DRC is such a disadvantaged country in the midst of many years of violent conflict, our approach is to examine between-teacher variation in cumulative risk within this high-risk population. While the DRC has shown some positive signs of economic growth and stability in recent years, the country is widely held to be a failed state (Foreign Policy and the Fund for Peace 2010). Thus, while variation will exist in teachers’ exposure to type and quantity of risks based on personal and community characteristics, all results should be considered exploring the influence of “relative risk” on teacher well-being.

#### **3.2.4.3 Schools and Administrative Structures Creation**

Similarly, the creation of schools and administrative structures seems poorly controlled. The SECOPE has a key role in this process, as it is responsible for registering schools. The SECOPE is responsible for setting the official school map, and this despite an official annual process (the “promotion scolaire”) where all PROVEDs assess where new schools can open in their area based on needs assessments and local priorities.

Currently, there is a MEPS-INC moratorium in place concerning the creation of new schools, although in practice this seems to be ignored. There are even documented reports of the creation of “phantom” schools in some provinces, schools that are recorded in the SECOPE system and for which teachers are registered and paid, even if no school or teachers exist in reality. At a minimum, the regulation role for creating schools is currently not effectively filled by the PROVEDs due to interference from other levels of the system in this process. It is also actually unclear whether there is even a process in place for regulating the creation of administrative structures. As the creation of schools and administrative structures and their registration later drives teacher and administrator recruitment, no effective regulation of recruitment will be possible without meaningfully addressing this issue.

## **4. Findings and Discussions**

We consider work-related risks, which include objective conditions, shown to be related to teacher morale and motivation (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007), as well as subjective work conditions, shown to be positively related to job burnout in the US literature (Mashlach et al. 2001). In addition, we consider elements of non-work-related living conditions shown to be important components of material hardship and adult well-being.

These include household hardship, health and well-being of individual and household members, and degree of social isolation (Corcoran et al., 1999; Bauman, 2003; Heflin et al., 2009). In other words, there are several types of work-related risks in DRC, among which the primaries are:

- Teacher demotivation,
- Teacher burnout,
- Job dissatisfaction,
- Corruption,
- Wage arrears,
- Strikes.

**Figure 5:** Teaching profession in the DRC



Source: Author's conception, 2018.

The cumulative hardships teachers face in their work and personal lives contribute to the poor motivation and burnout found in other studies (Chaudhury et al., 2006; Moon, 2006; Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). It is critical that conditions for teachers, both professionally and personally, are targeted for improvement in order to enhance teachers' capabilities and effectiveness in the classroom.

First, the findings in this study indicate that changing material work conditions, such as reducing class size or increasing access to textbooks, may not be the most effective first step to improving teacher well-being and thus, presumably, teacher performance. Rather, efforts to improve the nature of interactions among staff within a school, such as school management and supervision, may be more important at this stage. In addition, increasing the status of the teaching profession could improve teachers' subjective perceptions of their work conditions as well as their actual and perceived support from the community.

Second, while improving all of the conditions of teachers' work and personal lives is not possible, the linear relationship found between risk and wellbeing suggest the targeted efforts to reduce some of the difficulties would improve teacher well-being incrementally. If governments take steps to address individual challenges, the risk of teachers becoming "overwhelmed" by cumulative stress will decline. For example, the fact that personal health and food insufficiency contribute to higher levels of burnout indicate that teacher salaries both level and timeliness of payment is one incremental

change that can be addressed. This type of administrative improvement is straightforward and a direct lever of change those policies can target.

Third, the findings that burnout levels are high among the least experienced teachers regardless of their cumulative risk level suggests that new teachers are at high risk of burnout irrespective of the work and personal hardships they face. This fact may contribute to the high rates of absenteeism and turnover in the profession (Chaudhury et al., 2006; Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). This suggests that in-service professional development programs for new teachers are critically needed. Such efforts may consider providing ongoing support and feedback to new teachers (e.g., Downer et al. 2011) during their first years in the profession as a way to reduce burnout and increase retention in the profession.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study is timely for the DRC in light of the government's recent public identification of the need to improve teachers' working conditions, and of the recognition of teacher well-being as central to successfully reforming the education system (MEPSP 2012). High enthusiasm and participation rates in recent teacher professional development activities in the DRC (EDC 2013) indicate that teachers are eager to engage in such efforts. There is still a relative dearth of basic research to inform the most efficient and optimal ways to improve conditions for teachers. Some efforts to build this foundation of knowledge are currently underway. For example, the Teacher Education in sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) has started an initiative to create a network of African universities and international organizations to focus on the education and training needs of teachers (Harley and Barasa 2012). But much more work is needed.

Next steps in research should include evaluating if and how school-based program or policy interventions reduce burnout and increase motivation, and what role cumulative risk may play in teachers effectively utilizing such programs. In addition, if programs do successfully improve teacher well-being, research is needed to examine whether those changes lead to improved teacher' practices, classroom learning environments, and student learning outcomes as is hoped. Such research will enable a greater understanding of the mechanisms through which effective programs work, and will help to unpack if and how school-based interventions improve educational quality and student learning. Enhanced knowledge is crucial in order to design the most effective educational programs and policies. In order for leaders to fulfill their promise of every child achieving a quality primary education, they must first make and fulfill promises to the teachers who educate these children. Overlooking teacher well-being will result in a crucial missed opportunity to improve child and human development.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

### About the Author



Professor and Researcher in Economics and Management at several universities in the City province of Kinshasa, Sifa Bura Huguette is an active member of various associations of international and local researchers; author of numerous articles in international editions. Ms. Sifa holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and Development (Option: Finance) at the Catholic University of Congo in the Democratic Republic of Congo and a Master's degree in Business Economics and Management at central China

Normal University in China, Wuhan. Ms. Sifa Bura is also Head of Scientific Works at the Higher Institute of Commerce in Kinshasa/Gombe and Philosopher Doctor (Ph.D.) in Economics and Education Management at the Normal University of Central China. As chair of Economics and Financial Management at the Higher Institute of Commerce in Kinshasa/Gombe, she also teaches at other private universities in the country.

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