

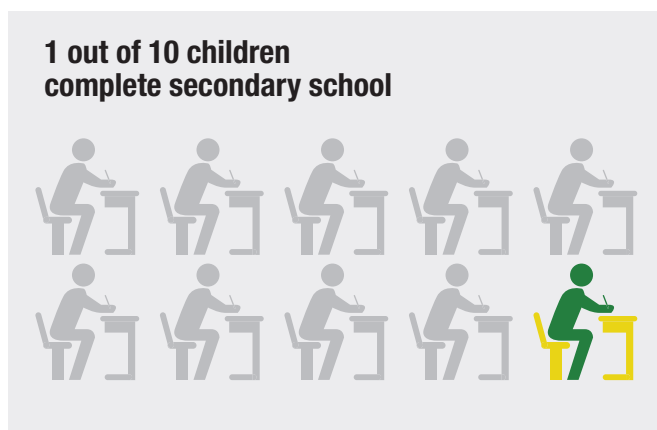
EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOUR RISK FOR OLDER CHILDREN IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE¹

SUMMARY

In Côte d'Ivoire, older children (defined here as aged 12-17) face a number of challenges in post-primary education. Underperformance is an issue with enrolment and completion rates remaining low and quality of education needing improvement. Access to education is low for girls, poor families and those living in rural areas. Improving quality of and access to education would yield significant benefits. Cocoa-producing areas, in particular, would benefit in terms of reduced poverty, better employment prospects and the reduction of child labour.

SCHOOL ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

Enrolment rates remain low in secondary school. In the 2013/2014 school year, the enrolment rate was about 44% for junior secondary and about 21% for senior secondary (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016). Keeping children in school poses another problem as enrolment rates decrease with each added year. Drop-outs are frequent, with **1 out of 4 children dropping out of senior secondary school in 2014** (MEMEASFP and MESRS, 2017).



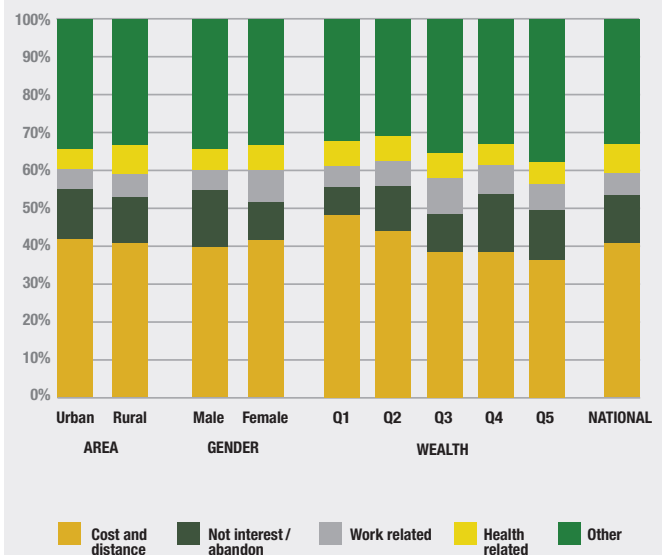
(Source: Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016)

Poor quality of education is a factor related to children dropping out, as it translates into grade repetition and children failing standardized exams. Nearly one fifth of children in secondary school repeat a grade (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016). Rates of repetition are highest in the two grades where students take standardized exams, due to failing test scores. Over 40% of children do not pass the junior secondary exam (BEPC) and only 36.1% pass the final secondary exam (BAC) (MEMEASFP and MESRS, 2017).

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

In 2013, about one third of children completed junior secondary and just 12% completed senior secondary (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016). Educational attainment is lowest in rural areas. For example, in Southwest region, a major cocoa-producing region, less than one tenth complete secondary school (INS & ICF, 2012).

Reasons for Children aged 6-18 Being Out of School (Dropout or Never Attended), 2012



(Source: DHS 2012 and Public Spending 2012)

¹ This policy brief was written by Hans von Zinkernagel, October 2017

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The educational system in Côte d'Ivoire is characterised by significant inequalities. Disparities exist across sex, place of residence and household income (ME & MPD et al., 2014).

- **Sex:** Boys have 1.4 and 1.6 times more chances of being enrolled in junior secondary and senior secondary school, respectively (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016).

- **Place of residence:** Rural areas are underserved in educational opportunities. In 2014, the overwhelming majority (**93.6%**) of secondary schools were in urban areas (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016).

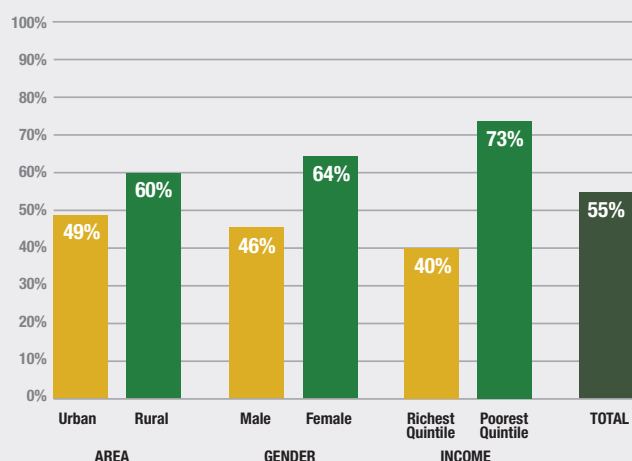
- **Household income:** This factor is the greatest determinant of access to education. **A child from a well-off family is 46 times more likely to enter higher secondary school** (MEMEASFP and MESRS, 2017). The costs associated with secondary schooling are significant, including registration fees, school supplies, food and uniforms. Families spend on average FCFA 155,292 per child for senior secondary school (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016). These costs are prohibitive for many families and preclude the possibility of children from poor families going to school. It is important to note that poverty is overwhelmingly rural (WB, 2015).

EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The political crisis that lasted over a decade severely weakened the educational system, causing damage to school buildings and reducing availability of teachers, particularly in rural areas (WB, 2012). **Since the end of the crisis, there still remains a major lack of schools and teachers** (USDOL, 2016; Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016). Aspects related to the quality and efficiency of the educational system can be strengthened (WB, 2017).

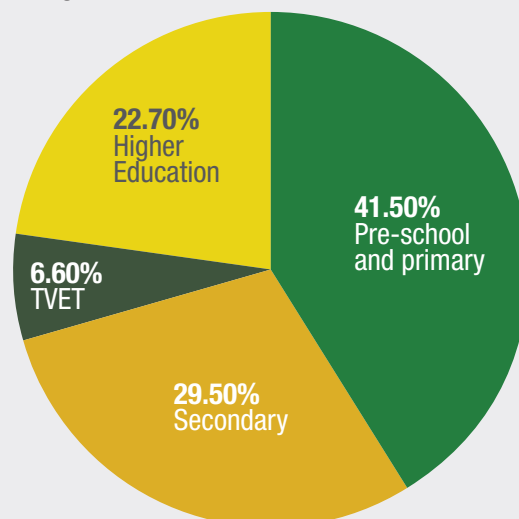
Recently, the government has invested heavily in education, spending about one fourth of its national budget on education in 2015 (WB, 2017). Yet this investment has mainly been prioritised primary schooling and resulted in limited development of secondary schooling and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Most TVET programs are not in rural areas so children must travel far from their homes to reach them. Once there, children live in sometimes insecure boarding facilities and are susceptible to abuse from their trainers without recourse to family support.

Comparison of out-of-school children aged 12-18 by group



(Source: EPDC, 2014)

Expenditure by Level of Education in 2012



(Source: adapted from WB, 2015)

EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOUR RISK IN COCOA-PRODUCING COMMUNITIES

Lack of educational opportunities increases the risk of child labour. This is especially relevant for rural and poor communities with disproportionately lower access to education, and post-primary education in particular.

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) works in 46 communities in Côte d'Ivoire to reduce the risk of child labour. In these communities – that have a total child population of 46'786 – there are no post-primary educational opportunities. The medium distance to the nearest junior high school is 17km and 24km for the nearest vocational training/technical school (ICI, 2017). This translates in a greater risk of older children engaging in child labour.

In Côte d'Ivoire, **child labour is especially prevalent in cocoa-growing areas**. In these areas, 32.2% of 5-to-17-year-old children are child labourers working in cocoa production (Tulane, 2015). The risk of engaging in hazardous labour is notably high for adolescents, in part due to the lack of secondary school and vocational training. **Children aged 15-17 working in cocoa production engage in hazardous labour at a rate almost three times higher than children aged 5-11, 60% compared to 22.2% (Tulane, 2015)**. Interestingly, reports of cocoa work interfering with schooling are very rare (5%) (Tulane, 2015), which leads one to believe that education is a priority and cocoa work an activity undertaken by default in the absence of educational opportunities. Once again, the most pressing issue seems to be the very low access to secondary education and technical/vocational training in rural areas.

HYPOTHETICAL COST OF TVET FOR CHILD LABOURERS

The cost of a full TVET programme per child is FCFA 1'156'375 (USD 264'028) (Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire et al., 2016). Considering that there are roughly 342'067 child labourers aged 14-17 (INS, 2014), it would cost close to FCFA 400 billion (USD 708 million) to cover the cost of TVET programs for all of them.

Education is a key tool in the prevention of child labour. Whereas having a non-educated parent can be a determinant of child labour (Nkamleu, 2009), an increase in the level of education of the household head increases the probability of enrolment of children and significantly decreases the probability of child labour (Abou, 2014). Additionally, rates of child labour continue to decline with each added year of enrolment of the household head (WB, 2015). **This means that expanding access to education for the current generation can sharply reduce the prevalence of child labour in the next generation.**

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Efforts to improve the post-primary education sector in Cote d'Ivoire should take into consideration the factors examined so far.

- Achieving universal secondary education should be a priority. In order to do so, the country will have to focus on **improving access to education, especially in rural areas and for poor families**. Reducing distances to schools and the costs of education will likely have the greatest impact.
 - Côte d'Ivoire could also prioritize **improving the quality of post-primary education**. Increased retention rates and improved standardized exam passing rates will be important indicators. Improving efficiency of resource allocation and enhancing teacher training will also be integral to this goal.
 - Côte d'Ivoire may want to consider **increasing the share of public investment going into secondary school**, which is currently less than the share allocated to primary school. It may also want to increase investment in **expanding TVET programs**, which could benefit cocoa farmers and the national economy.
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