

Background – Education Cluster

Côte d’Ivoire has been immersed in a political crisis since the contested outcome of the presidential election in early December 2010. The ensuing violence and post-electoral crisis has caused many schools to close throughout the country—either due to schools being used as voting sites, teachers being absent because of political campaigns or because of parents fearing to allow their children to attend classes due to the volatile situation.

Although schools reopened in the southern regions of the country on 3 January 2011, after the Christmas vacation, Ouattara’s call for civil disobedience by civil servants, including teachers, resulted in schools in the Centre, North and West (CNO) area remaining closed, affecting approximately 800,000 Ivorian children who went without school for four to six months.

On 20 January 2011, in order to assure an effective strategy and collaborative response to the crisis from international, national and governmental agencies and to prepare for continued and future emergencies, the Côte d’Ivoire Education Cluster was activated. Following high-level advocacy endeavours on the by the Education Cluster between the months of January and March, the Education Minister, Mrs. Kandia Camara, officially announced the reopening of schools in the CNO area for 28 March 2011.

As schools began reopening in the CNO area during the months of March and April, however, fighting in the south intensified, and many schools in the southern regions of the country, particularly in Abidjan, closed as well. The Minister of Education announced another official reopening for all schools in Côte d’Ivoire which was held on 26 April 2011.

Despite these official reopenings, the effects of the crisis are still being felt in the education system. Many schools throughout the country have remained closed and many which have reopened their doors are not completely functional and are struggling to meet the educational needs of the students.

Numerous teachers and education authorities who fled during the crisis have not yet returned to their posts. Schools have been attacked and pillaged leaving some with inadequate supplies and poor or even unsafe learning spaces. Isolated skirmishes in certain parts of the country continue to make parents, students and teachers hesitant to return to class.

In addition to its negative impact on the education system, the crisis has also forced an estimated total of one million Ivoirians to flee their

homes and relocate to other locations. Many of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) are children living in camps or with host families who are in desperate need of educational and recreational activities as well as psychosocial support.

The Education Cluster is comprised of a national education cluster in Abidjan, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, and several education sub-clusters in the field: in Man and Bouake (led by UNICEF) and in Odienne, Guiglo, Bondoukou, Abendourou and Korhogo (led by Save the Children).

The degree of participation and efficiency varies across the sub-clusters. As co-lead agencies for the coordination of the Education Cluster in Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF and Save the Children are required to ensure appropriate Information Management (IM) for an effective intra- and inter-cluster response (see, the *IASC Generic Terms of Reference for Cluster/Sector Leads at the Country Level*)¹.

The *IASC Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and OCHA for Information Management*² details, as part of these cluster lead responsibilities, that cluster lead agencies need to establish IM focal point(s) who should have sufficient expertise and an ability to work with different partners and clusters, and allocate the necessary human and financial resources for Information Management to ensure this.

¹[http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/Resources%20&%20tools/IASCGUIDANCENOTECLUSTER APPROACH.pdf](http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/Resources%20&%20tools/IASCGUIDANCENOTECLUSTERAPPROACH.pdf)

² http://www.oneresponse.info/publicdocuments/Operational_Guidance_IM.pdf