

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE BRIEFING



**Right:** Aicha, 9, who is deaf and dumb, enjoying the chance to learn in Bouaké in Côte d'Ivoire.



SAVE THE CHILDREN

*“I never thought I could make school. Today, I am in third grade and I am the best of my group. I speak French now and my friends do not make fun of me any more.”* Desiré, 13, Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire has been split in two since an army mutiny in 2002. International peacekeepers patrol a buffer zone between rebel soldiers in the north and the government-controlled south. Attempts to broker a permanent peace have failed and many Ivorians are unable to return to their homes. Some 12,000<sup>1</sup> Liberian refugees remain in the west of the country. We need your support to increase the number of children – especially girls and those affected by conflict – who can go to school and complete a good quality education.

### The issue

#### Access: not enough places to go round

The war interrupted school for more than 700,000 children in the rebel-held north.<sup>2</sup> More than half the teachers left the conflict-affected area.<sup>3</sup> The total number of schools destroyed or damaged in the conflict is unknown. Many other schools need cleaning, minor repairs, new or improved water and sanitation facilities and play areas to make them suitable. More than one million children had no access to school even before the conflict.<sup>4</sup> Now, over 40 per cent of primary school-aged children remain out of school.<sup>5</sup>

### The solution

#### Ensuring places for all

- Help communities and all organisations concerned with education to press for primary education for all children in the country.
- Offer communities support to repair and rebuild school buildings with training, field visits and small grants to school management committees and community groups.
- Offer small grants to help local agencies and community groups increase access to and the quality of girls' education.
- Provide teaching materials to schools.

## The issue

### Quality: Education without motivation

Children and schools have lost the resources to provide a good standard of teaching. Many families affected by the conflict are now too poor to buy exercise books and textbooks. The government is not spending enough on education to equip schools with furniture and materials. There is also a shortage of qualified teachers. Much teaching relies on untrained teachers, mentored by their qualified colleagues. Poor quality teaching and learning, plus the government's failure to carry out end-of-year exams, mean that 17 per cent of pupils have to repeat a year.<sup>6</sup>

### Protection: Danger, violence and disease cast a shadow

About 3,000 children involved with armed groups have yet to be demobilised and reunited with their families.<sup>7</sup> Girls in particular have suffered from exploitation by soldiers on both sides of the conflict, and by the peacekeeping forces. The result is an increase in teenage mothers, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. There are few programmes in place to provide specialised care and support for traumatised children. Forced to leave home either by the conflict or the worsening economic situation, the number of street children in Abidjan was estimated at more than 5,000 in 2003.<sup>8</sup>

### Finance: An ignored need

Although the proportion of government spending on education is relatively high – 21 per cent between 1992 and 2004<sup>9</sup> – this is not enough. In the north, teachers rely on parents' contributions for their wages. But parents too are facing financial difficulty and numbers of teachers and students have dropped sharply since the schools were re-opened in 2003. Funding for the schools in the Liberian refugee camps has fallen because of the conflict, resulting in a 50 per cent cut in the salaries of the teachers there.<sup>10</sup>

## How Côte d'Ivoire measures up

- Over 40% of primary school-aged children are out of school<sup>11</sup>
- 54% of girls enrol in primary school compared to 67% of boys<sup>12</sup>
- 49% of children complete primary school<sup>13</sup>
- More than 500,000 Ivorians remain displaced by the conflict<sup>14</sup>
- Around 6,000 Liberian refugees live in camps in western Côte d'Ivoire<sup>15</sup>

## The solution

### Active learning with trained teachers

- Promote child participation in all aspects of school life, for example on school management committees.
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Education to run accelerated training courses for teachers during school holidays and contribute to in-service training for subject teachers.
- Train and support district school supervisors in their work with head teachers and school administrators.
- Promote the idea of a local system of inspection to monitor the skills of teachers and community educators.
- Help district officials, school management committees and local agencies to distribute educational and recreational kits.

### Strong, healthy and safe

- Help bring young mothers, disabled children and those formerly linked to armed groups back into their school, family and community.
- Give graduating trainees teaching materials that focus on child rights, child protection and child participation, with training on how to use and develop them.
- Demonstrate the importance of safe learning environments and 'child-friendly' schools.
- Train teachers and social workers to provide emotional support to children affected by the conflict and in teaching about issues connected with sexual violence and drug abuse.

### Ensuring investment for the future

- Map where people and funds are needed and work to increase resources coming from international, national and local donors.
- Offer small grants to communities and include an element for advocacy, community participation and technical support.
- Encourage school management committees to set up school maintenance funds and help them and community education groups to raise further income themselves.
- Show how to make best use of resources by developing sustainable or low cost school materials, for example, school-owned rather than individually-owned books.

*"Once you feel that you have been able to give better life perspectives for a child at risk, you know there is a meaning to it."* Koré, a social worker with Communauté Abel,\* Côte d'Ivoire

\*Communauté Abel is a partner organisation working with Save the Children

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## BAMBA'S STORY

### “I am so happy to come here”

Bamba is 13 and is learning to read and write at an activity centre that is supported by Save the Children outside the rebel-held city of Bouaké. “I am so happy to come here,” Bamba says. “I have four brothers and one sister. Some of them also go here.”

The family's home is a simple shelter without electricity or running water. When he is not at the centre, Bamba helps his mother pick maize. He explains, “Before I couldn't go to school at all, because we could not afford it, but now my father allows me to go to the centre every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.”

Bamba's father used to be a farmer, but now heads a children's rights committee in the community, supported by Save the Children, which co-ordinates children's activities and organises child protection measures in the area.

For Bamba, his time at the centre has been inspirational. “I want to be the sport minister of Côte d'Ivoire when I'm old enough. Also I love theatre and want to continue acting. I really wish we could continue to come here.”

*“I like the theatre at the centre. Right now we are doing a play about our right to go to school. It shows how we want to go to school.”* Bamba, 13, Côte d'Ivoire



**Right:** Children engrossed in a Save the Children-supported lesson.

**Help us rewrite the future of education in Côte d'Ivoire.**



CÔTE D'IVOIRE MEETING THE CHALLENGE

We aim to increase the number of children – especially girls – enrolling in school and to help more of them complete formal education. We will build schools, provide facilities, train teachers and help communities support education.

Our target

Since the outbreak of violent confrontations in Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002, the country has been divided between government and Forces Armées-Forces Nouvelles controlled areas. The education system on both sides of the divide is facing huge challenges as a result of this crisis and over one million children are deprived of their right to education.

We need the international community to create a climate where Côte d'Ivoire can deliver its education targets for 2010. We will support the Ivorian government as it works to:

- increase overall primary enrolment rates to 95% and girls' enrolment rates to 90%
- improve the quality and relevance of teaching, learning and participation for primary school children
- ensure children are protected and respected in the learning environment
- ensure schools have a budget sufficient to cover their annual running costs

Our direct practical work with community and government partners will help 85,000 more Ivorian children go to school by 2010, and offer these plus 500,000 more a better and more relevant education.

Save the Children is putting \$2.5 million towards these aims. We need to raise a further \$24 million from our partners and supporters. The issues are complex, the solutions must be versatile. Above all, the world must take seriously every child's right to an education.

We will regularly monitor our work in Côte d'Ivoire, tracking things such as enrolment, attendance and class sizes. We will also monitor the government's relative spend on education. Donors will receive reports of our progress in December 2006, December 2008 and December 2010.

Help us meet the challenge

Save the Children will work in practical ways to address the availability and quality of schooling for many of Côte d'Ivoire's poorest and most isolated children. Here are some examples of how your support might help.

Access: Ensuring places for all

- \$3.5 million could repair and rebuild 310 schools.
- \$800,000 could supply 500 schools with furniture and equipment.
- \$360,000 could support the work of 500 school management committees.

Quality: Active participation with trained teachers

- \$7,000 could train 100 teachers and administrators for the next five years.
- \$63,000 could provide education and learning materials for 10 schools for five years
- \$275,000 could provide teacher training materials for 3,000 teachers for the next 5 years.

Protection: Strong, healthy and safe

- \$2,800 could set up a child protection and child participation scheme in a school.
- \$629,000 could give the opportunity of an education to 500 children with special needs and provide early childhood development education for around 1000 children.

But we cannot do everything. Although Côte d'Ivoire has a clear plan and targets for education, the government does not give it enough resources. We will also press the government to:

- take concrete action to ensure the right of all children to a quality basic education
- implement legislation to ensure the school environment is a safe, protective place.

All costs quoted are in US\$

To join our challenge, visit [www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture](http://www.savethechildren.net/rewritethefuture)

Left: Many children have spent their time playing war games, using the soldiers as role models.

