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From Plastic Waste to Classrooms

Climate-Resilient Sustainable Development: Agenda for Children and Youth

Progress Report: 1st January – 31st Decembre 2025

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1. Summary

Project Title	**From Plastic Waste to Classrooms** **Climate-resilient sustainable development: Agenda for children and youth**
Donor	Multiple donors
Grant Reference	SC210114
Country	Côte d'Ivoire
Funds Received	2,103,161.17 USD
Funds Utilized[1]	1,747,420.60 USD
Available Funds[2]	355,740.57 USD
Report Type	**Progress Report**
Objective	Provide equitable opportunities for children, youth, and women through a climate-resilient model of development.
Beneficiaries	30,000 students
Duration	1 March 2021 to 31 December 2030
Reporting Period	1 January to 31 December 2025
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1: Includes "spent" and "committed" funds.

2: Includes the recovery cost which will be spent according to effective expenditures.

2. Executive Summary

In 2019, UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire launched the global construction programme 'From Plastic Waste to Schools.' To date, the programme has recycled 3,228 tons of plastic, constructed 516 classrooms, and produced and distributed 1,000 benches across five schools. After a tem[roary closure at the end of 2024 due to financial constraints, the Conceptos Plásticos factroy reopenned in March 2025. The Société Ivoirienne de Préfabrication (SIP) invested in the company, making 2025 a transition year focused on relaunching and strengthening the initiative, with a new governance structure in place. With Conceptos Plásticos now operational, financially sustainable, and supported by SIP's construction expertise, UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire has launched a new phase under a turnkey classroom delivery model, where a single industrial partner manages the end-to-end delivery of fully equipped, compliant classrooms.

This new phase will not only accelerate infrastructure development but also ensure quality education through the equipment of classrooms with sustainable materials.

The Pool Fund resources have collectively supported the implementation of this innovative project, which contributes to:

- Improving boys' and girls' access to quality education in Côte d'Ivoire;
- Raising awareness on environmental protection through the use of recycled materials and sustainable construction practices.

3. Situation Analysis

Côte d'Ivoire faces two major and interconnected challenges: plastic pollution and limited access to quality education.

Plastic pollution is a growing environmental and public health concern. Abidjan alone produces around 288 tons of plastic waste every day, and 90% of it accumulates in low-income communities. Only 5% of plastic waste is recycled, mostly by informal workers—primarily women—who receive very low compensation. With 46% of households living in poverty, plastic pollution disproportionately affects already vulnerable communities and further degrades their living environment.

At the same time, the education sector faces major gaps. Although schooling is compulsory for children aged 6 to 16, an estimated 2.4 million children remain out of school. This is mainly due to a shortage of classrooms, overcrowded schools, long distances between home and school, and the cost of learning materials. The government estimates a deficit of 30,000 classrooms by 2025, which continues to limit access to education, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Access to adequate WASH services in schools is also insufficient. More than 2 million students lack basic water and sanitation facilities, which negatively affects attendance, learning conditions, and health outcomes. Strengthening WASH infrastructure is therefore essential to ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment.

To respond to these challenges, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education launched an innovative initiative in 2019 to transform plastic waste into durable bricks for building classrooms. This approach contributes simultaneously to reducing plastic pollution, creating green jobs—especially for women—and expanding access to quality education and WASH-compliant school facilities.

4. Project Description

The construction programme was implemented under the 2017–2020 Country Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and continues under the 2026–2030 programme. It aligns with national priorities, including the compulsory education policy, which aims to reduce the number of out-of-school children.

It also contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Additionally, the project contributes to the Key Result for Children[3] #3 (Equitable and sustainable access to education) which focuses on reducing the number of out-of-school children, children's access to formal education and equity.

This programme component contributes to improving children's (girls and boys) access to quality education and hygiene through infrastructures, trainings, and raising awareness of children on environmental protection. Thus, it supports enrolment, retention, and completion rates of marginalized children and adolescents.

Building on these achievements, the project has entered a new phase based on a revised implementation model. With Conceptos Plásticos now fully operational and financially sustainable, and with additional construction expertise provided through SIP, the UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire Country Office has adopted a turnkey classroom delivery model. This revised approach is designed to streamline and accelerate school construction

[3] The acronym KRC stands for Key Results for Children. It is a set of advocacy toolkits designed by UNICEF West and Central Africa to help communication and advocacy professionals carry out both advocacy and communication initiatives to achieve the key results for children 1. These toolkits provide resources, guidelines, and examples for advocating for the advancement of the situation of children in various areas such as immunization, stunting prevention, education and learning outcomes, protection of children from sexual violence, ending child marriage, birth registration, ending open defecation, evidence generation and knowledge management.

while ensuring consistent quality standards. Under this model, the industrial partner SIP/Conceptos Plásticos is responsible for brick production, complete school construction (including classrooms, furniture, latrines, and water points), as well as quality control and compliance with national and international standards.

The turnkey model offers several key advantages, including faster delivery through simplified processes, guaranteed quality through standardized designs and technical supervision, improved financial efficiency through pre-negotiated costs, and enhanced scalability. This approach strengthens the programme's capacity to contribute to national education objectives, including the Government's target of constructing up to 3,000 new classrooms per year.



Photo 1: New classroom constructed and equipped with recycled plastic. - Laleraba- Ferkessedougou

5. Results

Building Classrooms using Recycled Plastic Bricks

The project was designed to target the most marginalized regions of Côte d'Ivoire where access to basic social services is limited. Since its inception, the project has constructed 516 classrooms, providing improved learning spaces for 19,250 children. An additional 16 classrooms are currently under construction, and 33 more are scheduled for completion by the end of 2026.

This funding has been earmarked to make an overall contribution to the construction programme by filling any gaps or unforeseen expenditures. These funds specifically contributed to the technical studies, storage and transport of recycled plastic bricks and the construction of new classrooms. In addition, the funds supported services costs including technical assistance, supervision and field visits.



The regions of Côte d'Ivoire that have classroom construction

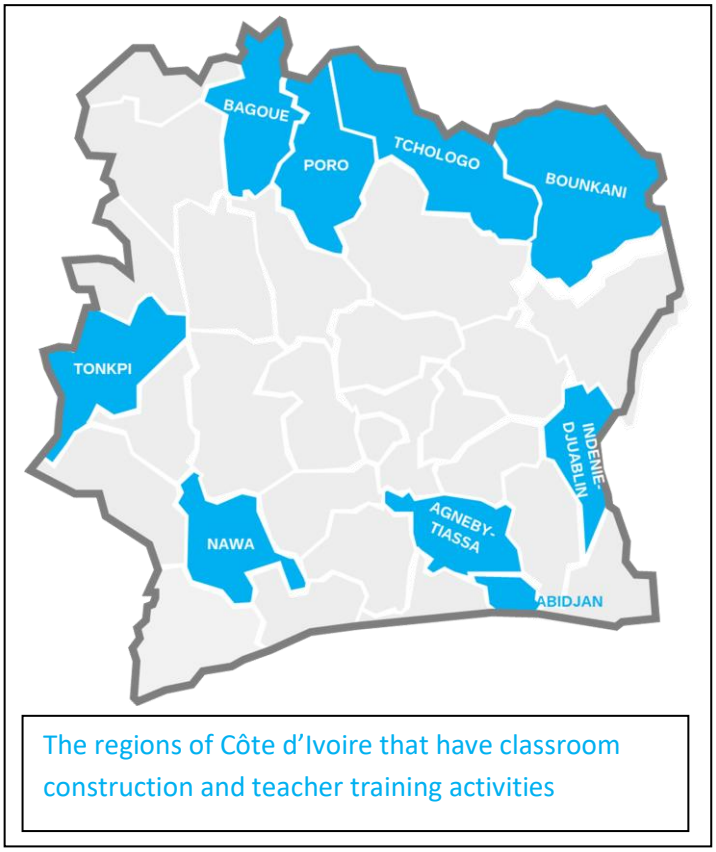
REGION	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF CLASSROOMS
Abidjan	6	17
Agneby Tiassa	3	9
Bafing	16	45
Bagoue	12	25
Belier	1	3
Bounkani	20	48
Cavally	2	6
Folon	11	28
Gbeke	1	2
Guemon	9	24
Haut Sassandra	2	5
Indenie - Djuablin	1	2
Kabadougou	24	69
Loh Djiboua	1	3
Nawa	1	3
Poro	21	63
San Pedro	7	21
Tchologo	24	40
Tonkpi	35	103
TOTAL	183	516

Table of schools built per region

Quality Education

In addition to the construction of classrooms, and thanks to the contribution of this pool fund and other generous partners, UNICEF has continued to provide critical technical assistance to the Ministry of National Education and Literacy (MENA) to improve the quality of education. This support has focused on strengthening the capacities of teachers and their supervisors, as well as on the distribution of educational materials. All newly constructed plastic-brick classrooms have been fully equipped with new furniture, contributing to improved learning environments.

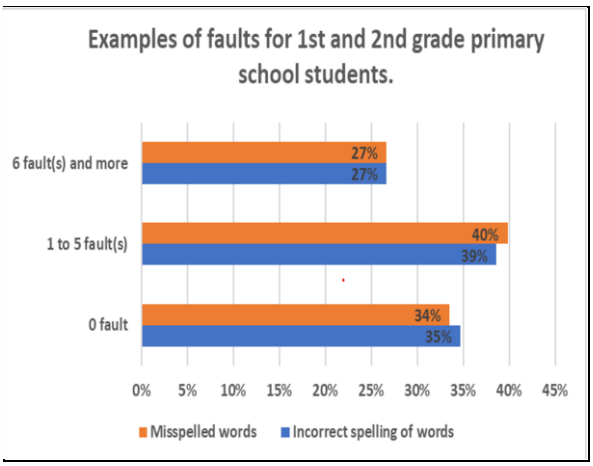
The teacher training programme aims to strengthen students' spelling, grammar, and conjugation skills through targeted remedial exercises based on dictation, improving literacy outcomes and reducing dropout rates. To date, 29,475 teachers and educational advisors have been trained in a games-based learning approach, equipping them with effective strategies to improve reading, writing, and mathematics skills in the first and second years of primary education, particularly for students facing persistent literacy and numeracy challenges.



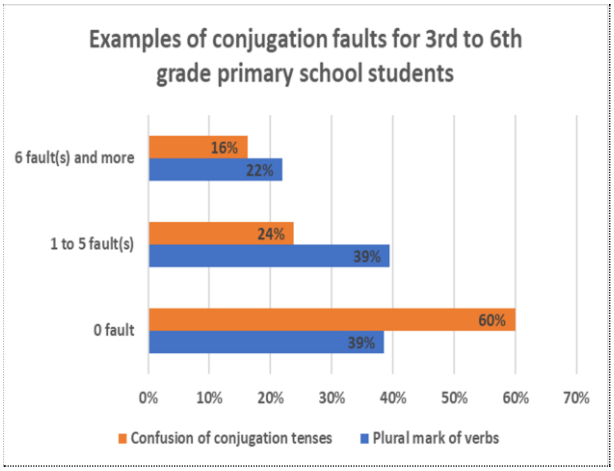
The regions of Côte d'Ivoire that have classroom construction and teacher training activities

Through the "Dictation of the Day" initiative, which provides dictations to teachers every two weeks, the pool fund contribute to support teachers' capacity building to better address remediation needs and improve student performance. The analysis of programme data allows for more targeted and cost-effective teacher training and learning interventions. In addition, WhatsApp and Telegram groups (WEB community) provide remote pedagogical support, reduce teacher isolation especially in remote areas and promote the use of digital technologies in children's learning. Overall, this intervention is expected to improve learning outcomes for approximately 1,244,453 students each academic year.

Below are charts illustrating the most common types of errors identified following the “Dictation of the Day”.



The graph shows that first- and second-grade primary school students face similar difficulties in forming letters and writing words correctly. Targeted remediation is



The graph above shows that, although the majority of students from 3rd to 6th grade made no mistakes regarding verb tenses, remedial actions will need to be implemented to correct the use of plural verbs.

A total of 875,649 school kits has been distributed to students by UNICEF thanks to the contributions of various donors, including 5,900 kits, with exercise booklets, directly supported by this fund to reach a large number of vulnerable children. This support has not only contributed to improving children’s learning and academic performance but has also helped alleviate the financial burden on parents from economically disadvantaged communities during the back-to-school period.



Photo 2: Class session in a newly constructed and fully equipped classroom, with students and their teacher having all the necessary educational materials, providing an improved and conducive learning environment- Laleraba- Ferkessedougou

Academic results reflect the positive impact of the combined interventions implemented in the targeted regions, including the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, the provision of school furniture, the distribution of teaching and learning materials, and comprehensive teacher training. These efforts have improved both the quality of the learning environment and the quality of teaching, facilitated access to education, promoted regular school attendance, and further reduced the financial pressure on families throughout the school year.

The success rates for the elementary school certificate (CEPE) have shown a significant improvement in the Regional Directorates of Education and Literacy (DRENA) of Abengourou, Abidjan, Bouna, Boundiali, Ferkessédougou, Korhogo, Man, Soubré, and Tiassalé. In addition to classroom construction, these regions have directly benefited from teacher training and the distribution of educational materials. These combined actions have greatly contributed to notable progress and a clear improvement in academic results, reaching or even surpassing the national average.

Success rate for the CEPE from 2021 to 2025 (with teacher training and the distribution of educational materials initiated in 2022).

REGION	DRENA	Success rate on final exams 2021	Success rate on final exams 2022	Success rate on final exams 2023	Success rate on final exams 2024	Success rate on final exams 2025
INDENIE-DJUABLIN	ABENGOUROU	57.69%	65.23%	69.91%	79.04%	84.22%
ABIDJAN	ABIDJAN 4	85.88%	86.33%	90.78%	93.67%	95.19%
BOUNKANI	BOUNA	36.64%	58.89%	61.38%	88.05%	88.29%
BABGOUE	BOUNDIALI	21.06%	49.20%	51.26%	80.47%	87.09%
TCHOLOGO	FERKESSEDOUGOU	44.67%	57.73%	64.95%	81.22%	87.62%
PORO	KORHOGO	43.19%	56.00%	57.96%	84.05%	89.55%
TONKPI	MAN	38.02%	49.93%	69.57%	89.35%	90.71%
NAWA	SOUBRE	42.99%	58.85%	70.74%	83.81%	83.01%
AGNEBY-TIASSA	TIASSALE	55.54%	70.24%	75.65%	91.44%	90.28%
	NATIONAL	52.53%	64.77%	71.28%	83.46%	86.58%

6. Constraints, Lessons Learned, and Risk Management

Since the beginning of implementation, a number of challenges have been faced, and mitigation measures have been put in place.

Challenges	Impact	Response
COVID-19 pandemic	It was necessary to adjust the programme's implementation timeline due to: Transport limitations, reduced availability of staff, other priorities in worldwide humanitarian assistance, and development agenda regarding the global health crisis.	Adjustment of programmes's implementation timeline.
Storms characterized by winds exceeding 200 km per hour in April 2022	Extensive damage in the city of Odienne, affecting schools built with plastic bricks too.	Set up temporary learning spaces to ensure school continuity. Revision of the initial construction plan to ensure classrooms are more climate resilient. Development of a new design, including more bricks and more columns for better wind resistance and a better-anchored roof. Reconstruction of new classrooms regarding the new design.
Heavy rainy season each year between	Difficulty/no access to the identified sites and construction delays.	Extension of contracts. Informing the donor and requesting no-cost extension when required.

May and October		
Tensions in the construction market	Difficulty in recruiting companies, low financial capacity of companies to cope with possible difficulties and delays.	Additional agreements and fragmentation of payment installments. Additional training for companies Capacity analysis to assess the best performers and retain them
Programmatic changes to focus on the targeted region to increase resilience	Delays as the process has to be relaunched from the beginning to identify the new sites.	Informing the donor and requesting no-cost extension when required.
Limited availability of construction and supervision companies	All construction companies are currently working on ongoing projects. As a result, UNICEF cannot launch the construction of the remaining 96 classrooms until some of the current constructions are finished. This is producing delays in the implementation of the project.	A public call was issued to invite expressions of interest from new companies, and the verification process was carried out to ensure suitability of the responding companies for the work required. In addition, trainings are planned, for the newly recruited companies as well as those already working on the project. This is crucial as some of these companies have recently hired workers who have not yet completed the training programme.
Conceptos Plásticos experienced limited operational capacity and significant financial constraints.	The project was temporarily halted, resulting in delays in classroom construction and disruptions to planned implementation timelines.	Following a temporary closure at the end of 2024, the Conceptos Plásticos factory reopened in March 2025 after being restructured and acquired by the Société Ivoirienne de Prefabrication (SIP). SIP invested in the company and introduced a new governance and operational structure.

7. Communication and Visibility

Several communication assets have been developed for the broader Plastic Bricks programme, including a series of new videos which highlight the construction process and present the full “bricks life cycle” from the plastic waste collection phase to the actual transformation into recycled plastic bricks.

Link to photos of the Plastic Bricks programme can be found here:
PLASTIC_BRICKS_2024



Photo 3: school kit distribution-Tchebakro- Soubre

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation activities were carried out within the UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire overall monitoring and evaluation framework plan. In addition, the MoE organized an annual routine survey conducted by the Directorate of Strategy, Planning, and Statistics (DESPS) covering the whole country. The survey provides information on children’s school attendance, retention and completion rates (including for schools benefiting from new classrooms).

UNICEF construction engineers organized several field visits to ensure quality control. At the same time, the UNICEF Education team conducted specific field monitoring visits to evaluate the global impact from the project implementation and ensure complete ownership by both the MoE and the local population of the communities where the schools are constructed.

9. Use of Funds

The financial report (donor statement by nature of expense) is attached with the report.

10. Future Activities

In 2025, the programme faced implementation challenges, which required an adjustment of the initial rollout strategy. As a result, a pilot phase was implemented for a duration of six months, running from December 2025 until June 2026. During this pilot phase, construction activities will be limited to five schools. This will allow the partners to test, refine, and stabilize the operational turnkey model. Following the successful completion of this transition phase, the project will resume at full scale from June 2026 onwards. From June 2026 until the end of 2026, a total of 33 schools are already planned to be constructed. Looking ahead, the programme maintains an ideal target of constructing 240 classrooms per year. In parallel, the quality education component will continue to be fully integrated, including the provision of classroom equipment, to ensure that infrastructure delivery is matched with adequate learning conditions.

The following activities will be implemented during the next reporting period:

Activities	Chronogram	Responsible
Pilot phase with limited construction rollout (5 schools) to test capacity	Jan-Jun 2026	UNICEF and Conceptos Plasticos Côte d'Ivoire
Upon successful completion of the pilot phase, delivery of 33 additional schools in the second half of the year, financed through non–Pool Fund resources.	Jun–Dec 2026	UNICEF and Conceptos Plasticos Côte d'Ivoire

Transition to revised full-scale implementation model, enabling construction of 240 schools by year	Jan-Dec 2027	UNICEF and Conceptos Plasticos Côte d'Ivoire
Integration of quality education components, including classroom equipment	Dec 2025 – rolling base	UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire

11. Opportunities for Future Support

A quality education component was included in the initial construction programme but was limited to children directly benefiting from the newly built classrooms. In light of Côte d'Ivoire's ongoing learning crisis, which places learning outcomes among the country's top national priorities, UNICEF proposed an expanded and more equitable approach. Under this approach, all children and teachers within the same school and surrounding communities receive quality education support, regardless of whether they are directly enrolled in the new classrooms.

This expansion significantly increases the number of children benefiting from quality education interventions. Increased funding availability would allow UNICEF to reach a larger population of learners and teachers, thereby contributing more effectively to improved learning outcomes and educational equity

12. Acknowledgments

UNICEF's work is funded entirely by the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and by our partners in governments, civil society, and the private sector. Voluntary contributions enable UNICEF to fulfill its mandate to protect the rights of children, help meet their basic needs, and expand their opportunities to realize their full potential.

We take this opportunity to thank all our partners and donors for their commitment and trust in UNICEF. Through this project, support from all the different donors involved in this fund is enabling hundreds of children to access preschool and primary education in optimal conditions for learning.

Through this project, support from the Luxemburg National Committee is enabling thousands of children to access preschool and primary education in optimal conditions for learning.

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