

Contents

List of acronyms	3
1. Programme Summary	4
2. Executive Summary	
3. The Purpose	
4. Key Results	6
4.1 Strengthening of social workforce capacity for case management:	6
4.2 Strengthening the legal and law enforcement framework:	6
4.3 Operationalization of childhood coordination mechanisms at the national and decentralized levels.	
4.4 Promotion of social accountability on protection of children against violence) 7
4.5 Development of an integrated information system	7
5. Challenges, lessons learned and opportunities	
6. Future plans	8
7. Resources	
8. Expression of Thanks	g
Annex: Human Interest Stories and photos	10

Cover page photo: children in Sibiti, Lékoumou region. Photo Credit: UNICEF 2019/Dejongh

List of acronyms

KRC Key Results for Children
SOP Standard Operating Process
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
VAC Violence Against Children
WFP Word Food Program

1. Programme Summary

Country	Republic of Congo
Programme title	Child protection
Title of project	Strengthening the integrated child protection system for a protective environment against all forms of violence
Donor	Global - Child protection
UNICEF Grant Reference:	SC149906
Total contribution	US\$ 200,000
Programmable amount:	US\$ 200,000
funds utilized:	US\$ 200,000
Unspent Balance	US\$ 0
Utilization level:	100%
Funding duration:	1 year
Period covered by report	January - December, 2018
Submission date	24 March 2019
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2. Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of key results achieved during the period of January to December 2018. The thematic funds have contributed significantly to improve the lives of children in Congo, in particular the betterment of an integrated child protection system, including provision of birth certificates and a greater appreciation of violence against children and its impacts on the lives of children. Furthermore, data from studies conducted will improve policy formulation and implementation. Key highlights are provided in the sections below.

Strengthening the integrated child protection system aims to provide protection and support to children survivors of all forms of violence. This contribution has supported interventions in the Lékoumou region, south west of Congo, since 2018 through the creation of 19 child protection committees, as follows:

- seven (7) village committees,
- ten (10) neighbourhood committees,
- one (1) regional coordination committee for child protection,
- one (1) regional reception and orientation cell.

In addition, a training of 48 staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action was conducted to strengthen their capacities on the implementation of the National Plan of Social Action, which is a strategic policy and planning framework that aims at providing social protection for children and their families.

The contribution also enabled 1,514 children (766 girls and 748 boys) to receive their birth certificates in the Lékoumou region in collaboration with local authorities (governors mayors, heads of districts, villages,) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action.

Regarding children living in an emergency situation, the following results have been achieved:

- 5,904 children have received a package of essential services (psychosocial support, birth certificates, awareness raising) of which 4,400 children (2,640 girls and 1,760 boys) have received birth certificates;
- 41 children victims of rape (1 boy and 40 girls) have received psychological support in the Likouala region;
- 140 children with psychological problems and 1,323 children supported in Child Friendly Spaces following violent disciplinary practices (corporal punishment) have also received psychological support in the Bouenza region, south of Congo (displaced children), Likouala (refugee children) and Pool (displaced children) regions.

Within the framework of Congo's contribution to Key results for children (KRC) in WCAR, the contribution has heightened and accelerated results for children, thus contributing strategically to some key Results for Children including KRC 5 on Violence against Children (VAC) and KRC7 on Birth Registration.

During the implementation of this grant, key lessons were learned, and opportunities

identified. These, together with some constraints and how these were resolved have been discussed further in the report.

3. The Purpose

In the Republic of Congo, according to MICs 2015, 82.5 per cent of children aged 1 to 14 are victims of disciplinary violence (psychological aggression, physical punishment) and four per cent of children under 5 are not registered at birth. To improve these indicators, the country committed in 2014 to strengthening the integrated child protection system in two phases.

In the first phase of the process, 2014 to 2016, the concept of the child protection system was developed which allowed child protection actors to adopt an integrated approach to child protection policies and programmes. In the second phase, 2017 to 2018 the system was tested in in two regions, Brazzaville and Lékoumou, and operational plans were developed. The focus was to operationalize the integrated child protection system by strengthening the coordination between child protection actors at national and sub-national levels, under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action.

4. Key Results

4.1 Strengthening of social workforce capacity for case management:

48 staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action, were trained on the implementation of the National Social Action Policy 2018-2022 and its action plan, including 12 Heads of Regional Directorates of Social Affairs, 12 Heads of Regional Directorates of humanitarian Action and 24 other staff in different regions. The regional directors were also trained to scale up the integrated approach to child protection system.

4.2 Strengthening the legal and law enforcement framework:

Strengthening the legal and law enforcement framework including linkages between formal and informal structures to ensure better care for children victims of violence. To this end, 90 actors (18 magistrates, 18 lawyers, 18 police officers, 18 gendarmes and 18 social workers) were sensitized on child protection law, especially on:

- (i) the General principles of child protection;
- (ii) extra-judicial and judicial procedures;
- (iii) basis of the special juvenile criminal law; and
- (iv) child labour.

The transfer of knowledge to this multidisciplinary group enabled them to better understand the legislative framework and provided them with greater abilities to provide integrated and multidisciplinary services to children. This training also provided an opportunity to enhance the knowledge on children's rights to law enforcement agents and social workers.

4.3 Operationalization of childhood coordination mechanisms at the national and decentralized levels.

1,514 children (766 girls and 748 boys) obtained their birth certificates as part of the collaboration between UNICEF and the Regional Directorate for Social Affairs in the Lékoumou region. In addition, 19 child protection committees (seven village committees, ten neighbourhood committees, one regional coordination committee for child protection and one regional reception and orientation cell) were created and functional in rural areas of Lékoumou region. 143 members of these committees were trained on the integrated approach to child protection. The integrated approach to child protection is currently being rolled-out at the urban level in Brazzaville region. It is expected that this model could be scaled up in other regions, including Pointe Noire region, the second largest region in the country.

4.4 Promotion of social accountability on protection of children against violence.

The funds received have facilitated the UNICEF country office to conduct a study on school-based violence including online child violence. Collection of data took place in 193 public and private schools in December 2018. The results of this study are currently being presented and discussed for validation. Preliminary results of this study show that there are five (5) types of violence affecting students:

- 73.8 per cent of students (75.4 per cent of girls and 71.8 per cent of boys) are victims of verbal and psychological violence;
- 37.4 per cent of pupils (34 per cent of girls and 41.6 per cent of boys) are victims of physical violence;
- 33 per cent of pupils (37.5 per cent of girls and 27.5 per cent of boys) are victims of sexual violence;
- 31.1 per cent of pupils (29.5 per cent of girls and 33 per cent of boys are victims of economic violence, and
- 12.4 per cent of students (13.5 per cent girls and 11 per cent boys) are victims of online violence.

It is expected that the results of and recommendations of this study will contribute to laws and policy formulation that protect children from violence, including online violence. The recommendations will further help strengthening the creation of a protective environment for all children in Congo, thus enabling them to live free from all forms of violence.

4.5 Development of an integrated information system.

Data collected on 5,904 children in the Likouala (refugee children) and Pool (displaced children) regions, who received a package of essential services including psychosocial support, birth certificates and awareness raising, have been used to develop an integrated information system. The collected data showed that:

- 4,400 children (2,640 girls and 1,760 boys) in Likouala region have been without birth certificates:
- 41 children have been victims of rape (1 boy and 40 girls);

- 140 children had psychological problems;
- 1,323 children have been supported in Child Friendly Spaces following violent disciplinary practices (corporal punishment).

With this critical information collected, the country office and partners will be able to have reliable information that will inform programmes and interventions.

5. Challenges, lessons learned and opportunities

The main challenge of strengthening the integrated child protection system for a protective environment against all forms of violence is mainly that, despite the fact that there is the Law n°4-2010 on the "child protection in the Republic of Congo", the implementation decree and mechanisms are still lacking. UNICEF is engaging in strategic advocacy with the Ministries of Social Affairs and Justice to ensure that the child protection decree is enacted and fully implemented. Using strategic advocacy and the opportunity presented by the CRC@30 celebrations, it is hoped that by the end of 2019 the law will be enacted.

In addition, experience during the first phase of the process shows that the approach is working well only when there is a strong ownership by child protection actors. The involvement of the government and sub-national authorities -especially mayors- is key to achieving meaningful results. Efforts must be pursued to strengthen this approach. UNICEF mitigates these challenges through capacity building of partners, close cooperation and coordination with other humanitarian actors.

Within the UN reform, opportunities are also presented to strengthen collaboration with UNHCR to accelerate birth registration for minority groups while working towards convergency of programmes other UN agencies, including UNFPA, UNESCO and WHO.

Finally, the opportunity presented by the KRC movement in the region will continue to sharpen programming and implementation of violence against children using multisectoral and multidisciplinary approaches to prevention and response to violence against children in Congo.

6. Future plans

- Support scaling up integrated child protection approaches.
- Support key interventions that prevent and respond to all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of school-aged children.
- Support the implementation of a case management system, including the support for developing tools, protocols and procedures that improve the tracking and reporting of abuse, abuse and violence cases.
- Promote multisectoral approaches to child protection and violence against children.
- Advocacy towards the enactment of the child protection law.

7. Resources

	Item	Amount used (US \$)
1	Strengthening social workforce capacity for case management (identification, referral, follow-up)	20,000
2	Strengthening the legal and law enforcement framework as well as the linkages between formal and informal structures	15,000
3	Operationalization of childhood coordination mechanisms at the national and decentralized levels	20,000
4	Promotion of social accountability on protection of children against violence (including a study on Child Protection)	30,000
5	Development of an integrated information system, including the use of modern technology, to track and monitor progress on Country Programme	30,000
6	Technical support	25,000
7	Support activities of Country Programme	60,000
	TOTAL BUDGET	200,000

8. Expression of Thanks

UNICEF would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation to donors contributing to the Global thematic funds for their generous financial contribution in support of children in the Republic of Congo. On behalf of the entire UNICEF Congo team, we thank you for helping to advance our shared commitments to protecting the rights and improving the well-being of the most vulnerable children in the country.

Annex: Human Interest Stories and photos

NGOUMA VINCENT, an indigenous community relay



Ngouma Vicent/Photo credit UNICEF 2018

32 years NGOUMA VINCENT, an active and dynamic indigenous community relay (neighbourhood of Sibiti, Lékoumou region) is in charge of identifying indigenous children who do not have a birth certificate and do not attend school.

"Our job is to visit the indigenous villages and identify children living far from our neighbourhood. We are using rented motorcycle to reach these communities".

We grouped parents and children aged 0 to 18 and counted them by household. We identified each child by name and age, then transcribed all the data collected in the information sheet. These information sheets are shared with the social worker who in turn shares them with the officer in charge of producing birth certificates. Once the birth certificates are established, the service sends them back to the social worker and gives them to us. Then, we organise meetings with the families and distribute the birth certificates to them. In addition, we take the opportunity to sensitize them to enrol their children in school, as they have already benefited from the birth certificate.



This new-born just received her a birth certificate at Sibiti hospital Photo credit UNICEF 2019/Dejongh



Distribution of birth certificates to indigenous children in Lékoumou region/Photo credit UNICEF Congo 2018

The indigenous children are bright, attentive and eager to learn.



Mrs Loemba, teacher at Samuel Ikounga primary school in Sibiti, Lékoumou region /Photo credit UNICEF 2019

Mrs Loemba is a teacher in CP 2 (grade 2) at the Elementary School Samuel IKOUNGA in Sibiti, south west of Congo.

"In my class, I have 76 students including 40 indigenous children. They are brilliant with excellent success rates. In the 1st quarter exams, out of 40 indigenous students, 36 scored averages of 7 to 8 out of 10". The UNICEF-supported programme enabled us to provide them birth certificates and school kits in order to give them the same opportunities as all other children. The village committees for children's rights informed teachers about the birth certificates as well as the prevention of violence against

prevention of violence against children.

"In my class, I have 76 students including 40 indigenous children. They are brilliant with excellent success rates".

In our school indigenous children make up the majority of CP1

(grade 1) and CP 2 (grade 2). It is therefore evident that protection of indigenous children's rights, in general and their education is working well. In addition, the school canteen supported by the World Food Program (WFP) programme is also contributing to encourage and maintain their schooling.



Indigenous children on their way to school with their UNICEF bags in Bétou, Likouala region. Photo credit: Diefaga



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