

MEDIA RELEASE

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LANDMARK PARTNERSHIP TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION AND TACKLE A ROOT CAUSE OF CHILD LABOUR IN COTE D'IVOIRE

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, 16 leading cocoa and chocolate companies, and two foundations have come together to tackle a root cause of child labour through improving access to quality education. The partners have already committed CHF 69 million (\$72 million) to scale evidence-based education programs, guided by a robust accountability framework and a comprehensive heatmap to identify areas in greatest need.

The Child Learning and Education Facility (CLEF) is now up and running following a successful first round of capitalization, it was announced today at the Africa CEO Forum in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Led by the Ivorian Government, CLEF is a public-private partnership involving two philanthropic organizations and 16 leading cocoa and chocolate companies. It aims to improve access to quality education for 5 million children by 2027, through teacher training and the construction of school infrastructure, thereby addressing a root cause of child labour in Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa-growing regions.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, Jacobs Foundation, UBS Optimus Foundation, Barry Callebaut, Beyond Beans, Cargill, Chocolonely Foundation, ECOM, Ferrero, Fuji Oil Group and its subsidiary Blommer, Guittard, Hershey Company, Lindt & Sprüngli, Mars Wrigley, Mondelēz International, Nestlé, ofi, Sucden and Touton have so far jointly committed CHF 69 million (\$72 million) to CLEF. The CLEF contributions from the industry partners and foundations enabled an additional \$13 million grant from the [Global Partnership for Education](#)'s Multiplier Fund as support for the education sector in Côte d'Ivoire. The CLEF partners aim to mobilize additional funds by inviting other partners to join the coalition and achieve a target capitalization of CHF 110 million (\$112 million).

CLEF will support the Ivorian Government's strategies to enhance the education system and tackle child labour, including the 10-year Education Sector Plan and the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labour. Activities will focus on scaling up proven pedagogical approaches to boost learning; the construction of school infrastructures; scientific research into the link between quality education and child labour; and a behaviour change campaign to inform parents' knowledge and practices in relation to education and prevention of child labour.

A landmark in cross-sectorial collaboration, CLEF will see all partners work together in a coordinated systemic approach. To determine the geographic areas where interventions should be prioritised on a needs-basis, CLEF's activities will be guided by a 'heatmap' developed through an extensive survey involving more than 2,000 schools and 7,000 households, identifying areas of greatest needs based on indicators pertaining to school infrastructure, learning outcomes, and the risk of child labour.

Fabio Segura, co-CEO of the Jacobs Foundation, said:

“This is the broadest and most ambitious public-private partnership for SDG4 (quality education) ever forged at a country level. For the very first time, a vast range of partners across the public and private sectors are working together in a coordinated, systemic, and evidence-based approach to improve learning and access to quality education in thousands of schools, particularly in rural areas. Partners will contribute financial capital, knowledge, and data, with the aim of improving educational outcomes for millions of children. In doing so, CLEF will also contribute to tackling root causes of child labour in Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa sector. Crucially, CLEF will support the [Ivorian government](#)’s own 10-year Education Sector Strategy and National Action Plan to Combat Child Labour.

We would like to thank the Government of Côte d’Ivoire, UBS Optimus Foundation, and our partners from the cocoa and chocolate industry, for committing to this historic initiative; and we call on more organizations to join our coalition. By aligning our efforts with public policies and keeping a strong accountability framework, we’ll strive to make a lasting and tangible difference in the lives of children in Côte d’Ivoire.”

A strong accountability framework

To ensure that all CLEF activities delivering, they will be continuously monitored, and undergo independent verifications of outcomes. The Ivorian Government will also conduct standardized learning evaluations each year. These efforts will be further strengthened by a randomized control trial to investigate the relationship between income, access to quality education, and child labour.

Building on TRECC program’s achievements

CLEF builds on the learnings and achievements of Transforming Education in Cocoa Communities (TRECC), a program launched in 2016 by the Jacobs Foundation, involving the Government of Côte d’Ivoire and 12 cocoa and chocolate companies. By training close to 4,500 educators and more than 42,500 parents, TRECC benefitted over 200,000 children’s learning. The TRECC program piloted Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), an evidence-based remediation approach which was developed in India in the early 2000s to support children struggling with reading and math. TaRL’s positive impact on learning outcomes was demonstrated through several evaluations conducted by 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics winners Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer.

Since January 2021, TaRL has been applied by teachers in 1,117 schools in cocoa-growing communities of Côte d’Ivoire, benefitting more than 140,000 children. The Côte d’Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy has now committed to scale TaRL across all primary schools. CLEF will support this endeavour by helping integrate TaRL into initial teacher training and in-service teacher training.

Côte d’Ivoire is the world’s leading producer and exporter of cocoa beans for the manufacture of chocolate, and grows 40% of the world’s cocoa.^[1] According to a study by the National Opinion Research Centre at the University of Chicago, 38% of 5-17-year-olds in agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d’Ivoire are engaged in child labour, and 37% are engaged in hazardous child labour in cocoa production.^[2] As of 2021, according to government data, 7,39% of primary-school aged children and 23,8% of lower-secondary-school aged children were out of school in Côte d’Ivoire. A large proportion of children enrolled in primary school do not acquire basic skills. [The 2019 PASEC evaluation](#) shows that by the end of primary school 59.5% of children do not reach the expected level of competence in reading and 82.8% in mathematics.

Notes for editors

The Jacobs Foundation is active worldwide in promoting child and youth development and learning. The Foundation was founded in Zurich by entrepreneur Klaus J. Jacobs and his family in 1989. As part of its Strategy 2030, it has committed CHF 500 million to advance evidence-based ideas for learning, to support schools in offering quality education, and to transform education ecosystems around the world. <https://jacobsfoundation.org/en/>

[1] <https://open.unicef.org/sites/transparency/files/2020-06/Cote-d-Ivoire-TP5-2018.pdf>

[2] <https://www.norc.org/Research/Projects/Pages/assessing-progress-in-reducing-child-labor-in-cocoa-growing-areas-of-c%C3%B4te-d%E2%80%99ivoire-and-ghana.aspx>

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