International Journal of Educational Development 107 (2024) 103056

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Educational Development

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedudev

Crisis mode in fragile state and its implications for the human right to education: A governance-analytical perspective on the DRC's education sector

Louise Ohlig [*,1], Susanne Timm [1]

Foundations in Education, Otto-Friedrich-University, Bamberg, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Governance
Crisis
Education system
Democratic Republic of Congo
COVID-19
Non-state actors

ABSTRACT

With this qualitative study, we contribute to the discourse on the governance of education systems in the context of crisis and fragility. We look at the crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where a high proportion of schools is owned and managed by non-state actors. Conducting a content analysis of 18 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the education sector, we analyzed the ideas and understandings that guided their crisis management. We identified understandings of schooling and of their own agency as main factors explaining how different actors reacted to the crisis. We also found generally limited advocacy for the right to education in the given crisis situation, in which mostly non-state actors took over the responsibility to fill gaps in the DRC's education system left by the state. In doing so, however, they contributed to the strengthening of the central state's authority at the same time.

1. Introduction

With this qualitative study, we contribute to the discourse on the governance of education systems in the context of crisis and fragility. We look at crisis management in the education sector of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the North and South Kivu provinces. By drawing on governance theory, we move beyond "a standard evaluation of education services" for crisis affected communities "to one that examines education's wider role" (Shanks, 2019, p. 43) in political system, which are also characterized by fragility and limited statehood. In particular, we uncover the guiding ideas and understandings of different actors as one of the main factors explaining the crisis management in education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is empirically grounded in interviews with education leaders in the DRC. It is part of the larger project "EduCOV", funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

Only five years after the global community voted for quality education for all (SDG 4) and international agencies identified a worldwide learning crisis (UIS, 2018; World Bank, 2018), the COVID-19 pandemic forced at least 1.29 billion students worldwide to leave school and stay at home (UNESCO IIEP, 2020, p. 3) often exacerbated existing inequalities and educational challenges.

Especially in countries of the Global South such as the DRC however, the learning crisis only came in addition to many others. The DRC is the second largest country in Africa and one of the poorest on the continent. Additionally, armed conflicts have shaken the region for decades. Especially in North and South Kivu, these conflicts have intensified since 2017 resulting in a growing population of internally displaced persons. Past health crisis caused by Ebola and Cholera and the high potential of natural desasters around the Lake Kivu only add to the complexity of crises in the DRC's eastern provinces, and continue to impact on educational development (Khan et al., 2020, p. 7; Falisse et al., 2022, p. 54).

Yet, these manifold crisis have never resulted in mass school closures or other government measures. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, however, like in almost all countries in the world, schools closed also in the DRC. These school closures lasted for 31–40 weeks, whilst, on global average, schools were closed for 20 weeks (UIS, UNICEF, World Bank, OECD, 2022, p. 7). The DRC's countrywide school closures started on March 23rd and were announced by President Félix Tshisekedi through a presidential decree only eight days after the first COVID-19 case was detected in the country (Falisse et al., 2022, p. 58). Even three days before this decision, the number of cases reported was only two and were located only in the capital (WHO, 2020). In October 2020, all

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: louise.ohlig@uni-bamberg.de (L. Ohlig).
[1] Equal authorship

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103056
Received 22 February 2024; Received in revised form 24 April 2024; Accepted 27 April 2024
Available online 4 May 2024

schools in DRC re-opened for the first time before closing again at the very beginning of 2021 in response to a second wave.[2] On February 22nd, 2021, the government fully re-opened schools and universities after both national and international organizations called for it (CASS, 2021, p. 3). As a major consequence, more than 27 million children could not go to school for almost one year (CASS, 2021, p. 3).

Already in the beginning of the pandemic, warnings about the risks for educational quality that arise from school closures had been reported. These included loss of teachers and personnel, unfavourable conditions for learning at home, an increase of domestic violence, exclusion from school feeding programs, and a higher rate of dropout rate for all, especially for girls and students from poor families (Alban Conto et al., 2021; Smith, 2021). Despite that, the continuation of learning was not guaranteed for all children. According to Save the Children (2020, p. 2), only 15% of the children aged 11–17 in the DRC had access to the distance learning provided by the government. Particularly under conditions of poverty, alternative teaching tools such as television or online learning reached only a small minority of learners and, in particular, left already marginalized students behind.

Against this background, the decision of school closures is striking. Moreover, none of the WHO's pre-COVID pandemic control recommendations included extended school closures of more than four weeks (Dasgupta, 2022, p. 128) and even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO advised to keep schools open as long as possible and to close schools only in situations of high and uncontrolled transmission (cf. CASS, 2021, p. 13; WHO, 2021).

In this article, we therefore look at how the education system in the DRC responds to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic while paying attention to the specific characteristics of the Congolese education system, namely the high proportion of schools owned and managed by non-state actors. Based on governance theory, societal and political mechanisms of problem solving and the processing of decisions decisive factors for the functioning of a system. (Altrichter and Heinrich, 2007, p. 56). Therefore, we focus on how actors involved in the DRC's education sector reflected on the crisis and on the rationale behind the implementation of the school closures in face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research question addressed in this paper thus reads as follows: What are the guiding ideas and understandings of different actors as one of the main factors explaining the crisis management in education during the COVID-19 pandemic? In the following chapters, we first outline the state of research with a particular focus on the characteristics of the DRC's education sector and the specific context of the crisis-torn DRC (chapter 2). In chapter 3, we explain the analytical framework that guided our research. After documenting the methodological approach and research design in chapter 4, we present the results on actors' understandings of schooling and that of their personal agency that guided the crisis management and especially the enforcement of the school closures in the DRC. We conclude by discussing these findings with respect to quality education in fragile contexts and the discourse on educational governance in crises.

2. State of research: education system in the DRC from a governance perspective

To introduce the context of our study, we first summarize the DRC's general framework conditions marked by fragility and conflict and its effects on education, before we give an outline of the DRC's education system with an emphasis on its governance structure.

Armed and protracted conflicts, large numbers of internally displaced persons, poor economic conditions, political instability, poverty, and the presence of both international peace operations and humanitarian organizations shape the reality of the DRC. The country is considered a "fragile state" and ranked 6th out of 179 states in 2022 (The Fund for Peace, 2023). Although hailed as a regional success story in the early 1980s for its high school enrollment rates, the multiple crises have had a negative impact on education in the DRC, and enrollment rates have never recovered after the intensification of violence in the 1990s, which led to many dropouts (European Commission, 2009, p. 3). Despite political stabilization in the early 2000s, the education system continues to suffer from underfunding. In 2015, the contribution of private households to the education sector was more than 1.5 times that of the state. Even when free primary education was introduced in the DRC in 2019, the state funding increased from 20.8 to 24.5 percent of the national budget, but did not cover the costs of the reform (Falisse et al., 2022, 55 f.). As a result, the free primary school attendance became a major challenge for non-state schools, which had previously been largely financed by parental contributions. Nevertheless, the state still managed to play an important role. A reason for this are the specific actor constellations characterizing the governance of the DRC's education sector:

The DRC is the country with the highest number of denominational schools in the world (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 3). In general, there are three types of schools: *écoles conventionnées* (public schools run by faith-based organizations (FBOs),[3] *écoles non-conventionnées* (public schools managed by the state), and *écoles privées* (run by different kind of organizations or individuals without a state contract). In the school year 2019–2020, only 10% of pre-primary, 17% of primary, and 18% of secondary schools were managed by the state. In North and South Kivu this proportion is even smaller (Ministère de l'enseignemet primaire, secondaire et technique, 2021, p. 10). Consequently, non-state actors play an important role in keeping the education system (De Herdt and Titeca, 2016). Only with the contribution of non-state actors the gross access rate to the last grade of primary education and the adjusted net enrolment rate in primary schools reached 84.4% and 78.2%, respectively, in 2018 (RDC Ministère du Plan, 2020, p. 30). The state, in turn, is in fact dependent on non-state actors (Titeca and De Herdt, 2011, p. 231), which in our case, unless otherwise stated, refer FBOs, which run most of the schools that are not run by the state in the regions studied (Scheunpflug and Wenz, 2021, p. 16). Although the state usually pays salaries directly to teachers (ibid.), many teachers remain unregistered and thus unpaid (Mokonzi Bambanota et al., 2022, p. 27). In these cases, teachers' salaries are largely covered by the parents, (Brandt and Lopes Cardozo, 2022, p. 179), which led to particular difficulties for the teachers during the school closures when parents stopped paying school fees for their children (Vivuya, 2021). The FBOs, in turn, often provide educational and other social infrastructure, material resources, training for teachers, and became leading management institutions of local service delivery (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2021, p. 67).

In their educational engagement, however, non-state actors do not operate free from the state. While today, international donors also gradually gained influence in the DRC's education sector (Brandt, 2017, 60ff.), the Congolese state still wields regulative "symbolic" power as expressed in the regulatory frameworks, e.g. curricula reforms, or teacher deployment for instance (Titeca and De Herdt, 2011; Brandt, 2019).[4] Falisse et al. (2022, p. 72) even argue that the implementation of free education in 2019, also "re-centralized" the system increasing the state's power and diminishing the agility of actors on lower levels.[5]

[2] After nearly five months of closure, schools were partly re-opened between 10.08.2020 and 11.10.2020, but only for students from classes with final examinations to finish their school career as usual (UNESCO IIEP, 2020, p.6).

[3] Following Wodon (2014, p. 45), we use FBOs in the narrow sense including all organization that run faith-inspired schools.

[4] Other measure of a states symbolic power over the education sector in fragile context are presented by Gandrup and Titeca (2019) for the case of Somaliland.

[5] An historical overview over the development of the relationship between the state and non-state actors in the DRC's education sector and its interpretation from a governance perspective is provided by Brandt (2017), 113ff.).

In summary, Titeca and De Herdt (2011, p. 213) thus describe the "real-world governance" in the DRC's education sector "as the direct result of an evolving negotiation process between state and non-state actors" that results in the state surviving as an administrative framework though taking a redefined role in providing public services. Non-state actors, on the other hand, are making use of the official legal framework according to practical necessities they find on the ground (De Herdt and Titeca, 2016, p. 472).

From an organizational point of view, this specific relationship between state and non-state stakeholders is mirrored in a complex structure of national, provincial, and local offices of state and non-state actors in the DRC's education system (Mokonzi Bambanota et al., 2022, p. 10). In theory, the state Provincial Office for Education may has direct control over the FBOs' Provincial Coordination Office. Yet, this hierarchy does not result in clear state authority over FBO sub-systems. Within the non-state run schools sector, counsels, priests, and parishes hold decision-making competencies and are often responsible for many more schools than the state itself. This allows for a broad spatial penetration, although their actual supervisory functions are unclear (Brandt, 2019, p. 149). Moreover, the state's geographic structure of provinces and sub-provinces is mostly not identical to those of FBOs' educational structures and non-state actors are often part of much larger networks involving various actors at different levels.[6] The education system in the DRC is thus characterized by parallel structures and overlapping decision-making processes. Non-state actors hold actual power in shaping educational realities on the ground. However, their importance in national level policy-making has vastly diminished and the state—influenced by international donors—provides the administrative and regulatory framework (Brandt, 2017, p. 68).

3. Analytical framework – governance analysis

To understand the implementation of school closures as main measure of the DRC's crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic, we apply a governance-analytical perspective. Originally, the "notoriously slippery" concept of governance (cf. Benz, 2003, p. 12) has emerged in response to a dissolving of governmental, hierarchical enforcement power through a shifting of territorial as well as functional and sectoral boundaries in political and social coordination. It recognizes the fact, that governments and administrations cannot perform their functions just in line with the hierarchy. Instead, they have to rely on cooperation with other public or private actors. Yet, this assumes that the state had previously exercised a strong regulatory power (Benz, 2003, 14ff.)—an idea, that originates mainly from the political reality of Western states. From both, a global and a historical perspective, however, the modern ("Western") nation-state with full control over its territory and sufficient capacity to enforce the law is, in fact, an exception rather than the rule (Börzel and Risse, 2021, 57). Therefore, the concept of governance needed a re-formulation for non-Western states, such as the DRC, that leaves behind the normative claim of liberal governance structures being better than others (Lahai et al., 2019, p. 2).

As part of this re-formulation, various authors (Draude and Neuweiler, 2010; Risse and Lehmkuhl, 2006; Dixit, 2011) have worked on the constructive forms of operation through the collective regulation of social circumstances (cf. Maynitz, 2003, p. 66) that emerged under the conditions of limited statehood in post-colonies. Börzel and Risse (2010), 112ff.) point out that also in contexts of fragile statehood, there can be areas that are reasonably well governed.

The DRC and the Congolese education system, specifically in North and South Kivu, appears to be exactly such an area of limited statehood, which is yet governed (cf. Brandt, 2021, p. 547). Indeed, there is no complete dissolution of state authority as, for instance, the rigid implementation of state examinations shows. The education system is still running despite manifold crises, the state's limited enforcement power, and non-state actors owning and managing most of the schools. This results in complex governance mechanisms worth analysing.

In doing so, we do not consider the concept of governance as a normative lens (keyword: "good governance") that is based on assumptions about democratic self-determination. Instead, we use the governance perspective as an analytical lens to better understand societal and political problem-solving mechanisms and to describe modes of societal coordination which explain certain policy outcomes (Maynitz, 2003; cf. Börzel and Risse, 2010, p. 114) (here: school closures and re-opening), not leaving aside issues of power and power retention (cf. Lange and Schimank, 2004, p. 27). Since such an analytical concept of governance is "theory-free" in the normative sense (Benz, 2003, p. 27), it opens up possibilities for identifying other modes of civil society and political coordination and action.

The relevant literature suggests a number of different approaches for conducting governance analyses (Altrichter and Heinrich, 2007, 56 f.). In this study, we apply a governance analysis that is primarily concerned with the underlying understandings and ideas in order to understand the rationality of school closures in the DRC, specifically why and how actors translated the top-down decision of school closures (see 2.1 and 2.2). This is particularly meaningful with regard to questions of vulnerability and resilience of education systems in crisis mode, which represent central factors for innovation understood as the necessary outcome of a transformation process towards Quality Education for All (Holtappels, 2013, 47, 55; cf. Rürup and Bormann, 2013, p. 18).

4. Methods

Given the theory-generating claim of the research, we conducted a qualitative study within the interpretative paradigm. In this chapter, we report the data collection, the sampling strategy, and sample composition. Subsequently, we explain our method of data interpretation and analysis.

The data collection took place in the first quarter of 2022. French speaking Congolese members of the EduCOV research group conducted 18 semi-structured in-person interviews. In qualitative research, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, the quality of the sample and the interviews is crucial in order to achieve meaningful insights. In particular, it is essential that participants bring a relevant perspective to the topic under investigation. Our sample reflects the key players relevant to the research question (contextual relevance). The respective interview guide envisaged broad narrative parts in order to gather a wide range of information and to allow space for interviewees to set priorities in terms of their perceptions of their crisis management. Members of the EduCOV research group transcribed the interviews and double-checked the texts. Transcripts were masked and anonymized as far as possible. As part of the data treatment, all interview transcripts where masked and anonymized as far as possible. The participation in the interview was voluntary and the interviewees approved the use of the data for scientific purposes. By this proceeding, all ethical requirements of the institutions involved in the research process were met.

The following table shows the purposive sample allowing for an in-depth analysis (Leavy, 2017, 79 f.). It provides an exemplary representation of the broad spectrum of actors involved the implementation of the school closures and further crisis management measures in the DRC's education sector. The interviewees are mostly located on the highest levels of the two provinces analyzed. Therefore, the statements of the interviewees reflect the central ideas and understandings that circulate within the two provinces examined education system and shaped the crisis management.

Based on the structure of the education system, both state and non-state actors from FBOs at the provincial or sub-provincial level in North and South Kivu were interviewed, as well as people working both in the education and health sector. Although multiple non-governmental

[6] A detailed overview can be found here: Kasereka Lutswamba (Forthcoming, 32ff.) or World Bank (2015, 10 f.).

organizations (NGO) are of relevance for education in the DRC, the sample includes only one respondent from an NGO, who accepted the request for an interview.[7]

For the data interpretation, we conducted qualitative content analysis of interviews with strong elements borrowed from grounded theory. In order "to understand the meanings that circulate in texts" (Leavy, 2017, p. 146), qualitative content analysis helps to systematically analyse, i.e. rule-guided, forms of fixed communication (Mayring, 2022, p. 13). Through applying an iterative approach, we also ensured that the material is examined in depth and that qualitative statements that go beyond the explicit information contained therein can be worked out.

In step of data interpretation, the research question usually guides the analysis from the outset (Lapan et al., 2012). In grounded theory, in turn, "it is the research process that generates the question. […] As an iterative process, grounded theory progresses in response to the evolving data collection" (Birks and Mills, 2015, p. 21), which does not preclude that the research problem is already roughly known before the analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2003). However, it opens up the possibility that the precise research focus arises from the data and is rather determined during the interpretation process itself. This is particularly meaningful for theory generating research as the one presented here. In this sense, we first approached the transcripts separately by developing independent case summaries for each interview (cf. Kuckartz, 2010, p. 50) and validated them communicatively afterwards. This already brought into light the significance of norms and ideas within our governance-analytical perspective, whereas the exact mechanisms of the decision-making process were not in the focus of the interviews. Building on this, we directed the research question toward the ideas and understandings that underlie the decisions and behavior of the various actors. Thus, the summaries served as a base to identify the themes that interviewees touched. Based on these themes and through the process of the validation, thematic comparison across interviews, abstraction and conceptual condensation as suggested by Meuser and Nagel (2009), 476 f.), we then developed an inductive category system that reflects what led decision-makers in their crisis management in the DRC's education sector. Consequently, the code system mirrors the spectrum of themes the interviewees touched and systemizes them. At each step, we communicated the results continuously and validated them in several research workshops with the members of EduCOV research group.

Despite the structured approach in compliance with quality criteria of scientific research, some limitations arise from the process of data collection and interpretation. First, due to the sample, we can only make limited statements about the actual decision-making process at the national level that led to the school closures, about the internal perspective of international organizations, or how negotiation processes between national and local actors actually looked in practice. Moreover, we did not ask for the actual impact of the governance features discussed below on the system's output.

5. Results – Actors' understandings and ideas guiding crisis management

As discussed in chapter 4, we approach the governance of the DRC education system by examining the ideas and understandings of the actors involved as these fundamentally shape the system's functioning (cf. Altrichter and Heinrich, 2007, 69 f.). The interviewees report retrospectively on their personal experiences and actions of crisis management, in which these underlying ideas are expressed. Before we argue in chapter 6 that this explains why the president's decree to close schools was largely followed at the (sub-) provincial level in North and South Kivu, we describe our findings in this chapter.

For this, we first describe the inductively developed code system as a first systematic representation of the themes, sub-themes, and topics that emerged from the actors' narrations on their crisis management during the school closures (5.1). Following this descriptive analysis, we take an interpretative perspective in a second step. We look at how the various topics were related to each other by the interviewees and highlight in particular two thematic constellations that appeared most frequently (5.2). The chapter ends with a brief conclusion (5.3).

5.1. Actors' views on schooling during the COVID-19 crisis

Since the code system was generated inductively, it presents a first result of the study. It gives an overview on the aspects that the interviewees considered relevant in their crisis management. The code system as presented in Table 2 includes an analytical systematisation of the main thematic lines of their retrospection (= codes), subordinate dimensions thereof (= sub-codes), and finally underpinning concretizations (= topics). Themes, sub-themes, and topics were extracted from the interviews in an iterative process of systematization.

Under the first theme "The role of schooling and education in society," we differentiate between how interviewees framed the societal role of schools and education in general as well as in the pandemic crisis management in particular. In the DRC, mainly due to the demographic structure, schools are at the centre of society. This may be why many interviewees described school as means of communication from the government to all people during the crisis. Moreover, we saw that the interviewees usually perceived school in its economic and social function. Particularly during crises, health protection, and the maintenance of economic life appeared as the primary concern for the society, and therefore also for schools. We note that in almost all interviewees' retrospection, inherent educational consideration appear only very rarely. When describing the role and societal task of schools in general and during the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, only few considered it primarily as pedagogical and/or educational institution.

Under the second theme "(Self-)Positioning and acting in the system," we show how respondents' perceive responsibility as well as to whom they attribute it. We remark that many interviewees considered themselves to be mere implementers of the central government's decision to close schools and delegate the responsibility of finding ways to continue providing education to others such as schools or parents, FBOs or political authorities. Especially international (faith-based) humanitarian or development organizations are considered to be the ones able to fill the gap left open by the state during the school closures, for instance, regarding online teaching. They also provided much of the (material) prerequisites for safe re-opening of schools in the already underfunded education system of the DRC. Additionally, the interviewees mentioned various networking structures that were relevant to their own crisis management approach. These structures appeared as characteristic features of the interviewees' perception of the education system and its relation to other fields. In line with the prominent role of FBOs in the education system, the interviewees also emphasized the role of religious actors, e.g. as trustful authorities.

Finally, the third theme "Points of references," is about solution concepts and their origin as well as criteria that the actors considered important in their crisis management. Interestingly, reference points for many interviews were located outside the country. International organizations, the crisis management of countries in the global North, and Rwanda as role model in the region were mentioned, expressing an increased orientation towards international policy trends. At the same time, actors from the FBO sector demonstrated a focus on their immediate context and individual field of action, particularly in terms of integration within the local community, solidarity, and spirituality. Furthermore, only two out of 18 respondents talked about "education as a basic need," whilst almost all interviewees referred to the emergency state and higher political authorities— regardless of whether they have a

[7] EPST: Education primaire, secondaire et technique

Table 1
Sample table (Source: Own representation).

	State actors			Non-state Actors		
	General state actors	State actors in education	Health actors	General actors	Actors in education	NGO
Provincial level	1 Governor/ Head of province	2 Education Ministers (EPST)	2 Health Ministers	4 Heads of religious communities	2 Coordinators of FBO-owned schools	
Regional level		1 Head of the sub-region EPST 1 Head teacher primary/ secondary school	1 Head of health zone		3 coordinators of FBO-owned schools	1 Representative (faith-based NGO)

state background or not. A high state official on the regional level, for examples, said: "*In fact, the decision to close the schools was dictated, as I said, by the higher hierarchy, and we can only comply."(Interview no.17)*[8]

5.2. Actors' crisis management rationale during the COVID-19 crisis

Apart from this range of themes and sub-themes, we found two combinations of themes, which gave us further insights into the logics of the rationale behind actors' crisis management. First, we describe the connection between understandings of education and the role of schools on the one hand and the role of the education and the health sector in the larger political context of crisis management on the other hand. Here, we refer mainly to the relation between the two themes "The role of schooling and education in society" and "Points of references" (5.2.1). Second, we document the relation between the themes „Points of reference" and "(Self-)Positioning and acting in the system" (5.2.2).

5.2.1. Educational concerns underrepresented

Based on how the interviewees rationalised school closures and their subsequent re-opening, we found that they attributed multiple functions to schools in society, making school also an important steering instrument in the management of a crisis. In view of the high proportion of children and young people in society and the limited supply of electricity as well as access to means of communication, schools served as a channel for mass communication through which all groups of society could be reached. Concretely, a health actor pointed out:

> *"[…] and we had to start with schools because most of the population, at least in every family, has a child at school, of course that's why we had to start there." (Interview no. 7)*

Because of the large number of children and youth, school closures also posed a problem for adults' economic activities, as the interviewees report. Finally, the interviewees described schools as protective shelter for young people, shielding children and youth from intra-family violence, children's work within and beyond families, and recruitment as child soldiers. This idea of schools as protective shelters appeared only rarely in the interviews. This suggests that in decision-making in and about the education system in the DRC, the specific needs of children were not much taken into account.

Even though the majority of interviewees were responsible persons within the education sector, the interviews strongly focused on health risks or economic needs. Only few interviewees brought educational concerns or the link between education and health risk prevention into the discussion about the school closures in the first place, or as a strong argument for their re-opening. The short-term protection of the public rather than long-term understandings of learning and well-being of children or teachers appeared to be the all-determining rationale. This is reflected, for instance, in the comments of one of the high state officials:

> *"In the case of the DRC, […] panic had gripped decision-makers […] and prompted the central government authorities to take measures to combat the spread of the disease. That's how all the gathering places, whether schools, churches or markets, came to be closed." (Interview no. 1)*

Looking at both the multiplied functions for society actors assigned to schools and the reported negotiations between education and health care stakeholders, we see that cross-sector collaboration was common, but has apparently been largely one-sided. Actors' responses suggest that healthcare stakeholders' decision and actions tended to be more influential, while education professionals had very little bargaining power. Non-state actors from FBOs, who both managed schools and also provided health services, however, were more likely to consider both aspects in their crisis management—health and education.

Lastly, the strong focus on health aspects was also reflected in recurring references to the state of emergency. Respondents not only expressed their concern about their own survival, but also mentioned the spread of panic among the population. It is noteworthy that, despite the fact that these regions have been facing several existential crises, none of the interviewees mentioned the protracted conflict that had already been affecting the education system in the North and South Kivu regions before the pandemic. This suggests that violence has become a common and regular occurrence in everyday life for the interviewees. References to the previous health crisis caused by Ebola were also infrequent and only mentioned in the context of reactivating institutions established before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Viewing COVID-19 as a short-term existential threat apparently prompted respondents to almost negate the need to protect other public goods such as education. In particular, respondents ostensibly overlooked the importance of education for long-term recovery. Instead, school closures had the primary purpose of protecting people, who had already been tormented by the health crisis caused by Ebola. Nonetheless, some interviewees conversely noted that, since during the peak phases of Ebola schools had remained open, school closures during COVID-19 served to raise awareness about the pandemic and the seriousness of the situation, which again underlines the specific function of schools as means of communication and the steering of the populace in the context of the DRC.

5.2.2. Own agency or others' responsibility

The majority of interviewees referred to the fact that the decision to close and open schools was taken "in Kinshasa" or by a presidential decree. This can be taken as proof for the actors' broad acceptance of political authority in the DRC's education sector during the crisis despite the generally limited statehood, the population's low level of trust in the state (Kangamina et al., 2022, p. 2), and the power-sharing between state and non-state actors in the DRC's educations sector (see 2.1).

In addition, interviewees also referred to crisis management in other countries or to international organizations such as UNICEF or WHO. State actors in particular used 'abroad' as role model to justify school closures even in their own country. Although non-state actors expressed the need for school closures as well they also emphasized much stronger the specific problems posed by school closures in the DRC education sector compared to state actors, pointing out that the state does (or can) not provide alternative schooling options such as, for instance, widespread online teaching. In this sense, a FBO representative complained about the inappropriate "copy and paste"-solutions from abroad:

[8] All interview statements have been translated from French to English.

Table 2
Actors' views on schooling during the COVID-19 crisis (Source: own representation).

Themes (= codes)	Sub-themes (= sub-codes)	Topics
The role of schooling and education in society	Understanding of school in general	schools as place of health education
		school as an institution linked to all parts of society
		as a pedagogical and/or educational institution
		„storage room"/ custody/ care/ safe-keeping
	Instrumentalization of education as means to an end (not as an end in itself)	for the economy
		for degrees
	Instrumentalization of school closure	for protection of the society
		for protection of teachers
		for protection of children
		as means of communication
(Self-)Positioning and acting in the system	Allocation and delegation of responsibility in the system	to schools
		to himself/herself
		to churches (self)
		to UNICEF/ international organizations resources provider
		to other political actors
		to media and social networks (communication)
		to parents
	Networking/own networks	multi-sectoral networking
		not relevant
		internal multi-sectoral cooperation in religious institution
		external multi-sectoral networks
		multi-sectoral cooperation dominated by health
		with international partners
	Role of religious actors	as links across society's levels
		providing social guarantees to teachers
		providing own health structures for society
Points of reference	Science	Scientific knowledge
	Health	health authorities
		state of emergency (health crisis)
		Ebola experience
	Politics	higher political authorities
		educational authorities
	International	international organizations
		Northern countries
		Rwanda as role model
	Education	education as basic need
	Own context	Faith and spirituality
		Local knowledge and conditions
		Solidarity

"The big problem was that, at state level, […] they always take over a system and always give you solutions, but solutions that don't actually meet the real need. They've introduced what's called distance learning […] but the problem is actually the connection system, the system of devices, telephones, children who can't keep up. […] Locally, we have suggested that there should be a registration team trained in distance learning, but nothing has been done." (Interview no. 4)

Attribution of responsibility to oneself, in turn, was also most common among non-state actors. The interviewees from FBOs, for instance, mentioned the provision and distribution of teaching materials, the management of communication with parents and the local community, or the procurement of other material resources (e.g. masks) through their networks to support the reopening of schools. Furthermore, being locally connected with the people was considered key resource for their ability to adapt.

"Yes, with the other educational partners that we had, we had held consultations and at that time, we said to the parents […] to think about their duties how they could supervise the children during this period but also we said with other partners and other financiers […] what should be done during this period to ensure the supervision of the pupils, to also ensure the continuity of the activities […]." (Interview no. 13)

They also saw themselves as active participants, for example, in a religious global network. Local and global networking appears to be a resource that opens up new pathways for action. It also offered and ensured experience of solidarity. In addition, we note that especially these actors with strong and differentiated networks are also the rare ones who stood out as advocates for the specific needs of children and for the importance of education, expressing a sense of responsibility to provide adequate solutions.

5.3. Conclusion

In summary, we find that principles of quality education (cf. UNESCO, 2004) seemed to be mostly beyond the horizon of the overall decision-making process. The right for education as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Human Rights Pact I) and the Children's Right Convention, both ratified by the DRC, as well as the duty for society and its institutions to deliver schooling, however, did not play a major role in the interviewees' deliberations. Rather, we found that not only health actors, but also almost all actors from the education sector, who could emphasize educational concerns and children's rights alongside health issues, hardly fulfilled this core aspect of their role. Interviewees who did express a sense of personal responsibility drew on local and global networks, their faith, and spirituality to increase their scope for action and active problem solving adapted to local realities. However, compliance with the top-down decision of the central government was most common, often justified by the fact that the pandemic was an existential crisis. Criticism was generally scarce, and then focused on the inappropriate transfer of international "solutions" to the specific context of North and South Kivu (such as school closures in general or the shift to online learning in a country where internet coverage and access to digital devices is very low). At the same time, many interviewees mentioned the necessity of support from international organizations for the re-opening continuing learning instead of formulating expectations vis-à-vis the state."

Taken together, this paper provides insight into the ideas and understandings underlying the rationale of relevant actors' crisis management. While it cannot explain how the decision came into being in Kinshasa in the first place, it focuses in the translation within the DRC's education system and the problem solving mechanisms in face of the school closures through the example of North and South Kivu. Previous research has often focused on what the state does in order to strengthen its top-down power, e.g. through teacher identification measures (cf. Brandt, 2017), and how different actors respond. Based on the assumption that ideas and understandings of actors are crucial for the governance mechanismus, we find that specifically the perceptions of responsibility and agency, of understandings of school and education, as well as of different reference points for relevant actors was crucial for the crisis management in the DRC's education system during the pandemic. Consequently, we argue, that despite the manifold challenges from outside, in providing quality education, the education system is

challenged from inside.

6. Discussion

The strengths and weaknesses of an education system come to light in the moment of facing a major crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Realizing that school closures in response to the pandemic add to the already critical situation within education (see so-called "global learning crisis," c.f. UNESCO, 2013, 2014), our findings suggest new entry points for promoting change toward the provision of educational quality. In this perspective, we discuss two major points: on the one hand, we look for resilience factors of education systems in countries with limited statehood that a governance perspective makes visible (6.1). On the other hand, we deal with the ambivalent role of non-state actors with regard to the theoretical understanding of educational governance in the context of fragility (6.2).

6.1. Governance factors contributing to the resilience of education and educational quality during crises

Through our analysis, we were able to identify factors of vulnerability and robustness in the education sector, particularly with regard to active problem solving by non-state actors in times of crisis.

Through the interviews, it became apparent that the functions of school as proclaimed by researches in the Global North are hardly able to adequately capture the actual position of schools within societies in fragile contexts such as the DRC. In addition to being places of socialization, education, and societal integration and allocation, as proclaimed by Fend (2006) for instance, in the DRC, schools appear to serve also or even mainly as places where children can stay when their parents are working. Morrow (2007), 16 f.), in addition, refers to schools as caregiving institutions. This subordinate importance of inherently educational functions of schools and the emphasis on the economic usability of education allows for the instrumentalization of educational institutions for non-educational purposes, such as mass communication. It also increases the probability for the prioritization of other sectors of society, such as the economy and healthcare over education, even within the education sector itself. Previous research has found similar tendencies in other contexts where health-related arguments also dominated educational crisis management decisions during the pandemic (e.g. Spaull, 2022 for South-Africa). For the case of the DRC, Brandt and Lopes Cardozo (2022) point out that this leads to a situation in which individuals—namely teachers—are mostly responsible for providing and delivering education to different social groups, although for many this proved almost impossible due to their precarious working and living conditions (Brandt and Lopes Cardozo, 2022).

On the other hand, our interviews and their governance-theoretical analysis also revealed four specific factors that increase the resilience of the education system, which mainly stands on the shoulders of FBOs (see chapter 2), in face of crises under the conditions of limited statehood and fragility. To illustrate the specific characteristics of the factors, we have differentiated them here, although, in fact, they are mutually dependent and interrelated.

First, solidarity within communities and worldwide contributes positively to actors' capacity to act and to look for adaptive solutions. Different interviewees expressed this solidarity in the form of material support from various sources, but being involved in a world spanning church community already seems to be a major resource in enhancing resilience. Especially within the closer community, however, the reciprocal feeling of solidarity and empathy provides a wider corridor for acting for educational actors from FBOs in particular. This finding is in line with the remarks of Greyling et al. (2016) on Ebola management in West Africa, who emphasized the contribution of non-state actors in crisis management based on a range of assets. The authors point out, that (unlike the state) non-state actors provided the West African communities with a holistic set of services and programs. In particular, they offered not only religious services and education, but also social and health services, which historically have been combined under the umbrella of diakonia for religious communities. This provided them with high levels of trust as well as necessary resources to act effectively. In the DRC, this also seems to apply, where, after two decades of ongoing conflict, communities rather mistrusts government officials and humanitarian aid organizations (Lal et al., 2022, p. 337).

Second, we identified non-state and state actors' involvement in different kind of networks as crucial factor, be it within actors' own institutions as well as beyond or across hierarchies and sectors. The general importance of the existence and quality of networks as precondition for adaptive crisis management has already been emphasized in existing literature on organizational learning and educational change (cf. O'Hara et al., 2021). For the cases of North and South Kivu, we can confirm that these networks provided actors with resources in terms of material support, mutual learning, and problem solving mechanisms:

Given the complex governance structure (see chapter 2) of overlapping and parallel institutions and the presence of a diverse spectrum of organizations with different backgrounds in the DRC's education system, individual actors, particularly those from FBOs, are often involved in many other networks. Our interviews suggest that actors were therefore used to communicate across different levels and sectors on a regular basis. This helped them find creative, adaptive, and context-specific solutions to the new crisis. However, the actors' embeddedness in networks also provided another advantage, particularly when it comes to standing up for one's own goals even under adverse circumstances: Especially actors' experience in negotiating seemed useful when advocating for the rather de-prioritized educational concerns. This relates to Titeca and De Herdt's description of the DRC's education system as the "result of an evolving negotiation process between state and non-state actors" (2011, p. 214).

Thirdly, with regard to the specifics of the health crisis, actors were already involved in many coordination structures created during the Ebola crisis that only needed to be re-activated during the COVID-19 pandemic. This facilitated a quick and effective response, particularly under the conditions of limited statehood, as noted by our interviewees confirming the findings of Kangamina et al. (2022). Likewise, Gichuhi and Kalista (2022) have shown this for the COVID-10 crisis management in the Kenyan education sector suggesting a general comparative advantage of education systems with expanded and deepened network structures involving various stakeholders for the system's resilience.

Finally, several interviewees, especially those actors from FBOs, who have strong ties to and are embedded in local communities, emphasized the value of local knowledge. Despite the vertical organizational structure in religious matters, both the Catholic (Titeca and De Herdt, 2011, p. 230) as well as the Protestant (Brandt, 2017, p. 101) educational administrations exhibit significant autonomy at the local level. Nevertheless, the fact that despite the general limited statehood in the DRC, almost all interviewees portrayed the central governments' decision of school closures as a necessary reaction to an existential threat suggests that ensuring the appropriateness of the school closures in terms of the local particularities was not a primary concern of the decision makers. Indeed, Cronert (2020) shows that especially countries with lower levels of "government effectiveness" tended to implement school closures faster after the first confirmed COVID-19 case in their country, and considers this as a result of the "political survival logic." According to the author (p. 5f.), states lacking government effectiveness tend to favour quick decisions given the absence of the capacities to allow for the search of responses based on criteria related to necessity and proportionality. In addition, our interviewees referred to other countries as role models for an effective crisis management. This suggests the impact of the international education regime postulated by Parreira do Amaral (2011, 138ff.), under which it would have been politically difficult – even for actors on regional levels – to justify not following this international "trend" of school closures.

In summary, resilience was fostered by four factors: a feeling of embeddedness that inspired solidarity; networks as the structural integration of individuals into larger contexts; the existence of coordination structures that provided functional problem-solving mechanisms; and the inclusion of local knowledge as one of the plural forms of knowledge to be considered.

6.2. Governance in crisis mode

The governance perspective chosen for our study generally suggests the possibility that non-actors can gain large informal power in contrast to a hierarchical state-dominated decision-making and enforcement. Especially in situations where the state's authority is widely limited, non-governmental actors in particular, but also international ones often fill the resulting governance gap (Börzel and Risse, 2010, 112f.; cf. Tull, 2011). For the case of the DRC and its education sector, De Herdt and Titeca (2016) have also already underlined the prominent role of non-state actors in guaranteeing educational needs, even irrespective of the acute crisis. Our analysis confirmed this stance for the time of the pandemic.

However, we find that despite statehood being limited in the DRC, the COVID-19 crisis did not contribute to a further differentiation of the governance system and detachment from state-hierarchies. Similar to Kangamina et al. (2022), we found that non-state actors presented the pandemic as an existential threat that required immediate action without costly discussion, thereby depoliticizing the issue of crisis management. Even the interviewed non-state actors emphasized the necessity of this presidential decision of school closures almost as much as state actors. In doing so, they sometimes even violated the needs in their own area of responsibility, namely to provide education, contributed to the whole system's stability and reinforced the state's at least "symbolic" power in the education system. This stipulates the hypothesis that states with limited authority might benefit from the crisis and gain power beyond the administrative level.

Taking De Herdt and Titeca (2016) into account, it can even be argued that this potentially stabilizing effect consequently prevented the system from imploding and which could have stimulate a comprehensive transformation of the Congolese education system to one that is more inclusive and of higher quality. Non-state actors thus find themselves confronted with a dilemma of either taking an active role as guarantors of stability or leaving the gaps open, which could lead to broader educational change. We therefore conclude that—as we see in the case of the DRC—the crisis mode in a fragile state does not automatically become a driver of structural reforms. Instead, orientations understandings of actors resulting in path dependencies determine the crisis management (cf. Brown and Nikolai, 2022).

The absence of a more fundamental transformation based on the subordination of education to other societal and political concerns as well as–intentional or unintentional–strengthening of state power despite its shortcoming that became even more visible during the crisis gives reason to worry about the achievement of SDG 4 "Quality Education." This is especially concerning in view of foreseeable crises caused by the changing climate, migration, increasing numbers of conflict, and prognoses of further health crises.

7. Key findings and outlook

School closures and the long interruption of education in the DRC are problematic from a normative perspective, both in terms of human rights and the international agreement on quality education (UN Sustainable Development Goals 4). Governance analysis is an analytical tool to identify the reasons for the emergence of this problem, which is a prerequisite for addressing it. We found that schools became the fulfiller of the right to health and other societal concerns. However, although all human rights are equal, the right to education has mostly been subordinated. At the moment of crisis, schools as institution become the venue where conflicting human rights are negotiated. We conclude that in order to ensure educational quality in fragile and crisis contexts, including the DRC, the value of education as an end in itself must be recognized by all actors involved, thus especially within the system. All educational stakeholder need to give a greater value to education over or at least in addition to other societal interests in decision-making and implementation.

Moreover, we find that non-state actors hold significant informal power in shaping educational realities and take responsibility for active problem solving during crisis based on different resources they can draw on. From a research perspective, we note that it is important to understand what guides actors in the education sector—namely how they understand education and schooling, their own responsibility as well as what reference and sources of knowledge they draw on—in order to comprehend the (dys)functionalities of education systems. Therefore, we suggest research on the following questions: Which measures can strengthen the recognition of educational quality within decision-making process? To what extent do our findings apply to other fragile contexts where non-state actors are less relevant? What characterizes the educational networks in place in the DRC, and are there network features, which are specifically conducive to the systems learning on the one hand and the consideration of various sources of knowledge on the other? To which extent can democratic decision-making process even in times of crisis contribute to a balance of different (sectoral) interests?

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Louise Ohlig: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation. **Susanne Timm:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgement

This study is part of the research project "Education Systems and COVID-19 Management in Central Africa – EduCOV", funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft/DFG under the number 468151860. The project was conducted under the leadership of Prof. Annette Scheunpflug, Dr. Julia Seibert and Dr. Susanne Ress with support and contributions from Charles Gahutu MA, Prof. Semerita Kavira Kamundu, Meschac Vunanga Karhakabire MA, Dr. Jean Kasereka Lutswamba, Lea Markus, Dr. Kakule Molo, Samuel Mutabazi MA, Frederick Njobati MA, Ernest Claude Njoya MA, Edouard Ntakirutimana MA, Emmanuel Nyibizi MA, Dr. Christine Nyiramana, Julienne Tuyishime MA, Dr. Mark Wenz, Siqi Zhang MA.

References

Alban Conto, C., Akseer, S., Dreesen, T., Kamei, A., Mizunoya, S., Rigole, A., 2021. Potential effects of COVID-19 school closures on foundational skills and Country responses for mitigating learning loss. Int. J. Educ. Dev. 87, 1–11.

Altrichter, H., Heinrich, M., 2007. Kategorien der Governance-Analyse und Transformationen der Systemsteuerung in Österreich. In: Altrichter, H., Brüsemeister, T., Wissinger, J. (Eds.), Educational Governance. Handlungskoordination und Steuerung im Bildungssystem. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 55–103.

Benz, A., 2003. Einleitung: Governance - Modebegriff oder nützliches sozialwissenschaftliches Konzept? In: Benz, A. (Ed.) Governance - Regieren in komplexen Regelsystemen. Eine Einführung. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 11–28.

Birks, M., Mills, J., 2015. Grounded theory: A practical guide. Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC.

Börzel, T.A., Risse, T., 2010. Governance without a state: Can it work? Regulation & Governance 4, 113–134.

Börzel, T.A., Risse, T., 2021. Effective governance under anarchy: Institutions, legitimacy, and social trust in areas of limited statehood. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Brandt, C., 2017. Illegibility as a State Effect: The Limits of Governing Teacher Identification in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Amsterdam.
Brandt, C.O., 2019. The deployment of internally displaced teachers (DR Congo): A "real governance" approach. Int. J. Educ. Dev. 66, 147–154.
Brandt, C.O., 2021. Reluctant representatives of the state: teachers' perceptions of experienced violence (DR Congo). Comp.: A J. Comp. Int. Educ. 51, 546–563.
Brandt, C.O., Lopes Cardozo, M., 2022. Researching teacher well-being in protracted crises: a multiscalar cultural political economy perspective. Comp. Educ. Rev. 67, 167–187.
Brown, B., Nikolai, R., 2022. The contestation of policies for schools during the Covid-19 crisis: a comparison of teacher unions' positions in Germany and Australia. Comp.: A J. Comp. Int. Educ. 1–19.
CASS, 2021. Fermeture des écoles en lien avec la COVID-19 en RDC: Impacts sur la santé, protection et éducation des enfants et adolesent.e.s. Cellule d'Analyse en Sciences Sociales.
Cronert, A., 2020. Democracy, State Capacity, and COVID-19 Related School Closures. APSA Preprints. https://doi.org/10.33774/apsa-2020-jf671-v4.
Dasgupta, S., 2022. School in the time of Covid. Monash Bioeth. Rev. 40, 120–144.
De Herdt, T., Titeca, K., 2016. Governance with Empty Pockets: The Education Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dev. Change 47, 472–494.
Dixit, A.K., 2011. Lawlessness and Economics: Alternative Modes of Governance. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
Draude, A., Neuweiler, S., 2010. Governance in der postkolonialen Kritik: Die Herausforderung lokaler Vielfalt jenseits der westlichen Welt. SFB-Governance Working Paper Series 36, Berlin.
European Commission, 2009. Study on Governance Challenges for Education in Fragile Situations: Democratic Republic of Congo Country Report, Brussels.
Falisse, J.-B., Brandt, C., Mukengere Basengezi, J., Gupta, S., Kanyerhera, D., Marion, P., Nyabagaza, P., Safari Nyandinda, I., Marchais, G., Matabishi, S., 2022. Implementing free primary education in a crisis context: COVID-19 and Education Reform in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. J. Educ. Emerg. 8, 50.
Fend, H., 2006. Neue Theorie der Schule: Einführung in das Verstehen von Bildungssystemen, 1st ed. Springer VS, Wiesbaden.
Gandrup, T., Titeca, K., 2019. Reproducing the state? Organising primary education between state and non-state actors in Somaliland. J. East. Afr. Stud. 13, 642–660.
Gichuhi, L., Kalista, J., 2022. The Kenya Ministry of Education's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Case study, Paris. http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/160134. Accessed 18 March 2023.
Global Education Monitoring Report, 2021. Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2: Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses?, Paris.
Greyling, C., Maulit, J.A., Parry, S., Robinson, D., Smith, S., Street, A., Vitillo, R., 2016. Lessons from the Faith-Driven Response to the West Africa Ebola Epidemic. Rev. Faith Int. Aff. 14, 118–123.
Holtappels, H.G., 2013. Innovation in Schulen - Theorieansätze und Forschungsbefunde zur Schulentwicklung. In: Rürup, M., Bormann, I. (Eds.), Innovationen im Bildungswesen. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, pp. 45–70.
Kangamina, S., Falisse, J.-B., Baba, A., Grant, L., Pearson, N., Way, Y., Wild-Wood, E., 2022. Conflict, epidemic and faith communities: church-state relations during the fight against Covid-19 in north-eastern DR Congo. Confl. Health 16.
Kasereka Lutswamba, J., Forthcoming. Les héros dans l'ombre.: Leadership scolaire et qualité de l'éducation dans un contexte de précarité (cas du Nord-Kivu en République Démocratique du Congo RDC).
Khan, A., Wales, J., Nicolai, S., Caron, C., 2020. Strengthening coordinated education planning and response in crises. Democratic Republic of the Congo case study. In. London: ODI. https://odi.org/en/publications/strengthening-coordinated-education-planning-and-response-in-crises-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-case-study/. Accessed 18 January 2023.
Kuckartz, U., 2010. Einführung in die computergestützte Analyse qualitativer Daten, 3rd ed. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, 269 pp.
Lahai, J.I., Strokirch, K. von, Brasted, H., Ware, H. (Eds.), 2019. Governance and Political Adaptation in Fragile States. Springer International Publishing, Cham.
Lal, A., Ashworth, H.C., Dada, S., Hoemeke, L., Tambo, E., 2022. Optimizing Pandemic Preparedness and Response Through Health Information Systems: Lessons Learned From Ebola to COVID-19. Disaster Med. Public Health Prep. 16, 333–340.
Lange, S., Schimank, U., 2004. Governance und gesellschaftliche Integration. In: Lange, S., Schimank, U. (Eds.) Governance und gesellschaftliche Integration, 1st ed. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 9–44.
Lapan, S.D., Quartaroli, M.T., Riemer, F.J., 2012. Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs, 1st ed. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, Calif.
Leavy, P., 2017. Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based and community-based participatory research approaches. The Guilford Press, New York, London, 301 pp.
Maynitz, R., 2003. Governance im modernen Staat. In: Benz, A. (Ed.) Governance - Regieren in komplexen Regelsystemen. Eine Einführung. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 65–73.
Mayring, P., 2022. Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken, 13th ed. Julius Beltz GmbH & Co. KG, Weinheim.
Meuser, M., Nagel, U., 2009. Das Experteninterview – konzeptionelle Grundlagen und methodische Anlage. In: Pickel, S., Pickel, G., Lauth, H.-J., Jahn, D. (Eds.), Methoden der vergleichenden Politik- und Sozialwissenschaft. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 465–479.
Ministère de l'enseignemet primaire, secondaire et technique, 2021. Annuaire statistique de l'enseignement primarie, secondaire et technique: Année scolaire 2019-2020, Kinshasa.
Mokonzi Bambanota, G., Awongi, A.I., Asobee, O.G., Brandt, C., 2022. Spotlight on basic education completion and foundational learning: Democratic Republic of Congo ED/GEMR/MRT/2022/SL/CR/2.
Morrow, W., 2007. What is teachers work? J. Educ. 41, 3–20.
O'Hara, J., Shevlin, P., Brown, M., McNamara, G., 2021. Educational networks: a key driving force for school development in a time of crisis and change. SHS Web Conf. 98, 2003.
Parreira do Amaral, M., 2011. Emergenz eines Internationalen Bildungsregimes?: International Educational Governance und Regimetheorie. Zugl.: Tübingen, Univ., Diss., 2010. Waxmann, Münster, München, Berlin, 208 pp.
RDC Ministère du Plan, 2020. *Rapport d'Examen National Volontaire des Objectifs de Développement Durable*. Kinshasa.
Risse, T., Lehmkuhl, U., 2006. Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood - New Modes of Governance?: Research Program of the Research Center (SFB) 700, Berlin.
Rürup, M., Bormann, I., 2013. Innovation als Thema und Theoriebaustein der Educational Governance Forschung - Zur Einführung in den Herausgeberband. In: Rürup, M., Bormann, I. (Eds.) Innovationen im Bildungswesen. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, pp. 11–43.
Save the Children, 2020. L'Impact de la COVID-19 et Ebola chez les Enfants en Republique Democratique du Congo: Resume du Rapport: Resume du rapport.
Scheunpflug, A., Wenz, M., 2021. Faith based non-state actors in selected African countries: A comparative analysis of catholic and protestant schooling in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Madagascar and Cameroon. Background paper for Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/2.
Scheunpflug, A., Wenz, M., Rubindamayugi, M.B., Lutswamba, J.K., Njobati, F., Nyiramana, C., Mutabazi, S., Njoya, C.E., Raharijaona, O., Wodon, Q., 2021. Relationships between Christian schools and the state: a comparative analysis for five sub-Saharan African countries. Int. Stud. Cathol. Educ. 13, 163–174.
Shanks, K., 2019. The politics of IDP education provision: negotiating identity and schooling in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Int. Migr. 57, 32–47.
Smith, W.C., 2021. Consequences of school closure on access to education: Lessons from the 2013-2016 Ebola pandemic. Int. Rev. Educ. 67, 53–78.
Spaull, N., 2022. COVID-19 and schooling in South Africa: Who should go back to school first? PROSPECTS 51, 563–572.
Strauss, A.L., Corbin, J.M., 1990. Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques, 1st ed. Sage, Newbury Park, CA.
Strauss, A.L., Corbin, J.M., 2003. Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques And Procedures For Developing Grounded Theory, 2nd ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks.
The Fund for Peace, 2023. Fragile State Index. https://fragilestatesindex.org/. Accessed 18 January 2023.
Titeca, K., De Herdt, T., 2011. Real governance beyond the 'failed state': Negotiating education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Afr. Aff. 110, 213–231.
Tull, D., 2011. Schwache Staaten, erfolgreiche Eliten: Außenpolitische Strategien afrikanischer Krisenländer. SWP-Studie 15/2011, Berlin.
UIS, 2018. One in Five Children, Adolescents and Youth is Out of School, Paris.
UIS, UNICEF, World Bank, OECD, 2022. From Learning Recovery To Education Transformation: Insights and Reflections from the 4th Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-10 School Closures, Montreal.
UNESCO IIEP, 2020. Distance education in the context of COVID-19: Accomplishments and perspectives in sub-Saharan Africa, Dakar.
UNESCO, 2004. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005: Education for All: The quality imperative, Paris.
UNESCO, 2013. The Global Learning Crisis. Why every child deserves a quality education, Paris.
UNESCO, 2014. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All.
Vivuya, B., 2021. In 2019, the Democratic Republic of Congo introduced free education; here's what happened. https://www.equaltimes.org/in-2019-the-democratic-republic-of?lang=en#.Y1Jn6OTP2Uk. Accessed 21.101.2022.
WHO, 2020. Coronavirus disease 2019 (‍COVID-19)‍: situation report, 56. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/331480. Accessed 2 February 2023.
WHO, 2021. Considerations for implementing and adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19: interim guidance,. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341811. Accessed 18 January 2023.
Wodon, Q., 2014. Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Comparing Faith-Inspired, Private Secular, and Public Schools. World Bank Publications, Herndon, 143 pp.
World Bank, 2015. Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Equity Analysis Report No. ACS14542.
World Bank, 2018. Learning to realize education's Promise. World Development Report Issue.