

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**NOKUT**



**DR Congo**

# Refugees Country Briefing

REACT aims to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.



## DR Congo

**Official name:** Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo)

**Location:** Located in Central Africa, and shares a border with nine countries.

**Population:** +/- 90 million

**Ethnic groups:** There are more than 200 ethnic groups in the DRC, and the Bantu peoples constitute a majority of the population.

**Languages:** French (official language) - Lingala, Swahili, Kongo, Tshiluba (national languages).

This country briefing – especially developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – should give orientation on the education system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the light of recent political and economic developments in this country. It presents a systematised overview on its higher education system and links to the available information sources that are useful for the evaluation of qualifications of refugees coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, even in cases where candidates present insufficient or lack of documentation.

**Photo coverage:**

Kinshasa by night

**Photo:** MONUSCO/

Abel Kavanagh

**Source:** *Encyclopedia Britannica*

# History and current situation

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (or DRC) is the second biggest country in Africa, second only to Algeria. In addition, it has the 16th highest population of the world.

The DRC gained independence from Belgium in 1960. Left with almost no preparation, the first years of independence were chaotic. In 1965, army commander Joseph-Désiré Mobutu seized power. In 1971, he renamed the country as the Republic of Zaire and himself Mobutu Sese Seko.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo became the stage of the First Congo War (1996-1997) when tensions from the Rwandan genocide spilled over to Zaire. In 1997, Mobutu was ousted by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who became president and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Shortly thereafter, the Second Congo War (1998-2003) broke out. In 2001 Laurent Désiré Kabila was assassinated and succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila, who was officially elected president in 2006. Joseph Kabila's re-election in 2011 was contested by the opposition. The following elections in December 2016 were postponed until December 2018, causing a lot of unrest and political instability. The inauguration of Felix Tshisekedi as president in 2019 prompted protest as well from other candidates who believe that the elections were rigged and that Tshisekedi won by making a deal with Kabila.

Still recovering, the DRC has nearly constantly dealt with treats by rebel forces, militias and ethnic militant groups. Recent unrest in the Kasai, Tanganyika, Ituri and Kivu regions caused millions to flee their homes and become internally displaced. According to UNHCR numbers of the 31st of August 2018, 811.299 refugees from the DRC were being hosted in other African Countries like Uganda, Southern Africa, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Angola and 536.271 refugees from other African countries like Rwanda, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Burundi were being hosted in the DRC.

Despite being rich in natural resources, the DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world. Over the last few years, there have been various outbreaks of cholera, ebola and yellow fever.

## Impact on the system of education

Due to the unrest and the poor economic situation, the education sector has become underfunded and largely financed by households. Students have to pay additional fees in order to receive most official documents. As a result, strikes over teacher wages and school fees occur from time to time.

Due to limited funding, institutions can encounter difficulties retaining sufficient staff and maintaining their infrastructure. The Ministry of Higher and University Education periodically organises viability tests for higher education institutions. Institutions that are not considered viable are ordered to close down.

Corruption is a major problem as well, including in the education sector. According to Transparency International's corruption perception index 2018, the DRC is ranked as 161st most corrupt out of 180 countries by perceived levels of public sector corruption.

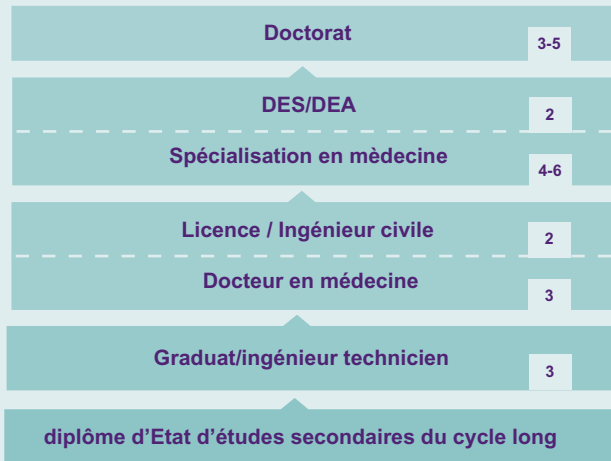
In 2014, the implementation of the LMD-system (Licence-Master-Doctorat) was announced. Several institutions have started organising programmes according to the LMD-system as a pilot project. In the strategic planning for 2016-2025, the ministries responsible for education indicate that they are planning to finalise the implementation by 2025.

Despite being rich in natural resources, the DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world.



## Education chart

### GLD-system



0 = Duration of education

“About 50% of the relevant age group are in secondary school and only about 29% enter grade 12.”

## Education system

Despite improvements in school participation, the amount of children out of school remains high, especially in rural areas and regions troubled by conflict. The education sector is also underfunded, with only 1,47% of the GDP and 10,76% of total government expenditure going to education in 2017.

As a result, households are charged several school fees. These costs are widely identified as the main barrier keeping children out of school. According to estimates by the Ministry in 2013-2014, about 50% of the relevant age group are in secondary school and only about 29% enter grade 12.

### Primary and secondary education

- 6 years of primary education (age: 6-12)
- 3-5 years of vocational or professional secondary education (short cycle)
- 6 years of general, technical or pedagogical secondary education. At the end of grade 12, students participate in the Examen d'Etat (state examination) in order to obtain the Diplôme d'Etat d'études secondaires du cycle long (state diploma for secondary studies of the long cycle)

## Higher education

In 2014 the implementation of the LMD-system was announced. The introduction of the new system of education will be gradual. As of 2019, a handful of Higher institutes for medical techniques were given the right to organise programmes in natural resources management and midwifery in the LMD-format as a pilot project. Additionally, 11 university faculties and 3 higher institutes have been authorized to start preparing their programmes for the implementation of the LMD-system.

Study load is measured in theoretical and practical hours. One academic year usually consists of about 500-800 hours.

### GLD-SYSTEM

#### 1st cycle: Graduat - 3 years

- Access: diplôme d'Etat d'études secondaires du cycle long
- For admission to some programmes, an admission test or scores above a certain percentage for the Diplôme d'Etat are required
- In engineering, the qualification is called Ingénieur technicien (technical engineer)

#### 2nd cycle: Licence (2 years)

- In engineering, the qualification is called Ingénieur civile (civil engineer)
- In medicine, the duration of study is 3 years and the qualification is called Docteur en médecine (medical doctor)

#### 3rd cycle, 1st part: Diplôme d'études supérieures / approfondies (2 years)

- Access: Institutions specify which Licences give access to their DES- or DEA-programmes and what score needs to be obtained for the Licence (usually 60-65%). Admission is competitive, as places are limited
- In medicine, the duration of study is 4-6 years and the qualification is called Spécialisation (medical speciality)

#### 3rd cycle 2nd part: Doctorat (3-5 years)

- Access: DES or a DEA

### LMD-SYSTEM

#### (GRADUALLY BEING IMPLEMENTED)

- 1st cycle: Licence (3 years)
- 2nd cycle: Master (2 years)
- 3rd cycle: Doctorat (3-5 years)

## Grading system

The yearly final result is usually mentioned as a percentage:

- 0-50%:
- 50-69%: satisfaction
- 70-79%: distinction
- 80-89%: grande distinction
- 90-100%: la plus grande distinction

Scores between 50 and 69% with the mention satisfaction are the most common.

As of 2019, a handful of higher institutes for medical techniques were given the right to organise programmes in natural resources management and midwifery in the LMD-format as a pilot project

# Education institutions

## Special situations

From 1971 to 1981, all higher education institutions were merged into the Université Nationale du Zaïre (National University of Zaire). During the academic years 1990-1991 and 1991-1992, the Université de Kinshasa (University of Kinshasa) was closed.

In 2013, the right to organize education of the third cycle (DEA, DES and Doctorat) was limited to the three oldest public universities: Université de Kinshasa, Université de Kisangani and Université de Lubumbashi. In 2015, several other institutions regained the right to organize education of the third cycle. Each academic year, the Minister of Higher and University Education mentions in his instruction académique (academic instruction) which institutions are authorized to organize third cycle programmes.

Higher education institutions are not allowed to open extensions (branch campuses). Therefore, the Ministry often closes down unauthorised extensions.

In the DRC, final certificates issued by public higher education institutions and private higher education institutions with agrément are sent to Ministry of Higher and University Education for homologation or entérinement. This process involves a verification of the student's administrative file and yearly promotions. After the verification is finished, the certificate is signed by the Minister of Higher

and University Education. Therefore, a diplôme homologué can be seen as an indirect proof that the institution was officially recognized.

## Private education

Private higher education has been allowed since the early 90's. Private higher education institutions can have four possible statuses:

- Agrément définitif (definitive approval)
- Agrément provisoire (temporary approval)
- Autorisé à fonctionner (authorised to function)
- Fonctionnant sans autorisation préalable (functioning without authorisation)

In order to award recognised degrees an agrément provisoire or an agrément définitive is required.



# Certification/Documentation samples

- Documents are issued in French

## Secondary education

After the results of the state examination are made public, students can use an SMS-based service or the result checker on the website of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education to see their results. The issuing of the state diploma can take several years. For example: the final certificates for students who graduated in 2012 and 2013 were only available in 2017. Since 2017, a fee has to be paid in order to receive the state diploma. Students who want to enrol in higher education when the state diplomas are not yet available can obtain an attestation de réussite à l'examen d'Etat (proof of graduation for the state examination), delivered by the inspection générale (inspectorate).

## Higher education

Upon graduation, an attestation de réussite (proof of graduation) and a relevé de cotes (transcript) are delivered by the institution. In order to obtain the diplôme homologué (final certificate), students have to pay a homologation fee. After payment, the institution will fill in the final certificate and send it to the Ministry of Higher and University Education for homologation. After the certificate is signed by the Minister, students can collect their final certificate. This process can take several months to several years.

## Security features

Both the Diplôme d'Etat and Diplôme homologué are printed on security paper distributed by the respective ministries and often include security features.

For more information, please contact your national ENIC-NARIC centre.

# Useful sources and links

## Useful websites of the national authorities

- Website of the Ministry of Higher Education: <http://www.minesu.gouv.cd/>
- The website mentions lists of institutions under établissements (institutions). However, most institutions have not been added yet. In 2019, only public universities and a few categories of higher institutes can be found
- Website of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education: <https://www.eduquepsp.education>
- In 2018, an agency for quality assurance "ANAQ-ESU" was created

## Verification sources – secondary education

Result checker on the website of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education: <https://www.eduquepsp.education/resultat>

- This page allows you to look up results for the state examination by school or individual student. Currently, only results from the state examinations of 2017 and 2018 can be found. Possibly, other years (2008-2016) will be added later, as the website is still relatively new

Graduation lists on the website of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education: <https://www.eduquepsp.education/palmars-exetat>

- This page allows you to download the graduation lists for the state examination of 2018 by province

Before 2008, paper palmarès d'examen d'Etat (graduation lists) were distributed by the inspectorate.

**Verification sources – higher education:**

- Université de Kinshasa – faculty of medicine: <https://facmed-unikin.net/decanat/secretariat-academique-diplome-signe>
- Université Protestante au Congo: [www.upcrdc.org](http://www.upcrdc.org) (offline in March 2019)
- Institut Supérieur d'Informatique et de Gestion de Goma : <https://www.isig.ac.cd/isiggoma/valve.php?slug=palmares>
- Institut Supérieur des Techniques Médicales de Kinshasa: <http://istmkin.education/fr/2018/09/03/liste-des-diplomes-signes-par-le-ministre-de-lesu>
- Institut Facultaire des Sciences de l'information et de Communication: <http://ifasic.cd/coordination-estudiantine/diplomes-de-listi-ifasic-de-1975-a-2017/>

**Existing country profiles**

- France Diplomatie - Fiche Curie: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/venir-en-france/etudier-en-france/assurer-une-veille-sur-les-systemes-d-enseignement-superieur-dans-le-monde-base/afrique/article/republique-democratique-du-congo-119072> (in French)
- UK-NARIC: <https://www.naric.org.uk>
- UNESCO International Bureau of Education - World Data on Education: Sixth edition 2006-07: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/document/world-data-education-sixth-edition-2006-07>
- UNESCO International Bureau of Education - World Data on Education: Seventh edition 2010-11: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/document/world-data-education-seventh-edition-2010-11>

## Evaluation tips and recommendations

***In the case of missing documents which extra documents can be asked?***

- If the final certificate hasn't been issued yet, most students will have a proof of graduation and/or a transcript

***If you have doubts on a document, what can you do?***

- You can look for lists of graduates on the website of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education or on the website of the institution (search terms: palmarès, diplômes signé, diplômés, ...)
- If the applicant considers it safe, you can contact the awarding institution directly:
  - Secondary education: contact the ministry through [sgc@eduquepsp.education](mailto:sgc@eduquepsp.education)
  - Higher education: contact the secrétaire général académique or the directeur général of the institution



## REFERENCES

### Educational system and institutions:

- Fiche Curie – République Démocratique du Congo (Ambassade de France en République Démocratique du Congo, 2014): <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/venir-en-france/etudier-en-france/assurer-une-veille-sur-les-systemes-d-enseignement-superieur-dans-le-monde-base/afrique/article/republique-democratique-du-congo-119072>
- Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education: <https://www.eduquepsp.education>
- Ministry of Higher and University Education: <http://www.minesu.gouv.cd>
- Instruction Académique n°020/MINESU/CAB.MIN/SMM/BLB/2018 of 04/10/2018 portant directives pour l'année académique 2018-2019 (Steve Mbikayi Mabuluki, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire, le Ministre, 2018): [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwjyspqRqdfgAhUhUxUIHcATAQAQFjABegQICRAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.minesu.gouv.cd%2Fimages%2FInstruction%2520Acad%25C3%25A9mique%2520N%25C2%25B0%252020\\_MINESU\\_CAB%2520MIN\\_SMMBLB\\_2018%2520du%252004%2520octobre%25202018.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0wuup6m5KUKBPeliSg3qeh](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwjyspqRqdfgAhUhUxUIHcATAQAQFjABegQICRAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.minesu.gouv.cd%2Fimages%2FInstruction%2520Acad%25C3%25A9mique%2520N%25C2%25B0%252020_MINESU_CAB%2520MIN_SMMBLB_2018%2520du%252004%2520octobre%25202018.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0wuup6m5KUKBPeliSg3qeh)
- Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation et de la formation 2016-2025 (Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Initiation à la Nouvelle Citoyenneté, Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire and Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Action Humanitaire et Solidarité Nationale, 2015): <https://www.globalpartnership.org/download/file/fid/52992>
- World Bank Group, 2015. Public expenditure review of the education sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo – an efficiency, effectiveness, and equity analysis: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/469851468186549157/Public-expenditure-review-of-the-education-sector-in-the-Democratic-Republic-of-Congo-an-efficiency-effectiveness-and-equity-analysis>

**COUNTRY INFORMATION:**

- *Encyclopaedia Britannica. Democratic Republic of the Congo:* <https://www.britannica.com/place/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo>
- *International Monetary Fund. Democratic Republic of the Congo:* <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/COD>
- *United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Indicators and Indices, 2018 statistical update:* <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-indices-indicators-2018-statistical-update>
- *UNHCR. DR Congo Emergency:* <https://www.unhcr.org/dr-congo-emergency.html>
- *Transparency International. Corruption Perceptions Index 2018:* <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>
- *World Bank:* <https://data.worldbank.org/>



# What is REACT?

REACT (Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 2) is an Erasmus+ supported project, which aims to establish a more efficient and consistent approach to the recognition of refugees' qualifications in Europe. The project builds on the recently completed Erasmus+ project «Refugees and Recognition», which developed a toolkit for the recognition of refugees' qualifications. The project takes place between 2018 and 2020.

## Goal

The overall goal of REACT is to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – including those without official documentation of their educational background. Through undertaking testing of the toolkit in cooperation with higher education institutions from across Europe, the objective is to identify the needs of the institutions and develop best practice cases that illustrate possible pathways for admission of refugee students to further studies.

In addition to the testing of the toolkit, five refugee country briefings will be developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. The country briefings will present a systematised overview of the educational systems in Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The content will also be presented in webinars held by experienced credential evaluators.

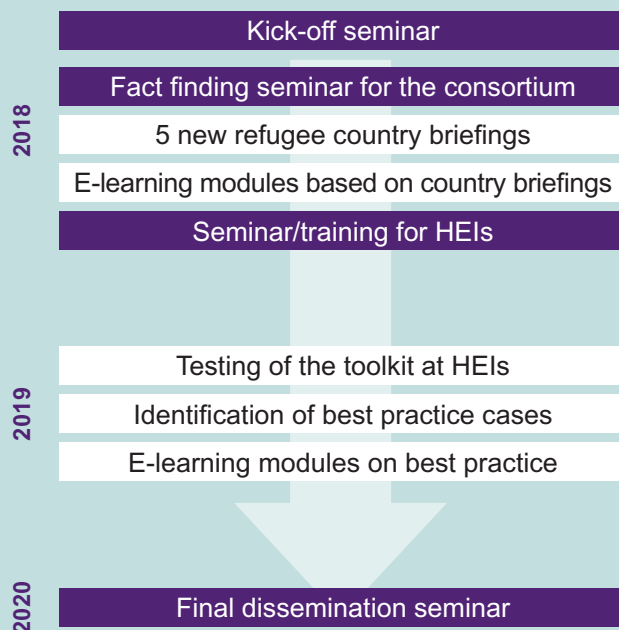
## Activities

The project is structured around nine work packages, developed to ensure a knowledge-based approach to the assessment of refugees' qualifications.

### MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Testing and adaptation of the toolkit, in close cooperation with higher education institutions from Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Ireland
- Provide recommendations to higher education institutions and identify best practice cases that illustrate pathways for admission of refugee students to further studies

### TIMELINE



- Compilation of e-learning modules presenting best practice cases on admission of students with refugees' qualifications to further studies
- Development of five refugee country briefings on the educational systems in Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Development of e-learning modules based on the five refugee country briefings

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To enable the accessibility and transparency of the project's work, the results will be made available on the project's website on a continuous basis.

### Website:

[www.nokut.no/en/about-nokut/international-cooperation/erasmus-projects/react--refugees-and-recognition](http://www.nokut.no/en/about-nokut/international-cooperation/erasmus-projects/react--refugees-and-recognition)

### Email:

[project-react@nokut.no](mailto:project-react@nokut.no)

# NOKUT



Drammensveien 288  
Postboks 578, 1327 Lysaker  
Telefon: 21 02 18 00

[www.nokut.no](http://www.nokut.no)

The REACT-project is a cooperation between National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs), higher education institutions and interest organisations working closely with refugees and their educational qualifications.



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.