

Education for All in Public Primary Schools: An Analysis of Practices and Perspectives in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Abstract: *Everyone has the right to education according to article 26 of human rights. No nation knows that the future of every citizen in a modern society depends on the nature of the education received. Developed nations have implemented it successfully for decades. However, African countries, namely the Democratic Republic of Congo, are following in the footsteps of certain African nations in implementing free education. The application of free basic education is not without requirements; the organizing authority must observe certain prerogatives for the success of an exercise of this magnitude.*

Keywords: Basic education, Integral education, free public school

1. Introduction

Choice and Interest of the Study

Integral education is the basis of the future of every citizen, and of an entire society. Some people are aware that it is the guarantee of the successful social integration of any child. Since ancient times, wise men have raised their voice for the universalization of education or to fight for education for all. Of course, every family is concerned about the education of its children. Everyone, however, is aware that without school attendance, the educational efforts of families remain vain or incomplete.

It is in this context that Confucius said that his teaching was intended for everyone, and without distinction. Among his learners were both common people and nobles, [...] <https://www.grainesdepaix.org> accessed 06/14/2024.

Several African nations, including the DRC, have projected towards the year 2030 the achievement of the maximum rate of school attendance, on educational philosophy which would open the way towards the integral development of the nation, because illiteracy is both a scourge and a hindrance to development. Therefore, the implementation of free basic education in this country is an attempt to develop the educational sector.

Indeed, integral education is the only means by which the child is formed to become a "MAN". As Erasmus said: "Man is not born a man, he becomes one through education. » We must therefore think about educating man. Here is reason to be concerned about education, because to build productive, creative people, they need good education. School is at the heart of concerns because it is within it through different interactions that the child is helped to become a "MAN".

The concern of education for all is not of Congolese origin, it is rather since ancient times that this concern has marked the minds of wise people. It was for this reason that around the 18th century Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle created a school where he put into practice education for all and free [...]. He refused to control the financial state of the families who entrusted their children to him. It guaranteed free access for

all. Even the ink was distributed free, [...] Yves POULET in classic literature /1991/n°14/p.179 - 201.

The function of education is to learn to think intensely and to think critically. Intelligence plus character is the beginning of true education. Martin Luther King <https://www.peace.ed-campaign.org>

Under this impulse, developed countries have provided free education to their youth. Since the 19th century; Driven by the spirit of globalization, African countries are following in the footsteps of developed countries. It is with this in mind that the Democratic Republic of Congo has been committed since 2019 to making free primary education effective throughout the national territory. A reform which finds its basis in article 43 of the national constitution of 2006.

2. Problem and Hypothesis

It should be noted that the unilateral generalization of this measure is not without limits in its practices. Daily life in public primary schools in urban areas has led us to ask ourselves the following fundamental questions:

- What would be the opinions of primary school teachers about the practice of education for all applied in public schools?
- Does the option for education for all, implemented in all public primary schools, really benefit learners?

In relation to the questions thus posed, we respond in advance in these terms:

In accordance with the first question, the opinions of teachers in primary schools in urban areas would be diversified in relation to the effectiveness of education for all, for several reasons, including working conditions, overcrowded classes, monthly salary ...

As for the second question, the answer is formulated as follows: the practice of education for all, implemented in public primary schools, would not benefit learners trained under current conditions. That is to say unequipped schools, very poorly motivated teachers, overcrowded classes...

3. Objective

Undertaking this study, the objective is first to clarify the opinions of teaching staff regarding the implementation of the philosophy of education for all in primary schools, then to elucidate their impressions on the level of learners, and finally to make suggestions regarding the subject.

To achieve these objectives, we will use the survey method, materialized by a questionnaire and an interview for data collection. For counting, we will use direct processing for closed questions and content analysis for open questions. As for the statistical treatment, we will use percentages.

Methodology and Scope of Investigation

This study was conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a nation that embraces the philosophy of achieving education for all. Given the size of its territory and the galloping population, ensuring education for all is one of the greatest challenges.

In order to verify our hypotheses, we will use a survey method, materialized by a questionnaire to collect the data. Analysis by direct processing for closed questions and content analysis for closed questions. As for treatment, we resorted to percentage. It should be noted in passing that this study was carried out in approved Catholic primary schools in the city of Likasi, the said city is located 120 km from the city of Lubumbashi, the capital of the Haut - Katanga province.

Population

The population of our research is made up of primary school teachers in the Catholic network managed by the diocesan coordination of Likasi. Thirteen (13) schools were randomly selected from whose teachers took part in this study, constituting a total of 178 participants. From this number we obtained a weighted stratified random sample of 123 subjects.

Table 1: Presentation of the research population

N°	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE	%
1	EP. UTASHI	23	13
2	EP. UHAKI	23	13
3	EP. KITIMIZO	6	3
4	EP. UHAKI II	6	3
5	EP. CHEM - CHEM 2	13	7
6	EP. CHEM - CHEM 3	13	7
7	EP CHEM - CHEM 4	12	7
8	EP. CHEM - CHEM 5	12	7
9	EP. KITUMAINI	11	6
10	EP. KITUMAINI 3	12	7
11	EP. UZIMA 1	18	10
12	EP. UZIMA 2	17	10
13	EP. SAINT FRANCOIS	12	7
Total		178	100

Source: Establishment obtained from schools involved in the research

Table 1 presents the distribution of the numbers of the study population in 13 primary schools. The size of our research population is 178 participants distributed as follows: the UTASHI and UHAKI schools each have 23 teachers, or 13% of the overall population. EP KITIMIZO and UHAKI II each have 6 teachers, or 3% of the overall population. E. P. CHEM - CHEM 2, 3, 4, and 5, each account for 7% of the total

workforce; the p. KITUMAINI and KITUMAINI 3 account for 6% and 7%, the E. P UZIMA 1 and UZIMA 2 each represent 10%, while the E. P SAINT FRANÇOIS accounts for 7% of this workforce.

Sample

Taking this population into account, we deemed it appropriate to use a sample. We selected a weighted stratified random sample. We started by calculating the sampling rate using the formula n/N where "n" represents the size of the expected sample, and "N" that of the total population. In order to respect the weight of each stratum in the population as well as in the sample, we used the following formula: $n_i = (n/N) \times N_i$ where N_i is the size of each stratum. Following the operations we obtained a sample which we present in table no.2 below.

Table 2: Presentation of the research sample

No.	School	Effective	%
1	EP. UTASHI	16	13
2	EP. UHAKI	16	13
3	EP. KITIMIZO	4	3
4	EP. UHAKI II	4	3
5	EP. CHEM - CHEM 2	9	7
6	EP. CHEM - CHEM 3	9	7
7	EP CHEM - CHEM 4	8	7
8	EP. CHEM - CHEM 5	8	7
9	EP. KITUMAINI	8	7
10	EP. KITUMAINI 3	8	7
11	EP. UZIMA 1	13	10
12	EP. UZIMA 2	12	10
13	EP. SAINT FRANCOIS	8	7
Total		123	100

Source: results of sampling operations.

Table 2 presents the overall situation of our study sample. We observed equal representation in relation to the study population. At the end of the operations, the E. P. UTASHI and UHAKI each represent 13% of the population size, E. P. KITIMIZO and UHAKI II each represent 3%, while CHEM - CHEM 2, 3, 4, 5, KITUMAINI and KITUMAINI3 and EP. SAINT FRANÇOIS each represent 7%, EP UZIMA 1 and 2 have respectively 10 and 9 percent of the research workforce.

4. Results

In this part of the study, we present the results of our investigations, highlighting the indicators analyzed in this approach. Thus, we analyzed the considerations of field agents regarding the implementation of education for all or the effectiveness of this educational philosophy. We present and analyze the different questions in order of the questionnaire, that is to say question by question in small tables.

Table 3: For or against free education.

Position	Frequency	%
All right	53	43
Frequencies Disagree	70	57
Total	123	100

Table no.3 shows the idea that 53 participants, or 43%, are for the application of free service, while 70 participants, or 57%, are against this practice.

Table 4: The enthusiasm of teachers for their profession during this period.

Position	Frequency	%
Yes	39	31,7
No	84	68,3
Total	123	100

Reading table no.4 tells us that 39 participants, or 31.7%, attest to being enthusiastic about the teaching service in public primary schools.

Table 5: Great concern among primary school teachers.

Worry	Frequency	%
under payment	111	90,2
Overcrowded classes	12	9,8
Total	123	100

Table no.5 tells us that 90.2% of teachers are seriously concerned about underpayment, and that 9.8% deplore overcrowded classes.

Table 6: State of mind of teachers.

Position	Frequency	%
Sad	77	62,6
Worried	32	26
Irritated	14	11,3
Total	123	99,9

Table no.6 provides us with the information that 62% of teachers are sad when going to service, 26% are worried and 11.3% are angry.

Table 7: Question n°5. Quality of training given to learners.

Quality	Frequency	%
bad	71	57,7
sloppy	46	37,3
Good	6	4,8
Total	123	99,8

It emerges from reading the table above that 57.7% attest that the quality of training is poor, 37.3% simply attest that the training is shoddy. However, 4.8% attest to providing good quality training.

Table 8: Level of Training

Level of training	Frequency	%
Very low	76	61,7
poor	41	33,3
Good	6	4,8
Total	123	99,8

Table no.8 informs us that 61.7% of teachers find that currently the level of training is very low, 41% even find that the level has become mediocre, however 4.8% attest that the level of education is good in primary schools.

Table 9: Increase in service.

Position	Frequency	%
Living condition	69	56
Lack of motivation	31	25,2
Pressure from inspectors	23	18,6
Total	123	99,8

From reading table no.7, the idea emerges according to which 56% of participants attest that living conditions make the

service more difficult, lack of motivation for 25.2% and pressure from inspectors for 18.6%.

Table 10: The future of primary school.

Position	Frequency	%
Dark and without future	117	95,1
We keep hope	6	4,8
Total	123	99,9

Table no.10 tells us that 95.1% are convinced that the future of primary school is bleak, in other words the school has no future, however 4.8% remain hopeful.

Table 11: Feeling that teachers enroll their children in public primary schools.

Position	Frequency	%
Woory, children are sacrificed	117	95,1
Acceptable	6	4,8
Total	123	99,9

From reading Table No.11, the idea emerges that 95.1% of teachers attest that they are worried about enrolling their children in public schools, they confirm their offspring is sacrificed.

Table 12: Ask the organizing authority

Position	Frequency	%
Improved living conditions	123	100
Total	123	100

It appears from this table that the participants hope for an improvement in living conditions from the organizing power.

5. Interpretation of Results

In this century, no one is unaware of the importance of a successful education for each child. Integral education has been recognized for centuries for the good of the entire city. Auguste Comte cited by J. DELVOLVE, (1928, p.409 - 432), attested without explicitly using the concept integral education wanted that the essential of the positive truth be provided to all youth, by means of a rigorously limited initiation to the highest scientific generalities...

At a time when a real "market of suffering at work" is emerging, it is essential to give those who deal with this topic a better understanding of the methodological reflections and statistical mechanisms that allow to assign a "price" to this suffering and its share of individual and collective consequences. Marc LASSAGNE et al, (2012)

It should be understood that teachers working in public primary schools are not against the practice of free education, rather they express a feeling of concern, taking into account their experiences and their family responsibilities. Certainly anyone who finds a job hopes to live better on the income from their job. The teachers making up our sample give the appearance that they are against the practice of free education. There is no question of it, lows hurt motivation.

Laurène BOUSSE (2023), attests that motivation allows a person to achieve their professional objectives and contributes to their satisfaction. It strengthens the competitiveness and performance of organizations. Lack of

motivation leads to disengagement and an increase in the rate of absenteeism. [...] motivation is not based solely on the personal will of the employee. It is also linked to economic, social and environmental factors. It corresponds to what encourages everyone to achieve their with the objectives and to invest in the company's projects.

Indeed, the primary school teacher is demotivated because he is no longer able to live on from his job income. The aforementioned author determines the sources of demotivation among which we point out remuneration, quality of life, working conditions and recognition and disconsideration.

Stephen ROBBINS et al, (2014, p.353) attest that effective managers, those who know how to guide their employees in the right direction, always know what specifically motivates them and ensure that they implement appropriate management practices., corresponding to the expectations and real needs of the employees to be motivated.

Salary embodies an indisputable lever of motivation at work. Remuneration is one of the key elements of motivation. Faced with the reduction in purchasing power and lower inflation, remuneration becomes a major source of demotivation at work.

In addition, primary school teachers accuse a lack of recognition and consideration by the organizing authorities of the educational sectors pecially of during this difficult period. To this end, the data collected in the 7th question proved that living conditions and pressure from inspectors increase their performance.

Abram MASLOW's pyramid determines the factors that favor or disfavor motivation depending on whether they are respected or not. Physiological needs, security, belonging, esteem... to the extent that these factors are not satisfied, workers become demotivated. For this purpose, Alfred (1969) cited by Patrice ROUSSEL (2000) said that motivation would depend on the intensity of a need, itself linked to the degree of satisfaction of the desire.

Regarding the participants in this study, they are demotivated for several reasons, as MASLOW determines the physiological needs, security, belonging, esteem. . . Employees see themselves abandoned by their employer, in the meantime they are under pressure of the inspection controle. The inspectors seem to ignore the calamitous situation of teachers.

Indeed, it is clear to understand that a motivated person puts in more effort and works hard. However, not only the intensity of the effort but also the quality must be taken into account. (Idem, p.354)

6. Conclusion

It no longer needs to be demonstrated that any society develops according to the level and nature of the instruction that young people receive through the educational system. Poor nations have remained mostly theoretical than practical

in this matter. (The declarations on the education of young people are not effective, that is to say not put into practice).

To begin this study, we started from the observation relating to the effectiveness of free basic education in the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to the 2006 constitution. This practical application led us to ask ourselves two questions formulated as follows:

- What would be the opinions of primary school teachers about the practice of education for all applied in public schools?
- Does the option for education for all, implemented in all public primary schools, really benefit learners?
- Hypothetically, we responded in these terms:

The opinions of primary school teachers in urban areas would be diversified in relation to the effectiveness of free basic education, for several factors, including work conditions, overcrowded classes, monthly salary, etc.

To the second question, the answer was formulated as follows: the practice of education for all, implemented in public primary schools, would not be beneficial to learners trained in current conditions. That is to say, unequipped schools, very poorly motivated teachers, overcrowded classes...

At the end of the field trip, collection and processing of data, the following results emerged. Opinions are really diverse between those who accept the practice of teaching for all and those who are against it. The root of the problem is that the purchasing power of teachers has declined significantly, to the point that their work seems like a chore. Given the low monthly income, the working conditions, and the average age of teaching staff being generally very advanced, training activities no longer benefit those trained. Young people move from class from year to year, while their level drops more and more, whether in oral, written or operational skills. Reason why 95.1% of participants attested that the future of the school is bleak. Framework law No.14/004 of February 11, 2014 on national education in article 72 certifies that primary education is compulsory and free. The rest of article 76 of the same framework law adds that free text also applies to textbooks and school supplies.

One thing is true, it is simple in nature to hope to achieve free education for a nation, but it is still not simple to achieve. For this, G. N. Areba (2011) cited by C. Vanessa (2024), speaking about free education in Kenya, attests that: "although the government of Kenya remains the main funder of free primary and secondary education, the Economic challenges and failings in educational infrastructure have allowed schools to find ways to recover costs from children and their families. Additionally, the author continues by saying; "Generally speaking, the government retains primary responsibility for school staff salaries and infrastructure maintenance, but this leaves room for a range of crucial and essential costs, including:

- Registration fees, including interviews and administrative fees;
- Costs of school materials, including textbooks and exercise books, stationery and uniforms;

- Activities fees, to support extracurricular activities, excursions and subject - related activities;

This non - exhaustive list highlights the complexity inherent in “free” education.

Indeed, the point of view of the author above sufficiently shows that the satisfactory achievement of free education in public schools is no less likely to succeed.

To do this, the resolution would have to be taken downstream and upstream in order to improve the educational system in this country, that is to say on the one hand, in favor of the teaching staff who are becoming increasingly demotivated and on the other hand, in favor of working conditions within the educational system. It is an invitation to take into consideration the MASLOW pyramid only at the level of physiological and security needs before seeing the rest, as presented by Stephen ROBBINS et al (2014, p.354). This vision will be completed by the application of Victor VROOM's theory of expectations, hypothesizing that the individual acts while waiting for a given result based on the interest he attributes to the latter. It is important to understand that there is a strong relationship between company remuneration and individual effort, the latter leads to individual performance, the latter leads towards the objectives. Teachers are aware that their work depends on the future of society and that the existence and proper functioning of the school leads to the realization of the educational philosophy of a nation.

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