



# Project Information Document (PID)

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Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 06-Jun-2022 | Report No: PIDC33697

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Congo, Democratic Republic of	Project ID P178684	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name DRC Girls Learning and Empowerment Project (P178684)
Region EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Dec 05, 2022	Estimated Board Date Apr 17, 2023	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Democratic Republic of Congo	Implementing Agency Ministere de l'Education Primaire, Secondaire, et Technique (MEPST)	

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

To improve equitable access and teaching and learning conditions at secondary schools, particularly for girls with the focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in selected provinces

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)****SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	250.00
<b>Total Financing</b>	250.00
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	250.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS****World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	250.00
IDA Credit	250.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Concept Review Decision



Substantial

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

## B. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

- 1. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa – with a population estimated at 92.4 million.**<sup>1</sup> DRC has a long history of conflict, political upheaval and instability, and authoritarian rule, all of which contributed to its deep fragility. Due to abundant and diverse natural resources, a strategic location at the center of Africa, and a large and young population, DRC has considerable economic potential. However, the lack of good governance, weak fiscal institutions, mismanagement of natural resources, and protracted conflict and violence have all contributed to limited progress in building human capital and infrastructure and resulted in economic underperformance and high levels of poverty.
- 2. The third largest population of poor in the world lives in the DRC.** Although the two existing household budget surveys (2005 and 2012) have revealed a decline in the extreme poverty from 94.3 percent to 77.2 percent between 2005 and 2012, because of the high population growth (3 percent), the number of poor people has increased by about 1.5 million every year.
- 3. Notwithstanding these significant and persistent challenges, there are indications that the social contract in DRC may be changing.** The government that was formed in the spring of 2021 is showing commitment to reform and to addressing ongoing challenges to development. This is manifested in the adoption, in October 2021, of the country's first conflict prevention and stabilization strategy and a new community-based reintegration and stabilization program in the eastern part of the country. There has also been progress in the implementation of the free primary education policy—the first high-level political commitment to reform and the provision of basic services since the collection of school fees began 40 years ago. In addition, the new government has restarted a program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), after the last program was interrupted in 2012 due to transparency concerns around large contracts in the mining sector. The recent appointment of a new governor of the Central Bank of Congo, a selection based on merit over connections, could signal a welcome direction toward open and competitive recruitment processes for key governmental positions.
- 4. The DRC ranked 164th out of 174 countries on the 2020 Human Capital Index (HCI), reflecting decades of conflict and fragility, and constraining development.** The country has an HCI score of 0.37, which is below the 0.40 average for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and means that a Congolese child born today can expect to achieve only 37 percent of her potential, compared to what would have been possible if they had benefited from a full, quality schooling experience and optimal health conditions. The main contributors to low HCI are low child survival under age 5 (0.91), child stunting (share of non-stunted only 0.57) and quality of education (while a 4-year-old child is expected to complete 9.1 years of schooling before her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, factoring in what children actually learn, expected years of school is only 4.5 years). While girls are doing better in terms of health components of HCI, they are lagging boys both in terms of expected years of schooling and learning outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank (April 2022): Macro Poverty Outlook (estimate, the latest census took place in 1984).



5. **The DRC ranked 175 out of 189 countries in the 2020 Gender Inequality Index, which benchmarks national gender gaps using economic, political, education, and health criteria.** Similarly, the Gender Development Index is currently 0.845, indicating women’s human development is about 84 percent that of men’s (UNDP 2020). Across the DRC, girls and women face profound and interconnected disadvantages compared to men. National-level indicators of the World Bank’s Africa Human Capital Strategy show that girls and women in the DRC are highly disadvantaged in terms of empowerment and agency over life choices; access to enhanced health services to enable family planning; education, particularly at the secondary level and beyond; and employment, in terms of labor market participation and earnings. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is pervasive in the country, with 52 percent of all women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence<sup>1</sup> and 27 percent have experienced sexual violence<sup>1</sup>, most commonly by a current or former husband or intimate partner.<sup>1</sup> This level of violence, higher than Sub-Saharan Africa regional and global averages, represents a critical barrier to women’s and girls’ full participation in the social and economic space.
6. **The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened challenges in human development, especially for women, girls, and children.** First, according to interviews with school directors, the school attendance has dropped after the reopening of schools following a 7-month closure period due to COVID-19 restrictions. Second, tensions in the food supply emerged in the areas most affected by COVID-19 resulting in rising malnutrition of young children as evidenced by the surveys undertaken by the Social Sciences Analytics Cell (SSAC). Furthermore, there has also been a decrease in contraception use, an increase in pregnancies, and lower attendance vis-a-vis antenatal care. The rise in early pregnancies is pushing young girls out of school. Finally, the incidence of sexual- and gender-based violence increased dramatically, with rates more than doubling since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.
7. **Addressing gender disparities, by investing in the girls’ empowerment, learning, and health, and by expanding their economic opportunities** will be critical for the DRC government to revitalize the economy and put the country on a path towards sustainable development. Achieving sustained results in improving girls’ education will be particularly important as it can be a powerful transformative force for the girls, their communities, and the economy as a whole. Girls’ education, especially at the secondary level, is a consistent factor that has been found to positively influence not only the girls’ lives, but also improve numerous other development outcome, including reducing child and maternal mortality, improving educational outcomes of offspring, reducing poverty and achieving equitable growth (World Development Report (WDR), 2012).
8. **Climate change poses a serious risk to the DRC’s sustainable development.** Due to a combination of political, geographic, and social factors, the DRC ranks 177 out of 181 on the 2018 Notre Dame Global Gain Index,<sup>2</sup> illustrating high vulnerability to climate change. Globally, DRC is therefore one of the most vulnerable countries but the 5th least ready<sup>3</sup> country – meaning that it is very vulnerable to, yet extremely unready to muster the required investments to address climate change effects.<sup>4</sup>

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

9. **Primary and secondary education in the DRC is represented by public and private schools with public schools managed under two regimes *écoles conventionnées* and *écoles non-conventionnées*.** Public schools comprise the majority of schools – 84 percent in primary and 71 percent in secondary education. *Conventionnées* schools account for 80 percent of public primary and 77 percent of public secondary schools and are managed by faith-based organizations (FBOs) under a 1977 agreement. The agreement establishes that the State ‘organizes’ education and

<sup>2</sup> The ND-GAIN Country Index summarizes a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges in combination with its readiness to improve resilience - <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>.

<sup>3</sup> Readiness measures a country’s ability to leverage investments and convert them to adaptation actions.

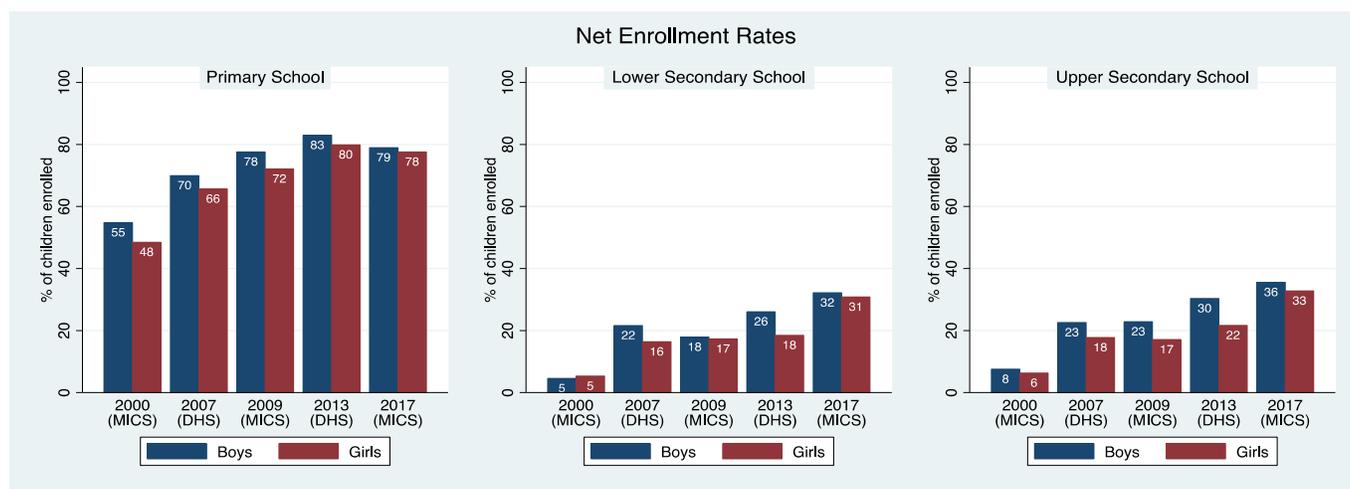
<sup>4</sup> Climate Change Profile: Democratic republic of Congo (2018) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DRC%2B%28east%29.pdf>



churches ‘manage’ the schools. The State defines the pedagogical programs, oversees quality, and pays personnel and operating costs. FBOs hire teachers and mobilize additional resources as needed, including for new infrastructure. They have their own administration and inspection services. *Non-conventionnés* schools are managed directly by the Government. Both types of schools are supervised by administrative structures known as management offices (*bureaux gestionnaires* (BGs)). Private schools make up 16 percent of all primary schools and disproportionately serve the better-off families (30 percent of their students come from the top quintile, and only 11 percent come from the bottom quintile).<sup>5</sup>

- 10. **The government of the DRC has been making efforts to improve access to education, as a result the enrollment rates have improved significantly across the whole education system between 2000 and 2017 in DRC for both boys and girls.** Overall, in 2017 about 87 percent of school-age children (6-17 years old) were enrolled in school, compared to 58 percent around two decades earlier. At the primary level, net enrollment has increased by 50 percent, from 52 to 78 percent, and girls have caught up to boys (Figure 1). In 2018, approximately 17 million children were enrolled in primary education (public and private) in the DRC across more than 53,000 schools staffed by 540,000 teachers. The estimated net primary attendance rate was 78 percent, with over 4 million primary school-age children out of school.<sup>6,7</sup> Despite starkly lower access at the secondary level, enrollment rates have increased even faster over the same period, with lower secondary net enrollment increasing six-fold from 5 to 31 percent and upper secondary net enrollment increasing five-fold from 7 to 34 percent. In 2018, approximately 6 million children enrolled across more than 28,000 schools staffed by 378,000 teachers.

Figure 1: Trends in net enrollment rates, by educational level, 2000-2017



Note: MICS 2000-01, 2009-10, and 2017-18 surveys are used for 2000, 2009 and 2017 data points respectively. DHS 2007 and 2013-14 are used for 2007 and 2013 data points respectively. Because of different survey methods, comparisons across surveys may be imperfect.

- 11. **Yet, girls are less likely than boys to make the transition from primary to lower secondary school as well to complete full cycles of lower and upper secondary with large variation across provinces.** Transition rates between primary and lower secondary show that girls are 9 percentage points less likely to complete the cycle and go onto lower secondary.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, girls are less likely to complete upper secondary education, with completion rate for boys at 46 percent and for girls - only 29 percent. Completion rates in primary and lower secondary level are higher

<sup>5</sup> World Bank. 2015. *Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo*.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank. 2018. *Systematic Country Diagnostic*; INS/UNICEF. 2019. *DRC 2017-18 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*.

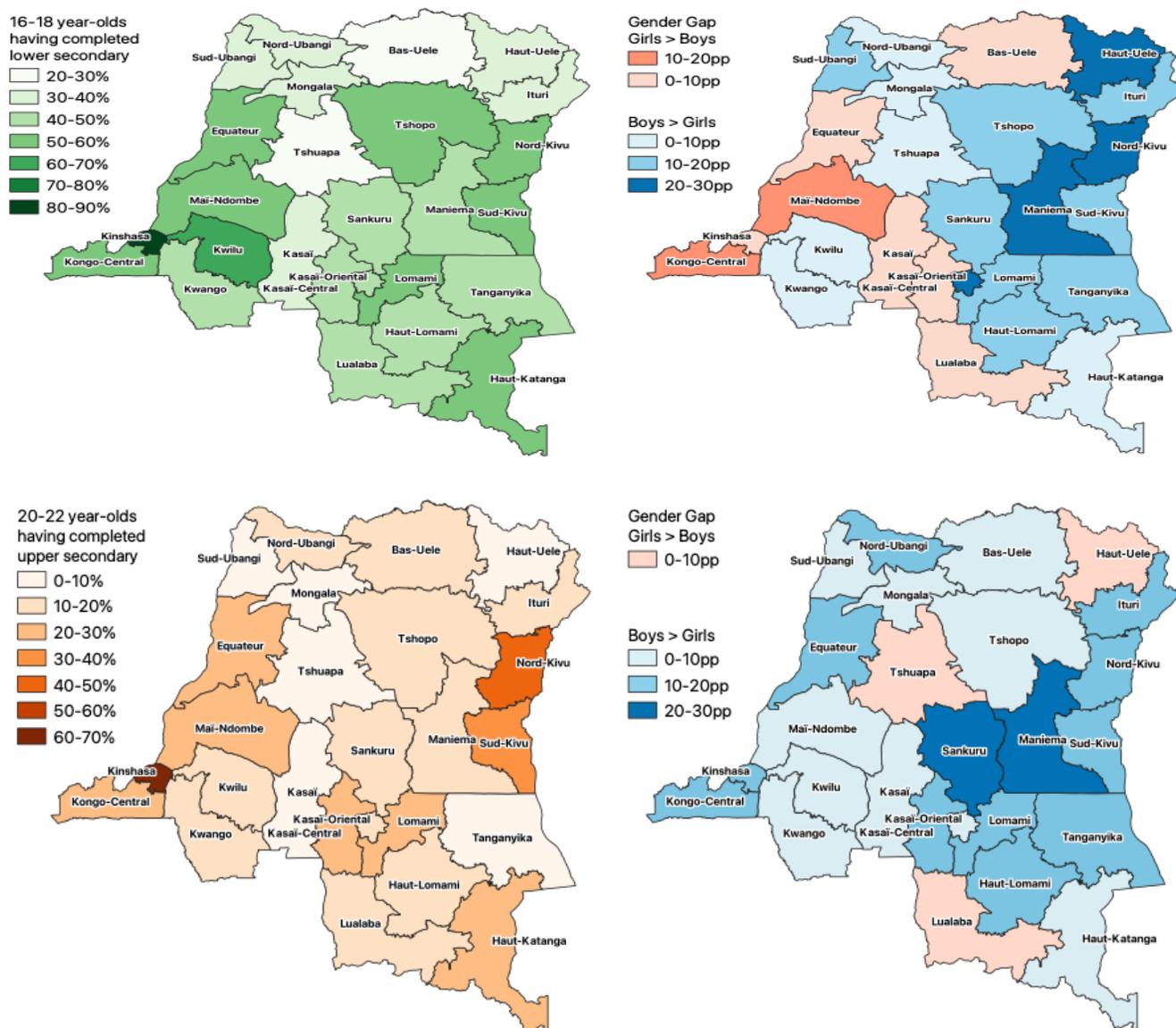
<sup>7</sup> Since September 2019, the Government estimates that about 2.5 million children have entered the system.

<sup>8</sup> MEPST Annuaire Statistique 2017-18.



for boys than girls in most of the provinces (Figure 2). Rural girls are particularly vulnerable as rural girls are 23 percentage points less likely than rural boys to enter grade 12.

Figure 2: Proportion of children of completion age to have completed each school level, 2017/18

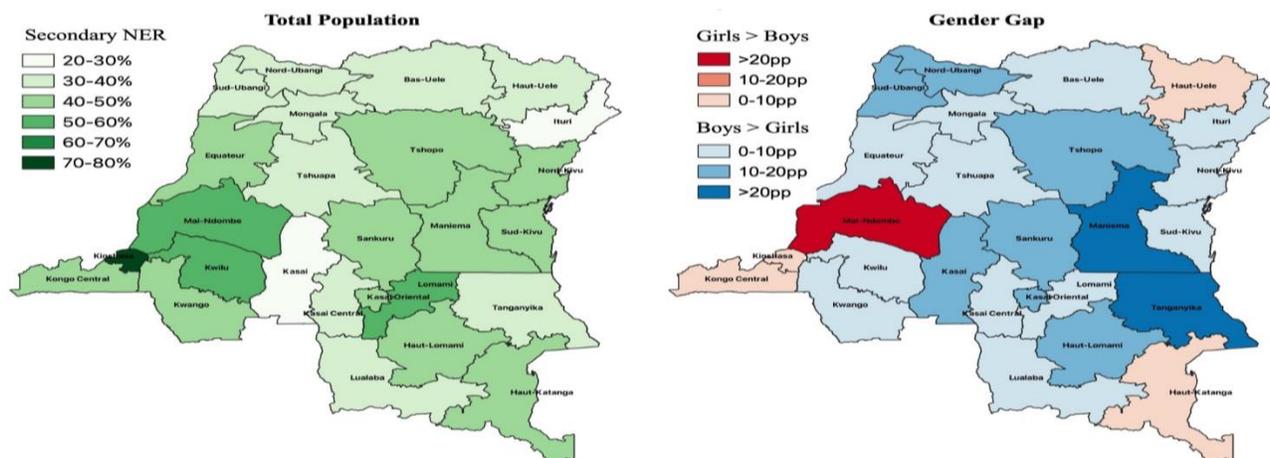


Note: Completion rates are calculated using 3 to 5 years above the official completion age Source: MICS 2017/18

12. **Gender gaps in enrollment are particularly stark in certain provinces (Figure 3).** The five provinces with lowest net enrollment rate for girls’ education at the lower secondary education were in Kasai - 3.1 percent, Kasai Central -11.3 percent, Ituri – 12 percent, Kasai Oriental – 20.4 percent, and South Kivu – 27.5 percent. In terms of gender gaps, net enrollment for girls is lower in 21 of the 26 provinces. The provinces with lowest NER for girls, except for Kasai Central, also have the highest gender gap in the NER: Kasai – 23.2 percentage points (pp), Kasai Central - - 2.3pp (boys NER was 8.9 percent), Ituri – 8.5pp, Kasai Oriental – 5.9pp, and South Kivu –7.5pp.



Figure 3: Secondary net enrollment, by province and gender, 2017/18



Note: Only secondary school aged children (12-17) are used for this analysis. Source: MICS 2017-18.

13. **While the DRC government has made laudable efforts to bring children to school, the country faces a learning crisis as learning levels are low for both genders.**<sup>9</sup> About 97 percent of children in the DRC were living in learning poverty in 2021, meaning they could not read and understand a simple paragraph at age 10. Learning poverty in DRC is 10.6 percentage points higher than the average for the Sub-Saharan Africa region and 5.9 percentage points higher than the average for low-income countries.<sup>10</sup> Results from the 2019 PASEC show by the end of primary school, only 27 percent of students cleared the language competency threshold, and a mere 18 percent passed the math threshold. Similarly, results from the 2018-19 EGRA/EGMA assessment show that 64 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders are unable to read a single word of simple text in French, and 63 percent are unable to correctly answer a single multiplication problem. There is no statistical difference in learning outcomes for girls and boys. While there were no standardized learning measurement assessments conducted at the secondary level, learning adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) – a proxy for quality of education – demonstrate a huge learning gap: a four-year-old child is expected to complete 9.1 years of schooling before her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, however, factoring in what children actually learn at school proxied by standardized PASEC scores, demonstrate that this is equivalent only to 4.5 LAYS.
14. **Adolescent girls and boys in the DRC face specific constraints in accessing and completing secondary education which are complex and multi-dimensional.** Based on extensive consultations and recently carried out analytical studies by the World Bank,<sup>11</sup> a number of supply and demand side constraints to accessing quality secondary education were identified and described below.
15. **On the supply side, the existing infrastructure for secondary schools in DRC is poor and is disproportionately disadvantageous for girls.** Secondary schools are too few and too far, leading to long travel times and increasing both transport costs and security risks for teenage girls, especially in conflict-affected provinces. Existing schools lack gender-segregated sanitation facilities and running water, which can lead girls to be absent during menstruation or to drop out prematurely. Low share of female teachers creates further challenge for access, especially for girls.

<sup>9</sup> While the DRC does not have any national student exams prior to grade 6, three recent learning assessments provide data on the learning levels of primary and lower secondary school-age children: (i) MICS household survey data; (ii) EGRA (reading) and EGMA (Math) 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade assessments, and (iii) PASEC language and math tests administered to students at the start and at the end of their primary schooling.

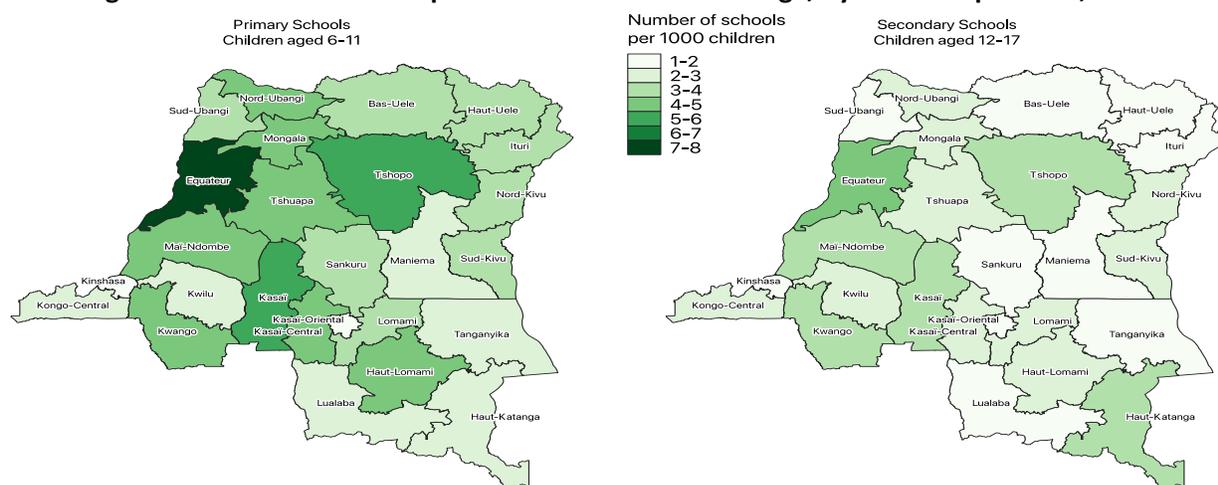
<sup>10</sup> <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/289621624877434754/pdf/Congo-Democratic-Republic-Learning-Poverty-Brief-2021.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Adelman, M., Faron de Goër, E., Sallami, M., and I. Trako. 2021. "Empowering Girls and Enhancing Learning in the DRC." World Bank, Washington, DC; Gauthier, B., Abouly, Y., and A. Y. Chang. 2021. "Service Delivery Indicators (SDIs) in DRC." World Bank, Washington, DC.



- **The secondary school network is limited, and existing secondary schools lack classrooms, leaving many children out of school.**<sup>12</sup> While at the primary level, supply still remains a constraint in many areas (Figure 4) with eight provinces (including Kinshasa) having 3 or fewer primary schools per 1,000 primary school-age children, at the secondary level, the school network is even more limited, with 10 provinces (including Kinshasa) having 1-2 secondary schools per 1,000 secondary school-age children and youth. Even if schools are relatively large in terms of enrollment, dispersed populations and lack of safe transportation networks mean that these levels of school supply are likely very inadequate. There are insufficient classrooms, particularly in Grades 7 and 8. Of the 27,168 public secondary schools, 7,391 have a student-classroom ratio (SCR) of 50 or above at Grade 7; at Grade 8, there are 5,237 such schools (MEPST, Geolocalisation database).

Figure 4: Number of schools per 1000 children of school age, by level and province, 2018



Source: Annuaire Statistique 2017-2018

- **The existing infrastructure in many government schools is inadequate.** Of the 208,317 public secondary classrooms, 16.5 percent are constructed of straw and leaves and 25.6 percent of clay. Only 3.6 percent of the schools have latrines; of these, 45.6 percent are made of straw and leaves. One of every five available classroom benches is in poor condition (Annuaire Statistique 2019/2020).
- **The scarcity of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, particularly lack of separate toilet facilities and water availability, and lack of health services can impact girl's performance** (Sperling and Winthrop 2015). In DRC, the availability of water and sanitation facilities tends to vary widely schools. Poor toilet facilities significantly affect young girls who have started to menstruate. The lack of private, gender-segregated toilets with running water creates difficulties for girls managing menstrual hygiene at school and makes it more likely that they stay home during menstruation. This lack of adequate facilities leads to gaps in their attendance, undermines their academic achievement, and increases the risk of them dropping out of school entirely.<sup>13</sup>

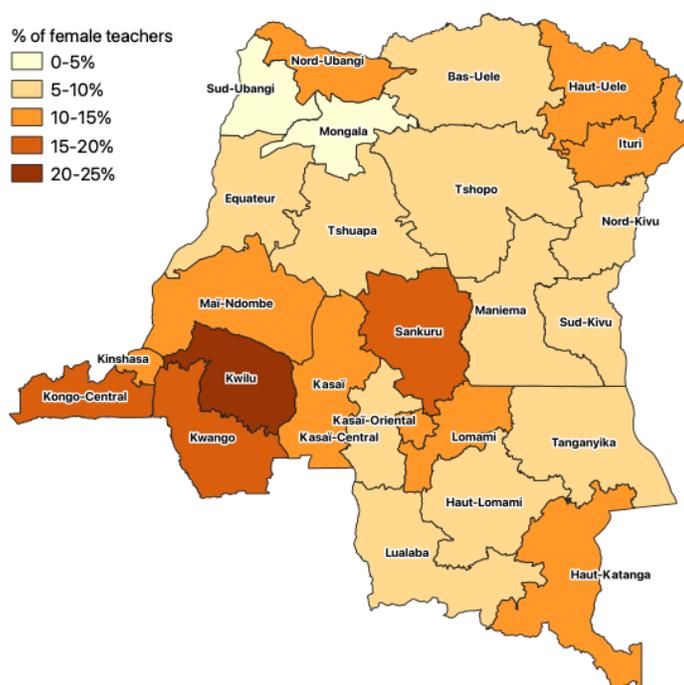
<sup>12</sup> The number of schools also drops dramatically after the primary level, from 53,451 primary schools to only 28,240 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> WaterAid reports that 7% of school-age girls in Malawi miss school on days of heavy bleeding during their menstrual period (House, Mahon, and Cavill, 2012). Other findings suggest that a girl can miss between 10% and 20% of the school year due to menstrual hygiene management-related issues (World Bank, 2005).



16. **There is a profound shortage of female teachers at the secondary level which leads to low outcomes in secondary education especially for girls.** Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. shows that female teachers represent only 10 percent of the workforce at the secondary level, on average. Global research has shown that teacher gender can have a positive impact on girl’s educational performance, especially in socially conservative cultures, where girls and women are isolated or segregated into sex-specific spaces and have less mobility, or where concerns are strong about physical or sexual violence against girls by teachers or students (Muralidharan & Sheth, 2016; Rawal & Kingdon, 2010; Makwati, Audinos, & Lairez, 2003; Chan, 2004). Research also suggests that hiring more female teachers is necessary in contexts where there is a great disparity in the ratio between male and female teachers and where social norms prevent girls from attending school with male teachers (Kirk, 2004; World Bank, 2005; Sperling & Winthrop, 2015).<sup>14</sup>

Figure 5: Proportion of female secondary school teachers, by province, 2018



Source: Annuaire Statistique 2017-2018

17. **Widespread harassment of students by teachers, including SEA/SH, against schoolgirls has been linked to dropouts in the DRC secondary schools.** Physical and sexual violence against girls is higher in DRC than in neighboring countries, with adolescent girls and younger women being particularly vulnerable to it, and local community engagement in school management practices is not sufficient to reduce such pervasiveness. Overall, DRC’s violence indicators tend to be significantly higher than the neighboring countries, especially for physical and sexual violence against adolescent girls. In particular, the data shows that in overall population more than half of girls aged between 15 and 19 have experienced physical violence and 21 percent sexual violence. In the school environment, the scarcity of female teachers is believed to contribute to this situation. Given the pervasiveness of violence in communities,

<sup>14</sup> Lee, Rhee, & Rudolf, (2019) analyzed over 31,000 sixth graders over 1,800 schools across 10 Francophone African countries and find that girls performed better than boys when taught by female teachers in both reading and math. Similarly, (Dickerson, McIntosh, & Valente, 2015) use earlier SACMEQ and the Programme d’Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC) rounds and find that regional characteristics (regional fertility rates, share of uneducated women, share of Muslims) can explain a large part of the variation in math scores across genders in 19 SSA countries.



without a strong anti-violence focus, accompanied by effective supervision and support, school and local leaders (including school directors, inspectors, and administrators) are unlikely to be able to create safe environments within schools. The WB-financed Emergency Equity And System Strengthening In Education (EESSE) Project (P172341) has explicitly incorporated measures to address these challenges in primary education, lessons from which can be translated to secondary education. In addition, evidence show that targeted attacks on schools in conflicts in Kasai central have disproportionately affected girls, including through sexual violence.<sup>15</sup>

18. **While the prevalence of early marriage and early pregnancies remains high in the DRC and frequently lead to the end to girls' schooling,<sup>16</sup> any efforts on informing communities, parents, and children (both girls and boys) about sexual and reproductive health are at the nascent stage.** In DRC, the age at which women and girls enter a formal union has increased slightly over time, but it is still quite early. Despite a law prohibiting marriage before the age of 18, in 2017/18 almost one-fifth of teenage girls aged 15-19 were married or cohabiting, and 5 percent of them were married or cohabiting before the age of 15.<sup>17</sup> Child marriage not only curtails a girl's education but also puts girls at a higher risk of early pregnancy and complicated childbirth. Trends in teenage pregnancy in DRC show a slight decline over time but they remain very high.<sup>18</sup> In 2017/18, almost one-fourth (23.4 percent) of teenage girls aged 15-19 has already had at least a child or is pregnant, with 2 percent being pregnant even before the age of 15.
19. **The quality of schooling and learning environment, which is critical for improving learning outcomes and retaining girls in school, is poor in the DRC.** Particularly these constraints are demonstrated by inadequate learning materials, shortage of qualified and trained teachers, lack of learning assessment system at the secondary level, and lack of life-skills for the girls who dropout.
20. **The lack of learning and teaching materials and their quality contributes to poor learning outcomes.** There is a severe shortage of textbooks and other teaching-learning materials and equipment. For example, in Grade 7 there is one French Language textbook for every 12.9 students, one Mathematics textbook for every 20.1 students, and one Science textbook for every 26.7 students. The ratios improve somewhat over the secondary cycle, but for Grade 12 still remain prohibitively high (7.5, 10.9 and 18.6, respectively). There is one computer for every 385 students, and one scientific kit (often incomplete) for every 1.5 schools (Annuaire Statistique 2019/2020).
21. **Existing teachers are inadequately skilled across the board including in STEM.** Across the country, there are not enough well-prepared teachers and even fewer teachers of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The WB-financed Quality and Relevance of Secondary and Tertiary Education Project (PEQPESU) (P149233) has enacted initiatives and pilots to improve the curricula in certain STEM subjects as well as train teachers on the delivery of those curricula, thereby laying foundations for increasing qualified teacher in STEM. Furthermore, in general there is a shortage of qualified teachers - data show that only 25 percent of secondary school teachers had post-secondary degree (Annuaire Statistique 2017/2018). Underqualified and under-trained teachers further gender stereotypes which can impede girls' education. In many classrooms, gender stereotypes are furthered by teachers assigning domestic roles to girls, such as cleaning and water collection, and not calling upon girls equally to participate actively in the classroom. Boys, on the other hand, are given more responsibilities and many educators still believe

<sup>15</sup> Global coalition to protect education from attack, "All That I Have Lost": Impact of Attacks on Education for Women and Girls in Kasai Central Province, Democratic Republic of Congo <https://protectingeducation.org/publication/all-that-i-have-lost-impact-of-attacks-on-education-for-women-and-girls-in-kasai-central-province-democratic-republic-of-congo/>

<sup>16</sup> Note that the relationship between early pregnancies and marriages and schooling can go in both directions. On the one hand, early pregnancies and marriages frequently lead to girls dropping out of schools; on the other hand, lack of access to schools may results also in early marriages and pregnancies.

<sup>17</sup> MICS 2017/18. Data from the 2013/14 DHS report show that 41.5 percent of women aged 20-49 are married before the age of 18, and 13 percent are married before the age of 15.

<sup>18</sup> The main causes of teenage pregnancy in Africa include sexual exploitation and abuse, poverty, lack of information about sexuality and reproduction, and lack of access to services such as family planning and modern contraception.



them to have greater learning abilities, in particular in the STEM fields (Frei & Leowinata, 2014). Few teachers in DRC are provided training to challenge these biases and support adolescent girls through guidance and counseling. While many partner-led initiatives have addressed sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools, the majority of teachers have not received training on these or broader gender issues.<sup>19</sup>

22. **The teacher training system is administered by two separate ministries.** Preschool and primary school teacher pre-service training is housed under the Ministry of Primary, Secondary Education and Vocational Training (MEPST), while the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for pre-service teacher training for secondary school teachers. The in-service teacher training is under the responsibility of the Department of the Training (DIFOR-BG) and the National Service of Training (SERNAFOR) of the MEPST. There is a disconnect between pre-service and in-service training, as well as between training in general and the needs that teachers have in the classrooms. Finally, due to the lower participation rates and higher dropout rates of the girls in the secondary education very few girls make it to the university to eventually be trained and become teachers at the secondary school which contributes to the low share of female teachers at the secondary level.
23. **There is a little or no use of digital technologies as means to support professional development and teachers' classroom practices.** Given the critical role that teachers play in the classroom, there is a pressing need for a harmonized teacher development system to be in place. The system should be based on clearly articulated standards, provide sustainable opportunities for continuous professional development and place a greater emphasis on school-based teacher development approaches that incorporate greater use of information technologies. There is substantial evidence that teacher professional practice is developed most effectively in the classroom and school settings, provided they receive sustained support from their peers and school leaders and are provided with complementary materials.<sup>20</sup> The supply and use of complementary materials should take advantage of low-cost digital solutions, which provided they are used to support strengthened teaching-learning practices have been shown in different settings to lead to improved teaching practices and children's learning involvement.<sup>21</sup>
24. **Lack of established assessment system and the culture of regular formative assessment in classrooms makes it impossible to monitor the regular learning progress of students at the secondary education.** The international assessments, e.g., EGRA/EGMA conducted in 2019 and PASEC 2019, at the primary level demonstrate low learning outcomes. However, there is no established system of learning assessment in secondary education, except for the final school leaving exam, as well as in-classroom teacher observation and support, making it impossible to monitor student progress on a regular basis and make course correction both to improve classroom- and system-level results.
25. **Adolescent girls, who dropout from secondary school, not only have very low foundational skills, but also frequently lack any life-skills which will help them to integrate into labor markets.** As a result, after dropping out for various reasons, e.g., because of early pregnancy and childbearing or to support in household in doing chores and

<sup>19</sup> See for example the following blog from Chemonics: [Making schools safe across the Democratic Republic of Congo](#).

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Westbrook, J., Durrani, N., Brown, R., Orr, D., Pryor, J., Boddy, J., and Salvi, F. (2013). Pedagogy, curriculum, teaching practices and teacher education in developing countries: final report. Education rigorous literature review, EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. pp. 61-62.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion on the successful use of digital technologies and open education resources in Bangladesh, see e.g. Power, T., Shaheen, R., Solly, M., Woodward, C., and Burton, S. (2012). English in Action: School Based Teacher Development in Bangladesh. *The Curriculum Journal*, 23(4):503–529. The Sub-Saharan African consortium 'Teacher Education in SSA, TESSA' has found that the combination of digital technologies and education resources has had a 'significant impact on changing the identity and practices of teacher educators and a profound impact on teachers themselves.' Hartley, K. and Barasa, F. (2012) Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Formative Evaluation Report, p. 24. See also Wolfenden, F., Buckler, A. and Keraro, F. (2012) OER Adaptation and Reuse across cultural contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons from TESSA (Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa) *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*. Pp. 16 ff.



raising young siblings, they are not equipped with basic financial literacy or negotiations skills to eventually integrate in labor market or start entrepreneurial activities.

#### Relationship to CPF

26. **The proposed Project would be ensconced within the DRC's Country Partnership Strategy for the period FY 22-26 particularly its significant shift toward the human development sectors. The proposed Project's would be fully aligned with the CPF's Focus Area 2: Strengthen systems for improved service delivery and human capital development.** The proposed Project will contribute directly to the following within this focus area: (I) strengthen systems to increase access to and quality of services in education; (ii) improve access to basic infrastructure services (WASH); electricity, classrooms; and (iii) improve gender disparities and inclusion across sectors. Moreover, the proposed project would apply all three of the CPF's cross cutting themes namely, climate change, gender and governance. The cross-cutting theme of gender in the CPF is aligned with IDA20 focus on gender and development, aiming to reduce persistent gaps and inequities linked to gender in DRC while robustly addressing GBV the proposed project will directly contribute to this.
27. **The Project would be also aligned with the World Bank's Strategy for Africa which has a strong focus on girls and women**, in particular two of its priorities: (i) to invest in people and (ii) to make institutions more efficient and accountable. It also contributes directly to the World Bank Education Global Practice's focus on ending learning poverty, which aims to ensure that, at a minimum, all children go to school and learn to read.
28. **The Project would also contribute to the IDA20 human capital cross-cutting theme** specifically its emphasis on girls' education that prioritizes investments in four key areas: (a) removing barriers to girls' schooling; (b) promoting safe and inclusive schools for girls; (c) improving the quality of education for girls and boys; and (d) developing skills for life and labor market success for young women.
29. **Moreover, the Project would contribute greatly to progress towards the achievement of the education objectives of the National Strategic Development Plan (2019-2023) and the first strategic axis of the DRC's Education Sector Plan (2016-2025)** which aims to expand access and ensure quality, through implementing an effective policy for free primary education.

#### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve equitable access and teaching and learning conditions at secondary schools, particularly for girls with the focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in selected provinces

#### Key Results (From PCN)

The proposed Project aims to achieve the following PDO results:

- NER (or student participation) by gender in lower secondary in selected provinces – outcome
- Number of teachers using practices from training in classrooms
- Teachers recruited or trained (CRI)
- Students benefit from direct interventions to enhance learning (CRI)

Selected provinces include Ituri, Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, and South Kivu. The selection was based on the lowest girls' net enrollment rate and highest gender disparities in lower secondary education in 5 out of 9 provinces which are included in the CPF.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Among the CPF-targeted provinces, the provinces with the lowest secondary participation rates (1<sup>st</sup> cycle) are: Kasai (3.1%), Kasai Central (11.3%), Ituri (12%), and Kasai Oriental (20.4%); while among the remaining provinces, South Kivu has the second greatest gender disparity (27.5%)



## D. Concept Description

30. **The proposed Project would be implemented over a four-year period using an investment project financing (IPF) modality.** In order to benefit from existing systems in the sector that are in the process of being strengthened as well as complementary Bank operations (e.g., Nutrition project under implementation and WASH project under preparation), the Project would focus on five of the nine target provinces of the DRC CPF. The Project would also put in place the fundamentals (currently missing in secondary schooling), to create a learning environment and hence behavior change amongst males and female that is safe, inclusive and free of sexual abuse, exploitation and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) including the introduction of Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) education in secondary classrooms. This would include the piloting of programs for both girls in schools and those who have dropped out in order to provide them with an opportunity to learn life skills and improve where possible, their livelihoods.

### Component 1: Empowering Girls through Improved Access to Quality Schools

31. The objective of this component is to improve access to school through the creation of quality learning environments and increasing the proportion of female teachers.

#### *Subcomponent 1.1: Improving learning environments*

32. The objective of this subcomponent is to increase access to quality, girl-friendly and inclusive learning environments, including for children who are refugees, internally displaced or with disabilities. In the poorest urban and rural areas, the Project would finance the construction, furnishing and equipping of 3,000 disabled-accessible and eco-sensitive classrooms, including classrooms to study science and technology. It will also finance the construction of disabled-accessible latrines at 1,000 schools with facilities for menstrual hygiene management and handwashing, as well as water-point or rain-capture technology. The infrastructure would be equipped to mitigate risks posed by climate change and natural hazards, including strategically situated rooms that can serve as shelters in times of crises. Where required, the Project would also finance the construction of office space for the Director and teachers, and the supply of solar panels. Selection criteria for communities would be finalized during preparation, and would include for example: (a) availability of a school within 30 minutes' walk; (b) a school exists but is not built with durable materials or is dilapidated beyond repair; (c) an agreement with the community to maintain and clean the school as per commitments to be elaborated in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM); (d) a student-classroom ratio well in excess of the national average; and (e) in the case of schools where only latrines are financed, the latrines are either unavailable or beyond repair. Schools would be selected using a geo-localized database of schools completed under the Bank-financed EESSE Project (P172341). The Project would also support the development of new building standards prior to the start of civil works, based on work done by other development partners and other Bank-financed operations.

#### *Subcomponent 1.2: Increasing the proportion of female teachers*

33. The objective of this subcomponent is to increase the proportion of female teachers, with a particular focus on STEM subjects. The Project would finance (i) a campaign to raise awareness among young women about teaching careers and opportunities (ii) conditional scholarships for female teacher trainees. and (iii) bonus payments both to the training institution and the trainee upon successful graduation and her signing of a contract to teach at a public secondary school in the project provinces. The Project will provide technical assistance to support the MEPST to

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for girls vs. 35% for boys). See MICS 2019.



develop a policy to promote female participation in teacher training, as well as to increase the proportion of female teachers.

*Subcomponent 1.3: Ensuring safe and inclusive access for girls*

34. The objective of this subcomponent is to promote girls sustained participation in education by ensuring that schools are safe and inclusive, with a particular focus on eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse/harassment (SEA/SH). The Project would finance communications campaigns including awareness-raising sessions for school and community members to promote girls' participation in education, establish and promote a policy of non-violence and inclusion, create a learning environment with zero tolerance for SEA/SH, roll-out of codes of conduct and related accountability measures to target schools, disseminate sanctions for non-compliance, complaints submission, and care available and monitoring for safety and inclusion. Building on mechanisms established in the Bank-financed EESSE Project (P172341), each school would establish a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) committee made up of local stakeholders, with at least one female focal point responsible for SEA/SH issues to be identified in a participatory manner and through students' engagement; and each teacher would sign the recently updated Code of Conduct that specifies prohibited behaviors including sexual, physical and emotional violence as well as discrimination and outlines the accountability and response framework including sanctions for non-compliance. School-level focal points would be trained on how to deal with complaints according to the accountability and response framework, including how to receive complaints, provide basic psychosocial support and refer sexual assault cases to emergency medical care. They would also be trained and provided with resources to establish and operate girls' clubs that focus on empowering girls and their families to attend school and to challenge social norms that harm girls' well-being.
35. The school GRM committee would be linked with existing education GRM focal points at the local (sous-Province), provincial and national levels, to enable the referral of grievance cases as needed. The Project would also finance on a cost-sharing basis the operations of an existing education sector national hotline (*Allô Ecole*) to receive grievances through voice calls and SMS messages free-of-charge. The Project would finance the strengthening of the operators' capacity on intake and management of SEA/H complaints, including the referral of cases to the relevant MEPST department based on the accountability and response framework, as well as on how to support persons with disabilities with resource information and referrals. All GRM SEA/SH-specific channels would be designed to allow for the safe and confidential disclosure, documentation, response and management of SEA/SH grievances, including the update of referral pathways developed under the EESSE Project. Regarding services for survivors, the Project would also finance psychosocial support, referral to medical case in cases of sexual assault, and the purchase and prepositioning of Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits and related training in select provinces where existing stock is inadequate, building on the efforts put in place by the primary education project.

**Component 2: Empowering Girls through Improved Quality of Teaching-Learning**

36. The objective of this component is to empower students, particularly girls, through an improved availability and quality of teaching-learning resources and practices

*Subcomponent 2.1: Strengthening the Curriculum, Textbooks, and Teaching-Learning Materials*

37. The objectives of this subcomponent are to strengthen the curriculum and increase the availability and use of quality, affordable and gender-sensitive textbooks and teaching materials. The Project would finance the following activities (i) revision of the secondary school and secondary teacher training curricula to incorporate sexual and reproductive health, both curricula would also be reviewed through a gender lens and strengthened; (ii) strengthening of guidelines for textbook developers and suppliers, to ensure that textbooks are aligned with curriculum revisions, incorporating *inter alia* sexual and reproductive health, and positive representations of girls and women, particularly



in STEM subjects; (iii) a series of workshops for national textbook and teaching-learning materials writers and publishers on the development of textbooks, particularly for STEM, with a view to strengthen their capacities to produce affordable textbooks and other teaching-learning materials; (iv) printing and distribution of a set of textbooks for each public secondary school in the Project provinces, with a focus on STEM subjects. Schools would receive a set with sufficient books to have one textbook per two students, as well as a case for storing the books; along with guidance for the teacher and director on how to use the textbook for classroom instruction and homework, and to manage the use and conservation of the books; and (v) the purchase and delivery of a set of natural sciences teaching-learning materials (building on and complementing the kits provided under a prior Bank-financed operation, P149233); a digital device; a projector; and, where needed, a solar panel to recharge the digital device and projector. The digital device would be loaded with teaching-learning resources to support STEM subjects, including digital labs.

#### *Subcomponent 2.2: Strengthening the quality of teaching*

38. The objective of this subcomponent is to strengthen the quality of teaching at public secondary schools. At the teacher training level, the Project would finance (i) the development of training modules on sexual and reproductive health, to be incorporated into the teacher training curriculum; as well as of a module (particularly targeted at female teacher trainees), on how to mentor girls on empowerment including to pursue STEM-related studies and careers; and (ii) the training of IPST faculty on how to deliver these modules to their teacher trainees.
39. At the secondary school level, the Project would finance the design and implementation of a model of local continuous professional development (CPD) including (i) the development of a model that uses a valid approach and instrument to measure teacher practices, identify areas in need of strengthening, and provide continuous feedback; and that can be linked to local inspection and in-service training services; (ii) the training on how to implement the model in all public secondary schools in the Project provinces, covering teachers, school directors and the local pedagogical support staff visiting the schools. School directors and teachers would be trained to use the tool to perform regular classroom observations and provide feedback and mentoring. Local officials would also be trained to perform regular classroom observation using the instrument, to provide tailored and actionable feedback to teachers during their regular visits, and to guide teachers and directors for mutual coaching in between the local officer visits, as well as to aggregate findings from classroom observations to provide focus and material for local pedagogical days; and (iii) the acquisition of digital tools and materials for schools participating in the CPD training, such that there is one digital device each for the school director, inspector and *animateur pédagogique* attached to the school. The digital devices would be preloaded with content related to the training and the CPD activities at school.
40. The design of the training content would be informed by a baseline evaluation of teaching-learning practices (see subcomponent 2.3). In addition to digital skills (to use the digital devices supplied under the project), ethics, GBV, FCV sensitivities, climate change, inclusive education and safe schools, trainings would focus on the following four areas: (a) *key teaching-learning practices*, including formative assessments to identify children falling behind and at risk of dropping out; (b) *classroom management techniques*, including the management of large groups and leveraging peer instruction; (c) the *creation of a pedagogical culture at school and local levels*, including (as elaborated in the previous paragraph) classroom observation and feedback by directors, inspectors, pedagogical facilitators, and other teachers; (d) the support of female teachers and the promotion of girls' empowerment; and (e) the use of the digital materials supplied to support STEM teaching including the use of the digital labs.

#### *Subcomponent 2.3: Strengthened systems for education quality assurance*

41. The objective of this subcomponent is to ensure the availability and use of information pertaining to the quality of education. The Project would finance (i) the development or adaptation of a valid approach and instrument for measuring classroom teaching-learning practices at the secondary level. This instrument would be used by the CPD



model supported under subcomponent 2.2 and will include a baseline sample-based observation of practices in Project schools, to establish baseline information that would be used to support the design of the training of teachers, school directors and local pedagogical support personnel and school directors foreseen under subcomponent 2.2; as well as at least one follow-up sample-based observation to gain insight into changes in teaching-learning practices that have followed the introduction of the local CPD model; (ii) the development of a learning assessment tool for Grade 8; as well as the strengthening of the terminal exam administered at the end of Grade 12 to certify graduation from secondary school.

### **Component 3: Empowering Girls through the Provision of Life Skills, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation**

42. The objectives of this Component are to provide life skills and knowledge to generate income and promote sexual and reproductive health for girls; and to ensure that capacities and systems are in place to achieve project results while adhering to corporate safeguards and requirements, including those pertaining to fiduciary functions and monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

#### *Subcomponent 3.1: Providing income-generating and life skills to adolescent girls and improving health knowledge and practices*

43. The objective of this subcomponent is to improve health knowledge and practices among secondary school students and out-of-school adolescents through girls' clubs including the piloting of income-generating opportunities and life skills. The Project would finance (i) the development of a package of sexual and reproductive health information materials for adolescents. The package would be a culturally appropriate program that includes sex education, rights education, prevention strategies for sexually transmitted infections/HIV and AIDS and pregnancies, prevention of early marriages, information on alcohol and drug abuse, mental health information, and SEA/SH awareness; (ii) the printing and delivery of the materials to 2,000 public secondary schools, as well as the training of female teachers, parents and other key community members, and the mobilization of NGOs to enable its delivery; and (iii) the package delivery through a series of extracurricular sessions throughout the school year, with some sessions delivered to both sexes, others to girls and their mothers (or other female caregiver), and some targeted at boys to focus on themes of positive masculinity; out of school adolescents would also be mobilized and encouraged to participate. To support the delivery of sessions to girls and their mothers, the Project would finance local NGOs to support the establishment of girls' clubs; club sessions would also address various themes of female empowerment.

44. Furthermore, on a pilot basis, the Project would finance civil society organizations to establish and operate 50 adolescent development clubs in South Kivu. The clubs would be targeted at girls who are either in or out of school, including those who are survivors or at risk of sexual violence, with a view to creating safe spaces for girls to learn and to meet and socialize with other adolescent girls. The clubs would work to build human capital through the simultaneous provision of market-relevant skills in vocational trades, entrepreneurship and financial literacy; and of life skills empowering girls to make informed choices about sex, reproduction and marriage. To these ends, the Project would finance trainings, equipment and operating costs to enable the clubs to operate. The proposed Project would explore girls' club models that have shown positive results in countries such as Uganda, where safe spaces are created for child survivors and others at risk of sexual violence. The clubs would also provide peer-to-peer learning, empowerment and life skills courses, as well as entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

#### *Subcomponent 3.2: Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation*

45. This subcomponent would finance project operating costs, including *inter alia* personnel costs associated with hiring/seconding staff and contracting technical assistance for the Project Coordination Team (PCT), equipment, supervision costs and incremental operating costs at departments working on project implementation. Finally, the



component would finance activities for monitoring, evaluating and reporting. As well as an overall project evaluation, the Project would finance specific evaluations of the scholarships for teacher trainees (subcomponent 1.2), as well as of the girls' clubs and SRH interventions (subcomponent 3.1) in collaboration with DIME and GIL.

**Component 4: Contingency Emergency Response (CERC) (US\$ 0).**

- 46. A no-cost CERC would be included in accordance with World Bank Investment Project Financing (IPF) Policy (paragraphs 12 and 13) for projects in Situations of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints. This would allow for rapid reallocation of project proceeds in the event of a natural or man-made disaster or crisis that has caused, or is likely to imminently cause, a major adverse economic and/or social impact.
- 47. **The Project would also include cross-cutting areas throughout different components** including harnessing the technology to strengthen implementation of project activities as well as support teaching and learning processes at the school level; taking a multidimensional approach to reducing the gender gap, for example, through encouraging female teacher recruitment, revising curricula through a gender lens, as well as designing explicit interventions targeting girls; and being inclusive of children with disabilities through capital, e.g., rehabilitation/construction, and soft interventions, e.g., teacher training, curriculum adaptations.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The project is rated Moderate for Environmental risks, Substantial for Social risks, and High for SEA/SH risks. The anticipated Environmental risks and impacts of the proposed project are minor, localized and can be avoided or minimized. Those risks will be generated by the implementation of activities under subcomponent 1.1, construction, furnishing and equipping of disabled-accessible and eco-sensitive classrooms as well as a science and technology laboratory; disabled-accessible latrines with facilities for menstrual hygiene management and handwashing; a water-point or rain-capture technology, girl's latrine and of office space for the Director and teachers but also the supply of solar panels. The adverse risks and impacts are mainly linked to civil works and may include occupational health and safety of workers, community health and safety, waste generation, soil erosion and runoff, fugitive dust and air emissions, noise from construction, traffic safety risks (from vehicles transporting construction materials to or from project sites), potential hazardous materials and oil spills associated with equipment operation, risks related to COVID-19 pandemic, community exposure to diseases, hazardous materials and emergency preparedness. These potential adverse risks and impacts are expected to be medium scale, reversible, of limited duration (construction phase) and site-specific and, can be managed through application of appropriate mitigation measures.

Potential Social issues and risks include SEA/SH risks and violence against beneficiaries at the hand of teaching personnel and other school-related staff, conflict (specifically in Ituri, Kasai, and South Kivu), risks of GBV among beneficiaries of project activities, resettlement activities as a result of the planned civil works (rehabilitation and construction activities of schools and WASH facilities), potential labor influx as a result of construction works and labor issues (child labor, poor labor practices, insufficient wages), discriminatory employment (recruitment, retention and promotion of women as teachers and directors, including women from IP communities and other marginalized groups), and community or



household level social tensions as a result of its strong focus on providing benefits for girls and women. The risks and impacts will be identified in the ESF instruments that will be prepared at various stages of the project cycle, and these will also propose specific measures to address the risks and impacts in a manner that is commensurate with the risk.

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