

Report

# Strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises

## Democratic Republic of the Congo case study

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Cover photo: A teacher instructs a class in Mwamba school in in Rutshuru, Democratic Republic of Congo. Credit: UNHCR/Frederic Noy.

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The case study series is led by Susan Nicolai. The authors of this report are Amina Khan, Joseph Wales and Charlotte Caron.

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# Contents

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<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of tables and figures</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2 Research framework and case study methodology</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Literature review and stakeholder mapping	13
2.2 Remote key informant interviews	13
2.3 Analysis	14
2.4 Validation	14
<b>3 The DRC context and education response</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Country background	16
3.2 Outline of the IDP situation	17
3.3 Outline of the refugee situation	19
3.4 Financing for education	20
<b>4 The ‘who’ of coordination in the DRC</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 The national education system	26
4.2 The coordination and delivery system for education for IDPs	28
4.3 The coordination and delivery system for refugee education	30
<b>5 The ‘how’ of coordination in the DRC</b>	<b>31</b>
5.1 Coordination of education for IDPs	34
5.2 Coordination of refugee education	39
5.3 Coordination across the national education system and provision of education for refugees and IDPs	43
<b>6 The ‘so what’ of coordination in the DRC</b>	<b>46</b>
6.1 Relevance and appropriateness	46
6.2 Coverage	48

6.3	Complementarity	49
6.4	Sufficiency	50
6.5	Efficiency	50
6.6	Connectedness	51
6.7	Accountability and participation	51
6.8	Effectiveness	52
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Annex 1</b>	<b>Key informant interviews</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Annex 2</b>	<b>Key interview questions</b>	<b>61</b>

## List of boxes, tables and figures

### Boxes

<b>Box 1</b>	Powers of the central state and provinces in the education sphere	<b>26</b>
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### Tables

<b>Table 1</b>	Major ongoing initiatives on education in the DRC	<b>22</b>
<b>Table 2</b>	Landscape of education coordination systems and structures in the DRC	<b>25</b>
<b>Table 5</b>	Analysis of coordination mechanisms using the Faerman factors	<b>32</b>

### Figures

<b>Figure 1</b>	Displacement distribution by province	<b>17</b>
<b>Figure 2</b>	Distribution of the refugee, IDP and returnee population by province	<b>19</b>
<b>Figure 3</b>	Education official development assistance disbursed between 2008 and 2016	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 4</b>	Estimated education funding requirements for crisis-affected individuals in the DRC (2016–2019)	<b>23</b>
<b>Figure 5</b>	Funding shortfall for DRC education requirements under Humanitarian Appeals (2016–2018)	<b>23</b>
<b>Figure 6</b>	Linking education coordination criteria to education outcomes in the DRC	<b>47</b>

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# Acronyms

<b>AFD</b>	<i>Agence française de développement</i> (French Agency for Development)
<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CRRF</b>	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>ECW</b>	Education Cannot Wait
<b>EiE</b>	education in emergencies
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>IHL</b>	international humanitarian law
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>INEE</b>	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
<b>INGO</b>	international non-governmental organisation
<b>JRS</b>	Jesuit Refugee Service
<b>KI</b>	key informant
<b>KII</b>	key informant interview
<b>LEG</b>	local education group
<b>MAS</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and Solidarity
<b>MEPST</b>	Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education
<b>MoU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>MRM</b>	monitoring response mechanism
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	official development assistance
<b>OECD DAC</b>	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
<b>PROVED</b>	provincial education officer
<b>PRS</b>	programme de rattrapage scolaire ( <i>italics</i> ) - catch-up programme
<b>RCM</b>	refugee coordination model
<b>RRRP</b>	regional refugee response plan
<b>SCI</b>	Save the Children International
<b>SSEF</b>	<i>Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation et de la formation</i> – Education and Training Sector Strategy

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<b>TFP</b>	technical and financial partners group
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations Refugee Agency
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

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# Executive summary

This case study examines how, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), humanitarian and development actors can more effectively coordinate planning and response to strengthen education outcomes for children and young people affected by crises. It looks at the ‘who’, the ‘how’ and the ‘so what’ of coordination of education in emergencies (EiE) and protracted crises for internally displaced persons (IDPs), local communities affected by crises, and refugees, resulting in recommendations for action that can be taken by different types of stakeholders, including the DRC Government.

The country confronts protracted and recurrent humanitarian crises relating to armed conflicts, a nutritional crisis, health epidemics and tensions over natural resources (Mosello et al., 2016). The DRC saw a peak of 4.5 million IDPs in 2018 (UNICEF, 2018a; OCHA, 2019). The refugee situation is complicated by the mix of inflows and outflows of refugees. While over 780,000 refugees from the DRC have settled in neighbouring countries, it hosted about 532,000 refugees and asylum seekers as of October 2018 (UNHCR, 2018b). Of these, 63% were children (ibid.).

## Who coordinates country-level education in emergencies and protracted crises?

Two coordination structures for EiE exist in the DRC. The Education Cluster covers IDPs and local communities affected by crises and is chaired by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (MEPST) and co-led by the United Nations Children’s Fund DRC and Save the Children International, with delivery largely through the national education system and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Refugee education is coordinated by the DRC Government and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, with delivery through both the national education system and NGO partners.

## How can coordination of education planning and response be made more effective?

Coordination can be improved for IDPs and crisis-affected local communities, for refugees, and across the national system in several different ways.

For IDPs and affected local communities, although the mandate of the Education Cluster and clarity on leadership is in place, the role of cluster co-leads at the provincial level is less clear and they appear to play a supporting role rather than assume full co-leadership. There are also perceptions that the government does not prioritise the education element of emergency response and concerns that the education sector plan, the *Stratégie sectorielle de l’éducation et de la formation* (SSEF), does not clearly address EiE. Overall, there are ongoing challenges with securing enough resources for EiE, particularly in terms of financing dedicated coordination posts.

Coordination of refugee education can be improved through increased government involvement. Current challenges include a lack of financial and human resources, with limited resources allocated to refugee education overall and the absence of dedicated coordination staff. Mandates are clear in that UNHCR leads the refugee response, but there is no national strategy for refugee education, and coordination appears to be based on partnership agreements for primary education in camps and arrangements with international non-governmental organisation (INGO) providers. A greater focus on facilitation and advocacy for integration of refugees into local schools can improve this situation.

Furthermore, several ministries, not only the MEPST, are managing specific aspects of the national education system in isolation rather than together. Integration of crisis-affected children into the system can be improved by reconciling their conflicting mandates and facilitating inter-ministerial coordination. This will help to fill the

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current leadership vacuum within government, enabling officials to take a more prominent role in response efforts, whether for the provision of education for refugees or IDPs and affected local communities.

### So what does coordinated education planning and response contribute?

This research has unearthed anecdotal and other evidence on the contributions that coordination makes to improved education outcomes in DRC. Working from a framework linking the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) for defining effective coordination and the Education Cannot Wait education outcomes (equity and gender equality, access, continuity, protection and quality), highlights include:

- First, the coverage of the Education Cluster system across all major areas of crisis helps IDPs and local communities gain *access* to education, as does teaching refugee children the national curriculum in camp and out-of-camp settings. But coordination gaps impact access as cluster leads and co-leads do not provide adequate leadership in crisis situations. It is also affected by the prevailing perception among key actors that education is not a life-saving intervention.
- Second, in terms of *protection* and broader outcomes, synergies of coordination between the Education and Protection Clusters appear to have improved child protection, and containment of child recruitment by armed groups and reintegration of child recruits back into school has been strengthened. However, potential contributions are constrained with insufficient resources.
- Third, following the national curriculum and allowing affected children access to national schools in displacement sites rather than children learning parallel ad hoc curricula has improved *continuity* of education. However, progress is curtailed with limited funding and significant gaps remain between education needs and the number of children being reached.
- Fourth, *quality* remains low and has not yet been a clear focus of coordination. Government staff are underpaid and undermotivated to perform duties such as school inspections that would help assess the quality of schooling accessed by crisis-affected children. The national education system is saturated and cannot absorb influxes of displaced children or refugees in its current form. Yet, the Cluster's role in coordinating trainings could further provide NGO partners, Cluster members, and government staff additional professional expertise and knowledge on EiE to improve learning outcomes.
- Finally, *equity and gender equality* outcomes remain constrained overall and evidence did not point specifically to coordination focusing or contributing to this issue one way or the other.

### Recommendations

To strengthen education outcomes for children and young people in the DRC affected by crises, humanitarian and development actors should more effectively coordinate planning and response. This study recommends that the DRC Government, the humanitarian cluster system, UNHCR and donors commit to:

1. Create a comprehensive EiE response strategy on education provision for refugees, IDPs and host communities.
2. Improve the presence of permanent and dedicated coordination staff for the DRC Education Cluster at national and sub-national levels.
3. Deliberate on the need for a refugee education working group within the development coordination structure (led by DRC's Local Education Group) and have a refugee education strategy under an overall government-endorsed EiE response strategy.
4. Prioritise investing in data as a key part of the education response.
5. Reconcile differing narratives on education for strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus.

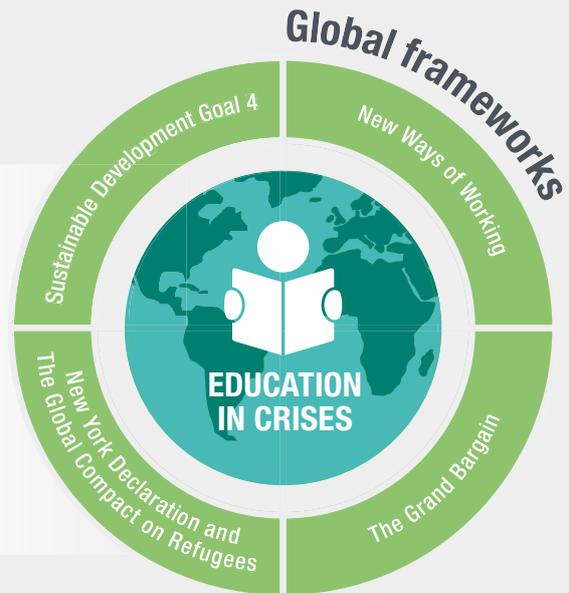
## Conceptual framework: DRC

Key features that shape education coordination outcomes

### Country context



Protracted crisis due to armed conflicts, a nutritional crisis, health epidemics and tensions over natural resources (Mosello et al., 2016). There was a flow of refugees into and from the DRC, around 532,000 and 780,000 refugees respectively in 2018 (UNHCR, 2018b) in addition to internal displacement of 4.5 million people (HRP, 2019).



### Who: Coordination approaches

The main actors providing leadership for education planning and response, their responsibilities, as well as the type of group(s) present.

For IDPs and local communities affected by crises:

- **The DRC Education Cluster** – chaired by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (MEPST) and co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children – coordinates education planning and response, with NGOs and development partners participating.

For refugees:

- **The DRC government** coordinates education planning and response with support from UNHCR.

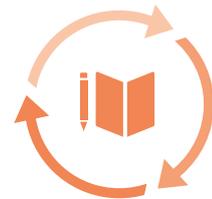


### How: Ways of working

The critical processes and tools that shape the experience of education planning and response throughout programme/project cycles.

The **'Faerman factors'** analysis on predisposition, incentives, leadership, and equity reveals:

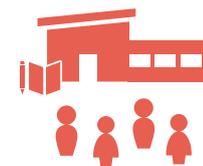
- For refugee education coordination: UNHCR has a clear mandate, with partnership agreements in place with NGO providers for camp-level primary education provision.
- Lack of financial and human resources and a national strategy on refugee education remain key challenges.
- For IDPs and local communities affected by crises, the Education Cluster has a national-level mandate and leadership in place, but provincial co-leads have been limited in their role.
- Challenges include lack of government prioritisation of education response, securing resources for Education in Emergencies and conflicting ministerial mandates.



### So what: Evidence of impact

The collective education outcomes of coordinated education planning and response as linked to coordination quality measures.

- **Gender** equality outcomes remain constrained overall.
- **Access** has increased amongst IDP children, but gaps remain between education needs and the number of children being reached.
- **Continuity** of education has improved for crisis-affected children through use of the national curriculum in camps and access to national schools in nearby displacement sites.
- **Protection** has improved for IDPs due to synergies in coordination between the education and protection clusters, reducing child recruitment to armed groups and supporting reintegration of child recruits back to school.
- **Quality** remains low and has not yet been a clear focus of coordination. The Cluster's role in coordinating new trainings would provide additional professional expertise and knowledge on Education in Emergencies (EiE) to improve learning outcomes.



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# 1 Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is considered to be undergoing one of the world's most complex and protracted crises, one that is periodically forgotten and neglected in comparison to other high-profile situations. The humanitarian situation has been at its worst in recent years. The Congolese state has very limited capacity to deliver public goods and services, with non-state actors playing a major role in the provision of basic services, including education (Mosello et al., 2016).

Coordination of education in emergencies (EiE) in the DRC's context presents considerable challenges. The country characterises a 'mixed situation', where a humanitarian coordinator is currently leading an internal displacement/emergency response, and a response led by the United Nations Refugee Agency, the UNHCR, is also active. Education coordination groups in the DRC include the Education Cluster at national and regional levels (under the Humanitarian Cluster system) and a local education group (LEG) at national and provincial levels, while UNHCR coordinates the refugee education response. The provinces of North and South Kivu and Ituri host both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

There is an active Education Cluster system, consisting of a national cluster and a network of regional clusters and sub-clusters spread across the country along with an EiE working group, that coordinates the education response for IDPs (estimated at 4.5 million people as of 2018), as well as returnees. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) leads the national cluster with Save the Children International (SCI) and the four regional clusters with different available field entities, including the government, and there is widespread participation in leadership. The education response for refugees is coordinated by UNHCR at camp level, while most refugees are out-of-camp and are allowed to access the

national education system, with UNHCR both facilitating and advocating this integration.

DRC uses several new mechanisms to support humanitarian–development coordination, such as the New Ways of Working, the multi-year Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as well as the UNHCR-led Country Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) (UNHCR, 2018d). It is also a recent recipient of funding from the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) First Response Fund, with further ECW investments being considered. While the DRC has not formally adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), many elements of the refugee response are consistent with the practical application of the CRRF in other settings.

All these elements make the DRC an important case study on the coordination of education planning and response in emergencies and protracted crises. It provides EiE practitioners and partners an opportunity to draw lessons from the functioning of existing coordination structures and how to strengthen them.

The study asks the following research question: *how can humanitarian and development actors more effectively coordinate planning and response to strengthen education outcomes for children and young people affected by crises?*

Answering the central research question of the study involves looking more closely at the 'who', the 'how' and the 'so what' of coordinated education planning and response in IDP, refugee, and mixed response situations in the DRC, where a range of humanitarian and development actors are operating.

The sub-research questions related to the 'who', 'how' and 'so what' are:

- *Who* are the main stakeholders contributing to country-level education coordination?

- 
- *How* can coordination of education planning and response be made more effective?
  - *So what* does coordinated education planning and response contribute to better education outcomes and other collective outcomes for children and young people affected by crises?

This report is organised as follows.

- Chapter 2 lays out the research framework and the case study methodology.
- Chapter 3 sets out key information on the DRC context and the current state of the education needs of IDPs and refugees and the related responses.
- Chapter 4 deals with the ‘who’ of coordination in the DRC, providing a general overview of

the three main systems for delivering education in the country: the national education system, the system of delivering education for IDPs, and the refugee education system. It also discusses the main coordinating bodies and the national and international actors aligned with these systems.

- Chapter 5 focuses on the ‘how’ of coordination.
- Chapter 6 explores the ‘so what’ of coordination in the DRC (i.e. the implications and impacts of coordination arrangements).
- Chapters 7 and 8 follow with the conclusion and key recommendations on how to effectively coordinate planning and response to strengthen education outcomes for children and young people affected by crises.

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# 2 Research framework and case study methodology

## 2.1 Literature review and stakeholder mapping

The literature review and stakeholder mapping involved a review of existing grey literature in English and French on the country context, its education system, the ongoing crises and responses. It gathered information on: the nature, scale and impact of the crises; the nature of preparedness and response efforts; key stakeholders involved in coordination, their roles and the obstacles they face in fulfilling them (including national and international actors, national and sub-national government departments and agencies, development and humanitarian organisations, NGOs and INGOs, etc.); the national education system and plans (i.e. formal and informal structures, extent of planning for education and crisis issues, assessments of national capacity, national coordination structures and mechanisms for providing education to IDPs, refugees etc.); and existing obstacles to, and examples of, effective coordination.

The primary technique used was ‘snowballing’: taking recommendations from experts in the humanitarian and education spheres, then taking references from these documents. Literature was selected based on its relevance and use in relation to coordinated planning and response in the education sector in the DRC and included material identified by the Global Partners Group (i.e. the Global Education Cluster, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)) and key informants, as well as that already known to the research team.

## 2.2 Remote key informant interviews

There were 15 remote key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted between November 2018 and March 2019 involving a wide range of actors. They included representatives from the UNICEF country and field offices involved in the cluster system, from SCI, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), government representatives from the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education (MEPST), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNHCR, and from implementing partners, including national NGOs. Most interviews were conducted in French.

The KIIs focused on gathering additional information on, and deepening the researchers’ understanding of, processes and issues beyond what was identified in the literature, gathering up-to-date information on existing and emerging coordination approaches and emerging issues and investigating any examples of coherent practices in detail. The aim was to further shape the stakeholder mapping exercise; identify the underlying causes of persistent obstacles to effective coordination; the impact that different approaches to coordination are having; the enabling factors behind effective coordination approaches; and the role that different stakeholders are playing at the national and implementation level.

The KIIs were conducted in a semi-structured manner. They drew on a list of questions that were developed based on the analysis framework paper (Nicolai et al., 2020), the pilot country

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case study on Ethiopia (ODI, 2020) and the DRC-specific literature review. The questions also allowed interviewees (and interviewers) the space to outline and explore other relevant issues and emerging topics.

Interviewees were selected initially based on the stakeholder mapping conducted in the literature review phase and recommendations from the Global Partners Group. Additional interviewees were then selected in a ‘snowballing’ fashion, based on suggestions from key informants themselves.

## 2.3 Analysis

The analysis stage drew together the information collected during the remote KIIs, triangulated this across multiple interviews and data sources and incorporated additional document reviews to close gaps in the information. This process drew out key themes in terms of our research questions on the ‘who’, ‘how’ and ‘so what’ of coordination in the DRC context.

Analysis of ‘who’ was addressed by mapping the formal role of different actors in the literature and sector planning documents, augmented with information on informal practices and roles derived from the KIIs.

Analysis for the ‘how’ of coordination – specifically looking at enabling factors and constraints – was aligned with that used for the global analysis framework paper (Nicolai et al., 2020). That paper uses a framework derived from organisational science which aims to understand the behaviour of different organisations across diverse contexts that involve numerous entities, often in competition or with a history of conflicts; these entities are interdependent and would collectively gain from cooperating rather than competing; they fall under different governance systems, but try to design rules and principles to collectively govern their behaviour (Faerman et al., 2001).

Faerman et al. (2001) identified four factors (henceforth the Faerman factors) that appear in organisational research relating to the success or failure of inter-organisational coordinated

efforts, and which we use in our analysis to understand the enabling factors and constraints for coordination in the DRC: predisposition; incentives; leadership; and equity.

This frame was applied by Nolte et al. (2012) to analyse the collaborative networks that operated during the disaster response in Haiti in 2010.

Analysis of the ‘so what’ of education coordination in the DRC is structured according to the OECD DAC framework for defining effective coordination. This is one of two specific frameworks for analysing the effectiveness and impact of coordination that were reviewed in the global analysis report. The OECD DAC outcomes are focused primarily on the quality of coordination itself and cover nine areas: Accountability and participation; Coherence; Complementarity; Connectedness; Coverage; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Relevance and appropriateness; and Sufficiency. In contrast, the ECW framework focuses more on education outcomes. The research faces a significant empirical challenge in linking the coordination mechanisms set out here to improvements in coordination and then linking that improved coordination to improvements in education outcomes. This is partly due to the absence of quantitative metrics for the level or quality of coordination and of metrics on the structures, processes and outcomes of coordination. There are also issues with data access and the practical scope of this study. Our analysis on ‘so what’ is therefore based on a review of existing assessments of coordination in the DRC and our interview process, which were used to map out anecdotal evidence.

## 2.4 Validation

The validation stage involved sharing the country case study report with a Country Validation Group for their review and comments, as well as a Global Reference Group of experts on humanitarian and education coordination issues. The case study was then revised and finalised based on these inputs.

## Conceptual framework

Key features that shape education coordination outcomes

### Country contexts



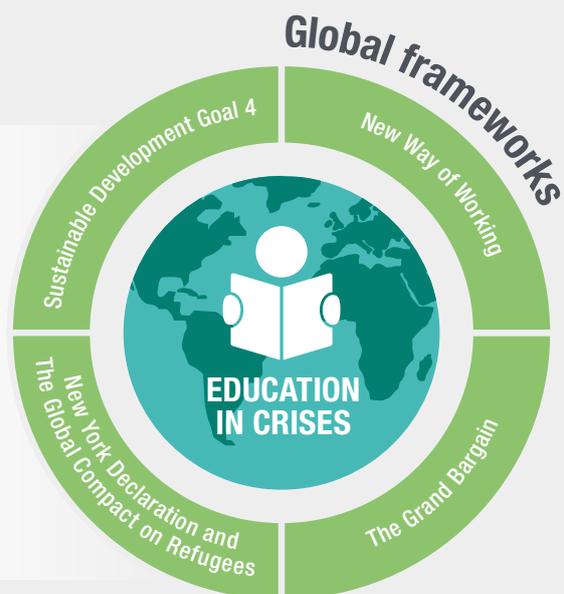
**Country situation:** the geographic, political, legal, social and economic context of the country, as well as existing capacity of national and/or regional authorities to respond to the crisis



**Type of crisis:** violence and conflict, environmental, health, complex emergencies, and whether displacement produces either internal displacement or refugee situations, and the scale of displacement, disasters or mixed situations



**Phase of crisis:** Sudden onset emergency and/or protracted situation



### Who: Coordination approaches

The main actors coordinating leadership for education planning and response, their responsibilities, as well as the type of group(s) present.

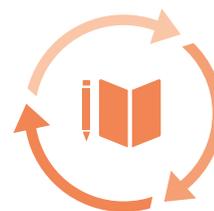
- **Ministry of Education**, and/or other national ministries, often in a lead or co-lead role for all coordination groups listed below
- Regional or local **government bodies** overseeing education and/or emergency response
- IASC **Humanitarian cluster coordination approach**, with the Global Education Cluster co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, and country level cluster leadership varied
- **Refugee Coordination Model** led by UNHCR
- **Development coordination**, through Local Education Groups, typically co-led by multi- and bilateral donors
- Mixed, regional and other **hybrid approaches**



### How: Ways of working

The critical processes and tools that shape the experience of education planning and response throughout programme/project cycles.

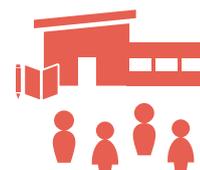
- **Coordination across the humanitarian programme cycle (HCP) and refugee response planning cycle:** needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, resource mobilisation, implementation and monitoring, operational review and evaluation
- **INEE Minimum Standards:** a global tool that articulates the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery
- **The Faerman Factors:** predisposition, incentives, leadership and equity highlighting the softer side of coordination



### So what: Evidence of impact

The collective education outcomes of coordinated education planning and response as linked to coordination quality measures.

- **Collective education outcomes set out in Education Cannot Wait strategy:** access, equity and gender equality, protection, quality and continuity
- **Coordination quality measured by OECD DAC criteria:** coverage, relevance/appropriateness, coherence, accountability and participation, effectiveness, complementarity, sufficiency, efficiency, connectedness and impact



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# 3 The DRC context and education response

This section provides a brief background to the DRC's current crisis situation, political set-up and structure of government. It outlines the IDP and refugee situation, in particular, the number of people affected and IDP and refugee children in need of education support, as well as the financing landscape for education, including provisions by the DRC Government and humanitarian funding for EiE.

## 3.1 Country background

The DRC is faced with protracted and recurrent humanitarian crises, with the high level of need and vulnerability being characterised as 'unprecedented in the history of humanitarian appeals in the DRC' (OCHA, 2018a: 3). Estimates for 2018 suggested that 13.1 million people (including 7.9 million children) would need humanitarian protection or assistance, with humanitarian emergencies ongoing in 18 of the DRC's 26 provinces (ibid.). This follows a significant worsening of the humanitarian situation in 2017, with an expansion of conflict in several areas of the Kasai region, and intensified violence in the east of the country driving sharp increases in population displacement, malnutrition, food insecurity and the spread of epidemics (ibid.). These are closely aligned to four major crisis narratives that recur in the DRC, including armed conflicts, a nutritional crisis, health epidemics and tensions over land and control of the DRC's considerable natural resources (Mosello et al., 2016).

The country has been afflicted with a series of conflicts since it achieved independence in 1960, and while the election of President Joseph Kabila and the implementation of a new constitution in 2006 marked the official end of the post-war transition, in practice the country has continued to experience extended national and regional armed conflicts, particularly in eastern DRC. The current political climate is highly unstable.

The 2006 Constitution established the DRC as a decentralised state, structured from national to local levels around the central state, provinces and decentralised territorial entities. From a coordination perspective, a key feature of governance in the DRC is the considerable powers held by provincial governments, which are run by governors elected by the Provincial Assembly.<sup>1</sup> The DRC does not have a federal system, but rather a large degree of decentralisation, meaning that a range of decision-making and policy-setting powers are held by the provinces alone, with some held concurrently with the central government. In reality, many decisions are referred from the provinces and then require clearance by the central government before decisions can be made. This has historically led to blockages in a number of sectors. The DRC is therefore a complex environment for humanitarian and development actors to coordinate and in which to deliver education assistance, due to ongoing instability, multiple drivers of conflict that interact across local, provincial and national levels, as well as issues with the fragility of state power and authority.

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<sup>1</sup> This structure was established by the 2006 Constitution (also known as the Constitution of the Third Republic).



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### 3.2.1 Evolution of the IDP situation

In 2017, the humanitarian crisis deepened considerably as the security situation deteriorated in eastern DRC. An estimated 1.9 million people were displaced by violence and, in October 2017, the Emergency Relief Coordinator declared an Inter-Agency Standing Committee System-Wide L3 Emergency Response for the Kasai, South Kivu and Tanganyika region.<sup>2</sup> The province of North Kivu is now hosting almost a quarter of all IDPs in the DRC, with 2018 estimates of a total of 1.15 million people (UNHCR, 2018a). The vast majority (95%) are sheltered by host families (JRS, 2018).<sup>3</sup> Considerable numbers of IDPs are also present in South Kivu and Tanganyika (UNHCR, 2018a).

Sizeable numbers of IDPs are beginning to return to their homes, including 1.4 million in the Kasai region, which is likely to create challenges in providing returnees with access to services due to the destruction of government facilities, including some 416 schools and 224 health centres in the region that were sacked, burned down or destroyed in the conflict (UNHCR, 2018a). These challenges are likely to increase in 2019 as nearly 2.9 million returnees are anticipated by the end of the year (OCHA, 2018a).

### 3.2.2 Estimates of education needs for IDPs

The nature of recent instability and displacement creates a need for particular types of education interventions. The integration of child protection elements is a priority, as (1) forced and voluntary recruitment of children into armed groups is a feature of conflict in the DRC and the upsurge

in conflict in the Kasai region in 2016 has been associated with an increasing number of child soldiers being recruited by armed groups (War Child, 2018);<sup>4</sup> and (2) girls are sexually abused and exploited and forced into early marriage (KII, 2018a). Schools have been occupied by IDPs and militias, resulting in their closure. The education system has also been used to support the health needs of children and communities following the outbreak of Ebola in North Kivu and Ituri. This initially led to schools being closed in affected areas, but many began to reopen from September 2018,<sup>5</sup> with schools receiving additional resources and infrastructure (e.g. handwashing kits and facilities, thermometers and heat scanners), accompanied by the implementation of risk-mapping and monitoring mechanisms and the provision of training for students, teachers and community members to help prevent the spread of the virus (UNICEF, 2018b).

The educational needs of IDPs must also be understood within the wider education context of the country, which is significantly poor (see section 4.1). The 2017–2019 HRP set a target of providing 1.7 million children (aged 5–11 years) with education assistance, providing them with access to quality education and psychosocial support activities and learning materials over the course of 2018, and training nearly 31,000 teachers in learner-centred methodologies, peace education, conflict and disaster risk reduction and psychosocial support (UNICEF, 2018c). These targets are three times higher than those set for 2017, representing a dramatic increase in needs (UNICEF, 2018a).

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2 L3 Responses are activated in the most complex and challenging humanitarian emergencies, when the highest level of mobilisation is required, across the humanitarian system, to ensure that the right capacities and systems are in place to effectively meet needs (OCHA, n.d.).

3 The remaining 5% are in displacement sites (JRS, 2018).

4 Voluntary enrolment may be due to a range of incentives for children to enrol, such as poverty, hunger, a lack of opportunities and future prospects, tribalism, shelter to avoid jail, abuse or mistreatment by police/households/other armed groups, and a desire for vengeance in conflict-affected regions (War Child, 2018).

5 As of February 2019, there were no confirmed cases outside these two provinces and the World Health Organization (WHO) is advising against any restrictions to travel to or trade with the DRC. However, the WHO notes that the outbreak was officially declared in August 2018 and that new cases continue to emerge. They characterise the outbreak as occurring in ‘a particularly complex and challenging environment, characterized by a volatile security context, which continues to hinder the implementation of key response activities’ (WHO, 2019: 9).

### 3.3 Outline of the refugee situation

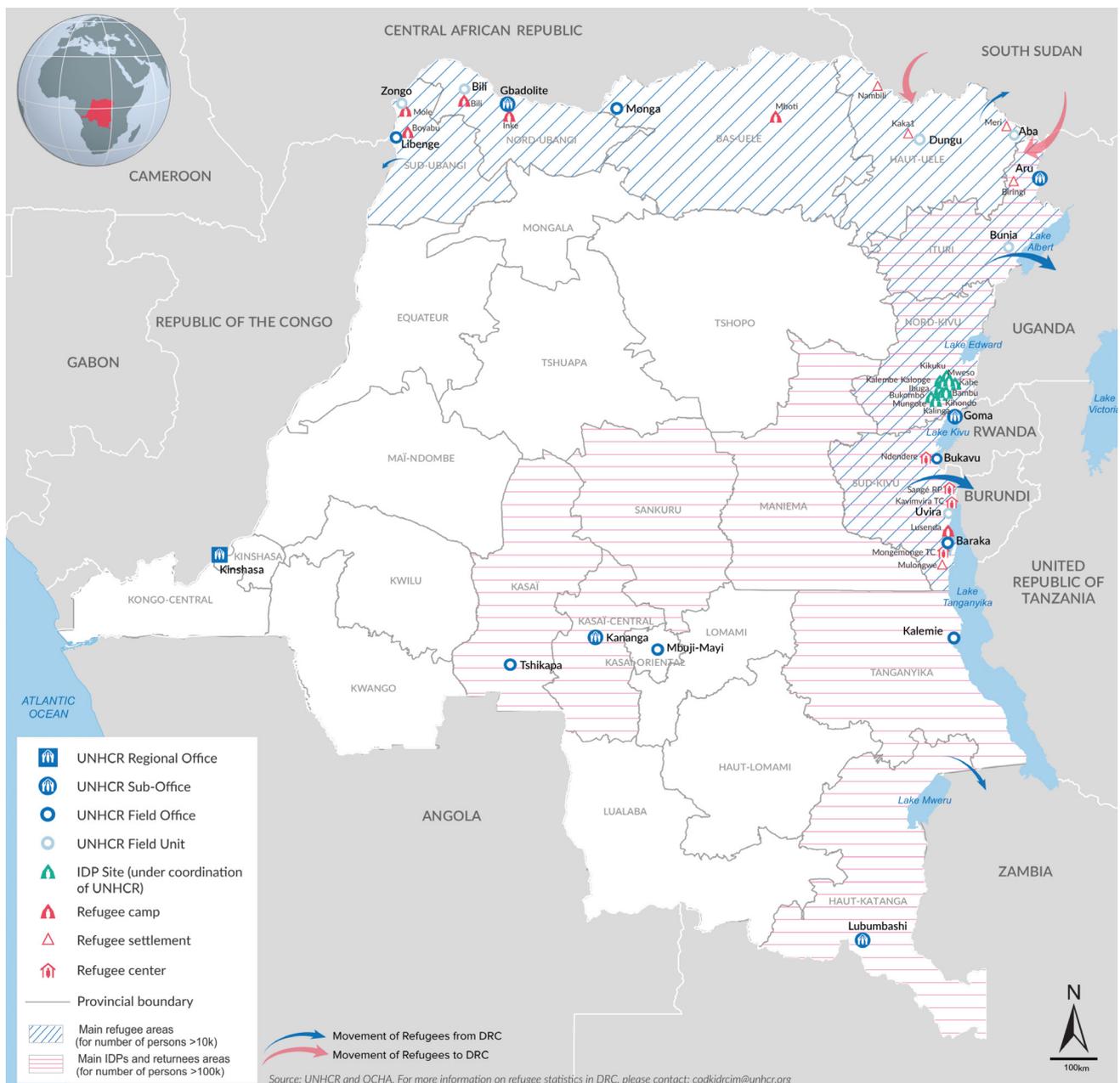
While there are over 780,000 refugees from the DRC that have settled in neighbouring countries, the DRC itself hosts about 532,000 refugees and asylum seekers (as of October 2018) (UNHCR, 2018b). Around 334,000 (63%) are children (aged 18 or below).

The largest groups of refugees come from Rwanda (217,670), the Central African Republic (CAR) (170,430), South Sudan (95,181) and

Burundi (42,408). Smaller numbers come from the Republic of the Congo (also known as Congo Brazzaville), Angola, Sudan, Uganda and Somalia (UNHCR, 2018b).

Figure 2 below illustrates the geographic spread of the refugee population, mainly located in the DRC's northern and eastern border provinces. Around a quarter of the refugees are located in camps and settlements (as shown on the map), while 74% are out of camps and a little under 1% are in urban areas (UNHCR, 2018b).

**Figure 2 Distribution of the refugee, IDP and returnee population by province**



Notes: Data as of 31 October 2018; drawn from UNHCR 2018 October Operational Update  
Source: UNHCR (2018b)

### 3.3.1 Evolution of the refugee situation

The refugee situation in the DRC is complicated by the mix of inflows and outflows of refugees.

Rwandan refugees make up the largest national group overall and many of them have been hosted in the DRC for a considerable period. Between 2001 and 2015 over 138,000 Rwandan refugees voluntarily returned to Rwanda. However, in recent years the number of Rwandans choosing to voluntarily repatriate has varied considerably, and the most recent available survey data – from 2013 – found that only around 30% of Rwandan refugees indicated interest in voluntary repatriation (UNHCR, 2016a; 2018c; 2019a). The DRC Government has made commitments to integrate the remainder of Rwandan refugees into Congolese society (UNHCR, 2016b).

At the same time as some groups are repatriating, new waves of refugees are arriving from other neighbouring countries – particularly in the north-east and north-west of the DRC. The ongoing conflicts in both South Sudan and the CAR are leading to consistent flows of refugees into the DRC. Just over 65,000 new refugees from the CAR arrived in the provinces of North and South Ubangi and Bas-Uélé since the beginning of 2017, while in the province of Haut-Uélé, 20,347 South Sudanese refugees arrived over the same period (OCHA, 2018a). In addition, some 7,500 Burundian refugees arrived in South Kivu province in 2017 following political tensions that led to violent clashes and human rights violations (OCHA, 2018a).

There are concerns that rising refugee numbers will exert additional pressure on access to resources and worsen the living conditions of local host populations, particularly at a time when community resilience is already weakened by difficult socio-economic conditions (OCHA, 2018a).

### 3.3.2 Estimates of education needs for refugees

The overall quality of education for the refugee population in the DRC is quite limited. It needs to be understood within the larger country context where the national education system fails to meet the education needs of its own population (see section 4.1). The diversity of refugee population groups is also a challenge in terms of language and educational background, as diverse learner profiles need to be catered to.

Throughout 2018, refugee needs were analysed through assessments and regular monitoring missions at general and sectoral levels, focusing on protection and multisectoral assistance including education, health, livelihoods, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelters and infrastructure, nutrition and food security. The RRRP (2019/2020) (UNHCR, 2018d) states that:

- Access to education for Rwandan refugees remains below humanitarian standards with basic needs not being met: about 46% of the school-going age children need to be enrolled.
- Around 30% of refugee children of primary school age from the CAR living in camps and 62% living outside of camps need to be enrolled in primary schools and temporary learning spaces. 64% of secondary school age children need to be in secondary schools in camps, and 97% in out-of-camp settings.
- Consistent with members of the communities that host them, more than 40% of South Sudanese refugee children of school-going age need to be enrolled in school.
- Around 60% of the new arrivals from Burundi are children. Existing schools in the camps cannot cope with providing education.

## 3.4 Financing for education

The DRC has limited domestic funding for education. The government had committed to increasing spending to 13.4% (as a proportion of total government expenditure) in 2014, but this was well below the sub-Saharan country average of 22% (DFID, 2015). It is also unclear whether the DRC has been successful in meeting this target, with data included in the 2016–2025 education sector plan, the *Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation et de la formation* (SSEF) (DRC, 2015) suggesting it has met the 13.4% target since 2012, while UNESCO Institute for Statistics data suggests it has only met the target once in 2016 (UNESCO, n.d.).

A policy of fee-free education was launched in 2010 but, in reality, school fees continue to be charged and play a major role in financing the education system. Government estimates suggest that households provide more than 75% of the education budget (MEPST, 2014). Since the launch of the fee-free policy, primary schools

have continued to charge fees and secondary school fees have almost doubled (DFID, 2015).<sup>6</sup> Revenues from school fees are being used to pay for operating costs at higher levels of education, effectively turning school fees into a form of taxation – with almost 90% of operating costs in the education sector being funded through this mechanism (DFID, 2015; Groleau, 2017). Some sources note examples of revenue from school fees being siphoned off by provincial politicians or used by the faith-based networks to finance non-school activities (Groleau, 2017).

### 3.4.1 Education official development assistance

The DRC has been receiving education official development assistance (ODA) from both bilateral and multilateral providers (data is available for 2008–2016) (OECD, 2018). ODA for education stood at \$63 million in 2016, with DAC countries providing \$45 million or 71% of the funds, and multilateral providers another \$18 million or 28%. Yet, this reflects only a 3% share of total aid the DRC received in 2016, and less than a fifth of education ODA it received in 2015 (\$343 million) (see Figure 3). Major ongoing initiatives on education in the DRC are listed in Table 1.

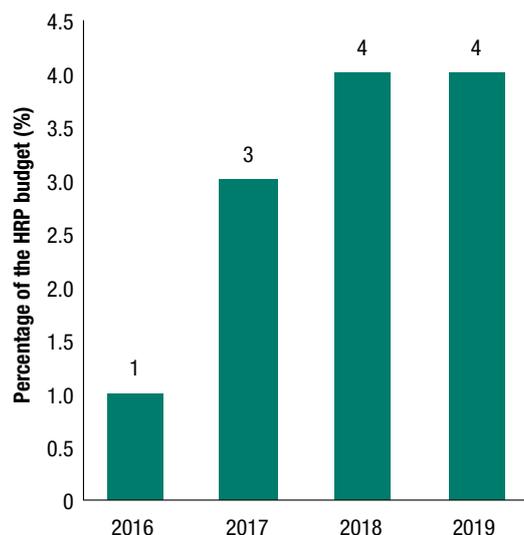
### 3.4.2 Humanitarian funding for EiE

The total funding required to meet the education targets in the HRP has increased significantly over the last four years, as can be seen in Figure 4. A key reason for this increase appears to be the considerable rise in IDP numbers over the course of 2017, which led to record levels of need and significantly more funding being required for 2018. Looking at the breakdown of recipients, it is notable that the majority of education funds are targeted at IDPs, returnees and host families. However, it is also striking that requirement levels have increased across all groups – except for host families – over this period.

Actual resources raised have fallen well short of these targets. As outlined in Figure 5, over 2016–2018 less than 14% of the funding requirements – outlined in the HRPs for education – were met.

Overall, it is notable that the IDP response (in terms of IDPs, returnees and host communities) forms the bulk of humanitarian needs and funding for education, and that there are significant shortfalls in terms of both overall education financing and for meeting the needs of specific groups of beneficiaries.

**Figure 3 Education official development assistance disbursed between 2008 and 2016**



Source: OECD (2018)

<sup>6</sup> Estimates of the average fees per student per year in the DRC range from 26,300 to 59,900 Congolese francs (from \$27 to \$623) depending on the level and source of data (Groleau, 2017).

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**Table 1 Major ongoing initiatives on education in the DRC**

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<b>UK Aid-USAID ACCELERE!</b>	<p>ACCELERE! is UK aid and USAID's joint flagship education programme in the DRC. It is jointly funded and managed, with £104m of dedicated resources over 2014–2020.</p> <p>The programme aims to reduce barriers to primary education by providing access to alternative/accelerated learning programmes, as well as improving the quality of primary education through teacher training and the provision of new learning/teaching materials. A substantial proportion of its funds are also dedicated to improving the governance of the education system at all levels. ACCELERE! targets eight provinces across the DRC including those which are affected by conflict and displacement.</p> <p>It is the largest single education intervention in the DRC and aims to reach 450,000 out-of-school children to improve retention in primary grades by 30% in target schools, as well as improve reading outcomes of 1.5 million grade 1–4 students in French and their local language (USAID, 2019; DFID Development Tracker, 2019).</p>
<b>GPE/World Bank Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP)</b>	<p>EQUIP is a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grant of \$100m covering 2017–2021 with the World Bank acting as the grant agent and activities being implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education (MEPST). The grant is intended to support the SSEF (DRC, 2015) and is focused largely on primary education (80%) with support for early childhood education (ECE) (20%).</p> <p>The main objectives are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Improve the quality of learning in primary education by developing a conducive education environment. Specifically:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strengthening the early childhood education system with a focus on quality, including quality assurance standards and mechanisms</li><li>• reinforcing teacher effectiveness through teacher training, teacher support and teacher management,</li><li>• supporting the supply chain of learning and teaching materials for the early grades of primary education, including improved sustainability of the textbook supply chain.</li></ul></li><li>2. Strengthen sector management by improving knowledge of sector performance and building systems of accountability by:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• institutionalising standardised student learning assessment</li><li>• use of performance-based financing to institutionalise accountability in the administrative and pedagogical support chain</li><li>• providing support to girls' education.</li></ul></li><li>3. Introduce new management practices at local levels to improve sector management and promote greater accountability.</li></ol>
<b>Equitable Quality Primary Education for All Children</b>	<p>The Equitable Quality Primary Education for All Children project is being implemented by a partnership of Educate A Child, UNICEF and the Government of the DRC.</p> <p>The project aims to enhance the quality of learning and improve school-based management, accountability and monitoring, as well as securing quality education for 3.7 million out-of-school children between the ages of six and seven.</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• funding and support for community mobilisation to construct and rehabilitate 400 classrooms</li><li>• training of at least two teachers from each targeted school in learner-centred methodologies</li><li>• developing partnerships with women's associations and other local groups to provide mentoring for young girls and support for their education</li><li>• training of school leaders and management committees to improve school management and accountability.</li></ul>

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**Table 1 cont.**

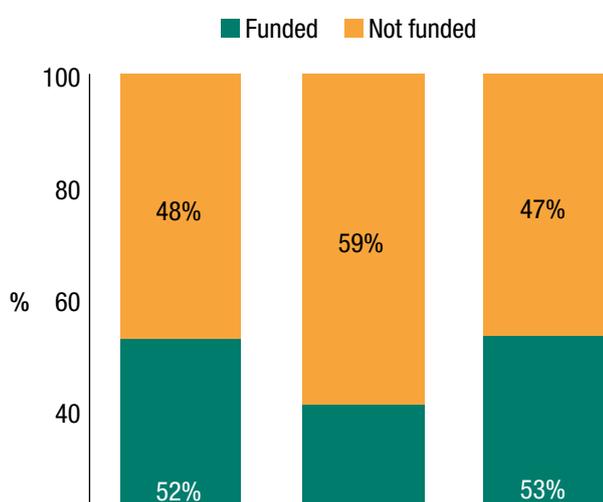
**ECW**

ECW is supporting the delivery of EiE in the DRC through its First Response window mechanism. The mechanism has four main funding modalities: (1) rapidly injecting funds at the onset of a crisis to meet immediate education needs; (2) matching funds for crises with coordinated Humanitarian Response or Refugee Plan; (3) funding project proposals that support crises without a coordinated HRP; and (4) needs assessments to support individual countries. In the case of the DRC, the ECW fund is providing \$3 million over 2018–2019 to support the provision of education to 245,000 children in four areas of the DRC – South Kivu, Tanganyika, Kasai and Bandundu. Targeted children will include a mixture of IDPs and host populations. This funding is additional to funds raised by the Education Cluster to target some 850,000 children in these provinces. The funding is being channelled through multiple consortia that include a mixture of international and national education NGOs that are involved in the response and are acting members of the Education Cluster at the national or provincial level. These include child protection actors, reinforcing the links between EiE and child protection, and – in some cases – national authorities (e.g. MEPST), promoting links and synergies with the national education system and authorities.

Key activities supported by ECW funding include: reconstruction/rehabilitation of school infrastructure; training for teachers and school directors (including on child-centred methodology, safe and protective environment, community-based approach, peace education and psychosocial support); provision of psychosocial support to teachers and children in classrooms; efforts to ensure a child friendly approach and a safe and protective environment; provision of learning materials and remedial classes to out-of-school children; setting up of peace clubs for children, youth and adolescents; and, identification and reunification of unaccompanied and separated children (including specific care and support to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence survivors).

In addition to the direct impact of the additional resources on education outcomes and the capacity of these NGOs, it is anticipated that the process of forming consortia will improve coordination and the sharing of knowledge and skills across the different organisations – as well as across education and child protection actors – resulting in additional improvements in capacity.

**Figure 4 Estimated education funding requirements for crisis-affected individuals in the DRC (2016–2019)**



Notes: \* Available data for 2018 is divided into refugees and repatriated and others.

Source: DRC Humanitarian Response Plans (2015, 2016, 2017, 2017–2019; 2018 Update (OCHA, 2018a))

**Figure 5 Funding shortfall for DRC education requirements under Humanitarian Appeals (2016–2018)**



Notes: Funding totals given here do not match those in Figure 4 due to updates in funding requirements that emerged in the course of the years in question and as Figure 5 does not include the \$0.5m funding requirement for cluster functions that appears in all HRPs over this period. Funding reached 15% of requirements in 2015, but data is not included in Figure 5 to allow a clearer comparison with Figure 4 (OCHA, 2015).

Source: OCHA Financial Tracking Service (fts.unocha.org)

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# 4 The ‘who’ of coordination in the DRC

Q1: *Who* are the main stakeholders contributing to country-level education coordination in emergencies and protracted crises?

The DRC has a diverse set of education coordination structures. These comprise key stakeholders from across and outside government. It relies on two main groups to strengthen its national education system. The first is the LEG, which is responsible for coordinating education provision in general (the bulk of its focus is on non-emergency aspects). It is led by the MEPST leads and UNESCO acts as co-lead. A second group, the national Technical and Financial Partners Group (TFP) (and a sub-set of the LEG) was led by UNESCO in 2018 and the French development agency (*Agence française de développement* – AFD) in 2019. It includes bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as UN agencies. It is a strategic donor-focused coordination structure to support education in the country.

Two coordination structures exist for EiE – the first one covers IDPs, returnees and local communities affected by crises and disasters. Responsibility for coordination of education for IDPs is largely held by the Education Cluster, with much of the drive and direction coming from the co-leads (UNICEF and SCI) at the national level. In addition to the national Cluster, there is a network of provincial clusters and provincial sub-clusters that provide good coverage of the DRC and its crisis-affected areas. UNICEF is the co-lead of all of the regional clusters and most of the provincial sub-clusters, but with the second co-lead varied depending on the strength of different local and international

NGOs. Provincial governments also engage with these bodies, but their degree of leadership is limited. Education delivery occurs through a mixture of NGOs, faith-based networks and provincial government schools, but faces a range of challenges linked to poor transportation, multiple crises and ongoing instability. Enrolment and attendance rates are also dampened by the reliance of the education system on school fees for financing – despite a nominal commitment to free education for all.

Coordination of activities for refugees is done at the local level as refugees tend to be concentrated in pockets of the country. UNHCR funds several implementing partners to provide primary education to refugees hosted in camps. However, most refugees are hosted outside of camps and can – as far as this is possible – attend schools within the national education system (see section 3.3). UNHCR is working on a few initiatives to expand their integration into the national system, including the payment of school fees for refugee children and partnership with the World Bank in areas where refugees from the CAR are hosted. There are a number of education cluster partners that also support refugee education in non-camp settings without UNHCR funding (e.g. support for education services for Burundian refugees in South Kivu). UNHCR also attends meetings of the provincial education clusters in areas where it is active and in South Kivu it uses the provincial education cluster as a forum for conducting some refugee education coordination activities for Burundians. See Table 2 for a brief summary of this overall landscape of education coordination systems and structures in the DRC.

**Table 2 Landscape of education coordination systems and structures in the DRC**

System	Key coordinating bodies	Leading agencies	Main education delivery partners	Overall composition
<b>National education system</b>	LEGs (national and provincial)	National – Chaired by MEPST and co-led by UNESCO until March 2019 and since April 2019 by AFD.  Provincial – Chaired by PROVEDs (provincial education officers).	Faith-based school networks (70%), state schools (18%) and private schools (12%).	National – Includes MEPST, UNESCO, UNICEF, AFD, Belgian Development Cooperation, World Bank, USAID, DFID, NGOs, civil society organisations, private firms, teachers' unions and parents' associations.  Provincial – Includes PROVED, UNICEF sub-offices, donor implementing partners and NGOs.
	Technical and financial partners group	UNESCO led in 2018 and AFD in 2019.	As above.	Includes – bilateral and multilateral agencies. Specifically, USAID, DFID, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR, the World Bank, AFD, Belgian Development Cooperation, the Canadian Cooperation Office.  Does not include a representative of the DRC Government.
<b>System for education for IDPs</b>	Education Cluster (national)	National – Chaired by the government and co-chaired by UNICEF and SCI.	National education system and NGO partners.	Includes UNICEF, co-lead agencies, government representatives, programme delivery partners (i.e. international and local NGOs). Attended by UNHCR in some areas.
	Four regional clusters	All chaired by the government.  Co-led by UNICEF and NRC in Goma (North Kivu); UNICEF and War Child Holland in Bukavu (South Kivu); UNICEF in Kananga (Kasai); UNICEF and AVSI in Kalemie (Tanganyika).	As above.	
	Five provincial sub-clusters	Provincial sub-clusters  Co-chaired by UNICEF with AVSI in Bunia (Ituri); UNICEF and AIDES Lubumbashi (Haut-Katanga); UNICEF and SCI in Mbuji Mayi (Kasai Oriental); UNICEF and CEMEA in Tshikapa (Kasai); and only UNICEF in Beni (North Kivu).	As above.	
<b>Refugee education system</b>	Ad hoc working groups at the local level where there are more than two partners	UNHCR under the Refugee coordination model.	NGO partners (in camps). NGOs and national education system (out of camps).  Education Cluster partners also support education activities for refugees (e.g. in South Kivu).	N/A

Source: Authors' analysis

## 4.1 The national education system

The national education system is responsible for delivering education to all citizens. It also sets the curriculum and policies for all education delivery to refugees. This section provides a breakdown of the types of schools that students attend and describes the national education system's overall structures and functions.

As of 2012 (latest data available), around 70% of students attended schools managed by faith-based organisations (*écoles conventionnées*), which were run by church networks but recognised as public schools under the 1977 Convention. Secular state-run schools (*écoles non-conventionnées*) were attended by 18% of students, and the remaining 12% attended private schools (DFID, 2015).

Education is an area in which power is shared between the central state and provinces, as set out in Box 1 below. The combination of this decentralised system and the strong role that non-state organisations play in delivering education has resulted in a national education system with

a complicated structure. While the state pays teachers and administrative staff in both *écoles conventionnées* and *écoles non-conventionnées*, the religious associations are powerful and influential, exercising considerable day-to-day oversight and managerial autonomy over their respective schools in practice. The dual structure of the system results in parallel administrations, with both faith-based and state-run 'networks' having administrative offices at national, provincial and district levels, as well as complementary school inspection systems. The accountability relationships between the state and education institutions are therefore quite ambiguous, and it is argued that the dual nature of education management impedes efficiency and accountability in the system (World Bank, 2008; DFID, 2015).

The four ministries in charge of implementing the SSEF Education and Training Sector Strategy (2016–2025) (DRC, 2015) include the MEPST, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs and Solidarity (MAS), the Ministry of Higher Education and Universities (MESU) and the Ministry of Vocational Training (MFPMA).

The MEPST is responsible for formal primary and secondary education, while the MESU is responsible for formal tertiary education. The MAS is responsible for non-formal education programmes, including accelerated learning programmes at the primary level and some vocational training centres, and are more closely connected to UNICEF and the education system for IDPs and crisis-affected populations. The MFPMA provides technical and vocational education to more vulnerable children and adolescents. The Ministry of Youth is also involved in these efforts, conducting literacy classes for adults and adolescents. Despite efforts to reintegrate out-of-school youth back into the formal education system, coordination across these different bodies is poor (KII, 2018f).

One aim of the SSEF is to ensure universal access to primary education, even with the relatively high population growth. Importantly, it includes a discussion on EiE, which we discuss in section 4.2. Overall, this plan has been criticised in its official evaluation for lacking practical descriptions of how responsibilities are allocated and how implementation should occur, as well as a lack of detail in terms of decision-making

### Box 1 Powers of the central state and provinces in the education sphere

#### Exclusive powers of the central state

- Setting of educational norms
- Nomination and deployment of school inspectors
- National statistics and census
- National planning

#### Concurrent powers of the central state and provinces

- Statistics and census
- Creation of educational facilities
- International projects, programmes and cooperation agreements

#### Exclusive powers of provinces

- Operation of provincial public services and facilities within the boundaries of national legislation and primary, secondary and professional education, in accordance with the norms and regulations set by the central state

Source: Groleau (2017).

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processes for launching forecast activities or reforms (Robert and Konaté, 2015: 26). An annual work plan under the SSEF was developed for 2019 but not for previous years (KII, 2018b).

While the SSEF recognises the need for building local capacity, it is unable to accurately diagnose current capacity levels and does not have defined tools or strategies for improving capacity. The evaluation argues strongly that there is a need to define the institutional roles of different government actors more clearly, improve coordination across them and strengthen the institutional structure. It also notes that community leaders and civil society will need to play an important role in this process.

Coordination of international actors at the national level occurs through two main mechanisms, the LEG and the TFP (KII, 2018b). From the government's side, MEPST plays a key role and the SSEF provides the overarching framework. We discuss each group in turn.

#### **4.1.1 Local education group**

The DRC has had an LEG for an extended period. Between 2015 and 2016, representatives of the LEG did not have regular meetings, though they had been involved in the development of the SSEF, which started in 2014 and ended in 2017, and participated in the Joint Sector Reviews (2015, 2016, 2017). The LEG also has sub-national representation, with a series of Education Technical Working Groups that operate at the provincial level and are chaired by the PROVEDs. The effectiveness of these groups depends particularly on the dynamism of provincial governments and these groups are quite autonomous in practice, although they are considered to be sub-groups of the national LEG (KII, 2018b).

In terms of key actors, the MEPST leads with the AFD. Other members include UNICEF, the Belgian Development Agency, the World Bank, USAID and DFID, as well as NGOs and civil society representatives, private firms, teachers' unions and parents' associations. UNHCR has also recently joined the group, having been invited to do so for several years. The breadth of the grouping is a result of advocacy from development partners to encourage full coverage of stakeholders. However, a number of other international

organisations that are involved in education are not represented, including the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Chinese development agencies and a range of embassies. At the sub-national level, UNICEF participates in the areas where it has sub-offices, but most bilateral donors do not have a presence. Instead, implementing partners and NGOs in those regions may participate (KII, 2018b).

The LEG is intended to have regular meetings and to have a series of technical working groups that can coordinate on specific issues. Its work is guided by the priorities set out in the 2016–2025 SSEF and it is also intended to evaluate and assess progress on realising the strategy (DRC, 2015). It is also the forum in which the Education Sector Plan is consulted on and developed. However, there have been a series of challenges that have limited its effectiveness. As of November 2018, it had only met once that year and few of the Technical Working Groups had convened in the intervening time. A particular challenge is that the SSEF only has five-year planning blocks that are not broken down into three- or one-year plans, making evaluation and coordination challenging. Interviews suggest that disputes over this had contributed to the lack of activity – with some organisations refusing to participate in a review of the sector without more detailed plans, and the conflict leading to the LEG not receiving key documents from the central government. At the sub-national level, efforts were made to maintain planning and coordination, but these have not been consolidated at a national level. Overall, national planning and related monitoring mechanisms remain inadequate (KII, 2018b).

The fact that there are multiple ministries for education also creates challenges, as there are disputes between them over leadership and they also seek opportunities to gain visibility and partners without necessarily engaging in effective cross-ministry coordination.

Some interviews suggest that there are efforts to ensure that LEG partners are involved in the Education Cluster coordination process and that – in practice – there was a stronger link between them at provincial level than at national level (KII, 2018b). Other interviews highlight the opposite, stating that at provincial level there are no LEG meetings, for example in North Kivu (KII, 2019a).

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### 4.1.2 Technical and Financial Partners Group

The TFP coordinates across the bilateral donors and international agencies in the DRC with the aim of improving the overall impact of assistance. Strategic Axis 3 of the SSEF, which is on improving the governance and steering of the education sector, specifically discusses the role of partnerships with the TFP in strengthening the national education system. Axis 3 also states that these partnerships would result in members' involvement in the implementation of public policy, in academic management, and would enable the country to mobilise additional resources for the education sector, citing existing contributions from UNICEF, the World Bank, the AFD, Belgian Development Cooperation, USAID and UNESCO. Furthermore, the development of a decentralised Education Management Information System (EMIS) was carried out with the support of the TFP.

Interviews suggest that the TFP is more effective than the LEG, meeting on a monthly basis with a clear agenda and an overarching advocacy strategy. However, donors also use it to reinforce some of the work of the LEG. An example of this, as mentioned above, is the attempt to improve the national EMIS, with a LEG technical working group led by the government spearheading this, while the TFP divided up responsibilities for implementation across the bilateral donors and international agencies. It is coordinated around achieving the aims of the SSEF, coordinating donor efforts in specific regions or on specific issues and coordinating both collective and bilateral efforts to advocate with the government. A key current focus is advocating for annual planning to improve the effectiveness of the SSEF. Interviews also suggest that the government is, to an extent, uncomfortable with this mechanism as the it is not represented on the TFP (KII, 2018b).

## 4.2 The coordination and delivery system for education for IDPs

The MEPST is the main government agency charged with ensuring the human right to education and training and overseeing coordination with national and international partners. The MAS also plays a prominent role focusing on social development and humanitarian actions; and initiating and evaluating global and specific strategies and policies in favour of marginalised communities (MAS, n.d.).

However, while government agencies and officials are involved in coordination and attend meetings of coordination bodies, they are rarely the lead organisations. Interviewees noted that the lack of a strong government presence is a key challenge, but that – at the sub-national (provincial and sub-provincial) level – the government is strongly involved during acute crises. In their view, the extent of government engagement in coordination is motivated partly by the extent of donor funding available for government activity during the crises. Their engagement wanes when donor assistance shrinks (KII, 2018b).

The SSEF (2015) acknowledged that emergencies (floods, climatic events, refugee influxes) are likely to affect school activities for quite a long time and aimed to develop a national risk prevention and management policy for ministries in charge of the education and training sector. Some specific action points in relation to EiE were also listed.<sup>7</sup>

A cell – under the strategy – was envisioned to coordinate responses to emergencies with support from the TFP. Key informants explained that the cell was created but it is not the main coordinating body.

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7 Ministries in charge of education and training would systematically incorporate into their annual action plans the measures needed to adapt the educational offer to the new needs induced by the occurrence of a crisis or natural disaster; e.g. immediately assess and repair damage to crisis-affected school infrastructure and equipment or set up new temporary or semi-permanent infrastructure to ensure continuity of education; strengthen quality control of buildings; enable children in fragile areas to be better fed and cared for during the crisis and to continue their education smoothly; to adapt the school schedules to avoid absenteeism from seasonal events; psychological support of traumatised children; and the facilitation of access to education for displaced persons and refugees through exemption from direct costs (DRC, 2015).

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### 4.2.1 The Education Cluster

The Education Cluster is the key actor in terms of coordinating the response on education for IDPs and ‘provides most of the energy and effectiveness’ (KII, 2018b).

In the DRC, the Education Cluster consists of a national Cluster based in Kinshasa; four regional clusters based in the North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika and Kasai provinces; and five provincial sub-clusters based in Bunia (Ituri), Beni (North Kivu), Lubumbashi (Haut-Katanga), Tshikapa (Kasai) and Mbuji Mayi (Kasai Oriental) (KII, 2018a; 2018c; 2018e).

UNICEF leads the national Education Cluster, as well as all the provincial and sub-provincial clusters, due to both its mandate and the fact that few other stakeholders have such a strong sub-national presence (KIIs, 2018a; 2018b). However, there are a range of co-leads. SCI is co-lead at the national level and in the Kasai Oriental provincial sub-cluster. The four provincial clusters are co-led by UNICEF and a different organisation in each location. AVSI co-leads in Kalemie (Tanganyika), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Goma (North Kivu), War Child Holland in Bukavu (South Kivu) and MEPST in Kanganga (Kasai). In terms of provincial sub-clusters, AVSI is co-lead in Bunia (Ituri), AIDES in Lubumbashi (Haut-Katanga); and CEMEA in Tshikapa (Kasai); and SCI in Mbuji Mayi (Kasai Oriental). UNICEF has no co-lead in Beni (North Kivu). The two *Groupe de travail éducation* (GTE) offices are both led by MEPST, with co-leads including EDUCON in Kikwiti (Kwilu) and the NGO ADES/HCR in Gbadolite (North Ubangi) (KII, 2018a).

The national, regional and provincial sub-clusters are therefore attended by UNICEF, the co-lead agencies, government representatives, programme delivery partners (i.e. international and local NGO members that facilitate the delivery of education programmes) and representatives of the faith-based school networks (sometimes called professional actors) who take on a large part of the management of the programmes following agreements with the government (KII, 2018d). Other UN agencies (UNESCO, WFP and OCHA), as well as bilateral agencies such as USAID, also participate.

The national Cluster has been active since 2006, with UNICEF consistently acting as the lead agency (KII, 2018b; 2019b). UNICEF had one staff member responsible continuously for five-and-a-half years up to April 2018 for both cluster coordination and UNICEF’s EiE programme management. An interim coordinator was put in place after that, but the role remained vacant for nine months (KIIs, 2018a; 2018b). The post of a dedicated full-time coordinator was filled in January 2019 (KIIs, 2019a).

The role of the co-lead agency at the national level has changed over time. SCI was co-lead up to 2015, but withdrew (unofficially) from this role (KII, 2019b). The co-lead post within SCI was cut due to funding constraints and was only filled by a staff member on short-term deployment in late 2018 – full-time options were being explored during our study period (KII, 2018b). Over 2016–2018, in the absence of the SCI co-lead, AIDES – a national NGO – took on this role in the national Education Cluster. At the time, cluster members unanimously agreed that AIDES should fill this gap in leadership (KII, 2019b).

While SCI has been more active since the last quarter of 2018 and plays a role in shaping strategy, there is more of a tripartite relationship emerging, with AIDES continuing to be closely involved as it is well connected with the government and other national NGOs. UNICEF and SCI focus on strategy development for EiE and coordination at the inter-agency level. The national government is represented in the Education Cluster and is involved in coordination, but not in a leading role (KIIs, 2018a; 2018b).

There is some crossover in membership of the two coordination systems, the LEG and the Education Cluster. UNICEF is both co-lead of the national Education Cluster and a member of the LEG. There is also some cross over between the NGOs that are members of the provincial LEGs and the provincial education clusters. There is a concerted effort to encourage members of the LEG to engage with the Education Cluster, although interviews suggest that they are better connected at the provincial level than at the national level (KIIs, 2018a).

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### 4.3 The coordination and delivery system for refugee education

While the Government of the DRC is ultimately responsible for the protection and administration of refugees that have taken refuge within its borders, UNHCR has a global mandate for protecting and assisting refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>8</sup> It holds responsibility for the international refugee response system, including the coordination function (UNHCR, 2013; 2014). This role cannot be transferred or delegated – so the mandate sits solely with UNHCR, although it may invite other agencies to cooperate where necessary to fulfil its mandate (*ibid.*).

UNHCR is mandated to support the government and ensure that the rights of refugees are respected. UNICEF has also received funds to provide early childhood development for South Sudanese refugee children and is working closely with UNHCR in the province of Ituri (KII, 2019a).

As noted in previous sections, most refugees are not hosted in camp contexts, and so, where they attend schools, they are within the national education system. While there is some primary education provision within refugee camps, camp-based refugees access the national education system for secondary and tertiary education and are integrated into local schools surrounding the camps. Camp-based primary education follows the

national curriculum of the DRC and examinations, certificates and diplomas are all harmonised with the national education system and recognised by the government. UNHCR works with NGOs in a range of areas of cooperation to implement education sector policies, and has monthly meetings at the camp and provincial level, with the latter being attended by the heads of offices of the implementing partners.

RRRP Country partners are continuing to support primary school education for urban refugee children and are intending to look at opportunities and gaps in secondary, and vocational education (UNHCR, 2018d). There are aspirations to gradually reduce support to individual refugees for education funding, depending on the success of livelihoods initiatives, but other forms of support to education – in the form of conditional cash transfers or vouchers – have been put in place in Goma, Bukavu, Kinshasa and in refugee sites (both in camps and out of camps) to allow for the payment of school fees and procurement of school uniforms and supplies (UNHCR, 2018d).

In 2019, UNHCR will collaborate with UNICEF and others on the development of a programme that will facilitate greater inclusion of refugees in national education systems, permitting humanitarian interventions to be phased out in favour of more sustainable approaches to support systems development (UNHCR, 2018d).

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8 This includes both camp and non-camp refugee populations, as well as emergency and non-emergency situations, and situations where there is mixed displacement (i.e. both IDPs and refugees).

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# 5 The ‘how’ of coordination in the DRC

*Q2: How can coordination of education planning and response be made more effective?*

This section examines the ‘how’ of coordination in terms of: education for IDPs; education for refugees; coordination between the national education system; and the provision of education for these different groups. It looks particularly at the enabling and constraining factors for coordination, as well as providing details on specific tools and mechanisms where appropriate. The analysis is framed by the four Faerman factors that have been found to contribute to the success or failure of inter-organisational coordination efforts, specifically: predisposition, incentives, leadership and equity (Faerman et al., 2001).

- *Predisposition* refers to the initial tendencies and dispositions that entities have towards potential partners that facilitate or inhibit working collaboratively. These predispositions can be both institutional and personal: structures channel behaviour in particular ways; thus, the system may tend to encourage or inhibit cooperation, with these tendencies in turn shaping personal interactions.

- *Incentives* relate to the ongoing ‘structuring’ of collaborative relationships over time, and the costs of and benefits obtained from coordinating with partners.
- *Leadership* and leaders at all levels of an organisation can influence how people think about incentives and even alter initial dispositions as well as equity and power dynamics within coordination mechanisms.
- *Equity* ensures consideration not just of the number of ‘equal’ actors, but also the recognition of the difference between and comparative advantages of actors and the consideration of the power dynamics present in any inter-organisational process.

Each section is followed by a brief analysis of the key conclusions as to how coordination can be improved for education provision for the populations and actors in question. The analysis conducted here draws heavily on KIIs, with a range of participants from across the various actors and coordination mechanisms (see Annex 1). Table 4 summarises the analysis on each of the coordination mechanisms using the four Faerman factors.

**Table 5 Analysis of coordination mechanisms using the Faerman factors**

Faerman factors	Coordination of education for IDPs	Coordination of refugee education	Coordination across the national education system and providing education to IDPs and refugees
<p><b>1. Predisposition</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low government priority on education as an element of its emergency response;</li> <li>• The Education Cluster system covers all major crisis areas in the DRC and plays a fundamental coordination role;</li> <li>• Role of UNICEF staff as lead cluster coordinators is clear at all levels, but the co-leading coordinators seem to play supplementary roles. Informants perceive this as a shrinking mandate of the cluster co-lead;</li> <li>• Cluster units at all levels are largely clear on their mandated coordination role and functions;</li> <li>• No explicit mention of MoUs or other advance agreements underpinning IDP education coordination;</li> <li>• Some agreements came about informally within provincial clusters leading to lobbying for funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The refugee coordination model (RCM) provides a framework for responding to all refugee issues in the DRC;</li> <li>• UNHCR plays a key coordinating role and provides financial support to implementing partners to deliver primary education to refugees in camps and to facilitate and advocate for refugee education outside of camps through coordination with respective government agencies and education providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several government ministries deal with specific aspects of children's education;</li> <li>• Conflicting mandates and structures on coordinating education within government predispose officials to limit their role in coordinating refugee education and education for IDPs and integrating these children into the national education system;</li> <li>• There is heavy emphasis on primary education</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Incentives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No dedicated pool of funds exists to fill key posts for the Education Cluster;</li> <li>• There is a lack of funding for education in general in the DRC;</li> <li>• Emphasis of the humanitarian response remains on 'life-saving' interventions and the education sector continues to be deprioritised and underfunded;</li> <li>• Funding challenges can also enable coordination (e.g. where implementing partners can build consortia to access larger pots of funding)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR collects data on refugee education, which are useful to education partners and government actors, including provincial education offices in the DRC;</li> <li>• UNHCR participation in education cluster activities varies: at national level this is minimal; at provincial, and sub-provincial level, especially on education coordination issues that affect both IDPs and refugees, participation varies;</li> <li>• Funding for refugee education is limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The funding modalities for refugee education and education for IDPs have created varying incentives for the government;</li> <li>• There is a perception in government that EIE funding in the DRC context tends to flow to the education cluster partners, which incentivises the government to strengthen its alignment with the Cluster;</li> <li>• Lack of governmental focus on refugee education in the national strategy also adds to the funding challenge for refugee education</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After several years of strong and continuous leadership, the Education Cluster suffered from leadership vacuum at the national level;</li> <li>• Inadequate information management system at national and regional levels due to lack of information managers for the Cluster;</li> <li>• At the national, provincial and sub-provincial levels, almost all coordinators are double hatting, or, triple hatting;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR leads coordination on refugee education within the context of the RCM. There are few education actors, and most of them are funded by UNHCR. They attend local and national planning meetings and agree on priorities;</li> <li>• UNHCR connects with national system discussions to try to attract attention to refugee-hosting areas, with limited success;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government leadership is lacking throughout: within the national education system, and in relation to provision of education for IDPs and refugees;</li> <li>• Low financial commitment of the government towards the education sector means low investment in resourcing leadership;</li> <li>• No single ministry is playing a leading role in coordinating response efforts;</li> </ul>

Faerman factors	Coordination of education for IDPs	Coordination of refugee education	Coordination across the national education system and providing education to IDPs and refugees
<b>3. Leadership cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinators in the field face leadership fatigue; there are concerns about their ability to play a neutral role in the Cluster and to provide enough time and strong leadership and capacity strengthening;</li> <li>• When leads and co-leads haven't taken off their organisational hats, they have engaged more meaningfully in coordination;</li> <li>• The government has not claimed a key coordinating role in the Education Cluster;</li> <li>• Government officials are also 'double hatting'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of political and disorganisation within government at provincial and sub-provincial levels prevent officials from taking on a leadership role in the refugee education response;</li> <li>• However, the level of engagement by the government on some issues appears to be adequate. The MEPST, for instance, liaises with UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees on organising tests and exams for Rwandan, Tanzanian, and Angolan children, coordinating visits of government school inspectors to see how the schools are functioning, and what obstacles they face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The multiplicity of ministries and related personnel has seen internal competition for funding rise;</li> <li>• Continuous change of focal points from the ministries in education cluster meetings at national level</li> </ul>
<b>4. Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education Cluster has been commended for creating comprehensive and timely situational reports and the HRP quarterly reports, alongside the ability to anticipate education challenges and needs;</li> <li>• There is some lack of capacity to fulfil core cluster functions e.g. information management and not having dedicated education cluster coordinators at regional cluster level;</li> <li>• Operational capacity for partners to respond is low;</li> <li>• The scale at which national and sub-national actors in and out of government need and are expected to operate is too high;</li> <li>• Broader security issues in the country affect the implementation capacity of partners since some locations are inaccessible;</li> <li>• Many crises are going on at the same time in some provinces, and many sub-provincial clusters need to be managed and coordinated simultaneously by the national Cluster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even UNHCR, which is seen as playing a key coordinating role, faces a lack of human resources to coordinate the education response;</li> <li>• The ministries of education and related provincial departments of education do not have such capacity either;</li> <li>• Broader security issues in the country affect the implementation capacity of partners;</li> <li>• Despite these challenges, the presence of actors that promote coordinated planning and response has allowed schools to be built or rehabilitated, and learning materials to be distributed to refugee children in need;</li> <li>• Partial and outdated information sharing between the national, provincial and sub-provincial levels of government have hindered coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capacity of government entities to coordinate the provision of education across the board is limited;</li> <li>• Reasons include: low salary and low staff motivation to fulfil core functions, lack of a pension scheme forcing older workers to retain their positions, lack of evaluation of the education programmes running in schools and of learning materials being used, underprovision of teacher training, and lack of evaluation of education quality;</li> <li>• Overall, the national education system is seen as saturated and it cannot absorb influxes of displaced children;</li> <li>• The country at large is reliant on parents to coordinate education provision and other actors, national NGOs and INGOs;</li> <li>• Parents have paid teacher salaries as well as school fees</li> </ul>

Source: Authors' analysis

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## 5.1 Coordination of education for IDPs

Coordination of education for IDPs is led by a range of actors, with the DRC Government seen as having the smallest coordinating role. This was observed across the interviews.

### 5.1.1 Predisposition

Coordination of education for IDPs is particularly shaped by issues of mandates (of the government, the Education Cluster at national, provincial and sub-provincial levels) and agreements.

#### Mandates

The general perception among key informants is that the DRC Government does not place a high priority on education as an element of its emergency response. It therefore plays a limited role in coordination of education for IDPs. A cell within the MEPST is dedicated to EiE and the LEG. In one informant's view, 'that cell should be the main coordinating body' (KII, 2019b).

From an official perspective, the government key informants' expectation is that during crises, and in general, the national strategy of education is to be followed and implemented by all actors delivering education. In its current national education sector plan (the SSEF covering 2016–2025), the government does not appear to have placed a clear emphasis or laid out its own approach towards EiE. A government representative stated, 'the priority is not IDPs but rather educational structures that can welcome all children, provide quality education, and improve partners' participation and transparency' (KII, 2018e). In practice, the key informant notes a flexible and adaptive approach employed by regional offices of education to respond to crises; a marker, in our view, of positive predisposition. The interviewee (KII, 2018e) explains the adaptation of primary and secondary education curricula in relation to crises, 'in crises or disaster outbreaks, the

regional office of education will postpone exams and classes. That way, children are more likely to stay within formal education. In case they fall out of the programme, children will be integrated into catch-up programmes that provide the equivalent of two years of formal education in only one year. A student missing a year will be able to catch up on the year missed and the current year and reintegrate into formal education the following year'.

The mandate of the national, provincial and sub-provincial education clusters is set through global benchmarks and adapted as needed to suit the DRC context. 'The education cluster plays a fundamental role at national and provincial levels. The cluster is active in provinces where emergencies are going in. In provinces where there are no emergencies, the cluster is in a "dormant" mode and can be activated when there is a need' (KII, 2019b). EiE working groups exist in areas where clusters have not been activated (KII, 2018b).

Covered in detail in the 'who of coordination' section, we know that at the national level UNICEF co-leads with SCI, whereas at sub-national levels, typically one UNICEF staff member and a representative from a local NGO, INGO or government co-lead. In reality, the role of the UNICEF cluster lead is clear at all levels, however the co-leads' roles are less so. In some instances, they are referred to as 'co-facilitators', and in some areas they are seen as playing 'supplementary roles'. Informants perceive this as a shrinking mandate of the cluster co-lead. In an effort to clarify roles and responsibilities, in June 2019, a training on Education Cluster coordination took place in Kinshasa bringing together co-leads from throughout the country (KII, 2018a).

The cluster units at all levels are largely clear on their mandated coordination role and the functions they need to fulfil during crises, in addition to contributing to the inter-cluster coordination mechanisms. In addition to the stated six cluster functions that members

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are meant to fulfil,<sup>9</sup> members themselves highlighted the following: (1) contribute to strategic decisions; (2) optimise the Cluster; (3) planning activities (e.g. objectives, indicators and alignment with the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) norms); (4) needs assessment and priorities; (5) monitoring and evaluation of the Cluster; and, (6) conducting awareness campaigns to integrate the key messages into humanitarian activities (KII, 2018c). Interviews at the national level also highlighted the importance of the Education Cluster in conducting needs assessments, engaging in ‘3W’ (‘who’ does ‘what’ ‘where’) processes to map interventions and funding, as well as conducting regular capacity assessments for NGOs and implementation partners (KII, 2018a). Further analysis on functions and the capacity of members to fulfil these are discussed in the section on equity (capacity of coordination partners).

#### **MoUs and other advance agreements**

Most informants did not refer explicitly to memorandums of understanding (MoUs) or other advance agreements in the interviews. Individually, of course, organisations set up their own agreements for EiE programming.

In other instances, informants explained that agreements came about informally and organically. The motivating factor for these was found to be a combination of the individual and collective will of the actors to respond to particular situations and to do what they can in their limited capacity (especially with few financial and human resources at their disposal). A key informant discussed in detail in relation to one of the education sub-clusters in South Kivu what the role of the cluster was and how the informal agreements led eventually to lobbying for funds:

the cluster had noticed the presence of many out-of-school children in affected zones in some territories in South Kivu. Because there were no resources to assess the education needs in the affected zone, the cluster, professional actors (religious schools), local and international NGOs and the community went from villages to villages to identify children who were not going to school. Data were reported to the national Cluster. Based on the data, an advocacy note was drafted (*note de plaidoyer*), and finally a concept note was submitted to the humanitarian coordinator to find additional funding for catch-up programmes for these children. A couple of months later, the Pooled Funds from the national Cluster allocated \$1,000,000 to South Kivu’s cluster to create informal learning programmes the following year. These programmes took place after regular school days and provided education to more than 30,000 children who did not have access to the regular schooling system (KII, 2018d).

#### **5.1.2 Predisposition**

Interviews highlighted a range of funding challenges that limit effective coordination, both within the Education Cluster, and relative to other clusters.

##### **Funding challenges**

Funding challenges exist at different levels and constrain key actors from fulfilling their coordination functions. The first challenge highlighted by interviewees is funding for staffing (KII, 2018a; 2018b). The Cluster lead and co-leading entities do not have a dedicated pool of funds on which to rely to fill certain key positions. For instance, SCI, the co-leading entity

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<sup>9</sup> Cluster functions: (1) Supporting service delivery by providing a platform for agreement on approaches and elimination of duplication; (2) Informing strategic decision-making of the Humanitarian Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordination Team for the humanitarian response through coordination of needs assessment, gap analysis and prioritisation; (3) Planning and strategy development including sectoral plans, adherence to standards and funding needs; (4) Advocacy to address identified concerns on behalf of cluster participants and the affected population; (5) Monitoring and reporting on the cluster strategy and results; recommending corrective action where necessary; (6) Contingency planning/preparedness/national capacity building where needed and where capacity exists within the cluster. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee added ‘Accountability to Affected Populations’ as an area of work that clusters should focus on.

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at the national level, was unable between 2016 and 2018 to hire a Cluster Coordinator to work alongside the UNICEF counterpart. In 2018 and 2019, the role of the information management officer remained vacant as it ‘has not been budgeted anywhere’ (KII, 2018a).

This is tied to the second, more structural challenge of lack of funding for education in general in the DRC, and education for internally displaced children in particular, which is underfunded. This leads to a continual ‘cycle of underfunding’ (KII, 2018a). A government representative in the Education Cluster noted ‘the Cluster does not have a sizeable budget like the Protection Cluster, thereby limiting the ability of the former to respond adequately’ (KII, 2018e). Others explained that even though ‘the DRC faces a protracted emergency, some donors still put an emphasis on “life-saving” interventions. Within the education response, activities were stripped down to cover pressing needs’ (KII, 2019a). ‘The cluster was always in the last position in receiving funds’ (KII, 2019b).

In a wider landscape of cost-cutting and effective use of existing funds, organisations are also being forced to make decisions as to which activities to direct greater or lesser resources. The Education Cluster itself has been severely affected. Given ‘funding issues’ (KII, 2018b), the UNICEF country office, for example, underwent a structural review which would ‘make the office more effective’ (ibid.). A team from New York laid out a restructuring plan for UNICEF in the DRC, and this resulted in a reduced number of field offices, a drop from 13 to nine. Of the nine, six field offices have had only one education staff member and one had no education staff member. This member typically oversees provincial/sub-provincial cluster functions in addition to carrying out the main organisational duties. There were 30 posts cut where staff had coordination and programming responsibilities. In North Kivu, four posts were cut in a team of five, and the remaining member had to ‘triple hat’ (KII, 2019a).

But, funding also enables coordination, especially where implementing partners (NGOs) can build consortia to access larger pots of funding than if they applied on their own (KII, 2018b). The application to the ECW fund and subsequent access to resources relied on such consortia-building

approaches (see Table 1 in section 3.4). The ECW investment pushed education actors that were not used to working together to jointly plan and design the First Emergency Response programme. It also encouraged increased engagement with the Technical and Financial Partners Group and with the four ministries responsible for education in the DRC. This is a good example of how funding can enhance cluster coordination and joint programming.

### 5.1.3 Leadership

Coordination of education for IDPs has clear leadership in terms of organisations, but considerable weaknesses in terms of specific leadership personnel and resourcing for them. These issues appear to be hampering coordination efforts within the sector.

#### Clarity of leadership roles

Leadership roles in the cluster structure are clear, in principle, with two agencies co-leading at the national level (UNICEF and SCI, DRC) and UNICEF co-leading with a government, local NGO or INGO counterpart at the provincial or sub-provincial level. In practice, however, at all levels, and when it comes to inter-agency coordination, leadership clearly sits with UNICEF, with other entities (including SCI at the national level and levels below) seen as playing supplementary and less significant roles.

At the national level, SCI is looking to clarify co-leadership roles with UNICEF. It started repositioning its role as cluster co-lead in 2018 after a period of two years when it did not engage in any of the national-level Cluster activities (KII, 2019b). This time around there are aims to negotiate equal responsibilities, whether in inter-agency coordination forums or elsewhere, and for shared accountability for cluster deliverables (KII, 2018a).

Furthermore, while key informants see the government’s role as vital to effective coordination, it does not play a strong leadership role in the Cluster. Some reasons for this are discussed below under resourcing leadership.

#### Resourcing leadership

Between 2012 and April 2018, the national Cluster had a dedicated Coordinator providing continuous

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leadership, but there were periods when she was ‘triple hatting’. Under her leadership, ‘there was a greater push for advocating on behalf of the Cluster within the UN system, in inter-cluster forums, and for ensuring members were respecting core functions of the Cluster’ (KII, 2019b).

Coordination has been particularly vulnerable to a leadership vacuum in the Cluster at the national level. The post of UNICEF Cluster Coordinator was vacant between April and December 2018. As noted earlier, between 2016 and 2018, SCI did not have a dedicated co-leading Cluster Coordinator. A leadership vacuum of this nature at the national level, at critical crisis points in the DRC, created incomplete information feedback loops from national to provincial, and sub-provincial levels and vice versa.

Resourcing leadership is tied to the funding challenge we stated earlier where cluster lead and co-leading entities do not have a dedicated pool of funds on which to rely to fill certain key positions; however, even when funds are available, recruiting people has been a challenge (KII, 2019a).

At the provincial and sub-provincial levels, almost all coordinators (leading and co-leading) are ‘double hatting’. Some are even triple hatting – juggling development programming and emergency programming as well as coordination (this was the case in North Kivu from April to August 2018) and is the case in South Kivu (KII, 2019a). Multiple responsibilities that fall on the coordinators have created leadership fatigue and have given rise to concerns about their ability to play a neutral role in the cluster, to provide sufficient time, and sufficiently strong leadership (KII, 2018a; 2018d). On the contrary, it has been noted that when leads and co-leads have been able to take off their organisational hats as, for instance, in the case of UNICEF and NRC in one of the provincial clusters, they have been able to engage more meaningfully in coordination (KII, 2018c).

Nor has the government claimed a key coordinating role in the Cluster. For some this is because the government has not claimed that space, and for others it has not been given the space. According to one key informant (2018a), its ‘role is reactive’. Another key informant stated that for the education response for IDPs and refugees affected by conflict, the

‘non-government leads provide most of the energy and are the most effective. The government is present, but it is not leading’ (KII, 2018b). Like many other representatives in the national and sub-national clusters, government officials are also ‘double hatting’; this does not place them in a good position to take a strong leadership role. Some government representatives expressed the view that the government should have more responsibility in coordinating the education response. The limited current decision-making power of the government within the Education Cluster is, in their view, hindering its actions and responses.

#### 5.1.4 Equity

The main equity issues for coordination of education for IDPs include a lack of strong coordination capacity – and overall capacity – among many of the partners involved in the response, as well as the extent to which there is a level playing field for actors to coordinate based on regionally decentralised coordination structures.

#### Capacity of coordination partners

According to the 2018 Update of the 2017–2019 HRP for the DRC, the development of the humanitarian situation in the country in 2017 had confirmed the indispensable role of coordination, given the geographical scale of the crises and the major access constraints. It referred to the OCHA review of the humanitarian architecture in 2017 that revealed the need for more flexible and adaptable mechanisms in the contexts of the various affected provinces, avoiding the application of a single ‘one size fits all’ model. The report stated that the Cluster Capacity Mapping exercise conducted by OCHA had confirmed the lack of resources available to the sectors that had in turn affected the humanitarian community’s capacity to monitor, report and analyse. This insufficiency, the report highlighted, would also be of interest to humanitarian actors to participate actively in coordination mechanisms. The priority for 2018 was to ensure – through the Humanitarian Country Team – the implementation of the recommendations from the architecture review; and continue to advocate for more capacities for the Clusters (OCHA, 2018a).

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Most interviewees noted a lack of capacity among members of the Education Cluster to coordinate education crisis responses, while some identified a few key strengths. Of the key strengths, OCHA, for instance, commended the Education Cluster for the ability to create comprehensive and timely situational reports and the HRP quarterly reports, alongside the ability to anticipate education challenges and needs (KII, 2019b). Others explained that the 'Education Cluster was working with other clusters as a group, so we were supporting each other. We were reaching a consensus among ourselves and we were going with this consensus to discuss further with OCHA our needs and priorities at national and provincial levels' (KII, 2019b). Some capacity issues within the Cluster itself have arisen due to the lack of capacity to fulfil core cluster functions. 'While the HRP acts as a "core document" and "a good organising framework" to plan the education response, cluster members have needed time to digest this process' (KII, 2019b).

Some of the informants link these issues to a range of reasons including the lack of awareness – in spite of training – of partners on how to evaluate the situation and related needs, how to plan, and to coordinate at the local level, and how to seek help from communities themselves. To an NGO representative (KII, 2018f), 'community participation would be key to relay information, to conduct preliminary needs assessments. Instead communities wait for the humanitarian teams to conduct the evaluation'. There are limits to the humanitarian teams' capacity to undertake these. In one instance, it was noted that the teams could not access some areas and so could not conduct the evaluations, and in another, it was noted that evaluations by the teams were duplicated in the same area (ibid.).

The number of partners with the operational capacity to respond is also very low. For example, in the case of North Kivu, there are nearly 40 partners participating in the education cluster meetings, but only five partners might have the capacity to respond (KII, 2019a).

The technical and political divide between implementing (non-governmental) partners and government representatives is also a key constraining factor in relation to capacity issues.

For instance, while these partners may have the technical capacity to respond to the crises, the political nature of the crises, the sensitivities around the conflicts in certain areas, and the government's own role in fuelling or abetting the crises, may prohibit the technical work from being undertaken.

On a positive note, a range of efforts, have been and are being made to improve coordination and provision in these areas. The efforts that have already been made include response planning where the tools and frameworks needed to create contingency plans and work plans have been made available by humanitarian actors (by OCHA, for instance, in line with INEE minimum standards), and workshops have been arranged regularly since 2012 to explain to new and existing cluster members how to use them, and what types of data need to be integrated into them (KII, 2018d). Efforts that are planned for 2019 include training using Global Education Cluster INEE packages to inform cluster members of their as well as the overarching Cluster's core coordination functions (KII, 2018a).

### **National, provincial and sub-provincial coordination**

Key informants generally commented on the scale at which national and sub-national actors inside and outside government need to and are expected to operate. They not only need to consider the vast size of the country, the number of coordination mechanisms in place at provincial and sub-provincial levels, but equally the fact that, in some provinces, many crises are going on at the same time, and many sub-clusters need to be managed and coordinated simultaneously.

While faced with these on-the-ground realities, many interviewees considered that the decentralised structure of coordination in the DRC helps to overcome certain obstacles. Take the example of OCHA. In 2017, it decentralised its own coordination mechanisms and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms regionally. One informant stated, 'along with our Education Cluster, OCHA uses its own regional coordination mechanisms to develop strategies, and identify needs, and these are forwarded to the national level. This I have not seen in other

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countries. There, you tend to see national level mechanisms have little input from regional, provincial levels' (KII, 2018a).

### 5.1.5 How can coordination be improved?

There are several closely linked and self-reinforcing areas where coordination of education for IDPs and communities affected by crises could be improved. This creates challenges in terms of improving coordination overall, as there are many factors at play, and also creates the potential for specific improvements to have a catalytic impact on the quality of coordination. Key areas include:

- Ensuring that the formal mandate and responsibilities of the national and sub-national education clusters (as well as individual cluster members) are clearly laid out, the roles are given sufficient priority and there are dedicated financial and human resources. The updated terms of reference for the Cluster in 2019 are aimed at addressing this.
- Enhancing the role of the government in carrying out key coordination functions. At the moment, it appears to be less involved in the cluster's response, and even on its own, is not proactively responding to the education needs of affected populations. Nominating and dedicating one government focal person who will represent the four ministries in charge of education would be a vital step forward.
- Strengthening leadership capacity in the national Education Cluster by ensuring that it has two full-time, highly capable Cluster Coordinators from UNICEF and SCI. The roles were filled in early 2019.
- Increasing advocacy efforts as a way to enhance coordination and the strengthening of the cluster mechanism. In the DRC, cluster advocacy capacities require strengthening if education is to be seen as central to the humanitarian response and if it is to receive dedicated humanitarian funding.
- Raising the profile of education for IDPs in particular and taking steps to engage more effectively in resource mobilisation, focusing particularly on how funding from non-

humanitarian donors can provide greater long-term support.

- Improving data gathering and dissemination mechanisms would help give national, provincial and sub-provincial clusters the information necessary to both coordinate provision and to make effective proposals to increase funding levels. Investing in a dedicated information management officer role at the national level is critical.
- Strengthening linkages with other coordination mechanisms – especially as focusing on the Cluster's internal strengthening will not help create or reinforce linkages with the development coordination mechanisms (i.e. of the LEG) or refugee coordination processes, a subject to which we now turn.

## 5.2 Coordination of refugee education

Coordination of the refugee response overall, and of the education response for refugees, is managed principally by UNHCR. However, it does not have a sector-specific coordination group for education. Coordination by UNHCR takes place at the provincial and sub-provincial levels since refugees tend to be concentrated in specific pockets of the country. The education ministries and departments play a limited role, while the role of the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) in refugee education remains unclear.

Overall, interviews suggest that the coordination challenges are more a result of lack of financial and human resources rather than a lack of willingness by actors to play a strong role. A range of factors underpin the shortcomings of coordination on refugee education, and the wider security context of the DRC adds an unparalleled level of uncertainty to the work being done on the ground by the various actors. These are set out below in terms of the Faerman factors.

### 5.2.1 Predisposition

In the refugee education system, we see the predisposition of actors towards coordination being shaped by a combination of mandates, and partnership agreements. The RCM plays a fundamental role in how refugee education coordination and response take place in the

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DRC.<sup>10</sup> The related ‘global analysis framework’ produced for the ECW Global Partners project has a dedicated discussion on the RCM.

### **Mandates**

Together with the government and, in particular, the CNR, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multisectoral assistance to persons of concern. For the refugee response, UNHCR closely collaborates with UN agencies and works directly with 16 national and international implementing partners as well as many operational partners in the DRC.

Within the humanitarian cluster system, UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and co-leads the Protection and Prevention component of the National Strategy on sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR also leads the Shelter Working Group within the Shelter/Non-Food Items Cluster, co-leads the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Working Group jointly with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and co-leads the National Cash Working Group jointly with UNOCHA.

The existing literature indicates, and this was confirmed by the KIIs, that UNHCR plays a key coordinating role. It provides financial support to implementing partners to deliver primary education to refugees in camps and to facilitate refugee education outside of camps through coordination with respective government agencies and other education providers.

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) – a faith-based NGO – has emerged as a key education provider for refugees. JRS plays a major role, especially in secondary education, in the territories of Masisi, Rutchuru, Walikale, Kalehe and in Goma. It builds secondary schools which are attended by refugees and displaced children and provides the students with school supplies and uniforms. It also contributes towards the salaries of the school teachers, organises teacher training and gives office supplies to the schools (KII, 2018l).

UNICEF is also providing education services for South Sudanese refugees through a number of local partnerships supporting local schools around the camps. The focus is on pre-primary education. In South Kivu, the education cluster has been active in providing school kits and strengthening the capacity of local schools to be able to absorb refugee and IDP children (KII, 2019a).

### **MoUs and other advance agreements**

UNHCR has partnership agreements with the education providers, and coordinates across them within the different camps. As part of its monitoring and oversight, it has mechanisms in place for reviewing partners’ performance. Two key informants explained, ‘we are accountable for what the education partners are doing. We are interested to see that resources go where they benefit refugees the most’ (KII, 2018j; 2018k).

UNHCR’s overall education strategy 2012–2016 aimed at ensuring that refugees have sustainable access to national education systems and lifelong learning and recognised sectoral coordination with government line ministries was central to this. UNHCR often works with partners like UNICEF to support the relationship with the Ministry of Education, which is considered increasingly vital in contexts of protracted displacement. At the global level, UNHCR and UNICEF have also developed a letter of understanding template that can be adapted to particular country or regional contexts. In 2018 a renewed MoU was signed between the two agencies at the global level, highlighting the potential contribution of UNICEF to the CRRF. In addition, in 2016 UNHCR signed an MoU with the GPE to strengthen engagement by UNHCR and partners in development-oriented LEGs to facilitate linkages with national government actors and enhance collaboration and coordination across the humanitarian–development nexus.

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10 The refugee coordination model (RCM) is a standardised approach to refugee response coordination designed to ensure inclusiveness, predictability and transparency, as well as clear lines of accountability. While called a ‘model’, the guidance states that coordination is a means to an end, and a contextual approach should be taken to designing the refugee coordination approach in any given situation. The RCM should ‘contract or expand’ depending on the scale and complexity of the context (UNHCR, 2014: 2).

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There is an MoU between UNICEF and UNHCR in the DRC from early 2013 to respond to crisis in the CAR and an influx of refugees in northern Equateur. However, the MoU was not updated to include other refugees (e.g. from Burundi and South Sudan).

The 2019 RRRP for the DRC states ‘UNHCR will collaborate with UNICEF and others on the development of a programme that will facilitate greater inclusion of refugees in national education systems, permitting humanitarian interventions to phase out in favour of more sustainable approaches to support developing systems’ (UNHCR, 2018d: 17). Noting that resources are an issue, UNHCR set aside funds in 2019 for a joint consultant to draft a joint project for 2020, but even by mid-2019 UNICEF remained unable to commit time to start the process (KII, 2019c).

### 5.2.2 Incentives

Within the DRC refugee education context, partners weigh the benefits of participating in coordination mechanisms when determining the nature and extent of their involvement, as highlighted by UNHCR’s roles below. A scarce funding climate for refugee education also shapes the extent of coordination and the priorities within it.

#### Coordination as give and take

As lead of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR shares its 3W mapping of the DRC across humanitarian and development partners. In the first semester of 2018, it recorded 127 operational actors and 228 projects that benefitted 1,142,655 IDPs, refugees, returnees and host community members – mostly children (UNHCR, 2018e). This information is considered useful for inter-cluster coordination and for coordination within the Protection Cluster.

By collecting refugee education data, UNHCR also provides a valuable service to education partners and government actors, including provincial education offices in the DRC. Two informants (KII, 2018j; 2018k) explain that, even though UNHCR does not have education officers in the camps, its community services officers and protection officers collect these data. Based on these, factsheets on refugee education are then produced and disseminated. UNHCR’s data gathering and data sharing role is an important benefit for the different partners.

When it comes to UNHCR participation in the education cluster activities at national and sub-national levels, especially on education coordination issues that affect both IDPs and refugees, UNHCR staff engagement is limited. Between 2012 and mid-2018, UNHCR attended less than five national cluster meetings (KII, 2019b). These meetings were the key platform for discussing substantive issues across refugee/IDP settings that would benefit from coordination across the two coordination bodies and sets of partners.

At the provincial level, the engagement between the clusters and UNHCR has varied. Given that IDP protection is part of UNHCR’s operational mandate in the DRC, in certain IDP contexts where UNHCR plays a major role – for example, in Kananga (currently a major conflict hotspot) – it is also active in the education sub-cluster.

Incentives have been noted to be high among certain actors, where collaboration has allowed them to expand the number of activities they undertake. For example, one key informant (KII, 2018l) explained that the alignment between the missions of JRS, the NRC and SCI have helped them to coordinate more easily.

#### Funding challenges

Funding for refugee education is limited. While several key informants indicated that UNHCR plays a key role in resource mobilisation, resource availability for widescale EiE interventions is, in general, low. Funds from the limited education budget of UNHCR tend to go towards primary rather than pre-primary and secondary education. UNHCR staff note that in 2018 the budget line for pre-primary and secondary education was almost zero for some populations. As part of their review process, some test cases on where refugees need help have shown that UNHCR should release a small budget for secondary level education.

The August 2018 UNHCR operational update (UNHCR, 2018e) stated that a major funding gap is affecting UNHCR’s programme for Burundian refugees in the DRC, with education being among the hardest-hit sectors.

The lack of government focus on refugee education in the national strategy for education also weakens the case for organisations to seek and secure additional funds. Refugee education

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is loosely mentioned in the existing government strategy, with no specific listing of priorities and action plans on specific refugee groups, such as new arrivals as compared to those who have lived in the country for several years. In the foreseeable future, funding challenges will continue to remain, with primary education likely to receive the bulk of the assistance inside the camps.

### 5.2.3 Leadership

UNHCR plays a key leadership role in coordinating the education response, though much of this is related to its own education programmes and partnerships.

#### Lack of leadership structure

A leadership role of actors is lacking in the refugee education set-up, as seen in the form of education clusters and sub-clusters for the IDP response. It does not have a technical or working group that could play a major coordinating role. A key informant explains, ‘at the local level, the response is being coordinated in different ways – with UNHCR either working closely with the education cluster (where it exists) or UNICEF (where the cluster mechanism does not exist)’ (KII, 2019a).

As lead of the refugee response and as a member of the TFP on refugee education, though, UNHCR is clear on its coordinating role on refugee education. Its staff note its key leadership role in implementing education sector policies alongside a number of NGOs, holding monthly meetings with these partners, coordinating education activities at camp level, and evaluating their performance (KII, 2018j; 2018h).

Some key informants also note the lack of political interest and the disorganisation within government at sub-national level to take on a leadership role in the refugee education response. However, some informants also deem the level of government engagement to be adequate. The MEPST, for instance, liaises with UNHCR and the CNR in the organisation of tests and exams for Rwandan, Tanzanian and Angolan children, coordinating visits of government school inspectors to see how the schools are functioning and what obstacles they face (KII, 2018h). As UNHCR is responsible for camp management, it plays a key role in the coordination of these activities. Government officials interviewed also explain

that inspectors go to neighbouring countries, in refugee camps administered by UNHCR, to ensure the curriculum is the same as in the DRC. It is also possible to take the primary education exam recognised by the DRC in refugee camps outside the DRC for the benefit of Congolese children.

### 5.2.4 Equity

Equity issues in relation to coordination were largely framed negatively in terms of their impact on coordination. The capacity challenges were clearly highlighted as hindering effective, coordinated planning and response.

#### Capacity of coordination partners

The lack of human resources to coordinate the education response is a major capacity challenge, even within UNHCR. Two KIIs (KII, 2018j; 2018k) noted that UNHCR has no ‘dedicated education officers who are focused on EiE at the provincial level. There all education work is carried out by protection officers (including collecting refugee education data). In Kinshasa, only one staff member deals with education under a broader portfolio of community services and is tasked with multiple functions.’ They further explain, ‘community services and protection portfolios undermine a sharp focus on education only’ (KII 2018j; 2018k).

With such scant resources, alongside the nature of refugee and returnee issues affecting the country, it is unreasonable to expect a great deal of coordination on refugee education. Key informants reiterate that the main challenge is not ‘unwillingness’ but the lack of human resources needed to coordinate. They equally recognise that the ministries associated with education and the related provincial departments do not have such capacity either.

Broader issues in the country affect the capacity of coordination partners. In many areas, there are security issues and cases of extreme violence which affect staff presence and disrupt education interventions, evaluations and assessments (KII, 2018j; 2018k).

Despite these challenges, some key informants believe that the presence of actors promoting coordinated planning and response has allowed schools to be built or rehabilitated, learning materials to be distributed to children

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in need, and teachers to gain the knowledge they need on conflict-sensitive education and psychosocial well-being.

### **National, sub-national and local coordination**

There are a number of challenges relating to poor information sharing from the national to sub-national levels and vice versa. These issues may then create a hindrance to coordination if information is conveyed unclearly, in a partial manner, or with a time lag. For instance, one key informant explains, ‘the poor condition of roads and heavy rains prevent the government from accessing schools in remote areas, which basically means that those schools would not have the updated versions of the curricula. Kinshasa is too far; the information can take a year to circulate’ (KII, 2018I).

#### **5.2.5 How can coordination be improved?**

There are a number of areas where coordination of education for refugees can be improved. Key areas include:

- Considering the creation of a sub-working group on refugee education led by a UNHCR education lead in the National Education Cluster and/or in the national LEG and having refugee education as a standing agenda item in the Cluster and LEG meetings to improve coordination on refugee education.
- Consulting with all provincial and sub-provincial clusters that are in mixed situations to consider the establishment of equivalent sub-working groups and standing agenda items on refugee education at those levels. It may be useful to consider that the education needs of refugees living in IDP hosting and return areas could be taken into account by the clusters.
- Strengthening the existing RCM in the DRC context and developing UNHCR’s MoU with UNICEF in ways that are specific to the country context, for which there is a precedent from previous years. Ensuring that UNHCR increases the number of education coordinators and/or focal points that specialise in EiE as currently there is one staff member at the national level; the country office should advocate upwards to higher levels of authority within UNHCR to ensure this happens and budgetary requirements for specialist staff are fulfilled.

- Building the capacity of coordinating partners, including government representatives.
- Improving data sharing across different levels of the coordination system.
- An improved security situation so that humanitarian actors can provide a more robust response would help coordination. At the moment, the high level of insecurity acts as a major disruptor of coordinated education planning and response, making it difficult for actors on the ground to plan, implement and monitor the work, especially when staff are advised to stay away from certain zones. However, addressing the security situation as such is beyond the scope of humanitarian actors.

### **5.3 Coordination across the national education system and provision of education for refugees and IDPs**

As noted in previous sections, all implementing partners lead coordination and delivery of education for IDPs as well as for refugees, in line with the SSEF. At present, there are several governmental ministries looking into specific aspects of children’s education and working in isolation rather than together on integration of children affected by crises into the national education system. The current level of coordination within and across these systems is perceived as weak. The main factors driving this coordination – and the challenges surrounding it – are outlined below.

#### **5.3.1 Predisposition**

Conflicting mandates and structures on coordinating education within government create a vacuum within the national education system, predisposing government officials to take a less prominent role in response efforts, whether for the provision of education for refugees and IDPs or for communities affected by crises.

#### **Mandates**

A key challenge is navigating the mandates of different ministries. These include the mandates of the MEPST and of three other ministries involved indirectly with education services.

The MEPST is currently tasked with formal education and certifying completion, and revising

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curricula so that basic education takes eight years to complete rather than six, with the additional two years now to include the curricula from the first two years of secondary schooling. The MAS is assigned with delivering informal learning programmes, where children aged 9–15 can access a three-year informal catch-up programme (PRS), and at the end of this period, receive their certificates of primary school completion (one year of informal education is equivalent to two years of formal education). They also offer vocational education to vulnerable adolescents. The Ministry of Youth focuses on literacy classes for adolescents and adults, but does not provide formal education.

KIIs indicate that such mandates place heavy emphasis on primary education relative to other levels of education. The system prohibits children above the age of 17 from enrolling in catch-up programmes, and they cannot complete their primary education. KIIs also note that, because the catch-up programmes do not fall under the mandate of the MEPST, schools have little interest in rolling them out. There are also issues with the fee structure, as children move on from these programmes to state schools. One KI states, ‘there is a real blockage between the PRS and formal education, coming from the lack of coordination between the two ministries’ (KII, 2018n). Others note that each ministry acts independently in the field. At the provincial and national level, they note that there is no communication between the different ministers, even though, as regards the national strategy, there is a clear role for the four ministries that oversee aspects of the education system in the DRC.

### 5.3.2 Incentives

To a certain extent there is a perception that greater international support for education for IDPs/communities affected by crises than for refugee education is incentivising the government to strengthen its alignment with the Education Cluster, a key player in attracting these resources to the DRC.

#### Funding – opportunities and challenges

Recent trends in funding for refugee education and education of IDPs/communities affected by crises have created varying incentives for the

government. The significant increase in IDPs since 2017 has led to increased funding targeted at these groups, which has flowed through education cluster partners. The ECW fund for instance provided \$3 million over 2018–2019 to support the provision of education to 245,000 children in four areas of the DRC – South Kivu, Tanganyika, Kasai and Bandundu. The funding is intended to respond to the significant increase in the numbers of IDPs in these regions following the escalation of conflict in the DRC, with IDPs and host populations envisaged as the main beneficiaries. This funding is additional to funds raised by the Education Cluster to target some 850,000 children in these provinces. The funding is being channelled through multiple consortia that include a mixture of international and national education NGOs that are involved in the response and are active members of the Education Cluster at the national or provincial level. In some cases, these also include national authorities (e.g. MAS). There is a perception among some actors working on refugee education that this area is seen as a lower priority (KIIs, 2018j; 2018k). However, the overall financing data analysed does not show considerable divergence in IDP and refugee funding levels prior to the recent crisis. Similarly, the fact that refugees access the national education system should allow them to benefit from investments made through this channel.

### 5.3.3 Leadership

Government leadership over coordination across these different provision mechanisms, including managing its own education portfolio, is currently lacking in terms of both clarity and resourcing.

#### Clarity of leadership roles

A major challenge for coordination is that there is currently no official entity whose role it is to coordinate across the refugee and national education systems, as well as an absence of individuals or positions to fulfil this function. At present it appears to occur largely on an ad hoc basis with particular officials doing it as part of a coordination role related to one of the systems.

Though UNHCR plays a vital leadership role, the integration of refugee children into the national education system boils down to government ownership of this responsibility.

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Key informants note that refugee integration in local schools is happening for some refugees but not for all. The government is primarily tasked with ensuring coordination of refugee education where refugees, such as from Burundi and South Sudan, are going to host community schools.

### Resourcing leadership

Government leadership is lacking not only within the national education system, but in relation to provision of education for IDPs/communities affected by crises and for refugees. Many informants expressed the view that resourcing leadership is tied to the financial commitment of the government towards the education sector and the priority it holds alongside other government priorities. No single ministry is playing a leading role in coordinating response efforts, with the education sector, as a whole, receiving limited financial resources. The multiplicity of ministries and related personnel has seen internal competition for funding rise. One interviewee stated, ‘each ministry wants to gain funding for itself which makes the coordination of interventions quite challenging’ (KII, 2018g).

Strategic leadership is missing at many levels and falls short for financial reasons as well. One key informant explained, ‘since 2016, a committee has been set up to produce a strategy to develop a peace-building education programme but no consultant who speaks French has been found so far to write the strategy. It has been two years. Because of this, the minister has not been able to define the strategy’.<sup>11</sup>

### 5.3.4 Equity

Equity issues in relation to coordination were largely framed negatively in terms of their impact on coordination, particularly in terms of government capacity to coordinate.

### Capacity of coordination partners

The capacity of government entities to coordinate the provision of education across the board is limited. Informants cited low salaries and low staff motivation to fulfil core functions, the lack

of a pension scheme forcing older workers to retain their positions, lack of evaluation of the education programmes running in schools and of learning materials being used, insufficient provision of teacher training, and lack of evaluation of education quality. Overall, the national education system is seen as saturated and informants explained that it cannot absorb influxes of displaced children. All these issues combine to constrain the capacity of the government to respond to the education needs of crisis-affected children.

The country at large is reliant on other actors, national NGOs and INGOs, as well as parents (who at times pay teacher salaries) to coordinate education provision.

### 5.3.5 How can coordination be improved?

There are a number of areas where coordination across the national education system and provision of education for IDPs/communities affected by crises and for refugees can be improved. Key areas include:

- The clarification of mandates, roles and responsibilities across the various ministries and clear demarcation of ‘who’ does ‘what’ within government to respond to EiE to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination and greater collaboration.
- Creation of a refugee education strategy by the government that clearly outlines its own approach to integration of refugees into the national education system; this strategy should be a key component of a wider, comprehensive government-led EiE strategy.
- Using data as a means for coordination *within* and *across* the three contexts (humanitarian contexts relating to refugees, IDPs, and host communities and the broader development context).
- Greater spread of international funding to cover both groups – refugees and IDPs/communities affected by crises – by encouraging joint working and collaboration across the different actors.

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11 One informant explained that UNICEF has been involved since the beginning of the process to develop a peace-building strategy, and the post to recruit the consultant was advertised multiple times. No suitable candidates were found. A member of the Country Validation Group stated that UNICEF will restart the recruitment process in collaboration with the government.

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# 6 The ‘so what’ of coordination in the DRC

Q3: *So what* does coordinated education planning and response contribute to better education and other collective outcomes for children and young people affected by crises?

This section examines the ‘so what’ of coordination in the DRC, reflecting on the outcomes and impacts of the coordination mechanisms and dynamics we have outlined in previous sections.

The global analysis framework paper accompanying the case studies notes two specific frameworks for analysing the effectiveness and impact of coordination – the OECD DAC outcomes and the ECW outcomes. The OECD DAC criteria are widely used metrics to measure humanitarian responses across sectors. These focus primarily on the quality of coordination itself in nine areas – Relevance and appropriateness; Coverage; Complementarity; Sufficiency; Efficiency; Connectedness; Coherence; Accountability and participation; and Effectiveness. The ECW outcomes are focused on concrete educational outcomes – specifically, Equity and Gender Equality, Access, Continuity, Protection and Quality.

The research faces a significant empirical challenge in linking the coordination mechanisms set out here to improvements in coordination and then linking that improved coordination to improvements in education outcomes. This is partly due to the absence of quantitative metrics for the level or quality of coordination, but also issues with data access, the capacity and priorities of the agencies that are engaged in coordination, and the practical scope of this study.

Our analysis is therefore based on a review of existing assessments of coordination in the DRC and our interview process, which was used to map out anecdotal evidence as to whether and how the coordination structures and approaches were improving coordination in terms of the OECD

DAC framework. In instances where it was clear to us that there were links between the OECD DAC outcomes and the ECW outcomes (see Figure 6), we attempted to make those connections. The strongest links between the two frameworks were found for education access and protection outcomes, followed by continuity and quality.

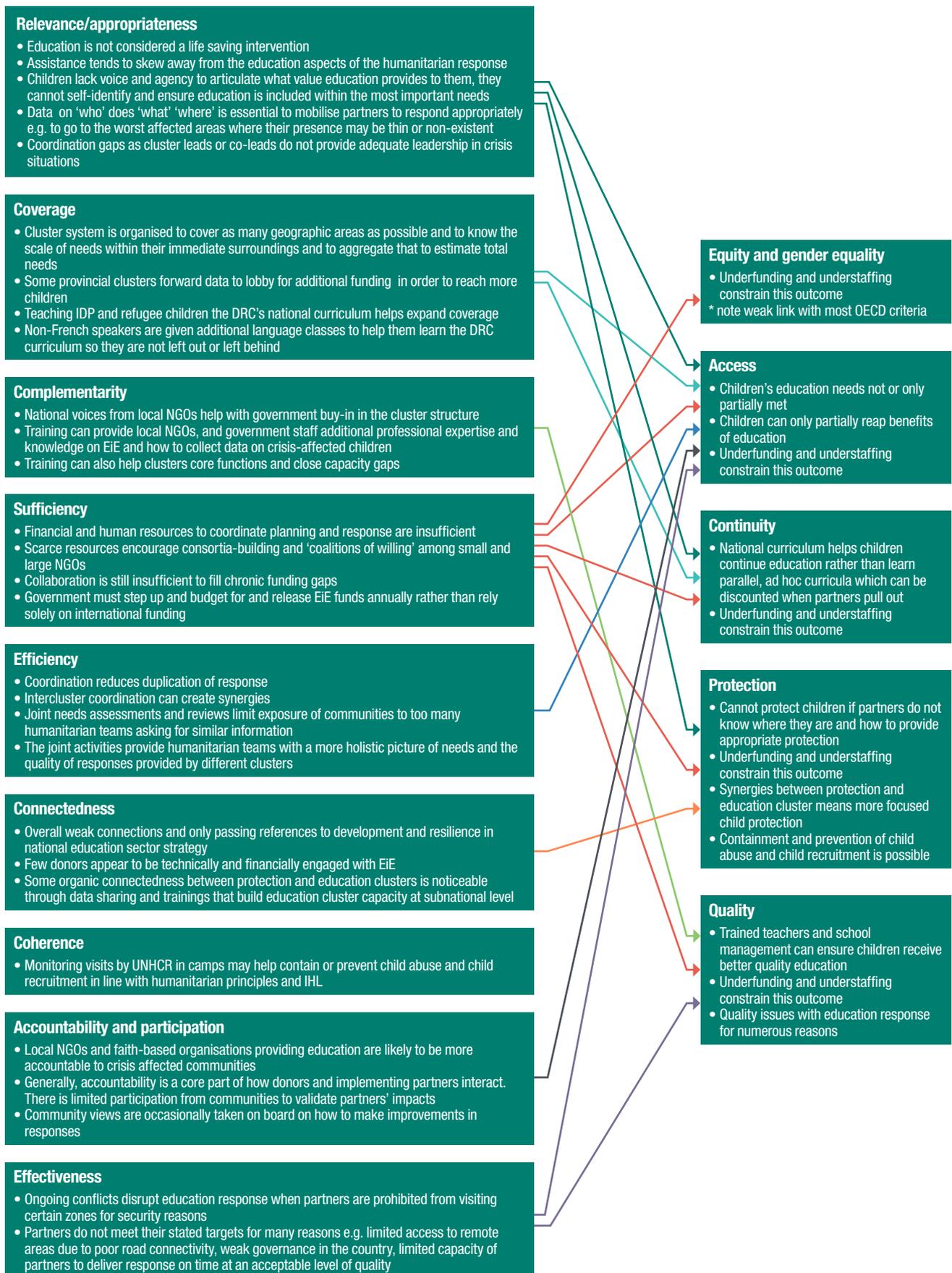
## 6.1 Relevance and appropriateness

*Assistance and protection that the international humanitarian system provides addresses the most important needs of recipients (as judged both by humanitarian professionals and by crisis-affected people themselves)*

Interviewees acknowledged that the judgment of humanitarian professionals on the most important needs and their subsequent response in the DRC is oriented towards ‘life-saving’ interventions. Except to a handful of partners invested in education for crisis-affected children, coordinating education-specific planning and response is not seen as an important, immediate priority, as it is not ‘life-saving’. Assistance tends, therefore, to skew away from the education aspects of the response for crisis-affected children and the benefits from education are left unseized as a result. Children themselves also lack the voice and agency to articulate the needs they consider to be the most important for them and it is not known what value they place on education, so it is generally difficult to establish whether the assistance is truly relevant and appropriate.

Despite the differing viewpoints of humanitarian professionals on the urgency of the education response, many informants find the 3W tool and joint needs assessments to be critical in facilitating the process by which the most important education needs for IDPs and communities affected by crises

**Figure 6 Linking education coordination criteria to education outcomes in the DRC**



Source: Authors' analysis

can be identified and addressed. Education Cluster members contribute – in principle – towards the collection and sharing of data to determine ‘who’ does ‘what’ ‘where’ and use that data to mobilise partners to go to the worst-affected areas as quickly as possible. This helps with coordination within the Cluster and is also useful for inter-cluster coordination.

But data collection is seen as a huge undertaking, and this is further intensified in the middle of an emergency where the information is needed most and people have the least capacity to collect and share it. The fact that there is no information management officer within the national Education Cluster means there is no proper and systematic oversight of the 3W process; nor do provincial clusters have the capacity to oversee this process at sub-national level. Individual actors relay information sporadically, and generally late. ‘Education Cluster members are reluctant in compiling the 3Ws, they have to be pushed to do it, or the Education Cluster has to work with OCHA to map the actors’ (KII, 2019b). Information flows from territories and provinces to the national level and vice versa are very slow, interviewees explained. This information and related data analysis would be instrumental in advocacy efforts and making the financial case for more appropriate and relevant assistance.

Needs also change quickly in emergency contexts, and some informants have highlighted how the Cluster’s response is affected by poor leadership and response management by senior cluster leads or co-leads. One KI stated:

the Lead is not 100% dedicated to the responsibilities of the cluster. He also has other roles and responsibilities and is not available to manage the crisis. The Lead often has often two hats. Where the Co-lead is not strong enough to assist the Lead, there is a gap in coordination and efficiency. When there is a warning, the Lead is here at the beginning, but then he may leave to attend to other responsibilities, and might come back one month later, not knowing what has happened, if appropriate measures were taken to find a solution to the alert (KII, 2018d).

Another key informant (KII, 2019a) emphasised:

the NGO co-leads are often overseeing implementation of their respective projects and management and therefore are in the field. Similarly, UNICEF leads are wearing double and sometimes triple hats, particularly at the sub-provincial cluster level where they are also coordinating development programmes.

For refugee children, UNHCR takes the lead on identifying the most pressing protection needs. While they collect the data for this, they also collect information on education needs for refugees and share that across relevant humanitarian actors and government counterparts. Informants stated the data from the education factsheets help humanitarian as well as development actors to understand ground realities, identify urgent needs and respond more appropriately. But, because it is the protection officers rather than education officers with limited knowledge of EiE collecting such education data, the data they collect may not be sufficient or granular enough to inform the education response.

## 6.2 Coverage

*Action by the international humanitarian system reaches all people in need*

The term coverage has several different interpretations in the interview context. Interviews suggest that one of the strengths of the coordination system in the DRC is its decentralised network of sub-national clusters covering most of the country. These help to ensure greater coordination efforts at the provincial and sub-provincial level as well as to ensure greater geographic coverage of the response by the international humanitarian system (KII, 2018a; 2018b).

An example was given of a mapping effort by the provincial cluster in South Kivu that identified out-of-school children and used the resulting data to lobby for additional financing for catch-up programmes. This effort was successful, with \$1 million allocated from the pooled fund to create informal learning programmes – providing education to more than

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30,000 children who did not have access to the regular schooling system (KII, 2018d).

To some extent, greater coverage is also made possible by the standardisation of the curriculum that crisis-affected children follow. By and large, implementing partners are trying to ensure that the children they support are taught the DRC Government's endorsed curriculum in the schools. The national curriculum applies to both IDPs and refugee children. For IDPs, the education cluster partners are required to use government-approved modules and materials. UNHCR, in the refugee camps, has also followed this approach for refugees, even though there is a language barrier for non-French speakers. Rwandan and South Sudanese refugees are accustomed to English as a medium of instruction in schools in their respective countries and are particularly disadvantaged. In these instances, UNHCR encourages partners to focus on providing additional language classes to them so that these children are not left out or left behind.

### 6.3 Complementarity

*The international humanitarian system recognises and supports the capacities of national and local actors, in particular governments and civil society organisations*

Interviewees highlighted that national and, particularly, provincial NGOs are crucial to the education response, and several smaller NGOs play co-facilitator roles within the provincial clusters. There is therefore clear recognition of the importance of these actors.

Some informants also believe the roles of national NGOs for coordination functions at the national, provincial and sub-provincial levels need to be expanded. According to one interviewee, the national Cluster should in the future be co-led by a national NGO. This would help include and strengthen 'national voices' (KII, 2018a) in the Cluster and lead to greater buy-in from the government. This was the case between 2016 and 2018 as AIDES stepped in place of SCI to fill the role of the Cluster co-lead – as mentioned earlier in the report. During that

period, national representation had increased.

This is especially important because the government has been characterised as a weak and less interested actor in terms of leadership, with limited capacity and resources to engage with the Cluster. But, the interviewee also explains that 'national NGOs have high turnover and it is difficult to invest in one person from a national NGO to be a cluster co-lead. (S)he may move to other jobs and not continue as cluster co-lead' (KII, 2018a).

There are other considerable capacity gaps that remain for local NGOs. Key informants have recognised the need to support them through trainings focused on coordination, on core functions of the Cluster, on building specific skills, and mentoring. Supporting cluster partners to improve reporting using the Monitoring Response Mechanism (MRM) has emerged as one priority area.

The MRM is used to report on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, including attacks against schools on which the Education Cluster reports on. Partners are meant to report on these attacks and provide alerts to the Education Cluster Coordinator. One informant pointed out that the Cluster receives 'few post-alert follow-ups from local NGOs: MRM is a working document assisting NGOs to assess serious violations, but there are no follow-ups; there is inefficient relay of information from territories to provinces to the national level' (KII, 2018d).

Training that builds the EiE expertise (and education expertise more generally) of public teachers and school management has also been recognised as a need by government officials we interviewed. In their view, better expertise will help to ensure children receive better quality education. Data-gathering skills within the ministries and provincial departments of education were also highlighted as critical missing links in the government's participation in the response, especially as staff are not held responsible for collecting key data (KII, 2018n). Training focused on this aspect was deemed critical by government representatives and NGO actors we interviewed.

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## 6.4 Sufficiency

*Resources available to the international humanitarian system are sufficient to cover humanitarian needs*

It is clear from the financing section and the section on the ‘how’ of coordination where we discuss funding challenges that, overall, there are major shortfalls in funding for EiE in the DRC across refugees, IDPs and communities affected by crises. The interviewees clearly acknowledged that the funding available is insufficient to cover the costs of planned responses even when the requests made under the humanitarian appeals are already scaled down to make planned activities appear more cost effective, financially viable and focused on the most pressing education needs of the most affected children.

They were also conscious that clusters compete among themselves for funding in the humanitarian coordination system. In one informant’s view, the Education Cluster is consistently among the lowest recipients of funds in comparison to other clusters, e.g. the one on protection (KII, 2018e). This is an issue of the overall prioritisation and preference of the humanitarian system to fund other ‘life-saving’ interventions over education.

NGOs implementing EiE interventions also compete with each other to access the limited funds. As a result, the smaller NGOs lose out relative to larger NGOs.

Such constraints, however, create the grounds for actors to collaborate and request funding together rather than individually, with some smaller NGOs benefiting from partnering with larger, more influential and more experienced NGOs. Some informants, for instance, observed that within the Education Cluster some members try not to compete when the benefits of collaboration clearly outweigh the costs and they are all contributing towards reaching the same goal: better education outcomes for crisis-affected children. In their view, the structure of the cluster system and coordination within it has been successful at attracting additional humanitarian funding for education. A clear example of this has been the ECW bid where the government and the national Education Cluster strongly encourage consortia-building by setting criteria for proposal

submission that would create coalitions of the willing. One of the objectives of the call by ECW was to promote localisation and support capacity-building efforts, creating additional incentives to collaborate. As an earlier section highlighted, the ECW investment brought together education actors - who were not accustomed to working together - to jointly plan and design the First Emergence Response programme. It also encouraged greater engagement by the donor community and the different ministries mandated to cover education needs in the DRC.

Informants, however, are aware that while scaling up or replicating such collaborative models can help cover some of the funding gaps, more fundamental funding gaps are likely to remain in the humanitarian system in the foreseeable future, and the education response will still be imbalanced. Without the government prioritising funding the education sector and EiE programming within it, in terms of budgeting and releasing resources for EiE every year, the imbalance will be exacerbated.

The lack of systematic collection of data from cluster members on the scale of needs and the financing required to meet those needs also prevents fundraising efforts and undermines sufficiency.

## 6.5 Efficiency

*Humanitarian outputs are produced for the lowest possible amount of inputs*

Overall, the literature review and interviews have emphasised the considerable challenges of delivering EiE in the DRC and so efficiency – in an absolute sense of child reached per dollar spent – is likely to be low relative to other contexts.

However, it is also clear that actors regard the coordination structures as important elements that are reducing duplication and improving the ability of different actors to work together. There is therefore a reasonable expectation that current coordination efforts are improving efficiency. For instance, one key informant described the efficiencies created by doing joint needs assessments so that education needs can be identified at the same time as other needs or are planned and sequenced in a way that means communities are not visited too frequently by different humanitarian teams asking for similar

information. Joint reviews also create efficiencies, as the teams combining their missions have a more comprehensive – rather than a sector-specific – picture of challenges and of how responses are being coordinated and delivered.

## 6.6 Connectedness

*The international humanitarian system aligns with development, resilience, risk reduction and peace-building*

The research found mixed evidence regarding the extent to which coordination approaches are contributing towards connectedness. The current education sector plan articulates some action points on strengthening the government's role at central and decentralised levels in coordinating emergency education and the interventions of humanitarian organisations in the education sector, as well as operationalising the integration of both disaster and conflict-related risk reduction across all programmes in the education sector (DRC, 2015). The extent to which these action points are realised remains unknown.

Interviews also make the point that provincial LEGs are – in theory – ‘connected’ with their provincial cluster counterparts, and a number of actors are members of both (KII, 2018b). This would suggest a high degree of connectedness, particularly in terms of development, risk reduction and resilience. However, attempts to interview bilateral development agencies highlighted that few of them are involved in EiE, either directly or in terms of providing technical support, and interviews with actors at the provincial and sub-provincial levels have not emphasised strong connectedness to development agencies or a major emphasis on resilience.

In contrast, interviewees did emphasise that at the sub-national level there were some strong examples of connectedness between different clusters, particularly within the Education Cluster itself, and in terms of education and protection.

One interviewee explained the strengths of connectedness within the Education Cluster:

We were constantly in touch. There were field visits, communication during the development of the project

proposal for accessing funds, request for feedback, sharing of monthly reports and data for the situation reports. The challenges in respect to connectedness were acute in provinces where colleagues were not familiar with emergency situations (KII, 2019b).

An example was also given in North Kivu of a strong organic collaboration between Education and Protection Cluster leaders, including the Protection Cluster conducting workshops to train the Education Cluster on how to use tools more effectively (KII, 2018c). There are also suggestions that education and protection are closely linked in terms of education for refugees, as many of the UNHCR staff engaging in education work focus primarily on protection issues (KII, 2018k).

## 6.7 Accountability and participation

*Actors in the international humanitarian system act in compliance with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law (IHL), and look to improve the degree to which they are able to influence states and non-state armed groups to respect humanitarian principles and conform to IHL*

Interviews did not particularly focus on the extent to which actors in the international humanitarian system are able to comply with humanitarian principles and IHL; nor was non-compliance raised as an issue by any of the actors interviewed. In contrast, the background of the DRC in terms of ongoing conflict and weak governance would suggest that the ability of international actors to influence the state and non-state armed groups in a meaningful manner is quite limited. One of the interviewees (KII, 2018f) talked about the role of UNHCR in not exacerbating conflict, for instance, ‘when UNHCR staff go to monitor the camps, they ensure there is no abuse of children, no child recruitment is taking place to exacerbate conflict’. Such monitoring indicates clear alignment of UNHCR with humanitarian principles and IHL and the efforts being made to contain, if not totally prevent, child abuse or child recruitment.

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## 6.8 Effectiveness

*Effectiveness refers to the degree to which humanitarian operations meet their stated objectives, in a timely manner and at an acceptable level of quality*

Interviews for this study did not produce many examples of effectiveness in this sense. Analysis of data on the stated funding and coverage targets of the Education Cluster and UNICEF education programmes suggests that these organisations are generally not meeting their overall targets, but that this is likely to be closely linked to considerable shortfalls in overall funding for EiE. Interviews also emphasised the significant practical challenges that agencies face in delivering

EiE in the DRC, given poor communications and physical infrastructure (remote areas are easily cut off from responses), a lack of governance and ongoing conflict preventing effective delivery in a number of provinces, especially when staff are prohibited from visiting certain zones when their presence is most needed.

The framework that combines the OECD DAC criteria and the ECW collective education outcomes are now populated with the data summing up the discussion in this chapter and is shown in Figure 6. As mentioned at the start of the chapter, the strongest links between the two frameworks were found for education access and protection outcomes, followed by continuity and quality.

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# 7 Conclusion

Organising the study in terms of the ‘who’, ‘how’ and ‘so what’ of coordination has helped us frame and highlight the areas where humanitarian and development actors are facing the most challenges and how coordination can be improved. In so doing, we are recommending that actors pursue a clear way forward on how to address those challenges and identify how and where they can effectively coordinate to strengthen education outcomes for children and young people affected by crises.

First, we note that coordination of education for IDPs has a number of weaknesses. While the mandates of the Education Cluster and cluster leads are clear overall, cluster co-leads at the provincial level play supplemental and supporting roles, rather than assume full co-leadership. Alongside this, there is a perception that the government does not place a high priority on the education element of the response and the current education sector plan does not have a clear emphasis and approach towards EiE. There are ongoing challenges with a lack of sufficient resources for EiE overall, but also particularly in terms of financing dedicated coordination posts. Poor capacity within NGOs, limited leadership and capacity in the various government agencies and periods of leadership vacuum at the national cluster are all cited as challenges to improving coordination and education outcomes for IDPs and communities affected by crises.

Despite this, there is evidence that a range of organic links and agreements between agencies are emerging to reinforce coordination. The decentralised nature of the Education Cluster and its strong overall coverage of the DRC are seen as key strengths of the response. Key priorities therefore include improving the clarity of mandates – particularly for provincial and sub-provincial cluster co-leads; enhancing and catalysing the organic links; improving the capacity of the government to show leadership

and of NGOs to improve data collection and coordination; ensuring the presence of two full-time national Cluster Coordinators from UNICEF and SCI (an effort that has materialised in 2019); raising the profile of education for IDPs and improving resource mobilisation, for which systematic data collection and data use in the creation of a financial case for these affected groups is essential. Drawing learnings from the positive developments ECW investment has brought about is also key. Finally, partnership agreements need to be created by agencies that work across the clusters and the LEGs.

Second, we find that coordination of education provision for refugees is managed principally by UNHCR and there is limited government involvement around refugee education. Major challenges include a lack of financial and human resources, with limited resources allocated to refugee education overall and the absence of dedicated coordination staff. Mandates are clear in that UNHCR has the key role and responsibility for refugee response, but there is no national strategy for refugee education and coordination appears to be based on partnership agreements for primary education in camps and arrangements with other providers (e.g. JRS) and where possible facilitation and advocacy for integration of refugees into local schools. The clarity of UNHCR’s overall role is also undermined by the lack of dedicated education coordination staff. Protection and community services officers ‘in the field’ appear to be playing a key role in the education response but have to divide their time between multiple roles, so their effectiveness overall is limited – a feature that may be more common in South Kivu where there are refugees and IDPs in the same communities. Key priorities for improving the response would include establishing a refugee education sub-working group with clearly defined roles, led by UNHCR within the national

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Education Cluster and/or the national LEG and having refugee education as a standing agenda item, and expanding the capacity of UNHCR, the government and partner NGOs to raise the number of staff with EiE knowledge and improve data sharing.

Third, we highlight that coordinating across the national education system and provision of education for refugees and IDPs is also complicated. All implementing partners lead coordination and delivery of education for IDPs as well as education for refugees in line with the national education sector strategy. At present, there are several government ministries looking into specific aspects of children's education and working in isolation rather than together on integration of children affected by crises into the national education system. Conflicting mandates and structures on coordinating education within government create a vacuum within the national education system, predisposing government officials to take a less prominent role in response efforts both for the provision of education for refugees and IDPs. To a certain extent, greater international support for education for IDPs than for refugee education is incentivising the government to strengthen its alignment with the Education Cluster, a key player in attracting

these resources to the DRC. Another major issue is that the capacity of government entities to coordinate the provision of education across the board is limited and this affects its interactions and linkages with the systems for providing refugees and IDPs with education. Many staff are underpaid and undermotivated to perform duties, such as school inspections, that would help assess the quality of schooling accessed by crisis-affected children. The national education system in the DRC is also saturated and cannot absorb influxes of displaced children or refugees in its current form. Key priorities to improve coordination would include facilitating inter-ministerial coordination and collaboration on EiE, creating a refugee education strategy that clearly outlines the government's approach to integration of refugees into the national education system, and greater spread of international funding to cover both groups, refugees and IDPs/communities affected by crises. The government will also need to dedicate more of its own resources to the education sector.

Across the EiE responses there is also a common need to improve the security situation and existing infrastructure to allow actors on the ground to more easily plan, implement and evaluate their interventions.

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# 8 Recommendations

To strengthen education outcomes for children and young people in the DRC affected by crises, humanitarian and development actors should more effectively coordinate planning and response. We recommend that the DRC Government, the humanitarian cluster system, UNHCR and donors commit to the following five recommendations.

## 1. Create a comprehensive EiE response strategy on education provision for refugees, IDPs and host communities

While humanitarian and development partners are playing a crucial role in responding to the various education crises facing the DRC, the onus is ultimately on the government to meet the education needs of children affected by crises. At present, government authorities are applying the existing SSEF as a one size fits all template. There is a loose focus on EiE in a planning context and there is a lack of government leadership – in practice – to follow through on this strategy. The nature of emergencies has changed in the DRC since the endorsement of the strategy in 2015, and the global understanding of coordinated planning and responses has significantly improved. A comprehensive EiE strategy must be designed to reflect these emerging realities, and the government should abandon the view that following the SSEF, as it is applicable to *all* children in the country, is enough for these uniquely challenged children to access education.

An EiE strategy should be tailored for communities (IDPs as well as refugees) in the DRC context where the government's position is elevated to the centre of the response. Such a strategy should clearly lay out the government's approach to providing education for refugees and for IDPs, how it plans to integrate such provision into the national education system, and how it

plans to facilitate and strengthen coordination on the response. The strategy should also consider the needs of the most vulnerable children from host communities along with the needs of IDPs and refugees in order to avoid any tensions between the different groups or to mitigate these as access to the national education system expands.

## 2. Improve the presence of permanent and dedicated coordination staff for the DRC Education Cluster at national and sub-national levels

The DRC faces recurrent challenges in terms of displacement of populations affected by crises. Despite this, the education response for these populations has been hampered by the national and sub-national clusters' limited human and financial resources, and sporadic engagement. Donors should provide financial support for cluster coordination.

At the national level, both UNICEF and SCI should ensure they always have full-time Cluster Coordinators and dedicated and capable counterparts at provincial and sub-provincial level (for regions facing repeated crises) who are not unduly stretched to meet their current job descriptions and fulfil the role of coordinators. While the national Cluster had a leadership vacuum in 2018, efforts were made in 2019 at high points in the crisis to appoint coordinators from both UNICEF and SCI. The Cluster will still need a dedicated national information management officer – a position that has remained vacant – who can collect timely data from the partners on the ground to feed into decision-making around coordinated planning. Such data would also place the Cluster in a better position to advocate for and mobilise funds and coordinate implementing partners than at present.

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To improve the presence of coordination staff and ensure continuity in the Cluster's response, both the UNICEF country office and SCI would need to consider where the additional budget for staff could come from, and how to ensure those resources are secured annually.

More specifically, cluster members' training on core functions of the Cluster and how to use the relevant EiE tools, including training NGO providers on how to collect and report timely and reliable data to the Cluster, was already identified as a key gap to be filled in 2019, by UNICEF, SCI, and by the members themselves. It is therefore essential to have a baseline survey on lead coordinators' and the members' existing skills and map the results onto a performance, learning and impact evaluation after the training is complete to gauge the extent to which the training has helped to improve coordination efforts. It is also vital to ensure how well cluster members have understood how to use the tools and frameworks covered in the trainings to help target areas where the response is most needed and to avoid duplication of efforts.

The government itself will need to amplify its position in the Cluster and demonstrate leadership capacity in carrying out key coordination functions. At the moment, it appears to be less involved in the Cluster's response and even on its own it is not proactively responding to the education needs of affected populations. Incentivising currently demotivated education inspectors at sub-national levels to engage with the response efforts will be critical, for example. Including relevant government staff in the upcoming training will also help reinforce coordination.

### **3. Deliberate on the need for a refugee education sub-working group within the development coordination structure (the LEG) and have a refugee education strategy under an overall government-endorsed EiE strategy**

Within the overall humanitarian coordination architecture, the refugee education response is not receiving the dedicated attention (financial, technical and human resources) it deserves. Humanitarian and development partners as well

as the government should now deliberate on how to add a specific refugee education sub-working group in the LEG to bridge the humanitarian–development divide and improve coordination and to raise the profile of refugees in the DRC who need education.

Humanitarian and development partners should also consider including an elaborate, clear roadmap for refugee education within an overall EiE strategy (in line with the first recommendation). There is also the potential for strengthening existing agreements and practices underpinning UNHCR–UNICEF relations in the DRC, an area which the DRC RRRP 2019–2020 may help these actors to reinforce (UNHCR, 2018d).

### **4. Prioritise investing in data as a key part of the education response**

To respond to escalating displacement in the months and years to come, key stakeholders involved in the response need to prioritise investing in data, including improving coordinating the collection and sharing of data. While the systems currently in place to track refugees and returnees allow for a reasonable level of both coordination and response (with mainly OCHA, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO monitoring and reporting humanitarian situations closely), greater investment in data is needed, especially by the government, to be able to respond adequately and quickly to the education needs of displaced and refugee children.

Explicit and systematic links between the national EMIS and data that is collected by UN agencies and implementing partners on refugees, IDPs and returnees are also needed.

### **5. Reconcile differing narratives on education for strengthening the humanitarian–development nexus**

Ensuring coherence between humanitarian and development teams on the ground is essential to ensure sustainable efforts towards education access and quality for all crisis-affected children. Many actors at the national and sub-national level in the DRC have identified the humanitarian–development nexus as a high priority. There is consensus among them on the need for a shared

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understanding across actors working in both sectors as to the generation-building, transformative impact of education and the negative implications of consistently deprioritising its status relative to other ‘life-saving’ interventions in inter-cluster coordination forums. So, rather than skewing human and financial resources away from the

education response, humanitarian and development actors must collectively brainstorm within the DRC context and establish where and how different narratives can be reconciled. Discussions at the global level on humanitarian–development coherence and in the EiE community more broadly can also help reconcile some of these differences.

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# Annex 1 Key informant interviews

**KIIs were conducted with 15 interviewees from the following organisations:**

- AHADI RD-Congo
- Jesuit Refugee Service
- Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education
- Norwegian Refugee Council, DRC
- Save the Children DRC
- UNESCO
- UNHCR
- UNICEF

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# Annex 2 Key interview questions

Central research question: ‘How can humanitarian and development actors more effectively coordinate planning and responses to strengthen education outcomes for children and young people affected by crises?’

1. Who are the main stakeholders and what are the main mechanisms involved in country-level education coordination in the DRC (for IDPs and for refugees)? What are different roles that the stakeholders and the mechanisms play?
2. What are the main obstacles and constraints for the delivery of the coordination and delivery of the education response in the DRC (for IDPs and for refugees)?
3. What are the main strengths of how the education response is coordinated (for IDPs and for refugees) in the DRC? Are there particular mechanisms or initiatives that have helped overcome coordination challenges?
4. What are the main tools used for coordination, planning, needs assessment, resource mobilisation, etc.?
5. What would help improve coordination in the DRC or allow coordination challenges to be more effectively overcome?





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