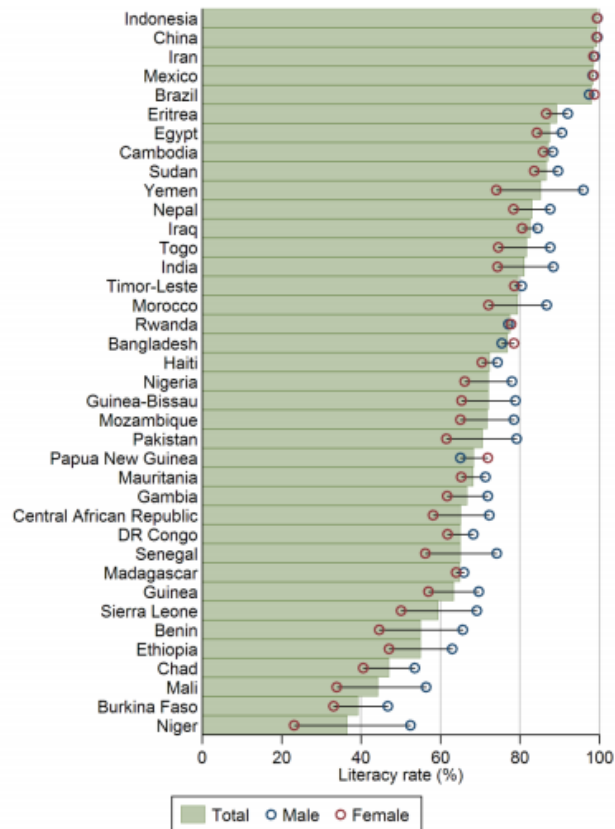


There have been two sets of goals established by the UN, the Education for All Goals (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), that seek to improve quality of living for everyone and to eliminate extreme poverty in the world. One of the main MDG goals is to achieve universal primary education, and although the EFA goals clearly work to fulfill that particular MDG goal, an improvement in education will ultimately see to the fulfillment of all eight of the MDG goals (Education for All, n.d.). In 2012, the UN Secretary-General launched the Global Education First Initiative as a way to faster achieve the EFA and MDG goals. The Initiative has three main priorities: putting every child in school, improving the quality of learning, and fostering global citizenship for the future (Priorities, n.d.). In this report, we will see what measures the Democratic Republic of the Congo has taken to achieve these priorities, and how successful these actions have been.

Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has struggled to thrive in the face of war, corruption, and oppression that has run rampant throughout the years. A study on out-of-school children conducted by the Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education showed that “nearly 7.4 million children aged 5-17 are currently not in school” (Walther, 2013). Literacy rates of the youth (age 15-24) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are among the lowest in the world. A 2012 UNESCO study on adult and youth literacy gathered data from 41 countries in four different regions of the world. According to the study, in 2010, the DRC had a youth literacy rate of 65.0%, ranking it 29th out of 41 countries (Huebler & Lu, 2012).

Figure 3: Youth literacy rate, by country and sex, 2010



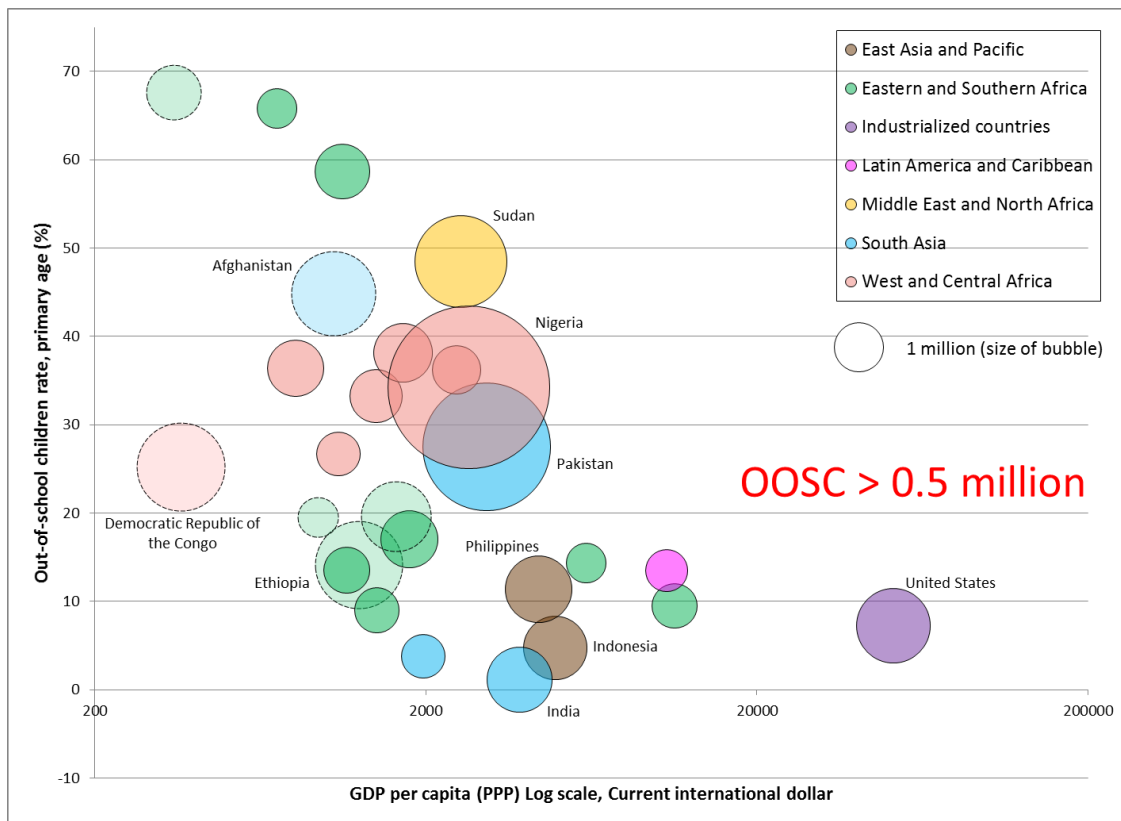
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, May 2012.
 Note: 2010 data refer to the period 2005-2010

¹2010 Youth Literacy Rate, by Country and Sex

A 2015 UNICEF report showed that, while the out-of-school rate² has decreased significantly since 1990, the change has stagnated in recent years. Sub-Saharan Africa was seen as the one of the biggest drivers of the stagnation. In the same report, it was shown that a majority of the countries with a high out-of-school rate were conflict-affected, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo among that number (Waltham & Hattori, 2015).

¹Figure 1: A graph of the literacy rates of 38 countries from four regions, with male and female disparity shown. The DRC is ranked 28th, which places it in the lower quartile. Source: 2012 UNESCO Adult and Youth Literacy Data Analysis

² One of the indicators for Millennium Development Goal #2: Achieve Universal Primary Education. Out-of-school rate measures the children (primary and secondary school age) not in school as a percentage of the total population of children (primary and secondary school age).

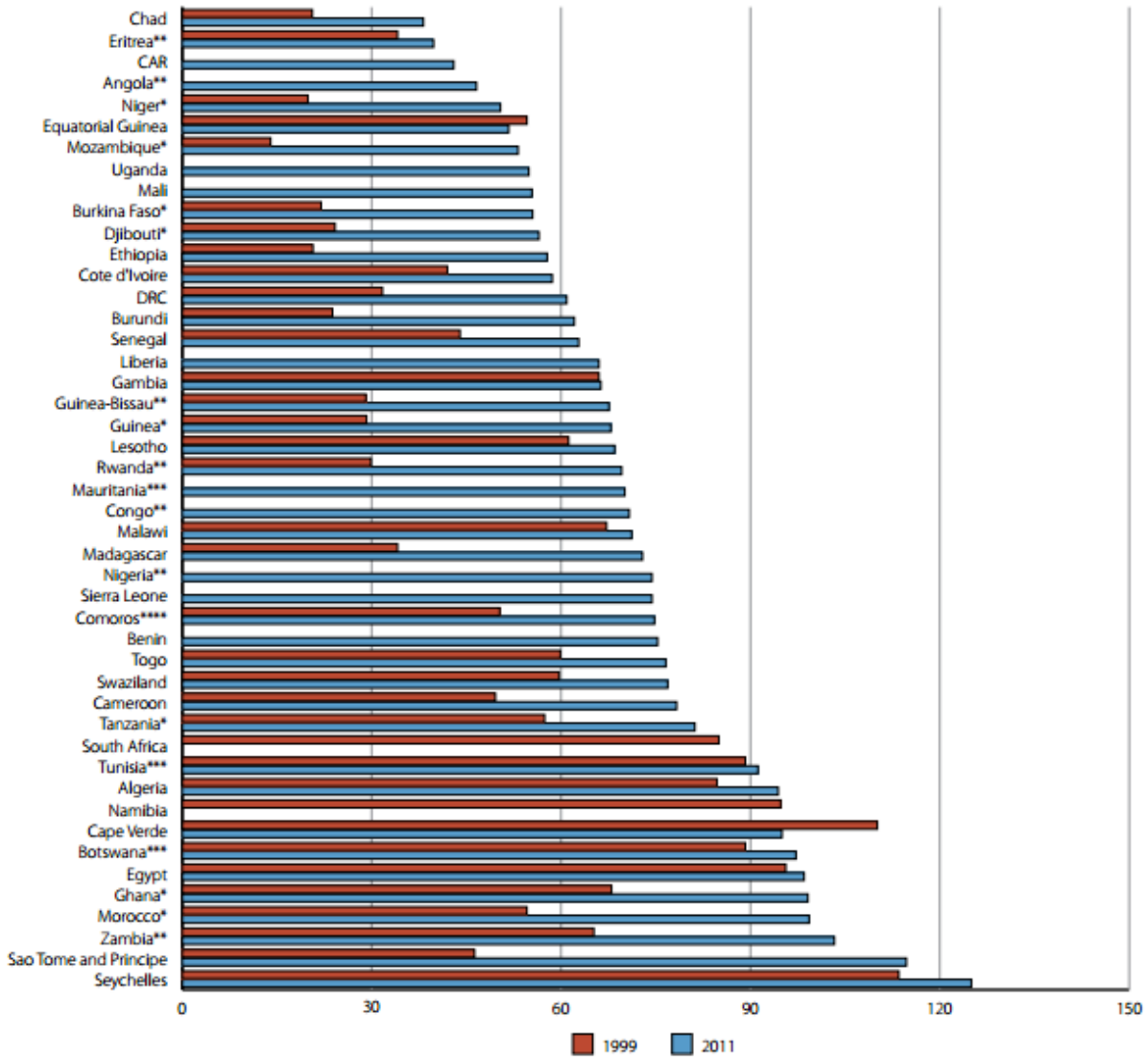


³Percentage of Out-of-School Children at primary age

In 2010, the Congolese government declared primary education to be free and compulsory. In theory, this should have greatly improved education availability and literacy rates throughout the country. However, theory and practice are not always the same. It is true that education has improved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In figure 2, showing the change in primary school completion rate in boys and girls, the DRC had almost doubled its percentage from 1999 to 2011. In more recent years, this percentage has increased to 72.4% in 2013 (Primary Completion rate, 2015).

³ Figure 2: A circle graph showing the percentage of out-of-school children (OOSC) that are at primary school age, with circle size showing the number of children not in school. The DRC has one of the higher number of OOSC's, over 0.5 million, as well as a higher percentage of OOSC's, around 25%. Source: 2015 Out of School Children Initiative presentation, slide 39

Figure 2.3: Primary school completion rate, male and female (%)



Note: *2012-**2010-***2009-****2008

Source: UNSD, July 2013.

⁴ Primary School Completion Rate, male and female (%)

⁴ Figure 3: A graph showing the primary school completion rate of males and females as a percent of the appropriate age population in the years 1999 and 2011. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (labeled DRC) has shown an increase from 30% in 1999 to 60% in 2011. Source: 2014 MDG Africa Regional Report, pg. 35

However, education still remains underdeveloped and underfunded venture. As of 2013, only 12.8% of the total public budget was spent on education (A World at School, n.d.). And while primary education is now free, it is still a slow process to integrate into all the provinces.

“Even with the announcement of free primary education, parents, many of whom are unemployed and have little means of sustaining themselves, are bearing most of the costs involved in educating their children because of delays in releasing the funds for free education” (IRIN, 2011).

On top of tuition, families also need to be able to afford school uniforms, books, other school materials, as well as a number of other fees. Currently, there is still a shortage of teachers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as a lack of classroom tools. There is an average ratio of 1 teacher for every 37 students, but that number grows in poorer areas. About 74% of the teachers in primary education have received training, however that number drastically decreases for secondary education teachers. On top of all that, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has among the lowest teacher salary levels in the world (Ackerman, Greubel, & Winthrop, 2013). These factors create a learning environment that is not conducive to teaching kids. All of these work together to create a poor learning environment that affects the DRC’s education goals as much as the abilities of the students. For students who were able to afford going to school, to be met with inadequate education standards is just as detrimental to their future as not being able to attend school in the first place.

With the approaching deadline for the MDG goals, increased measures have been taken to ensure that these goals will be met. Various international agencies have come together to develop plans to provide the quality of education necessary to propel the DRC into reaching the MDG education goal. Additionally, the government, in 2012, created the Interim Education Plan with goals of “increasing access, equity and retention, improving the quality and relevance of education and strengthening governance” (Ackerman, Greubel, & Winthrop, 2013). According to Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global

Education and former Prime Minister of the UK, the DRC will still need at least \$500 million just to abolish school fees, and even more money to build schools as the population grows.

“The U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.K. Department for International Development recently signed an agreement to implement a bold, five year \$180 million program to help nearly half a million children in the DRC go to school and another 1.4 million learn to read by 2020. The Global Partnership for Education has also recently joined the coalition now assembling to back the education ambitions of the DRC with \$100 million over four years” (Brown, 2014)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is striving to catch up to the rest of the world, despite the turmoil and crisis it has gone through for the past couple of decades. The Congolese government, along with a various number of Intergovernmental Organizations, are all working to achieve the economic, political, and social stability needed to provide a safe and equal learning environment for the children. However, much more is needed to be done before it can achieve both the EFA goals and the MDG goals.

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