



# Refugees Country Briefing

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

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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.

## 1. Current situation

General information:



**Population:** +/- 90 million

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

### History:

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (or DRC) is the second biggest country in Africa, second only to Algeria. In addition, it has 16<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

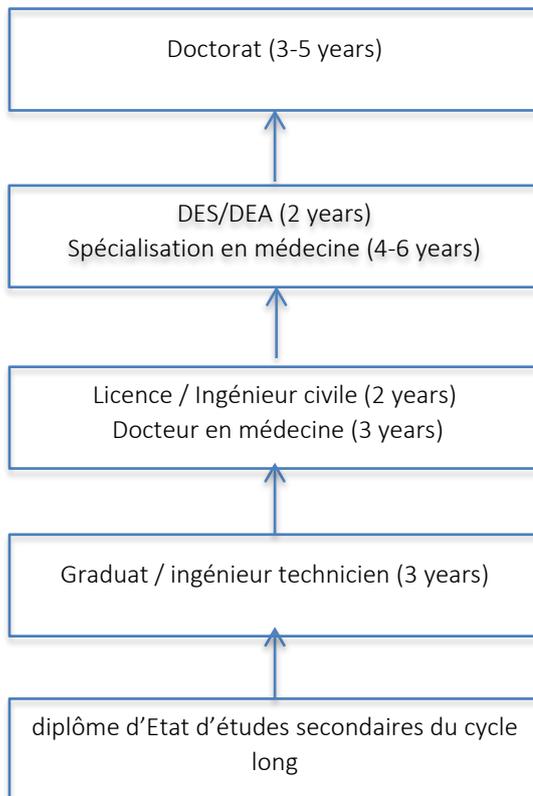
Due to limited funding, institutions can encounter difficulties retaining sufficient staff and maintaining their infrastructure. The Ministry of Higher and University education periodically organises viability tests for higher education institutions. Institutions that are not considered viable are ordered 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 161<sup>st</sup> 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.

## 2. Education chart

### GLD-system



### 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

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

#### 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 *Specialisation* (medical speciality)
- 3rd cycle 2<sup>nd</sup> 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)

### 3. Education institutions

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

## 4. 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

## 5. Useful sources and links

#### 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/palmares-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-signé>
- 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>

#### 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.

## 6. 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

Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Professional Education:

<https://www.eduquepsp.education>

Ministry of Higher and University Education: <http://www.minesu.gouv.cd>

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<https://www.britannica.com/place/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo>

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>

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%2520020\\_MINESU\\_CAB%2520MIN\\_SMM\\_BLB\\_2018%2520du%252004%2520octobre%25202018.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0wuup6m5KUKBPeliSg3geh](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%2520020_MINESU_CAB%2520MIN_SMM_BLB_2018%2520du%252004%2520octobre%25202018.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0wuup6m5KUKBPeliSg3geh)

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>

Public expenditure review of the education sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo – an efficiency, effectiveness, and equity analysis (World Bank Group, 2015)

<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>

Human Development Indicators and Indices – 2018 statistical update (United Nations Development Programme, 2018) <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-indices-indicators-2018-statistical-update>

UNHCR - DR Congo Emergency (UNHCR, 2018) <https://www.unhcr.org/dr-congo-emergency.html>

Corruption Perceptions Index 2018 (Transparency International, consulted in March 2019)

<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

Democratic Republic of the Congo (International Monetary Fund, consulted in March 2018)

<https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/COD>