

Funder's Report

# **BRiCE Project DRC and Niger: Midline Report**

## **Teacher Wellbeing and Teaching Quality in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts**

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**Sweta Gupta, Gauthier Marchais, Cyril Brandt, Samuel Matabishi, Pierre Marion, Jean-Benoît Falisse, Deborah West, Patrick Mze Somora, Patricia Justino, Pacifique Nyabagaza, Dieudonné Kanyerhera, Issa Kiemtoré, Christian PolePole Bazuzi, Souleymane Tahirou and Weifane Ibrahim**

**June 2022**

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**June 2022**

## Summary

This report presents the results of the midline study of the Building Resilience in Crises through Education (BRiCE) research project, which is led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu (ISP Bukavu). The research project is part of the BRiCE education programme funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships and led by Save the Children in Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This report presents the results of the midline evaluation of two components of the BRiCE education programme: Teacher Professional Development (TPD) and Improving Learning Environments Together (ILET). It also presents an in-depth analysis of teacher wellbeing and teaching quality in the regions of Zinder and Diffa in Niger, and Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu province in the DRC. Specifically, the report explores several key factors in teachers' wellbeing: their employment status, which structures inequalities in the teaching profession in Niger and the DRC; their social identity, with a particular focus on gender and ethnicity, which play an important role in teachers' professional and social life; and their exposure to violence, analysing how violent conflict penetrates the school environment and affects teachers' work.

## Keywords

education; education in conflict-affected contexts; governance; Niger; DRC

## Authors

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## Executive Summary

The Building Resilience in Crises through Education (BRiCE) research project is led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu (ISP Bukavu). It is part of the BRiCE education programme funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships and led by Save the Children Norway, Save the Children UK and Save the Children International (referred to hereafter collectively as Save the Children). This report focuses on furthering the understanding of education in fragile and conflict-affected contexts by exploring three central research questions (RQs): investigating whether and how exposure to and experience of violence influence teaching quality and wellbeing in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (RQ1); examining the impact of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) and Improving Learning Environments Together (ILET) components of the BRiCE project on teaching quality and teacher wellbeing in fragile contexts (RQ2); and examining how teaching quality and wellbeing influence children's cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected countries (RQ3). In addition to these RQs, the Midline Report also seeks to deepen our understanding of teacher wellbeing and teaching quality in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

The quantitative component of the IDS research project is based on a survey carried out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Niger in October–November 2020. In the DRC, 448 male teachers and 175 female teachers (623 in total) were surveyed in 49 BRiCE schools. In Niger, 59 male teachers and 386 female teachers (445 in total) were surveyed in 71 BRiCE schools. The same teachers were also surveyed during the baseline survey in 2019. Additionally, 293 boys and 344 girls in grade five of primary school, and their primary caregivers, were surveyed in the DRC. In Niger, 328 boys and 356 girls in grade five of primary school, and their primary caregivers, were surveyed.

The survey instruments related to teaching were designed to correspond to the competencies and activities of the TPD module. These include seven indices of teaching quality: teachers' interactions with other teachers; lesson delivery; providing feedback to students; use of high-quality literacy practices in the classroom; use of physical punishment; providing conflict-sensitive education; and unbiased gender attitudes. The survey also measures teachers' professional wellbeing as job satisfaction, motivation, and support with challenges on the job. An additional measure of post-traumatic stress disorder is also added. For student outcomes, learning assessments were carried out, including the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA). These were complemented with measures of students' wellbeing, including perseverance, educational aspiration, empathy and a nurturing classroom environment.

The qualitative component of the study relied on secondary sources, educational policy literature and qualitative interviews carried out in Niger and the DRC in 2020 and 2021. In the DRC, the research team of the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu carried out 62 semi-structured interviews in the territory of Fizi in South Kivu province, to complement the 59 interviews carried

out as part of the baseline study in the territory of Uvira in South Kivu in 2019. In Niger, 80 semi-structured interviews were carried out by the research team from International de la Communication et de l'Accompagnement Professionnel (ICOMAP), led by Weifane Ibrahim, in the Diffa and Zinder regions. The interviews were then coded and analysed by the IDS and ICOMAP teams.

With respect to changes in teaching quality and teacher wellbeing from baseline to midline, the study finds that teachers in the DRC report a decline in all teaching quality indices, with the exception of the measure related to providing conflict-sensitive education. In contrast, teachers in Niger report an increase across all these indices. Notably, a significant decline in the 'unbiased gender attitudes index' in the DRC is driven by a 10-percentage point increase in teachers who agree that books should encourage women to stay at home, and a 9-percentage point increase in teachers who agree that boys should be assigned to leadership positions. For teacher wellbeing, the study finds that teachers in the DRC also report a significant decline in the 'teaching challenge support index' due to teachers feeling unsupported to manage large class sizes and having to teach children from different grades together in the same class. This is an area that was impacted by the *Gratuité* policy of free primary education introduced in the DRC in 2019, which has led to a 22 per cent increase in enrolment in the BRiCE DRC schools without an increase in the number of teachers.

The report explores various factors that influence teaching quality and wellbeing, focusing on those factors emphasised prominently in interviews with teachers. The report focuses first on employment status, which conditions pay, job security, and incentives for training and career progression. Teachers on more favourable employment contracts – that is, with *mecanisé* and *payé* status (for registered teachers on the government payroll) in the DRC and permanent civil servant status in Niger – report significantly higher pay. In the DRC, the registration process which determines teacher employment status is highly politicised and the *Gratuité* policy has raised the stakes of this process. Since *nouvelle unité* (NU) teachers (new teachers who have yet to be officially registered) do not receive state salaries and rely on parent contributions, the drastic drop in parental contributions induced by the *Gratuité* policy has put NU teachers in a difficult financial position. Additionally, during the coronavirus (Covid-19)-related school closures in the DRC, which lasted 4.5 months during the 2019/20 academic year, between 45 and 50 per cent of NU teachers reported receiving no salaries. This had severe effects on teaching quality, and teachers' wellbeing and mental health. In Niger, there has been a continuing increase in contractual teachers. This casualisation of the teaching body has a range of effects, which the report explores; notably, that teachers on temporary contracts have limited prospects for career advancement, which curtails their incentive to invest time and energy in teacher training and professional development.

Looking at the effects of the Covid-19-related school closures on teacher-student relations, we find that relatively few teachers were able to engage with students during the school closures in either country. Some 14 per cent of teachers reported engaging with students in the DRC, and 3 per cent in Niger. Additionally, teacher-student-parent relations in the DRC have also been reconfigured as a result of the *Gratuité* policy. While, overall, the policy improved relations, it has created tensions between NU teachers and school management.

The report explores several facets of teachers' social position in the DRC and Niger. In both countries, teachers navigate complex social environments marked by polarisation. Analysing the role of gender in the school environment, the report finds that female teachers in both countries score lower in terms of teaching quality than male teachers. This gender gap is particularly acute in Niger, where there is a significantly higher proportion of female teachers: on average, 81 per cent of the teachers in BRiCE schools in Niger are women, compared with 28 per cent in the DRC, according to the school survey. This gender gap in Niger is partly driven by differences in education qualification and experience analysed in the baseline study.

As we show in the report, the increase in the number of female teachers is closely related to the casualisation of the teaching profession. While this entails sharply gendered inequalities in the school sector, the teaching profession nevertheless represents a site of professional and financial emancipation for women in Niger. The report shows that female teachers in Niger have higher levels of job satisfaction; in particular, their satisfaction with their salary compared to male teachers in Niger. Female teachers, however, face difficult working conditions and social pressure in professional and social environments saturated with gender norms. The report also analyses the role of ethnicity in the school environment in Fizi and Uvira in the DRC. We analyse how polarisation along ethnic lines has led to ethnic concentration in some schools, and affects decisions and processes around teacher recruitment and deployment.

The report explores violence against teachers and in the school environment (RQ1), pursuing the analysis started in the BRiCE baseline study. It documents multiple causes of violence against teachers in Fizi and Uvira, from extortion to the militarised governance of schools, and relations between teachers, parents and armed groups. The report shows that violence has generated enduring trauma in the teaching profession, resulting not only from individual exposure to violence, but also the collective experience and memory of violence. In Niger, although we find significantly lower levels of violence against teachers and schools than in the DRC, we show that violent conflict nevertheless has indirect effects on schools and also generates fear within the teaching profession.

The report studies the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on teaching quality and wellbeing (RQ2), as well as students' learning and wellbeing (RQ3). The quantitative research design employed a phased-in cluster randomisation approach for ethical reasons, with all surveyed schools receiving the interventions. Schools were randomly assigned to receive the TPD and ILET set of interventions in a phased manner: 24 schools in the DRC and 35 schools in Niger received the interventions in 2019/20; 25 schools in the DRC and 36 schools in Niger received them in 2020/21. As part of the randomisation set-up, the quantitative study compares treatment schools that received the intervention in 2019/20 to control schools that did not receive the intervention over the same period. Since only the TPD and ILET interventions of the BRiCE programme were randomised, the report evaluates the joint intervention effects of these two arms.

Given the disruptions due to Covid-19-related school closures in both countries, as well as flooding in Niger, the interventions were only partly completed. Concerning the ILET intervention, schools were provided with a report card highlighting potential areas for improvement. In response to this, schools formed a committee to develop school improvement plans (SIPs). However, some schools

in the DRC and all schools in Niger were awaiting disbursement of grants for the implementation of SIPs when the midline quantitative data collection was underway in October 2020. With regards to the TPD, both countries had completed training cycles on three modules: introduction to reading and writing, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. In the DRC, training had also started on conflict-sensitive education and large class management before the Covid-19-related closures, but had not yet completed training cycles on these when the midline data collection was underway.

The TPD interventions were largely well received in both countries, and only 4–7 per cent of teachers in the DRC and Niger found the TPD modules to be too long. However, within these TPD modules, lesson observation was the least appreciated activity. While teachers largely appreciated the content of the TPD modules, they found compensation for transport costs to be insufficient and complained that no accommodation costs were compensated.

With regards to the ILET intervention, this was better received in Niger than in the DRC; 80 per cent of school directors found the report cards generated by ILET to be useful, while this number was 60 per cent in the DRC. While the ILET intervention encourages participation of students when coming up with an SIP, 35 per cent of the schools in Niger did not involve students.

Evaluating the effect of the interventions, the report finds a significant positive effect on teaching quality and wellbeing in Niger, but limited effect in the DRC. In Niger, the interventions substantially increased activities related to word and story reading, teachers' use of conflict-sensitive education and their ability to engage uninterested children in the classroom; and they reduced teachers' use of physical punishment. In the DRC, the interventions substantially reduced teachers' use of physical punishment in the classroom. These effects were similar for both male and female teachers.

Given that the interventions had an impact on literacy activities in Niger, the report finds a positive effect on reading levels of students in the country, particularly on tasks related to word and passage reading. However, this improvement in literacy was largely driven by an improvement in the literacy levels of boys. In the DRC, due to limited impacts of the interventions on teaching quality, the report finds that the interventions did not improve literacy skills. In relation to numeracy levels, the interventions only improved the ability of girls to perform subtraction problems in the DRC.

While the interventions had limited impacts on learning in the DRC, there was a significant and substantial effect of the interventions on students' wellbeing for both girls and boys. The interventions significantly improved the learning environment, with a higher proportion of students in the DRC reporting the use of positive and encouraging language in the classroom, and a lower proportion of students reporting having experienced physical punishment. The report does not find similar effects of the interventions in Niger, except at the margin for girls on the use of positive language in the classroom, possibly because the ILET intervention was only half completed in the country at the time of the midline data collection.

The report concludes with recommendations for policy and programming, and the next steps for the IDS-led research project.

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## Acronyms

BRiCE	Building Resilience in Crisis Through Education
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EGMA	Early Grade Maths Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo)
ICOMAP	International de la Communication et de l'Accompagnement Professionnel
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ILET	Improving Learning Environments Together
ISELA	International Social and Emotional Learning Assessment (Save the Children)
ISP Bukavu	Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MP	<i>mecanisé</i> and <i>payé</i> (registered teachers on the government payroll)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NP	<i>mecanisé</i> and <i>non-payé</i> (registered teachers not on the government payroll)
NU	<i>nouvelle unité</i> ('new' teachers who appear on internal school documents but have yet to be registered officially)
PROVED	provincial education
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
RQ	research question
SD	standard deviation
SECOPE	Service de Contrôle et de la Paie des Enseignants (Teachers' Inspection and Pay Service)
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SIC	school improvement committee
SIP	school improvement plan
SMC	school management committee
TENAFEP	<i>Test National de Fin d'Études Primaires</i> (National End of Primary School Test)
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Education in Niger and the DRC since 2018 – new challenges

Since the BRiCE project started in 2018, teachers in Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on which this study focuses, have experienced severe challenges as a result of school closures related to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic; policy change; increasing violence in eastern DRC; and ongoing, large-scale displacement and insecurity in southeastern Niger.<sup>1</sup> These have exacerbated the challenges already faced in education sectors marked by structural underfunding and sharp inequalities. Despite these significant challenges, school staff in both countries have continued to carry out their work to the best of their abilities and often, as we will see, at the cost of their wellbeing.

In Niger, the pandemic led to a school closure between 20 March and 1 June 2020.<sup>2</sup> While this was a relatively short interruption compared to other countries, including the DRC, teachers and parents nevertheless faced significant challenges on professional, financial and personal levels. This happened against the background of worsening violence in the country because of a sharp escalation of the Sahel conflict in the tri-border area with Burkina Faso and Mali (Raleigh, Nsaibia and Dowd 2021). Violence in Niger has been lower overall than in Nigeria and Mali (Elischer 2018), but significantly escalated in 2020–21. While the BRiCE project does not work in that region, challenges in Zinder and Diffa also persist. Since the first direct attack on Nigerian territory in 2015, an ongoing state of emergency has been in place in Diffa. Diffa has experienced pervasive violence daily, resulting from the spread of armed militants and spin-off groups of the Boko Haram insurgency in northern Nigeria, as well as the escalation of the Lake Chad crisis in neighbouring Chad. Zinder has experienced indirect effects of violent conflicts, notably through the influx of a large number of refugees.

In the DRC, two significant shocks have affected the education sector: the implementation of *Gratuité*, a new policy introduced in September 2019 designed to make primary education in effect free of school fees, and school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The school closures were significantly longer than in Niger, from 23 March to 10 August 2020 and again from 4 January to 22 February 2021. Alternative education mechanisms were slow to reach learners. Moreover, a large number of teachers – who remain unpaid by the government – did not receive any income during lockdowns. Covid-19, thus, has very specific implications for the education sector in the DRC, which we analyse in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> For an outline of the challenges of the respective education systems, please see the Baseline Report (Marchais *et al.* 2020a).

<sup>2</sup> [Center for Global Development Covid-19 education policy tracking 2021](#)

These factors have added to the wide-ranging changes induced by the implementation of *Gratuité*, a landmark policy in the history of the education sector of the DRC. For almost 30 years, the institutionalisation of school fees was identified as a barrier to achieving universal primary education in the DRC. President Félix Tshisekedi in August 2019 announced the immediate implementation of *Gratuité* in the country. While some observers have been hesitant and critical, real progress has apparently been made.

The content of the *Gratuité* policy is simple, but its consequences are complex. The policy states that children from first to sixth grades in primary school no longer pay school fees. This has two immediate implications: first, parents no longer pay teacher top-ups (a so-called 'motivation fee'); second, parents no longer fund schools' and administrative offices' operational and other costs. Minor fees such as for *minerval* (tuition fees), student insurance or end-of-school exams have persisted. While the policy appears simple, its implementation has not been. Within the wide variety of school fees, teacher salaries have always accounted for about three-quarters of all fees.

Therefore, paying all teachers a decent salary is the ultimate condition for the successful abolition of school fees. Significant problems persist: first and foremost, remunerating teachers who are not registered by the educational administration – at local and national levels – and who therefore completely depend on parents' financial contributions. As a result, the impact of *Gratuité* on teacher wellbeing and teaching quality has been ambivalent, as we will be exploring in this report. Moreover, the education sector in Uvira and Fizi in the South Kivu province has continued to experience violence related to conflict in eastern the DRC, which increased by 50 per cent in 2019–20 (Vogel *et al.* 2021).

## 1.2 Rationale of the BRiCE study

The BRiCE research project is led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu (ISP Bukavu). For the qualitative data collection in Niger in 2021, the project was supported by the research team from International de la Communication et de l'Accompagnement Professionnel (ICOMAP). The BRiCE research project is part of the wider BRiCE education programme led by Save the Children and funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships. The overarching aim of this study is to understand how the primary and secondary education sectors operate in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, with a particular focus on the role of teachers. The study uses an interdisciplinary and mixed-methods approach to investigate several aspects of education in conflict-affected contexts. The project also seeks to evaluate and analyse the impact of two components of the BRiCE education programme – Teacher Professional Development (TPD) and Improving Learning Environments Together (ILET) – with the objective of informing the design of the interventions, as well as programming and policy on

education in fragile and conflict-affected contexts more broadly. The BRiCE research project's guiding research questions (RQs) are:

- RQ1 – Investigate whether, and how, exposure to and experience of violence influence teaching quality and teacher wellbeing in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.
- RQ2 – Examine the impact of TPD and ILET on teaching quality and wellbeing in fragile contexts.
- RQ3 – Examine how teaching quality and teacher wellbeing influence children's cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected countries.
- RQ4 – Explore how knowledge developed by teachers in conflict-affected contexts can be used effectively in policy and programming.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Midline Report

The report focuses primarily on teachers: their working conditions, their wellbeing, their role in student learning, their exposure to violence, the challenges they face and how they navigate tense social contexts. This reflects the overall objectives of the research project, whose focus on teachers stems from the observation of their relative neglect in education policy and programming. Indeed, despite their central role in education, it is only recently that teachers' working conditions and wellbeing have become the focus of sustained attention. During the lockdowns and school closures, the focus on online and distance learning alternatives has often meant reduced attention to teachers' concerns and wellbeing and insufficient consultation of teachers in policy responses (Sayed 2021). The focus on teachers is compatible with the report's concomitant attention to student learning. Both are intimately related.

Research on education in emergencies and areas of protracted violent conflict remains scarce, and empirical evidence limited (Burde *et al.* 2015; Burde, Lahmann and Thompson 2019). This provides a motivation for the study's empirical approach to understanding the complex challenges that teachers and students face in such contexts. This study's design seeks to make use of the relative strengths of different methodological approaches. The quantitative design allows us to build on recent insights, notably around student and teacher wellbeing (Wolf *et al.* 2015a, 2015b; Torrente *et al.* 2015; Starkey 2016). The qualitative and historically informed methods allow us to explore some of the key mechanisms behind, for example, teachers' exposure to violence and social position in contexts of violent conflict (Lopes Cardozo and Shah 2016; Wilson 2001; GCPEA 2018).<sup>3</sup> The research project brought together scholars from different fields and institutions in education, conflict studies, governance, development studies and linguistics.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Research Design for a more extensive literature review that connects the study to ongoing debates (Justino *et al.* 2019).

This interdisciplinarity, and a collaborative ethos that enabled rich engagements over several years, were the most valuable ingredients of the research project.

The report focuses on several key aspects of teachers' and students' lives, with the objective of addressing RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 (see section 1.2). Reflecting issues that came out prominently in interviews with teachers and thus adopting an inductive approach to the selection of the report's main themes, we investigate key aspects of teachers' professional and social lives.

First, employment status and the inequalities it conditions in the teaching profession in Niger and the DRC, and wider issues around pay, delays in receiving pay and the professional status associated with it, which were exacerbated as a result of school closures and the *Gratuité* policy in the DRC. Second, the social position of teachers, the ways it influences how they navigate tense social environments, and how it affects their work. Third, building on the Baseline Report (Marchais *et al.* 2020a), we continue our investigation into causes of violence against teachers. We then evaluate the effects of TPD and ILET. While the disruptions generated by school closures in Niger and the DRC, and the effects of the *Gratuité* policy in the DRC, have generated a particularly challenging environment for educational interventions, the BRiCE project was successful in achieving a significant part of its objectives. Taking into account the severe disruptions and their confounding effects, we analyse the effects of the interventions on teacher wellbeing and teaching quality, as well as student wellbeing and student learning.

The report and study have an empirical focus. Our partially inductive approach to the selection of themes covered in the report allowed us to start from what teachers, students and educational actors conceive as important for their work and lives. This approach facilitated our interrogation of the key concepts of wellbeing and teaching quality, which are embedded in the BRiCE programme's approach to supporting students and teachers. Critiques have pointed out that wellbeing – like resilience – tends to be conceived of as individualistic and with a limited understanding of how political economy, social and structural factors shape individuals' actions and wellbeing (Shah 2019; Shah, Paulson and Couch 2020; Reyes 2020; Cardozo and Brandt 2014). They also tend to be conceived of as apolitical, and 'forced' onto contexts where people might have different conceptions and ways of expressing what they refer to. While we do not engage in a theoretical discussion, this report seeks to address these limitations by analysing individual-level factors in conjunction with structural, political and social factors. This builds on the efforts of the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships and Save the Children to adopt a more

holistic understanding of key concepts,<sup>4</sup> with the objective of further assessing their relevance.

## 1.4 Structure of the Midline Report

Teachers' wellbeing and their capacity to deliver quality teaching depends on a wide range of factors. Rather than carrying out an exhaustive review of all factors, we focus on those aspects that have figured prominently in teachers' accounts. The Baseline Report has already covered other important factors, in particular the socioeconomic background of teachers, their education and training, and the infrastructural and organisational challenges teachers face in Niger and the DRC (see Baseline Report, in particular section 4). Here, we focus on three key factors: teachers' employment conditions, teachers' social position, and violence in the school environment. Throughout the report, we seek to draw parallels between Niger and the DRC, although the specificities of both contexts warrant some country-specific subsections that allow us to dive deeper into key issues in each context. The report does not present the full scope of the data collected – which are considerable, both in terms of the qualitative and quantitative data. Data analysis for the Endline Report is ongoing.

The report starts with a presentation of the methodology that was used for the quantitative and qualitative components of the midline analysis in the DRC and Niger. It then discusses the key concepts used in the report, in particular teacher wellbeing and teaching quality, and how these are operationalised in the study (section 3).

Section 4 looks at teachers' employment status. We start by presenting the characteristics of teachers' status in Niger and the DRC, and the modalities through which employment status is established. We look at the complex relationship between employment status, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality, using descriptive statistics from the midline survey. We then look at two events that have had major effects: school closures in the DRC and Niger, and the *Gratuité* policy in the DRC.

Section 5 looks at the social position of teachers and how they navigate tense and polarised social contexts. Specifically, the section starts by exploring the changes to teacher-student relations induced by the school closures and the *Gratuité* policy. We then look at gender and how it structures teachers' relations with the school environment, with a particular focus on Niger. We also look at ethnicity and how it permeates relations in the school environment in Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu.

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<sup>4</sup> Save the Children's conception of resilience highlights individual-, group- and system-level resilience, 'putting issues of people, power and politics at the centre of the change process', as: 'Effective resilience supposes a transformation... resilience is thereby built by influencing policies that relate to power imbalances in society that encourage, create and sustain vulnerabilities' (Save the Children 2020).

Section 6 looks at violence in the school environment, with a particular focus on violence against teachers. Building on the analysis carried out in the Baseline Report, we explore the intersecting dynamics of violence in the school environment in Fizi and Uvira. In Niger, our data suggest that teachers and schools are exposed to relatively less violence than in the DRC. However, violent conflicts have a range of indirect effects on schools and teachers, which we explore.

After having covered three key aspects of teachers' wellbeing and teaching quality in sections 4, 5 and 6, section 7 presents the results of the evaluation of two key interventions of the BRiCE education programme, implemented by Save the Children: TPD and ILET. The evaluation uses a phased-in cluster randomisation approach to measure the effects of these interventions on a range of teacher and student outcomes. The implementation of BRiCE has been significantly curtailed by the school closures in Niger and the DRC, and the *Gratuité* policy in the DRC. These, we believe, play a large part in explaining the absence of detected effects of the interventions in the DRC. In Niger, where the school closures were shorter than in the DRC, the interventions show some positive effects on the outcome measures, which is encouraging for a project that took place in such difficult circumstances.

Section 8 discusses the overall results of the study, makes policy recommendations and presents themes for the endline analysis in both Niger and the DRC.

## 2. Methodology

The BRiCE research project uses an interdisciplinary, mixed-methods approach. It relies on approaches and methods developed in several fields of the social sciences, notably education, economics, political science, conflict studies and development studies. Our mixed-methods approach is composed of quantitative and qualitative components. Throughout the analysis and report, we use both approaches in a complementary way, pointing out when the two approaches yield diverging results and seeking to explain the causes of these divergences. In this section, we present the quantitative and qualitative approaches, before moving to definitions of the central concepts of the study and how we operationalise them.

### 2.1 Quantitative component methodology

The midline survey was undertaken in the DRC and Niger in October–November 2020. Schools were divided into three groups: Pilot, Cohort 2 and Cohort 3. In this report, we only focus on Cohort 2 and Cohort 3, where the data were collected. Cohort 2 received the interventions in the 2019/20 academic year, while Cohort 3 received them in the 2020/21 academic year. In the DRC, we surveyed 49 schools selected by Save the Children for implementation of the TPD and ILET interventions in Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu. In Niger, similarly, we surveyed 71<sup>5</sup> schools in Diffa and Zinder, with the logistical and operational support of the Save the Children monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning team in Niger. These schools were not randomly selected or selected to be nationally representative but based on the criteria listed in detail in the Baseline Report.

The schools were randomly divided into the two cohorts to allow for rigorous evaluation of the effects of TPD and ILET. Following this approach, we compared schools in Cohort 2 (the treatment group), which received the interventions, to schools in Cohort 3 (the control group), which did not receive the interventions. In each school in the DRC and Niger, respectively, we surveyed an average of 15 and 10 teachers during the baseline survey in 2019. We surveyed a random sample of teachers, stratified by gender. In schools with less than the targeted number of teachers to survey, all teachers in the school were interviewed. Similarly, in each school in the DRC and Niger, respectively, 13 and 10 students at the beginning of grade 4 were randomly selected for the baseline.

In the midline survey in 2020, we aimed to survey the same teachers and students who were surveyed during the baseline to create a panel dataset of teachers and students. If these teachers and students were no longer at the

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<sup>5</sup> Yelwa school was dropped from the interventions; this accounts for the discrepancy between the number of schools reported at baseline and here.

school, we replaced them with teachers of the same gender and with students of the same gender and academic progression. Although we followed a replacement strategy for teachers, the Midline Report is based only on the panel of teachers, as these are the teachers who would have been employed in the school throughout the duration of the TPD and ILET interventions in 2019/20. Annexes 1A and 1B detail the survey instruments employed in the DRC and Niger, respectively. Annexe 2 provides a detailed overview of the data collection and quality assurance processes followed.

### 2.1.1 Post-data collection sample distribution

Table 2.1 presents the numbers of schools, teachers and students surveyed in the DRC and Niger during the midline survey.

**Table 2.1 Midline survey sample distribution**

	Sample size at midline		% of the baseline tracked at midline	
	DRC	Niger	DRC	Niger
Total number of schools	49	71	100	100
<b>Student sample at midline</b>				
Sample of female students	344	356	51	82
Sample of male students	293	328	61	79
Sample of students with at least one functioning limitation	75	14	100	100
Total students	715	694	56	81
<b>Teacher sample at baseline and midline</b>				
Sample of female teachers	175	386	81	73
Sample of male teachers	448	59	84	77
Total teachers	623	445	83	74

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Students in Niger were surveyed in only 69 out of 71 schools. In the 'Mai Kazagui' and 'Mal Entendants' schools, no students were surveyed as these schools are exclusively for children who are blind and deaf. In one school in Niger ('Doungou Quartier'), no teachers surveyed at baseline were found at midline.

For students, the attrition rate was higher in the DRC (44%) than in Niger (19%). Thus, only 56 per cent of the baseline students were surveyed at the midline in the DRC and 81 per cent in Niger. Exploring the school and child characteristics associated with attrition in Annexe 3 Table A5.1, we find that attrition among students is driven by different factors in the DRC and Niger. In the DRC, female students, students who were not born in the village where the survey was conducted, and students who feel that violence plagues the school environment have higher attrition rates. On the other hand, in Niger, socioeconomic background of students is more important. Students whose parents have not attended school, and who come from households with lower economic status and

lower learning engagement at home, have higher attrition rates. Additionally, students with lower levels of learning also have higher rates of attrition in Niger.

To counteract attrition rates among students, the IDS midline study followed a replacement strategy. Thus, we have a total of 715 students in the DRC and 694 students in Niger. Since the proportion of students reporting functioning limitations (as defined by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, which developed the tools on disability used in the analysis) is low in our sample (75 in the DRC and 14 in Niger), we are unable to perform any statistical analyses reliably on this sample.

For teachers, the attrition rate was lower in the DRC (18%) than in Niger (26%). Exploring the school and teacher characteristics associated with attrition in Annexe 3 Table A5.2, we find that attrition among teachers in both countries was strongly associated with safety at school. Schools considered to be unsafe by their head teachers saw higher rates of attrition among teachers. In the DRC, attrition is also associated with higher numbers of household members and children, which may exert caring responsibilities on teachers. Teachers who have direct experience of violent attacks in the DRC are also more likely to have higher attrition rates.

Given the lower attrition rates among teachers, the midline study is able to exploit the panel data, using information from both the baseline and the midline for teachers. For the rest of the report, we use this panel of teachers: 623 in the DRC and 445 in Niger.

## 2.2 Qualitative component methodology

### 2.2.1 DRC

The qualitative component of the baseline study took place in Uvira, while the midline study was carried out in Fizi. Between 18 March and 14 April 2020, Pacifique Nyagabaza and Dieudonné Kanyerhera of ISP Bukavu carried out 62 semi-structured qualitative interviews in Fizi, educational subdivisions Fizi 2 and Fizi 3, in South Kivu (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2 Location of qualitative interviews in Fizi, South Kivu – Phase 2**

	Location	Respondents
<b>School no.</b>		
1	Baraka	Head teacher, 4 teachers, parent
2	Katanga	Head teacher, 3 teachers, parent
3	Mushimbaki	Head teacher, 4 teachers, parent
4	Lusenda	Head teacher, 4 teachers, parent
5	Lusenda	Deputy head teacher, 2 teachers, parent
6	Katungulu	Head teacher, 2 teachers, parent
7	Mboko	Head teacher, 4 teachers, parent
8	Mboko	Deputy head teacher, 4 teachers, parent
9	Mboko	Head teacher, 3 teachers
10	Nundu	Head teacher, 3 teachers
11	Swima	Head teacher, 2 teachers, parent
<b>Office no.</b>		
1	Baraka	Sub-provincial government administrator
2	Baraka	Teachers' union member
3	Baraka	Provincial government administrator
4	Baraka	Provincial government administrator
5	Baraka	Sub-provincial faith-based administrator
6	Mboko	Sub-provincial government administrator
<b>Other no.</b>		
7	Baraja	Civil society representative

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

The schools where we conducted interviews are located in areas with distinct yet similar histories of struggles over customary power and land, and armed conflict. Regarding the semi-structured interview guide, we used the same one we had used for the baseline study, to enable coherence between findings in Uvira and Fizi. A few modifications were necessary. Responding to recent developments, we added questions on the *Gratuité* policy, the political economy of teacher recruitment and the Covid-19 pandemic. We adapted the section on TPD. While

these questions were rather generic in the first phase, we now engaged more closely with BRiCE TPD material and included questions to explore respondents' perceptions of these tools. Finally, we adapted the questionnaire according to feedback from our interviewers concerning, for example, sensitive terms and questions that did not resonate with the interviewees. While our interviewers had already begun to adapt these questions during fieldwork in Uvira, we then added them to the questionnaire more systematically to have a transparent document.

Regarding sampling, seven out of the 11 schools were remarkably old, having received their administrative decree (*arrêté d'agrément*) in the 1970s. This is possibly related to Save the Children's selection mechanism, which provides support for schools that are in good condition and likely to remain open in the near future. Being aware of this bias, we do not currently see how it might alter our findings. We complemented the interviews collected during this phase of fieldwork with those carried out for the Covid-19 Short Study in June–July 2020 (Marchais, *et al.* unpublished), as well as background research and secondary sources.

### 2.2.2 Niger

Due to organisational issues, no baseline qualitative research took place in Niger. The midline therefore targeted Zinder and Diffa. In February and March 2021, Kadey Magi Mamadou and Amoukou Saadou, under the supervision of Weifane Ibrahim, carried out 80 semi-structured interviews (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3 Location of qualitative interviews in Niger – Phase 1**

	Region	Location	Respondents
School no.			
1	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
2	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
3	Diffa	Chetimarie	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
4	Diffa	Maine	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
5	Diffa	Maine	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
6	Diffa	Kelakam	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
7	Diffa	Djajiri	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
8	Diffa	Goudoumaria	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
9	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
10	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
11	Zinder	Kantché	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent

12	Zinder	Matamaye	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
13	Zinder	Yaouri	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
14	Zinder	Matamaye	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
15	Zinder	Doungou	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
16	Zinder	Dan Barto	Head teachers, 2 teachers, parent
<b>Office no.</b>			
1	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Head of regional education office
2	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Head of departmental education office
3	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Head of departmental education office
4	Diffa	Maine	Head of departmental education office
5	Diffa	Maine	Head of departmental education office
6	Diffa	Goudoumaria	Head of departmental education office
7	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Head of regional education office
8	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Head of departmental education office
9	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Head of departmental education office
10	Zinder	Kantché	Head of departmental education office
<b>Other no.</b>			
1	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Security expert
2	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Teachers' union member
3	Diffa	Ville Diffa	Teachers' union member (temporary contracts)
4	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Security expert
5	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Teachers' union member
6	Zinder	Ville Zinder	Teachers' union member (temporary contracts)

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

As we were unable to conduct qualitative research for the Baseline Report, the qualitative questionnaire was not a follow-up to initial qualitative research. The main sources to inform the qualitative reports were secondary literature, baseline quantitative findings, exchanges with the Nigerien research team and BRiCE components. Given significant regional differences, we prepared two different questionnaires for Zinder and Diffa, and included questions to explore striking regional differences in quantitative findings.

### 2.2.3 Qualitative data analysis for the DRC and Niger

We translated (where necessary), transcribed and coded the interviews. We applied focused and open coding in our data analysis. Regarding focused coding, we followed the idea of 'sensitising concepts' (Bowen 2006), which means that theory and hypotheses guided coding and analysis. We then connected these findings to the wider literature. Open coding implied that we were alert to emerging and unexpected findings. Narratives do not represent objective facts about the social world (Hammersley 2003). People might also consciously or unconsciously perform a certain role and act according to perceived norms in front of an interviewer (Riessman 2001; Atkinson 2005). Narratives about education and conflict, like any oral knowledge, are 'heterogeneous, fluctuating, and even "fragmented"... unequally distributed, variously structured, relatively un-systematized, strategically uttered, and politically manipulated' (Olivier de Sardan 2015: 11–2).

We embarked on 'questioning heterogeneities, contradictions, and differences' rather than 'flattening them out' (*ibid.*). Especially in contexts of conflict 'the referents of knowledge are essentially contested', Verweijen (2015) states and proposes Nordstrom's (1997) notion of 'factx', 'highlighting the "x-factor", or the uncertainty and indefinability surrounding the information that the researcher obtains in war zones' (Verweijen 2015: 9). Rumours abound and 'representations can become the paramount field of battle, turning rumours into a powerful weapon of war' (*ibid.*). Triangulation was used by comparing the different respondents' narratives about these themes or specific events (Burawoy 1998: 15). We connect our findings to wider dynamics of political economy and patterns of contested public authority, at sub-provincial, provincial and national levels. Moreover, 'studying up' (Foley 1977: 321) – for example, patronage-based recruitment – was an important component of our multi-sited research.

## 2.3 Ethics review

This research project has undergone a full review by the IDS Ethics Committee (which can be provided upon request). The IDS Research Ethics procedure combines the Economic and Social Research Council's Research Ethics Framework and the University of Sussex's Research Ethics Committee procedures. The project has also undergone a full review and has been authorised by the board of ISP Bukavu for the DRC. This authorisation is recognised as an ethics authorisation, as ISP Bukavu has authority to review and approve research projects carried out in South Kivu. The midline qualitative and quantitative instruments were shared with both the IDS Ethics Committee and the ISP Bukavu Ethics Committee, to keep them informed of the evolution of the research design. Moreover, for the midline quantitative data collections, the research teams in both Niger and the DRC were trained on child safeguarding.

These trainings were delivered by the Save the Children child safeguarding focal points in Niger and the DRC.

Moreover, for the midline data collection in the DRC and Niger, the IDS research team worked with Dr Natalie Edelman, a principal research fellow at the School of Health Sciences of the University of Brighton, UK. Dr Edelman has been developing a new approach to working with populations potentially subjected to trauma: Trauma and Resilience Informed Research Principles and Practice (TRIRPP) (Edelman 2021). While this approach has been developed for health research in the context of the UK, the IDS team worked with Dr Edelman to adapt them to contexts of ongoing violent conflict, where research subjects endure significantly higher levels of trauma. These have been incorporated into the research instruments for the midline data collection, and a workshop and follow-up discussion are planned to take stock of the approach and its adaptation to the BRiCE project. The list of principles and practices incorporated into the survey instruments is available on request.

## 3. Definitions and measurement

### 3.1 Teacher wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing is increasingly popular in the study of education in crisis-affected contexts (Falk *et al.* 2019). High costs for recruitment and training resulting from teacher turnover and absenteeism, low levels of teaching quality and the impact of violence against teachers are central reasons for the growing concern about teacher wellbeing. Key components of teacher wellbeing include workload, self-efficacy, individual resilience, stress and anxiety, burnout, job satisfaction, social connectedness and social-emotional competence (*ibid.*; Mendenhall, Gomez and Varni 2018). Drawing on the most commonly quantitatively measured wellbeing outcomes of motivation, job satisfaction, and stress or burnout (Bennell and Akyeampong 2007; Wolf *et al.* 2018), and adding a trauma component, this report uses the following definition: teacher wellbeing is a teacher's perceived job satisfaction, motivation, teaching challenge support and trauma, affected by school-level factors and conflict and policy dynamics (Acton and Glasgow 2015; Viac and Fraser 2020; Falk *et al.* 2019).

Such a definition inevitably has limitations, which are inherent to broad-scope definitions. Moreover, the fact that concepts such as wellbeing are built on Western epistemologies and were developed in Western contexts also means that their application in non-Western contexts poses a range of challenges. These dive deep into ontological and epistemological questions, as what people understand by wellbeing can vary according to the cultural and social context. Even concepts such as psychological trauma and mental illness, which have precise medical definitions, are subject to wide-ranging variations and interpretations (Ventevogel *et al.* 2013). In this study, we recognise these challenges, build on an inductive approach in the qualitative methodology to select key dimensions of wellbeing and examine the relevance of the concept of wellbeing throughout the report.

Empirical evidence on teacher wellbeing in complex crises remains thin (Falk *et al.* 2019), though recent studies have made advances on this front. In a paper on teacher wellbeing in conflict-affected contexts, Wolf *et al.* (2015b) carried out a randomised controlled trial to assess the impact of the International Rescue Committee's 'Learning in a Healing Classroom' intervention. While the intervention does not significantly influence teachers' wellbeing – understood as motivation, burnout and job satisfaction – the authors highlight that the motivation of female and male teachers with the fewest years of experience increased (for findings on gender, see section 3.3). While these teachers had the lowest levels of motivation at baseline, this finding suggests that teachers with little experience benefit the most from exchanges with more experienced colleagues. In a second paper, a similar group of authors (Wolf *et al.* 2015a) investigated the relationship

between multiple risks<sup>6</sup> and teacher wellbeing. The authors found that cumulative risk is associated with lower motivation and higher burnout. This effect is moderated by years of schooling and experience. Less experienced teachers risk higher levels of burnouts. This aspect echoes another strand of the literature that is concerned with the 'subjective' dimension of many wellbeing indicators, reflecting the 'capacity to cope' rather than the accumulated level of stress or pain. In the medium- to long-run, many people 'adjust' to their new situation, even if initially harsh, and therefore perceive their level of subjective wellbeing increase (Stewart 2014).

The qualitative component of the BRiCE research project analyses complex interactions between teacher identity, policy, conflict and wellbeing. The quantitative component of the BRiCE research project distinguishes between professional wellbeing and trauma. As part of professional wellbeing, it measures the commonly reported teacher wellbeing outcomes related to job satisfaction, motivation and teaching challenge support (Aldrup *et al.* 2018). To measure levels of trauma among teachers, we administered the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) checklist. The PTSD checklist was developed by Weathers *et al.* (1993) and has been frequently applied in conflict-affected contexts, as well as with workers and survivors of road accidents and natural disasters (Ibrahim *et al.* 2018). The PTSD checklist is scored out of a total of 68 and comprises 17 questions that parallel diagnostic criteria B (re-experiencing symptoms), C (avoidance symptoms) and D (hyperarousal and reactivity symptoms) as delineated in the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV) (APA 1994). In these 17 questions, respondents answer using a rating scale from 0 to 4, representing 'Not at all', 'A little bit', 'Moderately', 'Quite a bit' and 'Extremely'. The sum of these scores across the 17 questions provides an indication of an individual's level of trauma as a result of violence and shock. The higher the score, the worse the individual's symptoms of trauma (for more details, see section 4.7 of the baseline study).<sup>7</sup>

Figure 3.1 presents the average score on each of the four teacher wellbeing indices at the baseline and midline for the DRC and Niger.<sup>8</sup> For comparability across teacher wellbeing outcomes, we scaled the indices to range between 0 and 1. For example, the rescaled 'job satisfaction index' can take values between 0 and 1, where a value of 0.6 would indicate that the teacher was satisfied with 60 per cent of the items in this index (or responded 'Yes' to 4 out of 7 statements).

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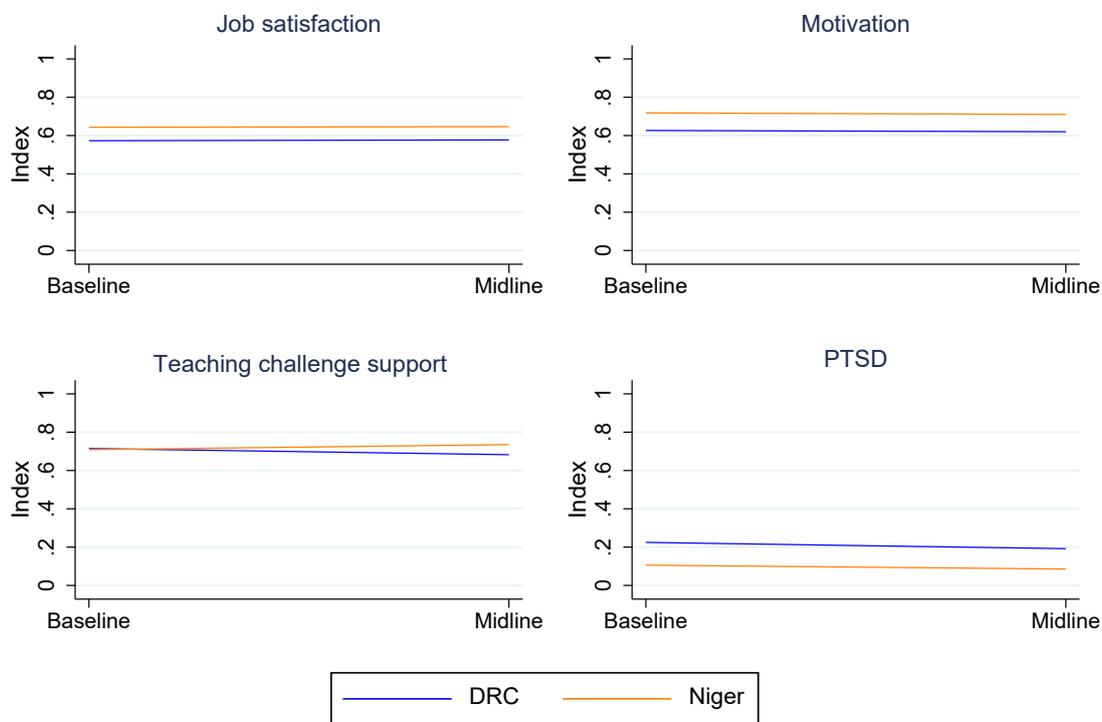
<sup>6</sup> Wolf *et al.* (2015a) identify five areas of risk that constitute the 'cumulative risk index' (*ibid.*: 727): household hardship; health and wellbeing; social isolation; objective working conditions; and subjective work.

<sup>7</sup> For more details, see **PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)**

<sup>8</sup> A detailed breakdown of each index and corresponding items are presented in Annexe 3 Table A5.3.

## Figure 3.1 Evolution of teacher wellbeing in the DRC and Niger

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.



Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger.

While the job satisfaction and motivation indices at the midline are almost the same as the baseline levels, there was a marginal decline in the PTSD index in both countries. Teachers in the DRC additionally reported an average decline in the teaching challenge support index. From Annexe 3 Table A5.1, we find that this decline is due to the teachers in the DRC feeling unsupported to manage large class sizes and teaching children from different grades together in the same class. This is an area that would have been impacted by *Gratuité*, which has increased enrolment without necessarily increasing the number of teachers employed or the school infrastructure to accommodate this increase in students (section 4.4 of this report discusses the exacerbating effects of *Gratuité* in more detail). While the TPD intervention adapted to this need and now offers training on large class management to teachers in the DRC, this module was not completed in the 2019/20 academic year at the time of the midline study.

## 3.2 Teaching quality

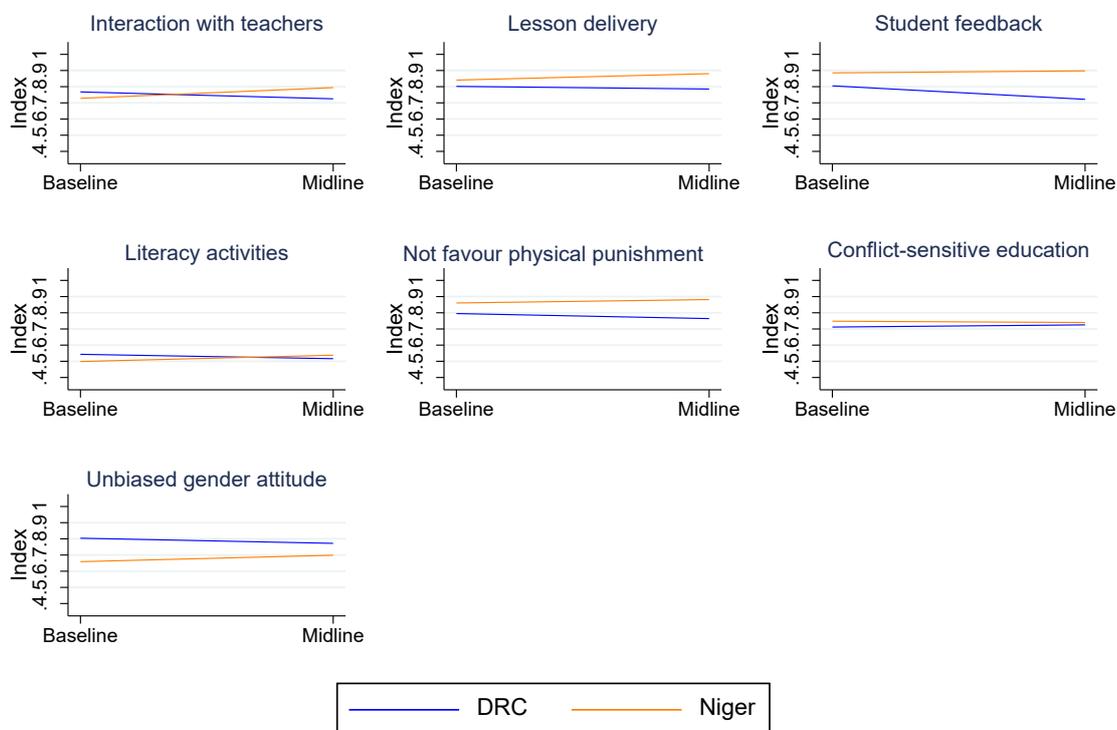
Teacher wellbeing and teaching quality are closely linked. Research has pointed out that observable teacher characteristics (e.g. gender, age, years of experience or contractual status) cannot fully explain teachers' quality and effectiveness (Hanushek and Rivkin 2006). Bold *et al.* (2017) identified three alternative factors: (1) instruction time in class; (2) teacher's subject content knowledge; and (3) teacher's pedagogical skills. 'Time on task' has long been considered an important predictor of teaching quality. Accountability frameworks have suggested that 'quiet corruption' (e.g. absenteeism) significantly decreases teachers' time in the classroom (World Bank 2010).

From a human capital perspective, non-cognitive/socioemotional skills are important as they can increase academic success and are demanded in the labour market (Heckman and Kautz 2012). Going beyond test scores and rates of return, programmes in education in emergencies have highlighted the importance of socioemotional learning and the links between education and other humanitarian sectors. Hence, teacher quality is much more than 'test scores'. A good teacher might be a teacher who consoles, who recognises psychological issues and understands referral mechanisms, who masters the school's security plan or who simply dares to teach in challenging circumstances. Some of this might indeed be subsumed under what Bold *et al.* (2017) refer to as 'pedagogical skills', but the term does not capture all these facets.

The quantitative component of the BRiCE study measures teaching quality in relation to classroom and professional teaching practices (see also Baseline Report). These were designed to map to the competencies and activities under the TPD modules. They include seven indices of teaching quality: teachers' interactions with other teachers; lesson delivery; providing feedback to students; use of high-quality literacy practices in the classroom; use of physical punishment; conflict-sensitive education; and unbiased gender attitudes. Past research has used similar measures to capture teaching quality in the form of classroom observation by trained third party or by video observations coded by trained pedagogists (e.g. CLASS tool in Araujo *et al.* 2016; TEACH tool by Molina *et al.* 2018; TIPPS tool by Wolf *et al.* 2018). One difference between the measures that exist in the empirical literature and those implemented in this study is that our measures were self-reported. This creates the possibility that teachers may tend to report favourably on these measures for social desirability. While measurement bias may occur from teachers' self-reported answers, it is much lower if the teachers are asked about specific and brief practices (Koziol and Burns 1986) as done in this survey.

Figure 3.2 presents the average score on each of the seven teaching quality indices at the baseline and at the midline for the DRC and Niger.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 3.2 Evolution of teaching quality in the DRC and Niger**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger.

For comparability across teaching quality outcomes, we scaled the indices such that they lie between 0 and 1. For example, the rescaled 'interaction with teachers index' can take values between 0 and 1, where a value of 0.5 would indicate that the teacher was conducting 50 per cent of the activities under this index (or responded 'yes' to 2 out of 4 statements). For all teaching quality indices except providing conflict-sensitive education, teachers in the DRC reported a decline from the baseline to midline. Teachers in Niger reported the opposite. The largest and most significant declines were in student feedback index and unbiased gender attitudes index in the DRC. The decline in unbiased gender attitudes index in the DRC was driven by a 10-percentage point increase in teachers who agreed that books should encourage women to stay at home (from 27% at baseline), and a 9-percentage point increase in teachers who agree that boys should be assigned to leadership positions (from 11% at baseline). While the TPD intervention incorporates training on girls' education, this module was not completed by the teachers in either country in the 2019/20 academic year, when the midline study was conducted.

<sup>9</sup> A detailed breakdown of each index and corresponding items are presented in Annexe 3 Table A5.4.

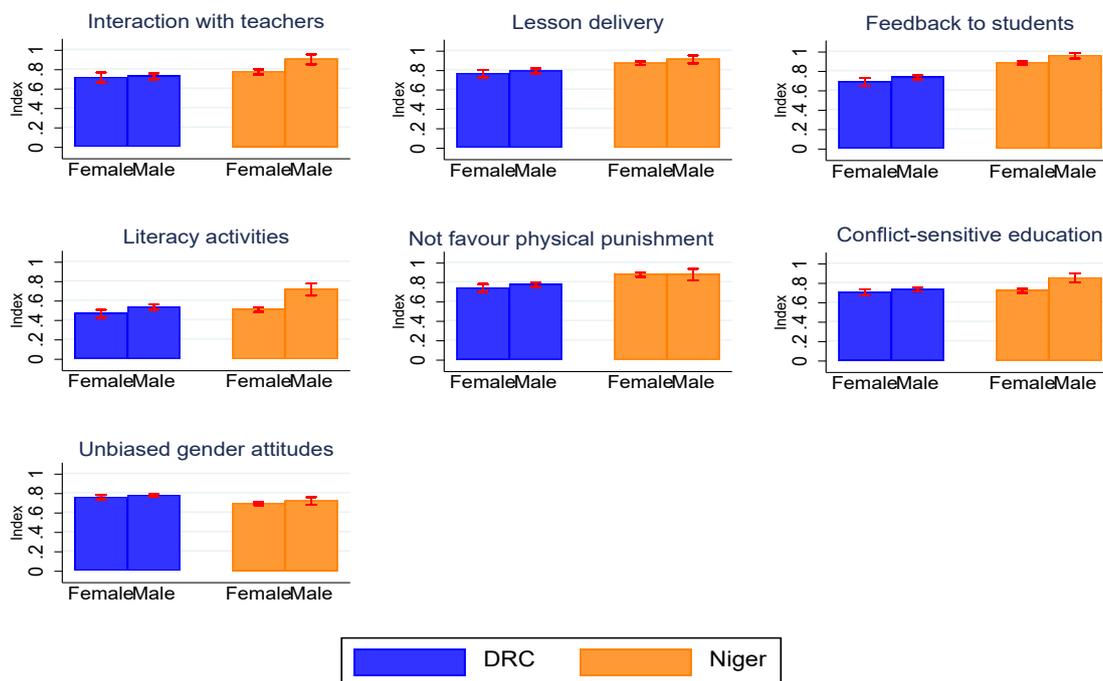
### 3.3 Gender, wellbeing and quality

Gender is a cross-cutting theme of the BRiCE project that plays a role in teacher wellbeing and quality in several ways. Studies have noted that the underlying gender gap in educational attainment can partially explain the relatively lower proportion of female teachers in the education sector in some countries (Smiley, Moussa and Brown 2018), although this is not systematic. In Niger, for example, there is a larger proportion of female teachers than male teachers. In our baseline study, we find that 70 per cent and 33 per cent of the female teachers in the DRC and Niger, respectively, completed secondary education, compared to 79 per cent and 42 per cent of the male teachers (Marchais *et al.* 2020a). Lower levels of education among female teachers can impact their progression and wellbeing in the teaching profession, compared to their male colleagues. This is reflected in our data, where substantially fewer women progress to school leadership and serve as school directors. In the DRC, only 6.5 per cent of school directors were female, while the corresponding figure for Niger was 32 per cent. In the DRC, on average, a school employs five female and 12 male teachers, a difference of almost 2.5 times (Table 3.1, Baseline Report). Moreover, gendered norms can affect teachers' work in several ways (see section 5.3).

The factors that structure teacher wellbeing and teaching quality in conflict-affected contexts can have starker effects on female teachers. Safety concerns and exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), for example, can be disproportionately higher for female teachers (Mendenhall, Gomez and Varni 2018; Falk *et al.* 2019). In our baseline study, 12 per cent and 8 per cent of the female teachers in the DRC and Niger respectively reported receiving threats from students in the school environment, compared to 8 per cent and 5 per cent of male teachers in the DRC and Niger (Annexe 5 Table A5.8, Baseline Report). Displacement can also have differentiated effects by gender, with female teachers more reluctant to return to affected areas (Mendenhall *et al.* 2018). As noted above, the Learning in a Healing Classroom intervention lowers female teachers' levels of job satisfaction, probably due to social norms that inhibit participation during teacher learning circles. Self-efficacy, an important part of wellbeing, may thus be hindered, while stress might increase. SGBV not only affects female teachers but also discourages other women from becoming teachers (Shepler and Routh 2012). At the same time, providing education during conflict can increase female teachers' reputation and bolster their wellbeing (Winthrop and Kirk 2008).

Given the range of inequalities that female teachers face, it is unsurprising that we find evidence of a gender gap in our outcomes of interest, with female teachers exhibiting lower levels of self-reported teaching quality. Figure 3.3 presents the average teaching quality indices by female and male teachers for the DRC and Niger.

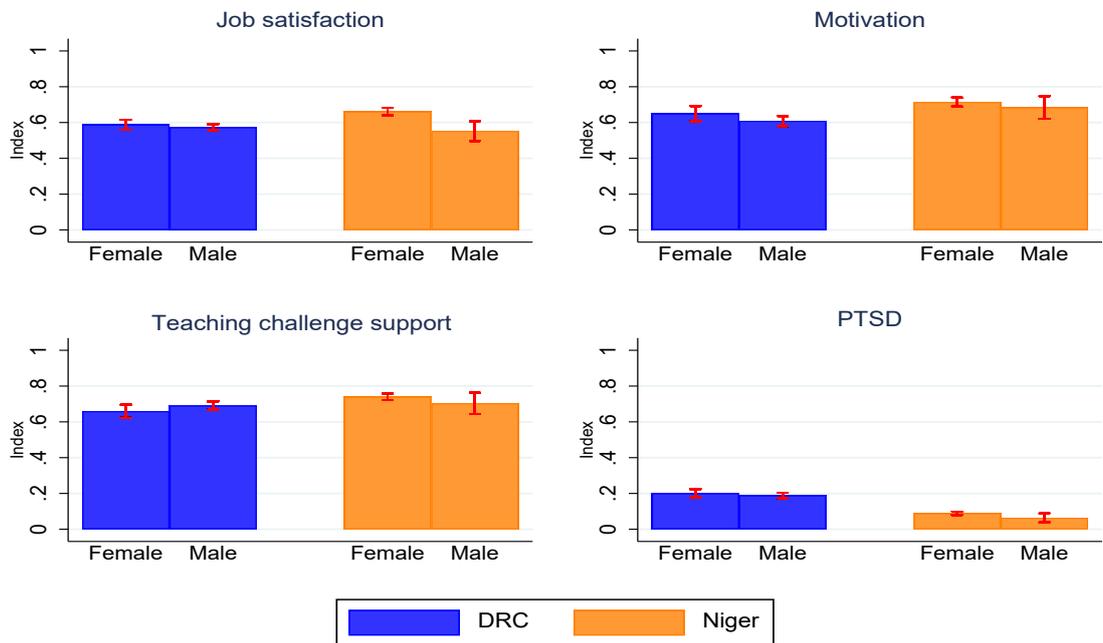
**Figure 3.3 Average teaching quality by gender of teachers**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger; figure reports average outcomes; red lines denote a 95% confidence interval.

Across all measures of teaching quality, male teachers outperform female teachers. This gap is particularly pronounced in Niger, where female teachers are less likely to interact with other teachers in the school, less likely to implement literacy-related activities in classrooms and less likely to provide conflict-sensitive education. Despite inequitable access to education, training and conducive social environments, female teachers report higher levels of teaching motivation and satisfaction than male teachers, particularly in Niger (Figure 3.4). However, female teachers report higher levels of PTSD symptoms than male teachers, particularly in Niger, a result that may be related to incidents of gender-based violence in crisis and conflict contexts. In section 5.3, we continue to reflect on the cross-cutting effects of gender and how gender influences teaching quality and wellbeing.

**Figure 3.4 Average teacher wellbeing by gender of teachers**

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger; figure reports average outcomes; red lines denote a 95% confidence interval.

## 4. Employment status

We start our analysis of the structuring factors of teachers' wellbeing and teaching quality by looking at teachers' working conditions and conditions of employment, with a particular focus on employment status. In the Baseline Report, we highlighted the stark conditions that teachers face in Niger and the DRC as a result of poverty and chronic underfunding of the education sectors in both countries (see Baseline Report, in particular section 4). Here, we focus on employment status; for example whether a teacher is recruited permanently or on a temporary contract, because teachers in Niger and the DRC repeatedly highlighted it as a central concern.

Employment status conditions job security, pay, employment rights and employment benefits, and professional recognition, which have been identified as central factors for teacher motivation and teacher wellbeing, both of which have implications for teaching quality.<sup>10</sup> In an influential study of 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) found that over one-third of primary school teachers reported low levels of motivation and morale, and that one of the most important factors explaining this was low and unreliable pay (*ibid.* 2007: 7). Research in Italy also suggests that job insecurity in the teaching profession, measured by the share of the total teaching workforce employed on temporary contracts, is positively correlated with occupational stress, suggesting a direct link between employment status and teacher wellbeing (Forcella *et al.* 2009: 95).

The relationship between employment status, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality, however, is not straightforward. In some contexts, casual or temporary contracts can correspond to a preliminary phase of employment, which is followed by teachers' accession to permanent contracts and career progression. In such configurations, teachers on temporary contracts might be highly motivated in their job and thrive to achieve high quality in their teaching because of the prospect of career progression. In other contexts, as in Niger, temporary contracts might offer little prospect of career progression and a large part of the teaching workforce might find themselves in a position of long-term casual employment. Such configurations can lead to low morale and motivation in the teaching workforce, negatively affecting teaching quality as a result. They can also deter vocational commitment, as entering the teaching profession offers little prospect of career progression or financial stability. Nevertheless, as noted in the previous section, it is important not to have a deterministic view of these factors: even in highly insecure employment status configurations, teachers' commitment to the profession can remain high as a result of their intrinsic motivation to work.

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<sup>10</sup> Employment status also features among the individual factors of teacher wellbeing in Falk *et al.* (2019).

By exploring the relationship between employment status, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality in Niger and the DRC, our objective is to develop a nuanced understanding of one of the factors that teachers consistently pointed out in interviews.

In this section, we start with an overview of the relationship between employment status, pay, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality in Niger and the DRC. We take a historical perspective to analyse the governance dynamics behind employment status in both countries. We then look at the effects of school closures during the Covid-19 lockdowns and the reconfiguration of the teaching profession in the DRC brought about by the *Gratuité* policy. Finally, we look at the policy and project implications of the analysis.

## 4.1 Employment status, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality

### 4.1.1 Categories of employment status

We start this section with a snapshot of the employment status of teachers in the BRiCE schools of Niger and the DRC where the qualitative and quantitative components of the study were carried out. In Niger, there are two main categories of employment status: (1) civil servants (i.e. teachers who are registered as permanent state employees); and (2) teachers on temporary contracts, often referred to as contract teachers, who can either be on full-time or part-time contracts. In the DRC, there has been a proliferation of types of employment status. The most important are:

1. *Mecanisé* and *payé* (MP) – teachers who are registered with the relevant government authorities and who are on the government payroll.
2. *Mecanisé* and *non-payé* (NP) – teachers who are registered with the relevant government authorities but not on the government payroll due to budgetary or administrative issues.
3. *Nouvelle unité* (NU) – ‘new’ teachers who appear on internal school documents but have yet to be officially registered with government authorities.
4. *Omis* – these are teachers who were previously either MP or NP, but due to administrative error or misconduct, find themselves omitted from either the government register or the government payroll or both.

To carry out comparisons between Niger and the DRC, we establish two categories for employment status – favourable and unfavourable – based on two key criteria: stability of contracts and pay; and discussions with teachers. For the DRC, we categorise MP teachers as having favourable teaching contracts, whereas teachers who are NP, NU, *omis*, volunteers or trainees are classified as having unfavourable contracts. Some 80 per cent of the teachers surveyed for

the midline data collection in the DRC had favourable contracts<sup>11</sup> and the school survey gives us an average of 66 per cent of teachers on MP contracts per BRiCE school.<sup>12</sup> For Niger, teachers with civil servant status are categorised as having favourable teaching contracts, whereas teachers on full-time or part-time temporary contracts are classified as having unfavourable contracts. Only 42 per cent of teachers surveyed in Niger had favourable contracts, and the school survey shows that, on average, 39 per cent of the teachers employed by the BRiCE schools surveyed were on favourable (civil servant) contracts.

#### 4.1.2 Employment status and employment conditions

As can be seen in Table 4.1, teachers' employment status partially conditions salaries and delays in payments of salaries, providing evidence that they structure wider employment inequalities in the teaching profession. Teachers on unfavourable contracts report a lower monthly salary, on average, in both countries, with a starker gap in Niger than in the DRC. Non-payment of teacher salaries is a major issue in the DRC, where 18.7 per cent of teachers on unfavourable contracts and 7.2 per cent of the teachers on favourable contracts report that their salaries were not paid for at least one month in the 2019/20 academic year. This, as we will see in section 4.4, is partially the result of the exacerbation of employment-related inequalities caused by the *Gratuité* policy, as well as school closures, which we explore in section 4.3.

Differences conditioned by employment status do not mean that teachers on favourable contracts do not experience difficulties related to pay. Indeed, delays in receiving pay are a widespread issue for teachers in both the DRC and Niger and can create significant financial difficulties for teachers on all types of contracts. In Niger, a higher percentage of teachers on unfavourable contracts experience delays in receiving pay, but the opposite is true in the DRC. While we

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<sup>11</sup> The teachers whose information is analysed in this report were present for the data collection at both baseline and midline, as specified in section 2. Thus, the report does not include teachers who left schools between the baseline and midline, or teachers who were not available for the midline. Given that we know that NU teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession, the study sample is likely to overrepresent MP teachers, which is confirmed by the lower proportion of MP teachers found in the school survey (66%) compared to the teacher survey sample (80%).

<sup>12</sup> The school survey shows that in the BRiCE schools in the DRC, on average, 66 per cent of the teachers employed are MP, 27 per cent are NU and 6 per cent are NP. Although this seems like a relatively high number, it is important to bear in mind that it is not necessarily representative of actual distribution of employment status in Fizi and Uvira, or in the DRC more generally, as the survey was only carried out in the BRiCE schools. The BRiCE schools are typically old and well-established schools, which for the most part are relatively close to urban centres and main roads (see Baseline Report for the general characteristics of the BRiCE schools). As a result of their relatively higher level of institutionalisation and location, they are likely to have a higher proportion of MP teachers. Uvira and Fizi, however, are marked by sharp geographic disparities in state and educational infrastructure. More remote schools or less institutionally established schools are likely to have a higher proportion of teachers on non-permanent contracts, which means that the overall ratio of permanent to non-permanent contracts in Fizi and Uvira – and, hence, in South Kivu and the DRC – is likely to be different to the one in the sample.

cannot currently explain the underlying dynamics in Niger, in the DRC two reasons account for this difference: first, since the introduction of *bancarisation* – payment of civil servants' salaries into their bank accounts – there have been regular delays and the process has resulted in teachers having to make lengthy journeys to withdraw pay from banks; second, parents have an incentive to pay NU teachers on time as they otherwise suspend students who have not paid.

**Table 4.1 Employment status and conditions in the DRC and Niger**

	DRC		Niger	
	Unfavourable contract	Favourable contract	Unfavourable contract	Favourable contract
Median monthly salary (in US\$) <sup>^</sup>	120.54	183.23	133.06	222.79
% of teachers whose salary was unpaid at least one month in Sept. 2019–Aug. 2020 <sup>^^</sup>	18.70	7.20	2.31	1.62
Average number of months, salary was unpaid in Sept. 2019–Aug. 2020 <sup>^^</sup>	4.44	0.48	0.24	0.15
% of teachers whose pay was delayed at least one month in Sept. 2019–Aug. 2020 <sup>^^</sup>	10.57	39.20	35.00	4.86
Average number of months, pay was delayed in Sept. 2019–Aug. 2020 <sup>^^</sup>	1.44	1.55	3.13	0.23
N (teachers)	123	500	260	185

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on the panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger; <sup>^</sup> monthly pay is missing for 3.21 per cent of teachers in the DRC and 1.35 per cent of teachers in Niger; <sup>^^</sup> delays in receiving pay and non-payment are missing for 14.29 per cent of teachers in the DRC and 1.35 per cent of teachers in Niger.

A brief comparison of the key characteristics of teachers on favourable and unfavourable contracts shows us that, although there are some differences in terms of gender, age, experience and socioeconomic status, the profiles of these two categories of teachers are not starkly different. The most salient differences are in age and years of teaching experience. As can be seen in Annexe 3 Table A5.5, teachers on favourable contracts are, on average, significantly older and have significantly longer teaching experience than teachers on unfavourable contracts. This provides evidence of a relationship between experience and career progression, with older and more experienced teachers achieving higher employment stability, as is expected to be the case across education systems. This, however, should not be taken at face value.

As we will see further in this report, contract teachers in Niger have increasingly stifled career prospects (see section 4.2.2), and NU teachers in the DRC face

significant difficulties in registering as permanent teachers (see section 4.2.1). The age and experience difference here might therefore reflect older patterns of career progression. Moreover, as can be expected given the differences in salary, the households of teachers on favourable contracts are relatively wealthier than those on unfavourable contracts in both Niger and the DRC, although the difference is not stark and only significant in Niger. Gender also seems to play a role, with a higher average proportion of women in unfavourable contracts compared to favourable contracts in both the DRC and Niger, but the difference is not statistically significant. This should not be taken as an indication that gender plays a minor role. Indeed, as we will see in section 5.3, the feminisation of the teaching profession in Niger, where the overall proportion of female teachers is starkly higher than in the DRC, has a range of implications.

#### **4.1.3 Employment status, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality**

The relationship between employment status, teacher wellbeing and teaching quality is not straightforward. A cursory analysis of our teacher wellbeing and teaching quality indicators by employment status, reported in Annexe 3 Figures A5.1 and 5.2, reveals a mixed picture, with no conclusive evidence of the direction of the relationship. For all our indicators of wellbeing and teaching quality, the difference between teachers on favourable and unfavourable contracts is relatively small and not statistically significant. We do, however, find that teachers who experienced delays in the payment of their salaries in 2019–20 exhibit lower levels of teaching quality, the distinction being particularly stark in the DRC (see Annexe 3 Figures A5.3 and A5.4). Teachers in the DRC who experienced delays in the payment of salaries report lower levels of interaction with other teachers and lower levels of literacy activities with students. Additionally, delays in receiving pay are also associated with lower levels of teacher wellbeing in the DRC. These teachers report significantly lower levels of motivation and higher levels of PTSD symptoms in the DRC.

Our findings resonate with Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) who report that while teachers' contract status is not a strong predictor of job satisfaction, poor and unreliable payment of teachers' salaries is. Regarding Niger, similar to this midline study, Maman (2011) finds that contract and civil service teachers do not demonstrate different levels of job satisfaction. She points to other factors, in particular experience (number of years in the job), with a higher number correlated with a higher chance of remaining in the position, as well as the number of students per teacher. She also finds that contract teachers with an A-level equivalent diploma or higher are less satisfied. The findings of Bourdon, Frölich and Michaelowa from Niger further suggest that 'contract teachers do relatively better for low ability children in low grades than for high ability children in higher grades... This implies that contract teachers tend to reduce inequalities in student outcomes' (2007: 1). We took note of this, but our findings are different. The fact that we do not find conclusive evidence of the direction of this

relationship, however, does not mean that it is not important. As noted above, teachers repeatedly highlighted employment status during our interviews. Rather, it means that this relationship needs to be unpacked, to which we now turn.

## 4.2 Causes and implications of contractual status in Niger and the DRC

In this section we unpack the key underlying factors related to teachers' employment status in the DRC and Niger that came up in the qualitative interviews. In the DRC, in line with previous research, the main issue is differentiation of posts according to registration and payment status, a very politicised process. In Niger, where other authors pointed to the importance of clientelism in recruitment processes (Cummings *et al.* 2016) and a strong divergence between formal norms and actual practices in administrative procedures (Olivier de Sardan, Ali Bako and Harouna 2018), the most salient topics that came up in our interviews were the sharp increase of teachers on temporary contracts, misaligned incentives for contract teachers to invest in TPD, and the gendered attractiveness of the teaching profession (on the last point, see section 5.3).

### 4.2.1 The political economy of recruitment in the DRC

The employment status of teachers in the DRC is determined by a complex political economy of teacher recruitment and deployment. A history of politicised teacher governance and administrative irregularities has led to a proliferation of sub-categories in employment status (see section 4.1 for an overview; Brandt 2014, 2020). In Fizi and Uvira in South Kivu, this political economy is tied to militarisation, which we explore in more detail in section 6.

For an NU teacher, moving towards MP status requires political backing. As is known from our research in Uvira (see baseline study) and research in other provinces (Brandt 2020), influential *parrains* (sponsors) intervene in recruitment processes (Int. 20, 48).<sup>13</sup> Decentralisation – here understood as the creation of new administrative educational units, offices and posts – has been used to distribute posts to loyal allies (Brandt and Moshonas 2020). Ethnicity (especially being ethnic Bembe), regional background (e.g. from Fizi) and political affiliation are key to obtaining support from *parrains* for posts, registrations and moving up the career ladder (Int. 11, 15, 21, 25, 31; see also section 5.4). Names for recruitment 'come from the top' (Int. 20). Without *parrainage* (sponsorship), it is 'impossible' to move up the hierarchy (Int. 1), even to become head teacher in a secondary school (Int. 42), or at least impossible to attain a senior position (Int.

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<sup>13</sup> Regarding influential *parrains*, respondents named two main bodies, both of which are affiliated to Compagnons de Néhémie pour la Paix et le Développement (PPRD/FCC: CNPD); and Fondation Louise Munga (FONDALMU) (Int. 1, 5, 12, 15, 16, others).

10), although some claim that the highest posts are not subject to patronage (Int. 57). This can lead to situations where administrative staff who have low competence levels stay in place because they are protected by their *parrains* (Int. 1, 3, 5, various). 'During the conflicts, a long-time member of FONDALMU [Fondation Louise Munga] replaced teachers who were not members of FONDALMU' (Int. 42). These patterns also exist without the interference of high-level politicians; for example, through pastors or head teachers who favour 'autochthonous' colleagues (Int. 24, 48). Such processes are contested and not linearly followed but they nonetheless put some teachers – of a certain ethnicity and regional background – in a relatively privileged position. We return to the role of ethnicity in section 5.4.

As elsewhere in the country, (sub-)provincial offices of the Teachers' Inspection and Pay Service (SECOPE) demand high illicit fees for the registration process (Int. 14, 15, 22, 33, 53, 55, 56); for example, US\$400-650 for the *mécanisation* of a school (Int. 1, 11), while these fees do not even always lead to being included on the payroll (Int. 12, also 15). Such accusations have already been noted in Congolese online media (Lavoix 2020). A teacher underlines the dynamic of *parrainage*, saying that, 'Our school lacks someone in Kinshasa to help us' (Int. 11). Adding to these nationwide dynamics, which sow inequality between teachers, we note that in some cases army officers successfully made 'recommendations' (Int. 1, 5, 21, 25). A military figure wanted to install his brother as a head teacher. In an act of collective agency, most teachers resisted (Int. 37). Here again, similar to the extortion and blackmailing of teachers explored in section 6, armed actors play a part in capturing rents from the education sector's recruitment process.

Additionally, certain administrators, and in some cases even head teachers, refrain from visiting and controlling insecure areas, in particular Hauts-Plateaux (Int. 7, 22, 45, 61). In turn, administrators whose offices are located in conflict areas face difficulties in sharing educational reports with their superiors (Int. 20, 22). As a result, some head teachers refrain from communicating changes of their staff: 'Several teachers live in Baraka but still obtain their salaries' (Int. 21). Such modes of embezzlement also occur elsewhere but might be detected more quickly than in an insecure area with little administrative coverage. Such manoeuvres, unless successfully contested, render the already incomplete registration database and payroll even more unreliable.

As a result, tensions exist between teachers of the different categories, and teachers and parents. We focus on tensions between teachers, as our research has yielded strong results in this regard. Through personal contacts with politicians, some NU teachers seek to replace paid teachers on the payroll, which can create severe problems (Int. 44). NP/NU teachers can hold grudges against their paid colleagues (Int. 58). Some paid teachers hide their salaries as they fear that non-paid teachers will want to borrow money (Int. 1). In some schools,

teachers reportedly use a part of their government salary or the school's operational budget to fund the NU teachers (Int. 2, 43, 48). This can become problematic when NU teachers feel entitled to receive a share of the other teachers' pay (Int. 3), an 'impossible thing' for some paid teachers (Int. 22). *Gratuité* has reinforced these dynamics (see section 4.4). Finally, conflicts about posts in schools occur frequently, mainly around promotion to head teacher (Int. 8, 16, 22, 27). Violence is a frequent form of solving conflicts in a militarised context and such fights can lead to threats, attacks and kidnapping (Int. 16, 27, 31, 44). One respondent argued that these conflicts might decrease with *Gratuité*, as there would be fewer funds directly and discretionarily managed by the head teacher (Int. 8).

Finally, considering the specific situation in the Lusenda refugee camp, there have been many complaints about the payment of salaries by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) via non-governmental organisation (NGO) ActionAid. In one school, ActionAid disbursed salaries to 24 teachers, all awaiting *mécanisation* (Int. 23); in another school, ActionAid paid 15 NUs. A teacher complained that UNHCR pays teachers in refugee schools US\$440 every four months; in other words, US\$110 per month (Int. 23). While the amount was reportedly the same as for state-paid teachers, the trimestral pay meant that teachers were taking up loans at high interest rates in the meantime (Int. 23). Moreover, salaries were contentious because head teachers allegedly had discretionary power in allocating them. Head teachers used to 'easily steal teachers' UNHCR salaries. They paid what they wanted. Some US\$300, US\$200 or US\$150 every four months. After strikes, they began paying US\$100 per month' (Int. 24). Another teacher said:

*Currently in our school, UNHCR's funding is at the roots of a conflict between head teacher and teachers. UNHCR paid US\$2 per child, but the head teacher gave a lump sum to teachers. He managed to build several houses with our money. It was only when teachers expelled Burundian students that UNHCR reacted.*  
(Int. 25)

The situation was resolved, but UNCHR is still said to be late with pay; and on top of everything, the church demands its tithe (Int. 25).

#### **4.2.2 Niger: the effects of a shift towards contractual teachers**

Until the 1970s in Niger, all teachers were civil servants and generally considered to be part of the elite. Between the 1970s and 1998, against a background of economic decline, the government responded to an increasing need for teachers by offering rapid training programmes. For several reasons, in 1998, the

government modified recruitment standards. The LOSEN law<sup>14</sup> allowed for the recruitment of contract teachers for primary schools with salaries amounting to about one-third of civil servant teachers' salaries (Bourdon *et al.* 2007). Despite the low salaries and challenging work conditions, the number of (contract) teachers continued to increase, surpassing that of civil servant teachers, and has stood at around 80 per cent for several years (Igodo 2018; see also Annuaire 2017).

Recruiting large numbers of contract teachers allowed the government to enrol masses of students while saving money on salaries and initial training, and to respond to the demand for primary education, as contract teachers were only allowed to teach in primary schools (Maman 2011). The backgrounds and objectives of today's teaching workforce are highly heterogeneous (Bakingué 2017). Many teachers consider their occupation to be an accident (*ibid.*). Rather than a vocation, being a teacher has mainly become a livelihood in a context of very limited income-generating opportunities (*ibid.*), which has important gendered implications for the profession (see section 5.3). Most importantly for this section, the high number of contract teachers has affected teachers' level of training and skills, teachers' time on task and teachers' career opportunities, which we now analyse.

First, the growing number of contract teachers has affected the average level of training and skills of the primary school teacher workforce, albeit without straightforward outcomes. Contract teachers have lower education and training requirements. As a minimum requirement, assistant contract teachers need a *brevet d'études du premier cycle*, which means six years of primary and four years of secondary schooling, and full contract teachers require a *baccalauréat* (Olivier de Sardan *et al.* 2018) (i.e. they must have completed secondary education). An initial training of 45 days used to be the norm, but Bourdon *et al.* already often found mere 'on-the-job training under the mentorship of senior teachers' (2007: 8). Olivier de Sardan *et al.* (2018) state that the 45 days of training take place after four years in the profession. Despite different requirements, as diplomas can in some cases be bought rather than earned, they do not necessarily reflect a teacher's skills (*ibid.*).

The Baseline Report presents descriptive statistics on the educational background and training of teachers in Niger and the DRC. These are also in Annexe 3 Table A5.5. What have been the outcomes of these changes? A World Bank report highlights 'limited subject knowledge of many teachers (in particular contractual teachers) and often... their lack of competency in teaching methods' (World Bank 2014: 5). Varly, Paré-Kaboré and Baraou (2019: 17) report a government study from 2017 where 19.2 per cent of 60,979 contract teachers scored less than 5/20; and 47.3 per cent scored between five and ten points on a

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<sup>14</sup> Loi 98-12 1 Juin 1998, Loi d'Orientation du Système Éducatif (LOSEN).

test for primary school students. On average, however, teachers who received initial training did not obtain higher scores.

Second, the relatively low salaries of contract teachers, in relation to the cost of living and expenditures related to insecurity, has implications for teacher absenteeism and time on task. Olivier de Sardan *et al.* (2018) argue that contract teachers are regularly absent from schools, at times missing the entire last week of the month to withdraw their salaries in urban areas,<sup>15</sup> or they refuse to teach until their salaries have been paid. A World Bank report, drawing on the 2010 Education Sector Analysis (RESEN), reports 'more than 18 days during a school year for almost a third of the teachers' (World Bank 2014: 5). Our findings suggest specific reasons for these dynamics. Interviewees noted that housing was much more expensive in Diffa than in Zinder, thus likely reducing the net income of teachers in Diffa.<sup>16</sup>

In certain areas of Diffa, insecurity can further reduce net income, notably through its effect on transportation costs. Indeed, in some villages situated close to Boko Haram zones of influence, all teachers and other state representatives leave and return to urban areas after 4pm or 5pm (Int. 8). As a result, some teachers can end up spending a considerable amount of their salary on public transport. According to some of the interviewed teachers, this can represent CFA1,000–1,500 to and from school (Int. 7, 9), which amounts to CFA30,000 per month, though in BRiCE schools most teachers have relatively low transport costs.<sup>17</sup> Some international NGOs used to provide transportation fees but reportedly stopped doing so (Int. 1). This issue is also gendered. Most teachers appear to prefer staying in towns and male teachers have much higher expenses than female teachers (Int. 22). Female teachers may have to use their salary to pay for transport, but male teachers have to take care of their families (see section 5.3).

According to interviewees, many of the teachers who face such high transportation costs do not turn up to school from the twentieth of each month onwards, which increases issues of teacher absenteeism, and reduces time on task. Teachers are also tied to public transport schedules and return to town in

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<sup>15</sup> Teachers are paid in person in regional education offices, which requires monthly travel and expenses without compensation (Cummings *et al.* 2016).

<sup>16</sup> As noted by an interviewee, housing in Zinder would cost CFA15,000/month compared to CFA60,000/month in Diffa (Int. 9).

<sup>17</sup> The quantitative data show that, for the BRiCE schools, distances to schools and transportation costs seem relatively low; 70 per cent of teachers surveyed in Niger reported walking to school. On average, teachers take 13 minutes to reach school, compared with 30 minutes in the DRC. Walking to school is more prevalent in Diffa, where 89 per cent of teachers reported walking to school. Only 2 per cent of teachers in Diffa use public transport. As noted before, these numbers should not be considered representative of all teachers in Diffa and Zinder, but of those teaching in the BRiCE schools, which are closer to larger centres, older and better established. Thus, these findings do not contradict the qualitative interviews that report long journey times and high costs of transportation to schools located in high-risk areas, whose teachers were interviewed because of the interest those schools presented for understanding the relationship between conflict and education.

the early afternoon. This negatively affects students' learning (Int. 1). One strategy that has been developed to cope with this is a modification of school timetables to a *journée continue* (continuous day) without major breaks, so that teachers can leave for town earlier (Int. 22, 23, 41). Moreover, as noted before, delayed payment of salaries can pose a major problem. Due to the state of emergency and resulting lack of transportation, teachers have to wait for market days before they can draw their salaries (Int. 25). If salaries are not paid, several contract teachers said that they go on strike from the eighth of each month until they receive payment (Int. 6, 21).

Third, contract teachers have poorer career prospects and therefore less incentive to invest in TPD. A lengthy bureaucratic process, limited number of annual posts and ingrained culture of patronage in recruitment<sup>18</sup> mean that teachers' skills and aptitude have little influence over their chances of moving up the career ladder and that contract teachers have few chances of obtaining permanent positions (Cummings *et al.* 2016; Bakingué 2017). One notable implication of the limited career progression opportunities is that incentives for contract teachers to follow TPD courses can be misaligned at the outset (Bakingué 2017). Studies have stressed the importance of improving teacher governance dynamics, particularly the link between career chances for teachers and their propensity to invest in professional development, to improve learning outcomes (*ibid.*).

### 4.3 The effects of school closures in Niger and the DRC

The Covid-19-related school closures and national lockdowns had significant consequences for schools across the world, including in Niger and the DRC. The DRC imposed longer school closures, which lasted almost 4.5 months in 2020 and 1.5 months in 2021, compared to two months in 2020 in Niger. In this section, we look at the effects on teachers (see section 5.1 for the effects on teacher-student relations). We look at the effects on all teachers, and highlight the differentiated effects induced by teacher employment status when these are relevant.

The qualitative data collected for the Midline Report – a well as the short study of the impact of school closures on schools in the DRC and Niger carried out in the summer of 2020 as part of the BRiCE project – suggest that teachers experienced severe difficulties during the lockdowns, and that employment status

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<sup>18</sup> In our study, most respondents stated that sponsorship in the education system was not an issue and that they received their posts through formal processes. Only a few respondents indicated the ubiquity of corruption and 'networks of PACs' (*parents, amis et connaissances*) (Int. 59, 66, 69, 70, 80). While the data on sponsorship in the DRC education system are more thorough, there was no qualitative baseline study in Niger, which implies that we have not gone into much depth regarding this issue. Judging from secondary literature, however, sponsorship is highly likely (Cummings *et al.* 2016; Olivier de Sardan *et al.* 2018).

played a role. Teachers experienced increased anxiety during the lockdowns, resulting from fear of the pandemic itself, and stress related to employment and financial difficulties, but also lack of a sense of purpose and fear of being out of practice because of the long interruption in teaching.<sup>19</sup>

Table 4.2 provides information on the effects of Covid-19-related closures in 2020 on teachers surveyed in the DRC and Niger. Reflecting the longer school closures in the DRC (4.5 months in 2020) compared to Niger (two months in 2020), we find that except for access to markets to buy food during the Covid-19-related lockdowns, the percentage of teachers who experienced negative effects from Covid-19 was higher in the DRC than in Niger. Only 3 per cent of teachers took up a secondary occupation during lockdown in Niger, but 35 per cent did in the DRC. Some 59 per cent of teachers in the DRC reported feeling stressed, compared to 43 per cent in Niger.

**Table 4.2 Effects of Covid-19-related closures on teachers in the DRC and Niger**

	DRC (%)	Niger (%)
Teacher's household was unable to access market to buy food	22.15	33.93
Teacher's household was unable to support sick and elderly	13.96	9.66
Teacher's household had extra care duties	5.62	1.35
Teacher's household experienced sickness	1.61	0.90
Teacher's household experienced permanent loss of job	23.11	4.94
Teacher's household experienced mental and emotional stress	58.59	43.37
Teacher's household was unable to participate in social and religious activities	77.05	61.12
Teacher's household was unable to sell property to pay for food, shelter, etc.	14.13	1.35
Teacher took up a secondary occupation during the Covid-19-related school closures which started in March	35.31	2.92
Teacher experienced 3 or more negative impacts of Covid-19 (high impact)	42.70	24.49
N (teachers)	623	445

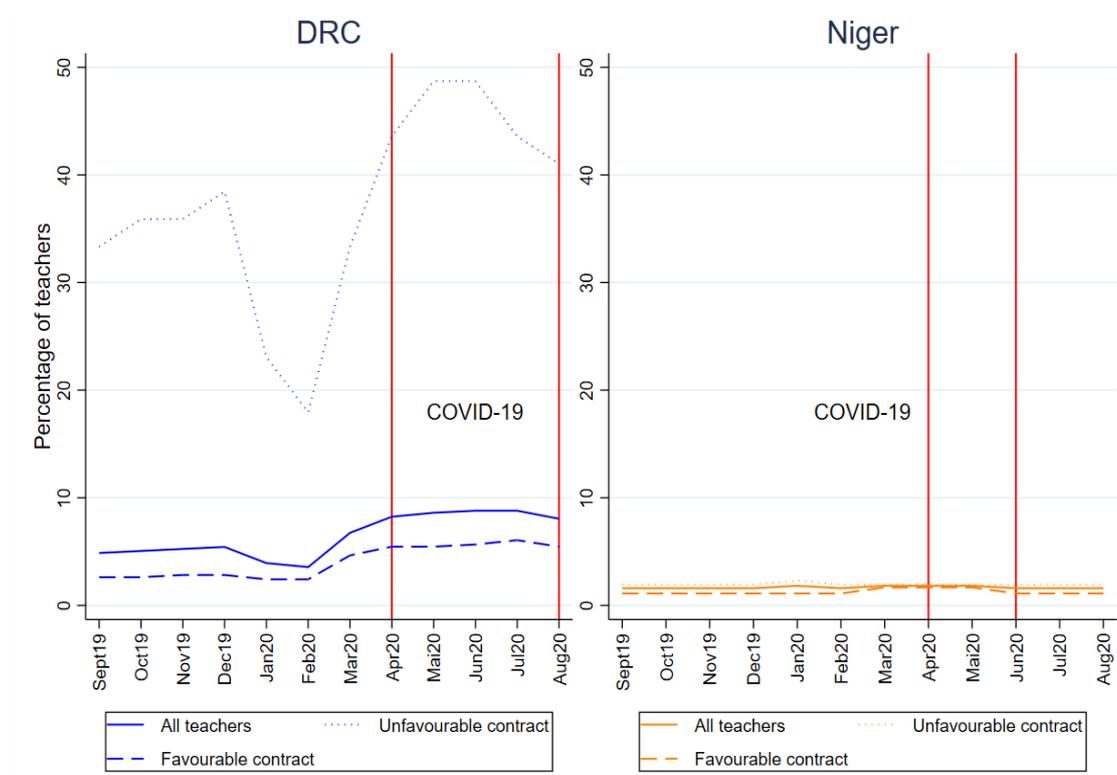
Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger.

One of the starkest impacts of Covid-19 seems to have been the delays in the payment of teacher salaries. This was intensely felt in the DRC where the schools remained closed for more than twice as long as in Niger. Figure 4.1 graphs the percentage of teachers who reported not having received their monthly pay in a given month, by the employment status.

<sup>19</sup> See Marchais *et al.* (2020a).

**Figure 4.1 Monthly salary payment status in the DRC and Niger (2019/20)**



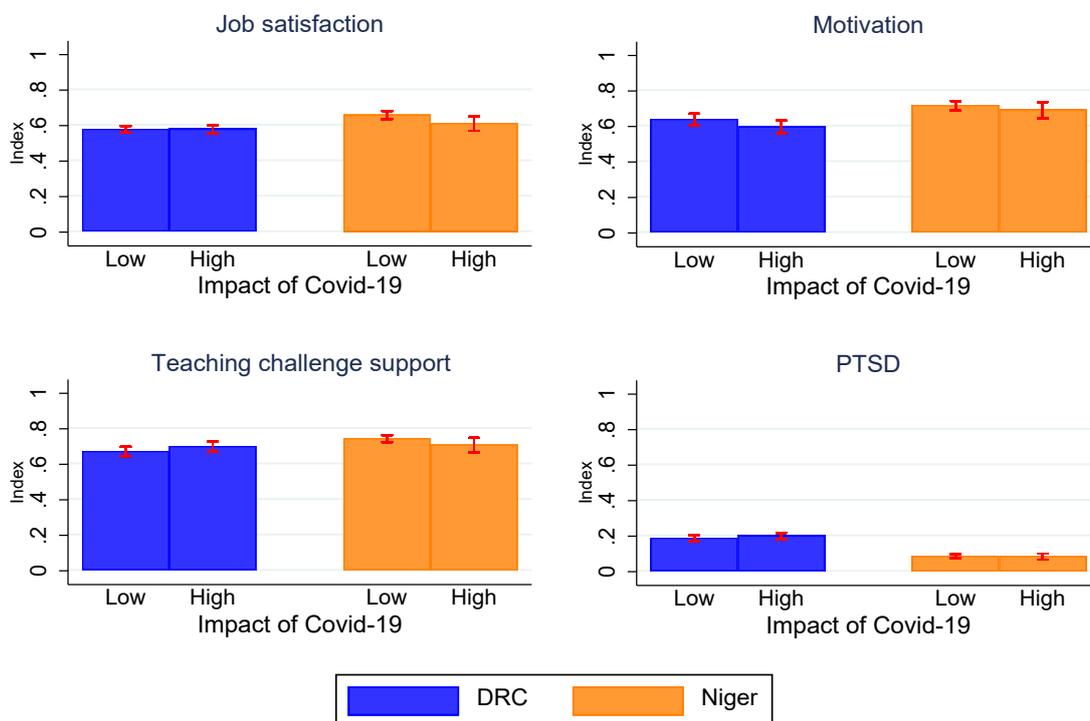
Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Notes: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline; not all teachers reported their salary status; information on salary is missing for 14.29 per cent of teachers in the DRC and 1.35 per cent of teachers in Niger.

While we find that Covid-19-related school closures in 2020 did not impact the timing of salary payment in Niger, there was a sharp rise in delays and/or non-payments in the DRC in April 2020, coinciding with school closures in the country. While teachers on favourable contracts in the DRC experienced a slight increase in pay delays in the DRC, this mostly affected teachers on unfavourable contracts, in particular NU teachers. As we will see in section 4.4, these teachers were not supposed to receive a salary after the implementation of the *Gratuité* policy, but some schools and parents had continued to pay them fees. As a result of school closures, most of them stopped receiving any form of payment or salary, though there were instances where schools or parents continued to provide compensation to these teachers during lockdown. This provides further evidence that employment status is a structuring factor in inequalities in the DRC.

In Figure 4.2, we present average teacher wellbeing and PTSD symptoms from their experience of negative impacts of Covid-19. In both the DRC and Niger, teachers who experienced higher negative impacts of Covid-19 reported lower levels of motivation. In addition, the teachers in Niger also reported lower levels of job satisfaction.

**Figure 4.2 Average teacher wellbeing by impacts of Covid-19**

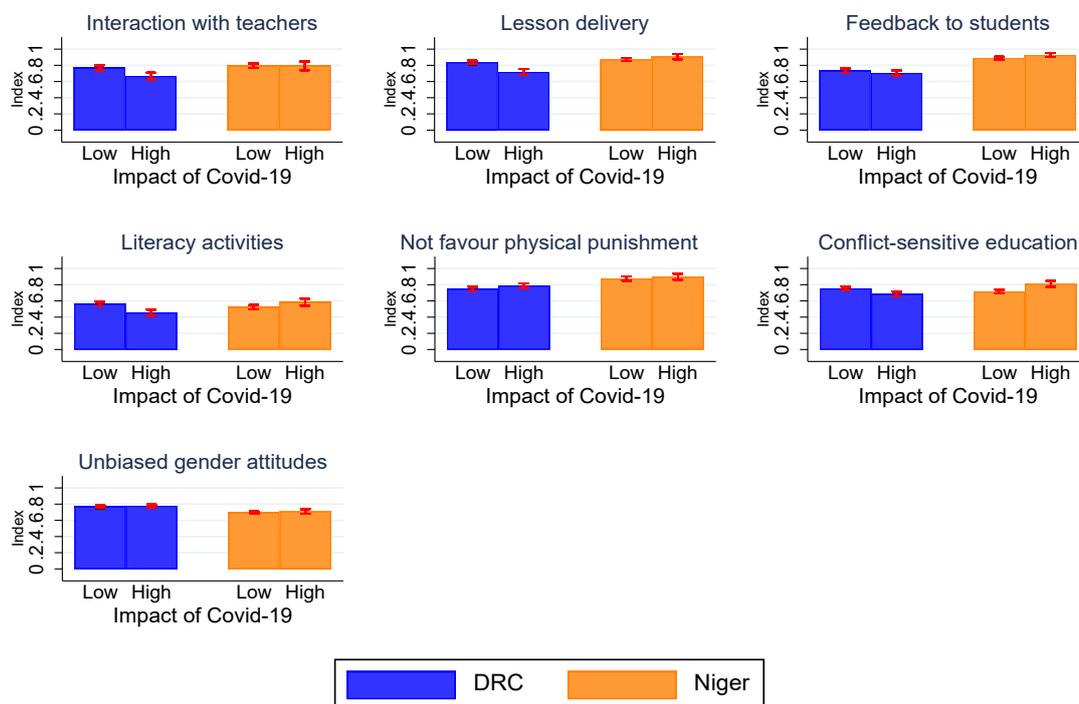


Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Notes: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger; figures report average outcomes; red lines denote a 95% confidence interval.

These negative impacts of Covid-19 on teacher salaries and the teachers' households are also associated with lower teaching quality. In Figure 4.3, we find that teachers who reported having experienced at least three negative impacts of Covid-19 (high), as described in Table 4.2, also exhibit lower levels of teaching quality in the DRC. There was no difference by impact of Covid-19 on teachers' attitudes to physical punishment and gender. There was also no difference in teaching quality indices by impact of Covid-19 in Niger, except on literacy activities and conflict-sensitive education. Teachers in Niger who experienced higher negative impacts of Covid-19 conducted higher-quality literacy activities in classrooms, perhaps as a way to help students catch up on learning while the schools were closed. They were also more likely to provide conflict-sensitive education in Niger.

**Figure 4.3 Average teaching quality by impact of Covid-19**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger; figures report average outcomes; red lines denote a 95% confidence interval.

## 4.4 The exacerbating effects of *Gratuité* in the DRC

In the DRC, the free primary education (*Gratuité*) policy was announced on 27 August 2019 and implemented from September. This policy has had significant effects on the education sector in the DRC, many of which are still unfolding. Using the survey data, Table 4.3 presents the summary statistics pre-*Gratuité* (baseline) and post-*Gratuité* (midline) on a select few indicators. As can be seen, the average student enrolment in the post-*Gratuité* period increased by 22 per cent, particularly for female students. However, the average number of teachers employed by the school remained constant (a marginal increase of 1.3 per cent). This has led to an 18 per cent increase in class size, which is captured by the student-teacher ratio. Here, we look at how the policy played out in Uvira and Fizi, and the effect it had on teachers, with a particular focus on NU teachers.

**Table 4.3 Implementation of *Gratuité* in the DRC**

<i>Gratuité</i> implementation indicators in 49 DRC schools	Pre- <i>Gratuité</i> (May 2019)	Post- <i>Gratuité</i> (Oct. 2020)	% change (2019–20)
Average number of students enrolled	788.10	958.96	21.68
Average number of female students enrolled	388.47	480.24	23.62
Average number of male students enrolled	399.63	478.71	19.79
Average number of teachers employed	16.41	16.71	1.28
Average number of female teachers employed	4.80	4.86	2.11
Average number of male teachers employed	11.61	11.86	1.87
Average student-teacher ratio	50.39	58.75	18.37
Average number of classrooms	13.82	14.22	2.95
Number of schools that received funding from parents for teachers' salaries	46	9	–80.43
Number of schools that received funding from parents for other reasons.	12	1	–91.67
N (schools)	49	49	–

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table is based on 49 schools surveyed at baseline (pre-*Gratuité*) and midline (post-*Gratuité*).

The immediate effect of *Gratuité* was to considerably sharpen inequalities in teacher employment status, as NU teachers could no longer expect to compensate their lack of state salary through parental contributions. To address this, the policy promised to gradually add all teachers to the payroll, including the prerequisite of comprehensive teacher registration. However, this played out in a context of highly politicised educational governance, where, as previously noted, teacher registration is not straightforward. *Gratuité* in that sense did not start with a blank slate but took place within 'inhabited institutions' (Hallett and Ventresca 2006), becoming entangled with long-standing payroll dynamics, *Gratuité* raised the stakes of *mécanisation*, adding to SECOPE's rent-seeking dynamics and the *parrainage* of teacher registration, which we discuss in the first part of this section. *Gratuité* presented the opportunity to (illicitly) add staff to the payroll on a massive scale.

Facing a situation in which some teachers had been unregistered for a long time, some head teachers sought ways to add their staff to the payroll; for example, by contacting politicians, though this was not always successful (Int. 31, 36, 39, 45, 53). It is important to bear in mind that *mécanisation* of schools is also a frequently occurring electoral promise. *Parrainage* in the education sector existed long before *Gratuité*, but *Gratuité* reinforced the system. Lack of relationships with politicians – for example, due to party affiliation or ethnicity – lowers the chances of a school being added to the government payroll and thus sustains structural inequalities in the education system. Furthermore, the *Gratuité* policy reintroduced salary zones, which has implemented three different levels of teacher salaries according to geographical area. Our respondents disliked these zones because they were in the lowest rank.

Despite a considerable number of teachers being added to the payroll and an increase in salaries, the government's promise to register all teachers has not materialised. Of the 623 teachers surveyed at the midline in the DRC, 520 (84%) teachers were *mecanisé*. However, 4 per cent of these *mecanisé* teachers continue to be missed off the payroll (*mecanisé* and *non-payé* (NP) or *omis* status). Moreover, *Gratuité* has considerably reduced parental funding of teacher salaries, as can be seen in Table 4.3. While 46 out of 49 schools in our DRC sample reported having received funds from parents for the payment of teachers' salaries pre-*Gratuité*, this number reduced by 80 per cent to only nine schools post-*Gratuité*.

Similarly, there was a 92 per cent reduction in the number of schools receiving funds from parents for reasons other than teacher salary payments. This means that NU teachers who have not been added to the payroll are likely to have experienced a considerable reduction in their income, though we have evidence that in some cases, parents continued to pay for these teachers. Indeed, the midline teacher survey shows that 31.7 per cent of teachers on unfavourable contracts (NU/NP/*omis*) and 7.4 per cent of teachers on favourable contracts – MP teachers – reported receiving salary contributions from parents. However, this is most likely an underestimate, as 68.3 per cent of the teachers on unfavourable contracts did not wish to disclose salary information, and hence we are unable to determine whether these teachers received salaries from parents. Given the political tensions surrounding this issue, it is likely that a part of these continued to receive fees from students and parents.

The considerable shock to teacher and school income caused by the *Gratuité* policy led to severe tensions in the school environment. At the beginning of the 2020 school year, strikes took place over NU teachers' pay, especially in Baraka and in schools with high numbers of NU teachers (Int. 2, 17, 37, 55). Using the quantitative survey, we find that 66.5 per cent of the teachers in the DRC reported being on strike in October 2020. During the same period, attacks on teachers also increased (we return to this point under section 6). A teachers' union member describes a toxic relationship between the union, the police and educational authorities, respectively (Int. 17), but we have no complementary evidence on this point. Many NU teachers abandoned teaching (Int. 4, 8, 12, 56) – 'I can leave at any moment' (Int. 11) – and/or received no pay at all during the closure of schools due to Covid-19 (Int. 34); though, as noted before, we found evidence of cases where parents continued funding their salaries. Tensions over employment conditions were also related to salaries. Indeed, despite the increase in salaries announced as part of the *Gratuité* package, the unfavourable exchange rate meant a limited increase in salaries; the general perception is that salaries remains too low (Int. 5, 34, 50).

The *Gratuité* policy has also heightened tensions within schools, in particular between MP and NU teachers. As more schools are now completely state

funded, being NU/NP has become more of an extraordinary status than the norm. For example, there were tensions between entire schools during the strikes between September 2019 and January 2020 (Int. 4). Teachers from a striking NU school threw stones at a state school, hitting two students (Int. 4). Paid teachers often consider themselves as 'real' state agents, in contrast to NU teachers (Int. 4, 7, 36, 53). 'NU and NP considered us their enemy' (Int. 5).

There were even paid teachers who went on strike to demand that the fees that parents paid to the NU teachers were equitably shared among all teachers (Int. 17) – the very opposite of what some NU teachers were asking for. These paid teachers made the argument that NU teachers need to find a way to be added to the payroll. It should be remembered that most paid teachers had to wait a long time before being paid, so they probably consider it as something that every teacher must go through (Int. 17). It is possible, in this sense, that *mécanisation* is considered as a form of a rite of passage.

Thus, the *Gratuité* policy has considerably heightened existing tensions within schools, generating additional stress and negatively affecting teachers' capacity to focus on their work. This has added to the considerable challenge that *Gratuité* already represents for teachers having to deal with a sharp rise in student numbers without additional teachers or infrastructural investments.

## 5. The social position of teachers

We pursue our analysis of teacher wellbeing and teaching quality by looking at the social position of teachers. The interviews carried out with teachers in Niger and the DRC underscored the difficulties that navigating tense and polarised social contexts added to their work. We use the term 'social position' to designate several facets of a teachers' social life that came up in interviews with teachers. These include teachers' relations with students and parents beyond the school setting, social isolation, the social status associated with the profession, as well as teachers' social identities, and the way these influence how teachers navigate their social environment. We do not conceive of teachers' social position as fixed or static, but dynamic and contingent, dependent on context.

The mixed-methods approach allows us to interrogate how different factors play out in the contexts of Niger and the DRC and develop a more refined understanding of factors such as social isolation, gender and ethnicity. We know from the literature that social isolation, for example, can have detrimental effects on teachers' wellbeing (Wolf *et al.* 2015a; Falk *et al.* 2019). Social isolation can breed depression and other mental health issues among teachers and worsen the traumatic effects of exposure to violence, which we explore in section 6. A cursory look at the level of social connectedness of teachers in the midline sample reveals slightly different pictures in the DRC and Niger.

As can be seen in Table 5.1, teachers in the DRC are much more likely to come from the villages or towns in which they teach and display a slightly higher level of social connectedness, though they have fewer connections on average with authority figures than in Niger.

**Table 5.1 Social connectedness of teachers within their communities**

	DRC (%)	Niger (%)
Teacher comes from the local village	79.13	47.64
Teacher knows at least three relatives	58.75	59.82
Teacher has at least three friends	49.76	34.99
Teacher knows at least one authority figure	56.18	85.62
Teacher is a member of at least two village groups	27.61	14.38
N (teachers)	623	445

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger.

But such descriptive statistics tell us little about the contextual factors that explain social isolation and its effects on teachers' social lives. In certain contexts, coming from the local village or town can play an important role in teachers'

social integration, whereas in others it might not; other aspects, such as the social status of teachers, might be more salient. Issues such as social isolation therefore need to be understood in relation to the context, and the salient features of teachers' social position that influence how they navigate these contexts. These include identity markers, which can be more or less salient.

Gender, also widely considered to be an important factor in teacher wellbeing (Falk *et al.* 2019: 13), can be particularly salient in contexts where strong gender norms are collectively upheld, influence teachers' relations with the school community and permeate a range of aspects of teachers' work. In societies that are polarised by identity markers such as race, ethnicity or religion, teachers' perceived identities can interfere with their work and generate a range of professional obstacles. In this section, we therefore seek to analyse the salience of different aspects of teachers' social position in relation to their context, and their effects on different aspects of their work, from their income to their capacity to interact with students. Given that we cannot review all of these, we focus on those that came out prominently in interviews with teachers. We start by looking at teacher-student relations, and how they have been affected first by the school closures and then the *Gratuité* policy in the DRC. We then look at the role of gender, with a particular focus on Niger. Finally, we look at the role of ethnicity, with a focus on the DRC.

## 5.1 School closures and teacher-student relations

As previously noted, the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting school closures have had severe effects on the education sector and student learning in both Niger and the DRC. In the DRC, schools were closed for 4.5 months, and for a further 1.5 months in 2021. In Niger, schools were closed for two months in 2020. Education and humanitarian actors sought to organise alternative distance-learning strategies (for the DRC, see MEPST 2020 and Education Cluster 2020), notably the distribution of school manuals and diffusion of classes by radio and television. Yet, as we showed in a short report on the impact of school closures on student learning in the DRC (Marchais *et al.* 2020b), such alternatives had very limited results. This reflected pre-existing infrastructural and logistical limitations and disparities, sharp inequalities in student access to technologies, and poor guidance and coordination by educational authorities.

The qualitative and quantitative data collected for the short study, as well as for the Midline Report, show that there was limited engagement between teachers and students during lockdowns. The quantitative survey in the DRC and Niger shows that only 14 per cent and 3 per cent of teachers, respectively, reported

having interacted with students during the Covid-19-related school closures.<sup>20</sup> Table 5.2 reports the medium of teacher-student interaction during this period for the teachers who report having stayed in touch with students.

**Table 5.2 Teacher-student interaction during school closures in the DRC and Niger**

Teacher-student interaction during Covid-19-related school closure	DRC (%)	Niger (%)
Provided homework	40.70	33.33
Interacted by radio	5.81	0.00
Interacted by phone	0.00	6.67
Visited students	72.09	66.67
N (teachers)	86	15

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on teachers who reported having interacted with students during school closures: 86 (14%) teachers in the DRC and 15 (3%) teachers in Niger.

Respectively, 72 per cent and 67 per cent of the teachers in the DRC and Niger who interacted with students during the school closures did so by visiting them; 40 per cent and 33 per cent of the teachers in the DRC and Niger who interacted with students during school closures also provided students with homework. In some cases in the DRC, teachers taught children in their homes for money (Int. 12, 31, 44), while in other cases this was done without any transactions. The qualitative interviews confirm that there was limited student engagement, with teachers reporting no particular role beside telling children to go home (Int. 11, 12), and the large majority of teachers not giving any homework to students (Int. 12, 34) or just asking them to review their notebooks (Int. 23, 25). This was attributed to the speed at which the school closures were decided on and implemented, and to the educational authorities' lack of guidance and support to teachers.

What those relatively rare instances of continued engagement between students and teachers reveal, though, is the significant psychological benefit that it had for both students and teachers. Teachers, who generally felt a lack of purpose and demotivation as a result of the cessation of their professional activity, found some comfort in being able to continue supporting students. Parents, on the other hand, reported that it had a positive psychological and motivational effect on their children. Physical and social proximity, however, was a key factor in this

<sup>20</sup> Given the small sample of teachers who report conducting teaching activities during the school closures, it is difficult to reliably assess the exact reasons for differences in engagement between the DRC and Niger. However, there is indicative evidence that teachers in the DRC who report engaging with students during the closures belong to households of lower economic status, the teacher being the only breadwinner in the household. Since teachers in the DRC receive lower salaries (Table 4.1) and come from economically deprived households (see Table 4.1 of the Baseline Report), this may explain the difference in the levels of teacher-student engagement between the DRC and Niger during the school closures.

continued engagement. One female teacher noted that she had continued meeting her students at school, preparing them for the exam at the end of primary school – TENAFEP – while respecting social-distancing measures (Int. 12, Marchais, *et al.* unpublished)

Moreover, as noted in the Covid Short Study (*ibid.*), parental support was limited during the school closures, with many parents saying that they had neither the time nor the competencies to support their children's learning. Limited parental support is something that also came up in the interviews, though not necessarily in relation to the period of school closures, but for children's' education more broadly. This was particularly the case in Niger, where numerous teachers complained about the lack of parental support for students' educational activities (e.g. Int. 17, 58, 77). While some respondents linked this to recent impoverishment ('Parents are no longer able to educate their children at home, in the sense of providing them with advice, showing them what's right and wrong. Children are abandoned' (Int. 8)), others argued that parents in the region have not been favourable to schools: 'for a long time... parents and students here are hostile towards schools' (Int. 9). As we have found through the interviews, some respondents highlight the importance of frequently talking to parents and encouraging them to participate in school-related matters (Int. 47).

Therefore, although continued engagement between teachers and students was the exception rather than the rule during the lockdowns and school closures, these rare occurrences show that they could have very positive effects on the morale and wellbeing of teachers and students. One implication is that supporting continued, albeit distanced, teacher-student contact and engagement should be a priority in the event of future school closures. This could also help to reduce inequalities in educational attainment, which the lockdowns are likely to have generated, with some students being able to pursue different forms of distance learning or receiving more support from parents, teachers or tutors, and others receiving no such support.

## **5.2 *Gratuité* and the reconfiguration of teacher-student-parent relations in the DRC**

The *Gratuité* policy has had significant effects on education in the DRC, affecting teachers' working conditions, as covered in section 4. It has also altered teacher-student-parent relations through the removal of school fees. School fees have played an ambiguous role in the DRC education sector. Indeed, this relationship was key in mitigating a severe crisis in the education system in the 1990s, as parents started funding the education sector via the payment of school fees. In that regard, school fees and the relationship they established between teachers and students have been a central pillar of the resilience of the education sector in the DRC. At the same time, school fees created a range of problems, from increasing income inequalities in relation to access to education, to various

problematic practices in schools, notably the suspension of students from schools for non-payment or late payment of fees, to social stigmatisation of students (Verhaghe 2017; Marchais *et al.* 2021a).

Our results show that the implementation of the *Gratuité* policy changed relations between parents, teachers and schools more broadly in several ways. Overall, the qualitative interviews suggest that *Gratuité* has been a relief for many parents and generally improved teacher-parent relations (Int. 2, 10, 47, 50). Beyond the obvious financial relief for parents, the policy has removed a range of distortions to the operation of schools that were generated by school fees and the transactional or consumerist relationship to education they instated. For example, it has restored greater transparency in sanctions against students, such as expelling children for bad behaviour, as one teacher noted (Int. 49). However, as noted in section 4, there is evidence that *Gratuité* has not been fully implemented in schools in Fizi and Uvira. This is confirmed by the household survey, where a relatively small fraction of parents report having continued to pay for school fees; some report that students carried out manual labour – such as agricultural work and other forms – for teachers. Thus, it is important to consider *Gratuité* as a process still in the making.

Here again, the effect of *Gratuité* on relations between teachers and the school environment is partially conditioned by employment status. In Table 5.3, we find that more teachers on unfavourable contracts (NU/NP/*omis*) than favourable contracts (MP) reported that their relations with school management had worsened since the introduction of *Gratuité*. We also find that more teachers on both favourable and unfavourable contracts reported an improvement in their relations with parents, students and school management since *Gratuité*. Those who reported that relations with students and school management had worsened were more likely to be on unfavourable contracts (NU/NP/*omis*) than on favourable contracts (MP).

**Table 5.3 *Gratuité* and teacher-student-parent relations in the DRC**

	% of teachers who said worse since <i>Gratuité</i>		% of teachers who said improved since <i>Gratuité</i>	
	Unfavourable contract	Favourable contract	Unfavourable contract	Favourable contract
Relations with parents	12.20	17.00	39.02	36.20
Relations with students	17.07	15.80	41.46	47.40
Relations with school management	10.57	4.60	35.77	39.40
N (teachers)	123	500	123	500

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC.

## 5.3 Gender and the social position of teachers in Niger

Gender plays an important role in relations between teachers and their social environment. Gender norms are internalised by individuals of both sexes and collectively enforced through social interactions in an iterative way. Here, we look at the role of gender in relations between teachers and their social entourage, with a particular focus on Niger, where the issue figured prominently in interviews with teachers. This does not mean that gender does not play an important role in the DRC, but it did not come out prominently in the qualitative interviews carried out for this study. Quantitative findings on teaching quality and wellbeing also demonstrate starker gender differences for Niger than for the DRC (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). The number of female teachers in Niger increased from 34.5 per cent in 2002 to 51 per cent in 2016 (Igodoe 2018). As reported in section 4, there are considerably more female teachers relative to male teachers in both Diffa and Zinder. Our quantitative data show that 87 per cent of sampled teachers in Niger are women, versus 28 per cent in the DRC. The cases of Zinder and Diffa in Niger point to a relationship between the sharp increase in the proportion of contract teachers and the feminisation of the teaching profession.

To sum up, contract teachers have lower incomes and poorer career chances than civil servants, making the profession less attractive to men who have to finance family expenditures.<sup>21</sup> Female teachers, however, find the prospect of financial and professional independence attractive, and report higher levels of job satisfaction (as reported in Figure 3.4). Gender norms further affect the deployment of teachers, as married teachers are supposed to live alongside their families, which often means they are over-represented in urban areas. Female teachers in rural areas have to navigate a social environment saturated with gender norms related to conceptions of what it means to be a 'good' female teacher. We discuss below a range of perceived positive and negative impacts of the feminisation of the teaching profession at school level.

### 5.3.1 Reasons for the feminisation of the teaching profession

While a few respondents considered teaching to be a 'woman's job' (Int. 12), most qualitative interviews suggest that the increasing precarity of the profession (see section 4), lower salaries and unstable employment have driven its 'feminisation' (Int. 10, 12, 18, 22, 23, 42, 46, 49, 56, 75, 76). Prevalent gender norms prescribe that the man is the head of the household and needs to generate the necessary income to support his (extended) family: 'When he leaves the bank, three hours later he's out of money' (Int. 22); 'Even when the

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<sup>21</sup> This resonates with the result in section 4.3 of the Baseline Report on job requirements and perceived satisfaction; 53 per cent of female teachers reported being satisfied with their salary, versus only 28 per cent of male teachers.

husband earns little, the husband needs to take care of the family' (Int. 72). Respondents specified that women can contribute to family-related expenditures, but do not have to and that women are in charge of the children, household and care activities. In both the DRC and Niger, the majority of teachers, including female teachers, agree that men should not share in household activities and that men should have a final say in household decisions (see Annexe 5 Table A5.9 in the Baseline Report).

As the family is purportedly already taken care of by their husbands, almost all respondents noted that women can use their own income for themselves and their personal affairs (Int. 5, 23, 42, 46, 49, 56, 75, 76). These are of course not monolithic norms, but they have been described as quite dominant and ubiquitous. Historically, it appears that the majority of women (especially in rural areas) have had few income-generating activities. As the teaching profession has become ever-more unattractive, especially due to low monthly salaries and poor career opportunities for contract teachers, men are constantly looking for alternative opportunities (e.g. in the police, military, Boko Haram (Int. 7, 10, 18, 22)). These findings resonate with our quantitative findings where we report higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation for female teachers (see Figure 3.4). Women have found it increasingly attractive to make their own living. Teaching thus allows women to develop a certain financial and professional autonomy (Igodoe 2018). Finally, it is noteworthy that most head teachers and most high-level bureaucrats are male, and thus that professional hierarchies within the educational sector remain gendered.

### 5.3.2 Impact on deployment

Another effect of gendered employment norms is that women tend to be over-represented in urban areas. Secondary data from Niamey and Dosso suggest this (Igodoe 2018). The main reason, Igodoe (*ibid.*) proposes, is that married women follow their husbands and stay with their families. It indeed appears that the *de facto* conditions for married female teachers to move to live with their families are rather flexible (*ibid.*). Indeed, in our study many interviews pointed to the fact that female teachers were married to civil servants (Int. 13, 14, 24, 25, 32, 41, 56). As the majority of them reportedly have their families in urban areas, if the female teachers worked elsewhere, 'who would take care of the children?' (Int. 13, 15). While such explanations themselves reveal gendered assumptions about women's role in the family, they point to the significance of gender in the processes that explain the gender imbalance within the teaching profession in Niger.

### 5.3.3 Gendered norms as a challenge for female teachers in villages

The interviews pointed to contradictory perceptions of female teachers' capacity to deal with the wider school environment. Overall, female teachers' new autonomy, in combination with the general reputation of a teacher as someone

who knows how to read and write, poses significant challenges for women's social position in rural areas. There, teachers need to understand local realities to build trust with communities. Literature and interviews highlight the importance of the 'first contact' (Bakingué 2017). Social norms and behavioural expectations of how a female teacher ought to behave have the potential to clash with a woman's own aspirations. Research from Zambia and Malawi suggests that female villagers can reject female teachers for various reasons (Mulkeen 2010).

At the same time, in Niger it is clear that rural villagers do not simply look up to female teachers' lifestyles. Zaidman (2007) argues that a growing presence of female teachers does not directly relate to a more positive appreciation of their status. Female teachers need to understand and then adhere to formal and informal social norms if they desire to build good relationships with dominant actors in the village (Igodoé 2018). They are expected to try to integrate into the community, demonstrate discreet behaviour, wear decent clothes and not have male partners while being unmarried. Otherwise, as a respondent in Igodoé ( remarked, 'Which mother will leave her daughter in this woman's classroom?'. One interview, however, pointed to the fact that women had an easier time integrating into a new environment, notably because they got along well with other women (Int. 42). Igodoé (*ibid.*) sees a tension in these behavioural expectations and female teachers' status as a literate 'modern' *avant-garde*. For some people, the very fact that a woman is in the classroom stands in contrast to her role as a mother who ought to be taking care of her children.

#### 5.3.4 Perceived negative impact at school level

Kirk and Winthrop (2013) suggest that household and caring activities can lead to added stress in managing household and professional responsibilities, which in turn can increase negative perceptions of female teachers' professional effectiveness and reinforce gendered norms around work. Indeed, our interviews point to contradictory perceptions of the impact of the high number of female teachers on student learning, with complementary narratives to the ones suggested by Kirk and Winthrop.

First, a range of interviews revealed negative perceptions of women's capacity to teach, and to work more broadly. As one interviewee noted, 'they don't want to work. The problems we are facing will continue', and 'men are stronger and work harder' (Int. 49); while another noted that 'when I make a woman my deputy then there's chaos in my absence' (Int. 23). A frequent explanation for women's absenteeism and supposed lower commitment to work were pregnancy, childbirth, childcare and other care work (Int. 22, 24, 46). 'We prefer men. Women have too many problems. When they are married, sick, when the child is sick. But we are constrained to work with them' (Int. 25). Another reason for absence of female teachers are journeys from and to town where they live (see section 4.1). 'Women are unable to visit students' families.... But men sleep

here... we [male teachers] always spend time with parents' (Int. 22). Several interviewees noted that because of the high volatility in the profession due to women's insufficient commitment to the job, student learning was affected as a result, and schools had to hire surplus teachers to palliate that volatility (Int. 22, 48, 57, 75). These perceptions exist among male and female respondents. Indeed, a female head teacher also stated this opinion, and that more male teachers were required to achieve higher educational quality (Int. 57).

Second, several interviews noted that female teachers have a harder time than male teachers when handling children, and especially boys (Int. 22, 26, 57), and that a better gender balance within the profession was necessary to handle the students.

Third, others pointed to the role of gender as a structuring factor in relations between teachers and parents, developing the example of a father who refused to talk or engage with female teachers (Int. 79). Results from the baseline data collection reported in the baseline study resonate with these points, as we found that in Niger parents talk more often with male teachers than with female teachers.<sup>22</sup> One further explanation could be a conceptual stretch of the term teacher: parents speak more to men because head teachers are more often men (Int. 35, 37).

### 5.3.5 Perceived positive impact at school level

In contrast, several interviewees noted that female teachers understood children better (Int. 12, 20, 31, 33); were better at detecting forms of aggression and SGBV against girls (Int. 34);<sup>23</sup> and that the perception of female teachers' general capacities in the profession was changing positively (Int. 12, 51). The role of female teachers as role models for female students was noted; and that it encouraged parents to send girls to school (Int. 7, 35, 37, 79); and motivated girls to enter the teaching profession (Int. 3, 9, 12), notably because female teachers were young and this could inspire girls about what they could do in a few years (Int. 56; see discussion above for nuance), but also, more prosaically, because girls saw female teachers with 'beautiful dresses' (Int. 15). Some interviews noted, however, that this was dependent on relations between teachers and the community, and notably whether teachers lived in the village: 'If you don't live in the village, you cannot be a good model. You don't have much contact with the people. [You need to attend] ceremonies, mosque, baptism, public places' (Int. 13).

In line with other research, the qualitative data therefore show that in Niger gender plays a significant role in education, and in relations between teachers and the wider community. Indeed, gender plays a role in the occupational and

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<sup>22</sup> In Niger, 68 per cent of male teachers and 39 per cent of the female teachers reported engaging with parents. The corresponding figures for the DRC are similar, with 69 per cent for male teachers and 63 per cent for female teachers.

<sup>23</sup> This result is supported by section 4.5 of the Baseline Report. We found that in Niger, 65 per cent of female teachers feel that girls report incidents of violence to them, versus 56 per cent of male teachers. There was no difference according to the gender of teachers in the DRC.

personal trajectories that lead women to become teachers, and in their professional lives with regards to students, parents, head teachers and the wider community. In a society marked by ingrained gendered norms, the teaching profession therefore represents a site of change in these gendered norms, both for society as a whole and for future generations.

## 5.4 The question of ethnicity in the DRC

Pursuing our reflection on the social position of teachers and its influence on teacher wellbeing and teaching quality, we look at the role of ethnicity and how it shapes teachers' relations in the school environment. Ethnicity is a socially constructed identity, which, in certain contexts, can be politically and socially salient. This is particularly the case in eastern DRC, where ethnicity figured prominently in interviews. While we do not suggest that ethnicity does not play a significant role in Niger, our research has not led to any findings in this direction. It is important, however, not to consider ethnicity in and of itself as a cause of political conflict or violence. Rather, the organisation of politics along ethno-territorial lines and use of ethnicity in armed mobilisation have generated a polarisation of societies along ethnic identities in Uvira and Fizi. There, one of the key lines of polarisation is between groups that consider themselves to be 'autochthonous' to the region – in particular the Fuliro and the Bembe – and those considered foreigners, the 'Banyamulenge' (Verweijen and Vlassenroot 2015) (see also Box 6.1).

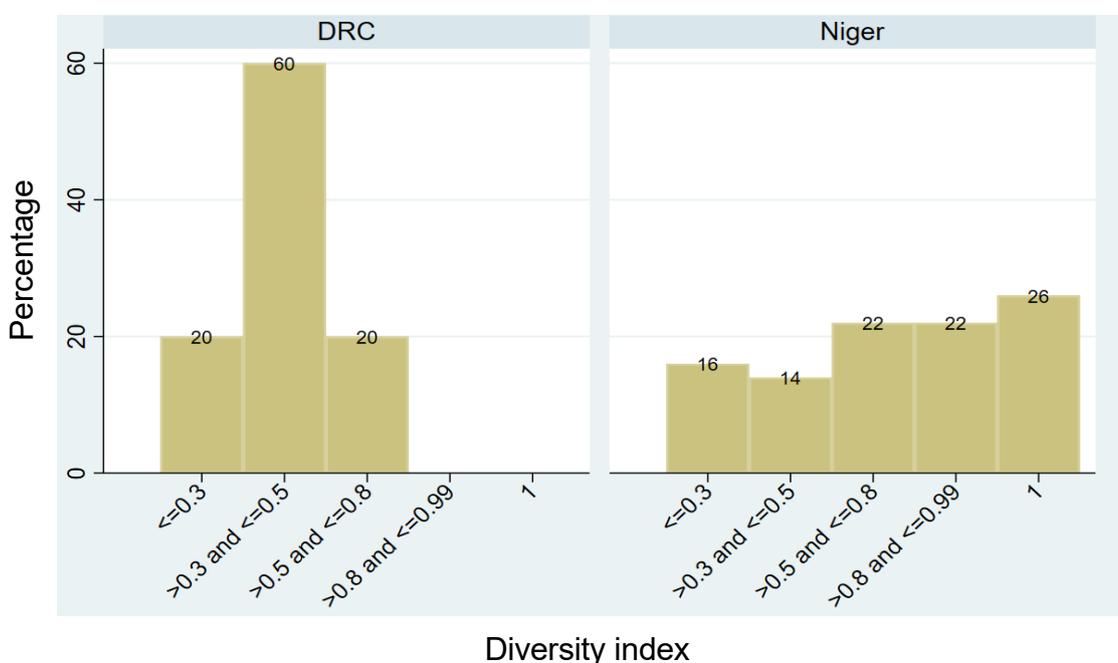
### 5.4.1 Accessing public goods

Ethnicity penetrates the education sphere in several ways. It is important to remember that there are sharp inequalities with regards to educational infrastructure and access to education in Uvira and Fizi. These inequalities are due to the unequal development and penetration of state services and sectors across the province. Combined with the ethno-territorial organisation of politics in the province, this entails that certain ethno-territorial entities might be relatively disadvantaged with regards to access to state infrastructure and education compared to others. As argued in a recent project on education and conflict, this can lead to groups that find themselves disadvantaged harbouring grievances, and can fuel ethnic rhetoric (Marchais *et al.* 2021a). Ethnicity also plays a role in dynamics of violence. A Congolese researcher who specialises on the conflicts in Uvira and Fizi has argued that schools are not targets because they form future generations of intellectuals, but because they are seen as the 'public good' of a particular ethnicity (Int. 62). Several teachers interviewed also noted that they could be targeted for violent extortion as a result of their perceived ethnicity (Int. 9, 19). We analyse dynamics of violence against teachers in section 6.

### 5.4.2 Ethnic concentration

The qualitative component of our midline study points to patterns of ethnic concentration of (head) teachers and students in certain schools in Uvira and Fizi, which can occur either permanently (e.g. in Hauts-Plateaux) or temporarily (e.g. shortly after violent confrontations). Given the spread of ethnic groups over the territory, concentration of ethnic groups in certain areas *per se* is unsurprising (Int. 18, 52, 54). However, our evidence points to disproportionate ethnic homogenisation, especially of teachers, in certain schools. This is not the case in BRiCE schools with regards to students, as can be seen in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1 Ethnic diversity of students in BRiCE schools in the DRC and Niger**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Using the quantitative data on schools, we calculated the diversity index based on Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (1964) and Simpson's Index (1949). The diversity index is based on the proportion of students in each ethnic group enrolled at the school and has been commonly used in the education literature to measure ethnic diversity (Dronkers, van der Velden and Dunne 2012; Dronkers and van der Velden 2013; Maestri 2017; Frattini and Meschi 2019). The index varies between 0 and 1, where a value of 1 indicates that there is no ethnic diversity in the school, or all students belong to same ethnicity. The index measures the probability that two students randomly selected from within the school belong to the same ethnicity. For example, a value of 0.2 on the diversity index implies that the probability of randomly picking two students of the same ethnicity is two out of 10, reflecting that the school hosts an ethnically diverse group of students.

The figure displays the distribution of the diversity index in the BRiCE schools. It is based on 20 (out of 49) schools in the DRC and 50 (out of 71) schools in Niger, as in the remaining sample the school head teachers were unable to provide us with the enrolment numbers by ethnicity. Schools in the DRC have a more ethnically diverse student body than the schools in Niger: the average diversity index in the DRC is 0.4 and 0.7 in Niger. In fact, 26% of the schools in Niger have no ethnic diversity, catering to students from only one ethnicity (diversity index = 1). On average, DRC schools host students from 6.8 ethnic groups and Niger schools host students from 3.5 ethnic groups.

However, we need to remember that BRiCE schools are concentrated in the larger urban centres of Fizi and Uvira, which are more cosmopolitan (as urban centres) and less exposed to violence than rural areas, and thus less prone to ethnic concentration. Moreover, the data presented concern students, and here we discuss ethnic concentration of teachers and head teachers, for which the qualitative data show evidence. Segregation of schools along ethnic lines is a phenomenon that was noted in other conflict-affected provinces of the DRC, notably Tanganyika and Ituri (Marchais *et al.* 2021a), and reflects dynamics of spatial segregation along ethnic lines resulting from conflict.

However, ethnic concentration in schools is not solely a reflection of the spatial segregation of and geographic distribution of ethnic groups that can result from repeated rounds of violent conflict. Indeed, our qualitative interviews point to several forms of xenophobia and '*tribalisme*' (a Congolese term that designates ethnic prioritisation) in teacher recruitment practices and the school administration. As we discussed in section 4.1, a variety of actors intervene in recruitment practices. Our data suggest that in South Kivu, ethnicity directly affects who is recruited. 'In our school all teachers are Bembe. The administrators recruit, and all of them are Bembe, starting with the pastor and head teacher' (Int. 39 [parent]; see also Int. 43). In fact, qualitative data suggest that certain schools are deliberately prioritising some ethnicities over others.

One teacher stated: 'Teachers in this school say that a Munyamulenge child cannot come to this Bembe school' (Int. 45; also 53). At the same school, the head teacher stated: 'It is difficult to recruit a Munyamulenge at this school, even as a labourer' (Int. 48). In one school 'teachers demand the head teacher not recruit teachers from [a particular area], notwithstanding their qualifications' (Int. 24). In a Kimbanguist all-Bembe school, 'all recommendations and recruitments are Bembe' (Int. 37, also 2, 33, 48, 56). Judging from our interviews, ethnic homogenisation of schools was most pronounced in Hauts-Plateaux. There, 'no Munyamulenge send their children to a Babembe, Fuliro or Banyindu school anymore' (Int. 16), 'there are schools for every ethnic group... due to the long armed-conflict' (Int. 22).

If a school is not mono-ethnic, at least 'students enrol in schools where their ethnicity is in the majority' (Int. 37). This was reportedly different before the conflicts but now the Banyamulenge no longer have access to other schools (Int. 62). Moreover, patronage- and ethnicity-based recruitment can lead to teaching quality problems because selection criteria do not follow teachers' qualifications (Int. 12). In one all-Bembe school, Kimbanguist, 'all recommendations and recruitments are Bembe, which leads to the recruitment of underqualified ('incompetent') staff' (Int. 37). In the Banyamulenge schools in Hauts-Plateaux there is: 'No failure, a Munyamulenge child will not fail' (Int. 45).

### 5.4.3 Ethnicity and tensions in schools

Beyond discrimination along ethnic lines in teacher recruitment and student admission practices, ethnicity is also a source of conflict between teachers in multi-ethnic schools, including the BRiCE schools in Fizi and Uvira. The head teacher from a school in Baraka noted that, 'Between Bembe and Banyamulenge, no one likes each other' (Int. 1); 'They don't like working with each other' (Int. 31). A provincial education (PROVED) administrator also noted that all (ethnic-Fuliro) teachers in a secondary school run by a Munyamulenge head teacher had demanded a transfer, then decided to stay nonetheless (Int. 20). In other cases, teachers from a minority group in a school can be made to transfer away from that school, or worse, be declared a 'deserter', which would make the teacher lose their salary (Int. 62). 'A Munyamulenge teacher was transferred to a school with mainly Babembe teachers. With these ethnic conflicts, he left his post' (Int. 47).

However, the existence of conflicts between members of different ethnic groups should not lead to reification of ethnic groups as homogeneous entities. Autochthony, for example, is another possible reason for differentiation. One teacher described conflicts between Bembe when some of them were not autochthonous in the village where they taught (Int. 37). Furthermore, while ethnic polarisation is pronounced, it is not ubiquitous. One Bembe teacher told us how he hid several Banyamulenge, because they were 'good persons, pastor and evangelist' (Int. 56), demonstrating the important intersection between ethnicity and religion. The teacher did so in a context where even radio messages announced that 'anyone who hosts a Munyamulenge will be killed' (Int. 1).

Ethnicity can also play a role in conflicts between teachers and students. Again, this is particularly the case between the Banyamulenge and the Bembe and Fuliro. As noted by an interviewee, 'Bembe don't like working with or teaching Banyamulenge, and vice versa' (Int. 21). Despite sensitisation programmes, and reproaches by inspectors, some teachers continue to discriminate against Banyamulenge (Int. 48) and use discriminatory language, particularly when they comment on armed confrontations (Int. 20). Although such tensions within the classroom are rarely violent, they can resonate with wider dynamics of violence around the school environment, which we will analyse in section 6. In particular, the fact that students can be recruited into armed groups or have relatives in armed groups raises the stakes of tensions within the classroom, which might otherwise not be threatening to teachers.

Ethnicity is therefore an important factor to take into account when seeking to understand how the social position of teachers influences their wellbeing and capacity to teach effectively. In socially polarised contexts, it is also something that teachers have to deal with in the classroom. As discussed above, ethnicity can generate tensions between teachers and students, and among students, and teachers have to deal with such tensions. In the Endline Report, which will focus

on how teacher knowledge is generated and circulated, we will analyse the different practices that teachers deploy to address tensions in the classroom, as well as the norms and ideas that inform them.

## 6. Violence in the school environment

Violence involving teachers has received increased attention in the education literature in recent years. It encompasses a range of forms of violence, from direct victimisation of teachers to threats, harassment and theft of personal property (Espelage *et al.* 2013; Bounds and Jenkins 2018). These are part of broader dynamics of violence in the school environment and have a range of detrimental effects on education, such as increasing teacher stress, burnout and demotivation, and reducing teachers' self-efficacy, as well as increased exposure of students to violence by teachers.

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, violence against teachers and schools more broadly is significantly higher and its adverse effects significantly starker. This provided the motivation for the BRiCE project's core focus on violence against teachers, as framed in RQ1. In this section, we pursue the reflection we started in the Baseline Report, on the causes and dynamics of violence against teachers and violence in the school environment more broadly. Although the section focuses partially on 'direct' violence, we also look at the structural causes of violence, and indirect effects of violence on the school environment.

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the causes of violence against teachers are closely linked with wider dynamics of violence. Although a full review of the dynamics of violence in the DRC and Niger is beyond the scope of this report, we provide an overview of some of the key dynamics of violence in the BRiCE schools of Niger and the DRC (see Boxes 6.1 and 6.2). We then highlight those salient dynamics of violence that are relevant to understanding the intersecting causes of violence against teachers. These are closely linked with the social positioning of teachers, which we covered in section 5.

As can be seen in Table 6.1, which summarises teachers' exposure to violence in 2019 and 2020 in the BRiCE schools in Niger and the DRC, teachers in Fizi and Uvira appear to be exposed to considerably more violence than those in Zinder and Diffa, though these results should not be interpreted as representative of all schools in these regions. As noted before, BRiCE schools in both Niger and the DRC are concentrated in urban centres, which are usually safer than remote areas. Moreover, as we will show in this section, the relatively low levels of violence in the BRiCE schools in Niger does not capture the range of indirect effects of regional violence that affect them. We seek to analyse both similarities and differences of the dynamics of violence against teachers in Niger and the DRC.

**Table 6.1 Teachers' exposure to violence**

	DRC	Niger
<b><i>Teachers' exposure to violence at school</i></b>		
Threats by students against teachers (%)	6.26	3.15
School experienced an attack in 2019–20 (%)	15.25	3.15
N (teacher)	623	445
<b><i>Teachers' exposure to violence outside of school</i></b>		
Experienced an attack in 2019–20 (%)	15.96	0.45
Teacher's house was destroyed (%)	5.05	0.00
Teacher was displaced (%)	3.58	0.00
Family member killed (%)	1.95	0.00
N (teachers)^	614	442

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger; ^ 1.44% of teachers in the DRC and 0.67% of teachers in Niger declined to answer questions related to personal experiences of violence.

## 6.1 Intersecting dynamics of violence in South Kivu, DRC

The causes of violence against teachers in Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu are numerous and cannot be reduced to a single overarching cause. Rather than affecting all teachers uniformly, dynamics of violence permeate the school environment and are linked to structural and quotidian dynamics. Here, we focus on salient factors that have come out centrally in the interviews. These are: (1) teachers under attack from armed groups; (2) student and parent violence against teachers; (3) teachers' active involvement in violence; and (4) further militarisation of the school environment.

### Box 6.1 Ethnicity and dynamics of violence in Fizi

Our analysis focuses on how dynamics of violence and social polarisation penetrate the school environment. Violence and polarisation along ethnic lines have a long history in eastern DRC. The colonial state organised governance along ethno-territorial lines, separating the Congolese population into territorially demarcated ethnic groups, a template of rule that structured political competition along ethnic lines and continued after the DRC's independence (Hoffmann 2014, 2021). Ethnicity, as a result, has become 'a guiding principle of social, political, and administrative organisation' (Vlassenroot 2013). In Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu, this partially shaped political conflicts between groups who consider themselves as 'autochthonous' to these territories and thus entitled to customary rule over the land, and those designated as 'foreigners' to these territories, notably the Banyamulenge, an ethno-territorial group whose

settlement in the highlands of Minembwe dates back to the nineteenth century (Verweijen and Vlassenroot 2015).

Importantly, however, the political salience of ethnicity does not in and of itself explain violence, whose persistence in the region has distinct origins. Large-scale violence dates back to the nineteenth century and the expansion of the East African slave trade into the region followed by the colonial conquest, both of which durably implanted modes of violent governance in the region (Northrup 1988; Hoffmann 2021). Violent resistance by political entities in the region also dates back to this period and continued in the 1960s, notably with the Simba rebellion (Verhaegen 1969). In the 1990s, the downfall of Mobutu Sese Seko's regime and heightened political competition resulting from democratisation precipitated the onset of the two Congo wars of 1996–97 and 1993–2003, which durably implanted violent economies in the region (Stearns 2011).

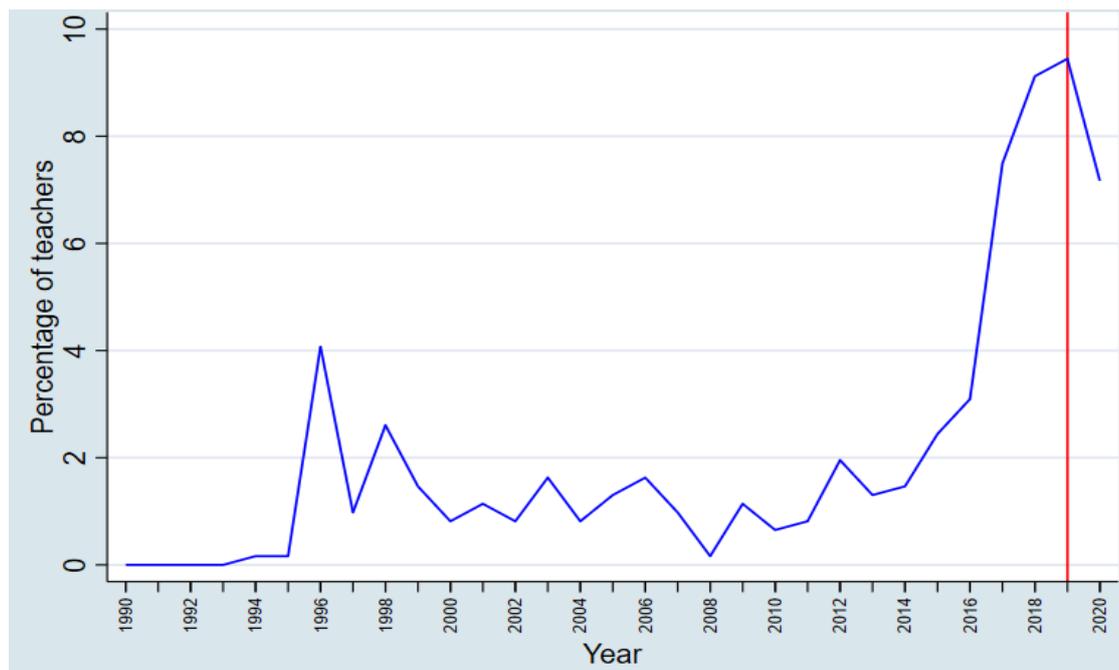
Today, the persisting violence is the result of a range of factors, from national and international political and military competition between networks of elites, to foreign rebel groups having rear bases in the region, and competition between armed groups for control over resources – in particular, mines and trade. The need to obtain the protection of armed actors has driven the militarisation of several activities – notably, agriculture and pastoralism (Verweijen and Brabant 2017). Pervasive militarisation has meant that political conflicts – notably, around customary and political authority – have at times turned violent (Verweijen 2016). Resulting from persistent polarisation along identity lines, autochthony and ethnicity have become part of the discursive repertoire of armed mobilisation. While this mobilisation is often anchored in local conflicts over territory and identity, it is entangled with national and provincial power struggles. For example, due to the integration of former armed groups in the Congolese military, Rwandophones 'came to dominate the national armed forces based in the Kivus. This reactivated antagonism towards Rwandophones among former Mai-Mai [community-based militia] fighters, both within and outside the army' (*ibid.*).

Crucially for our analysis, the social implantation of armed groups has blurred the lines between civilian and military. Mai-Mai leaders, such as William Yakutumba, have enjoyed popular support, and Mai-Mai groups hold considerable power over local societies (Hoffmann and Verweijen 2019). As in much of North and South Kivu, armed groups have extensive support networks among civilian populations and in most sectors of activity (Stys *et al.* 2020). Civilians can take up ancillary roles to support armed groups, and people can move in and out of them. This, as we will see, plays an important role in the penetration of dynamics of violence in the school environment.

### 6.1.1 Teachers under attack

As seen in Table 6.1, teachers in the BRiCE schools in Uvira and Fizi have experienced significant levels of violence. Figure 6.1 gives a historical perspective on violence against teachers and shows the percentage of teachers who experienced at least one attack from 1990 to 2020.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 6.1 Teachers' exposure to violence since 1990 in the DRC**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

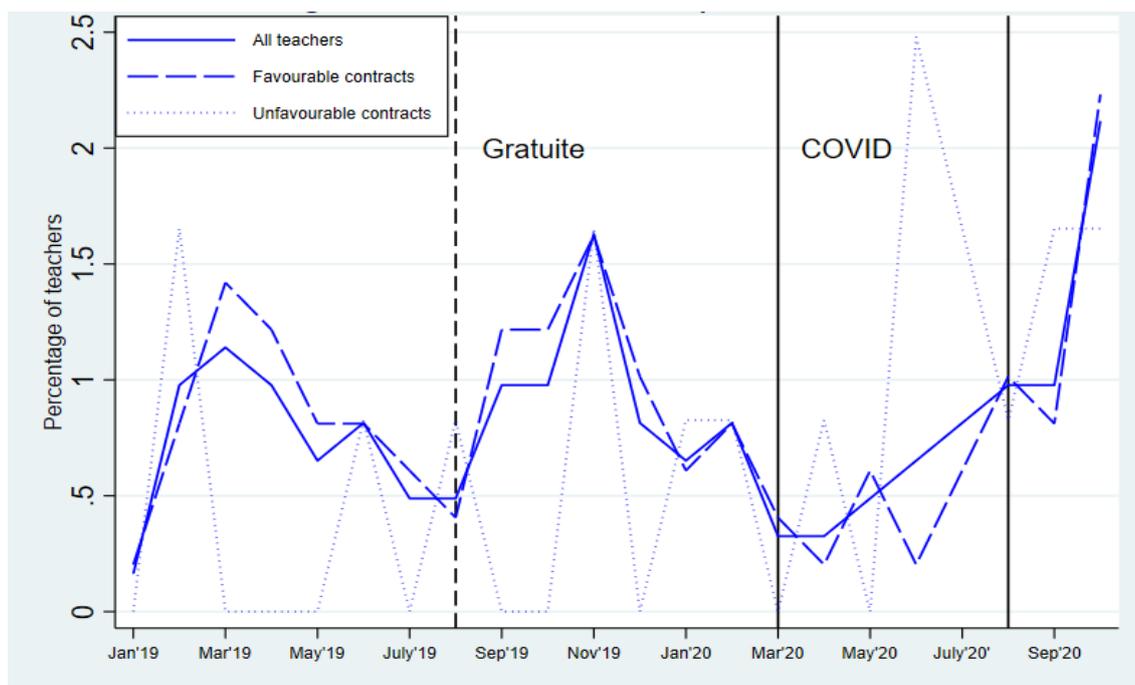
Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline; 1.44% of teachers in the DRC declined to answer questions related to personal experiences of violence.

We find 41.57 per cent of teachers surveyed in Fizi and Uvira have experienced at least one attack since 1990, versus 4.49 per cent in the BRiCE schools in Niger. This is a considerable number, bearing in mind that, as noted before, the BRiCE schools are not located in the most violent areas of Fizi and Uvira. As can be seen in Figure 6.2, there has been a sharp increase in attacks on teachers since 2017. This is likely due to several interrelated events. First, the escalation of violence in Hauts-Plateaux in 2017–18 (Verweijen *et al.* 2021). Second, the 2017 armed rebellion by the Coalition National du Peuple pour la Souveraineté du Congo, a coalition of armed groups led by warlord William Yakutumba, who sought to topple the regime of Joseph Kabila following the delay in the 2016 national elections. The coalition launched an attack on Uvira town in 2017, which was stopped by the national army and the United Nations Organization

<sup>24</sup> These methods for collecting data on historical exposure to violence were developed in previous projects on violent conflict in the DRC. Recall methods have been used in other studies of attacks on education in South Kivu. Bennouna *et al.* (2016) carry out a sensitivity analysis of recall methods for collecting data on attacks against schools, and find that they are reliable overall for short recall periods. For a detailed discussion of the validity and limitations of recall methods, see: Marchais *et al.* (2021); Marchais (2016); and Sánchez de la Sierra (2020).

Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). And third, ongoing violence in the Ruzizi plain, which has flared up on multiple occasions in recent years (Verweijen *et al.* 2020).

**Figure 6.2 Teacher exposure to violence since 2019 in the DRC, by contract status**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

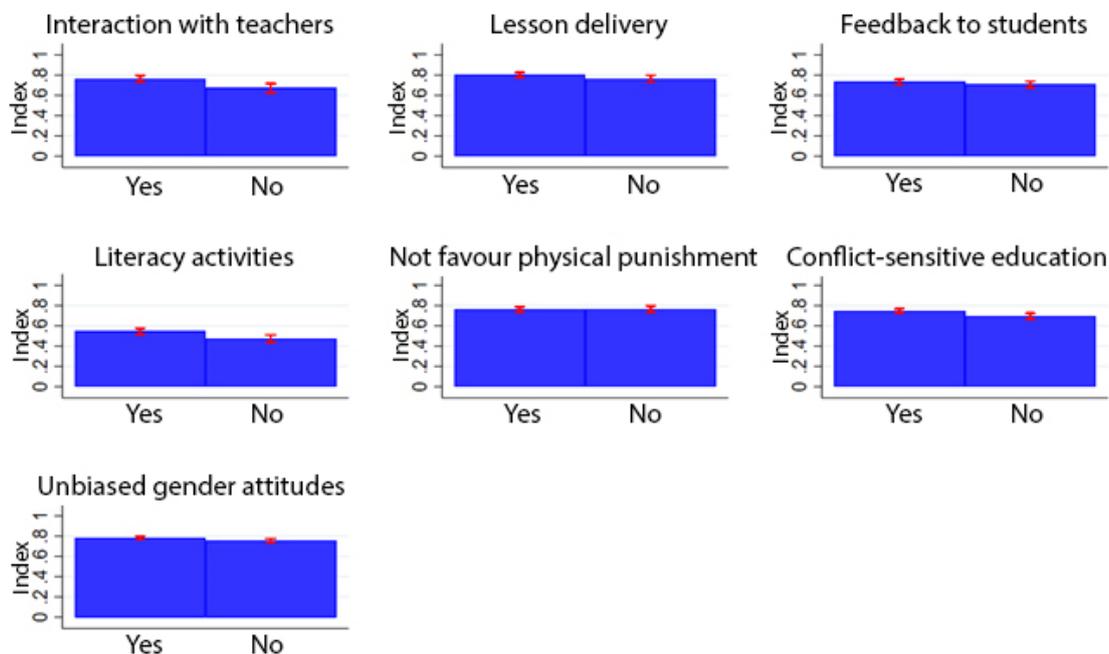
Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline; 1.44% of teachers in the DRC declined to answer questions related to personal experiences of violence.

Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of teachers who experienced at least one attack in 2019/20 (until before the Midline Survey in October 2020) disaggregated by teachers' contract status.

There was an increase in attacks on all teachers in September–November 2019, post-*Gratuité* implementation. While the attacks reduced as the 2019/20 academic year progressed, teachers on unfavourable contracts (NU/NP/*omis*) experienced a spike in violence again during the Covid-19-related closures in 2020. In September 2020, all teachers reported an increase in attacks, possibly due to widespread strike action in which 66.5 per cent of the teachers in our sample report taking part.

Violence against teachers has considerable effects on their capacity to work effectively and on their wellbeing. Figure 6.3 shows the association between teaching quality indices and violence in the DRC. Some 42 per cent of the teachers in the DRC had experienced an attack between 1990 and 2020. These teachers, on average, report conducting lower levels of high-quality teaching activities, particularly those related to interaction with other teachers, literacy and providing conflict-sensitive education.

**Figure 6.3 Average teaching quality and violence in the DRC  
 (attacks in 1990–2020)**

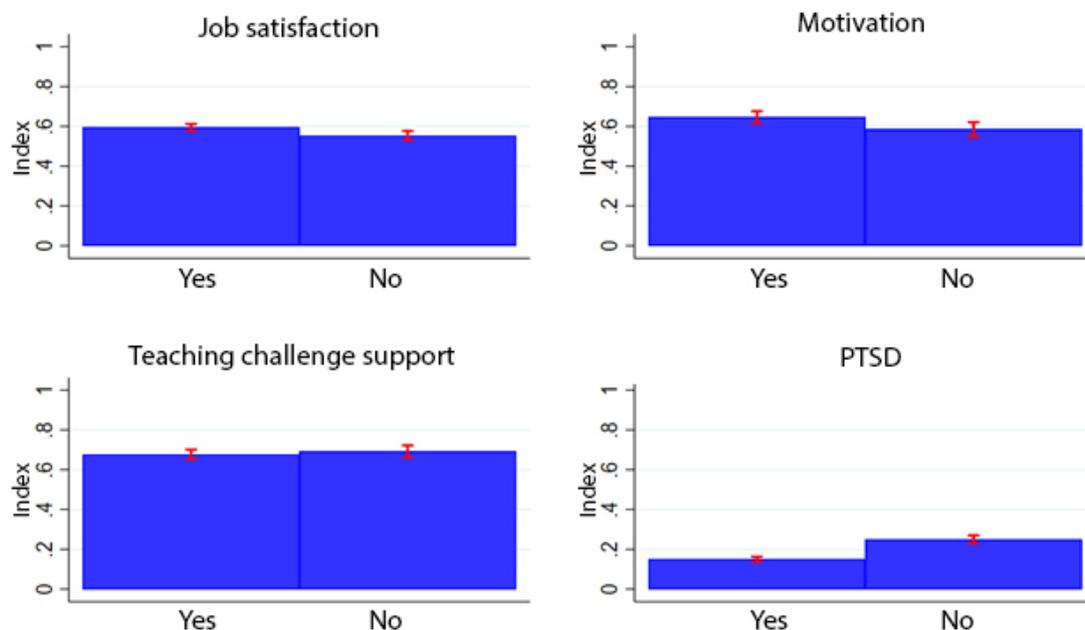


Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline; 1.44% of teachers in the DRC declined to answer questions related to personal experiences of violence; figure reports average outcomes; red lines denote 95% confidence interval.

Figure 6.4 shows the association between teacher wellbeing and violence in the DRC. Teachers who experienced an attack between 1990 and 2020 also report lower levels of job satisfaction and motivation. These teachers also report significantly higher levels of trauma-related PTSD.

**Figure 6.4 Average teacher wellbeing and violence in the DRC (attacks in 1990–2020)**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline; 1.44% of teachers in the DRC declined to answer questions related to personal experiences of violence; figure reports average outcomes; red lines denote 95% confidence interval.

Understanding violence against teachers requires unpacking the different causes and dynamics that lead to it. The eastern Congolese armed conflict has led to the entrenchment of a violent political economy in Uvira and Fizi. As noted in numerous interviews, teachers – as well as head teachers and students – are subjected to quotidian forms of extortion that are not necessarily tied to their status as teachers, and range from attacks on their houses to extortion at roadblocks during travel, a widespread form of extortion in eastern DRC (Schouten 2019). Attacks against teachers must therefore be understood in a context of pervasive violent extortion and robbery. As one teacher put it: 'They attack everyone, even teachers' (Int.19).

At the same time, our qualitative interviews suggest that teachers can be prime targets for extortion, as they receive a relatively regular salary, the distribution of which is announced on the radio. Perversely, but logically, an increase in teachers' salaries can serve as an incentive for armed actors to rob them (Int. 17). *Bancarisation* has made it easier for armed actors to know when teachers are paid and to rob them on the road: 'They know he is a head teacher and he has to pay. These costs are shared amongst us colleagues' (Int. 2, also 4). Ten or more roadblocks between Uvira and the schools imply that a part of the collected pay is lost during the journey (e.g. Int. 7).

Very high sums can be stolen; for example CDF500,000 (Int. 2), the budget for an entire school. Some teachers, however, claim that they do not have to pay when they show their '*carte de service*' (their professional identity card) (Int. 6, 15, 17, 25, others). Thus, two major public policies – *Gratuité* via increased salaries and *bancarisation* via radio announcements – have reshaped teachers' exposure to extortion. Such quotidian forms of extortion exist alongside more organised forms of violent extortion, which confirm the contention already made in the Baseline Report that schools and their staff can serve as sites of taxation in a violent political economy. As an example of these more elaborate forms of taxation, a PROVED administrator said that Mai-Mai threatened to deploy their members as invigilators during final exams and also demanded a share of the collected fees for these exams (Int. 20).

Teachers are not necessarily just the victims of extortion and can play a role in it, though it is rarely straightforward and reflects varying lines of tension in the school environment and the penetration of dynamics of violence in the school environment. Although the explicit use of coercion or violence by teachers was not confirmed, there were reports of extortionary practices by head teachers, with some teachers reporting that head teachers demanded a share of teachers' salaries (Int. 11, 33). 'All head teachers in our villages have nice houses but no teacher owns a house' (Int. 25). In one case, teachers successfully demanded the replacement of a head teacher who 'stole their money' (Int. 11). The contractual status of teachers, which we have previously shown is a key factor in teachers' working conditions, can also play a role with regards to exposure to violence. Given their relatively higher and more stable income, teachers on permanent contracts are more likely to be subjected to the forms of extortion described above.

This does not mean, however, that teachers on non-permanent contracts are less exposed to violence overall. In fact, as can be seen in Figure 6.2, NU teachers were exposed to higher levels of violence in 2019/20. This was likely due to the strikes, but also the need for unpaid teachers to generate income through alternative activities that might have exposed them to higher levels of violence. Grievances and jealousies resulting from employment inequalities can also fuel tensions that might lead to violence. Although we have very limited evidence from the interviews that this might be the case, one teacher on a non-permanent contract stated: 'As an NP I can get angry and create a conflict. Even send them thieves at night' (Int. 11). In another instance, it was reported that, during the teachers' strike, some teachers kidnapped NGO staff and received a ransom of US\$1,500. Violent extortion can also breed suspicion and tensions between teachers. Given the distances teachers have to travel, it is not uncommon for teachers to collect colleagues' pay on their behalf. If they keep their colleagues' pay in their residence overnight, the risk of robbery increases. And if they are robbed, their colleagues might suspect them of being complicit with the armed groups (Int. 40).

Extortion for money is not the only reason for violence against teachers. We also found cases where teachers were intentionally targeted either because of their status as 'intellectuals' (Int. 17, 62) or because they were perceived to be state agents, such as a case where a teacher was accused of being a National Intelligence Agency (ANR) agent (Int. 50). This provides further evidence for the idea that teachers may be targeted because of their role as 'reluctant representatives of the state' (Brandt 2014), which we explored in the Baseline Report. These quotidian forms of extortion and violence against teachers need to be understood in the context of wider militarisation of the school environment, to which we now turn. One crucial outcome of the above discussed perceived and real insecurity is that many teachers demand transfers, mainly because they have a different ethnicity, regional background or religion to most of their colleagues (Int. 1, 2, 5, 41, 55, etc.; similar to the Baseline Report).<sup>25</sup> However, as transfers are difficult to obtain and can lead to a temporary loss of official salary due to lengthy administrative procedures, many instead abandon the profession. In Fizi, we heard of cases where armed groups need to give their approval before transfers are made. In almost all schools in the lakeside area around Lake Tanganyika, head teachers are said to ask permission from armed groups before transferring any teacher: 'if not, you will be taken away at night' (Int. 11). The interviewee also provided a concrete example from 2009.

### 6.1.2 Student and parent violence against teachers

Most, but not all, primary schoolchildren are too young to be active members of armed groups. However, the average age in Congolese (rural, conflict-affected) schools can be relatively high, which means that children in the fourth, fifth or sixth grades can directly follow armed groups after abandoning or finishing primary school (Int. 1). 'Some say they might abandon school to move to the forest, especially when they fail or when they are expelled' (Int. 12). This reportedly mainly takes place in Hauts-Plateaux (Int. 2). The survey data show a high level of social connectedness of both teachers and students with armed groups. This means that conflicts and tensions within the school environment can easily spill over into wider conflict; threats against teachers by students can be particularly harmful in terms of stress and mental health because of their plausibility in a violent environment. As noted by several teachers, even when threats do not materialise, they are harmful (Int. 17, 21).

The interviews show that incidents of student violence against teachers, though relatively rare, can generate collective trauma in the teaching profession. We have documented acts of violence by (former) students against their teachers

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<sup>25</sup> To be sure, there are also other reasons for transfers: a head teacher does not respect the rules of the religious community (e.g. monogamy) (Int. 33); other conflicts (e.g. around posts) (Int. 27); using students to intimidate one another (Int. 33); or personal conflicts that are resolved by armed actors (Int. 56).

(Int. 5, 8, 12, 21, etc.). One event that respondents referred to repeatedly in the interviews was the following:

*In 1996, a Munyamulenge student failed in class... and joined armed groups. During the period of AFDL [the dissident Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo], people fled war. The student's teacher wanted to flee to Tanzania, he saw the former student at the port where this student is head of a certain group. The former student tells him to get off the boat, he did so, was tortured and shot by his student.*

(Int. 5)

Such events of extreme violence against teachers live on in teachers' memories, discussions and narratives, suggesting enduring collective trauma in the profession. Student-teacher relations need to be considered diachronically and in light of how past events can shape current relations, and teachers' behaviour more broadly. A teacher who was identified and tortured by a former student, whom he had punished, 'frequently advises us not to punish students and to live in harmony with them', said a colleague (Int. 56). The enduring psychological effect of past acts of violence, in addition to more recent ones, can cause a general feeling of insecurity, reluctance and hesitance among teachers when it comes to interacting with students, let alone sanctioning them (Int. 59). Such behavioural changes can interact with dynamics of ethnic polarisation in the classroom. Indeed, a teacher added, 'that is why we do not want these students [Banyamulenge] to fail because we are afraid and war can break out at any moment' (Int. 5).

As we are not trying to create a simplistic picture, we also note rare cases where former students who joined a militia rescued their teacher, being thankful for what they learned in school: 'some young soldiers thank their teachers because thanks to them they know how to read and write, which can open up higher ranks in their armed group' (Int. 58). Widespread accusations that NGOs favour refugees over host communities is at times translated to accusations against teachers. As we discuss in more detail below, a particular case concerns aid for refugees. As is known from other contexts, host communities frequently complain that refugees receive preferential treatment. What is relevant for this section is that students 'do not realise that it's NGOs who discriminate them, but they only see the teachers, saying that "the teachers do not like us, they only like the Burundian students"' (Int. 34). Whether or not these complaints are substantiated or a symptom of xenophobia, teachers might be the objects of such grievances, which can further tensions in the school environment.

### 6.1.3 Teachers' active involvement in violence

As noted above, schools, teachers and students are not merely targets of violence and armed actors, as is sometimes assumed in the 'education under attack' narrative, but have complex relations with the military and non-state armed groups. These must be understood in the context of the wider militarisation of the eastern Congolese societies, notably those of Fizi and Uvira (Verweijen 2016).

First, some teachers have fluid relations with armed groups. Some respondents hold that teachers can generally not join armed groups (Int. 5). In reality, however, many teachers, especially NU, are involved with armed groups in various ways. About half of the respondents of our qualitative interviews stated that they know one or more teachers who are somehow involved with armed groups. Table 6.2 shows the self-reported participation of teachers in state and non-state groups, based on midline survey data. Less than 1 per cent of the teachers belonged to the state armed forces (government army or police), and less than 2 per cent were part of a non-state armed group. Reported participation was mainly in Mai-Mai groups (e.g. Mai-Mai Yakutumba, Mai-Mai de la Plaine de la Ruzizi and various other Mai-Mai groups). Although reports of direct participation are fairly low, 27 per cent of teachers (162 teachers) indicated that they have one or several family members who are non-state armed group members. Similarly, 29 per cent reported that they have social acquaintances who are non-state armed group members. This provides evidence of the penetration of armed groups into the societies of Uvira and Fizi, and into the school environment.

**Table 6.2 Teachers' participation in state and non-state groups in the DRC**

Participation in state and non-state groups	DRC (%)
Teachers who ever belonged to a state armed group (army/police)	0.83
Teachers who ever belonged to a non-state armed group	1.83
Teachers who have one or several family members who are non-state armed group members	27.00
Teachers who have social acquaintances with non-state armed group members	28.73
N (teachers)	600

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline in the DRC and who provided consent to answer questions related to participation in state and non-state armed groups; 3.7% of teachers did not provide consent.

The qualitative interviews suggest that stability of employment and income might play a role in explaining teachers' participation in armed groups,<sup>26</sup> as they suggest that NU teachers are most likely to join armed groups (Int. 1, 6, 16, 22). In our survey sample, we find low participation rates of teachers in armed groups (Table 6.2). These claims are likely to concern teachers who have left the profession and are therefore not captured in our sample; or teachers in Hauts-Plateaux or other regions of South Kivu who are not in our sample and who reportedly participate in armed groups much more frequently. 'If he's promised to obtain a cow, rather than being non-paid, he can directly enrol' (Int. 10, 16). The non-payment of teachers in April 2020 in the wake of *Gratuité* and after the start of the 2020/21 school year, is seen as a potential reason for growth of Mai-Mai members (Int. 7, 16, 17, 19, 30, 40, 47, 50, etc.).

Joining the Mai-Mai is one of several exit options for teachers when deciding to leave the teaching profession. Relations are dynamic, with teachers moving between teaching posts and armed groups (Int. 1, 2, 3, 17). Teachers can also remain teachers and still collaborate with Mai-Mai; for example, as a facilitator who 'collects money and buys food, mainly on Sundays and during holidays, teaches normally' (Int. 4). This is likely to be facilitated by the social connectedness of many teachers to the armed groups. A frequently reported issue is the mobilisation of Banyamulenge teachers in Hauts-Plateaux: 'In case of an attack, teachers abandon the school to engage in war' (Int. 5). In Hauts-Plateaux, teachers are 'asked to leave the profession to assist others in the war' (Int. 2). Some teachers even leave school for two or three weeks, go to 'war' and return, leaving children temporarily unattended (Int. 2, 7, 10). Teachers are probably part of a general mobilisation and it is unclear whether they occupy any particular role.

#### 6.1.4 Further militarisation of the school environment

##### *Difficulty in sanctioning teachers*

The close relations that some teachers and staff entertain with armed factions can have an impact on professional relations within schools and a range of issues. Head teachers, for example, might be reluctant to give disciplinary sanctions to teachers suspected of being close to armed groups. Interviews pointed to the fact that some Mai-Mai are difficult to identify as they can live alongside the rest of the population during the day. And even if a teacher is not a member of a Mai-Mai group, he may be in a close relationship with such a group or with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) through relatives or close friends. It is 'impossible' to sanction such teachers (Int. 10, 15, 20, 22, 27, 58, etc.; similar to the Baseline Report). The following story illustrates this:

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<sup>26</sup> It is important, however, not to overstate the role of economic factors in explaining participation in armed groups (see Marchais *et al.* 2021b).

*In 2018, a secondary school head teacher expelled a teacher. The teacher, together with his brothers in the military, returned [to] arrest the head teacher. The students' dean refused the arrest and called on other students to join him and stop the soldiers. The soldiers left and did not arrest the head teacher. After this, the doyen des élèves [dean of students] abandoned school and joined an armed group.*  
(Int. 33)

Another reason a head teacher can find it difficult to sanction a teacher is when the head teacher is not considered to be an 'autochtone' (i.e. someone who is originally from the village their school is in):

*A teacher came to school after consuming alcohol, and after having been absent from school for two months. The head teacher could not fire him because he was not originaire from that village. The Copa and teachers wrote to that teacher to help the head teacher, because if the head teacher writes directly, he can be killed... People believe that he collaborates with armed groups.*  
(Int. 27)

Other examples confirm that armed groups can interfere in issues related to teacher employment and salaries. 'If we don't pay teachers, we can have an incursion by the Mai-Mai because they have their brothers who are teachers in different schools' (Int. 35). It is difficult to know to what extent this is true, but we note that this has been a salient argument in our interviews and suggests that school staff adapt their behaviour to potential threats by armed actors related to school issues. Moreover, teachers' links to armed groups can have ambivalent effects on their relations with colleagues: a teacher who used to be a Mai-Mai member can impose himself on other teachers. Yet, a teacher who is linked to armed groups can be advantageous for a school, as he can provide information about potential attacks.

### *Role of armed groups in school governance*

The militarisation of the school environment means that the national military also plays a key role. Overall, our interviews pointed to 'positive' facets of FARDC and Mai-Mai behaviour regarding schools and students. Most of these narratives concern the military's involvement in ensuring that education can continue despite a context of pervasive violence. FARDC officers asked head teachers to send children home from school before attacking an area (Int. 15, 19); the FARDC provided security for the *examen d'état* (final exam at the end of secondary school), but was also paid to do so (Int. 21); FARDC forces do not harass children in school uniform (Int. 40); and children in school uniform were protected when war broke out in Minembwe in June 2019 (Int. 22). Overall, many interviews pointed to the importance of good relations between the school and the military. In Fizi, a main issue is the 'creation of relations between schools and

military authorities' (Int. 39). 'It is important to maintain good relationships with them, because in times of conflict their parents can turn against us' (Int. 42; see Int. 22 of Baseline Report). One respondent highlighted the role of MONUSCO's predecessor MONUC's role in transporting and distributing exams during the Second Congo War (1998–2003), while Mai-Mai let the teachers pass (Int. 3). Data from various online sources suggest that MONUSCO has continued this role in various provinces (Padovan 2012; Media Congo 2014).

Some interviews also pointed to supportive behaviour by the Mai-Mai. One inspector recalled how Mai-Mai provided safe passage to all students and staff who were involved in TENAFEP exams. They escorted the inspectors to an area that was controlled by the FARDC. The FARDC then threatened the inspector (Int. 7). We need to remain cautious as to the veracity of such claims, because we have no inside knowledge on the respondent's allegiances. When Mai-Mai Yakutumba occupied a certain area in 2017, educational activities were reportedly not interrupted (Int. 3). It was also reported that Mai-Mai Dunia in 2013 in Fizi urged the reopening of schools, which was considered a 'symbol of peace' (Int. 31). Armed groups' involvement is, however, ambivalent. In one case the Mai-Mai obliged teachers to let all students pass their final exams, which resulted in a success rate of 100 per cent in 2017/18 (Int. 17). The same teachers' union member also told us that 'sometimes the Mai-Mai imposed *Gratuité*' on schools' (prior to September 2019) (Int. 17).

## 6.2 Indirect violence and fear among teachers in Niger

### Box 6.2 Dynamics of violence in Zinder and Diffa

**Zinder** borders Nigeria and has an estimated population of almost 3 million (18.5% of the national population) (Leclerc 2017). The city of Zinder has been affected by urban violence, although Ibrahim (2016) stresses that international media have highlighted negative aspects of youth groupings to the detriment of positive initiatives of a variety of community and religious organisations. Moreover, popular mobilisations are often used by key (religious) figures as a means to extend their grip on power (Mueller 2016). 'For young men... violence [via such groups] offers one of the few effective channels to make their voices heard' (Schritt 2022). While Boko Haram members were arrested in Zinder as far back as 2012 (Zenn 2012), Zinder has not directly been affected by Boko Haram. Zinder has, however, been home to internally displaced people from neighbouring Diffa and refugees from Nigeria. Increasing insecurity in the neighbouring region of Maradi adds to current tensions. Finally, in 2017 dozens of schools experienced a massive dropout of students (17,000 in total) whose families had left their home regions due to drought (RFI 2017).

**Diffa** borders Nigeria, Lake Chad and Chad. It is sparsely populated, with an estimated population of 591,000 (around 4% of the national population) (International Crisis Group 2017), and the majority of people live along the banks of the Komadougou river and near Lake Chad (before the massive displacements). As Diffa borders Nigeria's Borno state, which was the home of Boko Haram, it has been a place of refuge, fundraising, resource acquisition and recruitment. Attracted by military success and material incentives, between 'several hundred and a few thousand young Nigeriens' joined Boko Haram (*ibid.*). The first attack on Nigerien territory took place on 6 February 2015, when Boko Haram temporarily occupied the city of Bosso in Eastern Diffa. The government encouraged vigilante committees to monitor combatants' movements and identify suspects. The government declared an (ongoing) state of emergency in Diffa, restricting commercial activities, imposing a curfew, banning motorbikes and closing certain markets, all with the goal of curtailing Boko Haram's funding mechanisms. Due to Boko Haram's attacks and the government's attempt to cut off the population from the movement, masses of people have been displaced (*ibid.*). Diffa experienced heavy attacks in 2018 and 2019. The abduction of girls – reminiscent of the mass abduction of schoolgirls in Chiboke, Nigeria, in 2014 – has also been reported (GCPEA 2020). In July 2020, there were reportedly 16,573 new displacements: 'higher than the sum of new displacements reported for the region in the preceding 5 months' (IDMC 2020). Most displaced persons 'are spread over various spontaneous sites along Route nationale 1 (RN1) or refugee camps or are hosted by Nigerien relatives. These displaced people move around in response to Boko Haram's attacks or the availability of humanitarian aid' (International Crisis Group 2017).

The qualitative and quantitative fieldwork carried out for this project points to different patterns of violence in Niger compared to the DRC. As noted in the introduction, there has been an escalation of the conflict in the Sahelian tri-frontier region (Raleigh, Nsaibia and Dowd 2021), as well as the northern Nigeria conflict. The proximity of the Boko Haram movement and its diffusion into Diffa would suggest similar patterns of violence towards education in Niger as those observed in northern Nigeria. Indeed, Boko Haram has an explicit anti-education agenda embedded in its very name (which can be interpreted as 'Western education is sacrilege'), and has systematically targeted schools and colleges in Nigeria (Higazi 2016; HRW 2016). Yet, our evidence points to significantly lower levels of violence against schools in Niger than in Nigeria or the DRC, though, as previously noted, our quantitative surveys were carried out in BRiCE schools, which are located in areas less directly exposed to violence.

The existing evidence on violence against schools in Niger is scarce and we have found no prior academic research on education in emergencies in Niger. The only source that compiles reports is US-based interagency coalition the Global

Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA). While the 2018 GCPEA report did not contain information on Niger, the 2020 report cites attacks against schools and teachers and the military's use of schools in Niger. Two attacks on schools – and school canteens – in Diffa were noted for 2017, nine for 2018 and two for 2019 (GCPEA 2020: 182–3). In 2017 and 2018 respectively, a handful of direct attacks against teachers were reported and two incidents – one lethal – involving students. While underreporting is likely, these numbers are significantly lower than the violence against schools in Nigeria and high levels of violence against schools we have documented in South Kivu. Our data confirm this, as only 0.45 per cent of teachers and 2.8 per cent of the schools reported attacks in 2019/20.

Considering the history of attacks since 1990, 4.5 per cent of teachers and 8.5 per cent of schools reported attacks (for details on the history of attacks, see sections 3 and 4.7 of the Baseline Report). Yet, although levels of direct violence against schools and teachers appear from our data to be relatively lower, violence is nevertheless pervasive – particularly in Diffa. Here, we look at two particular effects of violence on the teaching profession, and the school environment more broadly. The first are key effects of violent conflict on the education system and the second is the psychological toll of violence on teachers.

### **6.2.1 Key effects of violent conflict on the education system**

The greatest immediate impact of violent conflict on the education system has been the displacement or closure of about 150 schools (Int. 8). Although we have no exact data, interviews suggest that the entire area around Lake Chad in southeastern Niger has become an educational desert. However, respondents underlined that schools were not particular targets and that they had no information on why a certain school was attacked. They underlined that all types of schools – public, French-Arab and even religious madrassas, in some cases – could be subject to attacks (Int. 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 29). 'In Nigeria, it's different' (Int. 9). Similarly, teachers have not been targeted in particular.

Nonetheless, some teachers have been subjected to violence, but less so due to their generic role as teachers; rather, because, for example, they publicly demanded peace or for personal reasons. From the interviews, ethnicity does not seem to be a salient factor. The role of gender is ambivalent. In 2015, women were said to have been used as 'human bombs' (Int. 25) but this was not very salient in our interviews. Teachers' experience of local social norms and context seems to play a role: 'If you know how you have to behave, that helps' (Int. 7); though such comments remained vague (Int. 9, 25). Respondents also noted that some parents have become afraid to send their children to school (Int. 25). A major difference compared to the DRC is that Boko Haram is not involved in

'school governance'. At most, Boko Haram loots schools or school canteens (Int. 1, 7), but most schools have left the areas where Boko Haram is most active.

Armed conflict also alters relations between students and teachers. Teachers become guardians of students' safety or are at least perceived as such. Our baseline study suggested that students considered that teachers offer most protection. Respondents in qualitative interviews commented that this was because teachers have everyday contact with students, are visible and known locally (Int. 7, 9, 18, 24, 25, 35, 44, 48, 49), while security forces are associated with violence and would make schools a '*de facto* target' (Int. 44, also 6). Furthermore, teachers convey many rules and norms to children (e.g. not throwing stones at people, greeting your teacher, etc.) so they reassure children (Int. 22, 29). In fact, these stories were most salient in relation to teachers in Zinder.

As we allude to in section 4.1, armed conflict interacts with gender norms and employment conditions in a particular way. To reiterate, men are said to pay for all family-related expenditures and therefore find the low salaries and poor career opportunities in the education system unattractive. For women, any income means increased personal autonomy as they are able to – but do not have to – contribute to family-related expenditures. As a result, female teachers have more financial leverage than male teachers. Many teachers working in rural areas in Diffa prefer to live in towns. However, it appears that fewer men have sufficient funds to pay travel costs (see section 5.3). As a result, space and time in relation to schools are strongly gendered: in the concerned areas, many teachers, especially women, arrive at school in the morning and leave in the afternoon. They have little time available to get to know communities and talk to parents – both of which have been highlighted as particularly important for a fruitful school climate (see section 5.3).

Finally, teachers' deployment to high-risk areas can fuel stress. Most respondents agreed that, *a priori*, teachers need to accept deployment as it is a duty in relation to the state (Int. 10, 12, 19, 31, 32, 46, 69); 'They should have passion (*'amour'*) for their work' (Int. 5). In those areas teachers should learn to adapt and integrate; it is the teachers' '*déontologie*' (ethics) (Int. 56). Nonetheless, most teachers prefer to live in town and female teachers are usually deployed to work in close proximity to their families. In any case, if teachers are transferred from a certain zone because of the general level of insecurity, who replaces them?

Such decisions put administrators in an uncomfortable position: 'If you decide to grant the transfer, well, whom are you going to deploy to that village? That's a big challenge. There needs to be a concrete threat against her/his life' (Int. 9). Indeed, as one teacher reckons: 'I myself was threatened, that's why I was redeployed to work here' (Int. 12). As in the DRC, teacher governance has strong implications for teachers' exposure to risk and violence.

## 6.2.2 Psychological toll of violence on teachers

While the overall number of teachers targeted with violence is low, most respondents have heard about cases of intimidated, threatened, kidnapped or murdered teachers (e.g. Int. 1, 6, 7, 16, 18, 19, 20, 48). As in South Kivu, these memories have an effect of their own. They create an omnipresent 'fear', which people also referred to as 'psychosis' (e.g. Int. 6, 7, 10, 14, 18, 19, 21, 32, 35). Even in areas located relatively far away from Boko Haram's activities, people still mention 'fear' and '*psychose*' [fear] (Int. 17, 30). Boko Haram 'instil[s] fear in people's minds' (Int. 32). While we can assume that most of the population finds itself in a state of fear, the school kidnappings by Boko Haram in Nigeria and the movement's very name add a particular layer of menace for teachers.

The fact that Boko Haram at times threatens people by calling them on their phones adds to the perception that various people in the community liaise with Boko Haram (Int. 1, 6, 18, 22), creating a situation of extreme caution: 'Boko Haram, we don't speak about it, it's a taboo. A student's brother disappeared. No one speaks about it. Between my teachers and I: I have never pronounced the words Boko Haram, never. Because you don't know who is who' (Int. 19, see also Int. 1: 'Several ones [teachers] who have been threatened, by phone, one has been kidnapped. You cannot talk about this publicly' (Int. 1)); 'Currently no threat but still a high level of caution because you never know who is who. Some students are somehow linked to Boko Haram, but I have no example of impact of that' (Int. 24). What then is the impact of this fear on teachers?

Psychologically speaking, teachers are stressed, do not feel well and do not have peace of mind (Int. 7, 9, 18, 25). Being afraid of attacks, discussing new information about who was shot where and who heard gunshots are everyday concerns. Respondents suggest that teachers have trouble focusing and that their mind is elsewhere: 'Imagine a teacher who prepares her lesson, and she finds out that there were attacks in proximity to her school, do you think she will come to school? Even if she goes, do you think she will teach calmly? She will be afraid' (Int. 9); 'You go and look out of the window to see if anyone is coming to disturb you' (Int. 7); 'You are constantly apprehending disturbances' (Int. 12); 'Living with this *psychose* [fear] affects teaching because your mind is elsewhere' (Int. 32); 'A teacher is in the classroom, but his mind is elsewhere' (Int. 10); 'Insecurity heavily affects education. For you to learn, you need tranquillity' (Int. 21).

The predominant feeling is 'nervousness'. As in other conflict-affected contexts, people live in more or less permanent apprehension of violent events. 'It only requires a burst tyre for people to start running. Students are afraid and so are teachers' (Int. 20, also 22). Moreover, fear is not only psychological but visceral: 'We're living with fear in the stomach' (Int. 52). On top of this metaphor, conflict and fear have concrete implications for bodies, as it shapes where people go, when they run and flee, where they live, what they can consume (access to markets) and so on.

It is also important to highlight that not everyone is highly afraid or nervous. Some note that people have indeed become less nervous when, for example, hearing gunshots, acknowledging that a certain peace exists and that real insecurity is far away (Int. 6, 10, 26, 29, 41). Nevertheless, narratives around fear and what we can conceive of as nervousness were dominant in the interviews.

## 7. Evaluating the effects of BRiCE interventions on teacher and student outcomes

The evaluation component focuses on two key interventions of the BRiCE programme implemented by Save The Children in Niger and the DRC: TPD and ILET. The two interventions were jointly implemented following a phased-in cluster randomisation approach, allowing for a rigorous evaluation of the effects of these interventions, based on a comparison between randomly selected treatment schools (24 schools in the DRC and 35 schools in Niger where the interventions took place) and the still randomly selected 'control' schools (25 schools in the DRC and 36 schools in Niger where neither ILET nor TPD were implemented) over the 2019/20 academic year. The phased-in cluster randomisation approach was chosen for ethical reasons: all schools, including those serving as controls in the evaluation, eventually receive both interventions.

For a detailed presentation of the evaluation research design, see the Research Design (Justino *et al.* 2019) and Baseline Report (Marchais *et al.* 2020a). It is useful to note that other interventions were implemented as part of the BRiCE programme to improve the quality of learning environments, such as Community Action Cycle and Conflict-Mapping, but those were rolled out in all the BRiCE schools at the same time. The BRiCE logframe reports on the progress and effects of these interventions, but they are not the subject of IDS research evaluation which focuses on TPD and ILET.

### 7.1 BRiCE TPD and ILET interventions

The TPD and ILET interventions are two key components of the BRiCE education programme implemented in Niger and the DRC by Save the Children. Here, we summarise the theories of change of both interventions and their principal components.

#### 7.1.1 Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

At the heart of the TPD intervention's theory of change is the recognition that teaching quality is one of the most important, if not the most important, determining factor of students' learning. The central objective of educational programmes such as BRiCE is to improve children's learning outcomes, wellbeing and socioemotional learning, which therefore warrants improving teaching quality. Moreover, as argued and discussed throughout this report, teaching quality is intimately linked to teacher motivation and teacher wellbeing.

The core idea is therefore that the more motivated and supported teachers feel, the more likely they are to be present in school and provide quality teaching, and the less likely they are to engage in negative behaviours such as abusing or physically punishing students. In addition to the effect on student learning, teacher wellbeing has intrinsic value as teachers are the pillars of the education system and their wellbeing and motivation support the strength and resilience of the education system as a whole. The TPD approach is therefore designed to improve both teachers' wellbeing and the quality of their teaching.

The TPD approach also builds on several insights. First, that practical, 'on the job' experiential learning is the most effective form of learning. Second, that peer learning and support from experienced tutors or mentors can significantly improve practical learning, both in terms of skill development and attitude/motivation. Peer learning has other benefits, as peer-learning groups provide networks of support for teachers, which can improve their wellbeing, help develop more effective ways of working, and build collective voice and agency in the school environment. Third, that teachers who go through professional development feel more valued, better equipped and more motivated to provide quality teaching and learning in their classrooms. Fourth, that when teachers are involved in assessing their own competences, they feel empowered and valued to lead their own learning and develop self-reflection, a critical skill for professional development. And fifth, that such forms of collective and mentor-driven teacher learning can become sustainable if a culture of support, constructive feedback and mentorship is built into the education system by involving education actors and school leaders.

The implementation of TPD is guided by recognition of the importance of adapting learning strategies to challenges that teachers face in specific contexts, and involves the educational actors, pedagogies and know-how that exist in the context of the project. The TPD framework therefore incorporates national teaching standards and involves national and subnational ministries of education, as well as teacher training institutes in the countries where TPD is implemented. In Niger and the DRC, to ensure the coherence and relevance of the intervention in different contexts, Save the Children conducted a situational analysis of the existing systems in place for teacher training in schools selected for the BRiCE programme. Based on this, the TPD intervention was adapted to offer structured and context-relevant professional development for primary school teachers.

The TPD intervention process typically starts with a short school-based workshop that introduces and explores a small set of foundational teaching competencies, such as preparing for lessons and effective delivery of lessons, and encourages working with and learning from peers. Then, intensive training is delivered to teachers on six core modules on an introduction to reading and writing, vocabulary, reading comprehension, a code of conduct, conflict-sensitive education and girls' education. Following the implementation of *Gratuité* in the

DRC in September 2019, an additional TPD module was offered to teachers on large class management. Training on each module lasts for six weeks and includes face-to-face coaching with an expert (usually, a provincial education official), independent activities, peer-learning circles and lesson observations. This process is repeated for each TPD module. The TPD intervention is then gradually phased out, but the resources are handed over to an education coach identified by the project, so that competencies can be revisited after the project interventions are completed.

### **7.1.2 Improving Learning Environments Together (ILET)**

The ILET intervention aims to improve the learning environment of children in contexts of humanitarian crises by increasing the physical safety of their learning environment, supporting children's wellbeing, promoting active learning and encouraging children, parents and school communities to develop a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of quality education. ILET seeks to address a key limitation of education interventions in humanitarian contexts, which is the lack of a shared understanding among children, teachers and education stakeholders about the nature and purpose of quality education, which often results from their lack of participation in school decision-making processes, as well as educational assessments, which too often have narrowly defined and externally determined outcomes and measures.

To address this key problem, ILET aims to foster the development of a common framework of understanding of quality learning environments by developing participatory and reflective processes of information sharing and decision-making that involve and reflect the priorities of children, parents and teachers. To reach this objective, the ILET intervention involves teachers, students, parents and the wider community to develop a school development plan which reflects their respective points of views and priorities. This participatory process aims to foster a better understanding of school-related data and information, and allows students, parents and teachers to hold duty bearers and educational actors to account. It also ensures that decision-making is more effective in bringing about safer and better learning environments for children.

For its implementation, ILET relies on a straightforward, ready-to-use toolkit, which includes school checklists, school director interviews, teacher and parent focus group discussions, consultations with girls and boys, and classroom observations to take into account different perspectives and priorities and ensure alignment with Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies minimum standards in education quality. The information gathered is presented as a 'report card' to the school director and the school management committee (SMC) or school improvement committee (SIC), which is composed of parents, students and teachers, who are then supported to develop a school improvement plan (SIP).

Save the Children provides technical and capacity-building support to SMCs to lead on SIP development, ensuring that teachers and students are effectively consulted. After completing the SIPs, SMCs are provided with small grants from Save the Children to implement the priority improvement activities they have identified. Examples of improvement activities funded as part of ILET are recreational support for students, improving safety at school by installing appropriate fencing and improving school infrastructure, such as access to clean drinking water. The report card system is designed to be adopted by schools, and thus provide a sustainable tool to ensure the continuation of participatory practices beyond the formal end of the project.

## 7.2 Progress and feedback on ILET and TPD interventions

The joint ILET and TPD interventions were due to be completed in 24 schools in the DRC and 35 schools in Niger during the 2019/20 academic year, and before the planned midline data collection in October 2020. However, due to the Covid-19-related school closures in both countries, as well as floods in Niger, the activities were only partly completed. Concerning the ILET intervention, schools had been provided with a report card highlighting potential areas of improvement. In response to this, schools had formed SMCs to develop their SIPs. However, some schools in the DRC and all schools in Niger were still waiting for the disbursement of grants to implement the SIPs at the time of the midline quantitative data collection in October 2020. Regarding the TPD intervention, both countries had completed the training cycles for three modules: an introduction to reading and writing, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Schools in the DRC had also started delivering trainings on conflict-sensitive education and large class management before the Covid-19-related closures, but had not completed the training cycles for these modules when the midline data collection took place.

The quantitative midline study collected feedback on the ILET and TPD interventions from 357 teachers and 20 school directors in the DRC, and 297 teachers and 35 school directors in Niger.<sup>27</sup> The remainder of this section focuses on the implementation of the intervention, describing how key stakeholders have perceived it.

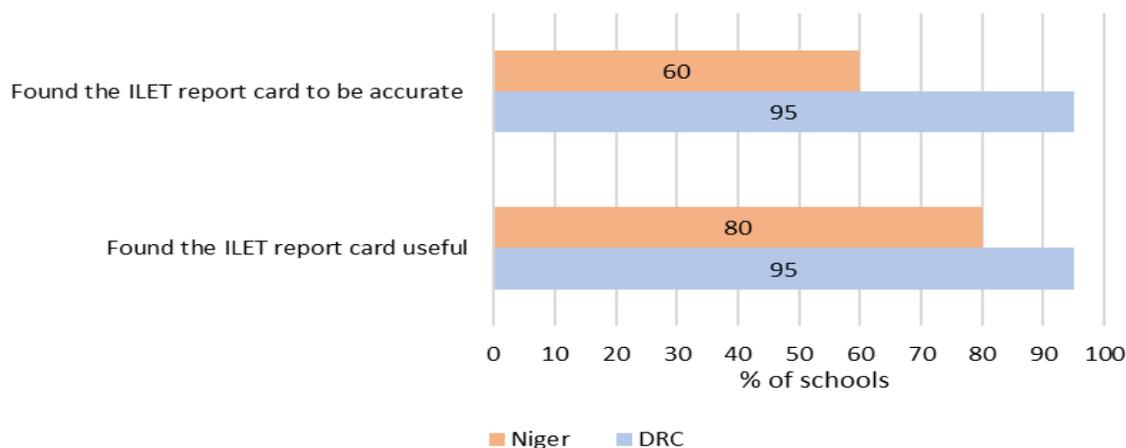
Figure 7.1 presents feedback from school directors on the ILET intervention in the DRC and Niger. Some 95 per cent of the 20 school directors in the DRC found the ILET report card to be useful and accurate in depicting the school's learning environment. However, in Niger, 28 (80%) of the 35 school directors found ILET report card useful for understanding their learning environment and

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<sup>27</sup> Four schools in the DRC treatment group were not administered questions related to the TPD and ILET interventions.

only 21 (60%) agreed that these were indeed accurate in their portrayal of the learning environment.

**Figure 7.1 School directors' feedback on ILET**

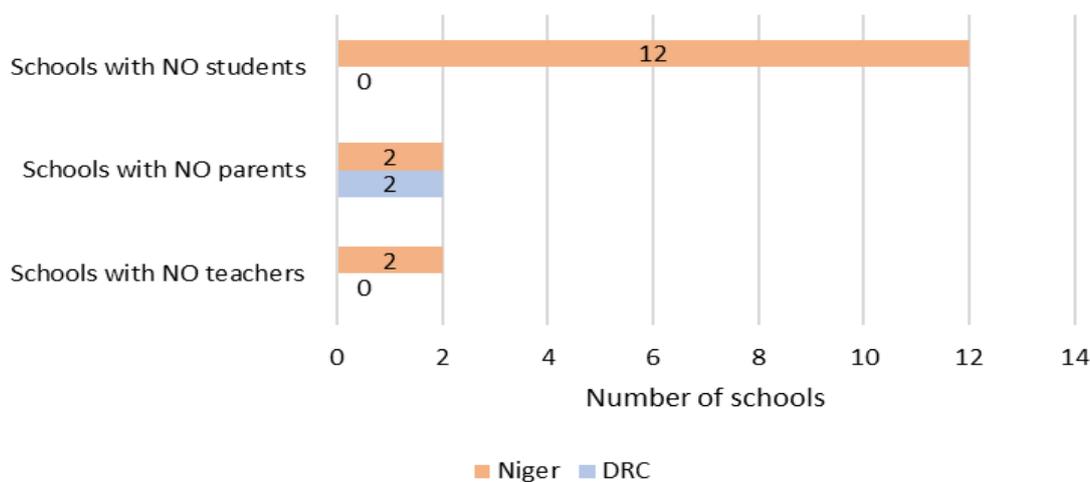


Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on 20 (out of 24 intervention schools) school directors in the DRC and 35 in Niger; schools received TPD and ILET interventions in 2019/20 academic year.

As part of the ILET intervention, report cards are meant to be used as the basis for the SIC to identify key improvement areas. The ILET intervention encourages representation on the committee from teachers, parents and students. In the DRC, all 20 schools had representation from students and teachers, but two schools did not have any parents involved in designing the SIP (Figure 7.2). In Niger, 12 schools did not involve any students, two did not involve parents and two did not involve teachers.

**Figure 7.2: SIC composition**

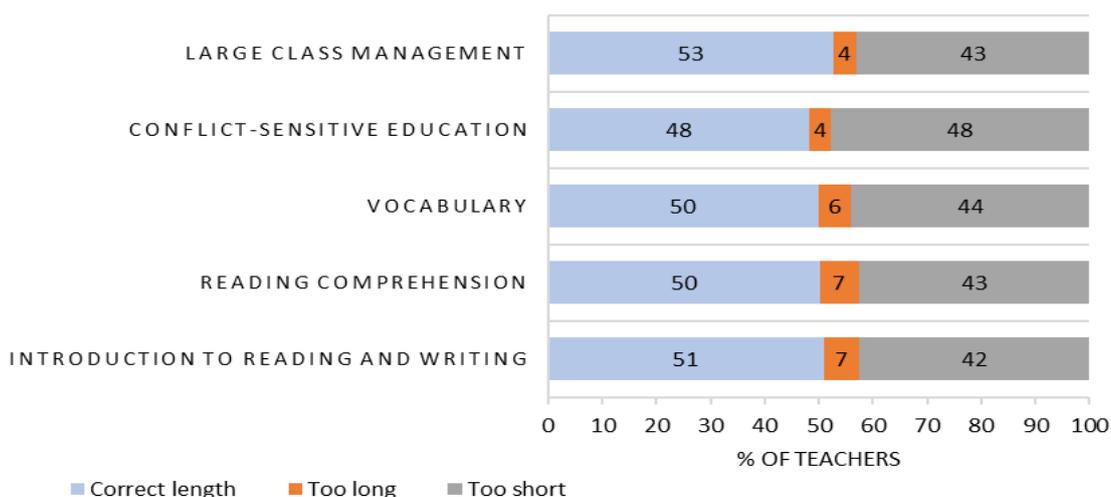


Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on 20 schools (out of 24 intervention schools) in the DRC and 49 in Niger; schools received TPD and ILET interventions in 2019/20 academic year.

Focusing on the TPD intervention, Figures 7.3 and 7.4 report on the teachers' feedback regarding the length of each TPD module in the DRC and Niger, respectively. In the DRC, opinion was mixed, as approximately half of teachers found the length of each TPD module to be correct, and 42–48 per cent found the length to be too short. In Niger, almost 60 per cent of the teachers found the modules to be the correct length, whereas 36–37 per cent of the teachers found them to be too short. In both countries, very few teachers (4–7%) reported the length to be too long.

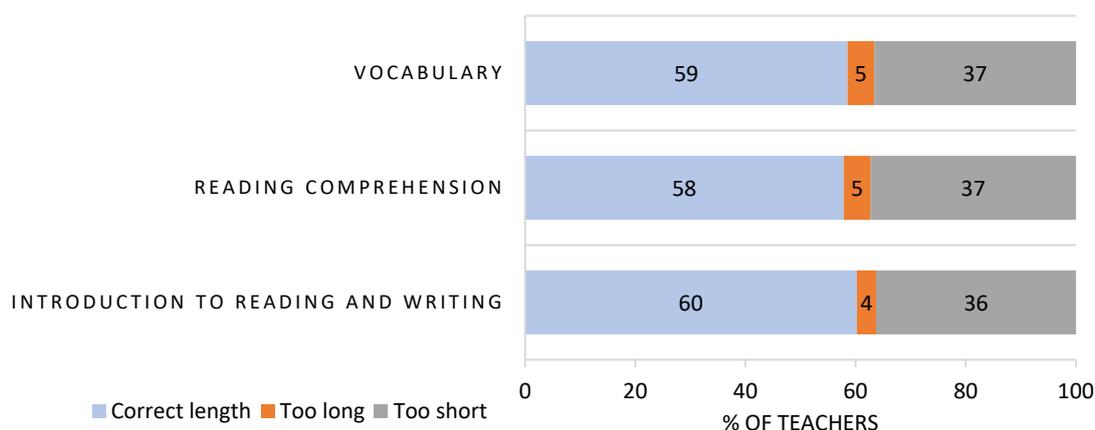
**Figure 7.3 Teachers' opinion on TPD module length in the DRC**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Figure based on 304 teachers in the DRC; teachers were in 20 schools that received TPD and ILET interventions in 2019/20 academic year; teachers at four intervention schools were not administered questions related to interventions.

**Figure 7.4 Teachers' opinion on TPD module length in Niger**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data

Note: Figure based on 225 teachers in Niger; teachers were in 35 schools that received the TPD and ILET interventions in 2019/20 academic year.

Each TPD module covers a range of activities – and includes face-to-face coaching with an expert (usually a provincial education official), independent activities, peer-learning circles and lesson observations. We asked the teachers to rank each of these four activities and find that in both countries lesson observations were the least-liked activity (Table 7.1). The most-liked activity was independent learning in the DRC and peer-learning circles in Niger.

**Table 7.1 Teachers' opinions on most- and least-liked TPD activities**

	DRC		Niger	
	Most-liked activity	Least-liked activity	Most-liked activity	Least-liked activity
Introduction to reading and writing	Independent activities	Lesson observation	Peer circles	Lesson observation
Reading comprehension	Independent activities	Lesson observation	Peer circles	Lesson observation
Vocabulary	Independent activities	Lesson observation	Peer circles	Lesson observation
Conflict-sensitive education	Independent activities	Lesson observation	–	–
Large class management	Independent activities	Lesson observation	–	–

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on 304 teachers in the DRC and 225 in Niger; teachers were in schools that received TPD and ILET interventions in 2019/20 academic year.

Overall, in our qualitative interviews respondents assessed TPD very positively (e.g. Int. 12, 13, 46). Two extra points are worth highlighting. The most important is that respondents had very strong opinions on financial compensation paid as part of the interventions (which participants refer to as 'per diems', but are only meant to cover transport costs);<sup>28</sup> the consensus was that the content of training was very good, but the financial compensation was insufficient (Int. 3, 14, 18, 21, 22, 23, 49, 56, 57): 'You first need to live before being trained' (Int. 18, also 28); 'You shouldn't mock teachers' (Int. 22). One reason for the complaints might be the lack of compensation for accommodation (Int. 18). During curfews, for example, teachers living relatively far away from the training location might have to spend a night away from their home. As one teacher stated, 'we have openly protested' (Int. 18).

<sup>28</sup> Save the Children does not pay per diems but covers costs for transport, and food and drink. In our questionnaire, we mentioned per diems and respondents also used this term to talk about compensation they received.

We believe that Save the Children is aware of this issue. We do not have data to assess whether low compensation kept teachers from attending.

Financial compensation and 'per diems' broadly speaking are a contested issue in Niger (Olivier de Sardan *et al.* 2018), as well as in many other countries receiving international aid. The problem is not new (Ridde 2010) and is ultimately one of collective action and real salaries. Hopefully, this report will help with further understanding the challenging income situation of teachers and developing financial compensation policy. The second point, which only appeared in two of the interviews and should not be overstated, relates to how teachers learn from the TPD: 'We figured that in future TPD we need to really begin with the teachers' actual needs rather than bringing in pre-conceived themes and material' (Int. 9, also 42).

### 7.3 Assessing the effect of ILET and TPD on teacher outcomes

To evaluate the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions (jointly, as both were implemented at the same time, as explained above), the quantitative study uses a phased-in cluster randomisation approach.<sup>29</sup> The BRiCE schools were randomly assigned to Cohort 2 or Cohort 3 groups. Cohort 2 schools (the treatment group) received the interventions over the 2019/20 academic year, while Cohort 3 schools (the control group) did not receive the interventions over the 2019/20 academic year. By comparing the two groups we are able to study the impacts of the interventions on teaching quality and teacher wellbeing, and to differentiate them by gender.

Table 7.2 organises the sample by treatment status. In the DRC, 354 teachers were in the treatment group and 269 in the control group. In Niger, 225 teachers were in the treatment group and 220 in the control group. These teachers were surveyed at the baseline in 2019 prior to the start of the interventions and again at the midline in October 2020, roughly a year apart.

**Table 7.2 Distribution of teacher sample by treatment status**

	DRC			Niger		
	Control	Treatment	Total	Control	Treatment	Total
Total number of schools	25	24	49	36	35	71
Sample of female teachers	82	93	175	190	196	386
Sample of male teachers	187	261	448	30	29	59
Total teachers	269	354	623	220	225	445

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Table based on panel of teachers observed at baseline and midline: 623 teachers in the DRC and 445 in Niger.

<sup>29</sup> For details, see the Baseline Report.

We estimate the effects of the intervention on teacher outcomes, using the following regression:

$$Y_{tsc1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treat_{sc} + \beta_2 Niger_c + \beta_3 Treat_{sc} * Niger_c + \beta_4 X_{tsc0} + \beta_5 S_{tsc0} + \beta_6 Y_{tsc0} + \epsilon_{tsc}$$

$Y_{tsc1}$  is the midline value of outcome variable for teacher  $t$  in school  $s$  in country  $c$ .

$Y_{tsc0}$  is the baseline value of outcome variable for teacher  $t$  in school  $s$  in country  $c$ .

$Treat_{sc} = 1$  if Cohort 2 school,  $0$  for Cohort 3.

$Niger_c = 1$  if country is Niger,  $0$  if country is the DRC.

$X_{tsc0}$  is teacher characteristics at baseline.

$S_{tsc0}$  is school characteristics at baseline.

$\beta_1$  captures the effect of the interventions in the DRC and  $(\beta_1 + \beta_3)$  captures this for Niger.

While randomisation into treatment and control ensured that the two groups were similar in all characteristics, we ran a balance test on a comprehensive set of school and teacher characteristics observed at baseline, to verify whether these two groups were indeed similar (see Annexe 3 Table A5.6). We found that the control group schools in the DRC had a lower number of students enrolled and higher proportion of teachers who had experienced a violent attack baseline. Similarly, in Niger, the control group schools had fewer teachers and a higher enrolment of children with disabilities. Additionally, the teachers in the control group in Niger were older and came from bigger households.

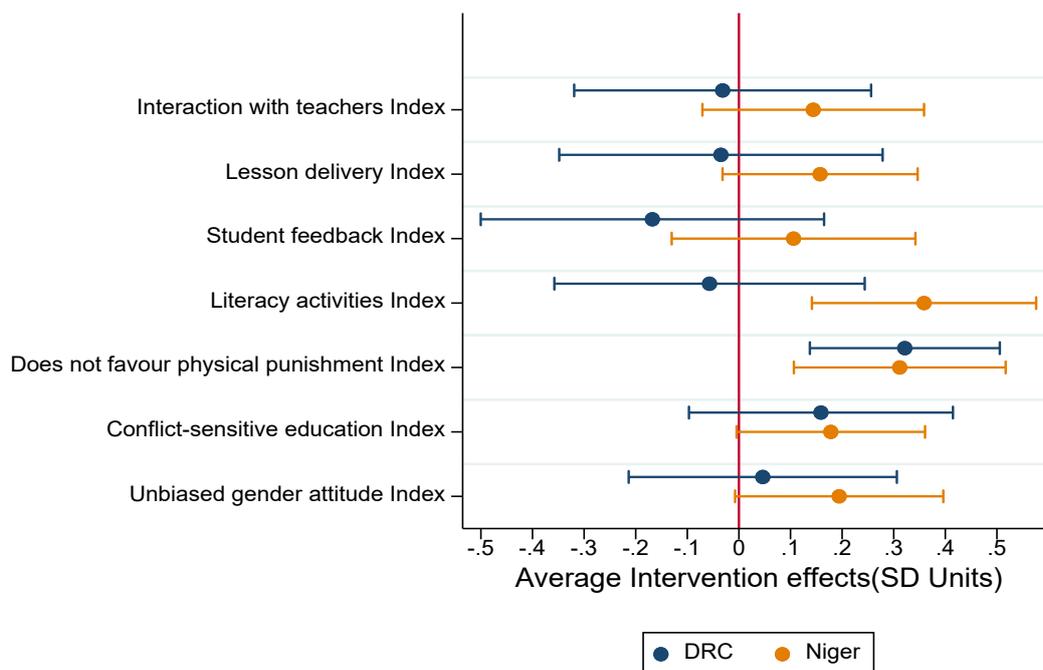
Given these dissimilarities, we include controls for: number of students enrolled; number of teachers employed; if the school caters to children with disabilities; teacher's age; number of members in the teacher's household; if the teacher is the sole breadwinner in the household; and if the teacher has experienced a violent attack. This ensures that effects of the intervention that we estimate are not driven by these differences.

We standardised our teaching quality and teacher wellbeing indices using the method described in Kling *et al.* (2004). With this method, each outcome variable index is a standardised sum of equally weighted average of z-scores of its components. The standardised z-scores are calculated by subtracting the control group mean and dividing by the control group standard deviation. Thus, the index has a mean of 0 and standard deviation of one for the control group. The z-index makes it possible to easily re-scale items on different scales without giving any item an unreasonable weight in the index. Indices typically follow a standard distribution in which 68.2 per cent of observations lie within one standard deviation (SD) of the mean.

### 7.3.1 Effects on teaching quality

Figure 7.5 reports the results of the regression of teaching quality on treatment status in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school and teacher characteristics, and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>30</sup> We find that the joint ILET and TPD interventions had a significant positive effect<sup>31</sup> on teachers' attitudes to physical punishment in both countries. In Niger, it also had an impact on the 'literacy activities index', which encompasses a wide range of teaching activities, as well as borderline effects on the 'conflict-sensitive' and 'unbiased gender attitude' indices. Also in Niger, the interventions increased the 'literacy activities index' by 0.36 SD units; increased the 'does not favour physical punishment index' by 0.31 SD units; increased the 'conflict-sensitive education index' by 0.18 SD units; and increased the 'unbiased gender attitude index' by 0.19 SD units. In the DRC, the interventions increased the 'does not favour physical punishment index' by 0.32 SD units.

**Figure 7.5 Intervention effects on teaching quality**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

The lack of evidence of an effect of the interventions in the DRC beyond the 'physical punishment index' could be due to the exacerbating influence of *Gratuité* and the closure of schools for 4.5 months due to Covid-19. As noted in Figure 3.2, all teaching quality indices saw a decline from baseline to midline in the DRC, particularly those related to providing feedback to students and the 'unbiased gender attitude index'. Additionally, in section 4.3, we find that teachers who reported having experienced at least three negative impacts of Covid-19

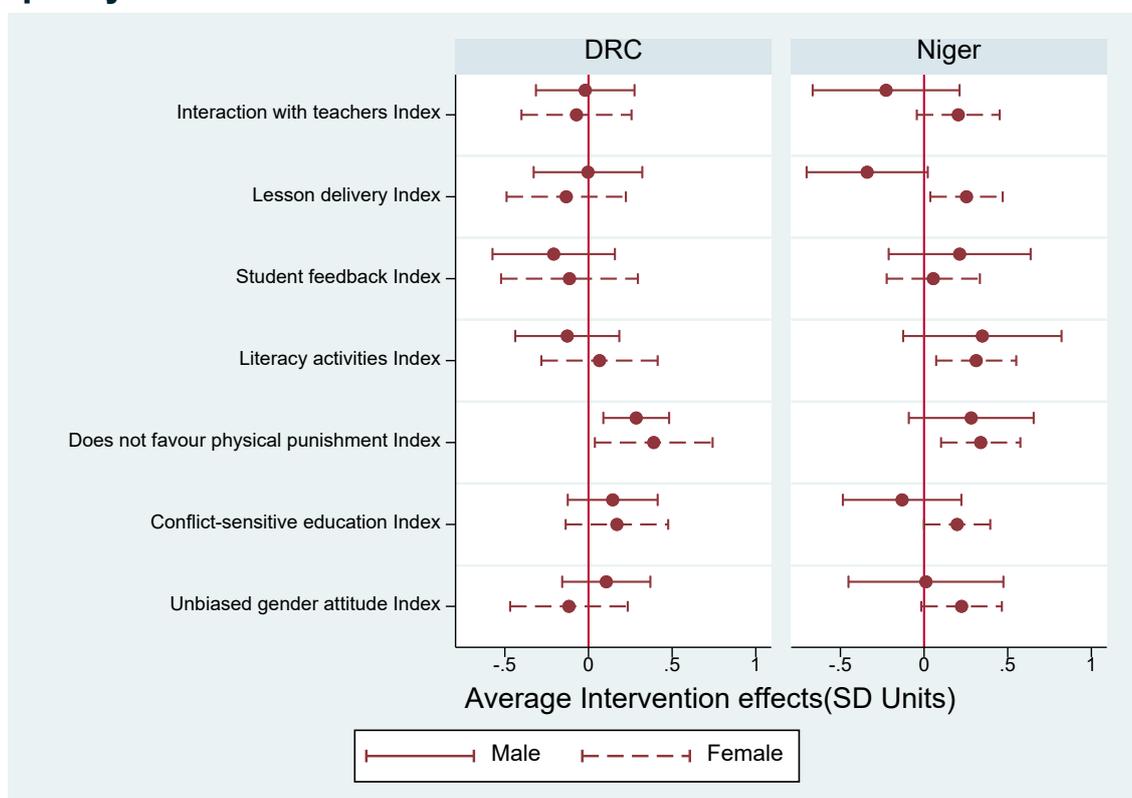
<sup>30</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.9 and Table A5.10.

<sup>31</sup> P-value<0.05.

(high) also exhibit lower levels of teaching quality in the DRC.<sup>32</sup> While the TPD intervention took the changing landscape in the DRC into consideration, and introduced modules on large class management and safe return to school, these modules were not completed within the 2019/20 academic year.

We also investigated if the joint ILET and TPD interventions had differential impacts for male and female teachers. In Figure 7.6 we report the effects of the interventions on teaching quality for male and female teachers in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school and teacher characteristics, and the baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 7.6 Gender-differentiated intervention effects on teaching quality**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

We find no evidence of differential impacts<sup>34</sup> on teaching quality by teachers' gender, suggesting that the interventions had similar impacts on both male and female teachers, as reported in Figure 7.6. The positive impacts of the joint ILET and TPD intervention on teaching practices invite investigation into which teaching component in the index gained the most from the interventions. Given the effects on (1) literacy activities, (2) conflict-sensitive education, and

<sup>32</sup> We will explore further explanations for this differentiated effect by country in the Endline Report.

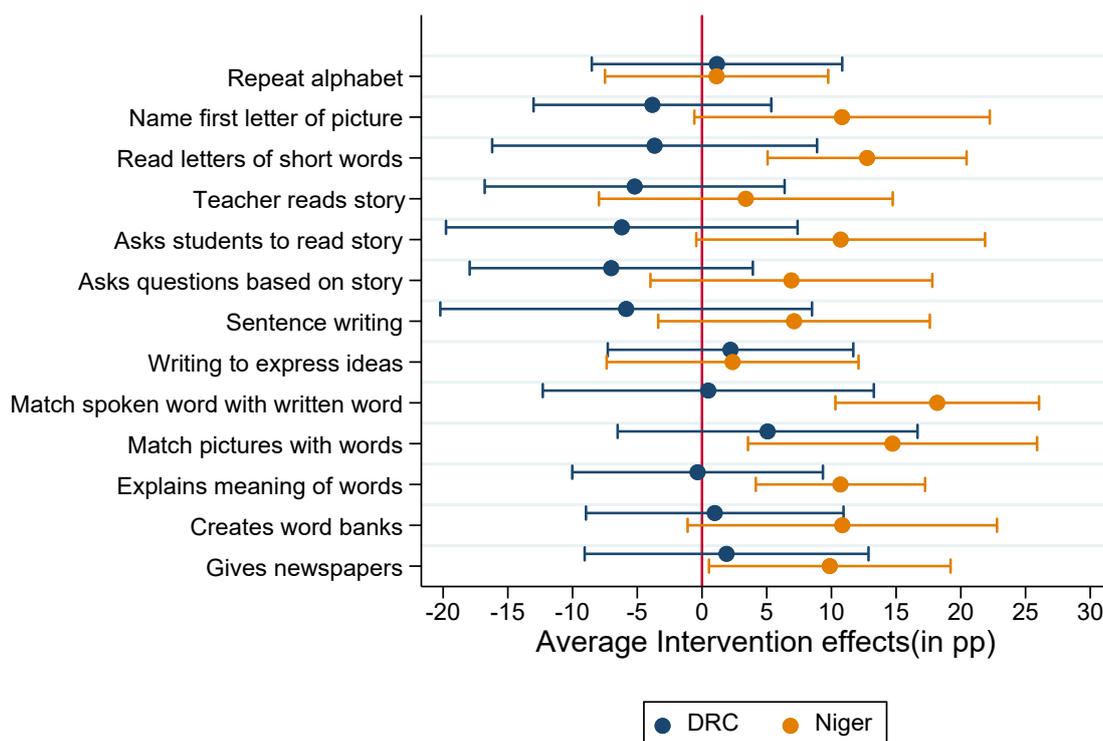
<sup>33</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.11 and Table A5.12.

<sup>34</sup> P-value<0.05.

(3) punishment, we now explore these results in more detail, looking at the items within each index.

First, in Figure 7.7, we report the effects of the ILET and TPD interventions on the components of the 'literacy activities index' for the DRC and Niger.<sup>35</sup> In Niger, the interventions had a significant positive impact<sup>36</sup> on activities related to words and vocabulary. Teachers in the treatment schools in Niger were 13 percentage points more likely to ask students to read the letters of a word out loud; 11 percentage points more likely to ask students to read a story; 18 percentage points more likely to ask students to match spoken words with a list of written words; 15 percentage points more likely to ask students to match words with pictures; 11 percentage points more likely to explain the meaning of words to students; and 10 percentage points more likely to bring newspapers to class for the students.

**Figure 7.7 Intervention effects on literacy activities**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

Unlike Niger, in the DRC the overall literacy activities index is not affected by the intervention (Figure 7.5), so it is not a surprise that none of its components appears to change with the intervention (Figure 7.7).

Second, as shown in Figure 7.8, the positive effect on the 'conflict-sensitive education index' in Niger<sup>37</sup> appears driven by most components having a positive

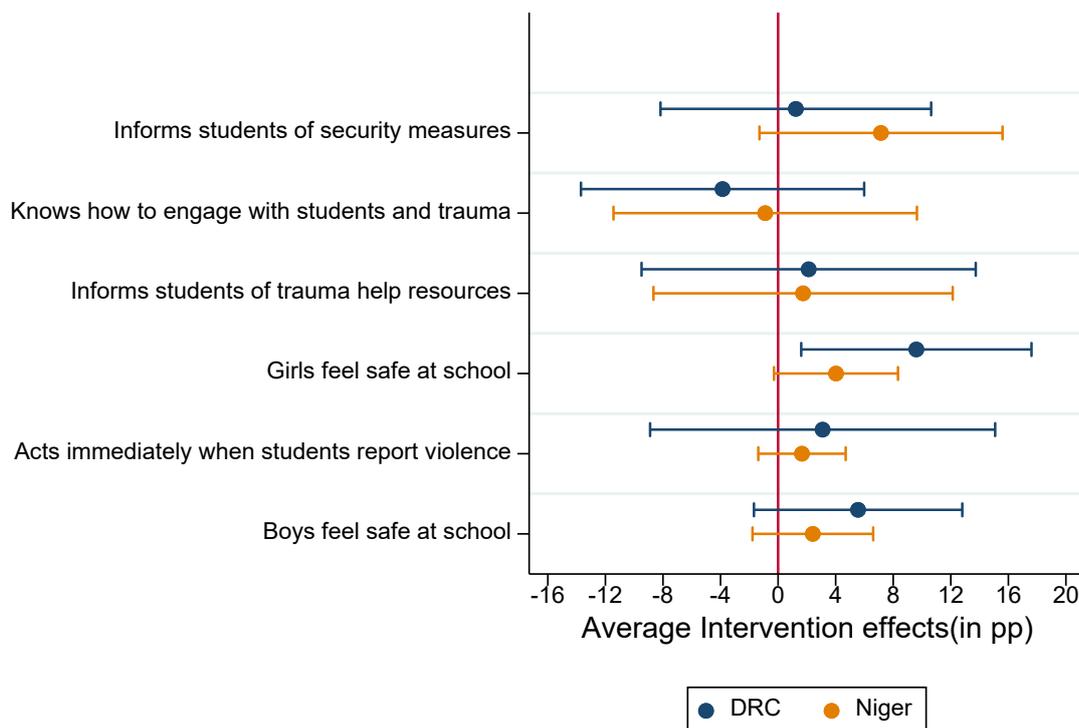
<sup>35</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.13 and Table A5.14.

<sup>36</sup> P-value<0.05.

<sup>37</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.15 and Table A5.16.

value; in particular, 'girls feel safe at school', with a 4-percentage point increase<sup>38</sup> at the treatment schools. It is interesting to note that, in the case of the DRC, four of the six components have a higher average value than in Niger, but with considerably more variance between schools and teachers, which makes it difficult to confidently assess that this effect is statistically significant.

**Figure 7.8 Intervention effects on conflict-sensitive education**



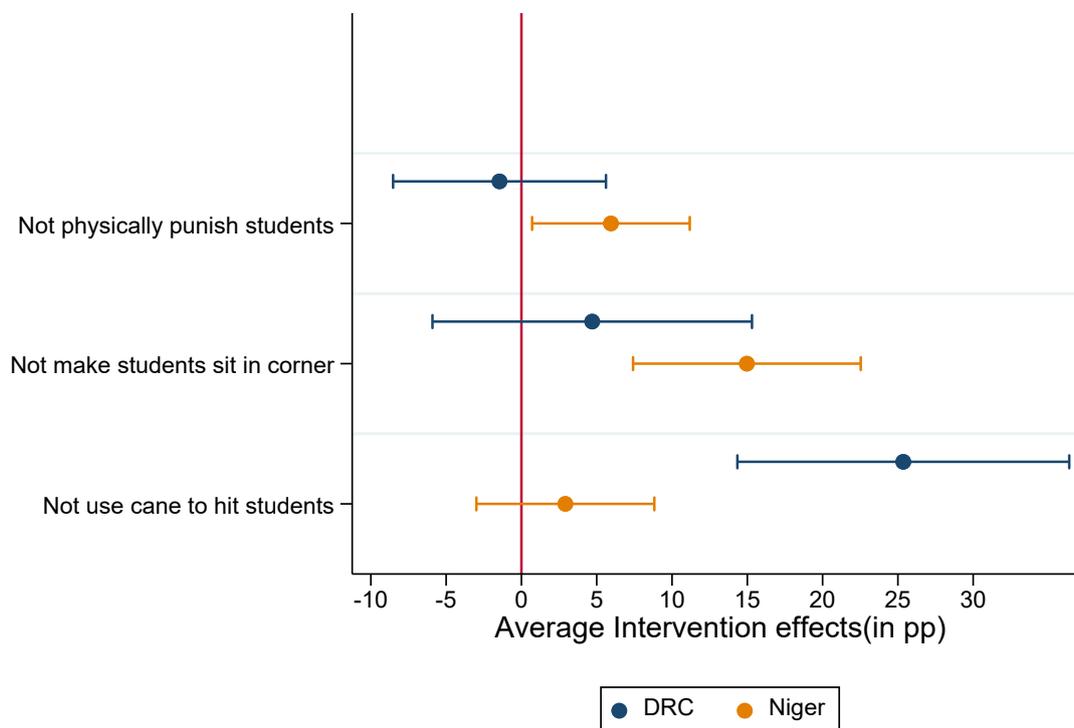
Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

Third, Figure 7.9 reports the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on the components of 'does not favour physical punishment index' for the DRC and Niger.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> P-value<0.1.

<sup>39</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.17 and Table A5.18.

**Figure 7.9 Intervention effects on physical punishment**

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

In Figure 7.5, we see that the interventions had a favourable impact on this index in both countries. In Niger, the positive effect is driven by a 15-percentage point increase<sup>40</sup> in teachers not punishing students by making them sit in the corner of the classroom, as well as a 6-percentage point increase in teachers not physically hitting students at the treatment schools. In the DRC, the positive effect is driven by a 25-percentage point increase<sup>41</sup> in teachers not using a cane to punish the students at the treatment schools. Interestingly, this indicator is barely affected in the case of Niger.

In the DRC, the most contested part of the intervention is 'positive discipline'. Some teachers see it as useful as it protects them and leads to less conflicts with students (Int. 37, 45, 48, 49, 50): 'we no longer turn a classroom into a prison' (Int. 57; and other reasons: Int. 5, 11, 31, 43). However, even more respondents provided reasons why they oppose positive discipline. For example, they do not find it useful because 'students consider teachers as grandfathers and come to class whenever they want' (Int. 5); students have become 'badly behaved' (Int. 12); students ignore teachers (Int. 17, 31); students no longer fear teachers because they think that even when they commit an error, they will not be punished and they have become spoilt (Int. 23); students cause interruptions in the classroom (Int. 25); 'we can no longer send children home when they arrive

<sup>40</sup> P-value<0.05.

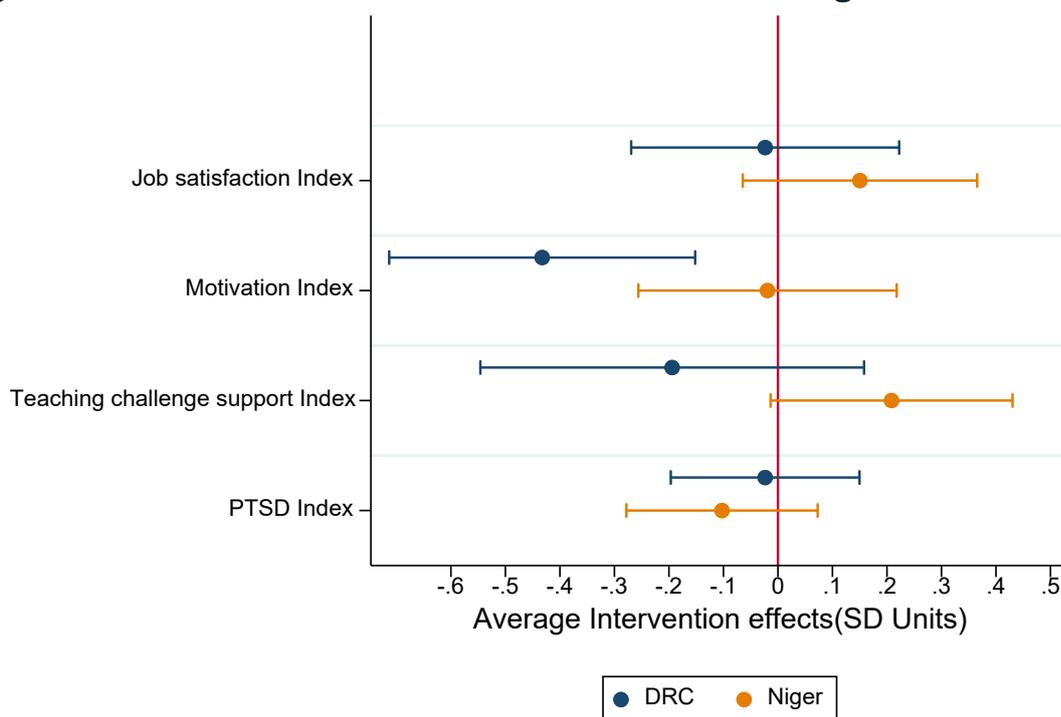
<sup>41</sup> P-value<0.05.

late' (Int. 26); teachers should be able to hit children they can no longer handle (Int. 29); it weakens the teaching profession (Int. 31, 53); students are negligent, but they learn through punishment (Int. 33); students are no longer disciplined (Int. 1, 39); and students become '*grands chefs*' (bosses) in the classroom (Int. 51). Further inquiry into this issue is important, particularly in light of changing social norms and child-adult relations due to dynamics of armed conflict. In contrast, only two participants complained about positive discipline in Niger, stating that, 'If you are a shepherd, you need a stick but here at school you're asked not to hit. How should you educate them?' (Int. 57); and 'Positive discipline is difficult in this milieu; students do what they want' (Int. 42).

### 7.3.2 Effects on teachers' wellbeing

Figure 7.10 reports the results of the evaluation of the intervention's effect on teachers' professional wellbeing and levels of trauma, after accounting for differences in baseline school and teacher characteristics, and the baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 7.10 Intervention effects on teacher wellbeing**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

We find that the joint ILET and TPD interventions had a significant positive effect<sup>43</sup> of 0.21 SD units on the 'teaching challenge support index' in Niger, but no effect in the DRC. In contrast, in the DRC, we find a decrease of 0.43 SD units in

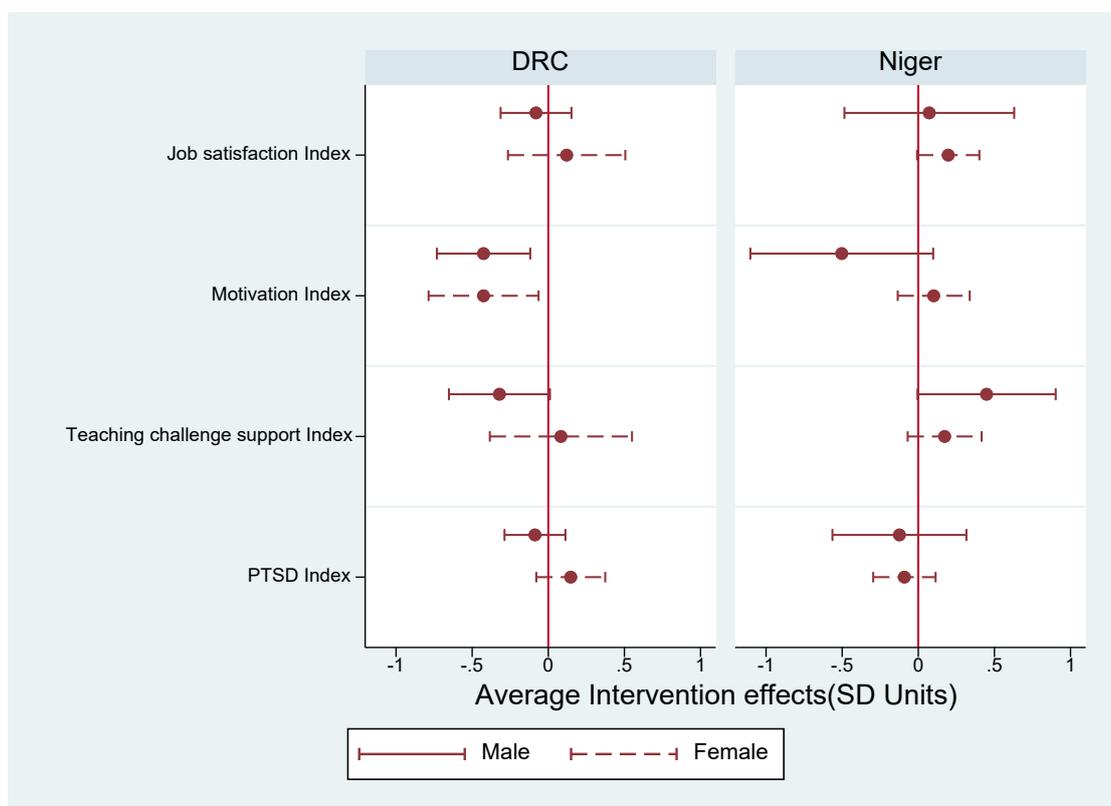
<sup>42</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.9 and Table A5.10.

<sup>43</sup> P-value<0.05.

the 'motivation index'. As noted in Figure 3.1, teachers in the DRC report an average decline in the 'teaching challenge support index' from baseline to midline because they feel unsupported in managing large class sizes and teaching children from different grades together in the same class. This is an area that would have been impacted by *Gratuité*, which increases enrolment without necessarily increasing the number of teachers employed or the school infrastructure to accommodate this increase in students.<sup>44</sup> While the TPD intervention was adapted to provide training on large class management in the DRC, this module was interrupted by the Covid-19-related school closures and was incomplete at the time of the midline data collection.

In Figure 7.11, we report the effects of the interventions on teacher wellbeing for male and female teachers in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school and teacher characteristics, and the baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 7.11 Gender-differentiated intervention effects on teacher wellbeing**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

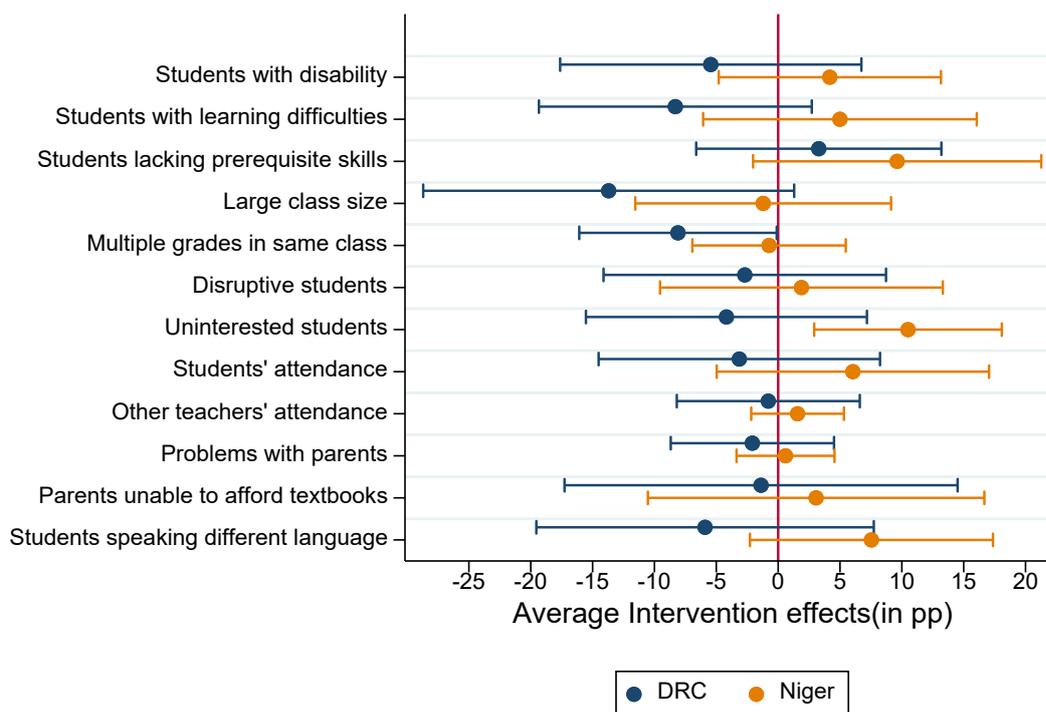
<sup>44</sup> We will explore further explanations for this differentiated effect by country in the Endline Report.

<sup>45</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.11 and Table A5.12.

We find no evidence of differential impacts<sup>46</sup> on teaching quality according to teachers' gender, suggesting that the interventions had similar impacts on both male and female teachers, as reported in Figure 7.6. Given the effects on the joint TPD and ILET interventions on the 'teaching challenge support index', we look at the various components within this index that registered the most change as a result of the interventions. The 'teaching challenge support index' measures how supported teachers feel to manage different teaching challenges.<sup>47</sup>

In Figure 7.12, we report the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on the components of the index in the DRC and Niger. In Niger, all components have a positive value (always non-significant). The effect on this index in Niger is likely driven by an 11-percentage point increase<sup>48</sup> in teachers feeling supported in their efforts to manage uninterested children in the classroom.

**Figure 7.12 Intervention effects on 'teaching challenge support index'**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

<sup>46</sup> P-value<0.05.

<sup>47</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.19 and Table A5.20.

<sup>48</sup> P-value<0.05.

## 7.4 Assessing the effects of ILET and TPD on student outcomes

In this section, we study the impacts of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on student learning and wellbeing. Given that the interventions have an impact on literacy activities in Niger and a reduction in the use of physical punishment in both countries, we expect to find these changes lead to better student outcomes. We also study gender-differentiated impacts on student outcomes. However, we are unable to study the differences in effects by functioning limitations, as this sample is too small to conduct reliable analyses.

The quantitative component of the BRiCE study surveyed 637 and 699 students in the DRC and Niger, respectively, at the beginning of grade 4 in the baseline. The midline study was designed to track the same children a year later. However, due to delays caused by Covid-19 and school closures, the midline study documented high levels of attrition; 44 per cent and 19 per cent of the students from the baseline in the DRC and Niger, respectively, could not be found at the midline. In the DRC, the attrition rate was higher among female students. In both countries, attrition was higher in the control group schools (see section 2.1 for details on attrition).

In response to this reduction in sample size from the baseline, the research study adopted a replacement strategy at the midline. Students at the beginning of grade 5, stratified by gender, were randomly selected to replace the missing baseline students. Hence, in the DRC there are 325 students in the control group and 312 students in the treatment group. In Niger, there are 350 students in the control group and 334 students in the treatment group (Table 7.13). Unlike the evaluation study on teachers, the study presented here on students is not a panel.

**Table 7.13 Distribution of students' sample by treatment status**

	DRC			Niger		
	Control	Treatment	Total	Control	Treatment	Total
Total number of schools	25	24	49	36	35	71
Sample of female students (% of BL tracked at ML)	177 (48%)	167 (53%)	344 (51%)	184 (81%)	172 (83%)	356 (82%)
Sample of male students (% of BL tracked at ML)	148 (59%)	145 (65%)	293 (61%)	166 (78%)	162 (80%)	328 (79%)
Total students (% of BL tracked at ML)	325 (53%)	312 (58%)	637 (56%)	350 (80%)	334 (82%)	684 (81%)

Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: BL = baseline; ML = midline.

We estimate the effects of the intervention on student outcomes, using the following regression:

$$Y_{isc1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treat_{sc} + \beta_2 Niger_c + \beta_3 Treat_{sc} * Niger_c + \beta_5 S_{isc0} + \beta_6 Y_{isc0} + BLmissing_{isc} + \epsilon_{isc}$$

$Y_{isc1}$  is the midline value of outcome variable for student  $i$  in school  $s$  in country  $c$ .

$Y_{isc0}$  is the baseline value of outcome variable for student  $i$  in school  $s$  in country  $c$ .

$Treat_{sc} = 1$  if Cohort 2 school,  $0$  for Cohort 3.

$Niger_c = 1$  if country is Niger,  $0$  if country is the DRC.

$S_{isc0}$  is school characteristics at baseline.

$BLmissing_{isc}$  is  $1$  if the student appears only at midline,  $0$  for students present at both baseline and midline.

$B_1$  captures the effect of the interventions in the DRC and  $(\beta_1 + \beta_3)$  captures this for Niger.

In the regression, we control for differences in the school characteristics between the control and treatment groups. These are the same as those used in the teacher evaluation study in section 7.3: number of students enrolled, number of teachers employed, and if the school caters to children with disabilities. This ensures that effects of the intervention that we estimate are not driven by these differences. We also control for the baseline values of the student outcomes. Where this information is unavailable, for the new students at midline who were part of the replacement strategy, we assign them to the relevant group means (Kling *et al.* 2004; Banerji, Berry and Shotland 2017). We additionally have an indicator variable that takes the value of 1 to control for the new students at the midline who have been assigned an estimated baseline value of outcome. This ensures that the effects we estimate are not driven by the new students added through the replacement strategy.

We consider literacy, numeracy and students' socioemotional wellbeing as outcomes. These have been detailed in section 5 of the Baseline Report. Here, we provide a short summary of these measures. The learning assessments in this study were the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Maths Assessment (EGMA). The detailed instrument can be found in Annexes 1A and 1B. The following sub-tasks were implemented:

#### *EGRA literacy sub-tasks*

Letter sound identification (50 letters, timed)

Familiar word reading (50 words, timed)

Invented word reading (50 words, timed)

Oral passage reading (60 words, timed)

Reading comprehension (5 questions)

*EGMA numeracy sub-tasks*

Number identification (25 numbers, timed)

Quantity discrimination (5 tasks, timed)

Missing number (5 tasks, timed)

Addition (levels 1 and 2 – 10 tasks, timed)

Subtraction (levels 1 and 2 – 10 tasks, timed)

For each sub-task, we calculate the percentage correctly answered by each student.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the evaluation estimates the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on improvement in the percentage of items answered correctly in each sub-task. Additionally, for comparability with the logframe, we calculate if students meet minimum reading proficiency levels. These thresholds were set based on the national education competency frameworks in the DRC and Niger for grade 4 students. Since the students in our sample would have completed a year in grade 4 before the midline survey, it is an appropriate benchmark to measure their literacy outcomes.

The minimum reading proficiency levels were set at:

- **Level 1:** in the oral passage reading sub-task, answering at least 50 per cent (or at least 30 words) correctly in the DRC and at least 60 per cent (or at least 36 words) correctly in Niger.
- **Level 2:** in the reading comprehension sub-task, answering at least 3 out of 5 questions correctly in the DRC and Niger.
- **Level 3 (used in the logframe):** achieving the proficiency levels for both levels 1 and 2.

Our final outcome of interest relates to students' socioemotional wellbeing. The IDS research study focuses on three elements of children's wellbeing, drawing on Save the Children's International Social and Emotional Learning Assessment (ISELA). The ISELA was designed to examine non-cognitive skills of primary school students and changes over time in response to social and emotional interventions. Scores in each test are not comparable across contexts and they are not used as a diagnostic tool.

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<sup>49</sup> See Annexe 3 Table A.21 for the average baseline and midline levels for each outcome.

## 1. Self-motivation

- 1.1 **Perseverance task** – perseverance refers to the child's ability to stay focused on a task despite the task being difficult. Additionally, self-motivation is captured by a child's aspiration or a passion for long-term goals (Von Culin, Tsukayama and Duckworth 2014). Specifically, we administered the ISELA perseverance test, asking students to complete three drawings using their non-dominant hand. We use this task to report the percentage of students who completed all three drawings displaying perseverance.
- 1.2 **Aspiration** – we asked children a question related to the educational long-term goal: 'Will you continue to study even after getting married?' We report the percentage of students answering 'Yes', thereby indicating they have educational aspirations.

2. **Social awareness/empathy** – empathy refers to taking other people's perspectives into account and understanding their emotional reactions. This fosters positive social interactions and the ability to form social support systems. Specifically, we administer the empathy test (ISELA) to measure this. In the task, students are shown a picture of a child crying and then asked three questions: 'How do you think the child is feeling right now?', 'What would you do to make her/him feel better?', and 'Is there anything else you would do to make her/him feel better?'. The students are then told a story about why the child is crying:

*Now I will tell you a story about this child and why she is crying. One day the teacher told all the children in the classroom to make a line so that they can go out to play. As they were making the line the girl/boy was pushed by another child. She fell and hurt her knee. Therefore he/she is crying in this picture.*

Based on the story, they are asked two questions: 'Why do you think that the other child pushed [him/her]?' and 'How do you think this other child felt after pushing [him/her]?'. We use this task to report the percentage of children who answered all five questions displaying empathy.

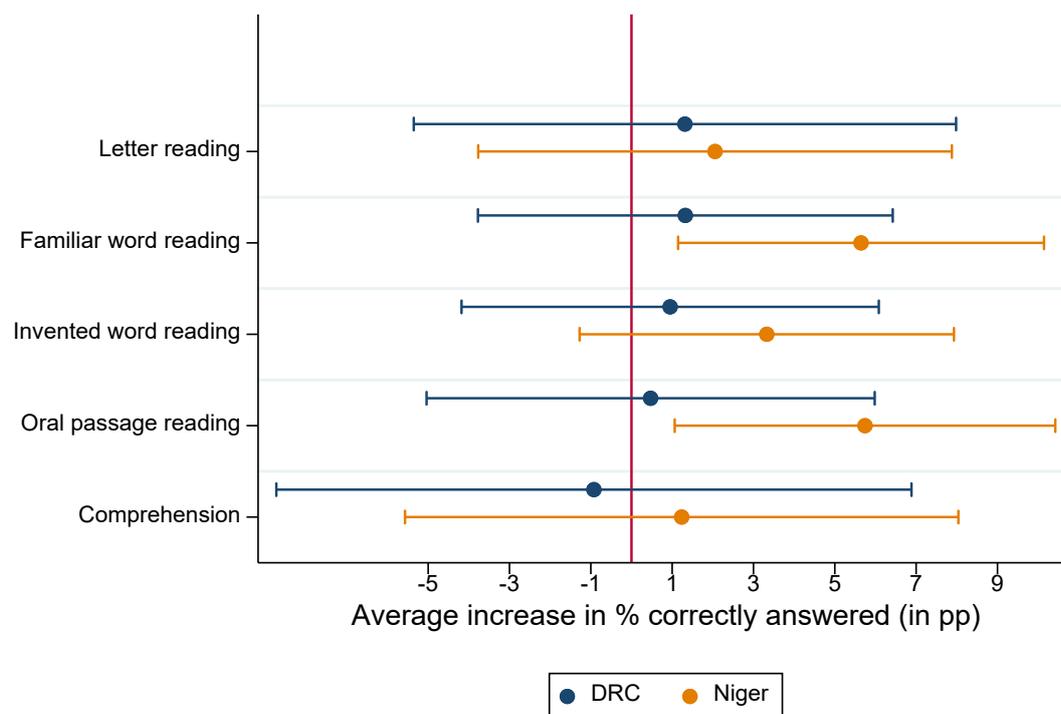
3. **Nurturing school environment** – to understand the development of self-motivation and social awareness competencies, we must understand the support teachers provide in school. For this section, students are given statements about teaching behaviours and say how often they experience them. We report the percentage of students who have experienced a nurturing school environment as illustrated by each of the following statements:
  - 3.1 Teacher has often or very often praised me for good work.
  - 3.2 Teacher has often or very often helped me when I was sad.
  - 3.3 Teacher has never or almost never humiliated me in class.

- 3.4 Teacher has never or almost never hit me with a bare hand or closed fist.
- 3.5 Teacher has never or almost never hit me with an object.
- 3.6 Teacher has never or almost never pulled or twisted my ear.

### 7.4.1 Effects on literacy

We start our analysis by reporting the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on literacy as measured by the EGRA test. Figure 7.13 reports the results of the regression of EGRA on treatment status in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school characteristics, and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>50</sup>

**Figure 7.13 Intervention effects on literacy (EGRA)**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

We find that the joint ILET and TPD interventions had a significant positive effect<sup>51</sup> only in Niger. As already noted in section 7.3.1, the joint interventions did not have any impact on teaching quality in the DRC (except on attitudes to physical punishment). Thus, it is unsurprising that we are unable to detect effects of the interventions (still positive, but not significant) on students' literacy levels. In Niger, however, the interventions had a significant impact on the literacy activities that teachers conducted, which is reflected in the improvement in student

<sup>50</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.28.

<sup>51</sup> P-value<0.05.

outcomes. In the treatment group in Niger, the average percentage of familiar words correctly read increased by 5.6 percentage points and the average percentage of words read correctly in oral passage reading increased by 5.8 percentage points.

These effects translate into students in the treatment group being able to read 2.8 more familiar words and 3.5 more words from a passage compared with students in the control group. Considering that learning levels are very low in Niger and that at the baseline<sup>52</sup> students could read less than one fifth of the total words on these sub-tasks, this is a significant gain in reading levels. This improvement in students' reading levels can be seen as an indirect effect of the positive and significant effects of the interventions on the 'literacy activities index' in Niger (Figure 7.5), in particular, on activities related to word reading and vocabulary.

While the joint ILET and TPD interventions improved learning levels in Niger, they still fall short of bringing students up to the minimum reading proficiency thresholds. It is also important to remember that the baseline levels in both countries prior to the start of the interventions were extremely low – students, on average, could read only nine words in Niger and five words in the DRC.<sup>53</sup>

At the midline, there was an improvement in the average words read correctly in the oral passage reading sub-task. In the treatment group, students on average could read 19 words in Niger and 17 words in the DRC.<sup>54</sup> However, these levels are still much below the minimum level 1 threshold of 36 words in Niger and 30 words in the DRC. Hence, it is unsurprising that in Figure 7.14 we do not find any significant positive effect of the interventions on minimum reading proficiency levels.<sup>55</sup>

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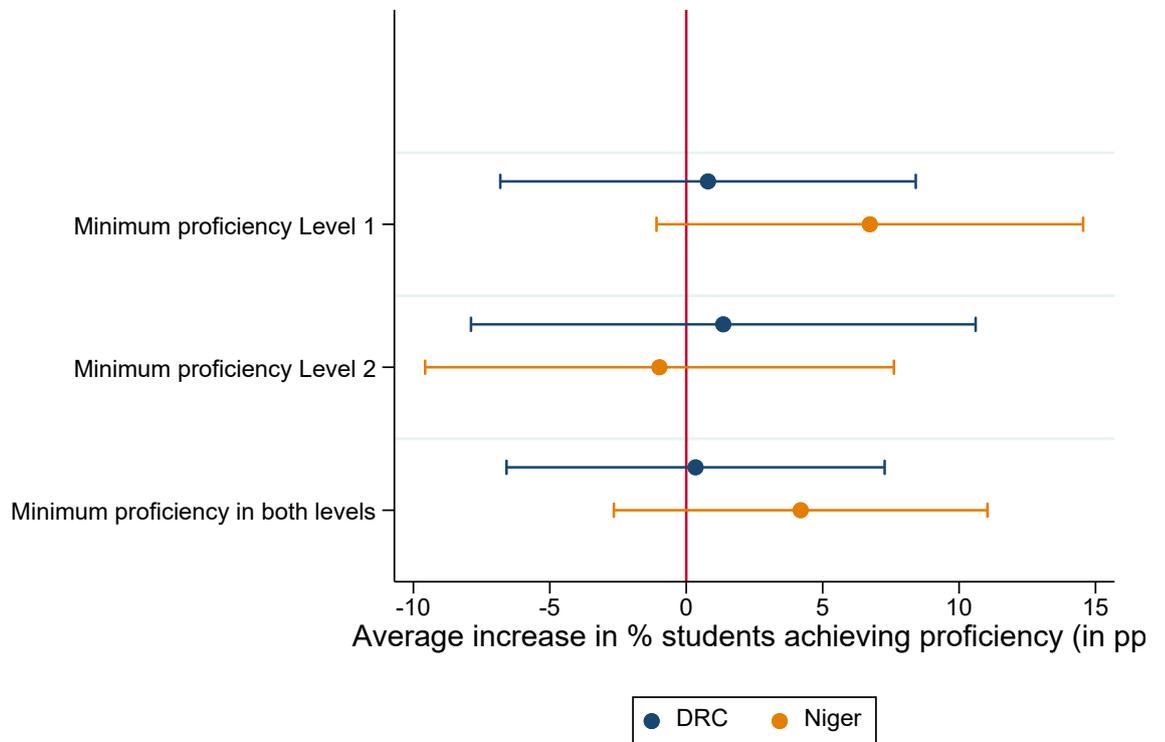
<sup>52</sup> See Annexe 3 Table A.21 for the average baseline and midline levels for each outcome.

<sup>53</sup> See Annexe 3 Table A.21 for the average baseline and midline levels on each outcome.

<sup>54</sup> See Annexe 3 Tables A.22 and A.23 for average levels of student outcomes by treatment status in the DRC and Niger, respectively.

<sup>55</sup> P-value<0.05; for detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.28.

**Figure 7.14 Intervention effects on literacy (minimum proficiency levels)**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

## Box 7.1 Students with improved reading – comparison with the logframe

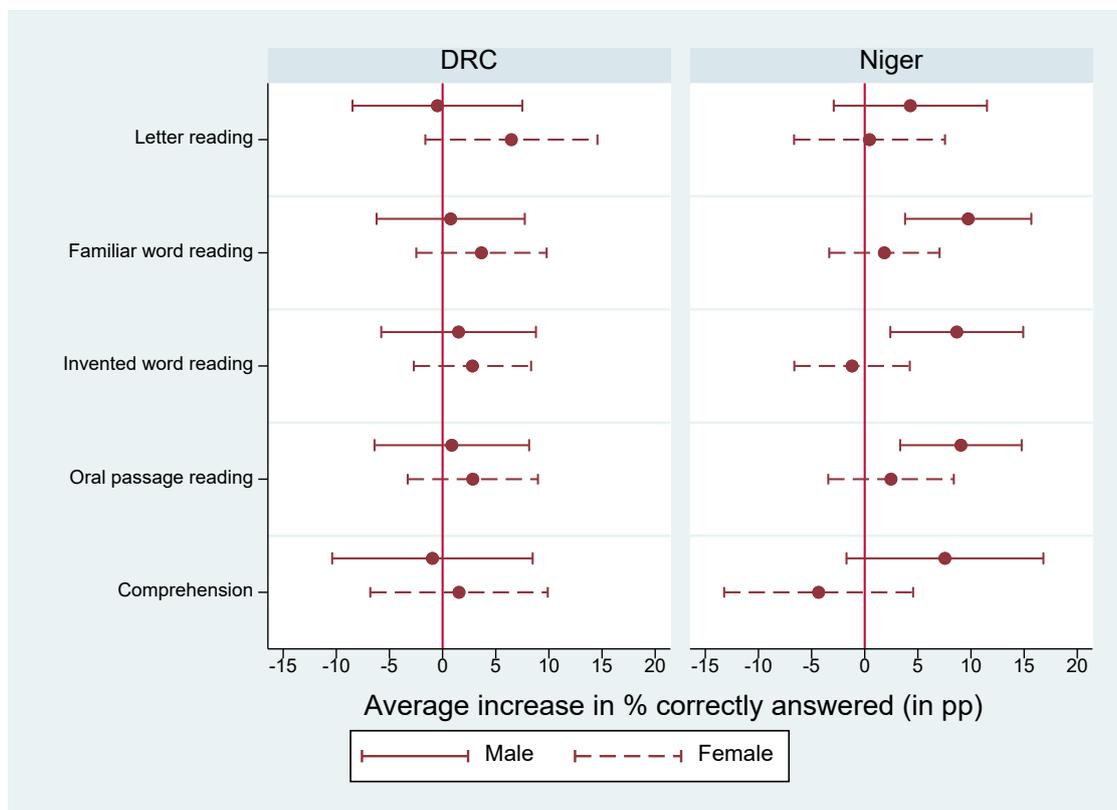
The logframe uses minimum proficiency reading level 3 to report the percentage and number of children with improved reading. In the DRC, students should be able to read at least 30 words of a passage (out of 60) and answer at least three questions (out of five) related to the passage. In Niger, students should be able to read at least 36 words of a passage and answer at least three questions related to the passage. Based on this measure, for students in the treatment group the logframe reports a fall of 0.08 percentage points and an improvement of 4.1 percentage points due to the joint ILET and TPD interventions in the DRC and Niger, respectively.

Using a regression analysis, the IDS research study reports no improvement for students in the DRC and an improvement of 4.2 percentage points for students in the treatment group in Niger. This difference between the logframe and IDS research study is because the research study uses a regression analysis controlling for differences in school characteristics. The treatment group schools in both countries had higher numbers of students enrolled than the control group schools. Since this would have a negative impact on student outcomes through larger classrooms and higher student-teacher ratios, not controlling for this (as in the logframe) would underestimate the impacts of the interventions.

We also investigated if the joint ILET and TPD interventions had differential impacts for male and female students. In Figure 7.15, we report the effects of the interventions on EGRA for male and female students in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school characteristics, and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.29 and Table A5.30.

**Figure 7.15 Gender-differentiated intervention effects on literacy (EGRA)**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

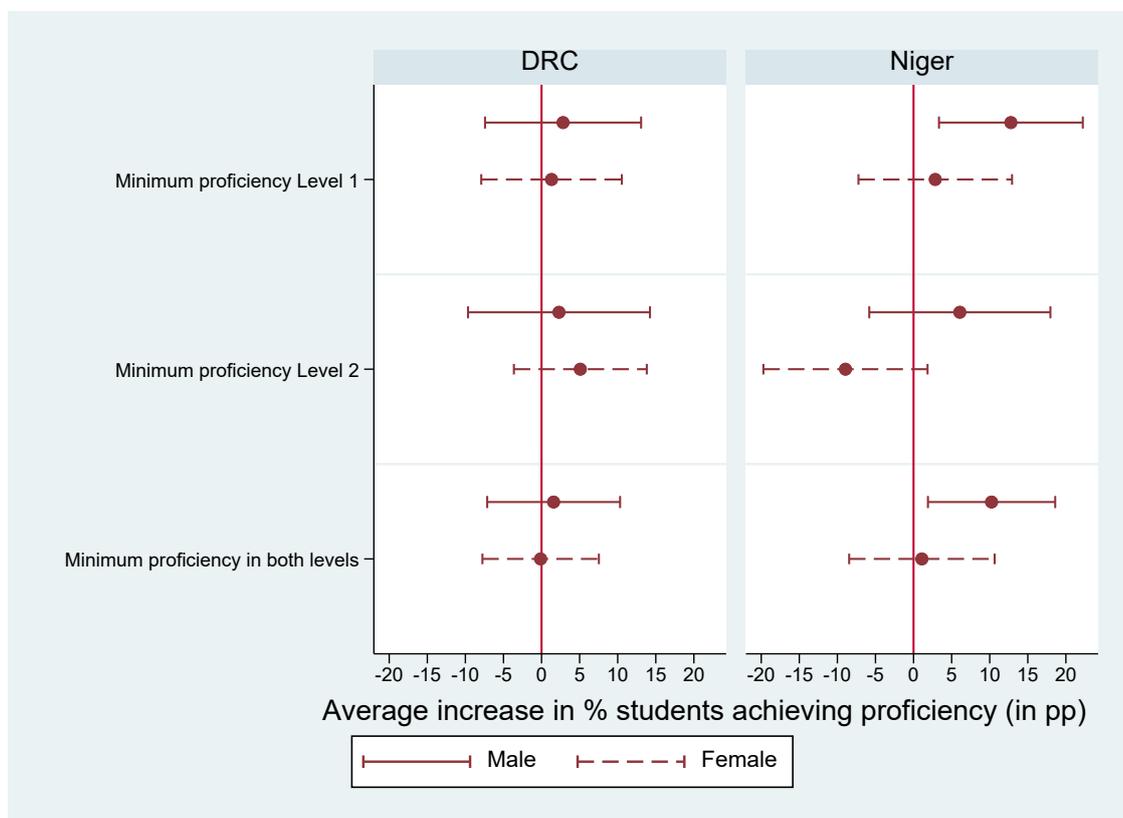
We find that the literacy improvements documented in Figure 7.13 for Niger are driven entirely by the improvement in literacy levels among male students in the treatment group in Niger. This could be due to the pronounced gender bias in Niger, as seen in the Baseline Report and in section 5.3 of the present report. Additionally, while the TPD intervention seeks to correct this bias by offering teachers a training module on girls' education, this was not completed in the 2019/20 academic year.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, we investigate the improvement in the percentage of students achieving minimum reading proficiency by gender in Figure 7.16.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> We will explore difference in effects by gender and country in depth in the Endline Report in discussion with the Country Offices.

<sup>58</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.29 and Table A5.30.

**Figure 7.16 Gender-differentiated intervention effects on literacy (minimum proficiency levels)**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

Although we find no overall improvements in the minimum reading proficiency levels as documented in Figure 7.14, here we find that the ILET and TPD interventions did increase the percentage of male students achieving the minimum level in the treatment group for Niger<sup>59</sup>. The percentage of male students achieving minimum proficiency in oral passage reading (able to read at least 36 words out of 60) increased by 12 percentage points, and this resulted in an increase in the percentage of male students achieving minimum proficiency in oral passage reading and comprehension by 10 percentage points among the treatment group in Niger.

<sup>59</sup> P-value<0.05.

## Box 7.2 Girls and boys with improved reading – comparison with the logframe

The logframe uses minimum proficiency reading level 3 to report the percentage and number of children with improved reading. In the DRC, students should be able to read at least 30 words of a passage (out of 60) and answer at least three questions (out of five) related to the passage. In Niger, students should be able to read at least 36 words of a passage and answer at least three questions related to the passage. Based on this measure, for boys in the treatment group the logframe reports an improvement of 1.5 percentage points and 8.4 percentage points due to the joint ILET and TPD interventions in the DRC and Niger, respectively. For girls in the treatment group, the logframe reports a fall of 1.5 percentage points in the DRC and an improvement of 0.1 percentage points relative to the control group in Niger.

Using a regression analysis, the IDS research study also finds positive effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on boys. In the treatment group, we report an improvement of 1.6 percentage points and 9.7 percentage points for boys in the DRC and Niger, respectively. For girls, the IDS research study does not find a 'negative' effect of the interventions as reported in the logframe. In the treatment group, we find no improvement for girls in the DRC and an improvement of 0.7 percentage points for girls in Niger. This difference between the logframe and IDS research study is because the research study uses a regression analysis, controlling for differences in school characteristics. The treatment group schools in both countries had higher numbers of students enrolled than the control group schools. Since this would have a negative impact on student outcomes through larger classrooms and higher student-teacher ratios, not controlling for this (as in the logframe) would underestimate the impacts of the interventions.

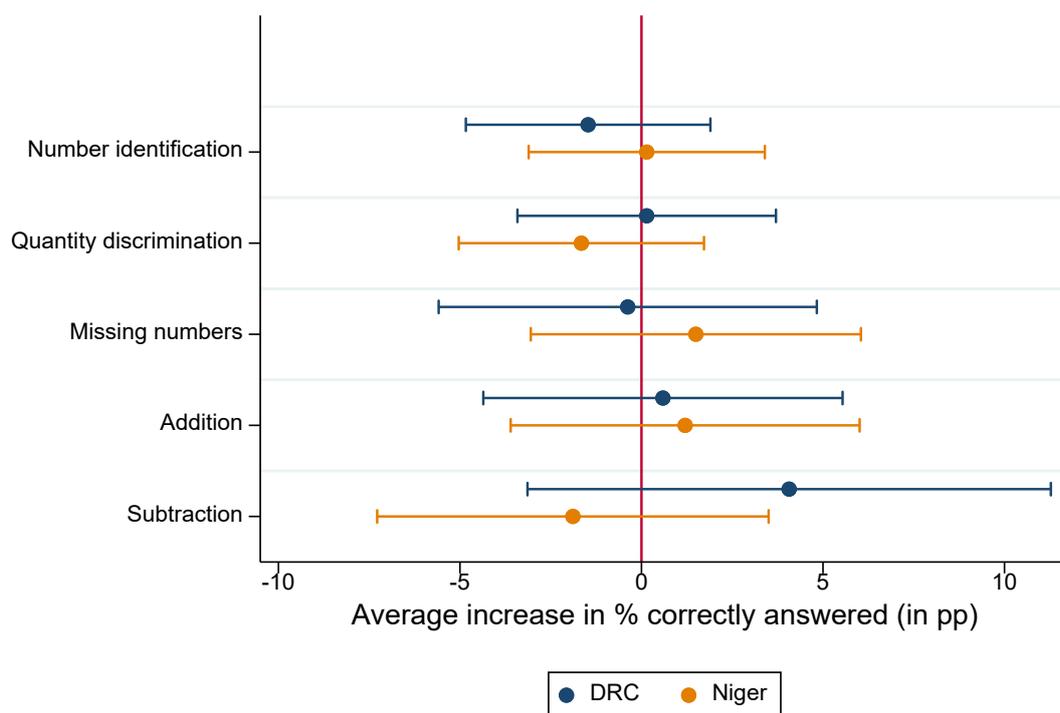
### 7.4.2 Effects on numeracy

While the TPD modules directly seek to improve literacy-related activities in classrooms, there is no direct targeting of numeracy skills. Thus, one would only assume an indirect effect on the numeracy levels among students through a general improvement in the learning environment, mainly through the ILET intervention. Figure 7.17 reports the results of the regression of EGMA on treatment status in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school characteristics and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>60</sup> We find that the joint ILET and TPD interventions had no significant effect<sup>61</sup> on numeracy in either country. All items take a positive value in the case of the DRC, but the variance is considerable.

<sup>60</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.31.

<sup>61</sup> P-value<0.05.

**Figure 7.17 Intervention effects on numeracy (EGMA)**



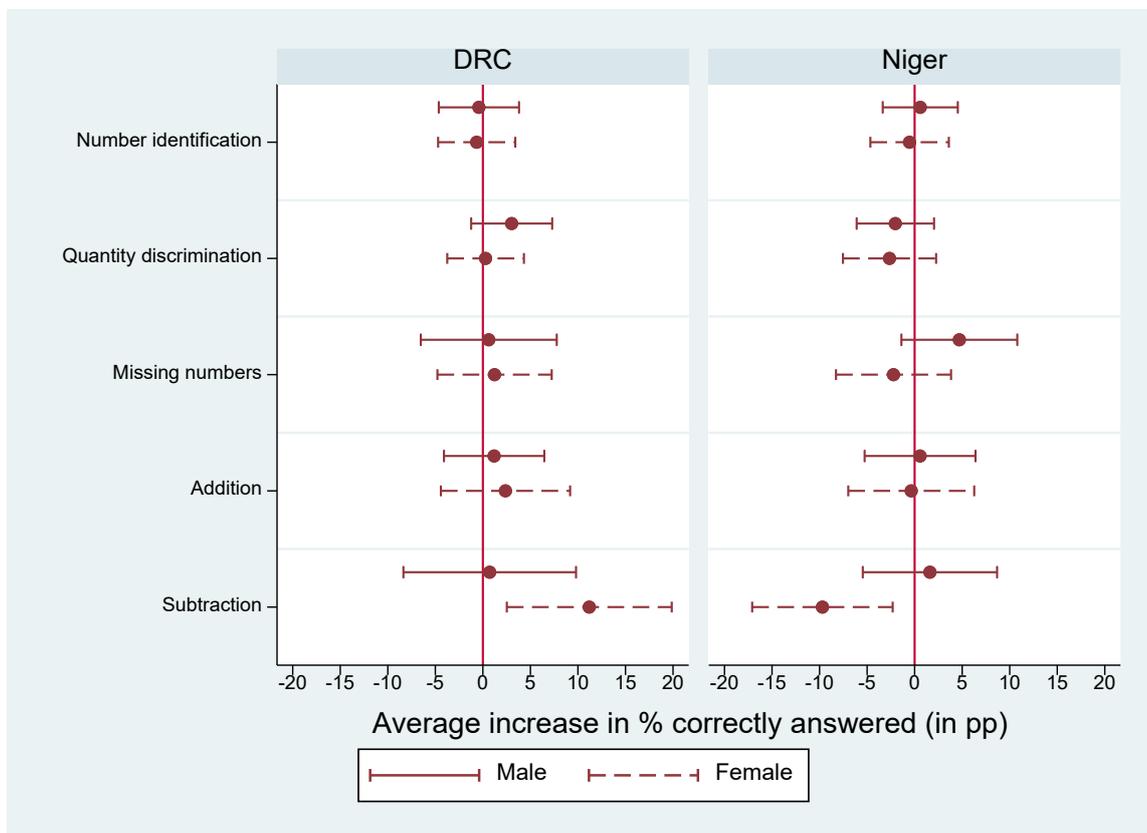
Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

We also investigated if there were effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions by gender. In Figure 7.18, we report the effects of the interventions on EGMA for male and female students in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school characteristics, and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.32 and Table A5.33.

**Figure 7.18 Gender-differentiated intervention effects on numeracy (EGMA)**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

Whereas in Figure 7.17 we found no effects of the interventions on numeracy, here we find that the interventions improved the percentage of correct items in the subtraction sub-task by 11 percentage points (or one more subtraction problem) for female students in the treatment group in the DRC, with no significant improvement for male students.<sup>63</sup> This is similar to the findings on literacy levels: while there was no overall improvement due to the interventions in the DRC, girls register an improvement in reading letters. Unlike in the DRC, in Niger we find that while the girls in the treatment group did improve in the subtraction sub-task, this improvement was 10 percentage points lower than the girls in the control group.<sup>64</sup> This result may also be linked to section 7.4.3, where we find that girls in the treatment group displayed slower growth in their perseverance levels compared with girls in the control group.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> P-value<0.05.

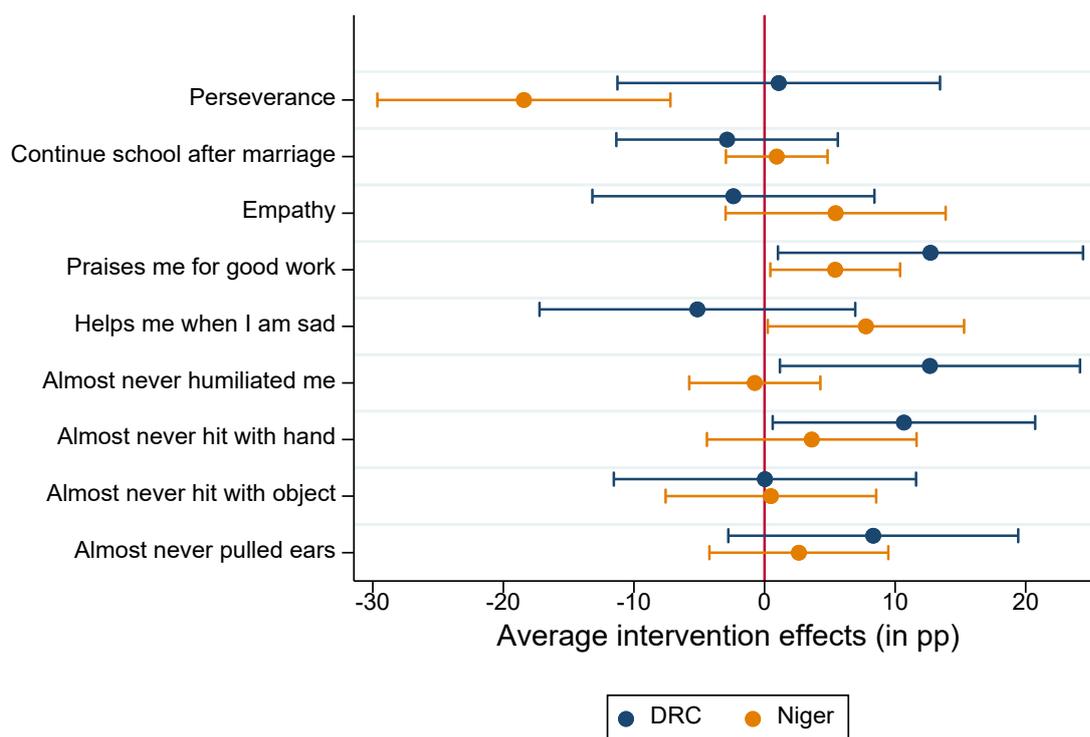
<sup>64</sup> See Annexe 3 Table A.25 for average baseline and midline levels of female students by treatment status in Niger.

<sup>65</sup> We will explore the difference in effects by gender and country in depth in the Endline Report in discussion with the Country Offices.

### 7.4.3 Effects on wellbeing

Both the ILET and TPD interventions aim to create a nurturing school environment, thereby leading to better student wellbeing. Figure 7.19 reports the results of the regression of student wellbeing outcomes on treatment status in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school characteristics and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>66</sup>

**Figure 7.19 Intervention effects on student wellbeing**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

We find that the joint ILET and TPD interventions had a significant positive effect<sup>67</sup> only in the DRC. In Niger, we find that the interventions had no impact on most student wellbeing outcomes. Students in the treatment group were 18 percentage points less likely to display perseverance than students in the control group, implying that the growth in perseverance outcome was slower in the treatment group. In the DRC, while the interventions had no significant positive effect on students' self-motivation (as captured by perseverance and educational aspiration) and social awareness (as captured by empathy), the interventions significantly improved the school environment in the DRC.<sup>68</sup> In the DRC,

<sup>66</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.34.

<sup>67</sup> P-value<0.05.

<sup>68</sup> The ILET and TPD interventions also improved the school environment in Niger at the margin (p-value<0.1) in these domains: the percentage of students who report being praised by their teacher increased by 5 percentage points; and the percentage of students who report being helped by their teacher when sad increased by 8 percentage points among treatment group versus control group students.

compared to students in the control group, the percentage of students in the treatment group who report being praised by their teacher increased by 13 percentage points; who report almost never being humiliated by their teacher, also increased by 13 percentage points; and who report almost never being hit by the teacher, increased by 11 percentage points.<sup>69</sup>

This improvement in school environment is also echoed by our findings on teachers' outcomes. In particular, the joint ILET and TPD interventions in the DRC led to a 25-percentage point increase in treatment group teachers who do not favour hitting the students. It is also important to note here that the ILET intervention had made considerable progress and almost been completed in the DRC when the midline survey was conducted; but in Niger the intervention was, at most, only half-completed. Additionally, in 35 per cent of the Niger treatment schools, the school directors reported no participation of students in developing SIPs (Figure 7.2). The slower delivery of the ILET intervention and the low participation of students in the SIPs may explain why we do not see any strong effects of the interventions in Niger on student wellbeing.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The ILET and TPD interventions also improved other aspects of the school environment in the DRC at the margin ( $p$ -value $<0.1$ ) in these domains: the percentage of students who report almost never being hit with an object increased by 10 percentage points; and the percentage of students who report almost never having their ears pulled also increased by 10 percentage points among treatment group versus control group students.

<sup>70</sup> We will explore the reason for this slow growth in student wellbeing outcomes in depth in the Endline Report in discussion with the Country Offices.

### Box 7.3 Students with improved wellbeing – comparison with the logframe

The logframe uses the wellbeing index to report the change in average score. The wellbeing index consists of the individual components presented here in the Midline Report. The logframe reports a fall of 0.03 and a fall of 0.35 in the average wellbeing score for students in the treatment group due to the joint ILET and TPD interventions in the DRC and Niger, respectively. The effects of the intervention are only significantly negative for perseverance in Niger.

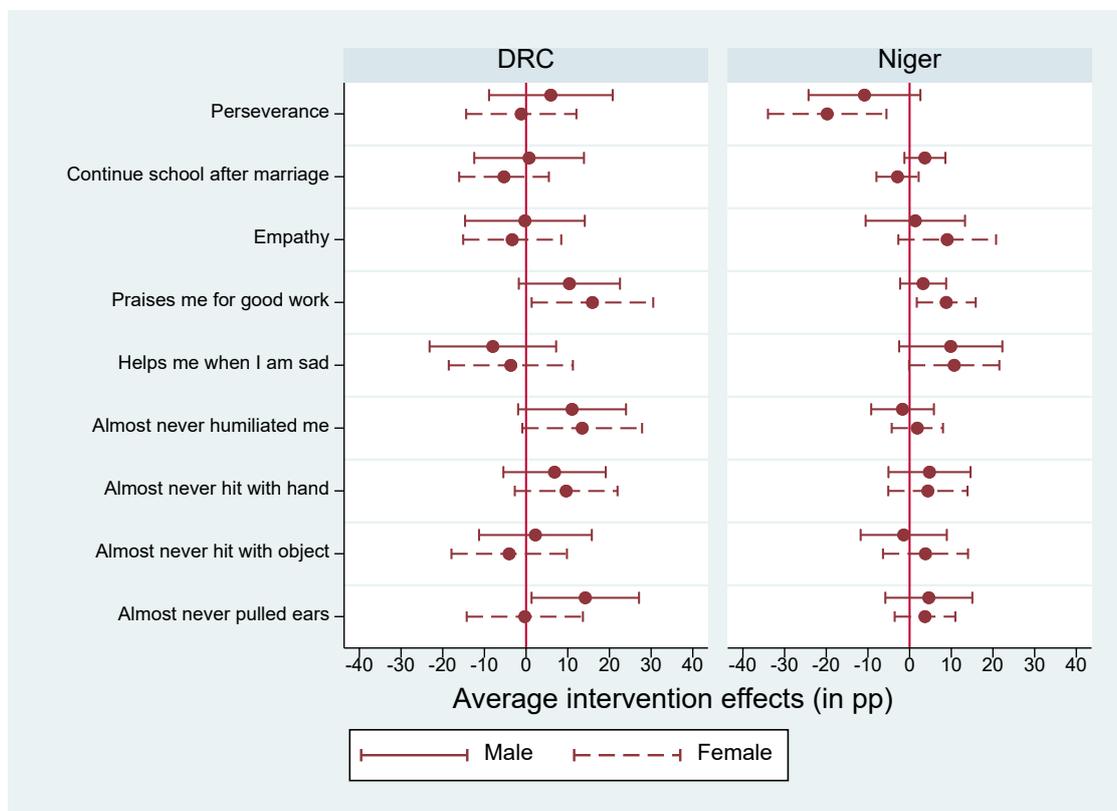
First, using a regression analysis, the IDS research study finds positive effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on most components of the wellbeing index in the DRC and Niger. Hence, looking at only the composite score may not show the full extent of the effects of the interventions. For instance, in the DRC there was significant improvement in three wellbeing components, and in Niger there are marginal improvements in two wellbeing domains.

Second, while in the DRC these positive effects are statistically significant for components related to a nurturing school environment, in Niger these effects are not statistically significant. Part of the reason for finding null effects of the interventions in Niger is that the ILET intervention was only half-completed when the midline data collection was conducted. This may also explain the small fall in the average wellbeing score for the treatment group in Niger in relation to the control group. Another explanation is that the schools in the treatment group had higher numbers of students enrolled and they were also less likely to cater to children with disabilities. Smaller schools in the control group would have a positive impact on student wellbeing through lower student-teacher ratios. Additionally, with the experience of interacting with children with disabilities, the control group schools are more likely to generate positive learning environments and better student wellbeing. Since the logframe does not take these factors into account (whereas the IDS research study controls for these in the regression analysis), it reports a fall in the average wellbeing score for the treatment group.

We further investigate the effects of the interventions on student wellbeing by gender. In Figure 7.20, we report the effects of the interventions on wellbeing for male and female students in the DRC and Niger, after accounting for differences in baseline school characteristics and baseline values of the outcomes.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> For detailed regression results, see Annexe 3 Table A5.35 and Table A5.36.

**Figure 7.20 Gender-differentiated intervention effects on student wellbeing**



Source: Authors' own, based on the survey data.

Note: Bar indicates 95% confidence interval (see Annexe 3 for detailed results).

We find no evidence of differential impacts<sup>72</sup> on student wellbeing outcomes according to students' gender in the DRC, suggesting that the interventions had similar impacts on both male and female students, as reported in Figure 7.20. However, in Niger we find that the slower growth in the perseverance outcome in the treatment group compared to the control group is driven by girls. This is also similar to our findings on other student outcomes in Niger, where girls in the treatment group showed similar improvements in literacy as girls in the control group, and girls in the treatment group showed lower levels of improvement in the subtraction sub-task than girls in the control group. Additionally, while there is no overall effect of the interventions on student wellbeing in Niger, there is a significant and positive effect on the use of positive language for girls, such as praising students for good work and helping students when they are sad. This gender dimension in the intervention effects is interesting and important to explore further using the endline data collection, particularly in the light of the strong gender biases in Niger (see section 5.3).

<sup>72</sup> P-value<0.05.

## Box 7.4 Girls and boys with improved wellbeing – comparison with the logframe

The logframe uses the wellbeing index to report the change in average score. The wellbeing index consists of the individual components presented here in the Midline Report. The logframe reports a fall of 0.03 and a fall of 0.27 in the average wellbeing score for girls in the treatment group due to the joint ILET and TPD interventions in the DRC and Niger, respectively. For boys, it reports a fall of 0.04 and a fall of 0.43 in the average wellbeing score.

First, using a regression analysis, the IDS research study finds positive effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on most components of the wellbeing index in the DRC and Niger. Hence, looking only at the composite score may not show the full extent of the effects of the interventions. For instance, in the DRC there was an improvement in four wellbeing components for boys and in three for girls. The effects of the intervention are only significantly negative for perseverance among girls in Niger, but significant and positive for two other wellbeing components.

Second, while in the DRC these positive effects are statistically significant for components related to a nurturing school environment, in Niger these effects are not statistically significant. Part of the reason for finding null effects of the interventions in Niger is that the ILET intervention was only half-completed when the midline data collection was conducted. This may also explain the small fall in the average wellbeing score for the treatment group in Niger in relation to the control group. Another explanation is that the schools in the treatment group had higher numbers of students enrolled than the control group schools and they were also less likely to cater to children with disabilities. Smaller schools in the control group would have a positive impact on student wellbeing through lower student-teacher ratios. Additionally, with the experience of interacting with children with disabilities, the control group schools are more likely to generate positive learning environments and better student wellbeing. Since the logframe does not take these factors into account (whereas the IDS research study controls for these in the regression analysis), it reports a fall in the average wellbeing score for the treatment group.

## 8. Conclusion, recommendations and next steps

The report has highlighted key dimensions of teacher wellbeing and teaching quality in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It has done so using two different approaches. First, the report has sought to reflect the inductive approach of the project in letting participants' concerns emerge: the themes covered were those that teachers identified as crucial to their wellbeing and their capacity to do their job effectively and purposefully. Second, the report also provides a more conventional evaluation of two arms of the BRiCE interventions – ILET and TPD – against the objectives that BRiCE set for itself in its theory of change. The report explores the effects of joint ILET and TPD interventions on teacher wellbeing and teaching quality, as well as student learning and wellbeing. We recapitulate the main findings of the report before drawing out their policy implications. We then present the next steps of the analysis, which will guide the endline study.

### 8.1 Key findings

In section 3, we highlighted a decline in teacher wellbeing and teaching quality from the baseline to the midline in the BRiCE schools in the DRC. Notably, teachers in the DRC report a decline in feeling supported to manage teaching challenges related to large classrooms and teaching students of different grades within the same classroom. This is likely to be a result of the *Gratuité* policy, which led to an increase in student enrolment but without hiring more teachers, significantly increasing the teacher-student ratio.

In section 4, we explored teachers' employment status in Niger and the DRC. We analysed the politicisation of teacher registration in the DRC, and sharpening of inequalities in employment status induced by *Gratuité*. In line with the objectives of the policy, parental contributions to teachers' salaries have dropped dramatically, though we have shown that they have not entirely disappeared. This has put NU teachers – teachers who are not yet registered with the Ministry of Education but are often essential to the functioning of schools – in an untenable financial position. Indeed, they relied on these fees for their income and, in most cases, the state has not regularised their situation. We document an exodus of such teachers from the profession.

In Niger, we have analysed the consequences of the continuing increase in contractual teachers. While this shift has made it possible to partially palliate the sharp increase in student numbers and resulting increase in demand for teachers, it is also problematic in many regards. The growing number of contract teachers has affected the average level of training and skills of the primary school

teacher workforce. The relatively low salaries of contract teachers in contexts of high costs of living and challenging mobility has implications for teacher absenteeism and time on task. Having little prospect of career advancement reduces contract teachers' incentive to invest time and energy in TPD. All of this affects teaching quality and teacher wellbeing in various ways.

We also looked at the effects of Covid-19-related school closures on teachers in both countries, showing that these were particularly drastic in the DRC, where they lasted more than twice as long as in Niger. During these closures, a high proportion of NU teachers in the DRC reported not having received their salaries. This had severe effects on teaching quality, teachers' wellbeing and mental health, and their sense of purpose, making programmes focused on supporting teachers all the more important.

In section 5 of the report, we explored several facets of teachers' social position in the conflict-affected societies of the DRC and Niger. We first looked at the effects of the school closures on teacher-student relations, showing that relatively few teachers were able to engage with students during the closures. Following our concern about teachers' relations with students and parents, we investigated how *Gratuité* has affected these relations. For paid teachers, the policy has improved relations, while tensions between non-paid teachers and parents may even have increased. We then explored the role of gender in the school environment in Niger, where female teachers constitute the majority of the teaching workforce and where gender featured much more strongly in interviews than in the DRC. We showed that the teaching profession has become a space of socioeconomic and professional emancipation for women in a society characterised by entrenched gender norms. Professional emancipation, however, is curtailed by gendered professional hierarchies in the education sector and female teachers report lower levels of teaching quality in both countries. Moreover, female teachers face serious challenges as they navigate persisting gendered norms in the school environment. Interviews, however, highlighted slow but real change in people's perceptions. Section 5 also looked at the role of ethnicity in Uvira and Fizi in South Kivu, where social polarisation along ethnic lines has created significant challenges for teachers. These include ethnic concentration in schools in some areas of these territories, and various forms of patronage and discrimination along ethnic lines, which create a range of distortions and difficulties in the school environment.

Section 6 of the report analysed the penetration of violent conflict in schools in Niger and the DRC and its direct and indirect effects on education. In the DRC, we explored the dynamics that explain teachers' exposure to violence, from violent extortion to the presence of armed actors in the school environment. We showed that violence has generated enduring trauma in the teaching profession, resulting not only from individuals' exposure to violence, but also the collective experience and the memory of violence. Looking at Niger, we showed that overall

lower levels of direct violence in the school environment do not mean that schools are free from violence. Fear and collective forms of anxiety were pervasive, stifling teachers' wellbeing and capacity to work. These results challenge reductive narratives that portray schools as somehow detached and insulated from surrounding dynamics of violence. The midline and baseline studies conclude our analysis of the causes and dynamics of violence against teachers and schools – a central objective of this study. The Endline Report will finalise the analysis of violence in the school environment and provide a comprehensive answer to RQ1.

In section 7 of this report, we studied the effects of the joint ILET and TPD interventions on teaching quality and wellbeing (RQ2), as well as students' learning and wellbeing (RQ3). We find that the interventions had a significant effect on teaching quality and teacher wellbeing in Niger, particularly on literacy activities conducted by teachers, providing conflict-sensitive education, and feeling supported in managing teaching challenges. The interventions also had a significant effect in reducing the use of physical punishment by teachers in both countries. These effects were similar for both male and female teachers. We also find that the interventions had a positive effect on literacy activities in Niger and on reading levels of students in the BRiCE schools. However, this improvement in literacy is largely driven by an improvement in the literacy levels of boys. In the DRC, due to limited impacts of the interventions on teaching quality, we do not find any effects of the interventions on literacy skills. However, there was a significant and substantial effect of the interventions – particularly of ILET – on student wellbeing in the DRC for both girls and boys.

## 8.2 Policy and programme recommendations

In this section, we sketch out some of the key recommendations emerging at this stage of the research. They should be considered with caution, given that the research is only at the midline stage. Please note that a separate report has looked at the effects and adaptations related to the Covid-19 situation (including lockdowns).

### 8.2.1 For the education authorities in Niger and the DRC

**Employment status is a major source of inequalities and should be a point of entry for teacher wellbeing.** Employment status conditions – whether a teacher is on a permanent, secure and fully recognised contract or on a more precarious type of contract (e.g. directly negotiated with a school or fixed term) – heighten inequalities in the teaching profession in Niger and the DRC. Policies should continue to seek to address inequalities through public sector reforms to increase teacher wellbeing and teaching quality. In the DRC, registration of NU teachers appears to be an urgent policy priority, with regards both to the status of these teachers and to their wellbeing. In Niger, where contract teachers' career

progression prospects have been stifled, opportunities for career progression should be improved. Employment status issues should be addressed through public sector (payroll) reform and are first and foremost the remit of the governments of Niger and the DRC, frequently supported by international organisations.

Policies and programmes need to do more to address gender bias in the teaching profession and school learning environment, particularly in Niger. The teaching profession can be an avenue for gender emancipation, as highlighted in the case of Niger. However, as evidenced in the baseline and midline studies, the full potential of such emancipation is hindered by strong gender biases that affect teachers' and parents' perception of female teachers and hamper quality teaching. Additionally, the perception of gender norms and roles limits the impact of programmes on girls' learning and wellbeing, especially in Niger. Affirmative policies would help female teachers achieve stable and durable employment and senior positions in schools and the educational administration. They would also encourage positive interactions between parents, communities and female teachers.

- 1. There is an urgent need for policies and programmes to address increasing class size and enrolment in schools in the DRC as a result of *Gratuité*.** The *Gratuité* policy has increased student enrolment substantially without increasing the number of teachers. This has impacted teachers' wellbeing and their ability to manage classes. There is an urgent need for policies to address teacher recruitment. This implies, for example, norms and standards of teacher recruitment, and reform of SECOPE's *mécanisation* mechanisms.

### **8.2.2 Specifically for Save the Children as part of the current BRiCE interventions**

**In relation to the increase in class size in the DRC, urgent mitigation measures are necessary.** While the TPD intervention, cognisant of this need, has already rolled out training on large class management for teachers in the DRC, the module was still in progress at the time of the midline study. Hence, the report recommends that this module be treated as an urgent requirement and delivered at speed, perhaps with a refresher cycle to ensure that the disruptions from 2019/20 do not impact quality of the training.

Policies and programmes should invest in building and sustaining healthy teacher-student relations. The ILET intervention can be strengthened to ensure that there is active engagement of students in developing SIPs, particularly in Niger where 34 per cent of the BRiCE Cohort 2 schools reported no student participation. Additionally, programmes and policies should encourage student representation in SMCs and active participation throughout the academic year.

### 8.2.3 For Save the Children and its partners, including at the government level

2. **Policies and programmes should explore and invest in both learning and teacher-student innovations that can take place remotely.** Innovation in digital technologies and providing training on how to use them could help ensure that the TPD continues during unforeseen school closures, as well as during school breaks. Additionally, they could reduce the cost teachers incur travelling to training locations.
3. **Teacher-student relations need to be supported during school lockdowns.** Policy and programmes rolled out during school closures have tended to focus mostly on the technological challenges of distance learning. A more holistic approach, which puts at its core teachers' continued educational and emotional support of students, is essential. It requires technology and health and safety measures, as well as proper consideration for the support that schools provide to students outside the strict remit of learning. It could also incorporate low-tech or network-based solutions.

**Teachers should be trained and supported on how to support students during lockdowns.** While high-tech distance learning during school closures is promising, it is very difficult and costly to implement in crisis contexts, as our short study on the Covid-19 lockdown has shown. The report emphasises the importance of the teacher-student relations during the lockdowns, particularly with regards to socioemotional support, but it also shows that most teachers lacked guidance on how to continue supporting students. Thus, in addition to technological solutions, low-tech and social network approaches could be supported through appropriate teacher training.

Employment status needs to be factored into the design of teacher training programmes. The report shows that employment status conditions career prospects and socioeconomic status. As a result of these different career prospects and personal situations, teachers on different types of contracts might have different incentives to invest in their professional development. Programmes should take teachers' employment status into consideration when delivering teacher training interventions, as the study finds NU teachers in the DRC and contract teachers in Niger have significantly lower salaries and belong to households of lower economic status. Without appropriate incentives, either in the form of financial compensation (e.g. per diems) or in kind (e.g. accommodation during training), programmes risk missing out those teachers who face limited prospects of career progression and greatest precarity in the profession.

Schools are not detached and insulated from surrounding dynamics of violence. Policies and programmes should aim to address trauma and mental health issues among teachers. In conflict-affected contexts, teachers bear the psychological weight of exposure to violence and violence permeates the school environment. Approaches that tend to focus on wellbeing cannot address severe

trauma, and psychological support for traumatised teachers should be a policy priority (e.g. the Rwanda National Mental Health Policy launched by the Ministry of Health in 2011). Programmes can provide support to teachers; for example, by setting up a hotline or SMS/text-messaging service for teachers to speak with trained counsellors, psychologists and mental health workers.

### 8.3 Next steps

The Endline Report will pursue the BRiCE research project's analysis of all research questions, though there will be less of a focus on RQ1, as the Baseline and Midline Reports have covered the question of violence against teachers and its effects extensively. The Endline Report will pursue the Midline Report's reflections on RQ2 and RQ3, notably the analysis of the ILET and TPD interventions' effects on BRiCE teachers' and students' key outcomes. While we find that the interventions had a more significant effect on teaching quality and wellbeing in Niger, the effects are largely positive in the DRC, but with greater variance. We will explore the reasons for this variance, which could be driven by heterogeneity in teachers' socioeconomic profiles and variance in the level of implementation achieved at the school level. Additionally, we will further unpack the gender-differentiated effects of the interventions in the DRC and Niger. While in the DRC, girls have shown an improvement in their literacy levels, the opposite has been true in Niger. We will deepen our understanding of the mechanisms that might explain these differences and consult with the BRiCE programme implementing teams to discuss these mechanisms.

The Endline Report will also address the research question that has not been covered in the Baseline and Midline Reports: *RQ4 Explore how knowledge developed by teachers in conflict-affected contexts can be used effectively in policy and programming*. Through further analysis of the data collected during the midline data collections, and additional qualitative and quantitative fieldwork, we will explore teachers' practices and knowledge with regard to some of the key difficulties they face in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. We will look at the norms and repertoires that guide teachers' actions in such contexts. Preliminary investigation of these issues during the midline research suggests that teachers draw on several discursive and cultural repertoires for their actions, which include religious and local cultural repertoires, as well as normative repertoires instilled through the national teacher training curriculum and educational interventions. It also suggests that teachers develop a great number of *ad hoc* techniques to adapt to circumstances largely unforeseen in conventional teacher training. Over the years, these adaptations constitute a significant body of practices and knowledge about how to deal with the penetration of violent conflict into the classroom. We will explore the nature of this knowledge, its modes of transmission, and how it can be taken into account in national-level policy, as well as educational interventions. In particular, we will look at the following aspects that have come out in our current analysis:

1. **Dealing with violence in the classroom.** We will explore the practices developed by teachers to deal with the dynamics of violence presented in this report. Violence in the classroom can create a range of distortions and aggravate issues of student discipline. Interviews with teachers have highlighted the importance of this issue: 'students are no longer disciplined' (Int. 1, 39); 'students become *grands chefs* in the classroom' (Int. 51). Further inquiry into this issue is important, particularly in light of changing social norms and child-adult relations due to dynamics of armed conflict. This will inform a discussion of the conflict-sensitive education components of the TPD intervention, whose relevance to different contexts we will seek to understand with a view to improving it.
2. **Dealing with trauma while working.** Teachers face high levels of trauma, both individual and collective. We will look at the practices teachers have developed to deal with trauma while continuing to work. This will inform a discussion of educational interventions, as well as research projects focused on trauma in the teaching profession. In doing so, we will pay attention to the cultural repertoires in which trauma, as well as coping strategies deployed to address trauma, are expressed.
3. **Dealing with complex and diverse school environments.** Both the qualitative and quantitative elements of the midline research have emphasised how diverse schools are in terms of ethnic groups and languages. In both Niger and the DRC, the student and staff bodies speak a variety of languages, which presents specific challenges for the teaching body. In conflict-affected contexts, where social polarisation can take ethno-linguistic lines, questions of language have a highly political character and are linked with dynamics of violence. We will explore the question of multilingual classrooms, which is a field of expertise and research priority of ISP Bukavu, which is setting up a research centre – Congolese Centre of Plurilingualism for Education and Development – led by Samuel Matabishi, who has co-authored this report.
4. **Governance of teachers and teachers' knowledge.** We will also pursue the analysis of teacher governance started in the Midline Report. In particular, we will look at links between provincial and national governance of teachers, as well as their relationship with international education projects, using BRiCE as a case study.
5. **Better understanding the theory of change of the BRiCE interventions and linking it to the evaluation of the joint ILET and TPD interventions.** This point will necessitate close collaboration with the Save the Children BRiCE team to understand in depth what exactly went on in the context of each intervention, including, for example: the exact improvements in school environment made under ILET; and exact modules, timing and implementation details for TPD. This will be crucial to understand the heterogeneity in the results and also to assess in more detail the actual theory of change.

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