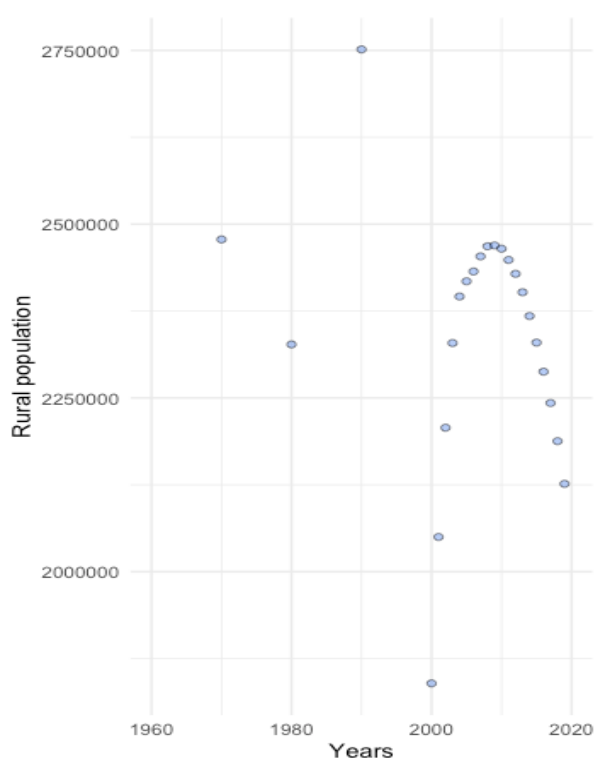

The UNDP WACA Hub

COUNTRY BRIEF: REPUBLIC OF CONGO



At a glance:

Total population = 89.5 million people = 1.15% of the world population

Population density = 40 per km² (102 people per mi²)

Area = 2.34 million km², (905,354 sq. miles)

Life expectancy = 61 years for women and 58 years for men

Median age = 17.0 years

Infant mortality = 426 deaths per 100,000 live births

Vaccinations given = 86% for diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus

Source: (Skoufias et al., 2020)

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Republic of Congo has a youthful and urbanized population, with 67% of people living in urban areas (Skoufias et al., 2020). In the Republic of Congo, women face political discrimination that disempowers them from equally engaging in politics (Skoufias et al., 2020). According to the global peace index, investing in empowering women will create more political stability to achieve equality for political peace. Equality for political peace means enhancing political opportunities for all women, not just a few. Empowering women is vital to augmenting women's choices related to employment and educational attainment. It is also critical to working with the Ministry of Education to ensure educational opportunities for all girls, minorities, and people with disabilities in urban and rural areas.

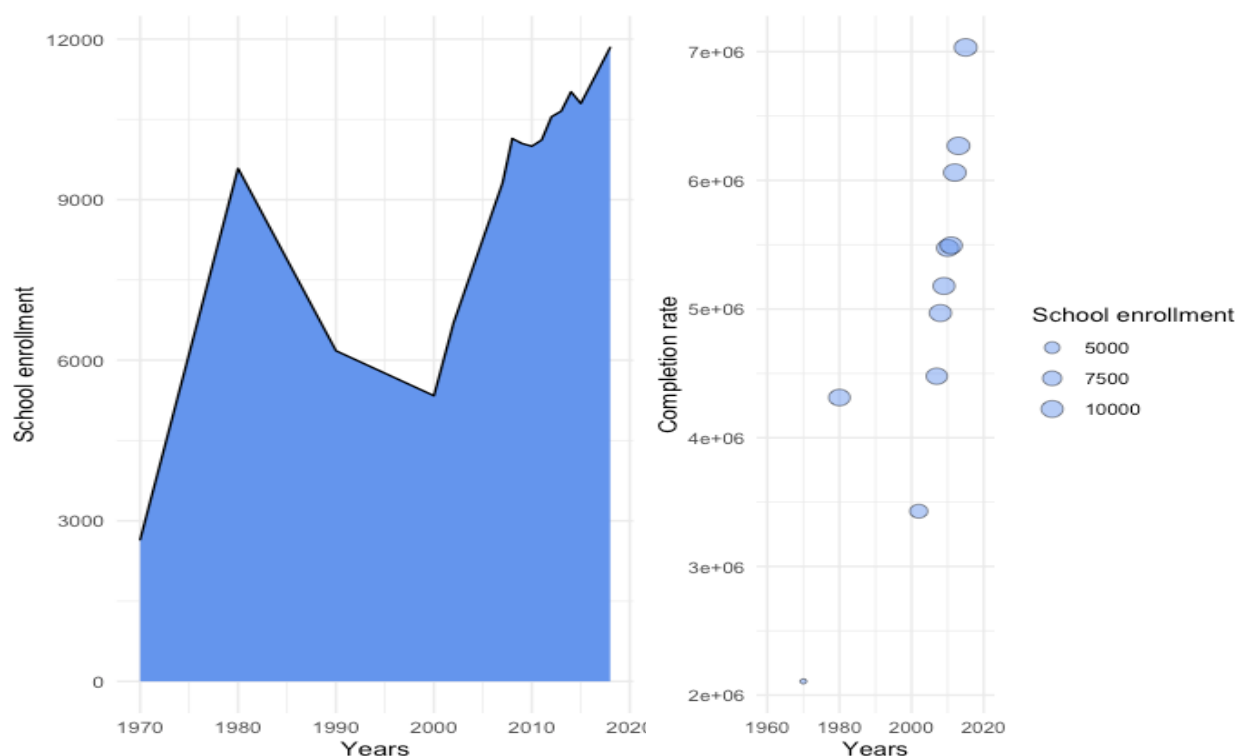
Between 2005 and 2015, the total number of people employed increased by 180,000 and people in communities between the ages of 15 to 65 increased by 264,000 (Skoufias et al., 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a temporary economic recession of -2.2% in 2020 (Skoufias et al., 2020). Creating new jobs will enable to design a demographic transformation where more people are employed than dependents. With fewer dependents, the Government of the Republic of Congo can have high savings and invest in infrastructures, health services, and education to achieve long-term

economic growth. When economic growth takes place, people, especially in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, will have higher incomes.

The cost of enhancing social protection coverage with cash transfers could be XAF 171.2 billion that represents 10% of the government budget (World Bank Group, 2017). Investing in human capital with social protection coverage will create the conditions to achieve more economic and inclusive growth. Enhancing social inclusion is critical to achieving sustainable economic and inclusive growth with new jobs, especially by promoting gender inclusion. Developing social protection policies to improve the quality of the health delivery system, enhance equity in the educational system, and increase the sustainability of social protection coverage is critical.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Shrinking child and maternal mortality are vital, and in 2015 the probability of children dying between birth and the fifth birthday has dropped from 95.3% to 56.6% per 1,000 births (World Bank Group, 2017). Maternal mortality rates have dropped from 781 to 426 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2005 and 2015 (World Bank Group, 2017). How do we create possibilities to save all mothers and children during childbirth, especially in emergency settings? It is also vital to enhance child health through immunizations. Albeit vaccinations have increased from 62% to 86% for diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT) (World Bank Group, 2017), there is still the possibility to protect 100% of children. During this COVID-19 pandemic, it is also crucial to immunizing all children, especially those between 0 and 23 months, to save their lives.



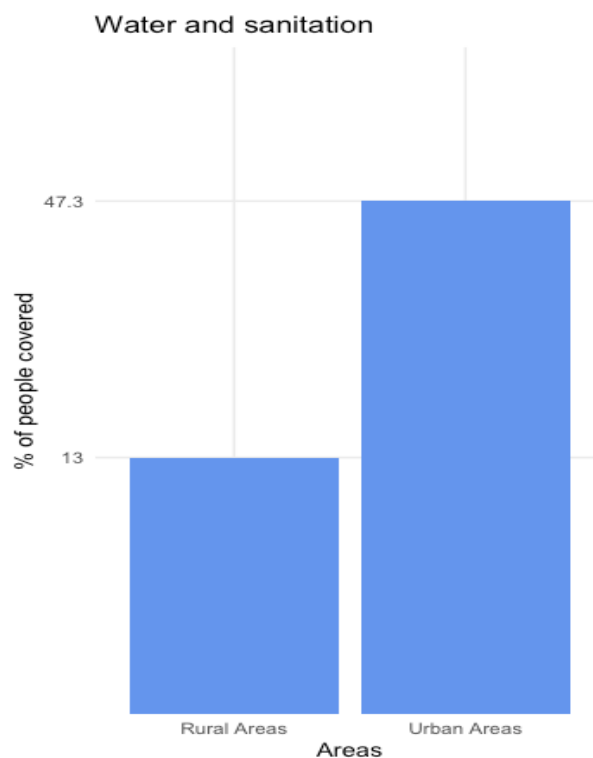
How do we make sure that more children are enrolled in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Congo? In 2015, the primary school completion rate for girls was 79% (World Bank

Group, 2017). In the same period, the primary school completion rate for boys went down from 75% to 70% (World Bank Group, 2017). In secondary school, less than 6 out of 10 children (World Bank Group, 2017), 58%, were enrolled. Children from families who live in poverty, autochthons, and people with disabilities are less likely to enroll in primary and secondary schools. These disadvantaged and vulnerable children do not register or drop out of school because of the cost of schooling and the distance to reach it.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Many people in the Republic of Congo do not have access to electricity. Albeit electricity coverage rates had increased from 26.7% in 2005 to 42.5% in 2015 (World Bank Group, 2017), people who live in poverty struggle to afford and do not have electricity in their neighborhood. In 2015, 42.5% of households were connected to the grid, but only 30% were paying for electricity (World Bank Group, 2017), so there is a gap of 12.5% between electricity coverage and payment.

Creating more access to water and sanitation is essential. Between 2005 and 2015, access to safe water increased from 72% to 77% (World Bank Group, 2017), and only 43% of the population has access to enhanced sanitation. Water coverage is higher in urban areas, with 47.3% of households (World Bank Group, 2017) that have a piped water connection. However, in rural areas, only 13% of the population (World Bank Group, 2017) had access to drinkable water. Intervening to protect 42.8% of households in marginalized and vulnerable communities will enhance access to water and sanitation for ~ 38 million people each year by creating more equality for all.



Resources:

Skoufias, Emmanuel; Zine Eddine El Idrissi, Moulay Driss. (2020). Realizing Demographic Dividends in the Republic of Congo. World Bank, Washington, DC.

World Bank Group. (2017). Republic of Congo Poverty Assessment Report: Education, Jobs and Social Protection for a Sustainable Reduction of Poverty. World Bank, Washington, DC.