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USAID ECCN Alternative Education in the DRC
Final Research Report

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Authors:
Claudia Seymour, *Education Development Center Consultant*
Gwendolyn Heaner, *University of Massachusetts*
Alfred Hartwell, *University of Massachusetts*
Gregory Deacon, *University of Massachusetts Consultant*

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEP	Accelerated education program
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CRS	*Centres de Rattrapage Scolaires*
DGENF	*Direction Générale de l'Education Non formelle*
DIVAS	Division of Social Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ENAFEP	*Examen National de Fin d'Études Primaires*
FGDs	Focus group discussions
IDPs	Internally displaced people
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International NGO
KIIs	Key informant interviews
KIs	Key informants
MAS	*Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Action Humanitaire et Solidarité Nationale*
MEPSINC	*Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Initiation à la Nouvelle Citoy*enneté
MESU	*Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire*
METFP	*Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel*
MOU	Memoranda of understanding
NGOs	Nongovernmental organizations
OOSC	Out-of-school-children
OPEQ	Opportunities for Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education
PNRS	*Programme National de Rattrapage Scolaire*
QA	Quality assurance
RAs	Research assistants
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TENAFEP	*Test National de Fin d'Études Primaires*
TOR	Terms of reference
USAID ECCN	USAID Education in Crisis & Conflict Network

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Overview

Despite notable progress in recent years in increasing access to formal education throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), an estimated 5 million young people remain out of school. Reasons for the persistence of the out-of-school phenomenon are largely structural, a result of poverty, insecurity, and unequal access to services, but they are also sociocultural, relating to gender roles, family responsibilities, and care practices. Young people in the poorest quintile of the population, those living in rural areas, and girls are disproportionately affected. Exclusion from formal schooling reinforces the social and economic marginalization of young people. The negative impacts of exclusion are not only individual—young people are prevented from realizing their lifetime potential for personal development and secure livelihood outcomes—but also societal, with long-term impacts on the country's socioeconomic development.

Given the near- and mid-term constraints on providing free and universal access to formal education in the DRC, alternative education programs have enormous potential to make a positive impact on out-of-school youth. Such programs can foster reforms that meet the needs of young people who have fallen out of the school system or who were never able to access it in the first place. Alternative education is especially appropriate in environments where young people have missed or dropped out of schooling because of forced displacement, the need to generate income, or early motherhood and other family care duties.

1.2 Research objectives and methodology

USAID ECCN commissioned this research to gather, build, and consolidate evidence about the demand for and provision of alternative education opportunities in the DRC, with a particular focus on the province of North Kivu. Because it is a priority country within USAID's Room to Learn initiative (Goal 3 of its three-part Education Strategy), the DRC was considered a pertinent case study for understanding the provision of alternative education programs in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts. That the DRC has an established national, government-led nonformal education program makes it particularly relevant, considering that the USAID/DRC Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2015–2019 includes support to national institutions as a key development objective (USAID, 2014).

The research on which this report is based was conducted in two phases. The first phase entailed data collection with more than 200 young people and 25 key informants at four research sites in North Kivu at the end of 2015 in order to learn more about current alternative education options, youth perceptions of education generally and alternative education specifically, and reasons why some youth had never been in or had dropped out of an alternative education program. Based on the findings from the first phase, the second phase, which took place in Kinshasa early in 2016, aimed to understand the national policy framework and donor strategies supporting alternative education through interviews with 23 government officials, donors, and national and international nongovernmental actors involved in the DRC's education sector.

1.3 Summary of main research findings

1.3.1 YOUTH-RELATED FINDINGS

Despite persistent barriers to formal schooling, youth respondents (including those not currently or ever enrolled in alternative education programs) placed a high value on education. Both males and females explicitly cited schooling as essential to securing jobs and livelihoods for themselves and their families. Analysis of focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth in North Kivu showed that the most common reason reported for valuing education was jobs (26 of 28 FGDs reported), followed by thinking/communication skills (15 of 28 FGDs), status (11 of 15 FGDs), improved management of day-to-day activities (11 of 15 FGDs), and delinquency correction and reform (6 of 28 FGDs).

Respondents' reasons for not participating in alternative education programs had mainly to do with relevance and access challenges. The most common reason given for not ever participating in alternative education programs was lack of motivation (19 of 28 FGDs) due to the perception that participation was not worth the time and effort, or that part-time employment was more important, or that programming was uninteresting or not relevant to their lives. Other reasons

for non-participation in alternative education programs included high cost (15 of 28 FGDs); difficult enrollment process (13 of 28 FGDs); limited time (10 of 28 FGDs); feelings of shame or stigma about alternative education programs (9 of 28 FGDs); and lack of educational ability (7 of 28 FGDs).

Certain aspects of the programs as currently administered limit their potential impact and deter students from enrollment or completion. Respondents mentioned that there were too few learning topics (24 of 28 FGDs) as well as unqualified and/or unmotivated teachers (23 of 28 FGDs), insufficient instructional materials and dedicated classroom space (22 of 28 FGDs), and high costs (20 of 28 FGDs).

1.3.2 POLICY AND PROGRAM FINDINGS

The DRC's alternative education system exists in policy and practice, but it needs significant capacity support if it is to fulfill its potential. A national alternative education system—known as *education non formelle*—has long existed in the DRC.[1] This system is clearly outlined in recent policy documents (see the *2012 National Literacy and Nonformal Education Policy* and the *National Education and Training Strategy, 2016–2025)*, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action, and National Solidarity (MAS)—through its *Direction Générale de l'Education Non formelle* (DGENF)—bears explicit responsibility for the system's administration. Yet despite its formal legitimacy, alternative education in the DRC today reaches fewer than 10% of the estimated number of school-age children who remain out of school. The principal reason given for this gap in program coverage is the severe shortage in overall financing for alternative education programs. This shortage is manifested in insufficient payment and support to teachers and administrators, lack of pedagogical materials, and inadequate infrastructural standards.

Interviewees perceive international actors supporting alternative education in the DRC to be working outside of the government-established system. Government funding for alternative education in the DRC is currently very low, leaving the system dependent on funding from international donors, private actors, and NGOs. Because many alternative education program providers work parallel to instead of in collaboration with government entities, the existing government system has not benefited from the financial, technical, and human resources offered through international investments in alternative education, and government capacity to offer or oversee alternative education remains weak and unable to meet the needs of the many young people who remain underserved.

1.4 Recommendations

Increase visibility and stakeholder awareness of the positive potential of alternative education. Alternative education has the potential to effectively and efficiently meet the immediate needs of millions of young people who currently remain outside the formal education system. Additionally, alternative education programs are particularly adaptable to the changing demands of today's global economy. To influence government policy and to improve the quality and reach of the existing alternative education system, both government and nongovernment actors need targeted and consistent information, robust research results, and frank discussion on the benefits and potential of alternative education programs.

Support approaches that respond to the needs of young people. The young people surveyed in our research appreciate the multiple benefits of education, encompassing the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills in the short term as well as enhanced potential for job security and future livelihoods in the long term. The role of education in fostering self-esteem, independence, and ability to care for their families also emerged clearly. Although young people generally conceive such advantages as coming from formal education, alternative education programs can also respond to these needs. Illustrative youth-relevant approaches include flexible schedules that allow young people to meet their work obligations and family care responsibilities; explicit training in life and employability skills; and the integration of education with high-quality, localized, and market-responsive skills training programs.

1 It was initially developed in the 1950s as a colonial-era project for training in social and domestic skills.

Strengthen support of the existing national system, and ensure adequate financing for quality service provision. The DRC is fortunate to have in place an alternative education program policy framework with responsibility and oversight clearly mandated to the DGENF. Currently, however, institutional capacity is insufficient to provide consistent quality and reach to the DRC's large out-of-school population. Resources should be directed toward building the alternative education program system's institutional capacity in the areas of financing, planning, policy, infrastructure, materials, and human resources. As these aspects of the system are improved, it will be easier to raise awareness among young people, parents, and business leaders on the potential benefits of alternative education.

Increase coordination between providers, donors, and the national system. This research has clearly shown that international donors, implementing partners, and private actors in the DRC can do much more to ensure that their work reflects emerging best practices for alternative education in order to support the strengthening of the national alternative education system (Baxter and Bethke, 2009). Increased coordination and sharing of information between the government and private providers will likely facilitate monitoring of service provision, thus contributing to program quality and the potential for disseminating learning and innovations across the sector. The challenges facing the alternative education sector in the DRC are common to many conflict- and crisis-affected environments. A more outcome-focused dialogue on key challenges—financing, program siloing and education system marginalization, the dearth of youth-oriented and context-relevant curriculum, insufficient program management, and insufficient teacher training and support—could lead to greater attention and commitment to their resolution.[2]

2 See the USAID ECCN Policy Issues Brief recommendations for conducting policy dialogue on AEPs in the DRC (2016).

2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

2.1 USAID ECCN

The USAID Education in Crisis & Conflict Network (USAID ECCN) is a community of practice composed of USAID education staff, implementing partners, and others working to increase equitable access to education and to improve the quality of education in crisis- and conflict-affected environments. USAID ECCN was initiated to promote knowledge generation and sharing among practitioners, policymakers, and researchers related to Goal 3 of the USAID Education Strategy: improved equitable access to education in crisis- and conflict-affected environments. One of USAID ECCN's primary objectives is to gather, build, and consolidate evidence for the field to advance the state of the art for education.

USAID ECCN commissioned this research as the first in a series of primary field research activities related to education in conflict and crisis. The field study detailed in this report has aimed to understand the provision of and demand for alternative education opportunities in the North Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The main objectives of this research are (1) to add to the body of evidence on alternative education in the DRC, and (2) to inform the development of research tools and guidance that can be used by USAID missions and implementing partners working in crisis- and conflict-affected areas.

2.2 Justification for the research

The situation of out-of-school children and youth in the DRC is a critical development concern. The DRC has faced a protracted state of crisis over the last three decades: the processes of economic and state collapse that accelerated in the 1980s contributed to and were exacerbated by the wars of 1996 to 2003. Since then, humanitarian crises and recurrent violent conflict continue to plague the eastern provinces of the country. Consequently, the capacity of the state to provide social services—including education—has been severely compromised (Pham et al., 2010). Although the government has in recent years taken a strong policy stance to strengthen the provision of formal education, its capacity to implement these policies is crippled by underfinancing and a decentralized and complex system of control. While the proportion of children out of school has declined significantly in recent years, it is still the case that millions of young people are not or are no longer enrolled in formal education.

In 2009, nearly four in five 15- to 19-year-olds were not in school, and 90% of them were functionally illiterate (Bashir 2009, p. 15). As of 2012, an estimated 5 million young people remained out of school, which represents 25% of the DRC's population between the ages of 5 to 17. Research has shown that those most vulnerable to falling out of the formal system are girls and young people living in rural areas (ISSP/UO, 2013; World Bank 2015). In North Kivu, a province that has been particularly heavily impacted by violent conflict in the last two decades, more than 990,000 children were out of school in 2012, representing 44% of all school-age children in the province (ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 9). In fact, North Kivu has one of the country's lowest completion rates and highest illiteracy rates (MAS, 2012, p.18) as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Priority DRC provinces in the area of education, in descending order (according to National Strategy)

LOWEST EXAM SCORES[3]	LOWEST FEMALE EXAM SCORES	HIGHEST DROPOUT RATES	LOWEST COMPLETION RATES	LARGEST POPULATIONS	HIGHEST ILLITERACY RATES
Katanga	Katanga	Katanga	North Kivu	Katanga	Katanga
Maniema	Maniema	Kasaï Occidental	Kasaï Occidental	Province Orientale	Equateur
Kasaï Occidental	Equateur	Kasaï Oriental	Maniema	Bandundu	Province Orientale
Equateur	Kasaï Occidental	Province Orientale	Sud Kivu	Kinshasa	North Kivu

3 In Table 1, exam scores refers to student scores on the national primary examination.

North Kivu remains a site of extensive donor activity; since 1994, the province has seen an enormous influx of humanitarian aid and development interventions, including a wide range of programs focused on alternative education or with alternative education as a component. Many of these programs, however, have operated in a short-term, uncoordinated fashion. Nationally, the number of alternative education programs increased by at least 111% between 2006 and 2010, although the number is now stable, with new programs opening and others closing as funding ends or runs out. This context provides a rich field for examining both government offerings and donor interventions, the ways in which the two program types engage with one another, and the implications for student access and perceptions of alternative education.

As a priority country within USAID's Education Strategy (Goal 3) and given the existence of its established national non-formal education program, the DRC was considered a highly relevant subject for an investigation of alternative education in conflict- and crisis-affected contexts.[4] The DRC case offers particularly interesting insights into how education systems can adapt and transform during extended periods of crisis, in some cases not only surviving but expanding their reach over time (Titeca and De Herdt, 2011). In attempting to understand the alternative education options available to young people through an analysis of existing policies and their implementation in the conflict-affected environment of North Kivu, this research is expected to contribute to the state of the art for education beyond the DRC, not only in raising the level of knowledge on the particular needs and concerns of out-of-school youth but in elaborating a research design that places young people at its center (Sommers, 2015).

The 2013 ISSP/UO survey divides the DRC's population of out-of-school youth into five subgroups:

1. Preprimary school-age children who are not enrolled in pre-primary or primary school
2. Primary school-age children who are not enrolled in primary school or higher
3. Secondary school-age children who are not enrolled in secondary school or higher
4. Children enrolled in primary school who are at risk of dropping out
5. Children enrolled in lower secondary school who are at risk of dropping out

This study focuses only on the experiences of young people in dimensions two and three—primary and secondary school-age children who are not enrolled in primary, secondary, or a higher level of formal schooling.

2.2.1 ELABORATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: UNDERSTANDING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

The research objectives were formulated based on an exhaustive literature review on alternative education in the DRC, a half-day consultation with DRC and/or alternative education program subject-matter experts, and phone interviews with experts in the field of alternative education programs within the DRC.[5] To understand why some out-of-school youth in the DRC participate in alternative education programs while others do not, the research set out to identify factors and rationales that either drive out-of-school youth into alternative education programs or keep them from participating. Gender, economic necessity, membership in particular groups or vocations, and cultural values and constraints were among the factors that were studied.

2.2.2 UNDERSTANDING THE RELEVANCE OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Researchers began by examining two sets of issues: the purpose, design, financing, management, implementation, and evaluation of selected and representative alternative education programs; and the value and relevance of these programs. Questions were designed to invite comparisons from respondents (i.e., out-of-school youth, teachers, program officials, community leaders, education officials) between the utility and value of different kinds of educational offerings. The comparison included formal primary education, formal secondary education, different kinds of accelerated education programs

4 The USAID/DRC Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2015–2019 incorporates support to national institutions as a key development objective and aims to contribute to the transition to peace in eastern DRC (USAID, 2014).

5 Dr. Marc Sommers, USAID ECCN senior researcher at the time, led these initial activities. USAID ECCN consultant Dr. Gregory Deacon directed the refinement of methodology and research tools and the implementation of field research, analysis, and reporting.

(run by international NGOs, DRC NGOs, or or the DRC's Ministry of Social Affairs), and other youth education programs. To address the purpose of education, we explored how different kinds of education (formal, alternative education program, or otherwise) or specific skills gained via education were perceived as either potentially beneficial to or lacking relevance for out-of-school youth with contrasting backgrounds and experiences. Youth plans for the future were also addressed, including whether and how education may play a role in these plans.

2.2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE DRC

The final set of questions was addressed to government and nongovernment officials involved in nonformal and/or formal education about the connections between alternative education programs and the formal education system. First, the officials were invited to explain how different kinds of nonformal education programs relate or connect to the formal education system in both theory and practice. Second, officials were invited to comment on the endpoint for alternative education programs in general—that is, to outline the real or ideal plan for concluding alternative education in the DRC.

2.3 Note on terminology

This report uses the term *alternative education* to describe the focus of the research. According to the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE):

> "Alternative education" is the over-arching term that refers to all types of education programs that are often not considered formal education programs by agencies, governments, and donors. Often, but not exclusively, alternative education programs are offered outside the auspices of the formal government and education system. (Baxter and Bethke, 2009)

Because the DRC has an established alternative education system that falls clearly within the auspices of the national government, the country offers policymakers and education researchers a compelling subject for case study. Known as nonformal education in the DRC, alternative education plays an explicit role in the national education strategy, with clearly mandated ministerial responsibilities, objectives, and programs that support basic literacy and numeracy, accelerated education, and skills training. This report also uses the INEE-accepted term *accelerated education program* (AEP):

> [A] flexible age-appropriate program that promotes access to education in an accelerated time-frame for disadvantaged groups, over-age out-of-school children, and youth who missed out or had their education interrupted due to poverty, violence, conflict, and crisis. The goal of AEP is to provide learners with equivalent certified competencies as in the formal system, in an accelerated timeframe, with learners transitioning to mainstream education or completing an entire primary cycle. (INEE, n.d., cites Nicolson 2013)

In the DRC, the administration of AEPs is guided by the *Programme National de Rattrapage Scolaire du Niveau Primaire,* and the locations at which these programs are held are called *centres de rattrapage scolaires* (CRSs), or, in English, catch-up centers. Instruction in AEPs in the DRC is formally structured by a national curriculum that compresses the national six-year primary school curriculum into three years.

2.4 Methodology

This study was conducted in two phases, first in North Kivu in November and December 2015 and then in Kinshasa in February 2016.

2.4.1 PHASE 1 RESEARCH METHODS

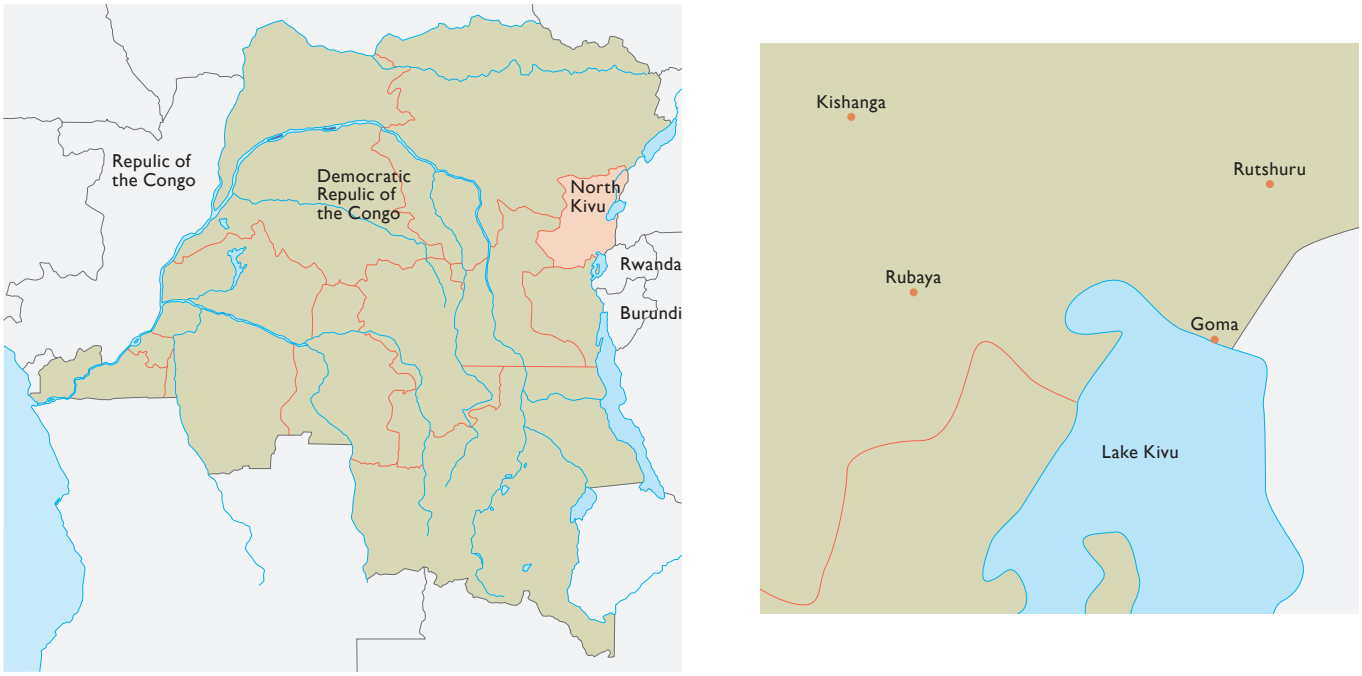
The methodology for Phase 1 was a rapid qualitative assessment of alternative education in North Kivu to understand a selection of out-of-school young people's perceptions of alternative education offerings. Research activities included the collection and review of documents; in-depth interviews with local government officials and staff members, international and national nongovernmental organization (NGO) staff, teachers, parents, and youth; focus group discussions (FGDs) and elaboration of life maps with youth; shadowing of some youth; and classroom observations.

2.4.1.1 LOCATION AND SITE SELECTION

As mentioned previously, North Kivu was chosen because of its high level of donor activity and because it has been particularly heavily impacted by violent conflict in the past two decades. Specific field sites in North Kivu (Figure 1) were chosen in consultation with provincial authorities based on criteria that included geographic and contextual diversity, accessibility, and

security: Kitshanga (rural), Rutshuru Centre/Kiwanja (periurban), Goma (urban), and Rubaya (an artisanal mining area). These locations allowed for comparisons between different socioeconomic profiles, levels of educational service provision, diversity of labor markets (mining areas in particular, given young people's attraction to this line of work), and varying experience of conflict. The contrasting community sites were identified during discussions with education experts in Goma, and the rural communities were accessible from Goma.

Figure 1: Locations visited for Phase 1 research



Because of the proliferation of alternative education programs in the region and the lack of updated and exhaustive enrollment lists, snowball sampling provided the most effective method of reaching members of the target populations. Reviews of existing government policy documents and interviews with preexisting contacts in the nonformal education sector confirmed that the Division of Social Affairs (DIVAS)—the provincial representation of the national Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action, and National Solidarity (MAS)—was the most prominent and coordinated actor in North Kivu. Their permission was required to conduct research, and they were instrumental in assisting with access to reports, statistics, and information.

The DIVAS office in Goma directed the research team to local satellite offices, allowing for identification of all alternative education programs in the area for which that office was responsible. Local officials were then able to direct the team to more established programs with meaningful numbers of students. A representative program in each area was then selected, and, to avoid potential bias as much as possible, program staff assisted with recruitment of youth from each target group in order to ensure that a representative sample of that group participated and that certain types of participants were not excluded from the research.

One aim of interviews with government, donor, United Nations, and implementing agency officials was to identify which internationally supported programs in the North Kivu area are particularly stable. The research looked for program sites corresponding to the following types of alternative education programs:

1. Alternative education programs funded by international donor(s) via an international NGO
2. Alternative education programs managed by a national NGO without the support of or connection to international agencies
3. Alternative education programs implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs

The programs differed by the kind of education program offered, the participant target group, rural vs. urban geography, and the wartime experience and composition of the program's host community. An overview of providers we engaged with and the contextual information we gathered about them is provided in Section 5.

2.4.1.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Three types of young people participated in the study: those who were participants in alternative education programs (mainly accelerated education programs, which are by some measures the most common offering); those who were program participants but left early; and those with reasonably similar profiles to program participants who never entered a program.

The starting point for the youth target group age range was those who cannot attend primary school due to age restrictions—that is, those over age 15 (also called overage youth). To ensure a reasonably comparable framework for analysis, the upper end of the age range was established by the ages of youth that were participating in accelerated education programs. Most overage, out-of-school youth in programs were ages 16 to 24; therefore, that was the general age range of study participants. Since precise ages were sometimes unclear, those slightly older than 24 may have occasionally been interviewed; some of those in programs who were younger than 16 were also interviewed. Among the youth that the research included were members of marginalized youth subgroups, such as orphans, miners, former child soldiers, and unmarried mothers. Youth participated in focus group discussions and were administered questionnaires. Some youth volunteered for shadowing and in-depth one-on-one interviews.

2.4.1.3 DOCUMENT COLLECTION AND REVIEW

Initial meetings in North Kivu enabled the field team to collect key documents used to understand alternative education provision in the DRC generally and North Kivu specifically. Table 2 provides a list of documents collected and used.

Table 2: Source documents

National Strategy for the Development of Basic Literacy and Nonformal Education	*Strategie Nationale Pour le Developpement de L'Alphabetisation et de L'Education non Formelle*
National Program for Catch-up Primary Level Education (2005) 2012–2016	*Programme National de Rattrapage Scolaire du Niveau Primaire (2005) 2012–2016*
National Program for Basic Literacy Education	*Programme National d'Alphabetisation Scolarisante*
National Action Plan – Education for All (Draft) Volume I: Strategic Framework	*Plan d'Action National de l'Education Pour Tous (Projet) Volume I: Cadre stratégique, Kinshasa: DRC, 2005*
Educator's Guides for Using the National Program for Catch-up Education: Levels 1–3	*Guide de l'Educateur pour l'Utilisation du Programme National de Rattrapage Scolaire: Niveaux 1–3*
Implementation Plan for the Program of Primary Level Catch-up Education: Bridging the Educational Deficit of Child Victims of Insecurity in DRC	*Mise en Place Du Programme de Rattrapage Scolaire du Niveau Pimaire: un Palliatif Pour Combler le Deficit en Education des Enfants Victimes de Precarite en RDC*
National Education and Training Strategy, 2016–2025	*Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation et de la formation 2016–202*

2.4.1.4 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with relevant officials from the national government, USAID and other donor agencies, UN agencies, religious organizations involved in education, international and national NGOs, and programs for out-of-school youth. Officials—including government education officers and national and implementing agency officials—were interviewed individually about a wide range of issues related to their programming and target groups. Parents of youth in and not in programs, community leaders connected to program work, and program teachers also participated in one-

on-one interviews. Informants were identified through researcher connections, USAID ECCN suggestions, and snowball sampling. Two sets of concerns were addressed in KIIs; the first focused on gathering detailed contextual information about programs that were used as case studies, and the following questions were asked:

1. How was this program designed?
2. What rationales informed program design?
3. Was a preprogram assessment undertaken? If so, what were the results?
4. What was the program's target group?
5. How was the program funded?
6. What curriculum did the program use?
7. How were teachers recruited, trained, and compensated?
8. What were the expected outcomes for program participants?
9. How was the program monitored and evaluated?
10. What theory of change was developed?
11. Were results from monitoring and evaluations used? If so, in what ways?

The research team then investigated what took place after each respective program was implemented, and the conditions and constraints that shaped implementation.

2.4.1.5 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The team also conducted 28 FGDs of six to eight persons each; almost all participants were between 15 and 24 years, with a few slightly older people who wished to participate. FGDs consisted of separate groups of males and females in each of three categories:

1. Participants in alternative education programs (mainly AEPs)
2. Youth who were program participants but left early
3. Youth with reasonably similar profiles to program participants who never entered a program

Participant responses are quoted extensively in Section 5; certain quotations have been lightly edited for ease of reading.

2.4.1.6 LIFE MAPPING

Participants prepared historical and projected life maps in which they were asked to draw their life histories as road maps and to represent the major events and milestones in their lives. Participants were asked to add on routes indicating where they think they will go and where they would like to go. The maps represent personal qualitative data regarding the nature and development of vulnerabilities and events that have led to or consolidated exclusion from education. These maps helped the research team generate leads on persons to interview and formulate specific follow-up questions to ask in FGDs and KIIs; however, they were neither designed nor used as separate data sources.

2.4.1.7 SHADOWING

Shadowing involved a member of the research team closely following a youth over an extended period of time, from the start of their day until evening. Throughout the shadowing period, the researcher asked questions that prompted a running commentary from the individual being shadowed. Some of the questions were for clarification, such as what was being said on the other end of a phone call. Other questions were intended to reveal purpose, such as why a particular activity took place at a particular time as well as the subjects' feelings—whether they wished to be doing something else, if they would prefer the activity to be at a different time or in a different location, and if they were enjoying the activities they were engaged in. The shadowing activity, like the life maps activity, primarily helped the team generate leads on persons to interview, and specific follow-up questions to ask in FGDs and KIIs. It was not used as a separate data source.

2.4.1.8 CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRES

Closed-ended questionnaires were administered individually by tablets to all youth participants in FGDs in order to capture key demographic information and to enable quantitative comparisons of respondent perceptions about education and livelihood opportunities. Survey questionnaires were short and easily understood by those interviewed (i.e., comprehensible for those having no education at all). Surveys were created with particular consideration to the sensitive nature of the topics at hand, as well as meticulous attention to confidentiality, data protection, and anonymization.

2.4.2 PHASE 2 RESEARCH METHODS

Phase 2 of the research was carried out in Kinshasa in February 2016. The aim of this phase was to document through key informant interviews the perspectives of the Kinshasa-based government and NGO representatives who are providers of formal and alternative education in the DRC. The main research objectives were to examine the priorities and strategies of current alternative education programs and to discuss possible future directions for alternative education in the DRC. Phase 2 activities investigated how alternative education programs relate to or connect with the formal education system in theory and in practice. Building on the findings of Phase 1, Phase 2 research sought to identify the main actors involved in alternative education at the national level, their knowledge of and adherence to best practice standards, and the existing systems for quality control. A total of 23 informants were interviewed during this phase, including key governmental education actors, UN agencies, international donors, and international NGO actors. A detailed explanation of the methodology is provided in Annex 4.

2.4.3 LIMITATIONS

This research was designed as a qualitative study of the provision of alternative education in the DRC and young people's experiences of alternative education programs. Phase 1 research was not based on a household survey and thus does not claim its findings to be statistically representative or generalizable. Rather, a purposive sample was selected in consultation with DIVAS so that the research team could focus its limited time and resources on the target study group. Careful consideration and consultation with local actors led to a selection of participants who could provide meaningful and contrasting inputs to inform the research. Research sites in North Kivu were in part chosen for reasons of physical accessibility and security.

The primary limitation of the Phase 2 research was the inability of the researcher to meet with the two main international donors supporting alternative education in the DRC: USAID and DFID. The findings relating to donor support for alternative education thus come from documentary review, interviews with donors who are involved in the formal education system, NGO actors, and national government officials in the education field.

Also, it may be significant that the participants in both phases of the research were aware that it was commissioned by USAID. While all interviews in Phase 1 were conducted in Swahili, and all interviews in Phase II were conducted in French (without the use of any translators), a degree of bias may have entered into some of their specific responses (e.g., when young people indicated they wanted to learn English). We do not believe, however, that this issue significantly influenced the overall findings.

2.4.4 ETHICS

The research team endeavored to respect core ethical principles throughout the research period and closely followed ethical guidelines as prescribed by the Office for Human Research Protections, reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

2.5 Report structure

This report consolidates and summarizes the main findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study, and draws on some of the most up-to-date research on the education sector and the situation of out-of-school youth in the DRC. Section 1 provides the executive summary, and Section 2 offers background on the research. Section 3 presents an overview of recent progress in increasing access to education in the DRC and highlights some of the persisting weaknesses that contribute to such large numbers of young people remaining out of school. Section 4 examines the national alternative education framework, including existing policies and programs, how they relate to and complement the formal sector, and the structural weaknesses that prevent realization of the sector's significant potential. Section 5 elaborates the case study of North Kivu, documenting young people's experiences of and perspectives on formal and alternative education, and highlighting the continuing barriers to access to and retention in alternative education programs. Finally, Section 6 summarizes the main findings emerging from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research, and highlights the main opportunities for strengthened alternative education provision in the DRC.

Annex 1 lists the references cited in this report; Annex 2 provides data tables of response distributions based on qualitative coding of FGDs; Annex 3 details the research methodology used in Phase 1 of the research; and Annex 4 summarizes the lines of inquiry followed during Phase 2.

3 THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL PHENOMENON IN THE DRC: AN OVERVIEW

3.1 Recent advances in access to formal education

In the last decade, the DRC government has taken a clear policy stance in favor of strengthening the provision of formal education, with evident gains in education indicators: between 2001 and 2012, primary school enrollment rates more than doubled, from 5.47 million to 12.6 million (De Herdt et al., 2015, p. 21). Slow but definite progress is being made toward the application of Article 43 of the national constitution, under which primary education is obligatory and free.[6]

Important structural reforms are underway to register and pay teachers and to provide increased support to the management and functioning of primary schools.[7] These reforms have been possible largely because government financing to the education sector has increased from 7.2% of the national budget in 2010 to 16% in 2012, and was targeted to be 18% in 2015. Actual funding increased from USD 175 million in 2009 to USD 841 million in 2015 (USAID, 2015). Providing overall coherence is the 2014 Framework Law on Education,[8] supported by the comprehensive document *National Education and Training Strategy, 2016–2025.*[9]

The government of the DRC has committed to the UN's 2015-2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including to the realization of Goal 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2016).

3.2 Persistent structural weaknesses in the formal system

Despite these advances, significant weaknesses continue to plague the education system. Annually, only 1.5% of GDP (World Bank, 2015) is spent on education, placing the DRC far behind other sub-Saharan countries, where the average education expenditure is 4.6% of national GDP (World Bank, 2015). The government remains unable to fulfill its 2010 policy decision to eliminate school fees for primary education, while teachers remain insufficiently remunerated and poorly supported, education quality is generally low, basic pedagogical materials are widely lacking, and infrastructure is broadly inadequate (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

The limited provision of social services by the DRC government is a historical and generalized phenomenon (Wrong, 2000). This is especially evident in the education sector, where a complex system has evolved in response to the consistently high demand for education among the country's population (De Herdt et al., 2015, p. 53). Although the education sector is administered by the state, religious networks and the private sector have provided the majority of schooling since 1977 (Poncelet et al., 2010). Primary and secondary schools are thus either designated *écoles conventionnées,* which are managed by the country's various religious networks, or *écoles non-conventionnées,* which are public schools managed and operated by the government. Whether *conventionnée* or *non-conventionnée,* all schools are subject to oversight and control by the state. In 2012–2013, there were just over 12,600,000 schools registered in the DRC, of which 71% were *conventionné,* 7% were *non-conventionné,* and 11% were private (De Herdt et al., 2015, p. 21).

This system has proven extremely resilient and capable of providing schooling even during the decades of state collapse and war. However, it has been primarily maintained by the imposition of fees on students, which partially or fully cover teacher salaries, administration,[10] infrastructure, construction, and virtually all operational costs (OSISA, 2009). The recent policy ad-

6 "Toute personne a droit à l'éducation scolaire. Il y est pourvu par l'enseignement national. L'enseignement national comprend les établissements publics et les établissements privés agréés. La loi fixe les conditions de création et de fonctionnement de ces établissements. Les parents ont le droit de choisir le mode d'éducation à donner à leurs enfants. L'enseignement primaire est obligatoire et gratuit dans les établissements publics." See http://www.presidentrdc.cd/squelettes/pdf/constitution.pdf.

7 A banking system for the payment of teachers was rolled out in 2013, but only for those teachers who are on the government payrolls. In April 2013, the DRC government established a healthcare insurance system for teachers launched a Reconstruction and Renovation of School Infrastructure initiative to construct or renovate a thousand schools across the entire country (Office of the Prime Minister of the DRC, 2014).

8 See the *Loi-cadre n° 14/004 du 11 février 2014 de l'Enseignement National.*

9 *Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation et de la formation 2016–2025.*

10 Fees usually top up, rather than fully cover, the salaries of teachers on the payroll. However, fees do pay the full salaries of certain volunteer or community teachers who are not on the payroll.

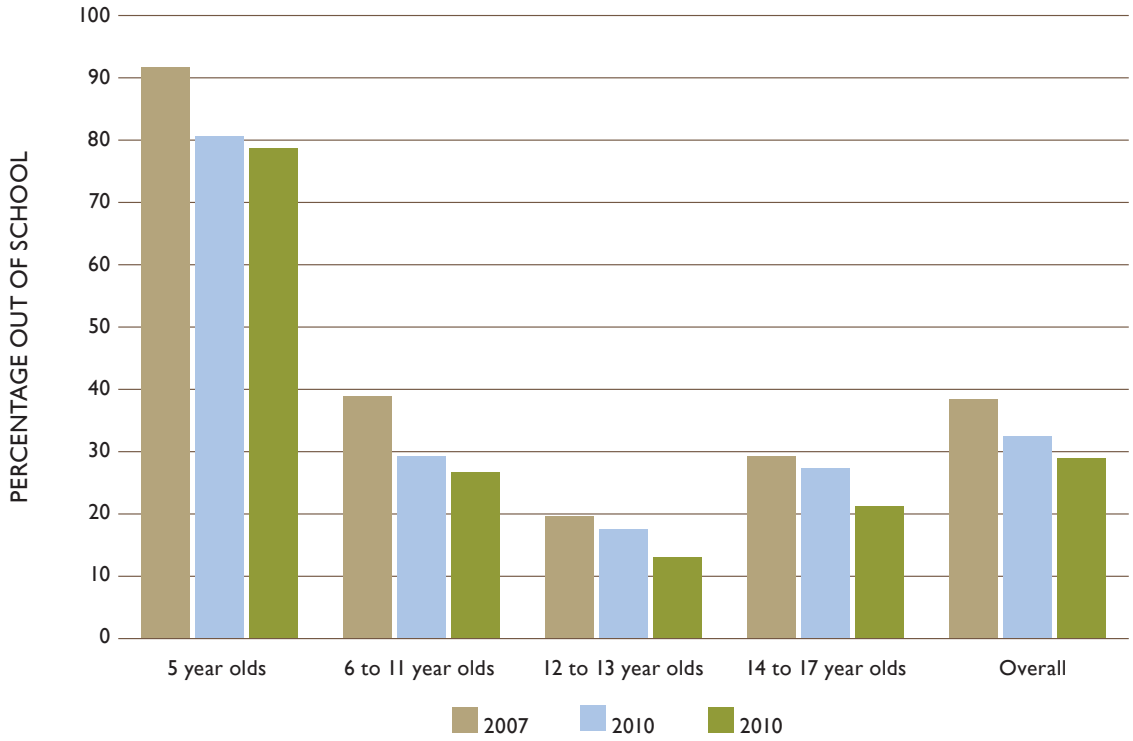
vances described above have begun to reduce this burden in some cases, but the costs of formal education remain extremely high. This burden has fallen heavily on parents, with households financing more than 50% of the total public education expenditure (Mputu, 2009, p. 11). Because these costs are unsustainable to many families, millions of young people fall out of the formal school system or are never able to gain access to it.[11]

3.3 Exclusion from the formal school system

In 2012, a national household survey on out-of-school children in the DRC was commissioned by the ministry in charge of primary and secondary education (MEPSINC) with support from DFID, UNESCO, and UNICEF, and carried out by the Higher Institute for Population Sciences of the University of Ouagadougou (ISSP/UO) in Burkina Faso. This study documented school inclusion or exclusion according to three categories: children who attended school at the time of the survey (i.e., enrolled children); children who had previously attended school but were not attending school at the time of the survey (i.e., dropouts); and children who had never attended school at the time of the survey. [12]

Figure 2: Percentage of young people out of school as documented in 2007 (DHS), 2010 (MICS), and 2012 national surveys of out-of-school children

Source: ISSP/UO, 2013, p.33



When compared to other studies that relied on comparable sampling procedures—namely the 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2010)[13]—the 2012 data shows a significant decrease in the proportion of out-of-school children over the last decade; as seen in Figure 2 above, this decline has occurred across age cohorts.

11 For a more in-depth discussion of the problems with school fees, see PAGE, 2007 and Titeca et al., 2013.

12 Exclusion of children from formal schooling is a complex and fluid matter, with some children falling out of the school system after having started, others reentering it following completion of alternative education programming, and still others never gaining access to it. According to UNICEF, five dimensions should be considered when analyzing the out-of-school phenomenon. Dimension 1: Preprimary school-age children who are not enrolled in preprimary or primary school; Dimension 2: Primary school-age children who are enrolled neither in primary school nor at a higher level; Dimension 3: Secondary school-age children who are enrolled neither in secondary school nor at a higher level; Dimension 4: Children enrolled in primary school who are at risk of dropping out; Dimension 5: Children enrolled in lower secondary school who are at risk of dropping out (ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 16).

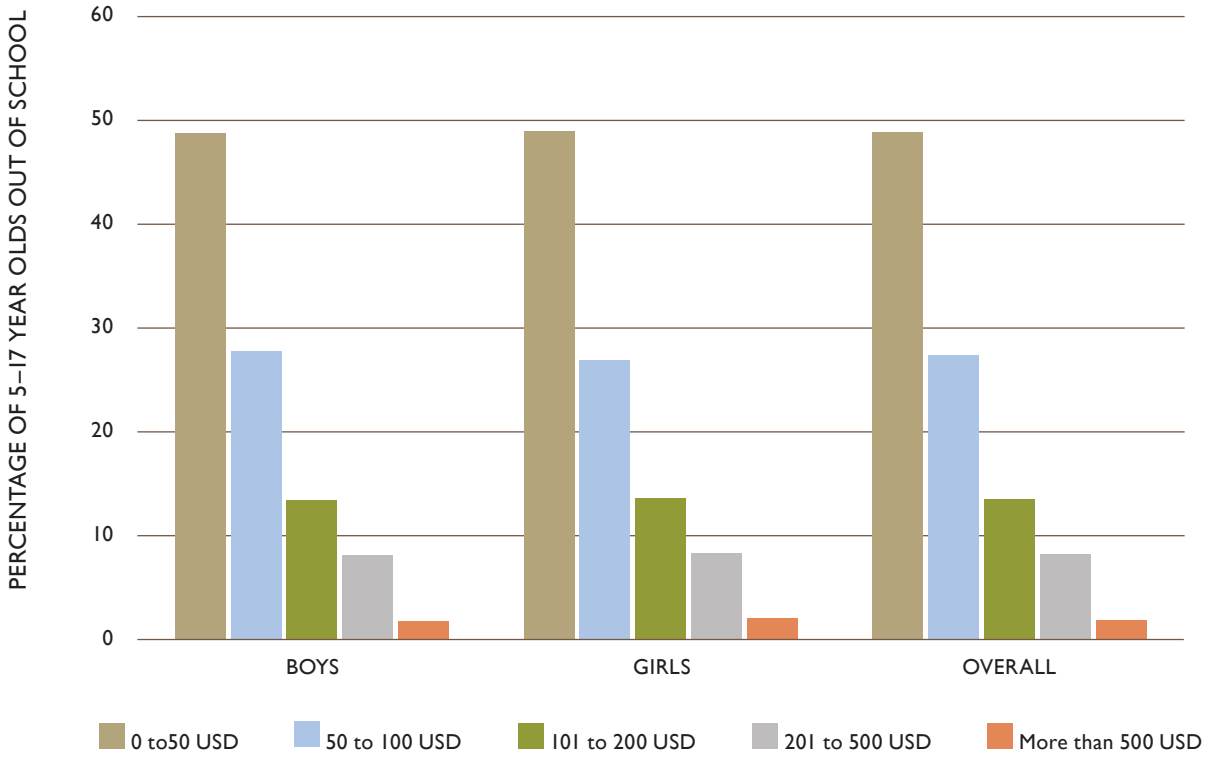
13 See ISSP/UO, 2013, pp. 17–24, for detailed methodological details and comparability with other data sets.

Despite this progress, the large numbers of out-of-school youth in the DRC is a "significant problem" (World Bank, 2015, p. xiii). The economic, structural, and sociocultural barriers that prevent young people in the DRC from accessing or remaining in formal education have been extensively documented (PAGE, 2007; OSISA 2009; Dryden-Peterson, 2010; De Herdt et al., 2010; Seymour, 2011; ISSP/UO, 2013; De Herdt et al., 2015).

Household income levels have been shown to be the key factor influencing access to schooling throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Inoue et al., 2015); household survey data has confirmed that this is also the case in the DRC (ISSP/UO, 2013). The persistence of school fees in the DRC is widely cited as the main driver of the out-of-school phenomenon (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). In a country beset by extreme poverty, where an estimated 87% of the population lives on less than USD 1.25 per day (UNDP, 2016) and 2014 per capita income averaged USD 380 (World Bank, 2016),[14] it is evident that formal schooling fees are not affordable to many. As seen in Figure 3 below, the poorest families are most affected: children in families making less than USD 50 per month are 33% more likely to be out of school than children from families with higher incomes (ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 66).

Figure 3: Percentage of 5- to 17-year-olds out of school by monthly household income and sex

Source: ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 67



School fees and poverty are not the only factors preventing young people from accessing formal schooling. Other factors such as migration—either forced displacement due to insecurity or relocation for better livelihood opportunities—can lead to extended and repeated periods of absence from school. This issue can become a particular problem in the DRC, where students are only permitted to enroll in formal schooling if they will be able to complete primary-level examinations by age 15 or secondary-level examinations by age 24. Age-related limitations to formal school access are a vital factor in the provision of and demand for alternative education programming.

14 This figure was calculated by the Atlas method; see http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/drc/overview for details.

Geographical distance from schools is another key factor, particularly in rural areas, where young people are at significantly greater risk of dropping out: on aggregate, 33% of out-of-school youth are from rural areas versus 20% from urban areas (ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 9). Although recent government efforts have led to the construction of more schools throughout the country, significant disparities in education infrastructure remain between urban and rural areas and across provinces (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

Equally significant are the continuing human resource gaps, particularly in the areas of teacher remuneration, in-class support, and training support (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). Urban/rural divides are also pertinent in terms of quality of teaching provided, and the persistence of the school fee system means that good teachers will move to schools where they are paid more (ISSP/UO, p. 87). The absence of sufficient pedagogical materials renders the work of teachers extraordinarily difficult, compromising not only the quality of teaching offered but also teacher motivation (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

Sociocultural factors also have a significant influence on rates of school attendance. The gendered dimensions of school exclusion become more pronounced among older girls as they get married, become pregnant (De Herdt et al., 2015, p. 32), or otherwise bear increasing household demands, including the responsibility and care for younger siblings (Seymour, 2011). Household survey data from 2012 show that at the end of six years of primary schooling, 17% of girls had already dropped out, compared with 12% of boys (ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 47). Fostered children often have lower rates of access to schooling, and fostering is a common practice in the DRC. Further, household survey data shows how inequalities are replicated across generations: heads of household who had no education are the most likely to keep their own children out of school (ISSP/UO, 2013 p. 100).

3.4 Importance of alternative education as an educational safety net

As seen in many conflict-affected contexts in sub-Saharan Africa, exclusion from formal schooling reinforces the social and economic marginalization of young people, which can have dramatically negative impacts not just on possibilities for individual self-realization but in terms of broader socioeconomic development (Honwana, 2012; Inoue et al., 2015; Sommers, 2015). The structural and economic challenges preventing so many young people from accessing or completing schooling in the DRC will take years to adequately address. Until then, alternative education occupies a crucial niche.

As the next section will describe in detail, the DRC has an established alternative education system, and its role is to serve as a safety net for the young people who fall out of the formal system. In the DRC, alternative education programs encompass accelerated education programs, skills training, and basic literacy programs. This system has a clear government mandate and curriculum and has been the subject of recent national and sectoral policy documents (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). However, as will be discussed in the next two sections, many gaps and weaknesses severely limit the potential of alternative education in the DRC.

4 NATIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

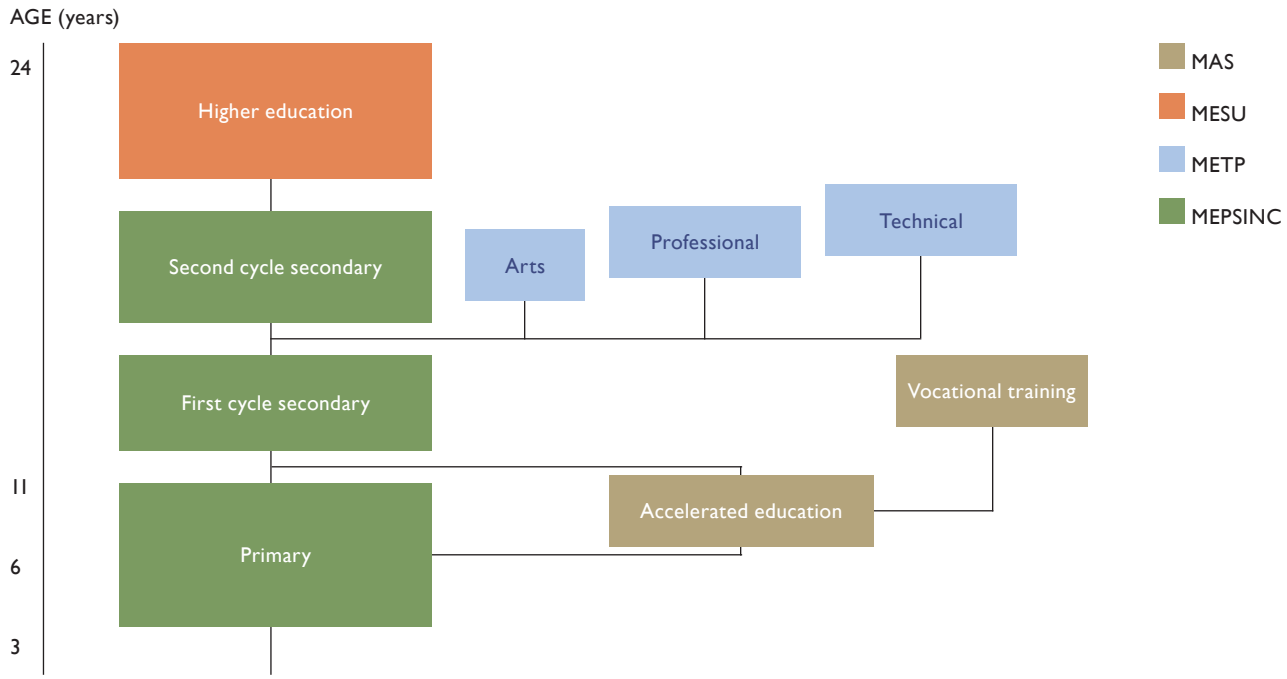
4.1 National policy framework

4.1.1 SECTORAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

Adopted in December 2015, the national 2016–2025 education and training strategy document—*Stratégie sectorielle de l'éducation et de la formation* 2016–2025—serves as the linchpin for all education programming in the DRC and is expected to be the organizing framework for all programs, interventions, and external support (MEPSINC et al., 2015, p. 112). The purpose of the document is to clearly delineate government responsibility for the multiple dimensions of education policy and programming, thus clarifying, consolidating, and updating existing policies.[15] Under this strategy, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and New Citizenship (MEPSINC) is responsible for preschool, primary, and secondary education, and the Ministry for Higher and University Education (MESU) is responsible for all aspects of higher education. The Ministry of Technical and Professional Education (METP) is in charge of all postprimary vocational training, and the MAS is mandated to cover all literacy, vocational, nonformal, and accelerated education programs (MEPSINC et al., 2015, pp. 19–20). The divisions of authority are summarized in Figure 4.

Coordination of the education sector is to be overseen by a national steering committee that includes all four education ministries as well as representatives from the ministries of finance, budget, planning, decentralization, and public service. A consultation committee co-chaired by the secretary general of MEPSINC and external technical and financial partners meets once per trimester. To ensure effective implementation and coordination of the strategy, the Permanent Secretariat for the Support and Coordination of the Education Sector (SPACE) functions as the technical working structure in which all four ministries are represented (MEPSINC et al., 2015, p. 114–117).[16]

Figure 4: Education-related government entities in the DRC
Source: adapted from MEPSINC, 2015, p. 19



15 The four ministries responsible for education in the DRC are the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire Secondaire et Initiation à la Nouvelle Citoyenneté* (MEPSINC), the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel* (METFP), the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire* (MESU), and the *Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Action Humanitaire et Solidarité Nationale* (MAS).

16 This consolidated policy aims to correct past practices by government partners that have been undertaken "without harmonization and without convergence" (MEPSINC et al., 2015, p. 112).

Interviews conducted during Phase 2 of this research confirmed that these coordinating structures have been established; however, their effectiveness depends on the willingness and ability of each participant to engage with them. The goal of effective coordination between various ministries and with technical and financial partners presents evident challenges. It is clear that greater technical and logistical capacities as well as the concerted efforts of all participants are needed to fully realize the potential of these coordinating structures (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). Opportunities for strengthening these structures are discussed in greater detail in Section 6.

4.1.2 MAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Since 2006, the leading responsibility of MAS for all aspects of alternative education has been established in national policy, and this function is specifically delegated to the *Direction Générale de l'Education Non formelle* (DGENF), or the General Directorate for Nonformal Education.[17] The DGENF's subsectoral strategy document, the *Stratégie Nationale Pour le Développement de L'Alphabétisation et de L'Education Non Formelle,* lists as its target population those who are considered most vulnerable, including children in illiterate or poor families, street children, working children, victims of conflict, orphans living with HIV/AIDS, and illiterate adults (MAS, 2012). It is important to note that, from its inception in 1952 with the creation of the *foyers sociaux,* the nonformal education system has been disconnected from the formal education system, and until recently it attracted little political attention or support.

Administration of alternative education is decentralized to each of the provinces, with the provincial representation of MAS—called the Division of Social Affairs, or DIVAS—in charge of the day-to-day management of literacy, accelerated education, and skills training programs. These programs are held in the *centres de rattrapage scolaires* that are managed by DIVAS, by NGOs or by other private actors offering alternative education programs.[18]

4.2 Alternative education programs

The main responsibilities mandated to the DGENF are to contribute to the eradication of illiteracy; to regulate all alternative education; and to improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of literacy and accelerated education. DGENF authority encompasses basic literacy, numeracy, accelerated education, and skills-training programs (Phase 1 fieldwork; multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016; MEPSINC et al., 2015).

4.2.1 BASIC LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Basic literacy and numeracy programs are organized according to different final goals. Traditional literacy programs usually last from six to nine months and support young people and adults who are illiterate in gaining basic reading and numeracy skills. Functional literacy programs are also offered to young people and adults already engaged in a profession or at the beginning of a nonformal skills training program and in need of specific skills; this kind of program may last between four months and three years.

4.2.2 ACCELERATED LEARNING CURRICULUM

AEPs allow young people to complete the primary education cycle in a reduced number of years. The national curriculum for accelerated primary education, known as the *Programme National de Rattrapage Scolaire* (PNRS), is based on the formal school curriculum but compresses six years of primary schooling into three.

With the support of UNICEF and other international actors, DGENF documented the AEP pedagogical approach in 2007 (interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). The full curriculum, accompanied by a teacher's guide, encompasses Congolese languages, French, mathematics, civic and moral education, health, environmental studies, drawing, penmanship, music, and

17 The DGENF was established by Ministerial Order AFF.SOC/CABMIN/0231/2006 of 29 December 2006.

18 A CRS may be held on premises that belong to the ministry, or it may be hosted in formal school structures after the school day is over or in other rented structures.

physical education and sport. Some private or NGO-run AEPs include components such as gender sensitivity, conflict sensitivity, peace, HIV/AIDS, and landmine education. At the time of this research, the existing national curriculum was undergoing review to mainstream learning on peace building, gender awareness, and life skills (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016; see also Kaniki, 2015).[19]

AEPs target children who have not entered the formal schooling system by the time they are 6 or 7 as well as youth who have had to drop out of school. According to the National Education Strategy, AEPs cater specifically to children from the age of 9 to 14 years so that they may re-enter the formal system at secondary level (MEPS,INC, 2015, p. 10, Lubanzadio Ketho, 2016; Phase 1 fieldwork; multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). After completing accelerated primary schooling, students can sit the national exam held at the end of primary school (the *Examen National de Fin d'Études Primaires,* or ENAFEP[20]) along with those students who are at the end of formal primary schooling (Lubanzadio Ketho, 2016; Phase 1 fieldwork; multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016), and, if successful, an AEP student can enter formal secondary school as long as she or he will complete the process before age 24. Alternately, AEP students may enter a formal professional-training or nonformal skills-training program. Children from 15 years of age (and not older than 24 years) who are too old to enter the formal education system can access a three-year literacy training that will support their subsequent engagement in a professional training program (Lubanzadio Ketho, 2016).

4.2.3 SKILLS TRAINING

The DGENF also oversees skills-training programs for members of the population considered to be most vulnerable (and thus falling under the mandate of MAS). Skills trainings may co-occur with basic literacy programs or follow completion of the AEP. These trainings last between one and three years and comprise a range of livelihood options, including sewing and tailoring, carpentry, auto repair, welding and metalwork, and electrical maintenance. These courses are intended to be accompanied by the teaching of entrepreneurial skills such as financial planning (Lubanzadio Ketho, 2016; Phase 1 fieldwork; multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

It is important to note that the skills-training programs run by the DGENF differ significantly from the formal vocational trainings run by the METP and do not offer the same level of professional qualification that formal vocational programs do (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). At the time of research, UNESCO and the International Labour Organization were involved in multiple studies and assessments in collaboration with the government to strengthen standards of the professional training sector in the DRC; once completed, these efforts may contribute to reinforcing coherence across the vocational and nonformal skills-training sector (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

4.2.4 COVERAGE OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

More than 466,000 participants were enrolled in alternative education programs in 2014 (Lubanzadio Ketho, 2016). Table 3 shows the numbers of students who were engaged in all alternative education programs between 2010 and 2014.

19 DFID has funded this revision within the *Vas-y Filles* project, which is due to end in 2016 (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

20 In 2015, the required test for entry into secondary school, the *Test National de Fin d'Études Primaires* (TENAFEP) was renamed the *Examen National de Fin d'Études Primaires* (ENAFEP).

Table 3: Number of students in alternative education in the DRC, 2010–2014

Source: Lubanzadio Ketho (2016)

ACTIVITIES		2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014
1.	BASIC LITERACY				
	Learners	71,011	94,685	158,283	160,531
	Educators/Teachers	4,831	7,406	8,509	8,824
	Centers	1,092	1,508	2,761	2,822
2.	ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAMS				
	Learners	72,403	111,759	133,913	138,144
	Educators/Teachers	2,632	4,724	4,960	6,945
	Centers	711	1,228	1,452	2,624
3.	SKILLS TRAINING				
	Learners	59,229	89,596	153,047	168,438
	Educators/Teachers	-	-	-	-
	Centers	829	1,621	2,437	2,462

It is difficult to know exactly where and how many alternative education programs exist in North Kivu because of the limited capacity of DIVAS to collect reliable data for programs that are usually flexible, negotiated operations that generally use existing school premises in the afternoons. Some courses, for example, use private houses as their base of operations and borrow classrooms in two different formal school buildings. AEP startups or enterprises are common and may not have any sort of formal registration procedure. Furthermore, it can be difficult to distinguish between those that are run by the government and those run by NGOs; although it is technically required that all NGO-run programs work through DIVAS, this is not always the case in practice. Some AEPs that are government funded and initiated may receive some funding from NGOs, but this assistance might be a one-time gift of money or supplies, or it could be a longer-term funding mechanism.

4.3 Structural weaknesses of the alternative education system

Millions of young people who have fallen out of or not been able to access the formal school system in the DRC could benefit enormously from alternative education, but severe structural constraints prevent it from adequately responding to the educational needs of some of the most vulnerable young people.

4.3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1965, the Ministry of Social Affairs became responsible for the *foyers sociaux* and largely continued the colonial-era project of training women to be model urban housewives.[21] By the 1980s, nonformal education activities targeted primarily girls and involved basic literacy and domestic skills such as tailoring and sewing.[22] Activities for men were administered separately; these comprised basic literacy and practical training such as brick making and bread baking. Resources were also directed to *animation sociale:* for example, how to dance and celebrate if the president visited. Other areas addressed by the *foyers sociaux* included social services, child protection, social research, and antenatal and postpartum services for new mothers. *Foyers sociaux* were later renamed social centers, and then social promotion centers. Nonformal education was one of the many services provided at the centers, an arrangement that continues today.

21 As Nancy Rose Hunt (1990: 447) says, "*Foyers sociaux*, or social homes, were Belgian domestic training institutions for African women, founded for married women living in colonial urban centers. Some women were learning to cook, mend, iron, and wash clothes, and how to wean their infants and decorate their homes, and a select few were being trained to work (for pay) as auxiliary aids or monitors in the classroom."

22 The nonformal education sector was subject to political and bureaucratic complexity: in 1970 the president's first wife, Mama Marie-Antoinette Mobutu, became responsible for women's social issues. Then, in 1980, administration of all social policies was divided between the GMPR (Mobutu's political party, as Zaire was a single-party state at the time) and Mama Mobutu.

4.3.2 INSUFFICIENT BUDGETARY SUPPORT

Beginning in the 1980s, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) caused a steep decline in the DRC's education budget. According to research by De Herdt et al. (2015, p. 53), real expenditure per pupil per year dropped from USD 159 in 1982 to around USD 4 in 2002. Teachers' salaries dropped from USD 68 in 1982 to USD 12.90 in 2002; teacher salaries paid by the state were cut by half in the same period, with slow recovery since (see Table 4 below). However, pupil numbers actually doubled in the 20 years from 1987 to 2007, with 11% annual increases from 2002 to 2007.[23] The systemic challenges resulting from such a budgetary crisis are evident, as described in Section 3 above, and have resulted in insufficient payment and support to teachers and administrators, lack of pedagogical materials, and inadequate infrastructural standards.

Table 4: Teacher salaries, 1982–2008

Adapted from De Herdt et al. (2015)

	NUMBER OF STAFF					
	Public Sector (1)	Teachers (2)	(1)/(2)	Avg. teacher salary ($ current)	Purchasing power of dollar (2006)	Avg. teacher salary ($ 2006)
1982	444,100	285,900	0.64	$121.60	0.56	$68.35
1987	364,500	196,300	0.54	$23.00	1.18	$27.21
2002	391,900	142,900	0.36	$8.64	1.49	$12.90
2006	698,400	214,200	0.31	$30.00	1.00	$30.00
2008	742,000	226,800	0.31	$52.44	0.66	$34.62

These problems even more acutely affect the alternative education sector (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). When interviewed for this research, both the education sector officials overseeing alternative education programs and the NGO actors implementing them observed that the most fundamental problem facing the alternative education system in the DRC is its lack of funding in the national budget (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). Indeed, the funds allocated to alternative education in the DRC form a tiny proportion of the overall education budget.

As seen in Table 5, all alternative education outlays represent less than 1% of the projected national education budget over the next five years. In 2016 alone, only USD 10.2 million has been allocated to alternative education, of the total of USD 1.277 billion. Although a detailed budget analysis exceeds the scope of this research, a review of projected costs for implementing the national education strategy for 2016–2020 presents a bleak outlook for alternative education in the DRC (MEPSINC et al., p. 105); indeed, the data suggest that monitoring the level of funds actually disbursed would most likely show much worse prospects for government financing of the alternative education sector.

23 As described in Section 3, the fees paid by parents for formal schooling are transmitted upwards to the level of national administration; the vested interests in this system remain strong, and thus there is little incentive on the part of these formal networks to incorporate the far-less-lucrative nonformal education structures.

Table 5: Annual education costs, by sector (in millions USD)

Source: MEPSINC et al., 2015, p. 105

Amounts in millions USD	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2025
CURRENT EXPENSES						
Primary, secondary, and technical education	735.8	832.2	959.3	1095.9	1229.6	1901.1
Higher and university education	223.8	246.1	268.7	283.8	306.1	458.6
Nonformal education	6.2	7.3	7.5	7.8	8.1	9.7
TOTAL	965.7	1085.6	1235.5	1387.6	1543.8	2369.4
INVESTMENTS						
Primary, secondary and technical education	279.6	301.0	319.1	338.1	359.2	386.9
Higher and university education	28.0	40.9	42.0	42.8	43.8	52.0
Nonformal education	4.0	4.8	5.5	5.9	5.6	6.9
TOTAL	311.6	346.6	366.6	386.7	408.7	445.8
Total expenses and investments	1277.4	1432.3	1602.1	1774.3	1952.5	2815.2

As will be discussed in Section 6, clear opportunities exist for increasing the visibility of alternative education in the DRC, and for conducting consistent, high-level advocacy so that the DRC government will allocate much higher levels of funding.

4.3.3 LACK OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND POOR INCENTIVES

Associated with the insufficient financing is a dearth of qualified teachers to run alternative education programs. Potential qualified candidates are unlikely to choose to work for alternative education programs as they are poorly paid, especially in the government-run programs. This is less the case with NGO-led programs, where salaries are reportedly higher, although the distortionary effect of such dual salary scales is evident (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). The provision of adequate training and human resource support to teachers in alternative education was repeatedly cited as a priority concern during Phase 2 research interviews (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

4.3.4 LACK OF PEDAGOGICAL MATERIALS

Another fundamental weakness of the government-run alternative education programs was reported to be the lack of pedagogical materials in the CRSs (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). Although the 2007 PNRS syllabus is comprehensive and aligned with the national formal education syllabus, many CRSs do not have access to it, or if they do, their numbers are extremely limited and insufficient to meet the pedagogical needs of the students. At the time of this research, the PNRS syllabus was to undergo a complete review in order to bring it in line with more updated standards relating to gender, life skills, and peace-building. Although this revision was considered pertinent by the government and NGO actors interviewed during the research, they also acknowledged that a more urgent priority would be to get the pedagogical materials—from 2007 or otherwise—in the classrooms in the first place (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

4.3.5 FEES

Like the formal system, and due also to the lack of state financing, government-run CRSs impose fees on students. These fees are reported to be significantly less burdensome than those in the formal education sector (Phase 1 research; multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016) and are usually not required in alternative education programs run by international NGOs. However, given the MAS mandate to support the most vulnerable populations, even the small amounts required can prevent some young people from accessing alternative education programs. Certain interview subjects in Kinshasa spoke of the frustration of having to send away vulnerable students; others reported that negotiation of the fees is sometimes possible and that they will not always be demanded, as will be discussed in the North Kivu case study below.

4.3.6 DEPENDENCE ON NGOS, WEAK MONITORING, AND LACK OF COORDINATION WITH EXISTING GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

In effect, the very small amounts of government funding leave the alternative education system dependent on funding from international NGOs and donors, as well as private actors. At the time of the research, USAID and DFID were described as the main donors to alternative education in the DRC. The other main education donors in the DRC have focused their support on the formal education sector; these donors include the World Bank, *Agence français de développement* (AFD), Belgian Technical Cooperation (CTB), and the Belgian Embassy, as well as UNICEF and UNESCO. Key international NGO supporters of alternative education programs include the International Rescue Committee and Save the Children (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

The level of coordination among alternative education program providers was consistently reported to be weak, thus leading to problems in monitoring, oversight, and quality assurance (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). Such lack of coordination with the DGENF and DIVAS at the provincial level is perceived to weaken state capacity to effectively lead on alternative education (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016; see also Kaniki, 2015). Currently, the DGENF has no evident logistical capacity to effectively monitor nongovernmental or private funding of the DRC's alternative education programs. As will be discussed in Section 6, pathways exist for increasing DGENF's capacity to do so.

Both government officials and NGO implementers interviewed in Kinshasa noted a significant lack of coordination and oversight of those providing alternative education programs throughout the country (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). According to them, a government framework on alternative education is in place, but it is vastly underfunded, leaving the government mandated yet unable to respond to the vast needs of the millions of out-of-school young people. In response to this massive need and weak capacity, international and national NGOs and other private actors (some would call them entrepreneurs) have set up alternative education programs, particularly in conflict-affected zones (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

As is true beyond the education sector and common in crisis-affected contexts, NGOs often work in parallel to existing government structures. Numerous Phase 2 interviews highlighted a disconnect between internationally funded alternative education programs and the existing government structures responsible for alternative education, namely the DGENF (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016). This disconnect was underscored to the researcher when the international staff members responsible for implementing a particularly large and prominent alternative education program, funded by USAID, did not know that the DGENF existed, nor had they demonstrated any plan to consult with their relevant government counterparts ahead of their project's rollout. Opportunities to correct such practices are discussed further in Section 6.

The next section of the report considers the actual implementation of alternative education in the province of North Kivu, based on field research conducted there in late 2015.

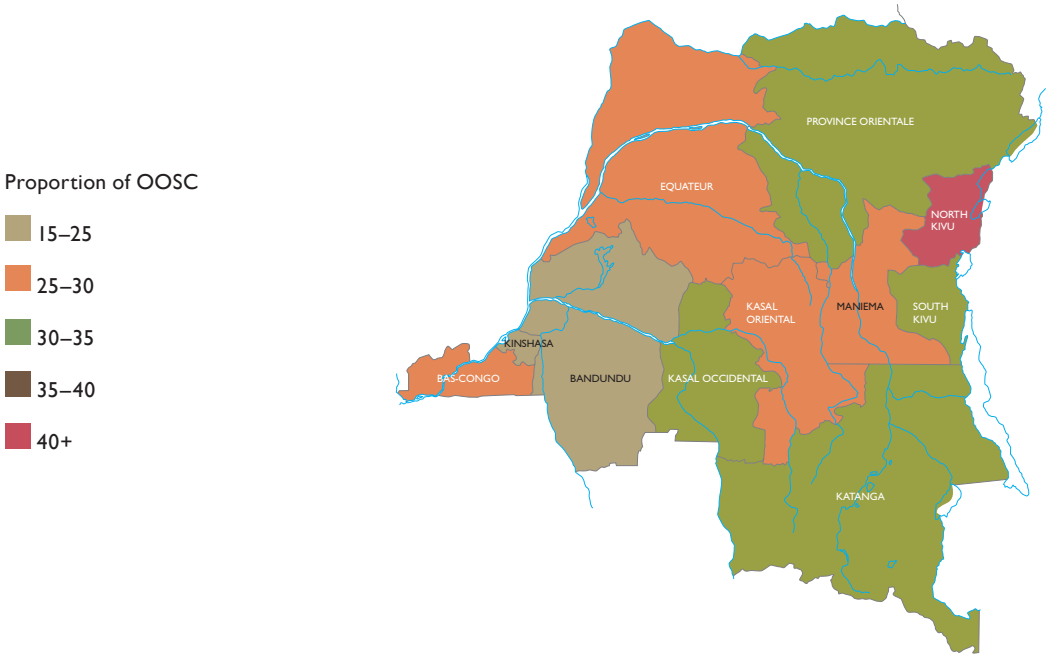
5 CASE STUDY: ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN NORTH KIVU

5.1 Out-of-school youth in North Kivu

North Kivu province has long been plagued by violence. For more than a century, it has been at the center of massive forced population displacements, which have led to explosive identity politics, continuous conflict over land, and fiercely contested rights to citizenship (Mamdani, 2001; Prunier, 2009). In recent decades, the population of North Kivu has endured devastating local land wars, dealt with a massive influx of refugees following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, fled volcanic eruptions, and survived recurring waves of armed violence. According to the United Nations, an estimated 675,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) lived in North Kivu in December 2015 (UNOCHA, 2015).[24] Recurring violence and forced displacement have had a profound impact on the provision of education and on young people's ability to access formal schooling, making North Kivu the province with the highest proportion of school-age children out of school (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Map of proportions and numbers of 5- to 17-year-olds out of school in the DRC, by province

Source: ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 35



According to the ISSP/UO household survey on out-of-school children (OOSC) in the DRC, approximately 990,000 children in North Kivu are out of school, representing 44% of school-age children in the province (ISSP/UO, 2013, p. 9). Of these young people, just over 48,000—or about 5% of all of those estimated to be out of school in the 2012 figures—were officially registered students in alternative education programs in North Kivu in 2015, according to DIVAS records kept in Goma. They were attending AEPs, skills training, and basic literacy classes at just over 400 centers and programs. As seen in Table 6, the majority of students participating in alternative education in North Kivu—more than 35,000, or 74% of them—were enrolled in AEPs.

24 For a detailed breakdown of the population per territory in North Kivu, see http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rdc_factsheet_mouvement_de_population_national_decembre_2015.pdf.

Table 6: Enrollment in alternative education in North Kivu (2015)

Source: DIVAS North Kivu

	LEARNERS			CENTERS
Type	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**	
AEP	18,402	17,015	35,417	191
Skills training	2,126	4,940	7,066	117
Basic literacy	3,700	1,927	5,627	103
TOTAL	**24,228**	**23,882**	**48,110**	**411**

The tremendous gap between the need for alternative education and the actual provision of service is one of the key findings of this research. The following subsections will provide greater detail on the actual provision of alternative education in North Kivu—with a particular focus on AEPs—and young people's experiences with and perspectives on these programs.

5.2 North Kivu alternative education programs researched in Phase 1

Phase 1 research in North Kivu focused on young people who were not enrolled in formal primary or secondary education to understand their perceptions of and experiences with alternative education options. In order to provide a broad sample of the types of out-of-school young people in North Kivu, seven alternative education providers across the four communities were selected based on the kind of education program offered, the participant target group, rural vs. urban geography, and the wartime experience and composition of the program's host community. As detailed in Section 2.4.1.1 above, the contrasting community sites were identified during discussions with education experts in Goma. Basic information about the seven participating programs is provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Specific providers researched in Phase 1[25]

PROVIDER	LOCATION AND SIZE	TYPE/CURRICULUM	DESIGN AND RATIONALES	TARGET GROUP AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES	FUNDING AND COORDINATION
Benediction Rubaya	• Rural • Active artisanal mining area • 380 primary students • 117 secondary students[26]	AEP: primary 3 years	AEP Poverty alleviation, reduce artisanal mining	Vulnerable individuals National exams	Fees/none Provincial network
Benediction Rutshuru (Kiwanja)	• Periurban • 1,128 primary students (increase of 320% from previous year)	Basic literacy AEP: primary 3 years Skills training: driving, tailoring, hairdressing	AEP Poverty alleviation	Vulnerable individuals National exams	Fees Previously OPEQ[27] input Provincial network
St. Benoit Kitshanga	•Rural •Statistics unavailable	AEP: primary 3 years	AEP Poverty alleviation	Vulnerable individuals National exams	Fees Local network (uses building but not otherwise assisted by Catholic Church)
Anna Micheli	• Urban • Statistics unavailable	AEP: primary 3 years	CRS and technical/ skills training Catch-up and poverty alleviation	Vulnerable individuals National exams	Fees Catholic Church
ETN Goma	• Urban • 40 residential places, >3000 participants including outreach programs	Skills training and psychosocial support	Technical/skills training and social programs Alleviate trauma and poverty	Vulnerable individuals Professional employment for poverty alleviation	Fees & diverse international grants. Registered with DIVAS. Inception and management by 4 INGOs, 9 organizations, and 4 local churches
ASSODIP	• Rural • Active artisanal mining area	NGO: Skills training: tailoring, hairdressing and auto-repair	Technical/skills training and social programs Alleviate trauma and poverty through employment skills	Miners Ex-combatants Outcomes not available	Currently none
Women's Association of Kitshanga	• Rural	Ad hoc	Technical/skills training and social programs Alleviate trauma and poverty through employment skills	Vulnerable women Outcomes not available	Occasional benefactors

The four communities in North Kivu were chosen for comparative value, accessibility from Goma, and level of security: Kitshanga (a rural location), Rutshuru Centre/Kiwanja (a periurban location), Goma (an urban location), and Rubaya (a rural area notable for the presence of artisanal mining activities). These locations allowed for comparisons between different socioeconomic levels, educational provision, labor markets, history and experience of conflict, and ethnic composition.

25 See Annex 2 for additional details about each of these programs.

26 As mentioned earlier, official policy mandates that CRSs (accelerated education program) be catch-up programs for primary education only. Although secondary-level catch-up programs were also identified in North Kivu, these seem to be private arrangements designed to attract more students, as there is no official syllabus or governmental oversight of such efforts.

27 Opportunities for Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education, an IRC program that was implemented in Katanga, South Kivu, and North Kivu (funded by USAID).

The providers we worked with are described here and assessed for their planning and execution. This description and assessment of the providers is compiled from interviews with DIVAS as well as interviews and observation of administrators, educators, and students in each location. Although most offered a range of alternative education activities, each was specialized in one of the areas described above. Where possible, we highlight the extent to which providers align (or do not align) with national standards according to documented MAS policy. It was beyond the scope of the study to verify from national representatives of MAS or DIVAS in Kinshasa whether what we were told in North Kivu is accurate; however, where possible, findings were triangulated within North Kivu through interviews and document review as provided by providers and local DIVAS representatives. Providers are broken down into CRS (i.e., AEP) and technical/skills-training categories below.

5.2.1 54 AEPs

AEPs do not plan their own budgets or receive center-level needs assessments; instead, policies for design and management—including curriculum and student assessment—are established nationally and provincially, and each center is expected to follow the same design. AEPs do attempt to keep teacher-pupil ratios within DRC's legal limits, although they are not always successful. The national nonformal curriculum is used when it is available; when it is not, teachers adapt the national formal curriculum as best they can. In three of the four AEP centers (CRSs) described below—the Benediction schools and St. Benoit—the official nonformal curriculum was unavailable. The full primary school curriculum is covered in three years. Students receive certification of the knowledge and skills they have gained by taking the same national exams as formal students.

Although AEPs tend to use the premises of existing formal schools, their work is conducted entirely separately: they do not compete, complement, or integrate with the formal schools. Facilities have to be rented, and neither program supports the other. These arrangements also mean that AEP classes have to be scheduled at different times from those of the formal school, and thus AEPs must operate in the afternoon when the formal school is not in session, which makes attendance difficult for students who work. At the Benediction centers and St. Benoit center, classes run from 13:20 to 17:20 Monday to Saturday. Night classes are not possible due to insecurity. Locations and times are not negotiated and agreed by students and the local community to fit in with students' work and household responsibilities. Pupils do not enroll in both the formal school and the AEP simultaneously.

Similar challenges affect many AEPs in the areas of staffing, teacher quality, and parent involvement. At the Benediction centers and St. Benoit, teacher trainers can be provided by DIVAS, but neither the AEPs nor DIVAS has any budget for transportation or salary. Teachers at these three schools were trained in formal rather than alternative education and recruited in the local area if they were willing to work for an indefinite time without pay. The Benediction AEPs have parent committees modeled after formal school parent committees; although parents are officially supposed to be elected, they are generally reputed to be appointed by head teachers. St. Benoit intends to have parent committees but hadn't yet organized them at the time of this study.

In total, our field team visited four AEPs: two managed through the Benediction Network, and two managed separately.

5.3 Overview of North Kivu young research participants

The Phase 1 research with young people in North Kivu involved 201 research participants distributed across four communities and five alternative education programs (four AEPs and one nonformal skills-training program). The two smaller nonformal skills-training programs mentioned above were excluded. These young people participated in 28 focus group discussions and responded to an individual questionnaire. Participants completed life-mapping exercises, and an additional eight young people volunteered to be shadowed by a team member; these latter two activities primarily served to help the research team refine follow-up discussion questions and identify key informant interviewees who could provide additional information. The analysis presented below is based solely on the questionnaires and open-ended discussions completed by FGD participants.

Three categories of young people participated in the study: those who were participants in alternative education programs (mainly AEPs); those who were program participants but left early; and those with reasonably similar profiles to program

participants who never entered a program (Table 8). AEP completers were not interviewed because it was difficult to identify and locate them based on program records, which were often absent or had outdated addresses and contact numbers.

Table 8: Count of participants by gender and alternative education program status

	FEMALE (N=97)	MALE (N=104)	TOTAL (N=201)
In	36	36	72
Previously in	26	27	53
Never in	35	41	76
TOTAL	**97**	**104**	**201**

Respondents were between 15 and 24 years of age with a median age of 18 years; in total there were 97 female and 104 male respondents (Table 9).

Table 9: Count of respondents' gender by community

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Goma	34	51	85
Kitshanga	27	23	50
Rubaya[28]	20	14	34
Rutshuru	16	16	32
TOTAL	**97**	**104**	**201**

As mentioned above, participants who were in an alternative education program were associated with one of the five programs listed in Table 7: CRS Benediction Rubaya, CRS Benediction Rutshuru, CRS St. Benoit Kitshanga, CRS Anna Micheli Goma, and ETN Goma. The directors of the latter two programs were interviewed, but they were unable to provide the research team with locations or times to meet any of their participants, so the voices of those youth are not represented in the FGD data.

It is important to reiterate that, since they were not selected randomly, our sample of young people is not representative of young people in either North Kivu as a whole or the individual communities where each school is located. For those involved in specific programs, we might consider the sample of participants somewhat representative of the students in that particular program.[29] However, the data are able to give us important insights into overall trends as well as differences based on gender, location, and participation (or lack thereof) in an alternative education program. Closed-ended data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively; qualitative data obtained in the interviews and focus group discussions was coded according to major themes that emerged and then analyzed for trends in response distributions across gender, location, and alternative education program participation. Unless otherwise specified, tables present data for all participants.

In the remainder of this section, we present participant characteristics based on questionnaire responses and supplemented with data from the life-mapping exercise. We then explore more deeply the qualitative data obtained from the FGDs along with data obtained from other key informant interviews (teachers, government staff, etc.).

28 In Rubaya, researchers were not able to mobilize a never in AEP group in time to conduct FGDs for either males or females.

29 While convenience sampling was used to select individual participants from programs—those who were available at the time of research—the team was careful to try to include as broad a representation as possible, allowing for a range of age groups, education levels, displacement status, religions, and so on to be included in the final FGDs.

5.3.1 DISPLACEMENT

Displacement was a significant issue for all of the young people in our study—71% of respondents had relocated, and only 29% had lived in their current communities for their entire lives. Rutshuru stands out as having more participants who were not displaced (41%). Slightly more of those who had never been in an alternative education program had been displaced. Of the 71% of respondents who had relocated in their lifetimes, 55% were fleeing violence (Table 10). Other reasons for displacement included the pursuit of education or employment, family relocation, and divorce (their own or that of their parents).

Table 10: Proportion of displaced respondents by community and alternative education program status

		% DISPLACED
COMMUNITY	Goma (n=85)	70.60%
	Kitshanga (n=50)	78.00%
	Rubaya (n=34)	73.50%
	Rutshuru (n=32)	59.40%
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM STATUS	In (n=72)	70.8%
	Left (n=53)	69.7%
	Never in (n=76)	73.6%
	TOTAL	**71.10%**

5.3.2 SAFETY

More than half of participants reported feeling unsafe or only somewhat safe; safety concerns were most pronounced in Rutshuru, where only 34% of participants felt very safe (Table 11).

Table 11: Perceptions of safety by community and alternative education program status

		NOT SAFE	SOMEWHAT SAFE	VERY SAFE
COMMUNITY	**Goma (n=85)**	12.9%	38.8%	48.2%
	Kitshanga (n=50)	10.0%	50.0%	40.0%
	Rubaya (n=34)	11.8%	29.4%	58.8%
	Rutshuru (n=32)	15.6%	50.0%	34.4%
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM STATUS	**In (n=72)**	13.9%	45.8%	40.3%
	Left (n=53)	15.1%	41.5%	43.4%
	Never (n=76)	9.2%	38.2%	52.6%
TOTAL	**Total (n=201)**	**12.4%**	**41.8%**	**45.8%**

Although respondents had escaped from active conflict, they cited violence and crime as their most current safety concerns. Fear of being robbed was the most pronounced safety concern; women in particular worried more about armed robbery and domestic violence. Nearly a quarter of both men and women worried about young armed groups. Findings were similar regardless of alternative education program status (Table 12).

Table 12: Concern about problems in community, by gender (multiple responses allowed)

	FEMALE (N=97)	MALE (N=104)	TOTAL (N=201)
Domestic violence	33%	44%	**29%**
Recruitment by armed groups	25%	22%	**24%**
Armed robbery	8%	11%	**7%**
Theft	34%	61%	**35%**
Young armed groups	22%	43%	**23%**
Refusal	1%	2%	**1%**
Other	0%	7%	**2%**
None	1%	3%	**2%**

In general, equally across communities, and regardless of alternative education program status, participants felt as though they lived in a close-knit community, though there were a handful of people, especially women (14% overall; 20% of women and 9% of men) who felt strongly that their community was not at all close knit (Table 13).

Table 13: Perception that community is close knit, by gender

	Female (n=97)	Male (n=104)	TOTAL (N=201)
Not at all	19.6%	8.7%	**13.9%**
Somewhat	40.2%	20.2%	**29.9%**
Very much	40.2%	71.2%	**56.2%**

Perhaps not surprisingly, more people who had been displaced felt that their community was not at all close knit (19%) compared to those who were not displaced (2%).

5.3.3 HOSTING

The majority of respondents were hosted either by a host family or a family friend; fewer than 5% of respondents resided in IDP camps, although, interestingly, nearly all of those who did were current alternative education program students (Table 14). As will be explained in the next subsection, young people who are hosted tend to have additional responsibilities that can limit their availability to participate in alternative education programs, whereas those in IDPs tend to have more time. The reason that respondents' place of residence was skewed in favor of host families or friends is not entirely clear, but it may be the result of our sampling technique, or it may indicate that, in general, the programs we studied either intentionally or unintentionally targeted youth outside IDP camps.

Table 14: Participants' place of residence, by gender and alternative education program status

	FEMALE (N=97)	MALE (N=104)	IN (N=72)	LEFT (N=53)	NEVER IN (N=76)	TOTAL (N=201)
Camp	5.2%	2.9%	9.7%	1.9%	0.0%	**4.0%**
Family friend house	86.6%	62.5%	61.1%	86.8%	77.6%	**74.1%**
Host family	1.0%	24.0%	15.3%	7.5%	14.5%	**12.9%**
Other	0.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.0%	1.3%	**1.0%**
Own house	6.2%	2.9%	5.6%	1.9%	5.3%	**4.5%**
Renting room	1.0%	5.8%	6.9%	1.9%	1.3%	**3.5%**

5.3.4 EDUCATION

Males appear to have had better access to formal education prior to displacement as well as earlier access to alternative education programs. This latter indicator may well be related to fewer obligations to engage in household tasks; females are generally expected to contribute to household upkeep, particularly if residing with host families following displacement. Those who are currently in and those who had left an alternative education program had similar education levels to one another, though interestingly those who had left an alternative education program were significantly less likely to have none or only some primary education than those who were currently in one (25% vs. 36%, respectively) (Table 15). As will be discussed later, this may be at least partially explained by the tendency of some young people to not see the value of alternative education, particularly when they already have the option of earning money in a job; it may be the case that those who had been able to attend school to eighth grade or higher were therefore able to find employment more easily and thus didn't see the benefits of staying in the program.

Table 15: Formal education level, by gender and alternative education program status

	FEMALE (N=97)	MALE (N=104)	IN (N=72)	LEFT (N=53)	NEVER IN (N=76)	TOTAL (N=201)
None / primary	49.5%	32.7%	36.1%	24.5%	56.6%	**40.8%**
8th or less	16.5%	22.1%	20.8%	28.3%	11.8%	**19.4%**
Some high school	24.7%	36.5%	30.6%	35.8%	27.6%	**30.8%**
High school	6.2%	8.7%	8.3%	11.3%	3.9%	**7.5%**
Some college	3.1%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	**1.5%**

Of all those surveyed, 72% (n=143) had never had any skills training; fewer than 5% (n=9) had completed skills training; and 24% (n=47) were currently enrolled in skills training (all of those in ETN are counted in the last category). Those who were currently in or had been in an alternative education program were typically able to do basic math, read, and write at least a little, while a quarter and over a third of those who were never in an alternative education program were unable to do math or read and write at all, respectively (Table 16).

Table 16: Ability to read, write, and do basic math (self-reported), by alternative education program status

		IN (N=72)	LEFT (N=53)	NEVER IN (N=76)	TOTAL (N=201)
BASIC MATH?	Yes[30]	51%	47%	28%	**41%**
	A little	46%	51%	49%	**48%**
	Not at all	3%	2%	24%	**10%**
READ AND WRITE?	Yes	56%	49%	32%	**45%**
	A little	39%	47%	32%	**38%**
	Not at all	6%	4%	37%	**17%**

5.3.5 LIVELIHOODS

Table 17 below shows job type by alternative education program status. Those who left an alternative education program and those who were never in one have similar types of jobs; of those who are currently in an alternative education program, 33% are not working at all. This finding suggests that these respondents have a degree of support that enables them to focus on their studies exclusively. Another third are involved in farming and agriculture, and most of the remainder are involved in petty trading or some kind of skilled trade (such as carpentry, hairdressing, or tailoring) or unskilled service job (such as a porter or cleaner). It is notable that having participated in an alternative education program seems not to influence livelihood; for each job category, the percentages of nonparticipants closely parallel those of former participants. About 66% of both groups are involved in farming/agriculture, the largest category—a figure that aligns with national employment data.[31]

Table 17: Job type by alternative education program status

	IN (N=72)	PREVIOUSLY IN (N=53)	NEVER IN (N=76)	TOTAL (N=201)
Farming/agriculture	37.5%	66.0%	65.8%	**55.7%**
Student not working	33.3%	3.8%	0.0%	**12.9%**
Petty trading	15.3%	15.1%	11.8%	**13.9%**
Skilled service	4.2%	5.7%	7.9%	**6.0%**
Wage employment	4.2%	0.0%	3.9%	**3.0%**
Support from kinship	2.8%	7.5%	3.9%	**4.5%**
Unskilled service	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	**1.0%**
Mining	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	**1.5%**
Cattle livestock	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	**0.5%**
Homemaker	0.0%	1.9%	1.3%	**1.0%**

30 A "yes" response meant that the person could generally read most words he/she encountered and could write sentences versus being able to read/write none at all or just a few words. The question did not assess reading and writing skills beyond this standard.

31 Agriculture is the DRC's main economic sector, comprising 56% of GDP; see https://www.btcctb.org/en/countries/dr-congo.

5.3.6 HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Whether they were currently attending, had left, or had never entered an alternative education program, youth research participants generally had a positive view of the future. Overall, most respondents (69%) said that they believed they had a good chance of a good life. However, a higher proportion (81%) of those who were currently in an alternative education program thought they had a good chance of a good life versus those who had left or never been in an alternative education program (70% and 57% respectively) (Table 18).

Table 18: Perception of chance of having a good life, by alternative education program status

	In (n=72)	Previously in (n=53)	Never in (n=76)	Total (n=201)
Good chance	80.6%	69.8%	56.6%	68.7%
OK chance	13.9%	18.9%	28.9%	20.9%
Not good chance	5.6%	11.3%	14.5%	10.4%

In a comparison among the five programs, expectations were highest in Goma Anna Micheli, where 81% of respondents thought they had a good chance at a good life versus 70% in Goma ETN, 64% in Kitshanga, 62% in Rubaya, and 63% in Rutshuru (Table 19).

Table 19: Perception of chance of having a good life, by program

	Kitshanga (n=16)	Rutshuru (n=13)	Rubaya (n=13)	Goma Anna Micheli (n=16)	Goma ETN (n=14)
Good chance	64.0%	62.5%	61.8%	81.3%	70.3%
OK chance	30.0%	31.3%	17.6%	12.5%	13.5%
Not good chance	6.0%	6.3%	20.6%	6.3%	16.2%

Literacy and numeracy were important factors in a person's perception of the chance of having a good life. Across all groups, 86% of those who were able to do basic math thought they had a good chance at a good life versus 57% of those who could not do any or only a little basic math. Similarly, 82% of those who were able to read and write thought they had a good chance of a good life versus 58% of those who were not at all or only a little bit literate. Females were more optimistic about having a good life than males, with 74% believing they had a good chance versus 64% of males; more strikingly, only 3% of females thought they did not have a good chance versus 17% of males. People had similar aspirations regardless of displacement status.

5.4 Youth perceptions of the value of education, formal and alternative

5.4.1 METHOD FOR COLLECTING AND ANALYZING QUALITATIVE DATA

To further understand youth perceptions of the value of education both formal and alternative, we held focus group discussions in which participants were asked questions about their ideas of and experiences with education; what factors determined whether they completed or left early; the extent to which they knew about and/or had experienced alternative education programs; and, if so, their opinions of the strengths and limitations of these programs (see Annex 3 for FGD discussion questions). Qualitative transcripts were translated into English and then coded for the number of times a group mentioned a particular idea or theme in order to elucidate certain trends across different groups (i.e., alternative education program status), communities, and genders.

5.4.2 VALUE OF FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN GENERAL

Overall, the young research participants, both female and male, valued education—especially formal education. While participants clearly asserted that completion of formal education is valued most highly, they were pragmatic and understood that not everyone could access or complete a formal education program. They could therefore also see the value of alternative education and were aware of the programs on offer and their varying strengths and drawbacks. Participants across all 28 focus groups, regardless of whether they had participated in a program or not, knew that an AEP was intended to help someone catch up on missed education and that a skills training program was intended to help someone learn job skills. For example, a young woman in Goma said, "We really like AEPs because we lost many years, and today we can catch ourselves

up; this helps us to study in one year, it helps us to study without problems, it helps those of us who are poor and brings us up to secondary level." Another young woman in an AEP in Goma said, "Without this kind of education, we would have been forced to start off at the first grade of secondary school." Young men in Rubaya discussed how "nonformal education gives us the opportunity to study again to catch up with those with whom we studied in regular schools and who have already obtained their certificates." A young woman in an AEP in Kitshanga said that the program "helps those of us who have missed out on education because of war and poverty; we are able to study again, and the education really helps us who missed many years because two grades are completed in one year."

5.4.3 VALUE OF FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SPECIFICALLY

Participants in all 28 FGDs were also able to articulate more precise ideas of what education (including alternative education) could help them achieve beyond the general idea of a better future. Participants mentioned that they would be more competitive on the job market because of certificates, credentials, or specialized skills that were prerequisites for certain types of employment (26 of 28 FGDs); that they could express themselves better with language and articulation skills (15 of 28 FGDs); that they would be better able to take care of themselves and their families in day-to-day practical tasks because of their ability to use math, reading, and writing skills (e.g., in reading warning signs or managing household or farming finances—life skills) (11 of 28 FGDs); that they would have higher social standing by being able to say they had graduated or had education (11 of 28 FGDs); and finally, that education helped criminals, drug addicts, street kids, and ex-combatants reform themselves or change their lives for the better (6 of 28 FGDs). Those who had never been in an alternative education program more often reported reform as a key positive (three of eight *never* groups mentioned this versus just 1 of 10 *in* and 2 of 10 *left*) (Table 20).

Table 20: FGD response distribution: Specific answers to "Why is education good," by alternative education program status (multiple responses possible)

	In (n=10 groups)	Left (n=10 groups)	Never (n=8 groups)	Total Groups (n=28)
Job	10	9	7	26
Think/Communicate	5	5	5	15
Build Life Skills	4	5	2	11
Social Status	4	6	1	11
Reform	1	2	3	6
Total Mentions	**24**	**27**	**18**	**69**

Females were able to articulate slightly more reasons than males for why an education was good (36 vs. 32 mentions). Females more often mentioned improved thinking/communication skills to be a key reason for education, whereas males more often mentioned the ability to take care of practical matters. Another interesting difference can be seen in Rubaya, where participants across all groups were less able to articulate specific reasons for valuing education (6 mentions versus 16, 14, 18, and 14 in Anna Micheli Goma, Goma ETN, Kitshanga, and Rutshuru, respectively). Annex 2 contains a table that breaks down all response types; detailed participant responses are summarized thematically below.

5.4.3.1 JOBS

Of the 28 groups interviewed, 26 (all of those currently in alternative education programs and all but one each of the *left* and *never* groups) said that education was considered essential for getting a job; schooling was an extremely important means of ensuring future livelihoods for themselves and their families. Despite the high and pervasive unemployment rates throughout the DRC, both male and female young people remained committed to the idea that schooling is essential to securing a job: a female in Goma who had never been in an AEP, for example, said that education was "extremely useful in getting work." A young male in an AEP program in Kitshanga said, "To get a job, you have to read the job offers and write a job application letter; we can not do all that if we do not read or write." A young woman in an AEP in Rutshuru said that in "preparing for tomorrow," education was imperative if one wanted to "get work." It should be emphasized, though, that

participants did not suggest that education facilitated expansion into new fields or enterprises; rather, they believed that schooling represents a gateway to the existing job market—moreover, that possession of formal certification is essential for attempting to enter the job market but it is not a condition for success, only the attempt.

Although catch-up programs were certainly valued, skills training was often perceived to be a more direct means to a livelihood. One young man in an alternative education program in Goma said, "From an early age, I was attracted by construction; I already knew how to put up a few bricks, but today I am able to start building a house and completed [building it] through the training I receive…free of charge." Females in Goma ETN explained, "We gain skills in areas such as electronics, vehicle repair, installation of solar panels, juice-making as well as cooking. It is a very good program because it helps us find work and get paid easily…it gives us assurance that we will never lack work opportunities."

5.4.3.2 PRACTICAL ISSUES

For 11 of 28 groups, particularly those who were in (4 of 10) or had left (5 of 10) an alternative education program, education—especially the learning of basic math and literacy skills—enables people to better manage day-to-day tasks for themselves and their families, including the skills required to manage household finances and small businesses. A female who left an alternative education program in Goma said, "These are good programs since they teach us vital information needed for self-sustenance…so we can take care of our families." Several male participants in Kiwanja who had never been in an alternative education program explained their views in detail.

> "When I harvest in my field (soybeans), I give the harvest to my brother to weigh for me to proceed with the sale. But since I do not read, the scale is distorted. Initially, I had a lot of soy for sale, but the amount declines… making that sale, I hardly earn anything."
>
> "In the past, I used to sell eggs, but I do not read or write or count money. Someone else who was planning and looking after the money took advantage of my ignorance."
>
> "The little money I earn, if I had studied, I would know how to use it effectively, how to manage it for my small projects; but not having studied, I have great difficulty trying to do my small projects."

Education was also described as having a role in personal protection, as a young man in an AEP in Goma explains: "When it's written somewhere 'Danger, Warning: Gas, Volcano,' to be able to read these signs, to interpret them" is crucial. A male who left an alternative education program in Goma said, "In a public place where it says 'No Smoking,' someone who does not consider the sign would smoke without discomfort, but someone who studied understands that smoking is prohibited in this place."

5.4.3.3 THINKING AND COMMUNICATING

Slightly more than half of all the groups (15 of 28), equally distributed across alternative education program status, indicated that a specific outcome of education was being able to think more critically and communicate ideas more effectively. This was important both in forming and keeping relationships with others as well as in helping impart such skills to other family members. Education was said to "help us to know and speak like good, complete people" (female previously in AEP in Kitshanga); "Education opens the mind to you and teaches you how to educate your children in the future" (Male never in alternative education program, Goma). Securing language skills, particularly in French and English, was viewed by many participants in all areas as valuable in its own right because it would increase their ability to communicate with other people. One young male never in an alternative education program said, "If one day you have the chance to talk with the foreigners to finance our small projects, it would surely be French or English, hence the need to know the language to avoid use of translators who can knowingly or unintentionally skew the message or translate treacherously."

5.4.3.4 SOCIAL STATUS

Improved social standing is a valued aspect of formal and nonformal education for 11 of 28 groups, though particularly so for those in programs (4 of 10) and those who had left programs (6 of 10); many in the latter group spoke of education as a means of gaining or regaining a denied or lost place in society. Education in general was said to help someone be "valued in society" (male previously in alternative education program in Goma). One young female who had never been in an alternative education program said, "Since they are of an advanced age, they prefer alternative education, which provides them

with certification. They are thus not looked down on by society once they are educated." A young male who had dropped out of an alternative education program in Goma said, "Alternate education is a training given to disadvantaged, vulnerable [youth] to enable them not to be despised and abandoned by society…to reintegrate in society as men who have value." Another young man in the same program said, "Before I started alternative education, I was a despised person and ignored by society, without any value, but the training I received has helped me to be respected."

5.4.3.5 REFORM

Alternative education was also described by 6 of 28 groups (most often by those who had never been in a program) as playing an important role in societal cohesion and security through reintegration of criminals and combatants. A young man in an alternative education program in Goma said, "It is a path of recovery, reintegration into society, and learning self-care for young people who have already lived a life of crime." A young man who had never been in an alternative education program said, "If ETN did not exist, Goma would be flooded with street children, thieves, bandits...Even if people do not complete it, ETN decreases the extent of these evils that plague society, by offering this category of young people a necessary framework for learning."

5.5 Youth perspectives on AEP quality, access, and relevance

In general, although those interviewed would have preferred to have completed formal education, alternative education was considered by all 28 FGDs to be the next best option. Still, despite the huge growth of alternative education programming in North Kivu, we were easily able to identify young people who had dropped out of or missed many years of formal schooling *and* had never attended an alternative education program. Below we consider perspectives about these young people.

5.5.1 NEVER ATTENDED

Participants in all FGDs were asked why some young people in need of alternative education programs had never enrolled in one. As mentioned above, even study participants who had never attended one knew what an alternative education program was, and several were able to describe AEPs offered in the area. The most common reasons mentioned for nonattendance across all groups was that such young people had no motivation to take part. Those who had never attended might have a more reliable perspective on this question, so it is worth highlighting that the most common reasons they indicated were not knowing how to enroll or what programs were available. A table that breaks down all response types can be found in Annex 2; detailed responses given by participants are summarized thematically in Table 21.

Table 21: FGD response distributions to the question "Why do some young people never join an alternative education program," by alternative education program status (multiple responses possible)

	In (n=10 groups)	Left (n=10 groups)	Never (n=8 groups)	Total Groups (n=28)
No motivation	9	6	4	19
Fees	5	6	4	15
Enrollment	3	5	5	13
Need to work	5	4	1	10
Shame	4	3	2	9
Ability	2	3	2	7
Distance	0	1	1	2
Domestic duties	1	0	0	1
Total Mentions	**29**	**28**	**19**	**76**

Among those who had never attended an alternative education program, females more often said that no motivation (four of five FGDs) and limited ability (two of five FGDs) were factors versus males, who never mentioned such factors. Across all groups, males more often mentioned work responsibilities as a barrier (7 of 14 FGDs versus 3 of 14 FGDs for females), and females more often mentioned limited academic ability (they were "not smart enough") (7 of 14 FGDs versus none of the male FGDs) and limited motivation (11 of 14 FGDs versus 8 of 14 FGDs for males). Response distributions were relatively similar among those who had never been in an alternative education program across the different locations, except for those around Goma ETN and Rutshuru, who said that they had issues with enrollment (both FGDs), while participants in Kitshanga did not indicate this to be a factor in their not enrolling (instead, it was lack of money to pay fees, motivation, and shame). Details about the most common responses are provided below.

5.5.1.1 NO MOTIVATION

The most common reason given by participants for why a young person would never be in an alternative education program was lack of motivation (19 of 28 FGDs overall, 9 of 10 *in,* 6 of 10 *left,* and four of eight *never*). One female in Goma who had never attended a program said, "Those that don't like alternative education have given up on life," and another female in Goma who had never attended a program said, "Those who don't want to engage in alternative education… don't have the desire to learn about artisanal work." One female from Kitshanga who had never been in a program said that some youth "don't have the motivation to study with other people"; a female from Rutshuru never in a program said, "Youth [who are] not interested in alternative education are lazy." Perceptions of those who had some exposure to a program were similar: one young male currently in an AEP in Goma said, "Some street children who are offered free education in school rehabilitation centers refuse outright and prefer to stay in the street." A male who left a program in Kitshanga similarly said, "Some young people (such as child soldiers and street children) are already so corrupted by the military spirit and the street that they will not see the importance of school." A female who had left an AEP in Kitshanga said, "They don't have the desire to study, and they don't appreciate the importance of education." A male in an AEP in Kitshanga said that low motivation could be overcome if young people saw what education could achieve: "If other young people would first see the fruits of those studying at these remedial education centers, they too would engage in it." Similarly, a male who left a program in Rutshuru said, "Other young people see normal school graduates who have no work and say that if they cannot find work, it makes no sense to waste one's time in school; therefore, they see no difference in terms of living standards among those who have studied and those who have not studied." In short, some young people considered that the benefits of spending time on education were not always certain or significant enough to sacrifice time that could be spent earning money. Indeed, money is a significant concern for many young people, as explained further below.

5.5.1.2 HIGH COST

Another common reason given for why young people were never in alternative education programs was cost (15 of 28 FGDs); as one young man from Kitshanga who was never in a program said, "We initially were told that training is free, but when I realized I had to pay, I gave up." A young man in Goma who had never been in a program said, "In the remedial centers, they pay some tuition, yet some young people have no ability to find money." A male in Rutshuru who had never been in a program said, "some young people would love to take accelerated courses in the academic recovery centers but do not have the means, because in some centers, training is not free"; a female in Rutshuru who had never been in a program said that some young people "are orphans and lack tuition fees."

5.5.1.3 ENROLLMENT

Difficulty knowing how to or where to enroll in an alternative education program was another commonly reported reason that some young people never joined programs (13 of 28 FGDs). As one young male from Goma who had never been in a program said, "Some young people learn that there are remedial education centers, but they have no one to inform them enough to guide them; they do not have sufficient information." One female who had never been in an alternative education program in Goma said that some young people "don't want to engage in alternative education…and aren't aware that these programs are free." A female in Rutshuru who had never been in a program said that people like her "don't have information regarding the availability of alternative education."

5.5.1.4 LACK OF TIME DUE TO WORK AND/OR DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The need for income in order to survive leads some to choose work (generally to meet family needs) over alternative education programs—i.e., short-term priorities and survival trump long-term gain. This reason was reported by 10 of 28 groups but only one (of eight) of the *never* groups. One male from Rutshuru who had never been in a program said, "Some young people with a sufficiently advanced age and with many family responsibilities can no longer go back to school because of meeting family [financial] needs." Mining and agriculture were both often considered a better option than formal or non-formal education, particularly by youth in Rubaya, which is not surprising given its proximity to a number of artisanal mining opportunities.

5.5.1.5 SHAME

While participants were generally positive about alternative education, some young people worried about stigma associated with being in such a program. Shame was considered to be an issue for participants in 9 of 28 FGDs; two of the eight FGDs with youth who had never attended voiced this as a reason for not pursuing alternative education programs. A male from Goma who had never been in a program said, "Some young people say that with their advanced age, they cannot go back to school to avoid the contempt of the people." A female from Kitshanga who had never been in a program said, "Wealthier youth [who are sometimes in these programs] are afraid to study with the poor [and] look down on them [the poorer youth]… they [the poorer youth] are embarrassed." Perceptions of those who had some exposure to a program were similar. A male in Rutshuru who had never been in a program said, "Those who have studied or who are still studying reject us," and this deterred him and others from joining a program. Young females who had left an AEP in Goma said, "They feel as if they will be stigmatized by their friends should they take on alternative education…There's also a pervasive perception that this kind of education is only for the poor and orphans…pride and the fear of being laughed at makes others stay away." A young male who had left an alternative education program in Goma said, "Other young people are ashamed of the term *recovery*; given their age, they say they cannot return to school." Female respondents in an AEP in Goma stated that AEPs can be seen as feminine; another respondent described this view in positive terms, stating that education assists with "management of oneself and one's children."

5.5.1.6 ABILITY

Seven of 28 FGDs (all of them female groups, and two of eight *never* groups) maintained that, for many people, intellectual ability was a barrier to entering an alternative education program. One female in Goma who was never in a program said, "Those that don't like alternative education… aren't intelligent"; similarly, a female in Rutshuru never in a program said, "Youth not interested in alternative education… aren't intelligent." Perceptions of those who had some exposure to a program were similar: one female who left a program in Goma said, "Quite a few don't have the mental capabilities needed to study." A female in an AEP in Rubaya said, "A lot of youth don't like alternative education due to…a low IQ"; a female who left an AEP in Rutshuru said, "Some of the youth don't like education since they're not smart enough to begin with."

5.5.2 PROBLEMS WITH ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Among those who were currently in or had been in an alternative education program, a number of serious problems were reported in regard to program access, quality, and relevance. For those who had left, these problems were factors that contributed to noncompletion. The most commonly reported reasons for attrition across all groups were that the programs did not provide adequate language and skills training (24 of 28 FGDs), unqualified and/or unmotivated teachers (23 of 28 FGDs), insufficient instructional materials and dedicated classroom space (22 of 28 FGDs), and high costs (20 of 28 FGDs). Groups were far less likely to mention class scheduling (generally afternoon or evening) (4 of 28 FGDs), distance (2 of 28 FGDs), and enrollment (2 of 28 FGDs) as reasons for departure. Response distributions were relatively consistent across groups. A table that breaks down all response types can be found in Annex 2; detailed responses are summarized thematically in Table 22.

Table 22: FGD response distributions to question "What are some problems with alternative education programs," by alternative education program status (multiple responses possible)

	IN (N=10 GROUPS)	LEFT (N=10 GROUPS)	NEVER (N=8 GROUPS)	TOTAL GROUPS (N=28)
Insufficient topics	9	10	5	**24**
Poor teaching/teacher motivation	8	9	6	**23**
Lack of materials/ classrooms	8	9	5	**22**
High cost	7	8	5	**20**
Difficult schedule	2	2	0	**4**
Far distance	1	0	1	**2**
Difficult enrollment	1	1	1	**2**
Lack of time due to work	1	1	0	**2**
TOTAL	**36**	**40**	**23**	**99**

Males and females had similar perceptions about insufficient topics and lack of materials and classrooms being major problems, but males more often than females considered high cost to be an issue, while females more often than males considered poor teaching and teacher motivation to be an issue. Only males (and only in Goma ETN) reported inconvenient scheduling, long distance, and lack of time due to work; only females (also only in Goma ETN) reported difficult enrollment. Response distributions were otherwise similar across the communities. The remaining section provides details on participants' most commonly reported problems and considers the perspectives of teachers and other service providers within this sector to explain why these problems exist, how they affect students, and how they might be overcome.

5.5.3 INADEQUATE LANGUAGE AND SKILLS INSTRUCTION

The most commonly reported alternative education program limitation across all groups was that the programs did not provide adequate instruction (24 of 28 FGDs). One particularly common complaint was that some of the courses did not build sufficient foundation for basic reading skills; the problem was compounded by the fact that classes generally had a mixture of students at very different levels, some of whom were left behind because of not being able to read in the first place. One male in an AEP in Kitshanga explained, "Almost all of those who attend can neither read nor write; it is very difficult for them to understand we should first start with their literacy." A female in an AEP in Rubaya agreed: "[Programs are good when] they give literacy top priority since many people don't even know the alphabet."

Language skills in particular were valued—especially French, but also English—but were not always sufficiently taught. Young women in an AEP in Rubaya explained, "We'd like them to teach us French and Swahili since these are the two languages of which we have little understanding; French is ideal since it helps us express ourselves to others." English language classes were also suggested because "today the world is marching to the beat of English" (male previously in alternative education program Goma). Similarly, one young male enrolled at Benediction CRS in Rutshuru said, "Add English because this language has become essential now worldwide and in all that we do." Better provision of basic literacy to facilitate entry to alternative education programs was raised as an issue for skills training. Though there were no formal requirements for entry into an alternative education program beyond money, it was thought that language would help a person succeed in such a program. Vernacular language, it was said, could help with instruction and comprehension, but teaching local languages was not recommended due to the fact that other, more commonly spoken languages (such as French and Kiswahili) were more practical given their ability to be used outside of one's own ethnic group. In almost all FGDs, Kiswahili was also suggested to be the language of day-to-day communication versus vernacular languages because of the more pressing dangers of division, ethnic nationalism, and conflict that came with not being able to communicate with one another. In Rubaya, for example, we were told that residents needed to learn more than Kinyarwanda to facilitate their ability to operate in other regions, let alone the wider world. While multilingualism was valued, males enrolled in Goma ETN said it was important to "make lessons in groups: that is to say, in such a time at such an hour, it is the Swahili learners' program, then at another time, it is the French learners' program" to avoid certain learners who are unable to follow in a particular language.

Those in alternative education programs stated that the instruction they received was limited in that it did not always include real-world skills development, in particular skills training. Although a certificate was one objective of alternative education program attendance, it was not considered to be sufficient for actually securing a job; rather, a certificate plus skills training was ideal. As one young male in an alternative education program in Goma said, "This addition of other [market-relevant skills] training would be advantageous to those learners who are forced to undergo training in sections that do not please them for lack of other choices," which could then cause them to drop out before completing. A female who left an AEP in Rubaya said, "They should consider adding more artisanal modules since we have an abundance of social and general studies. Artisanal jobs are in demand and can mean the difference between being able to get paid for a day's work or lacking a means of sustaining oneself." None of the programs that were researched combined equivalency certification with skills training; certain AEPs did offer both options, but not as part of a single program. Similarly, the skills-training programs sometimes included components of literacy and numeracy training, but not as part of a certification for the latter.

Skills-training programs have their own distinct challenges, but not necessarily in terms of classes offered. In general, students in skills-training programs saw the classes they were able to take to be useful, interesting, and relevant; one respondent at ETN said they were à la mode and sufficient in terms of choices they had. At ETN Goma, students suggested additional courses, such as hospitality and decorating; students in CRS Anna Micheli requested additional classes in computer science.

While options seemed to be sufficient, the main issue seems to be that finishing a program did not necessarily ensure that those who graduated were prepared to enter skilled employment. Educators at ETN Goma described their programs as rushed, and that students wanted to leave as quickly as possible to enter employment without learning more than the basics. While such fast completers were more rapidly able to enter the job market, ETN educators thought that, as workers, they produced low-quality products or quick fixes and were unlikely to go on to produce improved products or offer better services. Male students in an alternative education program in Goma in particular requested more on-the-job training: "The center should organize enough field trips for learners, and not just expect them to be in training for the practice; the lack of sufficient practical experience limits student learning."

Of those who completed skills training as reported in the quantitative survey (n=9), six said that they had some but not enough income from the work that they did as a result of that training; two had plenty of income; and one had no income at all. The outcomes for a young person who has received skills training clearly remain uncertain.

5.5.4 POOR INSTRUCTION

Participants in 23 of 28 FGDs complained about the quality of teachers or teaching in alternative education programs; complaints were recorded for each of the five different programs. Fourteen of those groups, again across all programs, specifically said that teachers were unmotivated because they were not paid well, if at all—a finding generally confirmed in KIIs with the program staff members. A male in an AEP in Rutshuru said, "Some teachers are often absent for the reason that they are not well paid or well treated." One male in Kitshanga who had never been in a program explained his perception about teachers: "They need to be conscientious and respectful of the work they do, as well as available and anxious to give quality education to young people seeking training and education." A female in Kitshanga who had never been in a program said, "Teachers should be properly trained and asked not to look down on us and accept us as we are, and there need to be more teachers overall." Others said that teachers needed to be able to focus more on students, or that teachers needed better training in how to teach young people effectively.

5.5.5 INSUFFICIENT CLASSROOMS AND MATERIALS

Most (22 of 28) of the groups reported insufficient classroom materials, particularly those that were related to practical skills; others highlighted the lack of dedicated classrooms, which sometimes caused the class to move elsewhere or compelled the teacher to cancel lessons if the room was not available. A male who left a program in Rutshuru explained, "The center does not have its own premises; it is a tenant, and this means that sometimes learners are asked to leave the classroom for the sake of the building's owners." Similarly, one female currently in an AEP in Kitshanga said, "Make sure that we have enough learning facilities. On top of that, we require teaching materials, equipment used for practicals…."

A few FGDs (4 of 28) said that hours of study were a barrier preventing young people from attending alternative education when linked to the lack of classrooms. This, they explained, is because many alternative education programs rent or otherwise access the premises of formal schools, which teach their classes in the mornings, and thus alternative schooling must take place in the afternoons. These classes are viewed much less favorably than those conducted in the morning, as afternoons are when many economic activities are expected to take place. A male in Kitshanga who had previously been in an AEP said that he really needed to "change when teaching happens; training needs to take place before the afternoons, so that learners are able to do things in the afternoon to meet their basic needs." Another male currently in an AEP in Kitshanga said, "[If] donors would build dedicated premises for the centers, they would not need to rent buildings, and learners could study before noon and devote afternoons to work and survival." A male who left a program in Rubaya said, "Some learners would prefer that training is done just before noon, since in the afternoon they go about their activities." One male who had dropped out of an alternative education program in Goma said, "The training center ETN runs from 8:00 a.m. to 15:00…[Center managers need] to shorten the length of time or grant learners a monthly survival scholarship to enable them to meet some of their basic needs, because the course hours cover almost all of the day." Offering a flexible range of hours was raised as a possibility to assist those who continue working while studying.

5.5.6 COSTS

Although alternative education programs are considered to be "cheaper" options available to "the poor" or "those without money" (females in AEP Kiwanja), cost was still a major concern in discussions of program improvement (mentioned by 20 of 28 FGDs), even if the costs of alternative education programs are significantly less than those of formal schooling, and despite the possibility of being able to negotiate fee amount and payment. Even the USD 3.50 per term, for example, was considered by young women in an AEP in Goma to be an onerous amount. A male in an AEP in Rubaya said, "Donors should encourage recovery [AEP] centers, especially in rural areas and mining environments, to support all learners' tuition. Many young people drop out of studies…because they do not have the ability to pay the required fee. At the beginning of the year…we were among 127 students, but now the number of students has decreased significantly [to] about 60 learners." There are unlikely to be competing AEPs in one area, and young people enter the AEP closest to them if they have the money to pay fees or are willing to take the risk that they will be able to remain in the program without paying fees.[32]

5.5.7 SUMMARY

The analysis of youth voices across the North Kivu alternative education programs gives us a relatively clear picture of some of the similarities and differences between those who were in, dropped out of, or had never attended an alternative education program. Although there are no clear distinguishing features between those who have participated in an alternative education program and those who have not, our respondents' views do give us a clear picture of some of the key reasons that may keep a young person from finishing or even joining in the first place. The summary below highlights the main findings that were detailed above.

As shown in the close-ended survey with all participants, displacement was a significant issue for the majority (71%) of young people and in particular those who had never been in an alternative education program. The majority of respondents were hosted either by a host family or a family friend; fewer than 10% of respondents resided in IDP camps, and all IDP dwellers identified were current alternative education program students. More than half of participants—regardless of alternative education program status—reported feeling unsafe or only somewhat safe, citing violence and crime as their main safety concerns. Participants generally felt as though they lived in a close-knit community, though there were a handful of people, especially women and those who had been displaced, who felt strongly that their community was not at all close knit. Those who had left an alternative education program were significantly less likely to have any or some primary education than those who were currently in one. Those who were currently in or had been in an alternative education program were typically able to do basic math, read, and write at least a little, while a quarter and over a third of those who were never in

32 In some cases, students can negotiate a reduction in their fees or may be able to find a sponsor to pay on their behalf, especially as DIVAS-run AEPs are specifically targeted to reach the most vulnerable individuals (DGENF interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

an alternative education program were unable to do math or read and write at all, respectively. Overall, most respondents (69%) said that they believed they had a good chance of a good life. However, a higher proportion (81%) of those who were currently in an alternative education program thought they had a good chance of a good life versus those who had left or never been in an alternative education program (70% and 57% respectively)

Analysis of the focus group discussions that the participants took part in shows, above all, similar perceptions about alternative education options in the DRC regardless of respondent alternative education program status. In particular, it was clear that despite persistent barriers to formal schooling, most youth respondents placed a high value on education. Both males and females explicitly cited schooling as essential to securing jobs and livelihoods for themselves and their families. The most common reason reported for valuing education was jobs (26 of 28 FGDs reported), followed by thinking/communication skills (15 of 28 FGDs), status (11 of 15 FGDs), improved management of day-to-day activities (11 of 15 FGDs), and delinquency correction and reform (6 of 28 FGDs).

Lack of motivation was the most common reason given (19 of 28 FGDs) to explain why a young person would not ever participate in an alternative education program, with reasons for poor motivation ranging from "not worth the time and effort" and "part-time employment takes priority" to "not interested." Other reasons given for not participating in an alternative education program were that they were too costly (15 of 28 FGDs); that enrollment was difficult (13 of 28 FGDs); that potential students had limited time (10 of 28 FGDs); that feelings of shame or stigma were often associated with alternative education programs (9 of 28 FGDs); and that potential attendees lacked educational ability (7 of 28 FGDs).

The data also show that certain aspects of the programs as they are currently administered limit their potential impact and deter students from enrollment or completion. Respondents mentioned that there were too few learning topics (24 of 28 FGDs) as well as unqualified and/or unmotivated teachers (23 of 28 FGDs), insufficient instructional materials and dedicated classroom space (22 of 28 FGDs), and high costs (20 of 28 FGDs).

The testimonies offered by young people and alternative education program service providers indicate possible ways forward for alternative education programming in North Kivu and throughout the DRC. These opportunities are summarized in Section 6.

6 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN THE DRC

Although the DRC's recent progress in providing access to basic education has been remarkable, reaching the 5 million young people who remain out of school remains an urgent development priority. Alternative education programs can reach some of the most vulnerable young people through the provision of accelerated education as well as literacy and skills training. Providing increased support to the alternative education sector could make a significant positive difference to millions of young people, especially for those who are heads of households, mothers, or too old to return to school. Only a tiny proportion—fewer than 5%—of the estimated 990,000 children and youth who are out of school in North Kivu are benefiting from alternative education. This tremendous gap between the need for alternative education and the actual provision of service is a priority policy issue that requires redress. As this research has shown, young people themselves are aware of the value and relevance of alternative education programs, and should be consulted in program development to ensure relevance and adaptability to their needs, interests, and limited finances.

6.1 Youth-related findings

Despite persistent barriers to formal schooling, youth respondents (including those not currently or ever enrolled in alternative education programs) placed a high value on education. Young research participants placed a high value on education not only for the literacy and numeracy skills attained but also for key social benefits, including self-respect, self-expression, social worth, and independence. Both males and females believed that schooling is essential to securing jobs and future livelihoods for themselves and their families, and respondents overall expressed deep commitment to this view despite widespread high unemployment throughout the DRC. Analysis of FGDs with youth in North Kivu showed that the most common reasons for valuing education were jobs (26 of 28 FGDs reported), thinking/communication skills (15 of 28 FGDs), status (11 of 15 FGDs), improved management of day-to-day activities (11 of 15 FGDs), and delinquency correction and reform (6 of 28 FGDs).

Respondents' reasons for not participating in alternative education programs had mainly to do with relevance and access challenges. The most common reason given for not ever participating in alternative education programs was lack of motivation (19 of 28 FGDs) due to the perception that participation was not worth the time and effort, or that part-time employment was more important, or that programming was uninteresting or not relevant to their lives. Other reasons for nonparticipation in alternative education programs included that the cost was too high (15 of 28 FGDs); enrollment was difficult (13 of 28 FGDs); potential students had limited time available (10 of 28 FGDs); potential students had feelings of shame or stigma about alternative education programs (9 of 28 FGDs); potential students lacked educational ability (7 of 28 FGDs); classes were too great a distance from home (2 of 28); and classes conflicted with domestic responsibilities (1 of 28).

Certain aspects of the programs as currently administered limit their potential impact and deter students from enrollment or completion. Participants identified a number of problems within programs that can drive students to avoid attendance or drop out early, or that would otherwise affect the positive impact such a program could have. The most commonly reported problems mentioned across all groups were that the programs did not provide adequate language and skills training (24 of 28 FGDs), but other commonly mentioned issues were unqualified and/or unmotivated teachers (23 of 28 FGDs), insufficient instructional materials and dedicated classroom space (22 of 28 FGDs), and high costs (20 of 28 FGDs).

6.2 Policy and program findings

The DRC's alternative education system exists in policy and practice, but it needs significant capacity support if it is to fulfill its potential. According to DGENF statistics, more than 466,000 people were enrolled in alternative education programs throughout the country in 2014. This figure represents a small proportion of the estimated 5 million school-age children and youth who remain out of school. The reasons given for this gap in program coverage include insufficient payment and support to teachers and administrators, lack of pedagogical materials, and inadequate infrastructural standards. Teachers are often discouraged due to low or no pay and lack of classroom or training support. Furthermore, there are clear

inequities in teaching standards between urban and rural areas, and the persistence of a school fee system means that good teachers will move to schools where they are paid more. The absence of sufficient pedagogical materials renders the work of teachers extraordinarily difficult, compromising not only the quality of teaching offered but also levels of both pupil and teacher motivation.

A historic lack of government financing to the alternative education sector has left it structurally weak and unable to extend its coverage. This structural weakness could well continue: a review of the projected costs for the entire education sector for 2016–2020 shows that a tiny proportion (less than 1%) of the overall education budget has been allocated to alternative education.

Interviewees perceive international actors supporting alternative education in the DRC to be working outside of the government-established system. The very small amounts of government funding for alternative education leave the system dependent on funding from international donors, NGOs, and private actors. This dependence precludes effective oversight by the government, which currently lacks the capacity to effectively monitor and coordinate nongovernmental or private funding of alternative education programs.

The disconnect between government-run and NGO-run alternative education program initiatives was readily apparent during the Phase 2 interviews; several NGO-based interviewees lacked knowledge of government programs and agencies, and vice versa.[33] Among the reasons that NGO officials gave for sidestepping existing government structures were differing concepts of program purpose, timing, and instructional approach; conflicting funding and contractual mandates and administrative cultures; and divergent lines of accountability between DGENF officials and international implementers of donor–funder alternative education programs. Because many alternative education program providers work parallel to instead of in cooperation with the government, the government system has not benefited from the financial, technical, and human resources offered by significant international investment in alternative education, and thus government capacity to offer or oversee alternative education remains weak and unable to meet the needs of vast numbers of underserved young people.

6.3 Recommendations

Increase visibility and stakeholder awareness of the positive potential of alternative education. The predominant focus on formal education throughout the DRC has obscured the crucial role of alternative education, both as a short-term response for the millions of young people who remain outside of the formal system and as a new approach to meeting the changing education demands of today's global economy. To influence government policy and to improve the quality and reach of the existing alternative education system, both government and nongovernment actors need targeted and consistent information, robust research results, and frank discussion about the system's benefits and potential as well as about its requisite financial and policy support.

Support approaches that respond to the needs of young people. This research has shown that young people appreciate the positive multidimensional role of education. For them, the most important benefits relate to literacy and numeracy in the short term and job security and future livelihoods in the long term. Additionally, the social value of education emerges very strongly, with young people emphasizing the important role of education in fostering self-esteem, independence, and ability to care for their families. Although young people generally conceive such benefits as coming from formal education, alternative education programs can also, and perhaps even more effectively, respond to these needs. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the degree of stigma currently associated with nonformal education can deter young people from enrolling in such programs even if they are able.

The potential for adaptability is one of alternative education's greatest assets. Innovations in scheduling, for example, could allow young people to continue to study alongside work, parenting, and other family responsibilities. When effectively integrated with skills training, accelerated education has the potential to be responsive to local market demands and personalized to the competencies and interests of individual students. Relevant and productive opportunities can be generated for

33 In one notable example, international staff responsible for implementation of at least one internationally funded education project had no contact with senior DGENF staff (multiple interviews, Kinshasa, February 2016).

elements of DRC's population that have not traditionally had access to opportunity. Promising models for realizing such potential exist elsewhere in Africa, including in Ghana, Mali, and Zambia (Hartwell 2008) and bear consideration for adaptation in the DRC. Once tested and proven to be effective, they will likely generate their own momentum, replication, adaptation, and upscaling.

Strengthen support of the existing national system and ensure adequate financing for quality service provision. The DRC is fortunate to have in place an alternative education program policy framework with responsibility and oversight clearly mandated to MAS and DGENF. These elements, however, are insufficient to provide consistent quality and reach to the DRC's large out-of-school population. NGO-run projects have tried to fill the gap, but no collection of small-scale private initiatives will ever effectively meet such need. Instead, resources should be directed toward building the alternative education system's institutional capacity in the areas of financing, planning, policy, infrastructure, materials, and human capacity. As these aspects of the system are improved, it will be easier to raise awareness among young people, parents, and business leaders on the potential benefits of alternative education.

Increase coordination between private providers, donors, and the national system. As an important first step toward greater cohesion and capacity within the national alternative education system, private providers and/or donors should seek ways of strengthening national policies and systems, including a standard protocol for memoranda of understanding with the relevant government actors at national and/or regional levels for project design and implementation. None of the providers in the North Kivu case study had taken this step, nor was there any indication that such memoranda had filtered up to Kinshasa even if they were done at the regional level. Additionally, external actors should participate in regular information-sharing and coordination meetings with government officials, which will facilitate monitoring of service provision, enhance program quality, and disseminate learning and innovations across the sector.

6.4 Conclusion

This research has clearly shown that international donors, implementing partners, and private actors in the DRC can do much more to ensure that their work reflects emerging best practices for alternative education in order to support the strengthening of the national alternative education system. Indeed, most of the challenges facing the alternative education sector in the DRC are common to many conflict- and crisis-affected environments. A more outcome-focused dialogue on key challenges—financing, program siloing and education system marginalization, the dearth of youth-oriented and context-relevant curriculum, insufficient program management, and insufficient teacher training and support—could lead to greater attention and commitment to their resolution.[34]

34 See USAID ECCN's Policy Issues Brief recommendations for conducting policy dialogue on AEPs in the DRC.

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ANNEX 2: ADDITIONAL PHASE 1 DATA

Program Details

ACCELERATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

AEP: BENEDICTION NETWORK

The Benediction Network was established in North Kivu in 2009 to help address the province's lack of alternative education program offerings beyond basic literacy programs. In one year, 2009–2010, the director set up 77 CRSs in Goma, Masisi, and Rutshuru. There were no funds at first; it was truly "a benevolent effort." The director was able to use local government contacts to discuss his plans with DIVAS, who then approved the network. The individual CRSs are certified, but no memoranda of understanding are signed. From 2011 to 2012, many of the CRSs closed, although 41 are still operational. Group statistics are not collected. From 2010 to 2011, teachers within the network started to demand salaries, but parents had no money for fees. Items such as chalk were lacking. The International Rescue Committee provided CRS Rutshuru with a one-time donation of teaching and learning packets. Teachers reported that young people were often traumatized and could be violent but that psychosocial support was not available.

CRS Benediction Rubaya was opened specifically to target young people working in the local informal (or artisanal) mines in order that they might return to formal schooling. Many of the mines closed in 2010, resulting in the loss of fee-paying students; however, some students who apparently had money from working in the mines still did not want to pay fees. As the government undertook reforms of the mining sector, work dried up, and many miners returned to their homes away from Rubaya, leading to the closure of the CRS. In October 2015, the school reopened. There is no DIVAS education representative in Rubaya, so a delegation came from Goma for the reopening—although in general the local director is expected to report to the network head, who may engage with DIVAS.

At CRS Rubaya, which reopened with 500 students, 80% of attendees are female, and ages range from 10 to 70. More than 50% are residents of the local IDP camp, which opened in 2011 and hosts mainly Rwandan Hutus and their descendants who came to the DRC in 1994, settled in a variety of areas (possibly following initial displacement by Rwandan forces), and then arrived in Rubaya following secondary or tertiary long-term displacement (again, possibly by Rwandan forces or a proxy thereof). One teacher also lives in the camp; another camp resident left teaching to sell phone credit. Some students have positions in town planning, some work in pharmacies, but most are underemployed, with sporadic informal jobs. In order to recruit students, the director made announcements in churches.

Fees are supposed to be CDF 6,000 per year (approximately six USD) —cheaper than formal school fees, although not dramatically so. Many students, however, are unable to pay any fees at all. Equipment is severely underfunded, and teacher salaries are currently unpaid; staff members hope that students will begin to pay fees eventually or that a donor will be found. Classes are conducted in formal school buildings. The formal schools requested CDF 500 (approximately 50 cents USD) per student per month as rent; this amount was negotiated down to a USD 50 flat rate per month, although this was also not paid.

CRS Benediction Rutshuru has operated in some capacity since 2008, when it offered a basic literacy course; the literacy classes are still given, along with skills training programs in driving, tailoring, and hairdressing. Students are between 10 and 60 years of age. CRS Rutshuru initially selected 12 overage students from local villages who already had some primary schooling and held intensive all-day classes with one teacher in the morning and another in the afternoon to facilitate their passing the national primary exam. All of the students passed, and now three primary grades are taught. In 2011–2012, 16 out of 21 students passed the national primary exam; in 2014–2015, 34 of 36 were successful. Rutshuru students did not need to pay fees in 2015 as the USAID Opportunities for Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education (OPEQ) project paid teacher salaries.

AEP: ST. BENOIT KITSHANGA/KIUSHA

Ephrata-IDAV *(Initiative de Developpment pour l'Accompagnement des Vunerables)* in Kinshasa coordinates CRSs in every DRC province. It has a provincial office in Goma, and St. Benoit is one of its satellite programs; St. Benoit's Kitshanga/Kiusha site, which opened in September 2015, was our focus. The director of the St. Benoit network was studying nursing when he heard about the CRS program; he began as a promoter and was asked to stay on as supervisor.

Officially, Ephrata-IDAV provides the national nonformal curriculum to its CRSs; St. Benoit instructors did not receive the materials, however, so they developed a condensed version of the national formal curriculum. The St. Benoit director stated that the network reports to DIVAS, which conducts monitoring and evaluation, although how this happens was not clarified. MEPSINC staff were informed that the CRS had commenced operations, although community meetings were not held.

Currently enrolled students range in age from 10 upward. St. Benoit hopes to target vulnerable groups: young mothers, disabled people, and internally displaced persons were all mentioned. Primary fees are CDF 1,000 (approximately one USD) per month. The classrooms of a formal Catholic school are used, although rent is not required.

CENTRE DE RÉCUPÉRATION SCOLAIRE ET DE FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE: ANNA MICHELI

The Anna Micheli Center aims to educate youth and promote women. The sisters of the congregation *Picole Figlee (petites filles) des sacrés cœurs Jésus et Marie,* who founded the Anna Micheli Center, have been present in the Ndosho area of Goma since 2006, when the area, now a built-up residential and light industrial sector of the city, was essentially a large village. A large influx of IDPs arrived with the conflicts that flared up in 2006, and the sisters found that many girls and women had missed lessons, both primary and secondary, and began teaching basic literacy in combination with the parish Xaverian priests. Cutting, sewing, and knitting were later added to the curriculum. The center began to operate a CRS in 2011.

Benefactors associated with the congregation helped in the construction of dedicated classrooms at the center and in buying equipment such as tables and chairs. DIVAS authorized operations at Anna Micheli and directed the organizations IRC and War Child to assist the center. IRC supported teacher training for six months in 2015; War Child assisted with literacy training but provided no additional payments for teachers. Because DIVAS staff can easily travel to the site, the division is able to maintain monitoring and evaluation of Anna Micheli. MEPSINC also seems to provide monitoring and evaluation, as well as materials such as textbooks. The national nonformal curriculum is used, and curriculum and assessment are nationally determined. However, materials are limited, and budgets are planned based on fees received.

Particular age groups are not targeted. All students pay fees. Primary classes run from 13:00 to 17:15 Monday to Saturday. Community meetings are not held. Teachers are recruited locally and paid salaries equivalent to those of formal teachers.

SKILLS-TRAINING PROGRAMS

Although a number of vocational programs in North Kivu are formally run by METP (see Section 4), numerous small, uncoordinated NGOs set up and operate nonformal educational activities that are oriented toward skills training. We researched in depth one large, formal program (ETN) and did KIIs with staff of two smaller informal programs. We conducted FGDs with ETN but not with the informal programs because a sufficient number of students and former students of the latter were not available to speak with us. The programs are briefly described below.

ETN GOMA

Education and Training Group for the Traumatized of Nyiragongo (*Equipe d'Education et Encadrement des Traumatisés de Nyiragongo*) (ETN) has 40 residential places in Goma but works with more than 3,000 participants in the capital and in outreach programs throughout North Kivu. Nonformal skills training is combined with psychosocial support and a range of community activities.

ETN is registered with DIVAS. The program was started and is still managed by four INGOs, nine local organizations, and four local churches. Good relations are maintained with local authorities. The DRC government officially states that programs must last three years, but ETN runs one-year programs. Apprenticeships are available, but individuals must provide their own equipment. Start-up loans and bridging agricultural loans have been provided on occasion.

Courses taught in ETN Goma comprise sewing and tailoring, welding and fitting, masonry and painting, carpentry, hairdressing, cooking, auto mechanics, computer electronics, and plumbing. Basic literacy skills are provided when needed. Program choice was said to be supported by research, although we were not provided with documentation of research and planning. Some students pay fees, and a diverse range of INGOs provide grants. ETN is considered to be an affordable substitute for tertiary education. Vulnerable individuals are recruited, such as demobilized combatants, street youth, orphans, young unmarried mothers, the disabled, and the very poor.

Other small nonformal skills-training programs

The two small NGO-directed nonformal skills training centers where we conducted KIIs are the Women's Association of Kitshanga (which consists of small classes learning to crochet cushion covers) and *Association pour le Développement des Initiatives Paysannes* (ASSODIP) (who are also involved in monitoring, advocacy, research, and education in the mining areas of Masisi; anti-slavery projects; and prisoner advocacy). ASSODIP has conducted research with the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) on conflict related to natural resource extraction. In 2007, research in Masisi and Walikale found over a thousand children as young as six working in the mines. The organization previously offered training in hairdressing and animal husbandry to former combatants, but these programs have now closed.

Qualitative Response Distributions

Table 23: FGD response distributions for "Why is education (including alternative education programs) a good thing," by gender, location, and alternative education program status

	Anna Micheli GOMA	GOMA ETN	Kitshanga (St. Benoit)	Rubaya (Benediction)	Rutshuru (Benediction)	TOTAL
COMMUNICATE	5	2	4	2	2	15
Female	3	1	3	2	2	11
In	1		1	1		3
Left	1	1	1	1	1	5
Never	1		1		1	3
Male	2	1	1			4
In	1		1			2
Never	1	1				2
JOB	6	5	5	4	6	26
Female	3	3	3	2	3	14
In	1	1	1	1	1	5
Left	1	1	1	1	1	5
Never	1	1	1		1	4
Male	3	2	2	2	3	12
In	1	1	1	1	1	5
Left	1	1		1	1	4
Never	1		1		1	3
LIFE SKILLS	4	1	4		2	11
Female	2		2			4
In			1			1
Left	1		1			2
Never	1					1
Male	2	1	2		2	7
In	1	1	1			3
Left	1		1		1	3
Never					1	1
REFORM		3	2			5
Female		2	1			3
Left		1				1
Never		1	1			2
Male		2	1			3
In		1				1
Left			1			1
Never		1				1
STATUS	1	3	3		4	11
Female	1	1	1		2	5
In					1	1
Left	1	1	1		1	4
Male		2	2		2	6
In		1	1		1	3
Left		1			1	2
Never			1			1
TOTAL	16	15	18	6	14	69

Table 24: FGD response distributions for "What are the problems with alternative education programs," by gender, location, and alternative education program status

	Anna Micheli GOMA	GOMA ETN	Kitshanga (St. Benoit)	Rubaya (Benediction)	Rutshuru (Benediction)	TOTAL
FAR DISTANCE		2				2
Male		2				2
In		1				1
Never		1				1
DIFFICULT ENROLLMENT		2				2
Female		2				2
Left		1				1
Never		1				1
HIGH COST	4	3	4	4	5	20
Female	1		2	2	2	7
In	1			1		2
Left			1	1	1	3
Never			1		1	2
Male	3	3	2	2	3	13
In	1	1	1	1	1	5
Left	1	1	1	1	1	5
Never	1	1			1	3
LACK OF MATERIALS / CLASSROOMS	5	5	4	2	6	22
Female	2	2	1	1	3	9
In	1	1	1		1	4
Left		1		1	1	3
Never	1				1	2
Male	3	3	3	1	3	13
In	1	1	1		1	4
Left	1	1	2	1	1	6
Never	1	1			1	3
DIFFICULT SCHEDULE			2	1	1	4
Male			2	1	1	4
In			1		1	2
Left			1	1		2
POOR TEACHING / MOTIVATION	4	5	6	3	5	23
Female	3	2	3	2	3	13
In	1	1	1	1	1	5
Left	1	1	1	1	1	5
Never	1		1		1	3
Male	1	3	3	1	2	10
In		1	1		1	3
Left	1	1	1	1		4
Never		1	1		1	3
INSUFFICIENT TOPICS	6	4	6	4	4	24
Female	3	2	3	2	3	13
In	1	1	1	1	1	5
Left	1	1	1	1	1	5
Never	1		1		1	3
Male	3	2	3	2	1	11
In	1	1	1	1		4
Left	1	1	1	1	1	5
Never	1		1			2
LACK OF TIME DUE TO WORK		1		1		2
Male		1		1		2
In				1		1
Left		1				1
GRAND TOTAL	19	22	22	15	21	99

Table 25: FGD response distributions for "Why are some youth never in alternative education programs," by gender, location, and alternative education program status

	Anna Micheli GOMA	GOMA ETN	Kitshanga (St. Benoit)	Rubaya (Benediction)	Rutshuru (Benediction)	TOTAL
ABILITY	3		1	1	2	7
Female	3		1	1	2	7
In	1			1		2
Left	1		1		1	3
Never	1				1	2
DISTANCE		2				2
Male		2				2
Left		1				1
Never		1				1
DOMESTIC RESP.	1					1
Male	1					1
In	1					1
ENROLLMENT	3	5	1	1	3	13
Female	2	2			1	5
In	1					1
Left	1	1				2
Never		1			1	2
Male	1	3	1	1	2	8
In		1	1			2
Left		1		1	1	3
Never	1	1			1	3
FEES	3		4	4	4	15
Female	1		1	2	2	6
In			1	1		2
Left				1	1	2
Never	1				1	2
Male	2		3	2	2	9
In	1		1	1		3
Left	1		1	1	1	4
Never			1		1	2
NO MOTIVATION	3	4	5	2	5	19
Female	2	3	3		3	11
In	1	1	1		1	4
Left		1	1		1	3
Never	1	1	1		1	4
Male	1	1	2	2	2	8
In	1	1	1	1	1	5
Left			1	1	1	3
SHAME	4		2	2	1	9
Female	2		2	2		6
In	1		1	1		3
Left	1			1		2
Never			1			1
Male	2				1	3
In					1	1
Left	1					1
Never	1					1
WORK RESP.		1	2	4	3	10
Female			1	2		3
In			1	1		2
Left				1		1
Male		1	1	2	3	7
In			1	1	1	3
Left		1		1	1	3
Never					1	1
GRAND TOTAL	17	12	15	14	18	76

ANNEX 3: PHASE 1 TOOLS

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with relevant officials from the national government, USAID and other donor agencies, UN agencies, religious organizations that are involved in education, international and national NGOs, officials of programs for out-of-school youth, program teachers, and community leaders. Researchers sought to better understand alternative education provision in the DRC generally, and North Kivu more specifically. The first aim focused on gathering detailed contextual information about programs that were used as case studies; the following questions were asked:

1. How was this program designed?
2. What rationales informed program design?
3. Was a preprogram assessment undertaken? If so, what were the results?
4. What is the program's target group?
5. How was the program funded?
6. What curriculum does the program use?
7. How are teachers recruited, trained, and compensated?
8. What are the expected outcomes for program participants?
9. How is the program monitored and evaluated?
10. What theory of change was developed?
11. Were results from monitoring and evaluation used? If so, in what ways?

Focus Group Discussions

Table 26: FGD questions for all groups

WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW?	KEY QUESTION	SWALI MKUU	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS AS NECESSARY	MASWALI MENGINE YAKIHITAJIKA
What do youth think the purpose of education is?	What is education?	Elimu ni nini?		
What do youth think the purpose of alternative education is?	What is alternative education?	Elimu mbadala ni nini?	What are accelerated education programs? How is alternative education different from formal education?	Mipango kuharakisha elimu ni nini? Kuna tofauti gani baina ya elimu mbadala kawaida / ya serikali?
What is offered to youth and what is their knowledge of alternative education program offerings?	What programs are offered in this area, town, or village?	Kuna mipango gani hapa?		
Do youth value alternative education programs?	Are the programs good?	Mipango mizuri?	Are they relevant? Why? Why not?	Mipango inasaidia watu maishani?
What else would youth like to see provided?	How could programs be improved?	Ungefanya nini kutengeneza mipango?	What would you do to improve them? What else would be taught? How else would it be taught? Why?	Ungefanya nini kutengeneza mipango? Ingefundisha nini? Darasa gani? Ingefundishwaje? Kwa nini?
What language is used for instruction in alternative education programs?	What language(s) are used in alternative education programs?	Je, lugha gani inatumika darasani?		
What language should be used for instruction in alternative education programs?	Which language(s) would you prefer to be used in alternative education programs?	Je, ungependa lugha gani darasani?		
What factors and rationales drive out-of-school youth into alternative education programs?	Why do youth join alternative education programs?	Kwa nini vijana wanasoma hivyo—elimu mbadala?	Explore gender, economic necessity, membership in particular groups or vocations, and cultural values and constraints	Masababu ni je?
What factors and rationales keep out-of-school youth from participating in alternative education programs?	What stops youth joining alternative education programs?	Kwa nini vijana hawawezi kusoma hivyo—elimu mbadala?	Explore gender, economic necessity, membership in particular groups or vocations, and cultural values and constraints	Masababu ni je?

QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE for FGD participants		Maswali ya kuuliza vijanan kabla ya mazungumzo
Code/ alama ya siri	Question/swali	
		Coding (before interview)/(kabla ya kuuliza maswali)
1a	Date/tarehe	
1b	Enumerator name/jina la mwana nambari na maswali	
1d	Community name/jamii	
1e	Focus group/chama cha mazungumzo	1. In alternative education program / anasoma elimu mbadala 2. Left alternative education program / alianza elimu mbadala hajamaliza 3. Never joined alternative education program / hajasoma elimu mbadala
1f	Urban, periurban, rural/mji ama kijiji	1. Urban / jiji 2. Rural / kijiji 3. Mining / uchimbaji
ih	[Read statement of informed consent]/ [Soma taarifa la kukubali kujibu]: Voluntarily and of your own free will, are you willing to be interviewed at this time? / Kama hiari na bila kulazimishwa unakubali kujibu maswali sasa? [If yes, continue; if no, end interview] / [Wakisema ndiyo, endelea, lakini hapana, maliza]	1. Yes /ndiyo 2. No / hapana
Basic—Education and SES / Maelezo ya Kibinafsi - masomo na hali ya kijamii na kiuchumi		
2	Name of respondent / jina la anayejibu	
2a	Mobile number / simu	
2b	Place of residence (description) / anakaa wapi	
3	Type of residence / aina ya sehemu ya kukaa	1. Own house / nyumba yake 2. Staying in family friend's house / anakaa na familia-nyumba ya rafiki 3. Renting room / kukodi chumba 4. Camp / kambi 5. Host family / akae kama mgeni 6. Nowhere; not secure / hana sehemu pa kukaa ama hana usalama 7. Other / ingine _____
4	If you move, is there someone we can contact in order to find you again? [Name and relationship] / Ukihama, kunamwingine tunaweza kupata kukutafuta baadaye? [Jina na uhusiano]	
4a	Contact phone number / simu	
5	Age / umri	#_____
6	Do you have a birth certificate? / Cheti cha kuzaliwa unacho?	1. Yes / ndiyo 2. No / hapana
7	Gender / jinsia	1. Male / mwanamume 2. Female / mwanamke
8	Do you have a physical disability? / Una ulemavu?	1. Yes / ndiyo 2. No / hapana

QUESTIONNAIRE for FGD participants *cont.*		Maswali ya kuuliza vijanan kabla ya mazungumzo
9	Marital status / umefunga ndoa?	1. Single—Never married / bado 2. Married / ameoa—ameolewa 3. Divorced / ametaliki—ametalikiwa 4. Widowed / mjane 5. Engaged or Cohabiting / anamchumba au wanakaa pamoja 6. Separated / wameachana
10	Number of children / watoto	#_____
11	Highest level of school completed / alifika wapi shuleni	1. None or some primary / hakuna—primari kidogo 2. 8th grade or less / chini ya darasa la 8 3. Some high school / secondari kidogo 4. High school graduate / alimaliza secondari 5. Some college or training / chuo kikuu kidogo 6. Finished college / alimaliza chuo kikuu
11a	Can you read and write? / Unaweza kusoma na kuandika?	1. Yes / ndiyo 2. No / hapana 3. Not at all / hakuna
11b	Can you do basic math? / Unaweza kufanya hisabiti msingi (unaweza kuhesabu)?	1. Yes / ndiyo 2. No / hapana 3. Not at all / hakuna
12	How many people live in your household? / Kuna watu wangapi kwa nyumba?	#_____
13	Nationality / utaifa	1. Congolese / Mkongo 2. Other / Ingine 3. No response / hajibu
14	Religion / dini	1. Catholic / Katoliki 2. Protestant / Protestanti 3. Muslim / Uislamu 4. Other / ingine _____
15	Have you lived in this community your whole life? / Umekaa jamini hii maisha mzima?	1. Yes / ndiyo 2. No / hapana

Research Ethics

As with any research that deals with vulnerable or marginalized populations, it was imperative to pay close attention to the potential risk of doing harm through asking questions or eliciting conversation. The research team followed ethical guidelines prescribed by the Office for Human Research Protections and reviewed and permitted by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The team was made acutely aware of the need to obtain vocal informed consent from every participant in the study; each participant was told that his or her name (if provided for the purposes of follow-up data collection) would not be used in any project documents without explicit permission; that pseudonyms would be used in any narratives; and that each participant would be given for reporting purposes a unique ID, which would be kept separately in a password-protected document. If, at any point in a conversation, it appeared that the participant no longer wanted to speak, then it was imperative that the researcher a) could identify this easily and b) stop the research immediately. Participants were never coerced to take part in the first place or to keep answering while taking part. When obtaining informed consent, researchers explained the types of questions that would be asked on the survey and assured the participant that a) his/her answers would remain totally anonymous, b) he/she can choose not to answer a question if he/she wants, and c) he/she can stop the interview at any point without question. To conduct research with a minor (under the age of 18), researchers obtained permission from a parent or guardian. Forms used in the field for each type of participant (and for children, their guardians) are provided below.

Assent Statement—Older child / young adult 15–17 years old

PROJECT TITLE: Youth and Alternative Education in North Kivu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ash Hartwell
LEAD RESEARCHER: Gregory Deacon

WHAT IS A RESEARCH STUDY?

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. You do not need to be in a research study if you don't want to.

WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO BE PART OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

You are being asked to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about accelerated education in North Kivu. We are inviting you to be in the study because: you are in such a program/used to be in such a program/we would like to know why you are not in such a program and if you would like to be. About 200 participants will be in this study.

If you agree to participate, the interview/focus group will be conducted privately, and the information you provide us will remain confidential. We will keep your participation secret and you will never be identified individually. The information you provide will be combined with that from about 100 men and 100 women. If you choose not to participate in our survey, you will not be penalized in any way. If you accept to participate and you change your opinion later, you can also ask me to interrupt the interview whenever you want. You may find that you are uncomfortable or do not wish to answer some of the questions. You can freely refuse to answer any questions if you prefer not to and this is perfectly okay. If you participate, you will not receive money or gifts, and you will not benefit directly from your participation. However, your participation will provide critical information about behaviors and relationships and foster healthy behaviors, relationships and learning in your community. You can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell the person in charge. It's okay.

If we hear allegations of child abuse or mistreatment, we are under obligation to report it to IRC/NCA who will decide what to do about the issue.

DO YOUR PARENTS OR TEACHERS KNOW ABOUT THIS STUDY?

This study was explained to your parents / guardians and they said that we could ask you if you want to be in it. You can talk this over with them before you decide. If you want to be in the study, your parents will need to sign a form too.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

You can ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call (insert appropriate contact).

You can also take more time to think about being in the study and also talk some more with your parents about being in the study.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

If you would like to talk to someone about how you feel as a result of questions asked during this interview, you can receive counseling here:

ETN=*Équipe d'éducation et d'encadrement des traumatisés de Nyiragongo*; Organization for the Education and Mentoring of those Traumatised in Nyiragongo.

- ☐ Adresse: Goma, Quartier Kyeshero, Avenue Karibu, no 17
- ☐ E-mail: etnnyiragongo@yahoo.fr
- ☐ Phone: 0819700750 0810092575 0813130080

VOLUNTARILY AND OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS PAPER TO KEEP.

IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THIS STUDY, PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW.

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

Name of Person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Informed Consent Statement—Youth 18+

PROJECT TITLE: Youth and Alternative Education in North Kivu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ash Hartwell
LEAD RESEARCHER Gregory Deacon

WHAT IS A RESEARCH STUDY?

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. You do not need to be in a research study if you don't want to.

WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO BE PART OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

You are being asked to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about accelerated education in North Kivu. We are inviting you to be in the study because you are in such a program / used to be in such a program / we would like to know why you are not in such a program and if you would like to be. About 200 participants will be in this study.

If you agree to participate, the interview/focus group will be conducted privately, and the information you provide us will remain confidential. We will keep your participation secret, and you will never be identified individually. The information you provide will be combined with that from about 100 men and 100 women. If you choose not to participate in our survey, you will not be penalized in any way. If you accept to participate and you change your opinion later, you can also ask me to interrupt the interview whenever you want. You may find that you are uncomfortable or do not wish to answer some of the questions. You can freely refuse to answer any questions if you prefer not to, and this is perfectly okay. If you participate, you will not receive money or gifts, and you will not benefit directly from your participation. However, your participation will provide critical information about behaviors and relationships and foster healthy behaviors, relationships, and learning in your community. You can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell the person in charge. It's okay.

If we hear allegations of child abuse or mistreatment, we are under obligation to report it to IRC/NCA, who will decide what to do about the issue.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

You can ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call (insert appropriate contact).

You can also take more time to think about being in the study.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

If you would like to talk to someone about how you feel as a result of questions asked during this interview, you can receive counseling here:

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- ☐ Adresse: Goma, Quartier Kyeshero, Avenue Karibu, no 17
- ☐ E-mail: etnnyiragongo@yahoo.fr
- ☐ Phone: 0819700750 0810092575 0813130080

VOLUNTARILY AND OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS PAPER TO KEEP.

IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THIS STUDY, PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW.

Signature or thumbprint _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

Name of Person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Informed Consent Statement: Parents of young people age 15–17

PROJECT TITLE: Youth and Alternative Education in North Kivu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ash Hartwell
LEAD RESEARCHER: Gregory Deacon

WE HAVE ASKED YOUR CHILD TO TAKE PART IN OUR RESEARCH STUDY.

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. They do not need to be in a research study if they don't want to.

WHY ARE THEY BEING ASKED TO BE PART OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

Your child is being asked to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about accelerated education. We are inviting them to be in the study because they are in such a program / used to be in such a program / we would like to know why they are not in such a program and if they would like to be. About 200 participants will be in this study.

If they agree to participate, they will complete a survey, tell us about their experiences in life, and discuss education with a group of 6–8 other young people/be interviewed about education.

The interview/focus group will be conducted privately, and the information will remain confidential. We will keep their participation secret, and they will never be identified individually. The information they provide will be combined with that from about 100 boys and 100 girls. If they choose not to participate in our survey, or you do not consent to their taking part, you will not be penalized in any way. If they accept to participate and you consent to their taking part but you or they change your or their opinion later, you or they can also ask me to interrupt the interview being conducted with your child whenever you or they want. They may find that they are uncomfortable or do not wish to, answer some of the questions. They can freely refuse to answer any questions if they prefer not to and this is perfectly okay. If they participate, you and they will not receive money or gifts, and you and they will not benefit directly from participation. However, their participation will provide critical information about behaviors and relationships and foster healthy behaviors, relationships, and learning in your community.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION COLLECTED ABOUT THEM?

The information collected about your child during this study will be kept safely locked up. Nobody will know it except the people doing the research.

The study information about them will not be given to you or their teachers. The researchers will not tell their friends.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

You can ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call (insert appropriate contact).

You can also take more time to think about being in the study and also talk some more with your child about being in the study.

If you have any concerns about their rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.

If you or your child would like to talk to someone about how you feel as a result of questions asked during this interview, you can receive counseling here:

ETEN=*Équipe d› éducation, et d'encadrement des traumatisés de Nyiragongo*; Organization for the Education and Mentoring of those Traumatised in Nyiragongo.

- ☐ Adresse: Goma, Quartier Kyeshero, Avenue Karibu, no 17
- ☐ E-mail: etnnyiragongo@yahoo.fr
- ☐ Phone: 0819700750 0810092575 0813130080

OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY:

If we hear allegations of child abuse or mistreatment, we are under obligation to report it to IRC/NCA who will decide what to do about the issue.

IF YOU DECIDE YOUR CHILD CAN BE IN THE STUDY, PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME BELOW.
YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS PAPER TO KEEP.
IF YOU WANT TO BE IN THIS STUDY, PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW.

Signature or thumbprint _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

Name of Person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

ANNEX 4: PHASE 2 RESEARCH PROTOCOL

This research protocol provides an overview of the objectives of Phase 2, which was carried out in Kinshasa, DRC, from February 22 to 27, 2016. This document outlines the main lines of inquiry that were probed during interviews with high-level government and nongovernmental actors engaged in both formal and alternative education systems in the DRC.

Research Objectives

In contributing to the overall USAID ECCN research objectives relating to the design, funding, and policy support of sustainable and equitable alternative education in the DRC and other conflict- or crisis-affected contexts, Phase 2 research aims to:

Capture the perspective of Kinshasa-based government and nongovernment representatives who are connected to formal education and accelerated education in the DRC, in order to:

- Determine their level of knowledge and awareness of the situation for out-of-school children and youth in eastern DRC; their perspective on these issues as a priority; their strategies, plans, programs; and their interest in policy dialogue and action to improve alternative education provision and conditions
- Discuss possible next steps in this process that could be carried out by the DRC government and supported by international actors
- Elucidate how different kinds of nonformal education programs relate or connect to the formal education system in theory and in practice
- Provide insights on the possible future of alternative education in the DRC

The findings emerging from the Phase 2 research will feed into the development of a USAID ECCN research toolkit and guidance for assessing alternative education programming in the DRC and in other crisis- and conflict-affected environments. The following lines of inquiry will be probed during the key informant interviews in Kinshasa.

Policy and political environment

Phase 1 research has documented the existence of a clear policy framework for alternative and nonformal education in the DRC. The *Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Actions Humanitaires, et Solidarité Nationale* (MAS) is the government ministry responsible for the coordination of nonformal education (Ordinance No. 07/ 018 of 16 May 2007). It collaborates with the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel* (examinations); *Ministère de la Jeunesse, Sports, et Loisirs* (skills training); *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire* (lifelong learning); and the *Ministère de la Recherche Scientifique* (research), as well as the *Ministère du Développement Rural et de la Santé* (functional literacy activities). The *Direction Générale de l'Education Non formelle* (DGENF) is the national coordinating structure for nonformal education (established by Ministerial Order AFF.SOC/CABMIN/0231/2006 of 29 December 2006). Among the main responsibilities of the DGENF are to contribute to the eradication of illiteracy; regulate all nonformal education; and improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of programs. The *Stratégie Nationale Pour le Développement de L'Alphabétisation et de L'Education Non Formelle* is the overriding policy document guiding alternative education in the DRC.

LINES OF INQUIRY:

- ☐ Current level of implementation of national strategy
- ☐ Political dynamics vis-à-vis various concerned ministries
- ☐ Positives and negatives of alternative education being separate from formal education
- ☐ Clarification on plans for adaptation of the national *rattrapage* curriculum
- ☐ Possibilities for including more transformative learning in the national curriculum

Key actors

Given the multiple government ministries involved in alternative education, the large number of international agencies intervening in the sector, and the wide range of donor-supported initiatives, there is a clear need to map main actors, their functional contributions, and their level of coordination.

LINES OF INQUIRY:

- ☐ Identification of main actors at the national level (and provincially, if information is available)
- ☐ Existence, implementation, and relevance of memoranda of understanding (MoU) between implementing agencies and the government
- ☐ Coordination mechanisms among implementers
- ☐ International donor interest and involvement
- ☐ Systems for quality control

Alternative education in practice

Phase 1 of the research elucidated that the main types of alternative education provided in the DRC are basic literacy *(alphabétisation)*, skills-training programs, and accelerated education programs (AEPs), with AEPs the most prevalent. Within the national framework, AEPs are conducted in *centres des rattrapage* or *recuperation scolaires*. *Rattrapage* entails the compression of six years of primary into three, whereas *récupération* involves catch-up programs through which students can complete missed schooling and then return to the formal system.

LINES OF INQUIRY:

- ☐ Knowledge of and adherence to best practice program principles
- ☐ Human resource capacities and gaps
- ☐ Teaching materials
- ☐ Quality of learning environment
- ☐ Monitoring and evaluation of results

Innovations and potential for transformation

Acknowledging that the existing education system in the DRC continues to fail a significant proportion of the population, researchers aimed to highlight the ways in which alternative education might more meaningfully improve outcomes for young people, including, for example, a shift from focusing on education to emphasizing concrete learning outcomes that positively contribute to young people's development. This research thus endeavors to document innovative programming that can contribute to the provision of transformational education in the DRC.

LINES OF INQUIRY:

- ☐ Identify innovative practices and their scalability
- ☐ Probe the acceptance of and interest in the potential for transformational approaches among DRC ministerial authorities and international donors

Opportunities and possible next steps

The final objective of the Phase 2 research is to provide insights on the future of alternative education programming.

LINES OF INQUIRY:

- ☐ Elucidate the current trends in thinking among national actors, donors, and international actors about prospects for alternative education in the DRC in the near, middle, and long term
- ☐ Understand how the momentum of the UN Sustainable Development Goals might be channeled to the alternative education sector for explicit improvements on the current situation