**Sharon Lee**

**UNESCO - Republic of Congo**

The Republic of Congo, also known as the Congo Republic and Congo-Brazzaville is located in Central Africa. The Congo Republic is a Presidential Republic and so the President acts as both Head of State and Head of the Government. The Republic of Congo has a population of about 4.6 million people and it is a mixed economic system which includes a variety of private freedom, combined with centralized economic planning and government regulation. The United States of America, China, France, Italy, Belgium-Luxembourg, Tanzania, Gabon, and Australia are Congo-Brazzaville’s top trade partners. The Republic of Congo is a member of multiple international organizations including the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the African Union, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization.

**Topic 1: Governance and its Effects on Education**

Corruption is a plague as old as the world, a phenomenon that is extremely complex and which affects all societies. In this case, corruption is the unethical and fraudulent conduct of government officials for private gain. Corruption reigns in many countries, such as the Republic of Congo, and it involves the abuse of power by political officials who wish to maintain their status. Effective governance often provides an effective educational system, but corruption is one of the core preventions from good governance, resulting in a poor educational system.

Developing countries, like Sudan and Somalia, suffer from drastic levels of corruption resulting in bad governance. Although Transparency International (TI) is heavily criticized, it brings forth reports of corruption around the world, identifying and raising awareness for countries with drastic levels of corruption. The efforts to reduce corruption need to severely improve as corruption affects education, undermines institutions, slows down sustainable development, and contributes to governmental Instability. For example, in the Republic of Congo, between 2009 and 2011, at the request of the government, several studies were conducted by FTHM International and Capsule. It was found that all Congolese administrations and chiefdoms were implicated in corruption. Years of warfare and political instability have severely damaged the standing of education in Congo Brazzaville. Although the current actions of La Commission Nationale de Lutte contre la Corruption, la Concussion et la Fraude (CNLCCF) in working with civil society to establish an anti-corruption charter are welcomed in the Republic of Congo, corruption is almost invariably linked to doing business in the country. To add on, the government has otherwise lacked the institutional independence and political support to address seriously its own mandate. What the UN needs to do for countries like these is to promote an increase of the wages of civil servants. Civil servants may be more likely to turn to bribes if they are not well compensated for their work. There will be less incentive to abuse their power, if public workers are paid better. In addition, creating more conditions for transparency and openness in government spending may also contribute to decreasing the level of corruption in these developing nations. There should be supervision over the way the governments use their resources because they should be adequately allocated to satisfy multiple needs.

Apart from low levels of corruption, another factor that help identify good governance are strategic visions of a government. Leaders of the government and the public should have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with an impression of what is needed for such development.

The Republic of Congo believes that all refugees should have the right to life, security and education. Most of the refugee children in Congo are of Rwandan origin and they were forced into child labor, lacking access to education and health care. However, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has worked closely with the government of Congo and now Congolese schools are more open to accepting refugees. To add on, approximately 110,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are gathered at the Republic of Congo and they are being provided with education, food and basic supplies (Doctors Without Borders, 2010). Evidently, Congo-Brazzaville values the rights of every refugee and realizes the importance of refugee children’s access to education. Therefore, the Republic of Congo believes that education in refugee camps is very crucial and requires a lot of attention and action in order to improve its quality. In times of political instability and war, countries where refugees displace themselves should give refugee children access to their public schools. If the country does not have enough public schools for this to take place, UNHCR and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). should collaborate to build bigger schools in bigger numbers so that all refugee children would have access to education. Moreover, teachers who are hired to teach in these schools should have experience of teaching from the countries the refugees had fled from. Teachers should be required to teach the refugee children with their country’s curriculum, so that when the refugees return to their country one day, they could resume their education with ease.

**Topic 2: Preservation of World Heritage Sites**

Four of Congo-Brazzaville's sites (Ancien port d’embarquement des esclaves de Loango, Domaine royal de Mbé , Le Parc National de Conkouati-Douli and Parc national d’Odzala-Kokoua) are on the tentative list to be a World Heritage Site .

The Republic of Congo acknowledges the value of World Heritage sites and supports their preservation. To add on, in order to raise awareness on the value of cultural sites, there should be more forms of media created to explain in depth the story and meaning behind heritage sites and artifacts. Today, especially, most knowledge on the world comes from reading or watching something on the Internet. Therefore an effective way to promote the preservation of World Heritage Sites would be to use the media to display their worth. The international community will be more interested in protecting cultural sites if they truly understand the sites’ global significance.

The Republic of Congo believes that every country should do all they can to preserve the heritage sights. However, Congo-Brazzaville understands that some countries are sometimes incapable of doing so due to occasional climate changes and wars. In times like this, the Republic of Congo believes that international support should be provided. After all, World Heritages aren’t just heritages of a nation, but heritages given to the whole world. Therefore, all of humanity with every tribe, nation and tongue should come together to fight against harm towards World Heritage because every one of us was given the responsibility of protecting these heritages.

**Topic 3: Supporting and Accomplishing Education 2030**

The Republic of Congo believes in the strength of education and its capability to empower a generation. Congo-Brazzaville aims to use education as a key factor to develop the country and ensure its economy is well integrated in the global economy (Global Partnership for Education, 2016). Due to the multiple projects Congo has taken part of, it boasts a literacy rate that is significantly higher than most countries in Central Africa for both men and women, although a gap in literacy between the genders is inevitable. On paper, education in the Republic of the Congo looks promising; modelled on the French educational system, its compulsory between the ages of six and sixteen with six years of primary and seven years of secondary education. However, the reality is different particularly for the Congoleses who live in rural areas. Congo-Brazzaville’s current standing of education has been drastically damaged due to years of warfare and its political instability with less GDP spent today on education than in 1991. All children should have the right to free education, but in rural, areas the costs of books and pencils make education inaccessible for many children. Education is not an option for many living in poor rural communities and thousands of children living on the streets of cities (African Volunteer Network, 2014). The students who do attend to school in rural regions are forced to sit on the floor when learning because many classrooms have no tables nor chairs along with an insufficient amount of teaching staff to educate the children (African Volunteer Network, 2014). Therefore, despite Congo’s free and compulsory education, education in rural parts of Congo-Brazzaville lacks accessibility and quality. The Republic of Congo strongly supports the development of education worldwide and considers education as one of their priorities. In order to achieve Education 2030, developing countries with developing educational systems, like the Republic of Congo, must take action to provide accessible, quality education for their people.

Public education of most developing countries is not quality education since the Congolese public schools are under resourced. Accordingly, the Republic of Congo believes that contributing more funds and attention to improve efficiency in the allocation and management of resources along with the the quality of the education services, would help achieve Education 2030 (The World Bank, 2016).

The Republic of Congo faces a serious lack of telecommunication infrastructure, which hinders the development of several social sectors such as education. Consequently, the Republic of Congo realizes that another way of advancing educational systems in developing countries is the development of distance learning programmes to harmonise international collaboration in order to reinforce local proficiency for further training of the Congolese population. Moreover, it believes that another strategy is to develop an official ICT policy coordinated by the Committee for the Promotion of Information Technologies in Congo (COPTIC). This policy will set up a national plan for ICT infrastructure and reduce the cost of computer products and services, which will help develop ICT applications in several social sectors, including education (Babacar Fall, 2007).

Even though Congo has a notably high enrollment rate with 80% of Congolese children being schooled and is one of the highest performing African countries in the field of education, it it is difficult to determine if the students are receiving high quality education. Consequently, in order to ensure a suitable level of education, there should be an establishment of standard levels of education for primary and secondary schools, internationally. The standard should be flexible to satisfy each country's cultural education and teaching styles. With this establishment, all children in developing countries will be guaranteed an effective education.

**References**

Olivia Garreau. (2012). *Children of the Republic of Congo, Realizing Children’s Rights in the Republic of Congo, Education, Refugee Children.*

Retrieved from http://www.humanium.org/en/africa/republic-of-congo/

Babacar Fall. (2007). *ICT in Education in the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville).* Retrieved from <http://www.projects.worldbank.org/P084317/republic-congo-support-basic-education-project?lang=en&tab=overview>

African Volunteer Network. (2014). Congo Education. Retrieved from <http://www.african-volunteer.net/republic_of_congo_education.html>

Global Partnership for Education. (2010). *Republic of Congo.* Retrieved from <http://www.globalpartnership.org/country/republic-congo>

UNESCO. (2016). *Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.* Retrieved from http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cg

Global Information Society Watch. (2012). *Congo, Republic of.* Retrieved from https://www.giswatch.org/en/country-report/internet-and-corruption/congo-republic