GLOBALIZATION, MINERALS, WAR, AND EDUCATION: THE CASE OF CONGO

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ABSTRACT

Seen as a bittersweet gift to the world today, especially in developing countries, globalization has had both positive and negative impacts on Africans, and especially on the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The resources of Congo have played an important role in globalization around the world; more so in the world outside Congo. Through the death of millions of people, socioeconomic and psychological challenges, the Congolese people have had to pay a very high price simply because of these resources that are so highly needed to sustain globalization. While expected to help address these challenges, higher education in the Congo has struggled to face the challenges of repeated wars. This case study presents the results of interviews, archival data, and participant observation done with educational leaders and administrators, teachers, and students in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country that has been on war for almost two decades. The study explores how war affects the quality of higher education when a country is constantly under the challenges of war, and what is being done about it.

Keywords: Case study, qualitative research, Democratic Republic of Congo, higher education, war, mineral resources, teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Republic of Congo (called Congo hereafter) is considered the heart of Africa based on its geographical location on the African continent. Its extremely high reserves of natural and mineral resources also make it an important country. From globalization perspective, Congo is just one of those parts that make up the common cliché—the global village. Since most people around the world have come to agree that it takes the whole village to raise a child (African proverb), it looks like globalization has tremendously benefited from this reality. Movement of people, things, and services around the world today faces much less restriction than what was the rule in just a few decades ago. Instead of talking about patriotism and nationalism, global or world citizenship is the value that is more and more promoted. Whether consciously or unconsciously, everyone is now a member of the "global village".

Coming back to the African proverb, "it takes the whole village to raise a child", it is clear that the child is globalization. For this child to grow and grow strong muscles, every member of the global village must bring their contribution. Just like other countries, Congo is making its contribution. Its contribution is mainly from its natural and mineral resources. Unfortunately, this contribution is not always offered at free will. Millions of lives have been lost in trying to get the share of the country to contribute to raising this child called globalization. Among those caught in this crossfire are the young people, who are the future of the nation.

This study aimed at understanding the impact of war on higher education in Congo, based on the beliefs that education is the key to success in modern societies. While studies may have

been conducted about wars and their general impact on people and the ecosystem, little, if any, is known about the impact of war on higher education in Congo.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature is almost mute on the impact that war has on higher education and vice-versa in Congo. It is basically the main reason behind conducting this study. A baseline study was needed to help explore this issue further in the future. The study is meant to generate constructive discussion on the role that higher education does or should play in this war-torn country. The literature presented here is therefore mainly focused on setting the stage of the study by reviewing globalization, facts about the Congolese mineral resources (which are at the heart of the armed conflicts there), a general overview of education in Congo, and the Congolese conflict.

Globalization

According to Oluikpe (2013), "the essence of globalization can be captured in two key words: interconnectedness and interdependence" (p. 6). Proponents of globalization promised that the world would become interconnected and interdependent. There is no doubt that this goal has been achieved, especially in the past one or two decades. Exponential technological advancement has put staying connected with people and organizations around the world easily possible. Moving people, goods, and services around the planet is now happening all the time.

World economies are now interconnected and interdependent. That is why, for instance, the 2008 US crisis quickly had a ripple effect in Asia, Europe, and the Americas (Biaggi, 2013). Although not on a significantly large scale, the impact of this crisis also affected African economies. The effects of such a global crisis can only be caused by the world interconnectedness of the world banking systems and the unethical attitude of world financial leaders (Boddy, 2011; Icke, 2011). Although the world has become a global village, this village has some black sheep that are ready to do anything to challenge what should be the peace and harmony of the village.

From the large spectrum of globalization, it has had both positive and negative impact on the world. Some may argue for one side over the other. It is, however, an undeniable fact that globalization has had both positive and negative effects on the world. Making the world a global village, the sharing of resources and interconnectedness through technological advancement are some of the positive effects of globalization.

The negative impact of globalization comes from different perspectives. When the world has high demand to sustain the technological advancement that relies heavily on minerals, whoever is on the way becomes a threat. Threats must be removed at any cost. Among those who are on the way are millions of innocent people. The source of many armed conflicts, including the conflicts in Congo, is usually the control of natural and mineral resources. Additionally, some nations are too dependent on others (Levitt & Dubner, 2009; Sachs, 2006). Other nations seem to take advantage of so many nations as everyone tries to become the world economic leader in the global village.

Congolese Mineral Resources

War in Congo is directly linked to the control of mineral resources. About 80% of Colombite Tantalum of the world, used in phone and computer transistors, is found in Congo. Congo has most mineral resources that the global village needs to sustain the fast-growing technological advancements. All means, legal and illegal, have been used to access and pull out these resources.

Some have argued that mineral resources in Congo are a curse to the Congolese people (Aluanga, 2008, November 15; Belgian Network on Natural Resources, 2009; British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013). From a normal perspective, a country with so many natural and mineral resources should have had a strong economy. Such a country should have had strong socio-economic structures in place. No wonder why it comes as a surprise to the global village members when everyone learns that a Congolese person lives on less than a US dollar a day (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010). Is it possible for paradise and hell, beauty and misery, riches and poverty to have such an unexpectedly strong cohabitation? Well, they do in Congo.

Education in Congo

The study by the World Bank (2005) is probably one of the most comprehensive ones available today about the education system in Congo. This study effectively traces the historical trajectory of education in Congo, showing both the good and bad times that the Congolese system of education has undergone. It covers all the educational sectors: private and public, primary, secondary, tertiary and professional training. It highlights the current challenges, their causes and makes recommendations of what needs to be done for education to sustain socioeconomic development.

For the purposes of this paper, some of the data from the World Bank's (2005) study are synthesized. Those presented here are the ones that have direct connection to this study. They show how the attention to education in general has decreased over the years.

A decade or two after the independence, the allowance for education was an enormous 30 percent of the national budget. In the early 1990s, just a couple of decades later, it had dramatically dropped to as low as 8 percent. As found in the current study, this budget has fallen even lower at 2 percent. Financing for education has become primarily the obligation of the students and their families, while that was primarily the government's responsibility.

With poverty striking most people in the country, students are not able to pay their tuition. This automatically leads to high dropout. Additionally, according to the World Bank's (2005) study, this leads the few qualified professors that the country has, to work in several universities to be able to meet their personal needs. This situation leads to poor quality education.

Poor quality of education is evidenced in many factors from the World Bank's study. For instance, doctoral training in Congo is highly limited. Most people who hold a doctoral degree studied abroad. Because the country has very few qualified professors, unqualified educators are teaching in higher education institutions, especially in the lower division. The few qualified ones easily spend between 35 to 70 percent of their time teaching in universities other than those where they are officially recognized as full-time faculty. Because of the lack

of enough funding, many institutions cannot afford quality professors. Additionally, laboratories, instructional materials, and school infrastructures are highly limited.

As a result, there are many deplorable facts about higher education in Congo. For instance, from all the batch of university freshmen, only 28 percent complete a master's degree. That is an attrition of 72 percent. Of those who manage to complete their master's degrees, only 18 percent of the initial batch of freshmen are able to complete without ever repeating a year. According to the World Bank, this is due to the untrained educators who teach in lower divisions of the undergraduate programs.

Last, despite the many challenges in the higher education system of Congo, the number of enrollment continues to go up. This is simply because it is part of the Congolese culture and collective philosophy that education is the best key to success. Something, however, must be kept in mind: "The higher education sector in [Congo] today presents a picture of uncontrollable and imbalanced quantitative growth with a rapid deterioration in quality, operating in a confusing policy and legal framework" (World Bank, 2005, p. 101). For this educational system to contribute significantly to the socioeconomic development of Congo, major improvements need to take place. Unfortunately, the repeated armed conflicts in the country do make the prospect even more complex.

Africa's World War

One of the well-known written works on the Africa's World War is by Prunier (2009). This section on Africa's World War is primarily based on Prunier's work because it presents facts as closely as viewed by Congolese people themselves. In his book, Prunier critically and meticulously analyzes the Rwandan genocide and how it exported war to Congo. He clearly shows that it is because of the two million Rwandan refugees from the 1994 massacres that war was exported to Congo. The Rwandan government wanted to come after the so-called *genocidaires* who had fled to Congo. Prunier reports that almost half of a million people were slaughtered in Congo because of this approach, and many of them innocent civilians.

While there, the Rwandan army decided to work with some Congolese politicians to topple the Mobutu regime. What was called the war of liberation ended in 1997 by the new leader getting into power and ousting President Mobutu. This new leader would face armed conflicts because of to his leadership skills. These conflicts would lead to his assassination in 2001. During this period, what Prunier calls Africa's World War would happen in Congo, leading to the lost of several millions of lives. Several African nations were involved on one side or the other of the official government. War was no longer between Congolese, rather it was between several African countries, hence, Africa's World War.

Prunier echoes the disappointment that the Congolese people had in the international community during Africa's World War. The international community, while knowing what was happening, did little to stop it. The number of people who died of this war was five to eight times more than those who perished in the genocide in Rwanda. Yet, there was almost complete silence from the international community.

Prunier discusses some peace projects that have been launched several times in recent years in Congo before he summarizes the philosophical underpinnings of all those conflicts that have plagued the Great Lakes Region of Africa, where Congo is located. Peace progress is

extremely slow in the country. Comparing the current state of the country with the period of Africa's World War, there is reason for some hope in the years to come.

METHODOLOGY

The complexity of war, minerals, and education in Congo, together with the lack of strong literature on the issue, could only make case study one of the most appropriate research design for this study. When the central phenomenon is an ill-structured problem that does not seem to have clear delimitations, case study is one of the most appropriate designs when someone tries to understand the related complex issues (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). This study is a phenomenological case study because it depends on lived experiences of the research participants (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2014). The aim of the study was to explore how war and higher education affect each other in Congo as seen in the oral accounts of the research participants, archival data, and participant observation.

Setting

This study is focused on Congo. This country of about 77 million people is the second largest in Africa, with the land area of about 2.4 million square kilometers. It is called the Heart of Africa because it is right at the center of the continent. It is the country with the largest number of neighboring countries in Africa—nine in total. It has about 250 languages and 150 dialects, leading to more or less 400 ethnic groups (Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 2009).

Since 1996, war has claimed between five to eight million lives in Congo. The country was once dubbed the "Rape Capital of the World" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2010). In 2013, the country had about 60 active rebel groups (Doctors Without Borders, 2014; Wars in the World, 2013). In war zones, mostly in the eastern side of the country, violence has been part of daily life for years. This is part of the local, national, regional, and international politics mixed with tribalism and rush for mineral resources.

A brief history of the Congo reveals that the conflict that still surfaces today actually started more than a century ago (Hochschild, 1998). From now and then, it simply takes different shapes but in general it is always linked to the natural and mineral resources.

Starting with the Kingdom of Kongo, natural and mineral resources were part of the economy. Slavery and colonization utilized Congolese human resources to be able to access natural and mineral resources. Belgian Congo depended on the same resources. The control over mineral resources moved even more to the center stage, both from national and international levels, from Belgian Congo (1908-1960), through the Republic of Congo-Kinshasa (1960-1965), Zaire (1965-1996) and now what is called the Democratic Republic of Congo (1996-present). The struggle is mostly around access to or control of mineral resources.

In the Great Lakes Region, the 1990s came with people's massive struggle for democracy. The mid-1990s coincided with the Rwandan genocide, which pushed about two millions of refugees into Congo, among them, some rebel groups. Ever since that massive migration went into all the directions of the Great Lakes Region of Africa, many armed groups have been formed, sometimes as proxies of some governments. What they have in common is to control mining sites in that region, more than any other cause. All these different

interconnected conflicts led to what was recently called Africa's World War (Prunier, 2009) because of the high level of involvement of several African countries in one major conflict at the same time.

When the name of Zaire was changed to the Democratic Republic of Congo, every Congolese citizen hoped for a new day. Unfortunately, that hope did not last long. It was quickly crushed with repeated wars, ethnic cleansing and inter-ethnic armed conflicts. In what is called Democratic Republic of Congo, real democracy is half-lived at best. There seems to be an international will to change the geopolitics of the country, ethnic cleansing has occurred, tribalism is using armed groups, and there is lack of control of war zones, just to name a few. Despite the most robust United Nations deployment of the world in Congo, some almost view Congo as a failed state (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2011). The 20,000 UN men and women in uniform have spent about a decade in the country without putting an end to the bloodbath.

From 1996 to 2014, the following African countries have been reported in the media to have be involved in the conflict of Congo. Without counting the countries represented through the United Nations personnel and those that were indirectly involved, these countries included Angola, Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The Congolese people have been caught in the crossfire of Africa's World War.

This study focused solely on the eastern side of Congo because that is where the epicenter of the armed conflicts was during the time of the data collection. In fact, that setting is the one that has had most of the wars and armed conflicts. Most incidents of atrocities reported about Congo come from that part of the country.

Sampling

This study used the purposive sampling methods because in most qualitative studies, the researcher must purposefully select participants who will provide the best information possible (Creswell, 2013; Lichtman, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Participants came from five different universities in that part of Congo. They were all in all 32 participants. There were 23 graduate students, four professors, two university presidents, one university vice-president of finance, one university vice-president for academic administration, and one university registrar.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection included four focus group discussions that lasted about one to an hour and a half each, and five individual interviews that lasted about half an hour to one hour each. The first focus group was made of 12 master's students in public health. The second had eight master's students in the field of education. The third was made of three student leaders. The last was made of one president, one vice-president for finance and one registrar of the same university. The individual interviews were made of four professors and one vice-president for academic administration.

Content and thematic analyses were the main methods used to try to understand the complexity surrounding the mutual impact that war and higher education have on each other in Congo. Analysis was made on data collected from both the recorded oral interviews and the reflections from participant observations.

FINDINGS

From the data, it became clear that war has had mostly negative impact on communities, on the youth and students, on the educational system, and on educators. Additionally, schools and non-government organizations (NGOs) have taken extreme measures to try to help promote higher education. A critical look at the case under exploration revealed some minimally positive side of war. All is discussed below.

Impact of War on Communities

War in that region has tremendously slowed down the economy and the agricultural activities of the people. Yet, most people there rely heavily on farming. This disruption in their activities has lead to dire poverty. In fact, Congo's GDP in 2013 was only US $400 (Factbook, 2013).

These financial challenges make it extremely difficult for university students to afford their tuition fees. Congo has many private colleges and universities. They heavily depend on tuition fees to meet their expenses. Even state educational institutions depend on student tuition fees to survive (Prunier, 2009). So, the poverty experienced in the communities has a direct impact on the students and their education, which also affect the university and its employees.

In war zones, young people and women are the primary target of rebel groups. This insecurity has caused some young people to drop out of school. Urban migration becomes a normal phenomenon because people feel more secure in urban than in rural areas. Of course, the consequence of these massive migrations is that very few people are involved in agricultural activities that feed the rest of the country. One master's of public health student in the study said, "there is no city without a village". Thus, the city also suffers because cities depend heavily on the product of the agricultural activities coming from rural areas.

Communities face other issues from rebel groups. People witness mass killings, mass rapes, desecration of churches, and illegal use of schools as lodging for rebels. As a result, people are in the village during the day but at night they all take refuge in the bush for their own safety.

In the study, it was revealed that about 50% of schools in war zones are not accredited. One interviewee was describing the situation in those remote places in such a surprising way that he was once visiting one of such schools when he observed one classroom. Five years after the former president of the country was assassinated, this teacher still never heard about it. The teacher was still telling students that the assassinated president was still the current president. The government obviously had no access to these remove villages. Rebels had cut the communities completely off from communication with the rest of the country.

Impact of War on the Youth and Students

War in Congo has had a tremendously negative impact on the youth and university students in that region of Congo. It has affected both their personal and academic lives. It leads one to wonder about the future of the whole nation.

Impact on Youth

Young people are frustrated and discouraged with life. Those in war zones live in constant fear. They face the potential of being forced into joining the rebel groups. Those among them who are educated are the targets of the rebels either to eradicate them for fear of control or to recruit them to take leadership positions in the rebel movements. Killing the educated ones is a strategy the rebel uses to weaken the potential of these intellectuals to resist the rebels' ideology.

Some of the young people have lost their parents, siblings, or friends in brutal atrocities. With loss of parents, these young people have no way to generate income to afford their university tuition. Additionally, as these young people witness violence and immoral acts being perpetrated on their loved ones by the rebels, these young people start adopting these devastating values as the normal life. They begin to think that violence is the best conflict management strategy because ever since they were born, they have never seen any alternative way that was successful. One of the presidents in this study said, "today's university students have never experienced peace . . . All they know is rebellion and atrocities" because they were born during the conflict.

The generation of those entering the university today is of those born in the mid-1990s when the current conflicts began. They are much familiar with seeing violence being used as the only way to address misunderstanding. They have tasted little, if any, of what people call peace and security.

Impact on Students

It is true that students face many challenges around the world. The Congolese students have probably faced some of the worst challenges ever recorded in modern history. This section briefly synthesizes some of the challenges that they face on a regular basis.

Students live in perpetual fear. Rebels' activities are unpredictable. No one ever knows when they will show up. They show up in the morning, during the day, at night, in the village, in the city, on the road, on the farm, at school, in the church, in houses, at the bank, everywhere and anytime that fits their own schedules. This creates some constant fear that surely has some negative impact on the students' brain and their learning.

One of the surprising sharing from most of the interviews with the students was that students are required to study for tests, take tests, and continue to attend classes while gunshots are going on. If a student misses a test for having fled the fighting, he or she is not given any make-up test when he or she is back. Make-up tests are given only if the whole institution was closed, which is quite rare, according to the interviewees.

When asked about this practice, the school administrators gave two reasons. First, they believe that all students should be tested under the same conditions. Therefore, if some students take tests while gunshots are on, every one else needs to be under the same condition to take the test. This reason did not seem to hold well because safety should always be one of the major priorities of a school. Second, and maybe a much better reason, they explained that if students are kept at home during these armed conflicts, young people run the risk of being forced into rebel movements. As hard as it is for the school, they would rather keep these young people at school. They must keep students' brain occupied with education. This helps

avoiding idleness that may easily lead young people to join the rebel movements or become killing targets of the armed groups.

In war zones, textbooks are inexistent. Unqualified teachers make the majority of the faculty. Additionally, while at school, some students have simply been informed that their parents or siblings have been killed. It changes everything for such students because they cannot concentrate well on their studies. As for those who lose their parents, they can no longer afford to pay their tuition fees; they end up dropping out of school. This can easily cause anger that will trigger them to join other armed groups for the sake of avenging their loss.

These challenges have led to massive failures in class and board exams, psychological problems, involvement in illegal use of drugs, just to name a few. One whole generation is facing the potential of being wasted. While the immediate effects are already scary, the long-lasting impact of war on the young generation may be even worse a decade or so from now.

Those who manage to complete their studies face unemployment problems. According to one vice-presidents of academic administration, having a large number of unemployed educated young people is like a bomb waiting to explode. Yet, about 70% of graduates were reported unemployed. When rebels come to recruit these unemployed youth for leadership positions, it is a struggle for them to reject such an enticing offer.

Impact of War on the Congolese Educational System

In Congo, there are educational issues that are hard to imagine. War has played a tremendously negative role on the Congolese educational system. Here, the paper synthesizes impact on the educational infrastructure, the leaders, and the faculty.

Impact of War on School Infrastructure

Deplorable facts were reported in the study about schools in war zones. In rural schools, it is common to find a classroom built for 30 students holding 80 to 120 students because other schools have been bombed or burned. A university was mentioned that was built for the capacity of 2,000 students but had more than 30,000 at the time of the data collection. Schools were reported that ask for less tuition fees because they are known to have unqualified teachers. Yet, parents still send their children there, knowing all well that teachers are not qualified. Last, during my observation, I was shown a university building that was built for one institution and was now hosting five different universities (not five different programs but five different universities with five different administrators). Five different unrelated universities were being concurrently run in the same building. A number of times, students from one of those universities would easily start a conflict with those from the other one running on the same campus. Such a conflict would take the police and several days to resolve.

One of the two presidents who participated in this study recalled a national meeting of university presidents that he attended. It was organized by the ministry of higher education of the country in 2010. In that meeting, he could not believe his ears when it was indicated that in the country with about 1,500 higher education institutions, there were only 1,800 qualified professors. This basic statistics simply and painfully showed that higher education in Congo runs on less than two qualified professors per institution. Last, only 2 percent of the national

budget is allocated to education in general, with a national annual budget that was around US $7 billion.

What is presented here can only lead anyone to believe in miracles. Very few countries, if any, can run higher education under such conditions. If education is still the key to success of a nation, then Congo must address these issues to give a chance to the next generation.

Impact of War on Educational Leaders

Leading a higher education institution in war zones of Congo brings quite some unique challenges. Educational leaders are frustrated. Yet, they must continue their work if they hope to contribute to the reconstruction of the country, the promotion of peace and socio-economic development.

Educational leaders in this study indicated that sometimes students from different programs can easily put up inter-program fights. It is not uncommon to find students using violence to try to resolve a conflict. When students are unhappy with some school policy, it is usual in many universities for students to break the school infrastructure. This conflict management strategy directly reflects what the young people are used to seeing with the armed groups. In many cases, peaceful resolution of conflict has become rare.

Since many higher education institutions are private schools, 80% of their fund is budgeted on tuition fees. The vice-president for finance who was involved in this study indicated that only around 50% of the tuition fees are recovered by the end of the school year. Yet, his university was known to be one of those with the highest rate of paying students. This means that many schools in those war zones do not recover even half of the student tuition.

Running an institution on half of the annual budget is a serious challenge for the administrators. According to one of the presidents interviewed, it makes it hard to hire qualified faculty. Due to the scarcity of qualified professors, universities rely heavily on adjunct faculty from inside and outside the country. Paying the travel, board and lodging expenses for them is a serious challenge for the administrators. Additionally, when these adjuncts traveling from other countries are scheduled, sometimes war starts and they have to cancel their flights and change their itineraries. This too affects the university and education at large.

Last, some students are connected to rebel movements. They go to school either to spy on the university or simply because they would like to obtain a degree that will help them obtain some promotion. Such students sometimes threaten the school leaders, the faculty, or other students. School leaders always have to watch for such students and develop ways to discourage them from their dangerous potential of conflict.

Impact of War on Educators

War has a negative impact on educators too. It does so from four different dimensions: poverty, health, security, and dignity. This section analyzes each as presented in the data.

In the research setting, education has come to be known as the profession of the poor. With students who cannot fully pay their tuition fees, the institution may not be able to pay a reasonable salary to all its employees. This leads educators to seek multiple employments,

bribery from failing students, and lack of motivation for teaching well. Teaching for many is a Plan B, after everything else has failed. The salary of many educators is not enough to meet all their needs.

Next, because of being overworked or due to prolonged dissatisfaction with their work, some educators face depression, mental problems, even heart attack. All three problems were illustrated in specific cases of faculty in one of the universities that I visited. Specific names were shared for each of these problems. One faculty member indicated that, on a yearly basis, he reads and is expected to give feedback to about 100 master's theses. This is the number that some professors in other parts of the world can achieve in their whole professorial life.

Educators also face security issues. For instance, if a student who is connected with a rebel group fails, the student easily threatens the professor. Additionally, parents who pay tuition fees expect by default that their children will pass the class. Threats come from parents if, after paying tuition fees, they hear that their children failed. Last, some students were reported to be working as spies of some rebel groups. Such students know only one way to deal with any professor with whom they have any misunderstanding: they simply want to end the professor's life. Educators thus have to use extra care when working in those war zones.

The final issue that comes with war is the loss of educator's dignity. When educators are some of the poorest people, it is common for the community to look down at them. When educators are involved in bribery or other immoral or illegal activities, they lose their dignity. When students threaten educators and these educators show that there is nothing they can do about it, they lose their dignity. When any of this happens to a handful of educators, people generalize the issue on all the educators, thus affecting all them all together.

Extreme Measures

To try to address the many challenges that higher education faces in this war-torn region, institutions and different organizations have developed some extreme measures. Although done on a small scale, they give some reason for hope in Congo. These measures are in three main areas: Involvement in peace process, research, and scholarship programs.

Involvement in Peace Process

Data revealed that some higher education institutions are involved in the peace process. For instance, workshops are organized on university campuses about conflict management and peace building approaches and projects. For instance, some performance arts majors have been focusing their activities on the theme of peace building and conflict management.

When students in this study were asked additional measures they wish to see to develop lasting peace in the region, they shared quite some impressive ideas. They recommended that education should focus more on world citizenship than just nationalism or regionalism. They promoted interethnic marriage to strengthen inter-ethnic relationships in places where ethnic cleansing is practiced. They recommended the government to be more involved in constructive dialog with local governments, civilians, and higher education students to brainstorm lasting answers to the problems of the country. Last, recommendation was given for better management of natural and mineral resources to benefit truly the people of Congo.

Research

Some institutions have decided to focus on applied research to try to help build and consolidate peace in the region. They have tried to use research and application of learning in real lives of people. For instance, some students have developed workshops to empower local communities in better ways of growing food and fighting common diseases. Two institutions whose administrators were part of this study indicated actively carrying out research with different communities that were affected. Their research is more on how to help these communities rebuild their lives for a better tomorrow. One institution that offers a law degree had their students pick up some legal cases from communities that cannot afford a lawyer. Students thus apply their newly acquired knowledge while defending the poor. In most cases, students reported that they won the case, which gave them quite some hope about their future career and the future of the poor clients they were representing.

Scholarship Programs

Schools, non-government organizations, and some church organizations have developed scholarship programs for students and faculty. As indicated earlier, Congo has limited number of qualified university professors. Very few of those professors are trained in conflict resolution and peace education. In recent years, one university has been sending a number of their faculty members to Europe and Latin America to specialize in these fields that are almost nonexistent in the country. As these scholars return to the country, they help teach courses and train young people in these much-needed fields.

Some Indian and German non-government organizations were cited to be providing scholarships of academic excellence to deserving university students. Some scholarships came from Baptist European churches. Others came from Congolese professors who decided to make a monthly contribution to help poor but intelligent Congolese students. This last one was even more significant because this self-determination in improving Congo by Congolese people themselves is an asset to bring about sustainable change and development.

Resilience

For the sake of their critical thinking, students in this study were asked what they think could be the positive side of war in Congo. Their answers were quite full of hope for the future. They were a clear evidence of their resilience.

One student leader referred to the case of Rwanda, South Korea, and Japan as his way of looking at the war in Congo. These countries are socioeconomically strong today as a result of their determination that came out of their great suffering trough atrocious wars. This student believed that Congolese too could do the same.

Another student in the same focus group referred to the Biblical Parable of the Talents. According to her, if much is given to Congo (through natural and mineral resources), much is definitely expected from them. Therefore, Congo will have to find a way to rise to that expectation.

Another theme that was common through most focus group discussions and individual interviews was that most people there believe that education is the key to success. This strong belief in education has helped students develop an extraordinary resilience. It is this resilience

that keeps them in the classroom while bullets are flying all over the place. It is this resilience that sends some to school even when they have no idea where their tuition fees will come from. It is this resilience that makes young people stay in the classroom, often living on one meal a day. It is this resilience that helps young people say "no" to the rebels when they are offered a choice to join rebel groups and make much more than just a decent salary. They dream and long for a different Congo. They dream of a Congo that is truly democratic, peaceful, and prosperous.

CONCLUSION

Congo has faced quite some chaotic situations. Young people have experienced the negative effects of war. Despite the challenges, Congolese educators, educational leaders, and students have shown resilience. Education has become an important shield for university students. It is also preparing them for a better tomorrow. Congolese people seem to be determined never to give up. They believe that, if they have survived in the past two decades, they shall survive indeed. A seed for that hope is being planted, even if this is done under deplorable conditions presented in the data. This seed needs special care. Everyone can give some care to this seed, as seen in the recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study, several recommendations can be made. They are directed to the local communities, students, educational leaders, the Congolese government, and the international community at large. For the dream of the Congolese people to be realized, all these groups of people will have to bring their contribution. After all, it takes one whole village to raise a child, as indicated earlier.

Local communities need to continue their life knowing that they are the first actors of the success of the local socioeconomic progress. The nation depends on them for development. Their resilience is one of the most powerful weapons against the armed groups. They must continue supporting the young people to go to school. They must go back to the traditional Congolese values of peace, respect, and cooperative effort, to face more effectively their common challenges. They must discourage their young people from joining armed groups no matter what. They must encourage their children to take their future in their own hand and make the world a better place to live in. They must continue to do all they can to meet the needs of their young people and cultivate hope in them.

Students must understand that they have an important role to play in reversing the current situation of the country. They can already participate in rebuilding their own nation by raising important questions to the Congolese government, in an intellectual, democratic and peaceful way. They must study hard because education is definitely an important key to their success. They must develop creative ways to generate income that would help meet their basic needs. They must avoid armed or violent conflicts. They must show to the world that their generation dreams something much better for their nation, their region, and for their world at large. They must show that they are doing everything they can to make this happen, despite the challenges of their country and the conditions under which they live and study.

Educational leaders must understand the sacred mission that they have in stopping war in Congo and helping rebuild the nation. A nation torn by war surely depends on well-educated men and women to give it a new direction for a better future. The work done in the classroom

thus has a direct impact on the future of one whole nation. They must continue to provide the best quality of education that is possible under the Congolese circumstances. They should continue to shield young people from enlisting in armed groups, training them in peaceful conflict management and peace building, and the love for and development of their country. University students must be trained to think deep for themselves and their nation. They must know that for Congo to play an important role in the global village, these young people must develop skills, competence, and values needed for good world citizenship. They must always remember that they are accountable to themselves, their local communities, their schools, their country, region, and the world at large.

The Congolese government is expected to guarantee security to all its citizens. After two decades of several repeated armed conflicts, the government leaders need to find definitive solutions to the different armed conflicts that have torn the country apart. They must do so once for all, in collaboration with the robust United Nations peacekeeping personnel that have been in the country for about a decade now. Without peace, the government should not at all dream of developing the country. The Congolese government must put in place (and in a few cases improve) educational infrastructures worthy of quality education. They must therefore increase the budget allocated to education in general, and higher education in particular. They must provide more security than what is currently available for educational institutions. The government must plan on providing more employment opportunities for young people to give reason for them not to enlist in armed groups. They must empower local communities in helping them meet their basic and regular socioeconomic needs.

The international community must continue the good work that they do in Congo. Before the United Nations can play the role of "peace keeper", they must spend more time in playing the role of "peace maker". There will not be any peace to keep if none has been made. More organizations should join in providing scholarships to deserving students. Last, the international community should focus primarily on programs that promote empowerment of the Congolese people. Instead of giving fish to the Congolese people, they need to teach them how to catch fish, as the saying goes.

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