

## **SSUNS Costa Rica - UNESCO**

Costa Rica has been a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) since May 19, 1950. Costa Rica is currently in the implementation stage of seven UNESCO-sponsored projects with the aim of improving the preservation of historical and cultural legacies, equality for women, and public education within the nation. Each of these projects were funded with a \$20 000 US budget and a two-year implementation timeline. We are leaders in education policies and the least corrupt country in Latin America according to Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perception Index, making our country one of the leading Latin American countries in UNESCO progress and goals. Costa Rica has had free and compulsory primary and secondary school education since the Constitution of 1869, and this education system is ranked 20th on the Global Competitiveness Report 2013-2014, considered as "high quality". The literacy rate is 94.9%. Costa Rica is also home to four UNESCO World Heritage sites with one more on the tentative list.

Costa Rica has a great amount of government corruption and therefore the attempts at improving the education availability and quality have been fairly non-progressive, however high-quality our education system is. This is due to the constitutionalization of free and compulsory primary and secondary school education by the Legislative Assembly of the Republic in 1869. The key to increasing the quality and accessibility of education in countries that are known for their corruptness is to constitutionalize compulsory education. This is especially necessary in Central and Latin America because of the commonality of government-level corruption and the slowing-effect that this causes in the educational progress of a nation. While Costa Rica has a high quality education system, it has progressed little in terms of equality and accessibility since its implementation due to corruption of government officials.

Nations suffering from drastic levels of corruption are those where we see the inequality and unfairness dripping into every reach of the government, including publically-offered programs and law enforcement, which is seen within Costa Rica. It is not uncommon for policemen to ask for bribes. The corruption of a nation can be measured by the perceivment of corruption by the people and the transparency that a government offers its citizens. The corruption of a country can also be kept in check by implementing audits and restrictions of UN assistance in a nation, which could involve organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF. The implementation of these practices in nations with a high level of corruption would place the government officials in a more accountable position and responsible for the consequences of their actions on their country. Restriction of United Nations assistance must be taken on an individual basis, however, because it could become a detriment to the country as well. The goal

of UNESCO is to aid countries in the improvement of their education, science, and cultural preservation, and therefore all actions taken to fight corruption must be in the best interests of these goals.

Costa Rica believes strongly in the prioritization of primary and secondary school education within refugee camps. Refugee camps can improve the quality of their education by making education one of their priorities, along with the safety of the people and meeting their basic needs. This would not only ensure that there is no generation gap between the educated and uneducated of a nation, but also create another addition to the daily routine of the camps to better promote the recuperation and rehabilitation of the nation by making education more accessible. This can be implemented with the increase in teachers and resources available to the refugees. These can be supplied both by the refugees (if there are teacher refugees, encourage them to be a part of the education system) and by a system of voluntary support from teachers around the world - similar to a Doctors without Borders program, except Teachers without Borders! This should be funded by the United Nations along with the rest of the refugee camps.

Costa Rica has four World Heritage sites and one more on the tentative list. These all face threats from climate change due to the position of Costa Rica on the equator and oceans. Rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions, and the increase in temperature are all effects of climate change that threaten the preservation of these natural and cultural heritage sites. The selection of World Heritage sites can be improved by including input from countries all around the world, purposefully taking all cultures, religions, and forms of geography into account. This would avoid any partiality or any bias in the selection of World Heritage sites and would also increase the variety of these sites around the world. The international community can entice private interests to cooperate with the preservation of World Heritage sites in an attempt to salvage their cultural value by offering monetary incentives and business opportunities. UNESCO should add money in the budget for promoting tourism and other business efforts related to the conservation of World Heritage sites.

To improve the cultural integrity of World Heritage sites in unstable regions, international governments must cooperate to prevent hostile action towards these cultural and natural sites. The preservation of our world's cultural history and the natural sites that are important to preserve for the future must come first and may not be disturbed by war. This can be enforced not only by vigilance on the part of all member states but also by military support. There should be troops available to protect - not engage with the militants - the heritage sites if they are thought to be in danger of eradication or of severe and irreversible damage. This commitment can also be encouraged within the international community by pressure from UNESCO and other UN committees and member states.

Developing nations can contribute to and have a greater effect on Education 2030 by placing more importance on the solution to ending the cycle of poverty in their nations. Costa Rica recognizes the importance of education and the role it plays in improving the wellbeing of all the people of a nation. Unfortunately, to provide the free education outlined in the goals of Education 2030, the governments of developing nations must have the funds to do this. These funds may not be available to the governing body through taxation based on the strain this could place on the nation, and therefore must be supplied through international support. By funding the implementation of an education system in a developing nation there is an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty, increase literacy rates, and then focus on improving the quality and equality of education in that nation.

The quality of education in a developing nation and all around the world must be equitable and consistent. There should be basic curriculum goals such as language skills, primitive math and science, and general history of that country. These are basic guidelines that each country must include in their education system but that are flexible and can be better tailored to each individual country's use. For example, the language skills taught should be in the official or in commonly spoken languages of a country, and the history lessons should be specific to that region and culture. By establishing an international standard for primary and secondary school education we can ensure equity and consistency in the quality of education offered around the globe. However, we must be careful to keep the standard for education flexible and customizable for each country to ensure cultural preservation.