



Use of Volunteer Teachers in Public Schools in The Djiri School District: Problems and Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand why volunteer teachers from the Djiri inspectorate stopped classes at the end of each month. The objectives were to describe the experiences and financial impact on volunteer teachers, analyze the behavior of parents in fulfilling their contractual obligations with these teachers, and report on the contribution of volunteer teachers to children's education. The research involved 13 volunteer teachers, 28 educational supervisors, and 23 parents. Data were collected through interviews. All respondents indicated that the discontinuation of classes was due to non-payment of subsistence allowances by parents. To address this issue, it is recommended that parents honor their financial commitments to ensure continuous and quality education for their children.

Keywords: Impact, Support, Volunteer Teachers, Parents of Students, Instruction, Public School.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a recurring concern in all societies; the development of individuals requires supervision, which is carried out according to the strategic standards of the family and the school to ensure their successful development and integration into the adult world (Azzahra et al., 2024). In the Congolese education system, this practice begins at the age of six, allowing children to acquire instruction and education progressively (Katabe & Tibategeza, 2023; Louge et al., 2023).

The school is the latest social institution, responsible for instruction, education, and training. Bashir et al. (2023) aptly attribute a significant value to it, stating that school is a privileged expression of society which entrusts it with the responsibility of transmitting to children the cultural, moral, and social values that it considers essential to the training of an adult and their integration into their environment. Therefore, it is an institution where collective education in general knowledge or specific skills necessary for a trade, profession, or art is provided. "It is a mecca of knowledge, a reservoir of hope, and a series of

opportunities to discover what a brotherhood of action can be.” (Kohl et al., 2022; Kovalchuk et al., 2022)

Schools train, shape, and educate individuals to become useful members of society. Primary schools, in particular, serve as the foundational educational and training environments that prepare young people for socio-economic integration (Kozina, 2020; Okoro, 2020).

In its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Congo has adopted a policy of compulsory education for children up to the age of sixteen, guided by the monitoring of quality education as outlined in School Law No. 025/95 of November 17, 1995. The successful implementation of this policy relies on the effectiveness of educational programs, which in turn depends on the quality and motivation of teachers, both in terms of salary provided by the state and subsidies from other sources (Imperial, 2021; Paltiel et al., 2021).

Congo is also focused on improving the quality of education by training "untrained volunteer" teachers and enhancing their psycho-pedagogical skills through the Basic Education Support Project (PRAEBASE). This initiative, funded by PRAEBASE1 (2005-2008) and PRAEBASE2 (2009-2012), fostered enthusiasm among unemployed graduates for teaching in primary schools, creating a new category of teachers known as "Teaching Volunteers."

The quality of education children receive is closely tied to the competency and dedication of their teachers (Mahoney et al., 2021). Consequently, the motivation or remuneration of these teachers is crucial. It is often said, "All work deserves a salary," highlighting the importance of fair compensation. This raises the issue of "the impact of parental support for volunteer teachers." Effective education requires seasoned and experienced teachers with exceptional professional knowledge for lesson preparation, proper execution of teaching programs, and evaluation of academic achievements (Nalzaró, 2022; Zalli et al., 2023). Teachers expect substantial remuneration at the end of each month. While teachers integrated into the Civil Service receive salaries from the Ministry of Finance and Budget, volunteer teachers, particularly in villages and major cities, face uncertainties regarding their compensation (Zounek et al., 2024).

Our experience as a supervisor in the Djiri school district reveals issues such as class stoppages and inadequate teaching, which can significantly disrupt learning, resulting in unfinished programs, class disruptions, low student performance, and falsified academic results. This prompted research into the impact of parental support on volunteer teachers to understand the root causes of these issues and assess the extent to which current practices may hinder educational progress (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020; Özdemir et al., 2023).

The primary research question is how parental support for volunteer teachers should be conducted. Additional questions include identifying the root causes of parental non-compliance with agreements made with volunteer teachers and exploring the strategies implemented by school administrations to prevent lesson disruptions by volunteer teachers (Musaniwa & Jakachira, 2024).

In the Djiri school district, volunteer teachers often halt classes at the end of the month due to delayed payments from students' parents. Secondary hypotheses include financial difficulties faced by parents due to the country's economic situation and poor management by school directors responsible for centralizing related finances. This research aims to identify the real causes of payment delays for volunteer teachers, highlight the consequences of irregular payments on academic performance, and propose potential solutions. We hope the results will provide decision-makers with valuable insights to address this issue and ensure that the use of volunteer teachers in primary schools is more effective and sustainable.

RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve our objectives, we employed the interview method. Our study was conducted in ten public schools in the Djiri school district, targeting volunteer classroom teachers, parents of students, and educational supervisors. Using a qualitative approach, we aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding the research topic. These in-depth interviews allowed us to understand the nuances and complexities of the situation that quantitative data alone could not reveal, thereby providing richer and more profound insights into the educational dynamics of these schools.

Populations and samples

Table 1. Summary of Populations

No.	Subjects investigated	Gender		
		Men	Women	Total
1	Volunteer teachers	06	07	13
2	Parents of students	15	08	23
R3	School directors	02	08	10
4	Senior Educational Advisors	02	12	14
5	Inspectors	03	01	04
Totals		28	36	64

Source: our survey, March 2020

Table 2. Study Samples

No.	Subjects investigated	Samples		
		Men	Women	Total
1	Volunteer teachers	06	07	13
2	Parents of students	15	08	23
3	Educational supervisors	07	21	28
Totals		28	36	64

Source: Survey, March 2022

In this table, it must be specified that the small size of the survey universe population corresponds to the samples of each category of respondents: inspectors, principal educational

advisors, and school directors, which constitute the samples of the educational supervisors. Ultimately, we have 64 subjects, including 36 women.

Data collection instruments

It is well known that research instruments and techniques facilitate data collection by making it reliable, efficient, and relevant. We therefore used an instrument for collecting survey data, the interview.

In the case of our study, the purpose of the interview was to collect the opinions of volunteer classroom teachers, parents of students, and educational supervisors (school directors, CPPs, and Inspectors) on the impact of the support of volunteer teachers by parents, the causes and consequences of non-compliance with commitments made on the one hand and the measures to be considered in order to correct the situation on the other hand.

This study is composed of the following three (3) themes:

Themes 1: the causes of non-compliance with financial assistance clauses for volunteer teachers;

Themes 2: the probable consequences of non-compliance with commitments made;

Themes 3: suggestions or approaches to solutions to correct the situation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results from the interview with volunteer teachers

All schools in the Djiri school district were affected, namely 10 public primary schools. Thirteen (13) volunteer teachers, including seven (07) women, were interviewed. Their duration in service varies between two (02) and five (05) years, and in the class, it is between two (02) and three (03) years.

Causes Of Lesson Interruptions By Volunteer Teachers

Table 3. Reasons for stopping classes for volunteer teachers

No.	Reasons for course interruptions	Effective	%
	Late payment of benefits	13	100%

Source: Our survey, March 2020.

In Table 3, all thirteen (13) volunteer teachers admitted that they sometimes stop classes due to non-payment for their services. Indeed, the official benchmark agreed upon by everyone in their agreements is the start of the payment of civil servants' salaries, even if the parent who pays the children's school fees is not a civil servant. To this end, the social categories of the student's parents range from civil servants to housewives, including professions such as trader, market gardener, taxi or bus driver, bus conductor, mason, tailor, and others. This means that all these categories of parents should respect the payment date of their children's school fees so that the school can pay the volunteer teachers' services on time and regularly.

Table 4. Causes of delays in bonus payment according to teachers

No.	Type of answers	Workforce	%
1	Delay in payment of civil servants' salaries	0	0%
2	Unemployed parent, no secure source of income	3	23.07%
3	Parent traders are suffering the financial crisis	5	38.46%
4	Bad management of school principals who embezzle our money	5	38.46%
Total		13	100%

Source: Survey, March 2022

The table results reveal several insights: Firstly, none of the volunteer teachers confirmed that irregular payment of their services stems from delays in civil servant salaries, which are known not to suffer delays currently. Therefore, this cannot explain the challenges school administrators and parents face in paying volunteers. Secondly, 23.07% of volunteer teachers cited unemployed parents as a key factor contributing to payment difficulties. Lack of employment is a fundamental cause of delayed payments to volunteers, as unemployed parents struggle to meet school fee obligations despite their best intentions. Finally, 38.46% of volunteers attribute the delay in payments to financial crises, while an equal percentage attribute it to school directors' mismanagement.

Consequence of course interruptions for learners

Table 5. Consequences of stopping classes by volunteer teachers in Djiri

No.	Nature of consequences	Workforce	%
1	Abandonment of students to their own devices	3	23.07
2	Student absenteeism	2	15.38
3	Delay in program progress	3	23.07
4	Drop in learner level	3	23.07
5	Resurgence of street children	2	15.38
Total		13	100%

Source: Survey, March 2022.

The table results highlight several key aspects of volunteer teachers' attitudes and views towards the teaching and learning process:

1. **Parental Support and Teaching Motivation:** 23.07% of volunteer teachers acknowledged leaving students to learn independently due to insufficient parental contributions. This dissatisfaction affects their motivation to teach.
2. **Student Engagement Concerns:** 15.38% of volunteer teachers noted a decline in student attendance, contributing to student laziness and potentially impacting their future career readiness.

3. **Progress and Schedule Delays:** 23.07% reported significant delays in the study program, affecting both students' progress and teachers' ability to adhere to teaching schedules.
4. **Skill Level Decline:** 23.07% observed a decline in students' skill levels, expressing regret over the impact on students entrusted to their care.
5. **Impact on Social Issues:** 15.38% highlighted that class disruptions contribute to increased street children, emphasizing broader societal impacts beyond educational outcomes.

Overall, these findings underscore the challenges within the education system involving volunteer teachers and their repercussions on both educators and students.

Suggestions or approaches to solutions

Table 6. Suggestions from Volunteer Teachers

No.	Types of suggestions from volunteer teachers	Workforce	%
1	The political-administrative authorities must take their responsibilities	7	53.84
2	The parents' office must take care of financial matters	2	15.38
3	The duration of volunteering must not exceed one year	3	23.07
4	Recruitment to the civil service must be automatic	1	7.69
Total:		13	100

Source: Survey, March 2022

The table above shows the following reflections:

1. 7 volunteer teachers out of 13, or 53.84%, suggest that the political-administrative authorities must take their responsibilities by finding viable and lasting solutions.
2. 2 subjects, or 15.38%, propose that the parents' office handle financial matters. This presupposes that either the parents manage their own funds and pay the volunteers, or they must monitor the movements of the fund monthly, that is, scientifically and regularly monitor the entries and exits of the funds. The parents' office must, from time to time, encourage their members to be up to date with their contributions in order to avoid late payments.
3. 03 volunteer teachers out of 13, or 23.07%, expressed the wish to reduce the duration of the volunteer status, which, according to them, should not exceed one year. School law 25/95 of November 17, 1995, states in article 1: "...education is free in the Republic of Congo. » If the Congolese education system took this law into account, parents would not take responsibility for the volunteers; it would be the responsibility of the State.
4. One subject, or 7.69%, suggested that the civil service automatically recruits volunteers. This would resolve their socio-professional living conditions in a viable and lasting manner.

Results of the interview guide with educational supervisors

This study includes 10 school directors, including 8 women; 14 principal educational advisors, including 12 women; and 4 inspectors, including 1 woman, for a total of 28 subjects, including 21 women.

Twenty-eight (28) educational supervisors were therefore involved in this study, including twenty-one (21) women.

Their duration in service varies between three (03) and twenty-seven (27) years, and in function, the duration is between one (01) and twelve (12) years. The interview guide revolved around the following themes:

Causes of course interruptions by volunteer teachers

Table 7. Causes of Course Interruptions by Volunteer Teachers

No.	Causes mentioned	Workforce	%
1	Late payment of benefits	28	100
	Total	28	100

Source: Survey, March 2022

The table above shows us that all the educational supervisors gave a single cause: the delay in payment of volunteers' services led to the latter stopping classes. We can deduce that the volunteer teachers would also be regular in classes if the payments were regular.

Consequences of stopping courses for learners

Table 8. Consequences of stopping classes.

No.	Causes mentioned	Workforce	%
1	Delay in program progress	8	28.57
2	Drop in educational level	7	25
3	Dropout	6	21.42
4	Proliferation of anti-values	7	25
	Total	28	100

Source: Survey, March 2022

The results presented in the table above provide insights into the impressions of educational supervisors regarding the consequences of lesson cessation by volunteer teachers on the learners:

1. Eight educational supervisors (28.57%) affirm that repeated class interruptions result in program progress delays. No miracle can happen when classes are regularly stopped; the programs will inevitably suffer.
2. Seven supervisors (25%) recognized that the decline in our learners' study levels is due, among many other reasons, to repeated suspensions of classes.
3. Six educational supervisors (21.42%) revealed that school dropouts are also caused by the repeated cessation of classes. When teachers are not in class, learners engage in other

activities, especially small jobs such as washing dishes, doing laundry, selling bags, sweets, etc.

4. Finally, seven supervisors (25%) asserted that the lack of engagement in school pushes learners to join criminal gangs, leading to a proliferation of negative values.

Suggestions or approaches to solutions

Table 9. Suggestions from Educational Supervisors

No.	Nature of suggestions	Workforce	%
1	The political-administrative authorities must take their responsibilities	4	14.28
2	The parents' office must take care of financial matters	2	7.14
3	The duration of volunteering must not exceed one year	3	10.71
4	Recruitment to the civil service must be automatic	19	67.85
Total		28	100

Source: Our survey, March 2022

The results in the table above highlight the solutions suggested by educational supervisors to address the phenomenon of course interruptions by volunteer teachers. These suggestions are highly relevant and compelling.

1. **Political-Administrative Responsibility:** Four supervisors (14.28%) suggest that political-administrative authorities must take responsibility for finding viable and lasting solutions to support volunteers in their roles.
2. **Financial Management by Parents' Office:** Two supervisors (7.14%) believe that the parents' office should handle financial issues to ensure sound management. This office should encourage parents to pay their contributions regularly and on time.
3. **Shortening the Volunteer Period:** Three supervisors (10.71%) recommend that the volunteer period be shortened and not exceed one year.
4. **Automatic Integration into Civil Service:** Nineteen supervisors (67.85%) propose that the State should automatically integrate volunteer teachers into the civil service, making life easier for this category of teachers, who should not exist in the Congolese education system.

Results from The Interview with The Parents of The Students

Twenty-three (23) parents, including 8 women, participated in this study. To this end, an interview guide comprising six (06) guiding questions was developed to successfully collect data from this audience. The themes were the same as for the first respondents: causes, consequences, and, of course, interruptions, as well as suggestions relating to this phenomenon.

Causes of Course Interruptions by Volunteer Teachers

All twenty-three (23) parents of students, or 100%, affirmed that volunteer teachers stop classes because of late payment of their services.

Consequences of Course Interruptions for Learners**Table 10. Consequences of Course Interruptions for Learners**

No.	Types of consequences	Workforce	%
1	The idleness of learners	10	43.47
2	Release of learners	7	30.43
3	Dropout	6	26.08
	Total	23	100

Source: Survey, March 2022

Ten (10) parents of students, or 43.47%, affirmed that the absence of teachers at school creates a vacuum and learners are victims of idleness. On the other hand, seven (7) 30.43% report the slackening of learners; Six (6) parents, or 26.08%, recognize that the recurring cessation of classes leads to school dropout. The main consequence of all these phenomena is a drop in the level of learners whose sidekick is poor academic performance.

Suggestions or Approaches to Solutions**Table 11. Suggestions from parents.**

No.	Nature of suggestions	Workforce	%
1	The political-administrative authorities must take their responsibilities	4	17.40
2	Recruitment to the civil service must be automatic	19	82.60
	Total	23	100%

Source: Our survey, March 2022

Suggestions made by parents yielded the following results:

1. 4 parents out of 23, or 17.40%, suggested that the political-administrative authorities take their responsibilities.
2. 19 parents out of 23, or 82.60%, thought that volunteer teachers should be automatically recruited into the public service.

Discussion and suggestions

These days, no one can ignore the fact that work guarantees independence. However, no one can work without expecting a reward that helps them, at least a little, to live a decent life. To work is to seek personal happiness, live in harmony, and make your family and surroundings happy. If work guarantees self-reliance, it means that it is not the work itself that guarantees self-reliance but the rewards that result from the work itself. For example, a farmer enjoys the proceeds of selling his crops, a merchant enjoys the profits from his sales, and an employee enjoys his salary after selling his services in the company.

We can think of salaries, profits from sales, and crops as motivation forms, often equated with satisfaction and engagement (Ewool et al., 2021). As explained by Uka et al.

(2021), motivation is the energy that drives individuals to invest in their work and thus increase productivity. Employees work with the assurance of earning a salary and strive to increase it through bonuses and promotions.

The volunteer teacher is no exception because he is a man, a man who wants to satisfy like all other men. Nevertheless, these five (5) fundamental human needs according to Maslow's pyramid: vital needs, need for security and protection, need for love and belonging, need for self-esteem, and need to realize oneself. Meeting basic needs is a necessity. If these needs are not met, it harms the development and the very life of an individual. This affects both his physique and his psyche. An example of psychological frustration is a volunteer teacher deprived of his service while civil servants regularly receive their salaries.

Maslow considers that each level of success conditions the passage to the next level and so on. Until a person can satisfy the initial need, he or she cannot move on to the next need. The volunteer teacher can only eat if he is paid because the salary will allow him to satisfy other needs.

Regarding the need for security and protection, Carl Rogers, another humanistic psychologist, said, "Only when a person feels secure does he have the time and strength to seek love and belonging and share love with so many others." This means that the salary for the case of volunteers is security, and by having the salary, they can afford to love their work, their learners, and all those who are around them. This is what explains a lot of human behavior.

Thus, love of one's work and one's learners will improve academic results, resulting from regular and decent remuneration (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). The results obtained showed that 43.47% of parents noted the idleness of learners during the absence of teachers, which led to school dropout, highlighted by 26.08% of parents. For supervisors, they note the delay in the progress of programs (28.57%) and the drop in the level of study of learners (25%). The volunteer teachers themselves are almost of the same opinion as the other respondents because (23.07%) affirm that the recurring interruptions of lessons have the consequences of delay in the progress of programs and dropping out of school (23.07%).

As a reminder, we would like to say that our study focused on the impact of parents' support of volunteer teachers for children's education. This theme has been the subject of extensive work by several authors. We can nevertheless discuss the question of knowing to what extent this means the non-support of volunteers generally has an effect on the education of children. Some authors have seen that "responsibility is being able to respond in an educational way; Responsibility implies taking care of the future of the human being as a whole (Alam, 2022)

Thanks to the results obtained by the study in Guinea demonstrate that it will need contract teachers over the next ten years because, he says, "the needs are such that they represent a doubling of the teaching force at primary level" (Vermote et al., 2020). This study should be taken into consideration for our education system and the experience of teachers with little or no initial training in Gabon "They are a workforce that fills a shortage of teachers

or replace a teacher who is temporarily unavailable and are recruited without professional training (Moussavou, 2015).

Although our suggestions are not exhaustive, we offer the following:

To volunteer teachers

1. To ensure reliable instruction and quality education, it is necessary to prepare lessons well on a daily basis with a view to good mastery of the teaching profession or profession.
2. Have the time necessary to train and obtain information by taking part in the various educational activities organized as part of quality continuing education.
3. Use official educational documents for good lesson preparation.

Improve professional awareness through punctuality at the workplace, effective presence at the workplace in the classroom, by teaching what is in the official program and by evaluating academic achievements.

To educational supervisors

1. Ensure close educational monitoring for young volunteer teachers
2. Help school directors to manage best the funds collected or provided by parents for the timely payment of the subsistence bonus of volunteer teachers. In short, fight against the misappropriation of funds intended for the payment of the bonus for volunteer teachers.

To parents of students

1. Become aware of the delicacy of the status of volunteer teachers in order to expedite the payment of the bonus due to them.
2. Meet all the conditions to gather in time the funds necessary to pay the subsistence allowance for volunteer teachers.
3. Establish bridges for ongoing dialogue with volunteer teachers.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that education plays a crucial role in nurturing the moral, intellectual, and physical development of children, as well as integrating them into society through family and educational institutions like schools. Primary education aims to impart fundamental skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and civic education, which are facilitated by dedicated and experienced teachers. The study specifically investigates the impact of parental support on volunteer teachers within Djiri's school district, highlighting that insufficient financial backing from parents can disrupt the continuity of teaching. The findings underscore the importance of sustained collaboration among volunteer teachers, educational supervisors, and parents to ensure consistent quality education and support for the future success of students.

Furthermore, the research recommends fostering stronger partnerships between stakeholders to address the underlying challenges in relationships among volunteer teachers, parents, and educational supervisors. It calls on parents to honor their commitments to

sustainably support volunteer teachers, recognizing their pivotal role in maintaining educational stability and fostering the academic achievement of children, who represent the future of the nation.

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