

Governance of the Basic Education Programme in the DRC (2014-2024)

Analysis of the Political and Institutional Role of the Ministry of National Education

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Abstract: This study was conducted to analyze the political and institutional dynamics that structure the governance of the basic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2014 and 2024, with a particular focus on the city of Kinshasa. It begins with the observation that, despite the existence of an ambitious legal and strategic framework, the effective implementation of educational reforms remains uneven and marked by numerous dysfunctions. The study aims to examine the role of the Ministry of National Education in the coordination, management, and implementation of the basic education program, analyzing the influence of institutional, political, and partnership factors on the coherence, continuity, and effectiveness of educational policies. To this end, a qualitative methodological approach was favored, based on document analysis and surveys of educational stakeholders involved in the implementation of the reforms. The results reveal an educational governance characterized by persistent centralization, low participation of local stakeholders, recurring administrative instability, and significant dependence on technical and financial partners. The study also highlights the limited impact of feedback from the field on strategic decisions. From a scientific perspective, this research makes an original contribution by offering a politico-institutional analysis of educational governance in the DRC, emphasizing that the performance of the basic education program depends primarily on the quality of public governance.

Keywords : Educational Governance, Basic Education DRC, Ministry of National Education (MEN), Educational Policy, Framework Law 14/004.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Between 2014 and 2024, the Democratic Republic of Congo established an ambitious legal and strategic framework to reform its education system: Framework Law No. 14/004 of February 11, 2014, and the 2016–2025 Education Sector Strategy enshrined the principle of a planning state, guaranteeing educational quality and equity. However, the effective implementation of these guidelines in institutional practices remains uneven, particularly in Kinshasa, the nerve center of educational governance.

The Ministry of Education appears both as the conductor of public policy and as an actor caught in structural constraints: persistent centralization despite proclaimed decentralization, technical and financial

dependence on donors, instability of administrative elites, and weak integration of evaluation data into curriculum reformulation. Thus, between policy and practice, a space of uncertainty opens up, where educational governance is constructed through compromises, negotiations, and sometimes discontinuities. The case of the basic education program in Kinshasa reveals a laboratory of public governance: how does a national ministry manage the complexity of reforms in an environment marked by a plurality of actors, budgetary constraints, and short political timeframes? What political, administrative, and partnership mechanisms actually structure the production and implementation of the educational program? In other words, the challenge is not merely pedagogical: it is profoundly political and administrative, relating to how the Congolese state exercises, delegates, and coordinates power in a

strategic area of national development. Our central question is: How does the Ministry of National Education exercise its political and institutional role in the governance of the basic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and what factors shape its effectiveness in Kinshasa between 2014 and 2024?

In light of the above, we propose a general hypothesis that the governance of the basic education program in the DRC (2014-2024) largely depends on the Ministry of Education's ability to articulate its political (guidance, negotiation, and strategic direction) and institutional (coordination, implementation, and accountability) functions within a context of budgetary constraints and partnership pressures. This hypothesis highlights the idea that program performance is a product of the quality of ministerial governance, rather than simply a legal or strategic framework.

Specifically, firstly The level of institutional effectiveness of the ministry (in terms of planning, monitoring and evaluation, and administrative decentralization) directly influences the coherence and sustainability of the basic education program. Second, the ministry's capacity to manage power dynamics and dependencies with technical and financial partners (TFPs) determines its decision-making autonomy in implementing the program. Third, the politicization of appointments and the frequency of cabinet reshuffles undermine the continuity of reforms and jeopardize the achievement of the basic education program's objectives.

Fourth; the absence of systematic mechanisms for accountability and participation of local actors (schools, provinces, communities) limits the transparency and legitimacy of educational governance.

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the political and institutional role of the Ministry of National Education in the governance of the basic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2014 and 2024, in order to understand how institutional, political and partnership dynamics influence the coherence, continuity and effectiveness of this governance in Kinshasa.

Specifically, To examine how the distribution of skills and responsibilities between the central level and provincial structures influences the capacity of the Ministry of Education to coordinate, steer and ensure the coherence of the implementation of the basic education program; to assess the impact of political dynamics - in particular ministerial rotations, administrative appointments and electoral cycles - on the continuity of educational policies and the effective implementation of the basic education program in Kinshasa; to analyze how the interactions between the Ministry of Education, technical and financial partners, as well as national actors (universities, unions, educational NGOs), influence the definition, prioritization and sustainability of educational reforms during the period 2014–2024; to identify the institutional and political levers likely to strengthen the governance of the basic education program,

in particular in terms of inter-level coordination, administrative stability and national ownership of educational reforms.

UNESCO and the AU (2025) propose an ambitious but overly general vision. Their strategies lack contextualization. PASEC and AFD (2024), on the other hand, highlight the concrete challenges encountered on the ground, particularly in the DRC.

The lack of coordination between the micro (local), meso (provincial), and macro (national/regional) levels weakens the overall coherence of the analyses. International organizations tend to produce ideologically convergent reports (focusing on good governance, participation, and effectiveness) without always questioning the limitations of these paradigms in African contexts. Our study adopts a critical and grounded approach, aiming to move beyond normative and globalizing approaches to educational governance in Africa. I adopt an applied institutionalist perspective, which takes seriously the actors, concrete practices, and systemic tensions specific to the Congolese context. Ateba (2023) and Veligiano & Galigao (2025) emphasize the positive impact of decentralization, while Altinok (2009) questions this effectiveness when it is dictated externally. Groffier (2014) criticizes the importation of managerial approaches into African universities, while other authors (World Bank, Akkari) present them as models to be followed. Deneff & Mvé-Ondo (2022) offer an institutional interpretation of the tensions between autonomy and centralization, but this complexity is absent in the World Bank's work (2023). This literature review reveals that research on educational governance in sub-Saharan Africa oscillates between a technocratic approach inspired by international models and attempts at local integration that are more sensitive to internal dynamics. Faced with this tension, our position adopts a critical, contextualized, and hybrid stance. On the one hand, we acknowledge the valuable contributions of major international organizations (UNESCO, World Bank, AFD), particularly in terms of frameworks, governance indicators, and reform structuring. However, we distance ourselves from the normative approach that tends to universalize solutions without considering local specificities. Educational governance cannot be reduced to a simple adaptation of imported models; it must be conceived from the perspective of the socio-political, cultural, and institutional realities specific to African states, particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo. Furthermore, we advocate an integrated approach that articulates the three levels of governance (micro, meso, and macro), valuing local management practices (Kapeta, Ateba), community dynamics (Ghana (2023) and Uganda (2023), while taking into account systemic constraints and national regulatory frameworks (Deneff, Akkari). Local autonomy, in this perspective, should not be conceived as a functional delegation strategy, but as a lever for empowerment, participation, and endogenous innovation. Finally, this work contributes to the search for alternative models of educational governance rooted in African experiences, but open to international dialogue. It is less about applying pre-conceived models than about co-

constructing relevant, adaptable and sustainable systems, based on the rigorous analysis of actual practices.

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted is a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach; for our research, a qualitative approach combined with documentary and institutional analysis, specific to the study of public governance and educational policies. It is designed to examine both the formal and informal dimensions of the political and institutional role of the Ministry of Education in Kinshasa in the governance of the basic education program (2014-2024).

➤ *Medium*

The research focuses on the city of Kinshasa, home to the Ministry of National Education and the decision-making center for education policy in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This choice allows for direct observation of governance mechanisms, interactions between the Ministry and key stakeholders, and institutional coordination processes. Analyses relating to the provinces will serve only to compare the implementation and absorption capacity of reforms, but without an exhaustive study of the national context, in order to maintain a realistic and in-depth analytical framework. The study covers the period 2014–2024, corresponding to the adoption of Framework Law No. 14/004 and the implementation of the 2016–2025 Education Sector Plan and Strategy. This decade provides a sufficient timeframe to analyze policy developments, implemented reforms, the effects of political cycles, and partnership dynamics, while remaining within a recent and well-documented timeframe.

➤ *Population and Sampling*

The target population includes: officials and managers of the Ministry of National Education in Kinshasa; provincial division heads and educational inspectors; representatives of international organizations and donors working in the education sector; and experts in education and public governance. The following formula should be used:

$$n' = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n-1}{N}}$$

Where n is the size calculated using Cochran's formula ($n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2}$)

n = sample size, Z = Z value (confidence coefficient), p = estimated proportion of the attribute in the population.

A convenience sample of 68 participants was selected due to participant accessibility and institutional constraints. This choice implies limitations in representativeness and a potential for selection bias. We opted for an accidental sample, also known as a non-probability sample. This sample choice is justified by the diverse range of stakeholders involved: provincial division heads and educational inspectors; representatives of international organizations and funding agencies working in the education

sector; and education and public governance experts whom we interviewed. This type of sample is constructed by the researchers themselves in response to difficulties encountered during the research or survey process.

III. MATERIAL

A. *Field Equipment*

➤ *Data Collection Instruments*

Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire based on Likert scales. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. All data collection procedures were carried out after obtaining the required administrative authorizations and the free and informed consent of the participants.

➤ *Logistics Tools*

The logistical setup included a laptop and a mobile printer for data processing and management, a smartphone, and notepads used during interviews and observations.

➤ *Reagents And/Or Culture Media.*

No chemical reagents or biological culture devices were used in this research. The data collected came exclusively from direct observations, surveys, and participant testimonies. The study focused on issues aimed at analyzing the political and institutional role of the Ministry of National Education in the governance of the basic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2014 and 2024, in order to understand how institutional, political, and partnership dynamics influence the coherence, continuity, and effectiveness of this governance in Kinshasa.

B. *Methods*

➤ *Methodological Approach*

This study employs an explanatory mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. This methodological approach allows for the understanding of complex phenomena by linking numerical data with contextual elements derived from the perceptions and practices of stakeholders. This type of design is particularly relevant when quantitative analysis alone is insufficient to account for the mechanisms underlying observed results. In this regard, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) emphasize that an explanatory mixed-methods design is appropriate when "quantitative results require further clarification through qualitative data to explain the observed relationships or effects." In this research, the influence of the distribution of powers between the central level and provincial entities, the continuity and resilience of policies in the face of political and administrative dynamics, and the interaction with donors and technical partners in the development and implementation of programs are examined. The research is descriptive and analytical, with an exploratory dimension to identify governance factors, power relations, and institutional constraints. It adopts an applied political science perspective, aiming to produce operational knowledge to improve educational governance.

• *Quantitative Analysis*

Data on the governance of the basic education program in the DRC (2014-2024) was structured into two main levels: a descriptive level and an inferential level, both carried out using SPSS software. This analysis is based on data collected through tools such as SIGE-RDC, Annual Performance Reviews (APRs), and ST questionnaires, while adhering to reliability standards assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

• *Descriptive Level*

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize central trends and the dispersion of governance variables, such as budget execution rates, school enrollment, and transparency indicators. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and graphs (histograms, box plots) were generated in SPSS to visualize performance by province and year, identifying, for example, differences between urban and rural areas.

The reliability of the measurement scales (e.g., questionnaires on COGES participation) was validated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, aiming for a threshold greater than 0.7 to confirm the internal consistency of the items.

• *Inferential Level*

Pearson correlations quantified linear relationships between variables, such as the correlation between budget execution and school retention rates (r coefficients between -1 and +1, with significance tests $p < 0.05$). Multiple linear regression, also using SPSS, modeled the predictive impact of independent variables (e.g., decentralization, PTF coordination) on a dependent variable such as governance quality, calculating beta coefficients, R^2 , and analyzing residuals to test the hypotheses (normality, homoscedasticity).

Independent factors associated with the governance of the basic education program in the DRC (2014-2024) were

integrated into the SPSS quantitative analysis to model their predictive impacts. These factors, derived from SIGE-RDC and RAP data, include institutional, budgetary and contextual dimensions, assessed via Pearson correlations and linear regression.

➤ *Key Independent Factors*

• *Institutional Capacities*

Number of agents trained in decentralized management, existence of provincial sector plans (PSP), and establishment of management councils (COGEP).

• *Budgetary Resources*

Execution rate of the budget allocated to basic education, proportion of decentralized funds to the provinces, and aid from technical and financial partners (TFPs).

• *Coordination and Participation*

Level of involvement of civil society and trade unions in the RAP, number of active technical committees.

• *Operational Context*

Rate of qualified teaching staff, infrastructure coverage (schools per capita), and security stability by province.

• *Integration into the Analysis*

In the SPSS linear regression, these factors served as predictors for the dependent variable "quality of governance" (composite, measured by Cronbach's alpha > 0.8), explaining up to 65% of the variance (adjusted R^2). Pearson correlations revealed strong associations, such as $r = -0.72$ between budget execution and overall performance ($p < 0.01$).

➤ *Operational Definition of Variables*

Table 1: Overall Analytical Scheme (Summary)

Governance Dimension	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Type of Relationship Expected
Institutional	Organizational efficiency	Program coherence	Positive
Political partner	Strategic autonomy vis-à-vis the PTF	Piloting ability	Positive
Policy	Administrative continuity	Sustainability of reforms	Positive
Participatory	Accountability Mechanisms	Transparency and legitimacy	Positive

➤ *Data Collection Techniques*

To ensure the richness and reliability of the information, several techniques are combined:

• *Document Analysis:*

study of legislative and regulatory texts (Framework Law No. 14/004, implementing decrees, ministerial circulars), ministerial reports, sectoral strategies and plans, national and international assessments (PASEC, UNESCO reports), and scientific publications on educational governance in the DRC.

• *Semi-Structured Interviews:*

conducted with ministerial officials, educational inspectors and representatives of international partners, allowing to collect information on practices, perceptions and implementation constraints.

• *Participant Observation*

(where possible): participation in workshops, meetings or program validation sessions to analyze interactions and decision-making processes.

• *Data Analysis Techniques*

The data collected will be analyzed using a thematic and comparative approach, combining: content analysis of official documents and interviews to identify institutional, political and partnership patterns; mapping of actors and power relations, highlighting interactions and dependencies between ministry, provinces and donors; critical analysis in SPA: comparison of formal norms and actual practices, identification of tensions between politics, technology and resources.

• *Ethical Considerations:*

Participants signed a free and informed consent form. Data was anonymized, securely stored, and participants had the right to withdraw their consent at any time. The study adheres to the ethical principles governing social science research.

• *Inclusion Criteria :*

The inclusion criteria were as follows: being the head and manager of the Ministry of National Education in

Kinshasa; the head of division and provincial educational inspectors; the representative of international organizations and donors involved in the education sector; experts in education and public governance and voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study.

• *Exclusion Criteria :*

concerned any person who refused to participate in the survey among the targeted public.

• *Limitations of the Study :*

The methodology adopted has certain limitations: restricted access to some strategic or financial documents; the potential reluctance of some actors to disclose sensitive information about power dynamics; and the difficulty of extending certain observations beyond Kinshasa to the national level. These limitations will be mitigated by rigorous triangulation of sources and by comparing perspectives between central and provincial actors, as well as between official documents and expert opinions.

Table 2. The Different Measuring Tools (Instruments)

Variable	Measuring Instrument (Tool)	Key Elements to Measure
Steering and planning	Performance Action Plan (PAO), provincial sectoral strategy	Implementation of planned activities, budget execution, strategic directions
Performance monitoring and evaluation	Annual Performance Review (RAP/School Promotion), dashboard	Annual performance by level (school, sub-provincial, provincial, national), access/quality/governance indicator, lessons learned
Data collection and management	Education Management Information System (SIGE-DRC), ST1/ST2/ST3 questionnaires	Student/teacher numbers, infrastructure, school geolocation, decentralized data (26 provinces)
Transparency and accountability	Statistical yearbooks, RAP reports	Budget allocated/executed, intra-sectoral distribution, evolution of SDG4 indicators
Participation and coordination	School management councils (COGES), technical/plenary committees	Involvement of civil society, trade unions, technical and financial partners, validation of data/reports

The table above presents the main measurement tools (instruments) used to assess the governance of the basic education program in the DRC from 2014 to 2024. These tools are based on the Education and Training Sector Strategy (SSEF 2016-2025), Framework Law No. 14/004 of 2014, and initiatives such as ACCELERE and SIGE-DRC. These elements cover key governance dimensions such as planning, monitoring and evaluation, transparency, and stakeholder participation.

It is in this perspective that the third part of this article opens, devoted to the presentation of the results, their critical analysis, as well as the identification of concrete perspectives for a more effective and coherent management of the education sector in the DRC.

IV. RESULTS

➤ *Respondent Profile*

Table 3: Distribution of Actors Involved at the Local Level

Level	Function	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Subdivision	Operators in the school and educational guidance unit	12	28.5	28.5
	Pool Inspectors	10	23.8	52.3
	Under proved	5	12	64.5
	Mobile inspectors	15	35.7	100
Total		42	100	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table shows that the majority of actors involved at the local level are the traveling inspectors, with 15 respondents, representing 35.7% of the total. This high proportion reflects their central role in the educational monitoring and supervision of schools at the local level.

The operators of the school and educational guidance unit represent 12 respondents, corresponding to 28.5%, which underlines their significant involvement in the guidance and support of learners.

The pool inspectors have 10 respondents, or 23.8%, indicating moderate but important participation in the coordination and supervision of educational activities.

Finally, the sub-proveds constitute the least represented category with 5 respondents, equivalent to 12% of the sample. In total, 42 actors were surveyed, representing 100% of the study population.

Table 4: Distribution of Actors Involved at the Provincial Level

Level	Function	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Provincial	Provincial Directors	5	31.25	31.25
	Provincial Chief Inspectors	5	31.25	62.5
	IPP assistants in charge of training	5	31.25	93.75
	Provincial Minister of National Education	1	6.25	100
Total		16	100	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table reveals a relatively balanced distribution among the main educational stakeholders at the provincial level. Provincial directors, senior provincial inspectors, and assistant provincial education inspectors responsible for training each have 5 respondents, representing 31.25% each. This near-uniform distribution reflects an equitable involvement of administrative and teaching staff in educational governance at the provincial level.

The provincial Minister of National Education is represented by 1 respondent, corresponding to 6.25%, which can be explained by the strategic and political nature of his role, less oriented towards direct interventions on the ground.

Table 5: Distribution of Actors Involved at the Local Level

Level	Function	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Central	MINEDUC-N Office	1	10	10
	General Secretariat	1	10	20
	IPP (primary and secondary)	2	20	40
	DIPROMAD	2	20	60
	Technical and Financial Partnership (UNICEF, UNESCO, AFD, CAT...)	4	40	100
Total		10	100	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

Table V highlights the diversity of actors involved at the central level in the governance of the education program. Technical and financial partners (UNICEF, UNESCO, AFD, CAT, etc.) constitute the most represented category with four respondents, or 36.36% of the total, reflecting their major role in providing financial, technical, and strategic support to the education system. The general inspectors (primary and secondary) and DIPROMAD each have two respondents, representing 18.18% respectively, underscoring their significant involvement in pedagogical guidance and the planning of educational activities. At this level, the directorate provided us with two agents, heads of technical

support units; all were heads of divisions in charge of training within the basic education program.

The office of the Minister of National Education (MINEDUC-N), the General Secretariat, and the Provincial Minister of National Education are each represented by one respondent, or 9.09% each. Their low representation is explained by the strategic and decision-making nature of their functions, which are generally less focused on direct implementation. In total, 11 stakeholders were surveyed, representing 100% of the study population.

➤ *Seniority of Respondents in the Education Sector*

Table 6: Distribution of Actors Involved According to Seniority

Seniority	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Total
Less than 5 years	8	12	12	12
5 to 10 years	13	19	31	31
10 to 20 years	15	22	53	53

More than 20 years	32	47	100	100
Total	68	100	100	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

Analysis of Table VI reveals that the majority of respondents have extensive professional experience in the education sector. Those with more than 20 years of experience are the most numerous, with 32 respondents, representing 47% of the total. Respondents with between 10 and 20 years of experience represent 15 individuals, or 22%, while those with 5 to 10 years of experience comprise 13

respondents, or 19%. Conversely, those with less than 5 years of experience are the least represented, with 8 respondents, or 12%. The total number of respondents is 68, representing 100% of the study population.

➤ *Direct Involvement of Stakeholders in the Development, Validation, or Implementation of Educational Programs*

Table 7: Distribution of Actors Directly Involved in the Process

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Total
Yes	21	31	31	31
No	47	69	100	100
Total	68	100	100	10

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table indicates that 21 respondents, or 31%, report being directly involved in the development, validation, or implementation of educational programs. This proportion shows that a significant number of stakeholders do indeed participate in the various stages of the programmatic process. Conversely, the majority of respondents, 47 stakeholders representing 69%, state that they are not directly involved. This high proportion reflects a centralization of the decision-making process and limited

participation from stakeholders on the ground. In total, 68 respondents were surveyed, representing 100% of the sample studied. These results highlight the low level of direct involvement of stakeholders in the educational program process, which may limit the ownership and effectiveness of the implemented reforms.

➤ *Educational Decision-Making Processes*

Table 8: Distribution of the Main Stages of the Decision-Making Process Concerning School Programs

Steps	Frequency	Percentage
Ministerial Decree, circular from the Secretary General, educational program management with experts, implementation (inspectors, school principals, teachers, students), COPA, educational partners	22	
Diagnosis, defining the focus areas, development, evaluation	16	
We don't know the process, the educational policy; it's imposed on us through decrees and decisions.	30	
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table reveals a contrasting perception among stakeholders regarding the decision-making process for school curricula. Thirty respondents (44.1%) stated that they did not have a clear understanding of the decision-making process, asserting that educational policy was imposed on them through decrees and administrative decisions. This majority reflects a lack of institutional information and communication. Furthermore, 22 respondents (32.4%) believe that the process follows structured steps such as

establishing governance, defining priorities, identifying needs, developing content, and implementation. This perception reflects a relatively formalized understanding of the process among some stakeholders. Finally, 16 respondents (23.5%) described a process based on diagnosis, defining priorities, development, and evaluation, highlighting a more analytical and evaluative approach to decision-making.

Table 9: Distribution According to the Link Between Political Decisions and Technical Expertise in Program Development

Seniority	Frequency	Percentage
Fluid	15	22
Effective	10	15
Ineffective	16	23.5
Incoherent	26	38
Others	1	1.5
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table analyzes how political decisions interact with technical expertise in program development: Inconsistent (38%): this is the most common response. A significant proportion of respondents believe that political decisions are not sufficiently aligned with technical expertise. Ineffective (23.5%): nearly a quarter of respondents consider this interaction unproductive, suggesting operational difficulties in translating political decisions into relevant programs. Fluid (22%): a relative

minority believes that the collaboration functions correctly. Effective (15%): few respondents perceive real effectiveness. Other (1.5%): marginal responses. This reveals a structural weakness in program governance, characterized by the dominance of political decision-making at the expense of technical expertise, which undermines the quality of education policies.

➤ *Role of Actors and Coordination Mechanisms*

Table 10: Distribution According to the Role of Our Respondents' Structures in the Implementation of Educational Policies Decided at the Central Level

Structural Role	Frequency	Percentage
Central and autonomous role	11	16
Provincial and autonomous role	2	3
Provincial and subordinate role	16	23.5
Local and detached role	38	56
Others	1	1.5
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table shows how structures intervene in the execution of policies decided at the central level, local and detached role (56%): largely dominant, local structures execute policies without real autonomy or decision-making power, provincial and subordinate role (23.5%), the

provincial level acts mainly as an administrative relay, central and autonomous role (16%): weak autonomous involvement of the central level in implementation, provincial and autonomous role (3%): almost non-existent, other (1.5%): marginal.

Table 11: Distribution of the Existence of Formal Consultation Mechanisms with Teachers and Field Pedagogical Leaders

Formal Consultation Mechanisms	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, there are regular meetings.	3	4.4
Yes, there are dedicated communication channels (WhatsApp groups, emails, etc.)	3	4.4
No, there aren't really any formal consultation mechanisms.	32	47
Yes, there are committees or COGES that involve teachers and administrators.	3	4.4
No, decisions are made without systematic consultation.	26	38.2
Others	0	0
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

The results in this table show a weak existence of formal consultation mechanisms between educational authorities and educational actors in the field.

Indeed, the majority of respondents (47%) stated that there are no formal consultation mechanisms, while 38.2% asserted that decisions are made without systematic consultation with teachers and educational leaders. These two groups alone account for 85.2% of the responses, reflecting a largely negative perception of the participatory

process. Conversely, positive forms of consultation appear very marginal: 4.4% mentioned the existence of regular meetings, 4.4% referred to dedicated communication channels (WhatsApp, emails, etc.), and 4.4% indicated the presence of committees or school management committees (COGES) involving educational stakeholders.

These results indicate that participatory mechanisms, when they exist, remain sporadic, informal or weakly institutionalized.

Table 12: Coordination Between the Ministry, Inspectorates, Provincial Directorates and Schools

Institutional Coordination Operation	Frequency
Through regular meetings between the different levels (ministry, inspectorates, directorates, institutions)	32
Through the administrative hierarchy (from the ministry to the institutions)	48
Through dedicated communication channels (emails, telephones, platforms...)	12
Through the COGES and management committees which involve local stakeholders	25
Through field visits by inspectors and officials	42
Through periodic reports and written exchanges	24
Coordination between these levels is weak or non-existent.	2

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

The table reveals that institutional coordination between the different levels of the education system relies primarily on hierarchical and administrative mechanisms. The most frequently cited method is coordination through the administrative hierarchy, from the Ministry to schools (48 occurrences), confirming the vertical and top-down nature of educational governance. This situation is reinforced by field visits from inspectors and administrators (42 occurrences) and by regular meetings between the different levels (32 occurrences). Mechanisms promoting more horizontal or participatory coordination appear less dominant, including: school management committees

(COGES) involving local stakeholders (25 occurrences); periodic reports and written exchanges (24 occurrences); and dedicated communication channels (12 occurrences). Finally, although in the minority, the existence of responses indicating weak or nonexistent coordination underscores the persistence of dysfunctions in certain areas or structures. These results reflect a highly centralized institutional coordination, where information and decisions flow primarily from top to bottom, limiting feedback and consideration of local realities.

➤ *Institutional Constraints*

Table 13 Lists the Main Institutional Constraints Hindering the Effective Implementation of Educational Policies.

Institutional Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
Financial constraints	48	70.6
Administrative constraints	0	0
Political constraints	13	19.1
Technical or human constraints	7	10.3
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table highlights the main institutional constraints hindering the effective implementation of educational policies. Our results show that financial constraints constitute the major obstacle, cited by 48 respondents, or 70.6% of the total. This high proportion indicates that insufficient financial resources remain the primary impediment to the implementation of educational policies. Lack of funding directly affects the planning, implementation, and monitoring of educational activities.

Political constraints come in second place with 13 respondents, representing 19.1%. This reflects the significant influence of political decisions, institutional

instability, or political interference in the implementation of educational policies.

Technical or human constraints were mentioned by 7 respondents, or 10.3%, which reveals difficulties related to a lack of skills, adequate training or qualified human resources.

On the other hand, administrative constraints were not reported by any respondent (0%), which suggests that administrative procedures do not constitute a significant obstacle in the context studied.

Table 14: Allocation According to Allocated Budgetary Resources

Are the allocated budgetary resources sufficient and available in a timely manner?	Frequency
Resources are sufficient and often available on time	6
Resources are sufficient but often available late.	18
Resources are insufficient but often available in time	22
Resources are dependent on, but often available late.	57
Resources are allocated but diverted or misused.	42
No budgetary resources are allocated for certain activities.	4
Others	2

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table shows that a small proportion of respondents (6) believe that resources are sufficient and available on time, indicating that this situation is marginal. Furthermore, 18 respondents indicate that resources are sufficient but often available late, which affects the successful execution of planned activities. A larger number of respondents (22) consider resources insufficient but available on time, reflecting a mismatch between actual needs and allocated funds.

The most prevalent category concerns insufficient resources, often arriving late, with 57 respondents. This

situation reflects a twofold problem: not only are resources insufficient, but they also arrive late, seriously compromising the effectiveness of educational initiatives. These results clearly demonstrate that budget management suffers from both delays and insufficient financial resources.

This table highlights the dysfunctions in the allocation and use of budgetary resources.

A significant number of respondents (42) state that resources are allocated but diverted or misused, indicating a

problem with financial governance and a lack of effective control and monitoring mechanisms.

In addition, 4 respondents report that there are no budgetary resources allocated for certain activities, which leads to the abandonment or non-implementation of certain actions that are nevertheless essential.

Finally, a minority of respondents (2) mention other problems, suggesting the existence of specific difficulties not explicitly mentioned in the proposed categories.

➤ *Evaluation and Monitoring of Educational Policies*

Table 15, Evaluation and Monitoring of Educational Policies

Evaluation and monitoring of educational policies	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, there are regular evaluations and follow-up actions.	48	70
There are assessments, but they are rarely applied or followed up.	13	19.1
No, there aren't really any formal evaluation mechanisms.	7	10.3
Other		
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table highlights the reality of the mechanisms for evaluating and monitoring educational policies. 70% of respondents (48) stated that regular evaluations are followed by concrete actions. This reflects the existence of formal evaluation mechanisms within the educational system studied, which is a positive indicator of governance, as evaluation is a key pillar of modern public management.

19.1% (13 respondents) acknowledge the existence of evaluations but believe they are rarely implemented or have

little impact. This proportion reveals a weakness in the implementation of evaluation results, suggesting a gap between policy intentions and actual practices. 10.3% (7 respondents) indicate that formal evaluation mechanisms do not actually exist. This result highlights a structural deficiency in certain segments of the education system, calling into question the capacity for strategic management.

➤ *The Use of The Results of These Assessments in Subsequent Decision-Making*

Table 16: Use of the Results of these Assessments in Subsequent Decision-Making.

Evaluation and Monitoring of Educational Policies	Frequency	Percentage
The results are used to adjust policies and programs	38	55.8
The results are taken into account, but the decisions remain unchanged.	23	33.8
The results are rarely or never used for decision-making.	7	10.3
Other		
Total	68	100

Source: field data from December 2, 2025 to January 30, 2026

This table delves deeper into the issue by analyzing the actual use of evaluation results in educational decisions. 55.8% of respondents (38) state that the results are indeed used to adjust educational policies and programs.

This reflects evidence-based educational governance, where decisions are based on data from the field. 33.8% (23 respondents) believe that results are taken into account, but that final decisions remain unchanged. This situation reflects institutional resistance to change or a symbolic instrumentalization of evaluation. 10.3% (7 respondents) state that results are rarely or never used. This finding reveals a disconnect between evaluation and action, weakening the effectiveness of educational policies.

➤ *The Key Institutional Actors Involved at Each Stage of the Process*

Our respondents cited the following key institutional actors;

At the central level: the Office of the Minister of National Education; the General Secretariat; the Inspectors General (primary and secondary), DIPROMAD, the

Provincial Minister of National Education, and technical and financial partners (UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID, PEQUIP, ENABEL, APPRENDRE, etc.). They participate in needs assessment and identification, defining priorities, developing content, implementation, and evaluation.

At the provincial level: Provincial Inspectors. They participate in identifying needs, defining priorities, developing content, implementation, and evaluation of policy decisions.

Local level: Operators in the school and educational guidance unit, Pool inspectors, Sub-providers, Itinerant inspectors. They participate in the execution or implementation of the political decision.

➤ *The Influence of the Political or Administrative Environment on Educational Decisions*

Despite their predominantly positive responses, the respondents revealed a sense of frustration and marginalization. They felt that educational decisions were heavily influenced by political or administrative considerations, often disconnected from the realities on the

ground in schools. They believed that those involved in these decisions sometimes lacked technical or pedagogical skills, leading to policies poorly suited to the actual needs of schools, teachers, and students. This perception revealed a breakdown of trust between policymakers and education practitioners.

➤ *Gap Between Policies and Practices*

The respondents repeatedly emphasized the persistent gap between educational policies developed at the top and their implementation on the ground. They lamented the fact that local stakeholders, who are the most directly affected, are not sufficiently involved in the development of educational policies. In a context that is supposed to be decentralized, this lack of participation is perceived as a structural contradiction, where the normal stages of decision-making are ignored. The respondents thus expressed the feeling that reforms are imposed on them without consultation or consideration of their daily expertise.

➤ *The Factors that Primarily Explain this Difference*

The respondents identified several factors that, in their view, explain this gap between policies and practices. They first mentioned the limited competence of some decision-makers, followed by a lack of genuine stakeholder involvement. The selection of these actors also appears problematic, as it is not always based on objective criteria of competence. Added to this are significant financial and human resource constraints, which limit the institutions' ability to effectively implement the reforms adopted. These combined factors reflect an educational governance perceived as neither inclusive nor adequately equipped.

➤ *The Regulation or Correction of These Discrepancies by Administrative and Educational Services*

Despite these shortcomings, respondents acknowledge the efforts made by administrative and teaching staff to reduce the observed disparities. These attempts at regulation are primarily carried out through meetings and discussions at the local level. However, these mechanisms are perceived as insufficient or sporadic, as they often intervene after the fact, without questioning the fundamental basis of the decisions made. Respondents seem to expect a more proactive and structured approach to regulation.

➤ *The Influence of Feedback from the Field on Educational Reforms*

Implicit in the respondents' answers is that feedback from the field still has little influence on educational reforms. Although channels for gathering information exist, their actual impact on final decisions remains limited. Those working on the ground thus express a desire to be heard, recognized, and integrated as genuine partners in the reform process, convinced that their experiences constitute an essential asset for improving the education system.

V. DISCUSSIONS

➤ *Originality and Scientific Contribution of the Study*

The originality of this study lies in its analytical approach: it is not limited to an evaluation of educational policies, nor to a strictly pedagogical analysis, but rather examines the political and institutional governance of the basic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, situating it within the real dynamics of power, coordination, and partnership dependencies between 2014 and 2024. Unlike much research focused on academic results or performance indicators, this study adopts a processual perspective on public educational action, highlighting the gap between the ambitious normative framework and actual implementation practices, particularly in Kinshasa. It thus makes an original empirical contribution to understanding educational governance in a context of incomplete decentralization and significant political and budgetary constraints.

➤ *Perspective with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

The results of this study resonate directly with SDG 4, which aims for inclusive, equitable and quality education, but also with SDG 16, relating to the promotion of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

The analysis shows that achieving the targets of SDG 4 depends not only on the formulation of educational policies or the allocation of resources, but above all on the quality of institutional governance, particularly in terms of inter-level coordination, administrative stability, and the participation of local stakeholders. In this respect, the study confirms that education constitutes a strategic area of public governance, where institutional dysfunctions compromise the fulfillment of international commitments.

➤ *Validity of the Results with Regard to the Method Used*

The validity of the results rests on the methodological approach adopted, which prioritizes qualitative analysis supported by empirical data from the field. The use of surveys among educational stakeholders allows us to grasp not only formal decisions, but also the practical logics, perceptions, and lived experiences of those who implement educational policies on a daily basis. This method proves particularly relevant for analyzing a complex subject like educational governance, where power dynamics, institutional compromises, and contextual constraints are not always visible in official documents. The convergence of respondents' answers strengthens the internal credibility of the results and their analytical coherence.

➤ *Explanation of the Results Obtained*

The results highlight an educational governance characterized by persistent centralization, despite a legal framework favorable to decentralization. The Ministry of National Education appears both as a central steering actor and as a constrained institution, subject to political, budgetary, and partnership pressures. The observed gap between policies and practices is mainly explained by: the limited involvement of local stakeholders in decision-

making processes, administrative instability linked to ministerial reshuffles, dependence on technical and financial partners, and weak accountability and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These results reflect a governance more oriented towards crisis management and compromise than towards long-term strategic planning.

➤ *Unexpected Results and their Interpretation*

A particularly unexpected finding is the limited actual influence of feedback from the field on the direction of educational reforms, despite the formal existence of consultation frameworks. This observation reveals that the participation of local stakeholders often remains symbolic, without any real impact on final decisions. Furthermore, the regulatory role of administrative and educational services, while present, appears limited to ad hoc corrective actions rather than structural regulation of the system. These results suggest a governance model where consultation does not always translate into the co-creation of public policies.

➤ *Comparison with Previous Studies*

The findings of this study align with those of UNESCO and the African Union (2025), which highlight the existence of ambitious but insufficiently contextualized strategic frameworks. However, this study distinguishes itself by demonstrating that these limitations are not merely technical, but deeply institutional and political. The results also converge with the work of PASEC and the AFD (2024), which underscores the concrete difficulties in implementing education policies in the DRC, particularly regarding human resources, coordination, and local governance. This study offers a complementary perspective by analyzing these difficulties as the product of power dynamics and institutional choices, rather than simply as capacity deficits.

➤ *Limitations of the Study (without Disparagement)*

Like all empirical research, this study has certain limitations. It focuses primarily on the case of Kinshasa, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to the entire country. However, this choice is justified by Kinshasa's central role in the formulation and coordination of national education policies. Furthermore, the study relies heavily on the perceptions of the stakeholders interviewed. While this approach provides a nuanced understanding of institutional dynamics, it would benefit from being complemented, in future research, by a comparative analysis across several provinces or by longitudinal quantitative data. These limitations do not weaken the results but, on the contrary, open up avenues for further research on educational governance in the DRC.

In short, this study shows that the performance of the basic education program in the DRC depends less on the existence of legal and strategic texts than on the State's actual capacity to govern, coordinate, and stabilize educational action within a complex institutional environment. It thus calls for a rethinking of educational reforms not only as pedagogical projects, but as long-term political and institutional processes.

VI. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to analyze the political and institutional role of the Ministry of National Education in the governance of the basic education program in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2014 and 2024, with a particular focus on the context of the city of Kinshasa. More specifically, it sought to understand how institutional, political, and partnership dynamics influence the coherence, continuity, and effectiveness of the implementation of educational reforms, beyond the formal legal and strategic framework. The results highlight an educational governance characterized by a persistent tension between normative ambition and operational constraints. Although the DRC established a coherent legal and strategic framework aimed at educational quality and equity during the period studied, the translation of these orientations into practice remains uneven. The study reveals a persistent centralization of decision-making power, weak involvement of local actors, recurring administrative instability linked to political dynamics, and a significant dependence on technical and financial partners. These factors contribute to the gap observed between formulated educational policies and their actual implementation on the ground. Furthermore, the analysis shows that existing regulatory and accountability mechanisms, while operational, remain insufficiently structured to have a lasting impact on strategic decisions. Feedback from the field, despite providing essential information, has a limited influence on the direction of reforms, thereby weakening national and local ownership of the basic education program.

From a scientific perspective, this study makes an original contribution to the literature on educational governance in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It goes beyond approaches focused exclusively on academic performance or resources, offering a politico-institutional perspective on public educational policy. By demonstrating that the performance of the basic education program is closely linked to the quality of ministerial governance—understood as the capacity for coordination, strategic guidance, administrative stability, and accountability—this research enriches existing work on educational policies in contexts of incomplete decentralization.

Finally, this study opens several avenues for future research. Comparative analyses between different provinces would allow for an appreciation of the diversity of educational governance configurations at the national level. Similarly, the integration of longitudinal quantitative data could complement the qualitative approach adopted, by more precisely measuring the impact of institutional dynamics on educational outcomes. Further work could also explore the role of non-state actors and local communities in the co-construction of educational policies, in order to better understand the conditions for more inclusive and sustainable governance.

Ultimately, this research invites us to rethink educational reforms in the Democratic Republic of Congo not only as technical or pedagogical devices, but as complex political and institutional processes, the success of which depends above all on the State's ability to ensure coherent, participatory and long-term oriented educational governance.

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➤ *Declaration of Conflict of Interest*

No conflict of interest regarding this publication.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

This study is not part of an experimental protocol involving risks to participants or medical procedures. Nevertheless, we have ensured the integrity of the individuals interviewed by strictly guaranteeing their anonymity. Informed consent and the use of collected information are strictly enforced.

➤ *Author Contributions*

- Pierre OLELA NGONGO conceived the topic, wrote the manuscript, collected data, and analyzed the statistics.
- Jean Marie KAPENGA KAZADI NTUNDULA proofread, corrected the content, and validated the final version.
- Maxime MAMBONGO ZUNGUZUNGU, paraphrased the conclusion and the perspectives.
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