

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN IN WEST-AFRICAN COCOA COMMUNITIES

Education is key to the future of cocoa communities in West-Africa. However, school attendance rates are low and dropout rates high, especially among girls.

Why?

- ▶ School attendance and enrolment rates are around 60 to 80 % for primary schools and around 30 to 50 % for secondary schools in most countries (UNICEF, 2014). Long distances to schools, low parental support and capacity problems prevented children from attending schools, while financial barriers to birth registration excluded migrant groups from sending their children to school (KIT, 2014).
- ▶ 20 – 40 % of children in West-Africa do not reach the last primary grade and drop out on the way (UNICEF, 2014).
- ▶ Improving school attendance might lead to reductions in child labour. A study among Ivorian children showed that school attendance was 34 % for children participating in all cocoa tasks, while attendance for children not working on the family cocoa farm rose to 64 %. (IITA, 2002)
- ▶ In Nigeria, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, school attendance rates are higher among boys than girls (UNICEF, 2014). In the first grade of the two primary schools of Ameleki (CI), 60,6 % were boys and only 39,4 % were girls (KIT, 2014).
- ▶ Dropout rates in Ivorian primary schools are 38.2 % for boys and 40.6 % for girls (UNICEF, 2009). The study in Ameleki showed that early pregnancies were a major cause for dropouts among young women in vocational training (KIT, 2014).

Best practices

Specific Age-Group Education & Empowerment System

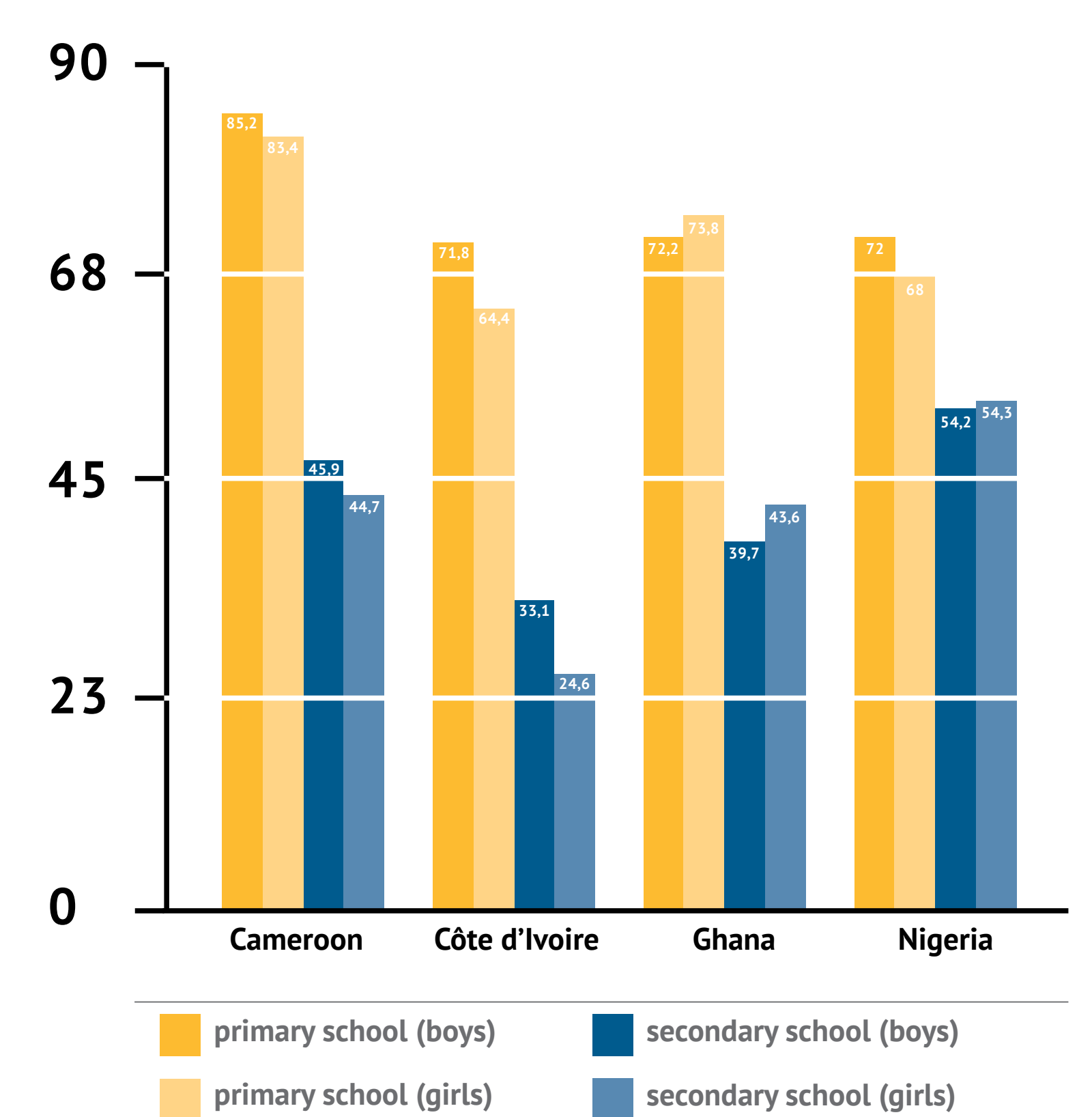
A pilot program, the (SAGE²S), targets Ameleki, a cocoa growing community in the East of Cote d'Ivoire. It aims at empowering young women and girls in rural communities, in three different age groups, through agricultural and food practices and in micro-enterprise development. SAGE²S is a collaboration between WCF, ADM, IECD and KIT. A first step was a situational analysis. This analysis has informed the project on how to address these issues and promote education opportunities for young women in cocoa communities in Côte d'Ivoire, Ameleki.

Nestlé Cocoa Plan

Lack of schools means children not getting an education or walking a long way to schools, and existing schools overcrowded with >55 per class. Getting girls educated is first step to helping next generation of women, and kids out of child labour. Nestlé committed to build 40 schools in 4 years and has now completed 23. Nestlé works with the community to seek their assistance in building the schools and in creating school management committees. Some schools have been set up with school kitchen gardens to provide some income for the schools and help teach practical skills.



Graph: School attendance ratio for primary and secondary schools in West-Africa (2008-2012)



Sources

KIT (2014) Going to School in Ameleki, A Cocoa Producing Area in East Ivory Coast: A Situational Analysis With Focus on Gender. Amsterdam: KIT Royal Tropical Institute.

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