



An international network for education in emergencies
Un réseau international pour l'éducation en situations d'urgence
Una red internacional para la educación en situaciones de emergencia
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الشبكة العالمية لوكالات التعليم في حالات الطوارئ

Executive Summary

Policy Dialogue Forum on Education and Peace

Kinshasa, DRC – October 2012

Introduction: Creating dialogue with policy-makers at country level

In October 2012, a joint initiative led by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) brought together ministerial representatives¹, donor agencies, international and local NGOs, as well as representatives of parents and teachers associations and the media. The purpose of this Policy Dialogue Forum was to create a space to exchange information and provide recommendations about educational policies and strategies that can contribute to address conflict dynamics through education and support peace building processes in the DRC. Through a multi-stakeholder approach, participants analyzed the education sector's needs within the DRC context; and based on a conflict analysis presented by UNICEF / Search for Common Ground and studies from ADEA, participants identified key conflict drivers and their impact on education. The role of education in mitigating or exacerbating those conflict drivers was also discussed, leading to the identification of several key educational policies and strategies that can significantly contribute to peace and state building. In the light of the experiences in Kenya and Liberia on how to mainstream education for peace, as well as the presentation of programs carried out by non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, participants prepared a set of policy and program recommendations to strengthen DRC's capacities and provide guidance for the development of a national education for peace program.

1) Understanding the DRC context:

Africa is a continent notably affected by the resurgence and proliferation of armed conflicts in which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been at the center. Despite a Peace Deal that was signed in 2003, this vast country with immense natural resources remains in a situation characterized by fragility, instability and insecurity.

The DRC context is complex, with many challenges that need to be analyzed in order to design relevant and efficient strategies that could support the country on the path to peace and stability.

Following a systemic approach, education was presented at the Forum as a critical sector that interacts with several socio-economic dynamics. Inputs from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Ministry of Planning were essential to understand the context in which education must operate to address conflict dynamics with a view to making a significant contribution to peace and nation building processes in the DRC.

Unequal distribution of resources was highlighted, both as a cause and consequence of conflicts. Indeed, 70% of the population lives under the poverty line (90% in the provinces of Equateur and Bandundu). The DRC is

¹ Representatives from the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education at central and provincial levels from six different provinces; representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Land Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Media and Relations with the Parliament, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights.

also a country with a young population; almost half of the population is under 15 years old. In addition, the high unemployment rate severely affects the youth, particularly in urban areas. The population also has limited access to basic socio-economic services. For example, only 47% have access to drinking water. In the Congolese society, violence is widespread, especially sexual and gender-based violence, while the integration of refugees and returnees is a major challenge to social cohesion.

Regional instability is often identified as a source of insecurity, as well as the presence of a multitude of non-state armed groups that are active mostly in the Eastern provinces of the DRC. Internally, civil strikes, displacement, ethnic tensions, the unequal distribution of resources, and land disputes contribute to creating an unstable environment.

In addition to the unequal distribution of resources, the economy relies on a limited number of productive activities that create economic dependence, thus representing a source of instability and fragility for the country. The presence of multinationals that dominate the mining sector is often perceived as having a destabilizing effect on the country's economy, politics and society. The historical legacy and geopolitics was often referenced to explain a political culture that is deeply dominated by predation and rent-seeking attitudes that affect the notion of citizenship.

To address some of these security, social, economic and political issues, it is expected that the implementation of the New Deal for Fragile States, an international initiative that was launched in the DRC in August 2012, will ensure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and support peace building efforts in the country. It was recommended during the meeting that the New Deal integrates education both as a key component for peace building and as a nexus with stabilization and development processes.

During the forum, it was made clear that there is much to be done for and through education at the institutional, society, and school levels, to support the DRC on the path towards peace and development. H.E. Mr. Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education of the DRC insisted on the political will and commitment of its Ministry to strengthen the education system in the DRC and to develop an Education for Peace program that can respond to the needs and challenges the country faces. Technical partners who participated in the Forum also expressed their concern about the situation in the DRC, particularly in the East, and underlined their commitment to ensure the development of quality, equitable, inclusive and safe education that can become a vector of peace.

Create an inclusive and quality education system for all that contributes to economic growth, addresses poverty and promotes an active citizenship for peace.

This Policy Dialogue Forum was an opportunity to go beyond the identification of education needs and reflect on the role that education plays in mitigating violence, promoting social cohesion, preventing violent conflicts and addressing the conflict dynamics in the country.

Education in the DRC in a nutshell

❖ Some facts:

- The education system has greatly suffered from years of violent armed conflict;
- Enrolment rates are low since primary education was neither free nor compulsory until it was inscribed in the Constitution in 2005. This has been gradually implemented;
- 7 million children and youths are out of school and receive no education;
- Budgetary allocation to the education sector has decreased to 13 percent of the national budget, down from 25 percent in the 1960s.

❖ Strengths and promising practices:

- Creation of dialogue and consultation spaces at different institutional levels and promotion of an inter-sectoral approach;
- Inclusion of the Ministry of Planning in the development of education plans;
- Development of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) as an effective planning instrument;
- Strong societal mobilization about education, which is also a presidential priority;
- Gradual introduction of free primary education as stated in Article 43 of the 2005 Congolese Constitution;
- The Interim Education Plan (*Plan Intérimaire d'Éducation* – PIE) gives grounds to key actions for the period 2012-2014 related to the universalization of free primary education, equity of the provision of education (gender, urban/rural and socio-economic groups), national teacher training policy, promotion of citizenship and democracy, reorganization of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education, and decentralization, providing spaces for dialogue with key stakeholders.

❖ Challenges:

- Fragmentation of the education sector is a challenge to the development of an inter-sectoral approach to education;
- Difficulty aligning Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) with the national priorities, since TFP focus on projects with limited scope rather than large-scale and long-term programs, thus undermining sustainability, coherence and the government's management capacity;
- Privatization of education, which poses ethical and governance difficulties;
- Lack of efficient Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms to ensure appropriate use and allocation of resources;
- Dependence of the EMIS system on external funding;
- The education sector is underfunded and is affected by economic crisis;
- Budgetary allocation marred by late disbursements, high incidences of corruption, lack of transparency and weak procedures;
- Destruction and occupation of school infrastructure and forced displacement of children and teachers;
- Lack of Education in Emergencies plan.

2) Identifying key conflict drivers through conflict analysis

Before going further with policy discussions, an analysis of the conflict dynamics was essential to identify the issues to be addressed through education. Search For Common Ground/UNICEF and ADEA shared findings from studies on education and conflict during the Forum.

The Search For Common Ground study commissioned by UNICEF is based on perception surveys. It shows that land conflicts and ethnic conflicts are the major types of conflicts perceived by the interviewees in four selected provinces², far beyond conflicts involving armed groups. At the school level, fees, salaries and corruption are the main sources of conflict. It was therefore recommended to address the teaching conditions and needs, and develop peace education activities to prevent or tackle most school conflicts. Adding on this, ADEA stressed the prevalence of predatory behaviors and distrust of the elites in the society. It was argued that the promotion of citizenship and the development of a sense of commonality among the peoples of the DRC would help address these issues.

Based on the presentations and discussions³, participants identified five key conflict drivers:

- **Tribalism/ethnicism;**
- **Unequal distribution of resources;**
- **Inequitable access / inappropriate delivery and quality of basic social services;**
- **Land issues;**
- **Poor governance.**

These five main conflict drivers were identified as having a negative impact on education. The table below summarizes the main effects on Access, Quality, Equity and Management.

EFFECT OF → ... ON ↓	Tribalism / Ethnicism	Unequal distribution of resources	Inequitable access / Inappropriate delivery and quality of basic social services	Land issues	Poor governance
Access	Increased dropouts due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion and discrimination of certain groups based on ethnic and tribal grounds, ethnic conflicts and violence leading to displacement of families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor families are forced to decide between paying for an education for their children or sending them out to work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School fees are a barrier to the fulfillment of the right to education Inadequate water and sanitation facilities lead to health problems and absenteeism. Working children drop out school to support their family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulties finding suitable places and obtaining land titles to build schools. Scarcity of schools, thus children and teachers have to walk long distances to go to school. Schools are expropriated by those who claim to own the land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on the participation and consultation processes, reducing the participation of students and parents. Widespread impunity, corruption and lack of accountability.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnic favoritism replaces meritocracy in the recruitment and evaluation process for teachers and students. Dissemination of hate through education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher salaries are low, school infrastructure is inadequate. Bad teaching conditions causes demotivation. Working children cannot attend or perform well at school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and students have low performance and productivity because of poor living and teaching conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having to walk long distances, teachers and students arrive tired; learning time and concentration are reduced. Inappropriate school infrastructures, no recreational spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mismanagement of resources attributed to schools.

² Province Orientale, Equateur, Maniema and Kalemie in North Katanga.

³ More detailed information about the studies can be found in the full Policy Dialogue Forum report.

Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widespread injustice, xenophobia and segregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inequalities in opportunities and resource allocation between rural and urban schools. Inequalities between working children and children who can have access to education (girls/boys, poor/rich). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families prefer sending the boys to school and girls have fewer chances to have access to education. Gender-based violence is found in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land conflicts and attacks on schools are a threat to school children and education personnel's security. 	
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mismanagement because of corruption, ethnic rivalry, lack of accountability and transparency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misuse and diversion of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education is not a priority; other basic needs come first. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School management is under pressure due to land conflicts. 	

3) How can education contribute to peace?

Once the main conflict drivers were identified, participants brainstormed how education could possibly address them. It was noted that education could either exacerbate or mitigate conflict drivers.

It was highlighted that education can be used not only to encourage tribal and ethnic hatred but also to institutionalize systematic discrimination through references in the pedagogical materials and teaching methods. However, education can also propose recreational activities that foster social cohesion and teach a culture of peace that promotes diversity and ethical values. It was recommended that references to African values, respect, tolerance, and meritocracy should not only appear in the curriculum, but should also be communicated to parents, teachers and school management, as integrated in the concept of citizenship. Additionally, to address tribalism and ethnicism through education, it was suggested to use anonymous evaluations and encourage non-discriminatory student registration and teacher recruitment procedures. Other suggestions were related to the development of curricula and pedagogical tools that take into account the local realities by promoting the use of local languages.

Regarding inequity, inclusive education for all was viewed as a major instrument to reduce gender and socio-economic inequalities by providing alternative education adapted to the needs of the vulnerable populations. School must also be seen as a safe and protective place, where education can contribute to economic growth, address poverty and promote an active democratic citizenship for peace. It was recommended as well to develop non-formal education to increase adult literacy; and the promotion of partnerships between schools and local companies to provide technical education and vocational programs that meet the job market needs.

Education can also have a role to play in the access and quality of basic services by offering proper sanitation facilities, promoting good health, hygiene and nutrition practices, and implementing income generation programs, and school feeding activities that support food security and improve living conditions of children and teachers in a healthy environment. Additionally, it was recommended to support accelerated learning programs for out of school youth, and ensure that education policies take into account the preparation for and response to emergency situations that affect access and quality of basic services.

Adapt and integrate the INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery in the Interim Education Sector Plan to strengthen national and provincial capacities to respond to the needs of education in emergencies.

Regarding land issues, it was mentioned during the discussions that a consistent liaison between land and education authorities could mitigate the impact of land conflicts on education. Also, awareness about law and land issues through education and training on conflict transformation using land cases could significantly mitigate the risk of land conflicts in the future. Similarly, teaching and learning about good governance

practices and clear management regulations to address impunity and corruption, as well as the guarantee of decent working conditions are useful elements that need to be taken into consideration when preventing conflicts arising from poor governance. It was recommended as well to raise the budget allocated to education, and guarantee its monitoring and effective use, through the involvement of education stakeholders.

4) Sharing experiences and learning from others to identify holistic and inter-sectoral policies

The experiences of Kenya and Liberia promoting education for peace were shared. In Kenya, before the development of the Education for Peace Program in 2008, peace education was a crosscutting theme taught in history and government in secondary education, and in social studies in primary education. After experiencing post-election violence in 2007-2008, the Ministry of Education in Kenya, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO and other partners, took a step further to initiate a comprehensive Peace Education Program and ensure the internalization of peace-related subjects in a school environment that promotes a culture of peace. The focus on teacher trainings, the involvement of the media and the organization of public campaigns were essential to the implementation of the national peace education program in Kenya.

Integrate Peace Education programs in basic education to impart knowledge, skills, attitudes and values essential to peace building, lifelong learning and development.

The Ministry of Education of Liberia has also developed an education system that contributes to peace building, through the promotion of an inter-sectoral approach that includes the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, Economic Planning, Finance and Gender and Development. This initiative also involved reforming and rationalizing the management of information and resources, implementing alternative basic education and early childhood policies, and promoting inclusive education.

Existing peace-building programs implemented in the DRC by international and local organizations such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), *Espoir pour tous*, UNESCO and UNICEF were presented. From these different initiatives, the following key policies and strategies were highlighted:

- Inclusive education policies targeting vulnerable groups, in particular out-of-school children, refugees, returnees, but also indigenous populations and street children, providing them with opportunities for basic education, vocational training, and literacy programs;
- Provision of safe learning environments where all kinds of coercion, punishment and violence are banned;
- Non-discriminatory teacher recruitment and student registration policies that prioritize meritocracy over ethnic preferences or socio-economic categories;
- Decentralization policies to reinforce participative mechanisms at all levels of the education system;
- Focus on emotional and social competencies, as well as ethics education, to support children's full development and fulfillment of their spiritual needs;
- Training of teachers and other education personnel on human rights, non violence, democracy, respect and other positive values that support the development of citizenship skills in children and youth;
- Involvement of all partners (schools, families, communities, local authorities) to increase trust, collaboration and social cohesion and improve the parent/teacher relationship in order to create safe learning spaces;
- Promotion of entrepreneurial skills for youth and collaboration with the private sector;
- Inter-sectoral and inter-agency collaboration mechanisms to share best practices, methodologies and resources, as well to promote good governance.

5) The way forward: Conflict sensitive education policy and programming

As a conclusion to this Policy Dialogue Forum, a series of recommendations were formulated to strengthen the DRC's education system in order to address conflict drivers and promote peace and development. It is indeed critical to integrate and prioritize education in the DRC's peace building, security and development agendas, since education is a means for conflict prevention, social transformation and cohesion.

The main recommendations issued during the meeting can be summarized as follows:

Access and retention

- Promote inclusive and non-discriminatory education and take into account specific needs (ethnic groups, indigenous populations, displaced populations)
- Focus on out-of-school children and youth through accelerated learning programs and develop non-formal education to increase adult literacy
- Promote the right to education and sensitize parents
- Reinforce the implementation and generalization of free and compulsory primary education
- Review the school map to ensure proximity and integrate the school in the community
- Develop community-based school feeding and canteens
- Ensure protection of children from sexual abuse and violence (with a focus on girls)
- Raise awareness on peace education through mass communication campaigns involving the media
- Mobilize local representatives on the issue of Early Childhood Education and kindergarten
- Ensure the development of education plans that take into account preparation and response to emergency

Curriculum

- Integrate elements of peace education, good governance, land law as crosscutting themes in Civic and Moral Education, Geography and History
- Review Civic courses to include topics related to the Congolese identity, tolerance and respect for diversity and differences
- Promote the integration of peace education in Early Childhood curricula
- Adapt to local realities, introduce local languages in the curriculum and teaching
- Develop conflict-resolution trainings in land issues
- Promote the operationalization and generalization of the approach by competences (Life Skills)
- Develop art and music capacities and notions of information and communication technologies
- Promote vocational and technical education to develop entrepreneurship and skills that meet the market needs and reduce unemployment and poverty

Teaching and teachers

- Improve the working and teaching conditions and valorize the teaching profession through awareness and advocacy campaigns
- Reinforce follow-up and administrative/pedagogic evaluation
- Provide quality pre- and in-service teacher trainings that include concepts of a culture of peace, prevention and management of abuses and violence, civism and citizenship, ethnicism and tribalism.
- Prepare and disseminate a code of conduct among all the operators of the education sector
- Promote educational and pedagogical exchange through forums (Educational Units / Basic Units)
- Train education staff on emergency preparedness and integrate/implement the INEE Minimum Standards for Education
- Promote teacher trainings in local languages to encourage bilingual education

Infrastructure and learning spaces

- Update and respect norms for building schools and learning spaces

- Ensure appropriate space and school facilities (with standard classrooms, separated latrines, hand-washing areas, library, recreational/sport areas, green spaces)
- Ensure the protection of schools from occupation by armed groups and displaced families
- Provide safe learning environments for displaced families

Finance and management of the sector

- Promote inter-sectoral approaches and partnerships to involve all relevant actors
- Strengthen the parents' participation and capacity to participate in the school management
- Involve decentralized structures in the development of education policies
- Apply and enforce the law to tackle impunity and promote transparency and accountability at the management level
- Raise the budget allocated to education from 13% to 20% according to the Government's commitment in the Global Partnership for Education
- Monitor the efficient distribution and appropriate use of financial resources
- Ensure appropriate management of the school patrimony and meritocratic recruitment processes
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Land Affairs to guarantee special provisions to protect and facilitate the construction of schools
- Develop collaboration with African Networks to share experience and good practices on the delivery and quality of education services
- Collaborate with the private sector

Most importantly, access to education should be increased by removing barriers inherent to ethnic, social and economic discrimination through holistic, inter-sectoral and conflict-sensitive programs which can mobilize all stakeholders. Through specific attention to the development of quality and inclusive curriculums, the improvement of teaching conditions and infrastructures, schools should become safe and protective places for children to learn and develop themselves. And finally, actions taken with a view to improving the sector's management and finances and promoting the development of a functioning, transparent and accountable system that is able to implement concrete education strategies, policies and programs, are needed in the DRC to support peace building and development processes.

Provide safe learning environments and safer access to schools to increase school participation and guarantee children's social, physical, psychological and emotional protection.

At the end of the Policy Dialogue Forum, a roadmap was drafted to call on all stakeholders to support the development of a National Education for Peace Program in the DRC. Both the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education (MEPSP) and its Technical and Financial partners made a commitment to include education in the DRC's peace building policies, as well as to make education a tangible means for conflict prevention, transformation and social cohesion. The Forum participants also agreed on the need to contextualize the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in the DRC, with the support of INEE. In order to prepare the next steps of the process towards the implementation of a National Education for Peace Program, a Technical Committee was formed under the leadership of the MEPSP Technical Support Unit, and with the participation of UNICEF DRC, FAWE DRC, *Espoir pour Tous*, Ministry of Land Affairs, APEC and ADEA.

Also, following the Policy Dialogue Forum, the meeting outcomes and recommendations were shared with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to inform their final decision and approve the attribution of funds for the DRC. Indeed, in November 2012, the GPE approved USD 100 million to the DRC to help increase access to primary education through the rehabilitation and construction of classrooms; increase student learning through improved learning materials and teacher trainings; and improve the education sector management. It is expected that the forthcoming National Program on Education for Peace will help address the main education needs in the country and help tackle the key conflict drivers that affect equitable access and quality of education.