

## **Schooling Experiences of Migrant Learners from Democratic Republic of Congo in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Drawing on social constructionism as its theoretical paradigm, this article examines schooling experiences of 12, Grade 8 -12 migrant learners, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), across three schools in Durban, South Africa. The socio-political and economic instability in many African countries have fuelled forced migration where people involuntarily flee their home countries in order to overcome adversity. In the recent times, African migrants have continued to enter South Africa, despite a surge in xenophobic attacks, particularly targeted at African migrants in the country. Qualitative research approach was employed as the study methodology, and narrative individual and focus group interviews were used as its methods of data collection. The results show that schooling experiences in South Africa of migrant learners from the DRC were filled with challenges: the issue of language limitations, stereotypes, sense of isolation and exclusion in school as a result of cultural and identity differences with South African learners. The findings indicated a dynamic scenario where some teachers and learners both were supportive and not supportive of the migrant learners in the schools. Some positive aspects of these learners' schooling experiences included being exposed to better educational facilities and a better standard of education in South Africa than what they were used to in their home countries. Indeed, the migrant learners' experiences in these South African schools were enriched with opportunities of learning from interacting with learners from different cultural, religious and racial backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Education, Inclusion, Learners, Migrants, South Africa.

### **Introduction**

The exchange of goods and capital and the voluntary exchange of human skills have immensely contributed to the course of migration and globalization. However, socio-political and economic instability in many developing countries have also fuelled forced migration where people involuntarily flee their home countries in order to overcome adversity. Migration is understood to mean the movement of people from one geographical point to another, driven by socio-economic, environmental, political and cultural reasons (Pries, 2006). International migration happens when people move from one country to another to reside in the countries where they have migrated permanently or temporarily with the aim of seeking employment, education or to stay away from harsh socio-political conditions in their home countries (Goldin & Reinert, 2006). History reveals that migration has frequently occurred as a result of natural and human-made disasters (Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006). Present day migration is motivated by a number of factors that contribute to the massive movement of people from one geographical location to another (Posel, 2003), in particular, economic factors. Migration caused by economic factors is mostly voluntary in nature, where migrants willingly decide to leave their home countries for places they think may offer better economic opportunities. War is another common factor contributing to both internal and external migration (Posel, 2003).

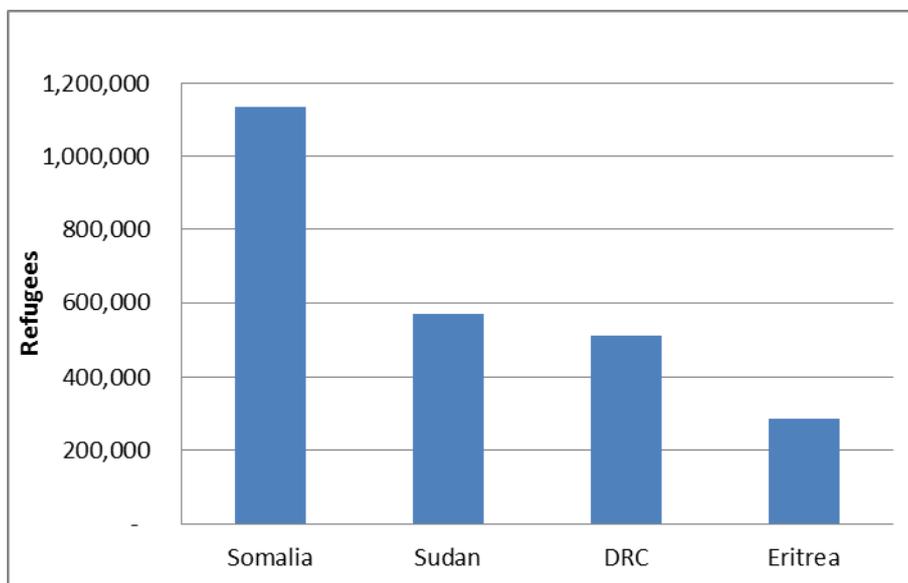
Many African countries have been ravaged by war, social, economic and political crisis thereby making those countries almost uninhabitable for their citizens. A typical example here is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Citizens of

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this country are scattered all over the African continent and beyond as a result of hardship caused by war, socio-economic and political crisis in that country. As the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report indicates (see table 1 below), DRC is among the countries with the highest number of displaced people in the world (UNHCR, 2012).

**Figure 1: Top Countries in Terms of Displaced People in Africa**



Source: UNHCR (2012)

In the African continent, the DRC is the third country with the highest number of originating refugees as shown in Figure 1. The UNHCR estimates put the number of refugees originating from the DRC at about 509,400 people. In South Africa, refugees from the DRC account for 20% of refugee population in the country. This translates to about 13,000 refugees from the DRC out of a total of about 67,000 in South Africa in 2012 (UNHCR, 2012). In terms of other immigration categories, the DRC is also one of the top African countries with recipients of temporary and permanent residences in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa, out of the 141,550 recipients of temporary residence in 2012, the DRC is the fourth country with the highest number of recipients (Statistics SA, 2012). An underlying factor in the high statistics of migrants from the DRC in South Africa is the preparedness of the school system in meeting the schooling needs of the young migrants.

Against the backdrop of recent xenophobic attacks targeted at African migrants in South Africa, this article aims to provide an insight into the African migrant learner's schooling experiences and challenges they faced for schooling in South Africa. The xenophobic attacks were certainly contrary to the constitution and educational policies of South Africa, which endorse social justice, inclusivity and the right of all learners to quality basic education. Also, the rights of the child as stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child state clearly that all children have the right to education including respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity and the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society (Adams, 2008). The National Commission on Special Education (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) strengthen the ideology of inclusive education. (Naicker, 1999). With this situation on ground therefore, Parker et al. (2001) maintain that schools and classrooms in the country are expected to be accommodative in nature and give opportunity for proper functioning of learners/students from diverse backgrounds.

The question of social inclusivity spans many social identity spectrums, which include race, culture, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality and so forth, which should cease to be hindering factors to accessibility of sound and quality

education in South Africa (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999). Therefore, enhancing migrant learners' inclusivity in South Africa stands to contribute immensely to the bigger national agenda of transformation and social cohesion. Guided by social constructionism as its theoretical paradigm, this article addresses how migrant learners' social identities, as foreigners affect these learners' quality of schooling and educational experiences. The article raises critical consciousness regarding the schooling challenges of the migrant learners in South Africa. It construes migrant learners as a social group whose educational needs and aspirations need to be factored in the strategies for enhancing inclusivity, diversity and social justice in South African schools.

### **Social Constructionism as a Theoretical Paradigm for The Study**

Social constructionism posits that migrant learners' schooling experiences are generated by relations, rather than by external realities (Gergen, 2009). This paradigm emphasis on discourse and social relations as bases on which migrant learners' experiences of schooling are predicated (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). According to Gee (2011), discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of thinking, feeling, believing and valuing, which is often used to identify a person as a member of a socially meaningful group. In this regard, this article shows how migrant children's schooling experiences were profusely linked to dominant (and often hegemonic) constructions of African migrants, as a social identity group – and the subsevient socio-power positioning that African migrants, are relegated to occupy within the broader South African society. McCann and Kim (2003) posited that a discourse is not a language or a text, but a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs. This insight enabled the article to reveal how socially instituted historical discourses of African migrancy, and foreignhood deeply undertooned the migrant children's perceptions, experiences and engagements with their schooling in the three South African schools.

Social constructionism believes that what migrants children's schooling experiences "are simply are", but the moment we begin to articulate what these learners' experiences are, we enter a world of discourse, and thus a tradition, a way of life and a set of value preferences" (Gergen, 2009; 161). Therefore, instead of seeking facts and truths, this article was interested in the migrant children's socio-cultural dynamics informing their schooling experiences historically and within the school, and the nature of prevalent social relationships which informed these children's schooling experiences. This theoretical paradigm enabled the article to illuminate not only the dynamics of support and lack thereof for migrant learners in the schools, but also the cultural alienation, myths and socially constructed stereotypes surrounding migrant learners. The social relationships that ensued between the migrant learners, school teachers and local learners were indicated in complex dynamics of support and lack thereof for the migrant learners. The schools presented the migrant learners with opportunities of exposure to diverse social enabling interactions with learners from different nationalities, socio-economic and racial backgrounds. Indeed, this rich social context provided migrant learners with a better quality of education, in comparison to the quality they experienced in their home country.

### **Methodological Approach**

#### **Study sites**

Given that three schools were used, and for the purpose of anonymity and clarity, the first school was tagged as 'school A' and the second and third schools as 'school B and C respectively.

School A is a government school, which implies that teachers in the school were employed and paid by the Department of Education. The school is open to learners from different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; this explains why there were many migrant learners in the school. Learner enrolment as at the time this study was conducted stood about 1054, out of which 3% were African migrant learners, with the DRC migrant learners greater in number than other migrants. The school offers a wide range of science and commerce subjects. The school did not provide facilities to enable migrant learners to learn in their languages. Also, there was no support system provided by the school or the Department of Education to cater for the learning needs of increasing number of migrant learners in regards to language barrier

experienced by these learners in the school.

School B, is also a government owned secondary school. Unlike school A, it is not a multiracial school, but it has migrant learners from other Southern African countries. Learner enrolment at the time this study was conducted was 980, out of which about 0.98% were migrant learners, from the DRC and other African countries. As it is a government secondary school, the Department of Education employs and pays the teachers in the school. School B offers a wide range of commerce and science subjects. Like school A, school B did not offer subjects in the migrants' languages and did not provide any form of support system to cater for the learning needs of migrant learners in the school.

School C is an independent school, meaning that teachers and other staff in the school are not employed by the Department of Education. When this study was conducted, learner population was 574. About 1.2% of the learner population were learners from other African countries. School C, though a private school, was not very well resourced. The Department of Education did not provide any funding for the school, and as a result, learners pay school fees and provide their own learning materials such as exercise and text books. School C had a good number of migrant learners who were mostly from Southern African countries and the DRC. Teachers and other staff in the school are black local South Africans. Unlike schools A and B, school C only had black/African learners in it. This means that school C was not racially diverse as schools A and B. The diversity in the learner population was as a result of the presence of migrant learners in the school who come from different cultural, religious and language backgrounds.

### **Research methodology**

This study used a qualitative narrative design to provide data on the African migrant learners' experiences of schooling in three South Africa schools. This approach enabled the study to present experiential data in a rich, complex, and holistic manner and involved not only the examination of consciously told stories but also the deeper, underlying meanings that the migrant learners held about their South African schooling experiences (Bell, 2005), which they often juxtaposed with their schooling experiences while in their home countries. In this way, we located learners' schooling experiences cross and in context, moving away from viewing migrant learners' experiences as merely individual perceptions but more as cultural and ideological constructions that reflect not just these learners' subjective constructions. We viewed these stories also as reminiscent of, or a microcosm of African migrant experiences in a bigger South African socio-cultural context. Qualitative narratives added richness in the study as they enabled learners to tell stories, which were preserved in real life memories, therefore connected and situated in particular socio-cultural contexts of these learners' schooling lives (Weed, 2008).

All interviews were conducted in English and migrant learners' native language, as one of researchers was conversant in both languages. This allowed the participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions without limitations. Integrity, trust, and rapport were maintained throughout the research process.

### **Sampling**

Convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used to select three schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Firstly, convenient sampling was used to select three schools with DRC migrant learners. The purposive characteristics of the selected schools were the schools' availability and willingness to participate as well as the presence of DRC migrant learners in the schools. Purposive sampling technique was later used to select 12 learners from the three schools, who were in grades 8 to 12 - five learners from school A, four from school B and three from school C. Seven male and five female learners were selected from the three schools.

### **Data analysis**

All data was transcribed from the native Congolese language into English. It was then analysed through an inductive process which necessitated listening and re-listening of the recorded data which aided in the identification of the patterns and themes related to the learners' constructions of their schooling experiences and challenges in the school contexts (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This was followed by reading line by line of all the transcripts for familiarity with the data and

identifying sub emerging themes related to the conceptual variables of the study, which were, then coded (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). All the generated data was then discussed in relation to the study objectives, drawing insights from the literature debates in the field, the conceptual framework of the study and the original critical interpretive abilities of the researchers.

### **Consideration of ethics**

Consent for the research was sought from the Department of Education in the district and the principal of the school. Ethical clearance was then sought from the research office, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Permission was also obtained from the parents or guardians of the participants and the participants themselves. We respected the notion that, children are human beings who have to be given a choice to take decisions on matters concerning their lives (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). During the study, their rights and welfare were protected and pseudonyms were used to protect their identity. All parties were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and the participants were further informed that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time they so desired (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007).

### **Findings and Discussion**

The study used social constructionism (Gergen, 2009) to explore the schooling experiences of migrant learners from the DRC in South Africa. The findings denote how social relationship and group membership of the migrant learners within the schools, and their social power positioning informed these learners' schooling experiences. The migrant learners' social identities and group membership contributed significantly to their collective and individual experiences and performances at school. For the purposes of this study, the findings have been organised to address the social dynamics of teachers' and local South African learners' support, cultural alienation, stereotypes about African migrants in South Africa, immigration documentation, and advantages of being an African migrant learner in South Africa.

#### **Dynamics of teachers' support**

The findings indicate that teachers and learners in the schools engaged in complex and fluid ways that dynamically expressed both support and lack of support for the migrant learners. The question becomes, what roles do teachers play in the inclusion or exclusion of migrant learners in the learning process? The participants' responses in the interview sections throw light on the level of commitment on the side of the teachers in giving support to migrant learners in their schools. Some of the participants claimed that they receive support from all the teachers in their schools, while some others participants claimed that they do not receive support from all the teachers in their schools. This therefore implies that not all teachers show full commitment in terms of giving necessary support to migrant learners in their schools. The data below illustrates:

“Some teachers and learners treat me nicely, while some others hate seeing me and reject foreigners.”

“...some teachers use Zulu to teach in class in subjects that are not Zulu like in Life Orientation, Computer and some others, while I do not understand Zulu... when you tell them that you do not understand Zulu they will tell you to go and learn Zulu. These teachers are not helpful because when I ask them to explain to me what they have taught they will not explain, they tell me to go and learn by myself. This makes me to find it difficult to learn in class.”

Furthermore, the findings show that teachers' support had a strong impact on the participants' academic performances and in the way they experience schooling in South Africa. For instance, lack of English language proficiency is one of the major challenges the participants face in school. Support from teachers can help them overcome this challenge. Inasmuch as migrant children have more positive attitudes towards their schooling, higher aspiration and greater optimism about the future

than their local peers, many still perform poorly academically and they also record low rates in scholastic attendance. This poor performance is partly contributed by lack of proficiency in the language of instruction in schools in their host countries. In this case, support from teachers could go a long way in assisting them to overcome this language barrier, which affects their academic performance and participation in other school activities. One of the participants in his narrative said:

“I would say that the teachers in my school...some of them are very sympathetic towards foreigners and they take their extra time to teach us even after school because we don't understand Zulu and English well... if we do not understand in class, they will go over the work again with us. Other teachers are just so ignorant; they just consider us as one of the learners.”

Although the migrant learners attributed teachers' lack of support to them as due to their foreign status, the evidence they provided does not exclusively attribute this kind of teachers' behaviour as uniquely directed towards the migrant learners. There a sense in which to think that teachers need to be more sensitive and accommodative of the migrant learners in their classrooms in order to enhance their educational experience. Another dynamic is this equation is an increased self-consciousness among the migrant learners, which predispose them to construct every unpleasant experiences, as if this was due to their social status as foreigners in South African school. There is a need to educate migrant learners in order to ensure that they do not attribute all the challenges they experience in school to their foreigner status, as indeed, even the local South African learners might still be experiencing similar challenges in the same school contexts. This would ensure that strategies, for instance, to address lack of teachers' support are understood in broader terms, and not necessarily a challenge for the migrant learners.

### **Cultural alienation**

One would argue that for the participants to be culturally alienated means that they are foreign to the South African cultural context. The issue of identity was found to pose itself as a barrier for migrants who do not have the same ethnicity, social and religious background with the host countries. Hence, the question of social identity played a significant role in how migrant learners construed themselves, in relations to the learners who were regarded as local – not foreigners. Indeed, the migrant learners continued to define themselves in light of their cultural backgrounds, and tending to juxtapose these with the existing school cultures in South Africa. Complex dynamics of nostalgia – home sickness (longing for the good old days) and embracing the new more dynamic and supposedly emancipatory South African cultural context played out in these children's expressions of cultural isolation.

“One of the things that really made me to know that I am now in a different place and in a different school was... in the assembly the learners did not sing the national anthem. In Congo we sing the national anthem every morning after prayers. This made me feel so strange because those are the things I was used to at home which I didn't find...in school here.”

The migrant learners struggled to reconcile what is morally good or bad in their culture with the new culture and life style they have come to embrace in South Africa. As illustrated above, the tendency was to compare in rivalry or oppositional sense, the current cultural identities and dynamics, often liberal, in South African schools with and their home profusely conservative and nationalist cultural identity in their home country. It is important to note the moralist way in which the learners constructed and juxtaposed cultures, in terms of good or bad, which posed a challenge regarding these migrant learners' integration into the South African schools culture, thereby increasing the extent of their feeling of cultural alienation.

This tendency brought about a strongly defined social group identity formation among the migrant learners. Their conceptions of cultural differences between their home countries and South Africa were suffused with contestations over

cultural supremacy, inferiority, perceptions of uniqueness, even if these were mainly socially constructed and regulated differences. The migrant learners struggled over dynamic and paradoxical perceptions of home cultural supremacy within the South African schools' contexts where they were generally regarded as inferior as a result of being foreigners, where were found to increase the likelihood of social and cultural alienation. As illustrated below, this was evident in the participants' narratives as they try to compare their home countries' cultural contexts with that of South Africa.

“In my culture there is respect for seniors...for example, learners have respect for teachers; they greet them when they see them in the morning. In South Africa, learners do not respect teachers and do not greet them when they see them in the morning. Also girls wear very short dresses to school which is not a good thing. This is not the same in my country...in my country, girls wear dresses that cover their bodies well, no girl will ever think of wearing short dress to school because it is seen as a bad thing...”

Instead of seeing these two (their home country schools' cultures and South African schools' cultures) as complementary, there was a deep-seated and intricate undertone of rivalry constructions of the two, by the migrant learners, as if what they experienced back home was better than what they experience in South Africa, thereby longing for the good old days. Indeed, this nostalgic constructions of social experience tends to become a functional source of many social ills in society today, and evokes the notion of productive remembering, in which the past could be used as a place of reference (not a place of resident). The migrant learners need to be equipped with the skills, knowledge and personal dispositions that enable them to creatively adapt their past memories about educational experiences while they were in their home country in ways that enhance their present South African schooling experiences in an attempt to forge for a better future.

### **Stereotypes about African migrants in South Africa**

The findings also revealed the impact of stereotypes on their experiences in South Africa as migrants and on their schooling experiences in particular. For instance, the data shows that the participants were mistreated as a result of the ideas South African local learners held about African migrants. One of the participants in her narrative said:

“At first being a foreigner in this country didn't bother me much but it did bother when they started to judge me and started to say bad things about us, and that affected and really lowered my confidence; my self-esteem being here in South Africa. There is still stereotype around being a foreigner in my school ... I think what causes these experiences is the stories that people hear on TV.”

In line with the above data except, Harris (2006) maintains that African migrants in South Africa suffer all degrees of exclusion, discrimination, xenophobic attacks and stereotypes. One effect of the stereotyping is to constantly define their social identity as Africa migrants, based on their shared experiences with other African migrants, not just with Congolese migrants.

One would argue at this point that their collective experiences as African migrants help in defining who they are and their group membership among other factors. This theme is relevant to SIT as the theory accounts for the participants' identity definition as African migrants based on their shared experiences with other African migrants, and the recognition of this shared experiences as a factor in defining their social identities. This raised yet another issue, which is; social identity definition is not only based on shared cultural, religious, language, ethnic or national backgrounds but also can be based on shared experiences as a group in a society. In line with this, Campbell (1992) argues that one's definition of his/her identity is mainly determined by the defining characteristics (which includes shared experiences) of the groups to which one belongs. It appears that social categorisations of self and others, as well as self – categories play a major role in defining the migrant learners in terms of their shared similarities (and experiences) and differences thereof with other

children within the schools.

### **Immigration Documentation**

The study found that immigration documentation was among the major challenges that limits migrants from easy access to schooling and participation in school in South Africa. All 12 participants in this study claimed that immigration documentation was among major limitations in their easy access to schooling on their arrival in South Africa. One of the participants in his narrative said:

“I had problem with getting school when I arrived South Africa because I didn’t have any permit. Schools I went to for admission asked me to get a permit before they can take. My parents started to look for permit to enable me get into school.

Different democratic governments in South Africa since after apartheid regime in 1994 have been committed to the practices of international refugee protection (Crush & McDonald, 2001). This required South Africa to put in place an immigration system and policies that would accommodate the needs of increasing number of refugees coming into the country (Crush & McDonald, 2001). This suggest more liberal immigration policies and practices different from those of apartheid era South Africa. Furthermore, the idea of building an inclusive society suggests that everyone should be given more opportunities to function and take part in the economic, social, as well as cultural development of the country and self-actualization of individuals living in it. This goes to suggest that refugee and migrants should be offered immigration assistance on their arrival in South Africa to enable them to function and participate in the inclusive South African society. It therefore implies that issues of immigration documentation should cease to be an impediment for migrants/refugees in accessing education and other opportunities in South Africa CoRMSA (2008). Participants in this study, being migrant children, should benefit from this social inclusion.

Contrary to the above, the findings indicate that immigration challenges still remains one of the major difficulties/challenges that make the South African environment unwelcoming for migrant children. Participants in this study expressed their experiences of discriminations, exclusion and limitations on arrival in South Africa as a result of immigration documentation which denied them easy access to education and other social welfare.

### **Advantages of being an African migrant learner in South Africa**

Inasmuch as the participants face many challenges and limitations as migrants, they still claimed to have gained a lot in living and schooling in South Africa. The participants’ narratives below allude to this;

“I have been able to relate with many people and I have learned much from this relating with people from different places and cultures... I’m now developed on how relate better with people”

“I have gained many opportunities from schooling in South Africa. I learn new cultures and languages. I can now speak many languages including my language because I got some friends in school who teach me how to speak Zulu”

“...as a migrant, I know I need to work hard to overcome the challenges and difficulties we face in school such as language limitations and schooling in another country. I also work hard to be the best in school so that I can get opportunities here because this s not my country”

“I like schooling here because there many resources available in my school which are not in schools in my country... because there are resources in school, I learn better here than in my country. In my school here we have

computers, good library and science laboratory. I didn't see these things in schools when I was in Congo. I will like to stay back in South Africa after my school and university education because there are more opportunities here than in my country”

Migration exposes migrants to various cultures/ways of life of different peoples. Migrants benefit a lot from this type of exposure. They gain knowledge and experiences from interacting with people from diverse backgrounds; they learn new languages and new cultures/ways of life, and get informed about different belief systems. In this sense, migration is seen as education, where migrants are exposed to learn new things and acquire more knowledge and experiences. Pries (2006) maintain that migrants benefit from this type of exposure as it develops their minds and widens their horizons.

One would argue here that those merits of migration, like its demerits, cut across all forms of migration, forced or voluntary. Further, the country of destination of migrants has effect on the benefits migrants would get from migration. This explains why migrants; voluntary or forced choose their countries of destination based on advantages they would gain from migrating to those countries. Also, as a result of advantages/opportunities migrants gain from staying in their host countries, many forced migrants become voluntary migrants (Martin, 2001). Migrants always target where they will get opportunities and gain more advantages. The participants in their narratives said they decided on South Africa as their county of destination based on opportunities they think South Africa would offer them. Also, most of the participants indicated their interest in staying back in South Africa to work after their studies. If this becomes the case, according to Martin (2001) their status will change from forced to voluntary migrants.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study revealed that migrant learners undergo many challenging experiences in their host countries. Their social position/identity as migrants in their host countries was found to play a significant role in the challenges that these learners experienced. Comments made by some of the migrant children from the DRC in South Africa reveal that some teachers fail to give them the necessary support they need from them, and the teachers treat them differently from the way they treat their local counterparts in the classrooms and in their schools. This situation among other things, contributed in denying them positive schooling experiences in South Africa. The findings also reveal that language difficulty is among the reasons they have been unable to get assistance as they found it difficult to express themselves and to effectively communicate with other people within the schools.

These finding point to the following important recommendations in order to improve quality of migrant learners in these schools:

- School authorities should ensure that teachers make their classrooms conducive for every learner to participate in the learning process, regardless of their social identities.
- The school authorities and teachers should try to adapt their educational and teaching strategies in order to accommodate the needs of migrant learners who come from different schooling systems and who in most cases are non-English speakers.
- Schools should develop inclusive monitoring programmes in order to ensure that all minority learners are equitably treated and supported within the school. For instance, establishment of inclusive enhancement and monitoring committees could be useful.
- Schools should have a mechanism by which they engage with the migrant learners in order to understand their needs, and then adapt their teaching strategies accordingly in response.

The overall aim should be to yield positive results in their academic performance and the way migrant learners get integrated and socialised into the South African schooling environments. This does not mean that the migrant learners are to be singled out from the rest of the other (South African) learners, as the participants themselves expressly objected to this. The principle of social justice, inclusivity and social equitability should be the guiding matrix behind the strategies to enhance the schooling experiences of the migrant learners in these contexts.

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## تجارب التعليم المدرسي للطلاب المهاجرين من جمهورية الكونغو الديمقراطية في مقاطعة كوازولو-ناتال، جنوب أفريقيا

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### ملخص

بالاعتماد على النظرية البنائية الاجتماعية، يدرس هذا البحث تجارب التعليم المدرسي للصف 12، من متعلمي الصف الثامن إلى الصف الثاني عشر، من جمهورية الكونغو الديمقراطية (DRC)، من خلال ثلاث مدارس في ديربان، جنوب إفريقيا. أدى عدم الاستقرار الاجتماعي والسياسي والاقتصادي في العديد من البلدان الأفريقية إلى زيادة الهجرة القسرية حيث يفر الأفراد من بلدانهم قسراً للتغلب على الشدائد. في الآونة الأخيرة، وصل المهاجرون الأفارقة الدخول إلى جنوب أفريقيا، على الرغم من تصاعد الهجمات على الأجانب، وخاصة الذين استهدفوا المهاجرين الأفارقة في البلاد. تم استخدام منهجية البحث النوعي في الدراسة، واستخدمت المقابلات السردية الفردية والجماعية كأسلوب في جمع البيانات. أظهرت النتائج أن تجارب التعليم في جنوب إفريقيا للمتعلمين المهاجرين من جمهورية الكونغو الديمقراطية كانت مليئة بالتحديات: قضية القيود اللغوية والقوالب النمطية والشعور بالعزلة والاستبعاد في المدرسة كنتيجة للاختلافات الثقافية والهوية مع المتعلمين في جنوب إفريقيا. وقد أشارت النتائج إلى سيناريو ديناميكي حيث ان البعض من المعلمين والمتعلمين داعمين والآخرين غير داعمين للمتعلمين المهاجرين في المدارس. وشملت الدراسة بعض الجوانب الإيجابية لتجارب الدارسين التعليمية مثل تعرضهم لمرافق تعليمية أفضل ومستوى تعليم أفضل في جنوب أفريقيا مقارنة بما اعتادوا عليه في بلدانهم الأصلية. في الواقع، تم إثراء تجارب المتعلمين المهاجرين في هذه المدارس في جنوب أفريقيا بفرص التعلم التفاعلي مع المتعلمين من مختلف الخلفيات الثقافية والدينية والعرقية.

الكلمات الدالة: المتعلمين، المهاجرين، التعليم الجامع، هوية.

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