



GOVERNMENTAL EXPENDITURE REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: 2005-2016

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Abstract:

As the education sector is gaining increasing attention in international debates for sustainable peace building, it is important to analyze the conditions under which education is taking place. The provision of education in conflict-affected and fragile countries is challenging. 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. The main purpose of this study is to identify the DRC' priorities for education policy and present options in order to assist the government in developing an education strategy. This is necessary for preparing the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and a program of assistance for the education sector by external donors. Furthermore, this is to explore the "efficiency, effectiveness and equity of public expenditure of the education sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo" i.e. to evaluate the strength of the linkages between different levels and determine how the structure of the DRC's education activities can guide the choice of development. Qualitative analysis and documentary research method have been used for data collection and desk review. The results of this research showed that on one hand, the country continues to emerge from a prolonged economic crisis, political instability and war which have had serious negative impacts on the education system. On the other hand, the education remains the true alchemy that can bring DRC its next golden age. To cope with this, reform measures continue to be adopted with a view to economic recovery, with special focus on open education for all by improving access, equality and equity, job creation and reducing poverty in order to improve the living conditions of each.

Keywords: governmental expenditure, education sector, Democratic Republic of Congo

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1. Introduction

The education sector plays a crucial role in building a country's political institutions, in promoting economic growth and in redressing inequalities. It represents the mirror of the society and is the seed as well as flower of the socioeconomic development. To a significant extent, it generally pursues the following main objectives: (i) transform human beings from ignorance to enlightenment, from shades of social backwardness to light of social amelioration and (ii) change structurally a nation from underdevelopment to faster social and economic development.

Indeed, over two decades of economic decline, political chaos and war have created extremely difficult conditions education in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite an increasing of the growth rate, the revenue envelope in DRC is still low given the country's large and growing population. The sector remains almost underdeveloped because of its low coverage and poor quality, including poor infrastructure, underdeveloped regulatory environment, poverty and bitter misery, parents lack means to support their child education (especially for girls), low productivity of the family workforce in the case of substance farming, no social protection policy, and so on (UNICEF, 2015). The delivery of education services at all levels such as: public, private, conventional and non-conventional levels has not to operate in vacuum. Their institutional performance is generally impacted by the governance context (Compy, 1997). However, the fragmentation in the governance of the education sector creates difficulties in evolving a comprehensive sector development strategy. Ministerial responsibilities for the education sector in DRC have evolved over time. The country's public finance sector is characterized by its weak resource mobilization which directly hinders its ability to address the country's most pressing human development needs and translate high growth into development. In fact, the DRCⁱⁱ government spends less on education than other SSAⁱⁱⁱ countries. International comparison shows that the DRC's spending on education as a share of GDP^{iv} (1.8 percent), is inadequate and lagging, especially compared to the SSA average of 4.6 percent. The country, as other developing countries, is facing a mounting demand for more and better education. Adequate financing is required to produce greater quality and equality within the educational system and constant pressures are applied to provide additional resources for the sector. Also, the large cohort of youth in DRC can potentially deliver a dividend for the country. A sound education sector is fundamental to reaping this dividend. The DRC's population has a very large youth cohort and reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend requires that sufficient funding is allocated to address priority issues at all levels of education. This also entails having a strong targeting mechanism in place to ensure funds reach the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

ⁱⁱ DRC stands for Democratic Republic of Congo

ⁱⁱⁱ SSA means Sub-Saharan African countries

^{iv} GDP stands for Gross Domestic Product

By reviewing different studies, we have seen that several studies have investigated the public expenditure of the education sector in the developing countries in general, and especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the light of the different above facts, the main objective of this study is to find out how the Congolese Government can attain stability, sustainable development and income, and reforms by improving the education sector. This is to respond directly to the question: *“Who/What/How much benefits from Government Expenditure?”*

The structure of this report is organized into six sections. Following the introduction, section two provides an overview of the education sector context including a chronological order of education sector policies, goals, priorities, structure and sector performance. Section three analyzes education sector financing including budget framework and process, the key actors, sources of funding, trends of public expenditure, budget allocation and execution, equity, affordability and unit cost analyses. Section four education sector management issues focusing on efficiency and effectiveness of resources utilization. Section five analyzes Education sector strategy and challenges. The analysis is followed by a conclusion, including a summary of main findings and by policy recommendations. The annex section is focused on policy recommendations matrix, related to our empirical findings listed above.

2. Education sector context

2.1 Background

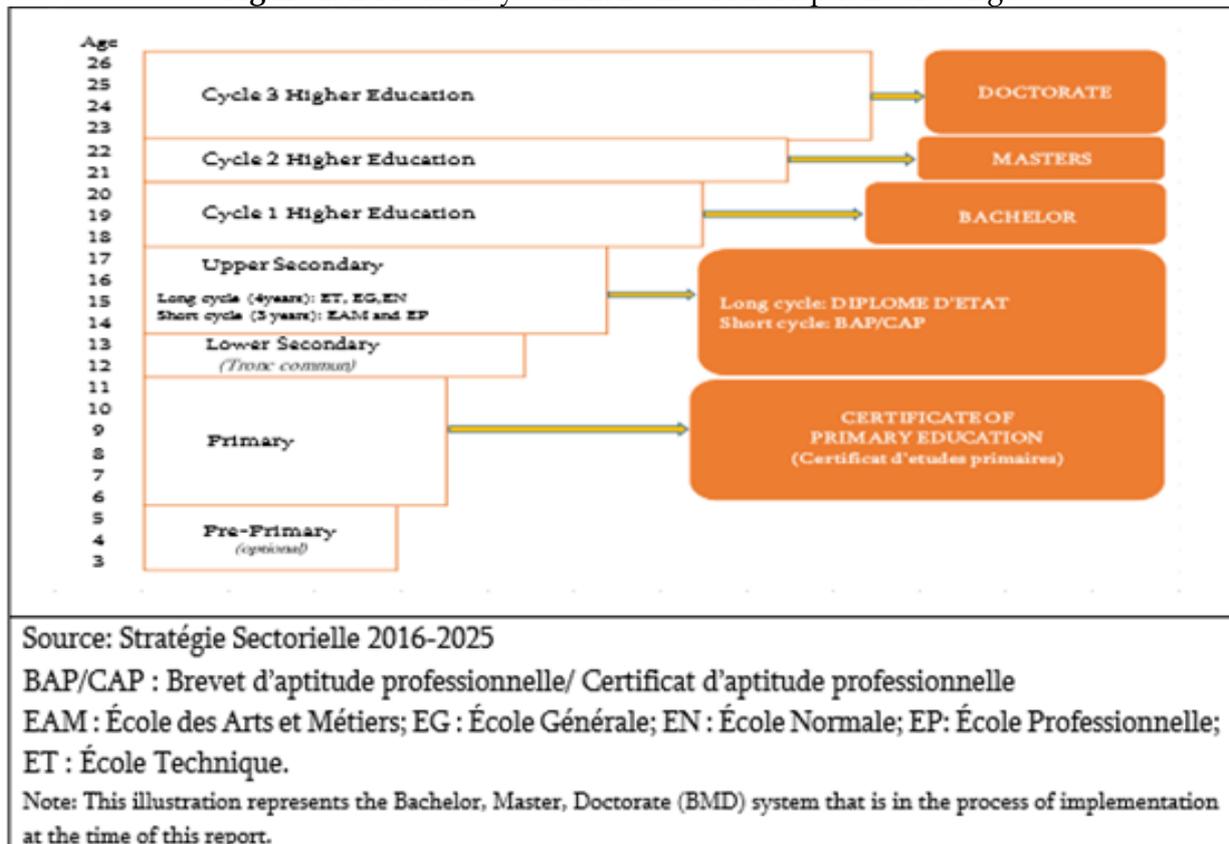
In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the education sector is one of the fundamental sectors of the Government national policies (education, health, infrastructure, social and energy), for the economic, social, and political transformation. The initial purpose was to instruct indigenous people so that 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 managed by three ministries responsible of education: (i) Ministry of primary, secondary and vocational education; (ii) Ministry of higher and university (and scientific research) education; (iii) Ministry of business humanitarian action and national solidarity/social affairs (non-formal education, literacy, remedial classes, technical training as well as adult education). However, at the national level, there appears to be insufficient clarity in division of responsibilities regarding TVET^v, as institutions in this area straddle all the three

^v TVET means Technical and Vocational Education and Training

ministries. Furthermore, at the sub-national level, there is insufficient coordination between Provincial Ministries which are supposed to manage the entire school system in the provinces and the National Coordination Committees which coordinate the écoles conventionnées and have a direct reporting line to the national level. This misalignment makes it difficult for the provincial ministries to ensure a coordinated and equitable development of the sector in their areas of responsibility.

Figure 1: Education system in Democratic Republic of Congo



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

- Kindergartner 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^{vi} funding incentivizes results: At least 70% of a GPE implementation grant is disbursed to support a coasted, 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 sectorial 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^{vii} (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 ;

^{vi} GPE stands for "Global Partnership for Education"

^{vii} SECOPE means Service de Contrôle et de la Paie des Enseignants (Service for the control of the teacher payroll)

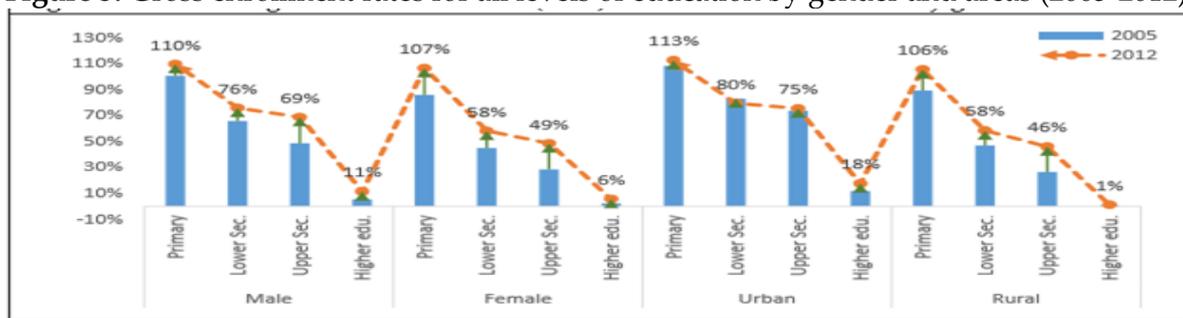
- Publicly post the amount of school fees and how they are allocated;
- Accompany the conclusions of the Court of Auditors with sanctions when poor behavior is evident;
- Review the composition and functioning of parents associations, as well as of school managing committees, and strengthen the capacities 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^{viii}'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”.

2.2 Education completion rate

It is important to note that there are well-documented access and quality issues in the schools of the DRC. All these different issues are directly linked to governance challenges facing the education sector. Statistically, the gender access to education in DRC is measured by an indicator which is called “Gross Enrollment Ratios (GER)” or “Gross Enrollment Index (GEI)”. GER formula = Number of students enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age / population of the age group which officially corresponds to the given level of education* 100 (Investopedia research, October 2018).

Figure 3: Gross enrollment rates for all levels of education by gender and areas (2005-2012)



Source: The World Bank Report (2012). Benefit incidence: A practitioner’s guide, Poverty and Social Development Group Africa Region.

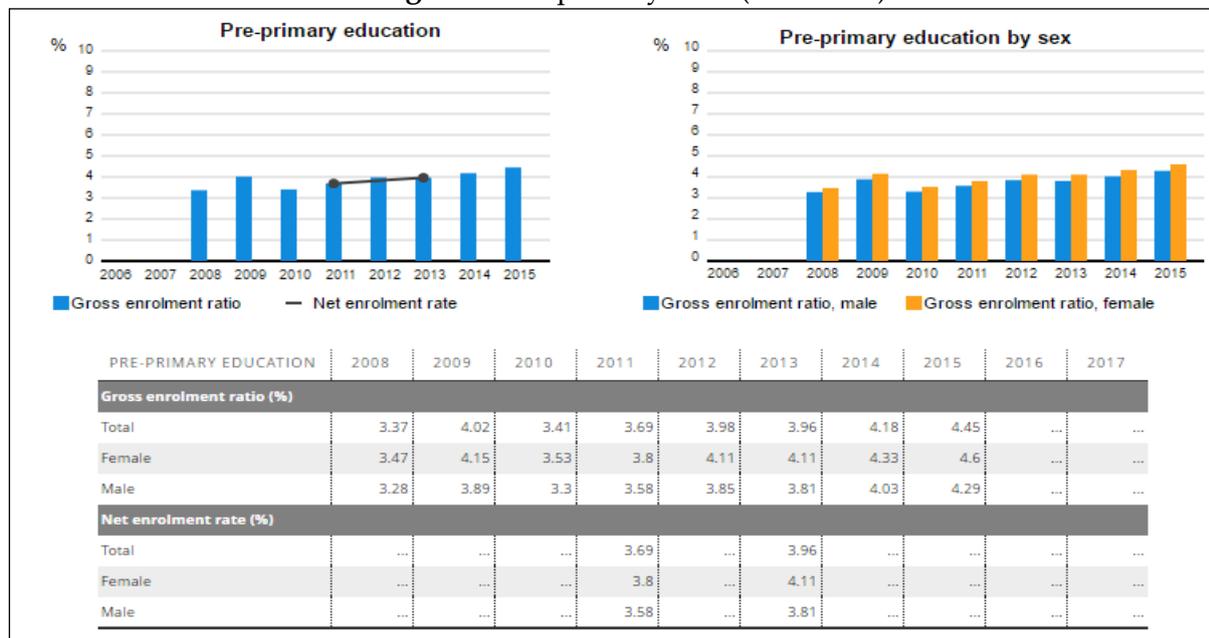
Notify that DR Congo has more than 15 million households, of which 11.7% live in Kinshasa and 37.6% are urban. However, seven out of ten households are poor with a disparity between rural areas where about eight in ten households are poor and urban areas where fewer than seven out of ten households are poor. The average household size is 5 people. Unlike most sub-Saharan African countries, rural households are smaller than

^{viii} OCEP stands for Organizational Compliance Evaluation Program

urban households (4.7% vs. 5.4%). This average size hides large disparities, as a result of socio-cultural, demographic and economic aspects (UNESCO, 2014).

At the visualization of the figure 3, the education sector in the DRC has shown consistent improvement in most of its national level education outcome indicators between 2005 and 2012. Consequently, the gender access to education as measured by gross enrollment ratios (GER) has also increased across all levels of education. But, despite the significant improvement in access to education, the DRC will fail to meet its 2015 MDG^{ix} goals in education. Furthermore, the figures 4 to 11 below are complementary to the previous (Figure 3) and justify more clearly the needs of DRC' Government to implement the education sector for facilitating acquiring knowledge for all.

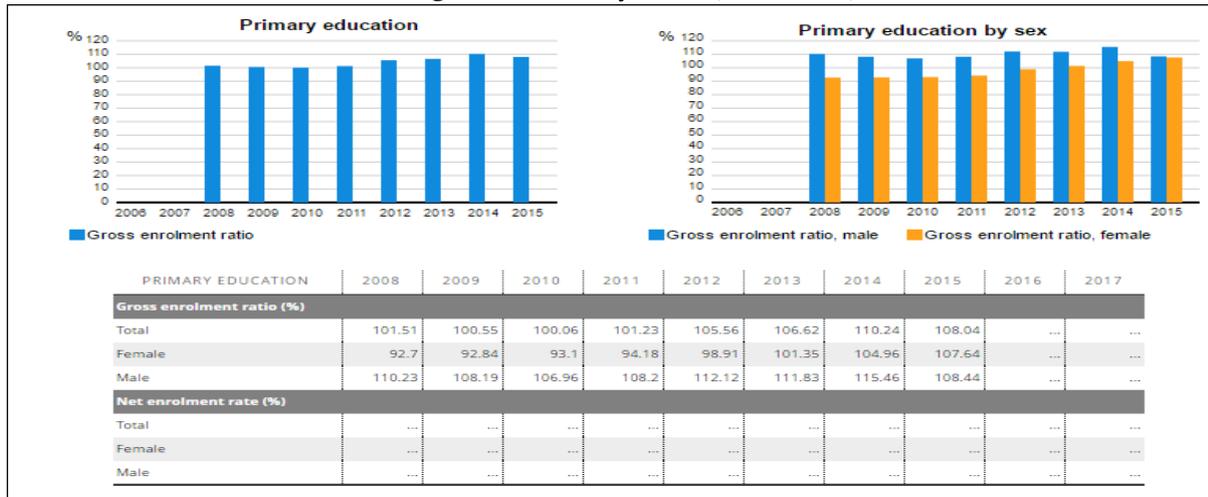
Figure 4: Pre-primary level (2000-2015)



Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

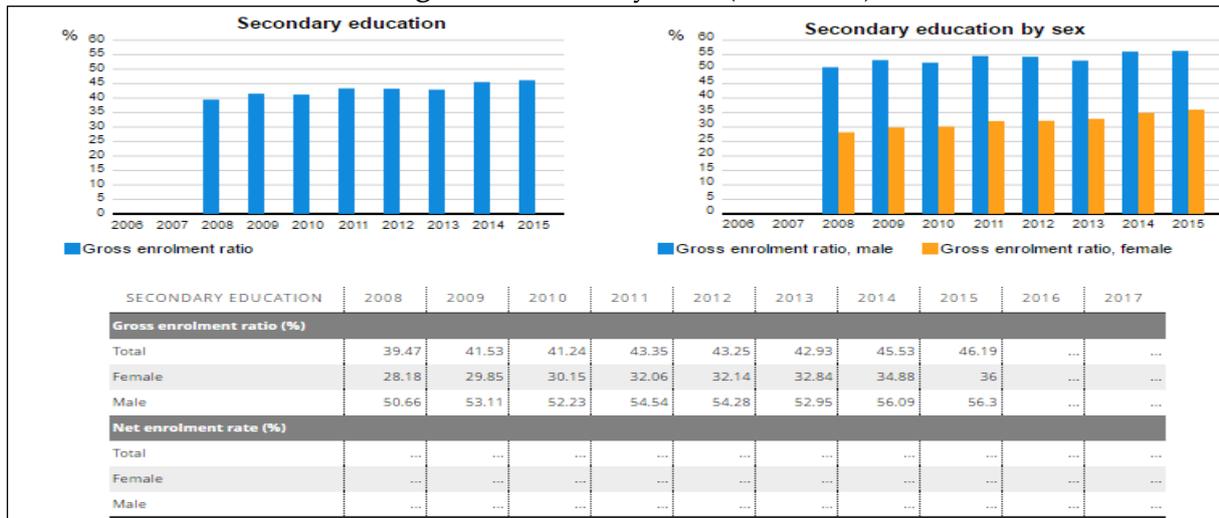
^{ix} MDG stands for Millennium Development Goals

Figure 5: Primary level (2000-2015)



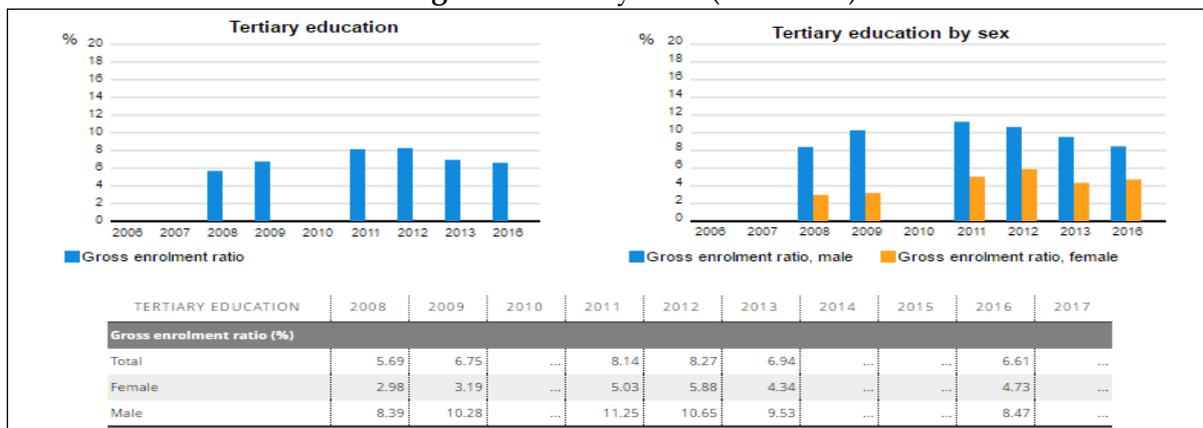
Source: UNESCO Report (2017)

Figure 6: Secondary level (2000-2015)



Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

Figure 7: Tertiary level (2000-2015)



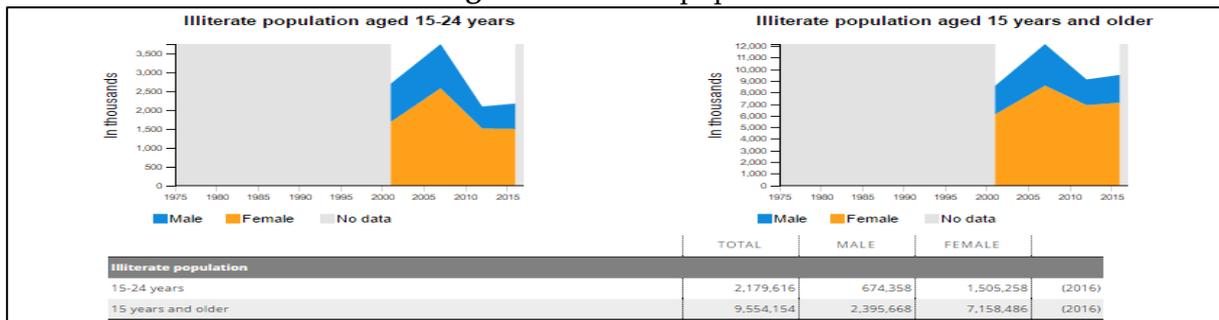
Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

Figure 8: Education expenditures

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Government expenditure on education										
as % of GDP	1.52	...	...	2.06	1.95	2.17	2.12	1.47
as % of total government expenditure	9.66	...	...	16.27	10.55	11.74	14.81	10.76
Government expenditure per student (in PPP\$)										
Primary education	20.07	...	...	55.17	...	...	...	...
Secondary education	61.62	...	...	40.57	...	...	...	...
Tertiary education	559.38	...	...	...	...

Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

Figure 9: Illiterate population



Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

Figure 10: Literacy rate



Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

Figure 11: Summary education data

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pre-primary education										
Number of pupils per teacher										
Pupil/teacher ratio	27.81	24.59	25.49	25.03	25.68	25.71	24.57	23.29	...	...
Primary education										
Gross intake ratio into the first grade of primary (%)										
Total	128.61	122.78	116.16	125.02	126.7	135.32	135.95	140.01	...	...
Female	121.66	116.53	110.39	119.18	121.22	130.58	130.96	134.79	...	...
Male	135.49	128.96	121.86	130.78	132.11	139.96	140.86	145.14	...	...
Survival to the last grade of primary (%)										
Total	...	54.8	54.47	70.73	55.44	...	45.26	...	...	...
Female	...	51.13	48.52	65.84	55.01	...	60.51	...	...	...
Male	...	57.98	59.73	74.87	55.74	...	34.41	...	...	...
Gross intake ratio into the last grade of primary (%)										
Total	60.55	63.16	63.68	65.61	70.95	69.81	...	69.95	...	...
Female	49.72	51.83	54.78	54.98	60.65	62.72	...	70.38	...	...
Male	71.29	74.4	72.52	76.16	81.15	76.83	...	69.54	...	...
Number of pupils per teacher										
Pupil/teacher ratio	39.02	37.33	37.01	37.37	34.75	37.07	35.32	33.2	...	...
Secondary education										
Primary to secondary transition rate (%)										
Total	...	...	...	74.84	72.3	...	...	...	...	...
Female	...	...	...	74.01	71.08	...	...	...	...	...
Male	...	...	...	75.44	73.2	...	...	...	...	...
Enrolment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as % of the total enrolment in secondary education										
Total	34.06	31.36	33.44	...	30.71	31.49	31.91	33.1	...	...
Female	33.72	31.86	32.58	...	30.18	30.26	30.02	30.94	...	...
Male	34.22	31.12	33.88	...	31	32.18	33.04	34.43	...	...
Number of pupils per teacher										
Pupil/teacher ratio	16.57	16.01	15.96	15.22	15.34	14.2	14.59	14.24	...	...
Tertiary education										
Gross graduation ratio, ISCED 6 and 7. First degrees (%)										
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.16	...
Female	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.9	...
Male	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.41	...

Source: UNESCO Report (2017).

From the outset, the key indicators of gender access to education have showed that, overall, the DRC improved significantly between 2000 and 2015 at all levels of education, especially among girls and in rural areas. Also, the significant improvement in the gross enrollment ratio reflects the policy focus on primary education, especially by international donors, in order to help the country to achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

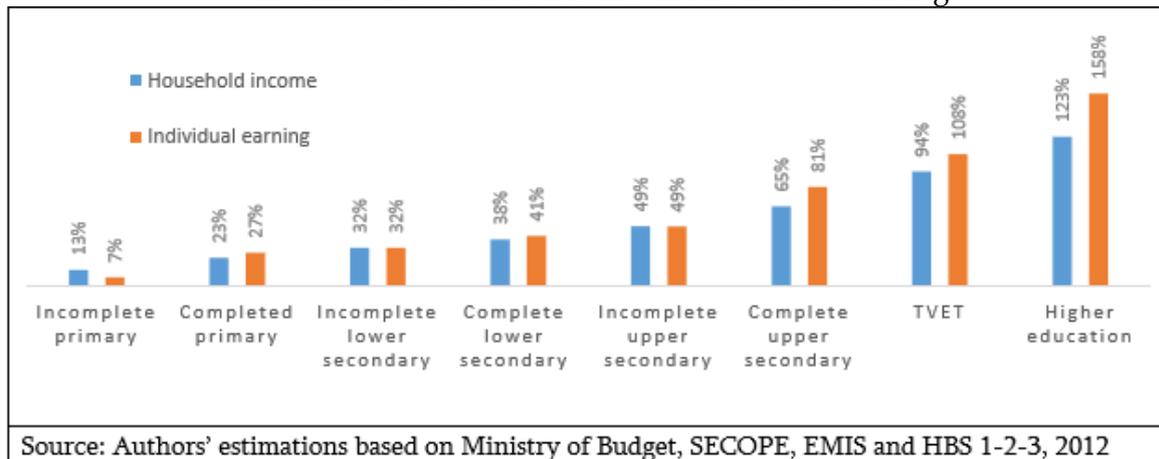
2.3 Education sector performance

Despite the upheavals of the last 25 years, the education system in DRC continues to expand at all levels, albeit slowly. This fact is all the more remarkable since public financing has declined dramatically since 1986, and the system is largely sustained by household financing. The education system is becoming large. Most of the key access indicators showed that, overall, the DRC improved significantly between 2005 and 2012 till nowadays across all levels of education, especially among girls and in rural areas.

Education is a key determinant of livelihoods in the DRC, and this provides a clear rationale for public and household spending on education. Among the many benefits of

education, the two main channels through which education leads to better opportunities and livelihoods are: (i) it increases earnings, an additional year of education is associated with an average increase of 9.1 percent in monthly earnings and each level of education is associated with higher levels of earning (See Figure 2 below). (ii), it increases the chances of employment in sectors with high returns, and of gaining contract employment, which offers greater stability.

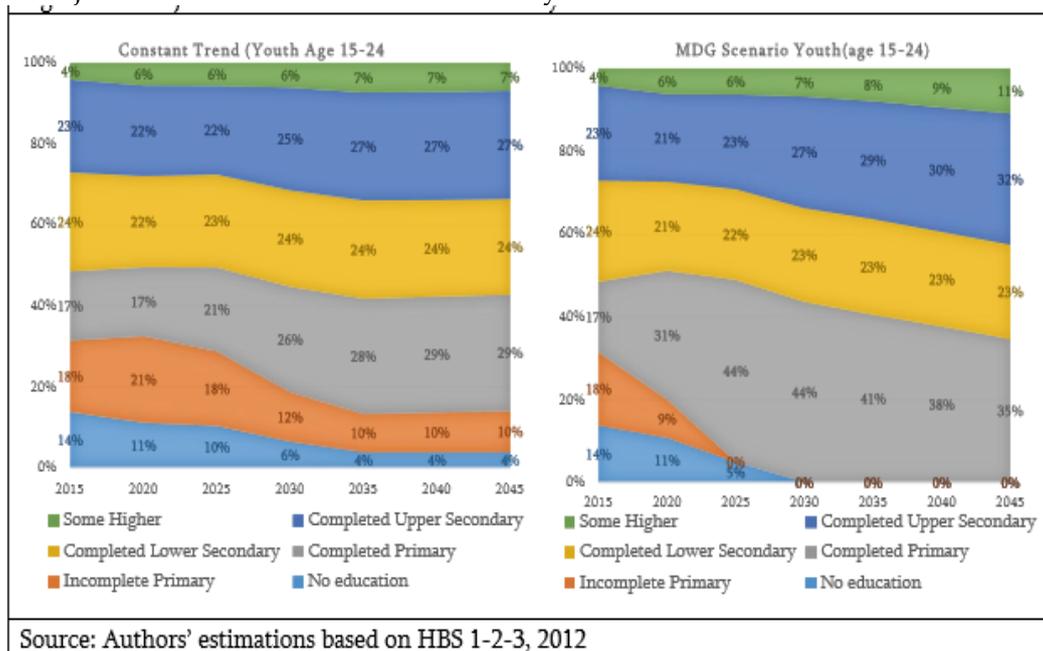
Figure 2: Private rate of returns to education by level of education in terms of household income and individual earning



Also, a forecast of human capital trends over the next 30 years tells us that if DRC invests sufficiently to achieve universal primary education completion, it will reduce by 18 percent, the number of youth aged 15-24 entering the labor market without having completed the primary cycle by 2030. For example, presently about 18 percent of youth enter the labor market without any education or having dropped out of primary education. If current trends persist, this figure will decrease slightly to 12 percent by 2030 and 10 percent by 2045. However, with some increase in investments, universal primary completion can be achieved, with the possibility of eliminating this challenge by 2030.

Pursuing the MDG goals in education will require concerted efforts across several areas- including financial considerations, as well as management and policy reforms. However, although finance is not the only solution, given that cost is the main reason for out-of-school children, increased financial commitment is necessary to accommodate the out-of-school children and increase retention and lead to better completion.

Figure 3: Projection of educational attainment of youth under constant trend and MDG scenario



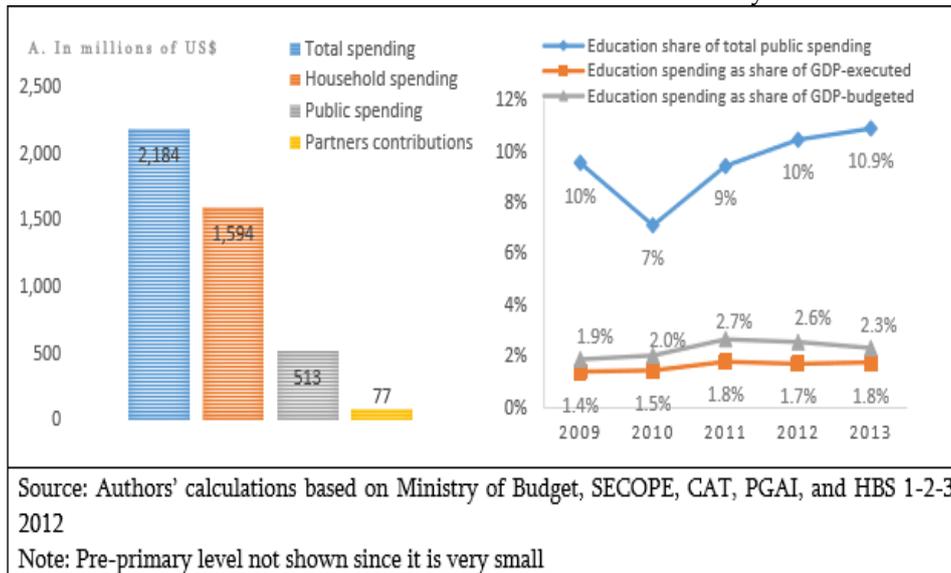
This Figure 3 mentioned above demonstrate that based on the current out-of-school rate, the cost equivalent of accommodating all out-of-school children, is estimated to be 1.4 percent of GDP (i.e. increase of spending from currently 1.8 percent of GDP to 3.2 percent).

4. Education financing

The Congolese education sector remains largely financed by households. Despite recent efforts to improve budget allocation, the public education sector in DRC is underfunded compared to most other countries in the region, with only 10.9 percent of the public budget being allocated to education and with education budget execution at about 1.8 percent of GDP. This places the DRC among the lowest among, compared to SSA countries with an average of 17 percent of overall budget allocation and 4.6 percent as a share of GDP.

Indeed, although there has been some improvement regarding the burden borne by households, the latter still finance 73 percent of education spending in the DRC (down from 90 percent in 2005). The government contributes 23 percent to education spending (up from 6 percent in 2005), while donors contribute the remaining 4 percent (See Figure 4 below). However, the reduction in the contribution of households tends to reflect the increase in the base education spending by the government rather than a reduction in the education burden itself on households.

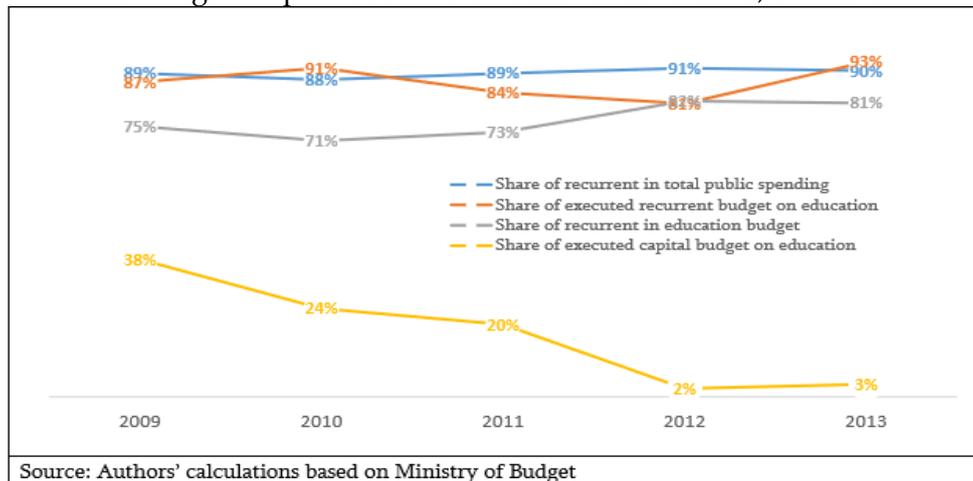
Figure 4: Sources of education sector finance and its breakdown by level of education, 2013



4.1 Budget allocation and execution

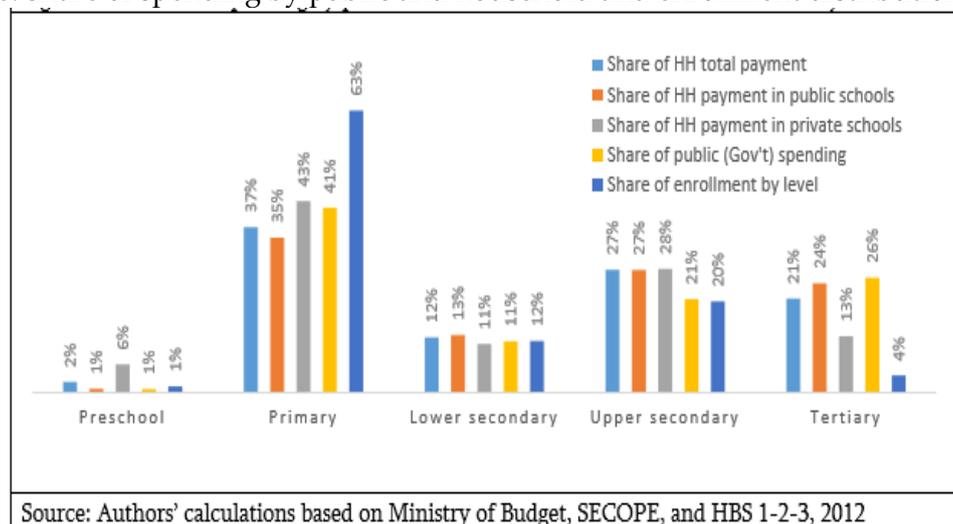
The budget allocation and execution are not aligned with the MDGs, reflecting a lack of clear prioritization in the budget elaboration and allocation process. In particular, while the budget execution of recurrent spending, which comprises mostly salary payments- is nearly fully executed, capital spending on the other hand is grossly under-executed (see Figure 5 below). In addition, the high share of salaries in recurrent spending indicates that the budget does not adequately provide for non-personnel costs which are essential for the public schools to efficiently teach, and manage their establishments. The low execution rate of capital spending, especially since 2010, is linked to the budget's heavy reliance on external sources of funding for capital spending. The development partners require donor funded capital spending to be included into the budget, but execution of these funds is not under the control of the government. Government's dependence on external funding in the budget preparation process clearly undermines the adequate provision of capital spending in the sector and leads to negative spillover effects on households where schools tend to demand contributions to compensate.

Figure 5: Trends of budget allocation and execution rates: total budget vs. personnel for the MEPSP and MESU, 2009-2013



However, the examination of the budget allocation by level of education reveals that in 2013, only 40 percent of the budget allocation went to the primary education level while the majority was dedicated to the post-primary levels- with 26 percent going to higher education alone- even though, on average, 63 percent of all students were enrolled at primary level (see Figure 6 below). The budget allocation to the primary sector is low by all standards- the average budget allocation to the primary sector in the SSA is around 44 percent while the GPE recommendation is at 50 percent.

Figure 6: Share of spending by public and household and enrollment distribution by level

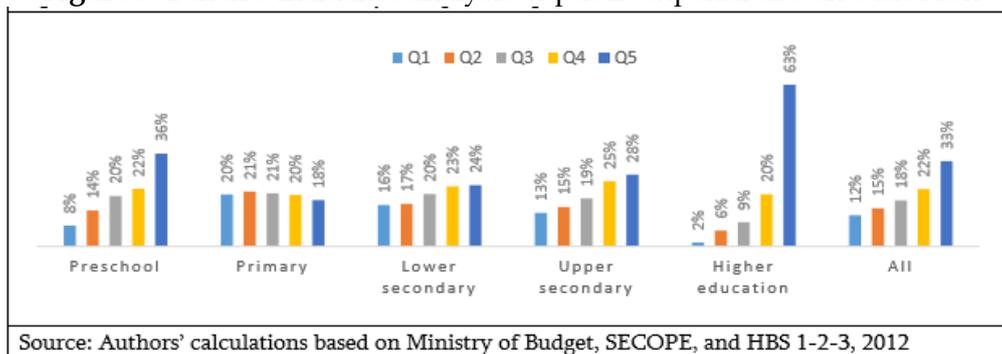


4.2 Public spending on education sector

Note that public spending on education in the DRC is biased towards the rich. Several analyses of public spending across all education levels shows that the poorest quintile receives only 12 percent of the total education spending (8 percent less than its share in population) while the richest quintile receives 33 percent of the total benefits (13 percent more than its share in population) (see Figure 7 below). At the primary level, public

spending appears to be equitable in the sense that the poorest quintile receives the same share of public benefits (20 percent) as their population share while the richest receives 18 percent of the benefits (only 2 percent of less than their population share). The pro-rich nature of the public spending on education starts at the lower secondary level where enrollment from poor families starts declining.

Figure 7: Benefits incidence analysis of public expenditure on education

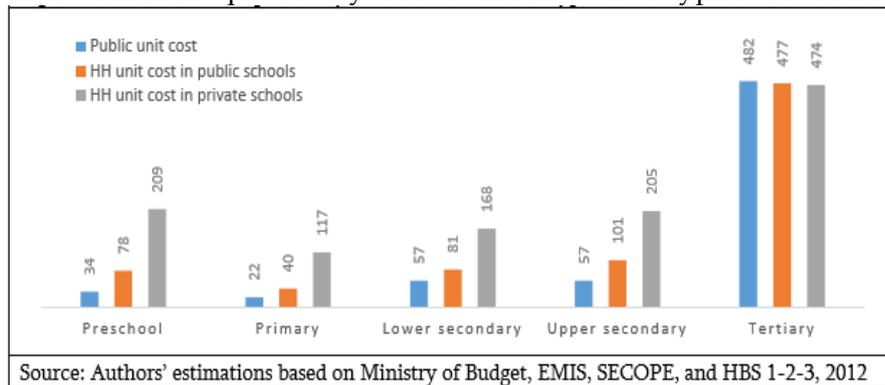


At the visualization of Figure 7 above, we found that there is a significant variation in the total unit cost across level of education, by school types.

4.2.1 Public and household unit cost

The public unit cost and household unit cost by level of education and the breakdown of the household unit cost are based on whether they are paid into public or private schools. Unit cost comparisons show that households spend more in preschool, primary and secondary education while the government spends slightly more in higher education (see Figure 8 below). Unit cost in non-conventionné schools is almost twice as expensive as conventionné schools at all levels of education, which is driven by disproportionately more public funds non-conventionné in the form of operating costs relative to conventionné schools. Otherwise, private school are more expensive in general education (primary to secondary), private higher education is more efficient than public higher education, but this could mask differences in the quality of education. Per student cost in preschool, primary and secondary education is lower in public schools than it is in private schools whereas per-student cost in public higher education is more than double that of its private counterpart.

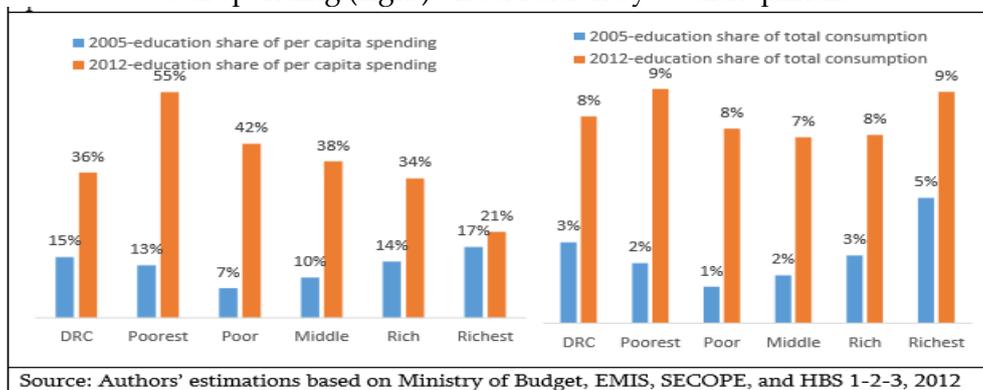
Figure 8: Unit cost comparison by level of education and type of schools attended



4.2.2 Unit cost in post-primary education

The high unit cost in post-primary education levels is prohibitive to poor households, despite their strong commitment to educating their children. Unit costs of post-primary education are a particularly heavy burden for the poorest households- the unit costs represent 76 percent of their per capita income for lower secondary, 96 percent for upper secondary and 390 percent at the higher education level. That being said, the poor remain committed to sending their children to school; as such, they increased their spending on education as a share of total household consumption between 2005 and 2012 significantly more than any other quintile (see Figure 9 below).

Figure 9: Household per capita (left) and share of total spending (right) on education by wealth quintile



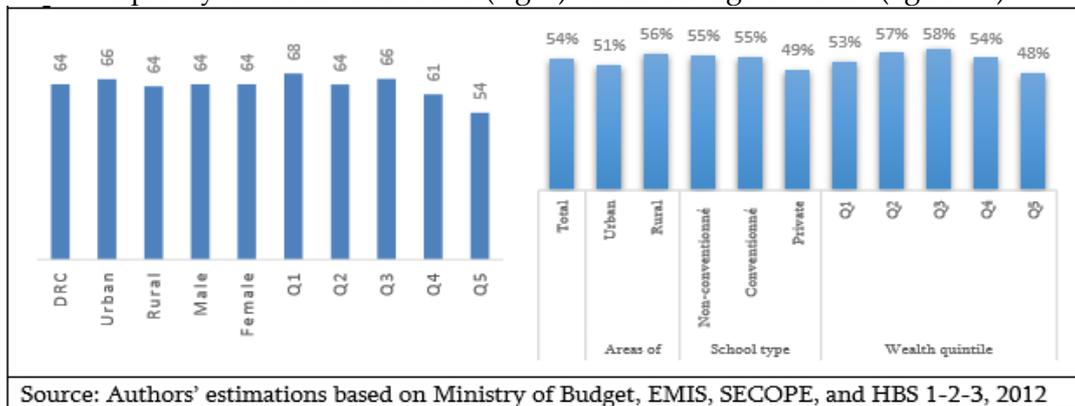
4.2.3 School fees

School fees represent the highest share of household contributions to education spending and households are very dissatisfied with the high costs- even though they still contribute a high share of spending. Estimations using the latest household survey 2012/13 indicate that 65 percent of household payments for education are in the form of school fee contributions (see Figure 10 below). The three main reasons that household contributions to education finance are so high stem from the fact that (i) only about 67 percent of public school teachers are on the official payroll, (ii) teacher salaries are still low in comparison with other public sector employees, leading households to compensate teachers already

on payroll with supplemental salaries (frais de motivation), and (iii) the education sector does not budget adequate funds to cover operating costs borne by public schools and the public school system.

In order to fill in the gap, schools have relied heavily on households through school fees. This has led to very high household unit costs at all levels of education, despite the introduction of a fee-free policy (gratuité) in 2010. However, the lacuna in the budgeting for the education sector, exemplified by the poor use of unit cost estimation to adequately fund the education sector, has contributed to its inability to accommodate all school age children, particularly from poor households. It is very clear through the analysis in this report that a true fee-free policy cannot be achieved without fully addressing all three of these factors.

Figure 10: School fees account for the most often given reason for being out-of-school (left) and household dissatisfaction rate over frequency of fee contributions (right) for school age children (age 6-17)

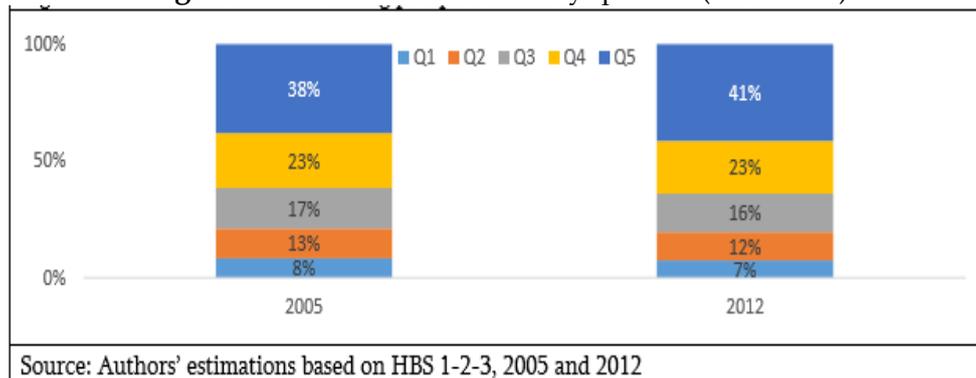


In such point of view, we say that household wealth, distance to school and public education expenditures all determine to varying extents the likelihood of being out-of-school. Both supply and demand side factors significantly affect the likelihood of being out-of-school. In particular, the longer distances to primary and secondary schools are positively linked to the probability of being out-of-school, while living in a household that belongs to the highest income quintile is associated with a lower probability of being out school. The probability of being out-of-school decreases with higher public education expenditures. Other factors of interest have also been teased out of this analysis such as the fact that being a female is associated with a higher probability of being out-of-school.

4.2.4 Inequality trends

The trend in inequality in the DRC shows that the income holding of the poor (the first three quintiles), diminished between 2005 and 2012, worsening the gap between the poor and wealthy. Figure 11 below shows the income distribution by quintile for 2005 and 2012. The increased inequality coupled with the huge burden of education costs on the poor, implies that the worsened wealth distribution may lead to further cyclical intergeneration inequality.

Figure 11: Income distribution by quintile (2005-2012)



5. Management of education sector

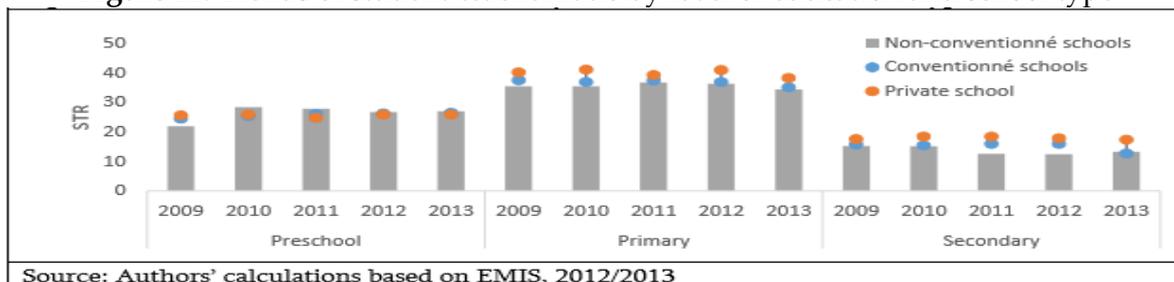
The Democratic Republic of Congo is facing with large internal inefficiencies in the education sector. Despite such observed improvement in education sector, the DRC continues to fail to meet its 2015 MDG goals in education (MEPS-INC, 2015). Three main reasons that cannot allow the State to reach its MDG goals are presented in the following points of our study:

5.1 School level

Marked by:

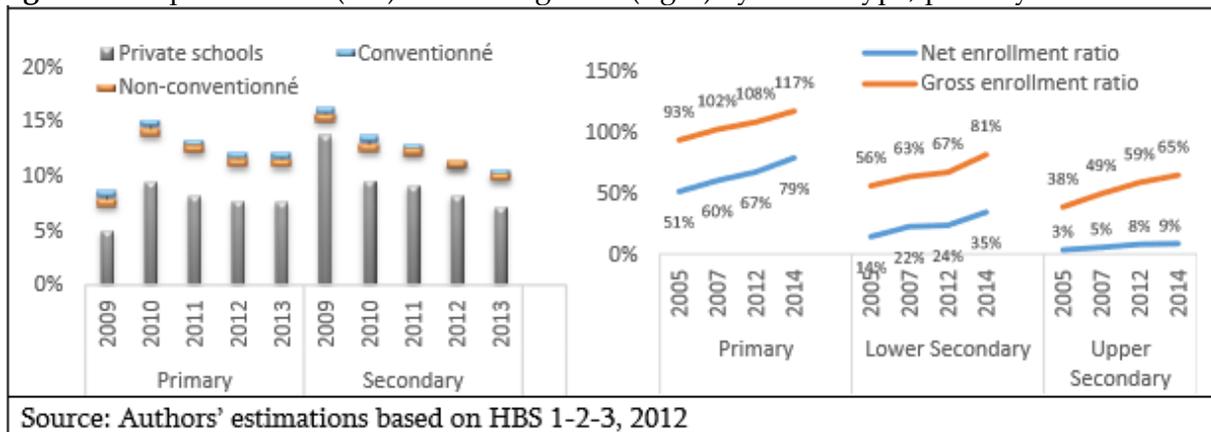
- Inefficient student teacher ratio and class size: are significantly below the optimal level in both primary and secondary education, which signals an under-utilization of resources;

Figure 12: Trends of student-teacher ratio by level of education and school type



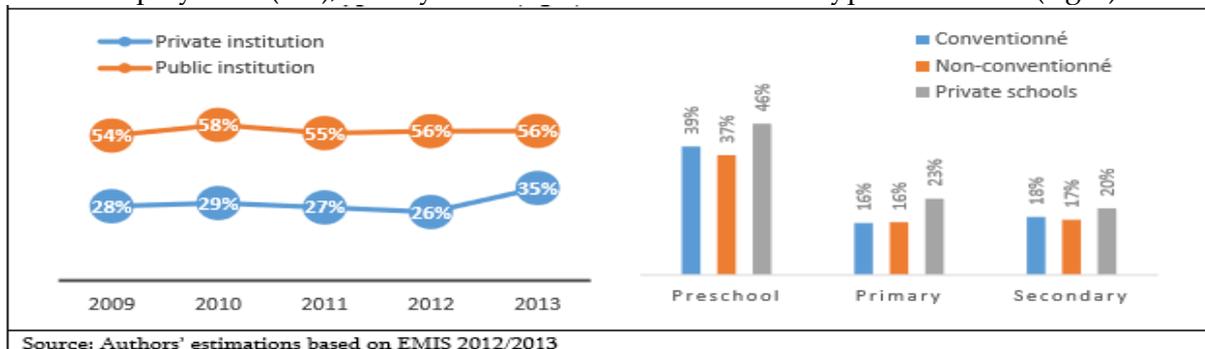
- High repetition and dropout rates: due to interruptions in schooling or repeating successive grade levels, children have difficulty in completing the desired school level within the standard timeframe and become overage students. Being overage in the classroom may be demotivating to the student as well, and also negatively impacts the teachers' ability to manage the class, given the wide age range;

Figure 13: Repetition rate (left) and overage rate (right) by school type, primary and secondary



- Unmanaged and unplanned staff onboarding into the education system: the growth in the number of teachers has outpaced the growth in student enrollment, especially in conventional schools. Similarly, non-conventional schools' share of non-salary spending constitutes about a third of total recurrent education spending compared with less than 2 percent for conventional schools, which clearly reflects relatively inefficient use by such schools of the scarce resources.

Figure 14: Trends in share of administrative staff in total higher education employment (left), and by educational level and school type for MEPSP (right)



- The lack of a clear and uniform human resource management system has several implications on the quality of teachers as well as the ability to sustain high standards of teaching. This is to say that the estimates household data of 2012/13 indicate that education sector staff accounts for about 45 percent of the wage bill in the public sector. Given that 80 percent of public schools are conventionné, the high growth in teaching staff, which is driven mostly by conventionné schools, has several implications: (i) since the sector is already under-funded, it puts further strain on existing resources, which leads to teachers not being compensated well enough; (ii) it also has an impact on the quality of teachers hired since more qualified and more experienced staff tends to be more highly remunerated; (iii) given their low remuneration levels, teachers often take on a secondary job; this may also adversely affect teaching quality, especially if the teacher is regularly

absent or late, which in turn affects learning outcomes. Lastly there is a significant lack of female representation among teaching staff (only 20 percent), which presents serious gender parity issues in the sector.

a. Family

- 1) Many families lack the means to help themselves,
- 2) Low productivity of the family workforce in the case of substance farming,
- 3) Compelled forced labor.

b. Social and political

- 1) Unequal distribution of income by social class,
- 2) No social protection policy: more than 70% of Congolese subsist on less than US \$ 1 a day= limited standard of living of the households,
- 3) Clientelism and nepotism,
- 4) Theft, misappropriation of funds, corruption, currency depreciation and hyperinflation, low wages,
- 5) Unstable environment, crisis and war,
- 6) Insecurity and violence at or around schools,
- 7) High poverty and unemployment level,
- 8) Threatening social and political institutions with failure,
- 9) Repeated political crises,
- 10) Poor infrastructure,
- 11) An underdeveloped regulatory environment ,
- 12) Lack of institutional capacity,
- 13) Weak rule of law fuels the country's persistent governance crisis,

c. Economic

- 1) Low coverage,
- 2) Poor financial performance,
- 3) Flee of government responsibility,
- 4) Misappropriation of funds provided by donors,
- 5) Economic environment undeveloped³

d. Gender barriers to education access

- 1) Unlawful killings,
- 2) Disappearances,
- 3) Torture, rape, and arbitrary arrest and detention by security forces: Security forces continued to recruit and retain child soldiers and to compel forced labor by adults and children,
- 4) Societal discrimination against women and ethnic minorities,
- 5) Trafficking in persons, child labor,
- 6) Lack of protection for workers' rights,

7) The difficulties of access to land, basic care and employment.

6. DRC sector goals and priorities: Education sector strategy and challenges

6.1 Governmental goals

In its 2010-2015 sub-sector plan, the Government, through its MEPSP, outlined three strategic objectives:

- 1) improve access, affordability, equity and efficiency (ensure free primary education access and policy for all children, increase and rationalize school constructions, and extend registration policy and payroll inclusion of teachers, ensure the payment of operating expenses to all schools and administrative structure of their further support),
- 2) improve quality of education and relevance of the educational program (production and distribution of learning materials), and
- 3) Strengthen governance capabilities (implement transparency of norms and mechanisms for managing resources and by improving management of all levels through more supportive and better organized partnerships).

6.2 Education sector strategy

- 1) Pre-primary level: raise awareness of the benefits of pre-primary activities through community based early childhood centers and sensitization campaigns; increase participation in pre-primary education by improving the likelihood of on-time enrollment in primary, also increases preparedness for primary school, raising quality of the experience throughout the child's educational career; increase pre-school enrollment from 3 to 15 percent of children in 2015.
- 2) Primary level: increase affordability of education by ensuring the State provides for all school fees and charges that are currently being paid for by households (frais de motivation and "frais de fonctionnement" being the two main ones); integrate of out-of-school children into the education system; support girls by increasing their chances of completion of primary education level.
- 3) Secondary level: make provision for construction of additional classrooms along with other key infrastructure such as toilets and equipment, facilities similar to the undertaking at the primary level; involve the re-evaluation and revamping of the school curricula and programs to ensure coursework is up to date.
- 4) Tertiary level: allow for increased mobility of the workforce through a harmonized higher education certification process; allow Congolese "licenciés" (graduates of an undergraduate program) to join the labor market; improve the curricula and school programs as well as an emphasis on adequate provision of laboratories and workshop space to carry out the practical part of the training; etc.

6.3 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and donors' goals

Most of NGOs such USAID (United States Agency for International Development), UNICEF (United Nations Children's (Education) Fund, UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization), United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID), etc. have jointly funded a groundbreaking to support the Government of the DRC's (GDRC) education program and training strategy by providing the country assistance to all levels of the education system and providing continuous technical advice and support to the Government.

With such context, the main objectives of these NGOs and donors in their strategic plan for next decades would consist to increase access, equity & retention by improving reading skills; allowing about at least 450,000 out-of-school children to improve retention in primary grade by 30 percent in target schools; employing professional development approaches for teachers that use local languages to help young children learn to read (consistent with the new curriculum); working at the provincial level to improve education governance and accountability and facilitating access to education in crisis environments of NGO's Education Strategy as well as the Mission's Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCS).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

Recall that this study focused on "Public expenditure of the education sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo". The results gathered from our research allow us to highlight the essential ideas closely related to the essential aspects of our field of analysis. Indeed, these have swayed the countries' general information on public expenditure to gender access for boys and girls in the DRC education area. The above discussion is necessarily brief and selective.

Steering the education sector in the right direction in order to address its most pressing needs and plan for its development requires a clear understanding of the issues at hand, their causes and the most effective ways to respond. This vision must also be outlined by the government's sector strategy, policies and reforms for a sustainable development of the DRC' education sector and its economy. Thus, all these implemented strategies do not only contribute significantly to the GDRC Mission objectives, but also increase quality, equity and equitable access to education in crisis, violence and conflict environments.

7.2 Policy recommendations

The policy recommendations presented below are informed by the empirical findings derived from an in-depth analysis of the education sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The recommendations are grouped under four broad topics: (i) finance, (ii) internal efficiency gains, (iii) system management, and (iv) developing human capital needs. A policy recommendation matrix is included at the end for easy cross-reference.

7.2.1 Sector financing

A combination of interventions is suggested in order to improve sector financing. These fall into two main categories: budget allocation and budget execution. Specific measures include: (i) increasing budget allocation to the education sector. Many of the key issues facing the education sector stem directly and indirectly from underfunding of the education budget. In particular, increase the education sector budget, allowing the budget to onboard all public education staff, increase salaries to truly reflect the premium placed on the teaching profession, adequately fund operating costs, and reach excluded, out-of-school children; (ii) allow the sector to fully onboard all public sector teachers, accommodate all out-of-school children, and help defray some of the additional costs borne by households; (iii) improving the balance in capital spending in favor of internally generated resources to avoid the low execution rate of capital spending due to availability of external funding. This will ensure the credibility of the budget as well as the availability of funding for immediate infrastructure needs; (iv) strengthening budget elaboration process to clearly reflect the sectoral priorities of the government, especially with respect to attaining the MDGs; (v) clarifying budget nomenclature to reflect sectoral allocation and priorities and allow better monitoring and evaluation of the goals and priorities; (vi) adopting a clear, standardized and transparent process to determine staffing needs prior to budget preparation in order to eliminate the issue of teachers who are not in the payroll; and (vii) introducing programs to foster equity in education such as conditional cash transfers, school feeding programs and targeted scholarships including scholarships for girls.

7.2.2 Internal efficiency gain

As mentioned above, the DRC's education sector is characterized by three main sources of internal inefficiencies: (i) inefficient use of existing resources, leading to low student-teacher ratio (STR) and small class sizes, (ii) high repetition and dropout rates, and (iii), inefficiencies linked to inappropriate proportions of non-teaching staff. Analysis shows that efficiency gains in the utilization of these resources could save an equivalent amount of 1.6 percent of GDP, the largest proportion being from STR and class size. Specific recommendations to realize such gains include: (i) an extensive revision of the curriculum at the secondary school level where the STR is extremely low, with a focus on reducing the number of study programs for students to choose from; (ii) the creation of a school mapping tool to assist with efficient identification and monitoring of infrastructure projects, to ensure that expansion of schools targets needy areas; (iii) introduction and implementation of a policy on mandatory school enrollment age and automatic promotion at least within the primary level to minimize the problem of repetition, which tends to lead to overage children and subsequent dropout; (iv) the introduction of clear guidelines on allowable ratio of administrative staff/teaching staff/student ratio at the school level and enforcement of this rule to ensure teachers are deployed in the most efficient manner.

7.2.3 Sector management

The division of the public education system between the conventionné and non-conventionné systems creates discordance in the management of public education system. One of the recent and rampant issues facing the DRC's education sector is the lack of adherence to standards and guidelines across school types. In particular, many conventionné schools, which have recently been built (despite the moratorium in place on new construction), fail to comply with agreed standards such as the minimum number of students required to open a school, the student-teacher ratio, and the appropriate teacher-administrative staff ratio, leading to inefficiencies such as low Student-to-Teacher Ratio (STR), and the disproportionately excessive hiring of teachers relative to student enrollment growth rates. The lack of a clear and uniform human resource management system has several implications on the quality of teachers as well as the ability to sustain high standards of teaching, and places a direct burden on education sector finances. The following key recommendations would help overcome such challenges: (i) improve efficiency of education provision by establishing a uniform public school management system with greater accountability and enforcement of rules and regulations to ensure standards maintained across all schools. This suggests that public schools stand to gain from increased coordination across school types through, for example, the creation of accountability channels for the sous-PROVED (local education overseeing offices) regarding teacher recruitment and deployment for both types of public schools, conventionné and non-conventionné. It would also help to set up a systematic monitoring and evaluation of schools by both the province and central authorities which would best determine what measures to adopt vis-à-vis non-compliant establishments. (ii) Strengthen the capacity of SECOPE to effectively manage a teacher database and salary payment system.

7.2.4 Human capital planning

The DRC's labor market shows positive and significant returns to education, but initial analysis of labor market needs and growth indicates disparities between demand for labor among drivers of economic growth and education attainment of the labor supply. This mismatch between labor demand and labor supply could have significant implications for future opportunities for the labor force and could hinder economic growth potential of the country. In order to ensure alignment of labor supply production and labor demand needs, the public sector needs to integrate private sector players (key employers) in establishing curricula and programs and develop an ongoing partnership in education matters. Activities indicated as "short term" are ones that can be implemented in the next 1-2 years; medium term is 3-5 years; and long term more than 5 years.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

About the Author



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Annexe 1: Policy recommendations matrix

Policy recommendation matrix				
Area/issue	Policy	Action	Timeline	Responsible agency
Sector financing	Increase the allocation to the education sector budget to catch up with the SSA average	Increase the allocation to the education sector budget to catch up with the SSA average	Increase the allocation to the education sector budget to catch up with the SSA average	Increase the allocation to the education sector budget to catch up with the SSA average
	The education budget as a share of GDP and as a share of total spending should be revised upwards to address the sector gaps identified in this report, including putting all teachers on the payroll and accommodating all out-of-school children.	The education budget as a share of GDP and as a share of total spending should be revised upwards to address the sector gaps identified in this report, including putting all teachers on the payroll and accommodating all out-of-school children.	The education budget as a share of GDP and as a share of total spending should be revised upwards to address the sector gaps identified in this report, including putting all teachers on the payroll and accommodating all out-of-school children.	The education budget as a share of GDP and as a share of total spending should be revised upwards to address the sector gaps identified in this report, including putting all teachers on the payroll and accommodating all out-of-school children.
	Short to medium term			
	Ministry of finance	Ministry of finance	Ministry of finance	Ministry of finance
	Align capital spending to internal resources and increase non-personnel operating cost allocations	Align capital spending to internal resources and increase non-personnel operating cost allocations	Align capital spending to internal resources and increase non-personnel operating cost allocations	Align capital spending to internal resources and increase non-personnel operating cost allocations
	Use Unit cost to determine resource distribution			
	Use unit cost to determine equitable distribution of resources in planning	Use unit cost to determine equitable distribution of resources in planning	Use unit cost to determine equitable distribution of resources in planning	Use unit cost to determine equitable distribution of resources in planning

Sifa Bura Huguette
 GOVERNMENTAL EXPENDITURE REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION
 SECTOR IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: 2005-2016

	access expansion policies, including accommodating out-of-school children.	access expansion policies, including accommodating out-of-school children.	access expansion policies, including accommodating out-of-school children.	access expansion policies, including accommodating out-of-school children.
	Short to medium term	Short to medium term	Short to medium term	Short to medium term
	Ministries of education	Ministries of education	Ministries of education	Ministries of education
Internal efficiency gain	Improve internal efficiency and increase completion.			
	Introduce and implement policy on automatic promotion and mandatory enrollment at age 6	Introduce and implement policy on automatic promotion and mandatory enrollment at age 6	Introduce and implement policy on automatic promotion and mandatory enrollment at age 6	Introduce and implement policy on automatic promotion and mandatory enrollment at age 6
	Medium -term	Medium -term	Medium -term	Medium -term
Sector management	Establish a uniform public school management system.			
	Target future infrastructure development to areas with verified need	Target future infrastructure development to areas with verified need	Target future infrastructure development to areas with verified need	Target future infrastructure development to areas with verified need
	Establish systematic monitoring and evaluation oversight of all schools to ensure standards are upheld; provide the means to enforce compliance.	Establish systematic monitoring and evaluation oversight of all schools to ensure standards are upheld; provide the means to enforce compliance.	Establish systematic monitoring and evaluation oversight of all schools to ensure standards are upheld; provide the means to enforce compliance.	Establish systematic monitoring and evaluation oversight of all schools to ensure standards are upheld; provide the means to enforce compliance.
	Medium -term	Medium -term	Medium -term	Medium -term
Human capital development	Align the curriculum at secondary and higher education to the future needs of the country.	Align the curriculum at secondary and higher education to the future needs of the country.	Align the curriculum at secondary and higher education to the future needs of the country.	Align the curriculum at secondary and higher education to the future needs of the country.

Source: Author' drawing and conception, 2019.

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