

The Situation of the Education of Refugee Children in the Republic of Congo from 1960-2017

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ABSTRACT

Schooling is defined as the fact of schooling a child, that is to say, putting him on the school bench. It is actually compulsory for all children of school age. Due to its political stability, the Republic of Congo is a country that has received many refugees from Central African countries over the past twenty years. Since the return of peace to the Congo in 1998, after a period of turmoil and political instability, the Republic of the Congo has continued to attract many refugees from all directions. The practical application of the education of refugee children who have suffered war trauma is essential. National and international organizations are working in this sector to enable these children to have access to school education in Congo. They provide refugee children with various school supplies. Well educated, these refugee children help fight against illiteracy. Once schooled and trained, these children will be able to support themselves in the host country. On the other hand, the failure of their education would make them marginalized, embittered, bandits.

INTRODUCTION

"Throughout history, human beings have had to abandon their homes and seek safety elsewhere in order to escape persecution, armed conflict and political violence. No region of the world has been spared from this phenomenon. Moreover, most regions respect concepts such as asylum, refuge, sanctuary and hospitality for people in distress."

The almost permanent climate of instability that characterized countries such as Rwanda in 1994 and the Central African Republic 2013-2020 was marked in the Republic of Congo by an influx of refugees. Many of these refugees are children. In December 2002, UNHCR counted sixty-one thousand five hundred and eighty-one (61,581) children under the age of eighteen (18), of whom forty-three thousand and eighty-one (43,081) were of school age.

In Brazzaville, out of more than one thousand five hundred (1,500) refugee children, about six hundred and fifty (650) are registered in one or the other local school and barely two hundred and seven (207) have an education more or less well followed. The poor state of schooling of these refugee children pushes us to a deeper reflection to identify the reasons that are at the origin of this obsolete schooling. This observation allows us to reflect on the situation of the schooling of refugee children in the Congo. This article aims to show the impact of schooling on refugee children in the Republic of Congo.

METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Research that uses a qualitative approach aims to explore or build a proposition or explain the meaning behind reality. Research is based on reality or events that take place in the field. In qualitative research methods will use research procedures that produce descriptive data from speech or writing and objective behavior itself. Qualitative research emphasizes more on data in the form of words or images and does not emphasize numbers, besides that this research emphasizes more on the process of the product or outcome.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The importance of education for refugee children

Education is a sacred right for every child without any distinction. This right, enshrined among others in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, in the preamble of the Congolese constitution of January 20, 2002 and taken up by article 1 paragraph 1 and article 2 of law 25/95 of November 17, 1995 modifying school law n ° 008/90 of September 6, 1990 and regulates reorganization of the education system in the Republic of Congo.

At the end of these articles, it is said in particular that everyone has the right to education and every child living on the territory of the Republic of the Congo has the right without distinction of origin, nationality, sex, belief, opinion or fortune to an education which ensures the full development of his intellectual, artistic, moral and physical aptitudes as well as his civic and professional training.

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said in 1999:

"Education is a human right with huge hopes of transformation. Freedom, democracy and sustainable human development are based on this right".

The realization of the right to education is beneficial for the whole world.

Continuing his remarks, Koffi A nnan adds:

" Certainly, there are no simple answers to the violence of this right, but the challenge to be met can be summed up in one sentence: on the threshold of the twenty-first (21st) ^{century} , placing at the forefront of our priorities and at the heart of our mission, education for all".

Indeed, of all the riches that can exist in the world, the most important is that of education. Without education, man becomes a danger, a threat not only to himself and his family, but also to society and to humanity as a whole.

Properly educated, refugee children can bring benefits. Because they will be able to:

- take charge and stop being continually needy;
- represent a human resource capable of contributing to the economic and social development of the host country;
- return home voluntarily;
- contribute to the process of rebuilding their homeland; because endowed with the cardinal virtues of tolerance, forgiveness, respect for others and hard work.

On the other hand, the failure of his education will make him a marginal, an embittered, a bandit, a social misfit capable of all vices.

2. The role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Unesco, Unicef and Non-Governmental Organizations

The UNHCR is the authorized body in the management of refugees, particularly in the international protection aspect.

However, several non-governmental organizations, directly or indirectly, also play a significant role in solving problems related to the lives of these refugees.

In many of its missions, UNHCR works in concert with other United Nations agencies.

The UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in ciple HCR was created on January 1, 1951 , as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 22 of the United

Nations Charter for a period of three (3) years, pursuant to Assembly resolutions 319 (IV) and (V) of December 3, 1949 and December 14, 1954.

His mandate was extended for a period of five (5) renewable, from January 1, 1954, by the Assembly. It was further extended until 31 December 1998 by its resolution 47/104 of 16 December 1992.

Apolitical, this body of a humanitarian and social nature has the following attributions:

- Promote the rights of refugees and ensure that they are respected;
- Provide humanitarian assistance to refugee populations;
- Provide international protection to refugees and seek durable solutions to their problems.

The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees remains the working document par excellence for the UNHCR; it oversees its application so that no refugee rights are violated. And among these rights,

UNHCR's general policy on education, which is contained in the document entitled Guidelines for Educational Assistance to Refugees, derives from international law, namely the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which in its Article 22 enshrines the right to public education for refugee children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1989.

This last convention is an essential instrument and guide to define not only the needs and rights of children in general, but also the specific needs of refugee children.

"For the hundred and seventy (170) States and more which have ratified the convention, this instrument is the basic legal framework for refugee children".

Moreover, being an instrument which is very widely accepted in the world, it represents a broad consensus of the international community on the needs of children.

In its policy on refugee children, the UNHCR, as a United Nations convention on the rights of the child, constitutes a normative reference framework to guarantee refugee children and young people access to primary and secondary education.

In the presence of a large population of refugees in an emergency situation, UNHCR should promote and finance, if necessary, the rapid and modulated implementation of recreational activities, non-traditional education and structured education, paying due attention to older people.

When a limited number of refugees enter a country in the educational system and similar to that of their country of origin, UNHCR will help the schools to receive the refugees and allow the children of the local population to attend the schools set up in place in areas where refugees are concentrated.

UNHCR's role with regard to the schooling of refugee children in cities is one of advocacy, coordination, advice and support for children from vulnerable families. Education must be provided to children in transit camps and to children seeking asylum.

UNESCO and UNICEF

The action of its two (2) organizations is directed towards all children living on the national territory without distinction of legal status.

This action, which consists of assistance in the areas of health, nutrition education, environmental sanitation and access to drinking water, can also be provided to refugees. However, always going through the UNHCR, which is the designated manager of the refugees.

It should be noted that the assistance they provide to refugee children, particularly for their schooling (various school supplies) is not covered by a specific budget designed for this category of children.

Non-governmental organizations: the case of the Maintenance Commission for Migrants and Refugees

They are certainly numerous to work in the field of education; but we have retained only one, concerning the education of refugees in Brazzaville.

The Mutual Assistance Commission for Migrants and Refugees is a non-governmental organization of a socio-humanitarian nature, evolving under the influence of the Catholic Church, in particular through the Episcopal Conference of Congo.

Created in 1995 and registered with the Ministry of the Interior under number 069/MISAT/DGAT/DOR/SAG of June 3, 1999, with the location of Brazzaville Impfondo, Loukoléla ; and as its head office the interdiocesan center of works of Brazzaville, the Maintenance Commission for Migrants and Refugees pursues, among other goals, to provide multifaceted assistance to migrants and refugees, in accordance with the standards of International Law and the laws and regulations of the Republic in this regard.

With regard to the education component, one of its areas of intervention; the Maintenance Commission for Migrants and Refugees works in partnership with UNHCR;

Indeed, the Maintenance Commission for Migrants and Refugees is UNHCR's operational partner. It is from the UNHCR that, among many other providers, comes the funds that allow the Maintenance Commission for Migrants and Refugees to assist refugee children, particularly in their schooling.

However, only children whose applications have been deemed relevant and selected by the Selection Committee which meets at the start of the school year and which is made up of the Government represented by the CNAR, UNHCR-Brazzaville, UNHCR -Kinshasa and the Maintenance Commission for Migrants and Refugees .

In the selection of grant recipients, priority is given to young children in need of basic education, to pupils and students pursuing vocational training that is more qualifying than graduating. Over the past four (4) years, five hundred and sixty-eight (568) refugee children of various nationalities have benefited from UNHCR's assistance through the Migrant and Refugee Interview Commission . This assistance consisted of the purchase of school uniforms, supplies (notebooks, books, writing desks), the payment of school fees and registration fees for examinations and the payment of a subsistence allowance for those in secondary, post -secondary, and those of vocational training.

It is necessary to understand by post secondary, a qualifying professional training of a duration of two (2) years after the BAC; with a diploma at the end of training equivalent to the Brevet d'Etude de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)... At the end of this training, the interested party enters the productive world.

It is generally provided by Private Higher Institutes. With regard to vocational training proper, this includes post-primary vocational training, that provided by secondary vocational training centers (public or private technical colleges) and exclusively practical training provided by apprenticeship workshops (workshops). hairstyles, mechanical workshops, pastries, etc.)

3. Situation of refugee children enrolled in official schools in Brazzaville

At the end of our investigations, it turned out that not all the refugee children in Brazzaville go to school in Brazzaville. In fact, out of more than one thousand (1,000) refugee children of school age, all nationalities combined, about six hundred and seventy (670) would be enrolled in schools in Brazzaville, and barely two hundred and seven (207) have enough schooling. monitored by UNHCR and CEMIR. Statistical data related to the schooling of refugee children in Brazzaville

Table 1 : distribution by nationality of refugee children of school age

No.	Nationality	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	central african	129	113	242
02	Congolese (DRC)	99	115	224
03	Angolan	20	25	42
04	Chadian	24	11	35
05	Burundian	07	09	16
06	South African	02	03	05
07	Sudanese	02	03	05
08	Nigerian	-	01	01
09	Togolese	-	01	01
	Total	610	487	1097

Source: UNHCR Brazzaville-Statistics January 2003.

As we said, these thousand and ninety (1097) children do not all go to school. Also, out of the six hundred and seventy (670) children who would be enrolled in schools in Brazzaville, just two hundred and seven (207) have a fairly good education.

The statistics we present below are those of refugee children who benefit from UNHCR's assistance through CEMIR.

Statistical tables of refugee children in Brazzaville benefiting from UNHCR assistance
In 2002-2003, two hundred and seven (207) refugee children in Brazzaville benefited from UNHCR assistance through CEMIR. There are one hundred and twenty-seven (127) boys for eighty (80) girls.

Table 2 : Breakdown by nationality

No.	Native country	Sex		Total	Percentage (%)
		Boys	Girls		
01	Central African Republic	72	39	111	53.14
02	D.R. Congo	43	33	76	36.71
03	Chad	04	05	09	4.34
04	Angola	05	01	06	2.89
05	Burundi	03	02	05	2.41
Total		127	80	207	100

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics

In this table we note the absence of Rwandan children even though this community is the most important in the Congo in general and in Brazzaville in particular.

Table 3 : Breakdown by cycle

No.	Cycle	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	Primary	38	39	77
02	College	32	23	55
03	Professional training	04	04	08
04	High school	13	05	18
05	Post-Secondary	40	09	49
Total		127	80	207

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics.

In its aid policy for the education of refugees, the UNHCR gives priority to basic education, which starts from primary school to lower secondary school.

Distributions by level of studies

Table 4 : primary

No.	Levels	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	CP1	06	03	09
02	CP2	04	08	12
03	CE1	09	06	15
04	CE2	03	06	09
05	CM1	09	09	18
06	CM2	07	07	14
Total		38	39	77

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics

Table 5 : Colleague

No.	Levels	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	6th	05	06	11
02	5th	09	05	14
03	4th	08	05	13
04	3rd	10	07	17
Total		22	23	55

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics

Table 6 : High school

No.	new	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	2nd	01	00	01
02	1st -	07	00	07
03	Terminal	05	05	10
Total		13	05	18

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics.

Table 7: Post-secondary

No.	Levels	Sex		Total
			girls	
01	1st year -	17	05	22
02	2nd year -	23	04	27
Total		40	09	49

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics.

The post-secondary program, although not offering the guarantee of employment, has more scholarship holders.

Indeed, it trains in the fields of computer science, accounting, management, international trade in short; in areas that do not allow them to support themselves or set up on their own account. Hence the high risk of unemployment.

Table 8 : Professional

No.	Levels	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	1st year -	02	01	03
02	2nd year -	01	01	02
03	3rd year -	01	00	01
Total		04	02	06

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics

Table 9 : post-primary vocational training

No.	Levels	Sex		Total
		Boys	Girls	
01	Single year	00	02	02

Source: CEMIR, December 2002 statistics

A very negligible place is given to vocational education, even though it is the surest way leading into the productive world.

Table 10 : summary of the results of the State Examinations 2002-2003

Review	registered	Admitted	Stranded	admission %
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BEPC	15	04	11	22.66
BET	01	01	00	100
BAC	10	01	08	20

Source : CEMIR August 2003

We have noticed that there is more success in the intermediate classes than in the exam classes.

Table 11 : Summary of the situation of scholarship holders in two (2) years

Years	Stock market numbers	present	give up	pendant lights	Resettlement	Relocation
2001-2002	245	223	01	08	01	08
2002-2003	207	201	06	00	00	00

Source: CEMIR, August 2003 statistics

From these statistical data we retain that the UNHCR assists very few children of school age. Rwandan children are excluded from this assistance. The training programs in which the majority of scholarship recipients are enrolled do not offer job prospects at the end of the training. However, there is equal admission of girls and boys to apprenticeships.

CONCLUSION

“Education is recognized as a human right in international institutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on Human Rights”.

It is an essential foundation for individual and social development in the modern world. Refugee law is recognized in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Education can provide the knowledge and skills a refugee child needs to survive, and help prepare for a durable solution such as repatriation. freely consented.

Education must be in line with the development needs of the country, which is why when schooling refugee children one must always refer to the programs of their country of origin. On the other hand, badly educated these children will certainly represent a danger for their future. Indeed, many refugees end up integrating into the society of the host country. However, to rout these children would constitute a danger as well for the country of departure as for the host country.

Refugee children as a whole are needy. Their future therefore depends on the effects of the UNHCR on the one hand and the Congolese government on the other in the process of their education. Therefore, if it is accepted that children are the future of society, they must be given the chance to go to school.

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