EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A research project for the Ministère de l’Education Nationale, de l’Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle designed in partnership with Education Partnerships Group

Data collection and analysis elaborated by Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education Côte d’Ivoire (ROCARE CI)

In recent decades, the education and training sector in Côte d’Ivoire has faced many challenges, including improving access at different levels of the education system, the quality of educational services and the efficiency of budgetary spending.

The public authorities have developed different education policy strategies to face this situation, aimed at improving the monitoring and management of the education system and to guarantee access to quality, equitable and inclusive education in line with the needs of the labour market. With this in mind, the Ministry of National Education, Technical Education and Vocational Training (MENETFP) established partnerships with various institutions for technical and financial support.

In this context, the MENETFP signed a partnership with the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) in 2018, and is enjoying positive results.

This review on “Analysis of the Government measure on the provision of tuition fees (or Subsidies) to students assigned by the Government in Private Lower Secondary Schools,” not only sheds new light on the current state of the public subsidy mechanism and its forward-looking evolution, but also suggests avenues for research to address the current challenges raised by the subsidy system, including:

• sustainability of public spending for lower secondary education;
• impact of the public subsidy scheme on equitable access to lower secondary education;
• impact of the public subsidy scheme on private schools quality;
• governance and efficiency of the public subsidies scheme to private schools.

Through the subsidies, the number of students assigned by the Government to private schools increased from 50,286 to 167,006 between 2012 and 2017, representing an average annual growth rate of 27%. The suggestions above for research avenues will be addressed with diligence by the MENETFP in order to make this scheme an effective lever for improving equity and quality of education in our country.

The MENETFP wishes to express its appreciation to EPG leaders and their partners for their commitment to provide technical support for the improvement of the Côte d’Ivoire education system.

KONE François-Xavier Raoul
Deputy Chief of Staff, MENETFP, Côte d’Ivoire

Foreword

In recent decades, the education and training sector in Côte d’Ivoire has faced many challenges, including improving access at different levels of the education system, the quality of educational services and the efficiency of budgetary spending.

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1.

Context and objectives of the review

Since the 1990s, the Ministry of National Education, Technical and Professional Training (Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale, de l’Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle — MENETFP) has granted subsidies in the form of tuition fees to private lower secondary schools. This approach is driven by a government commitment to expand access to secondary education. Given limited capacity within the existing public school system, the subsidy scheme is considered a cost effective way of achieving increased access. Over the last decade, the programme has expanded to respond to a growing demand for free secondary education.

Over one third of all lower secondary students are currently enrolled in private schools funded by the government, which places a significant pressure on the education budget. Over the past five years, budget allocations to subsidies have increased from 15.4 billion CFA (West African CFA Franc) in 2011 to 65.7 billion CFA in 2018, an average annual increase of 23%.

To cope with the increasing cost of financing subsidies, MENETFP sought to gain a deeper understanding of how successful these subsidies have been in expanding access, and how the subsidy policy could be improved to ensure equitable access to quality education for all children.

MENETFP partnered with the Education Partnerships Group (EPG) to consolidate available information on subsidies to lower secondary education. A joint decision was made to hire the Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education en Côte d’Ivoire (ROCARE-CI) to: (i) review international experience with subsidies to secondary schools in order to contextualise the Ivorian experience; (ii) review the experience to date of subsidies to private lower secondary schools in Côte d’Ivoire to uncover the challenges and opportunities for improvement; and (iii) carry out a comparative analysis of the costs of public and private secondary education to MENETFP. This short report is based on the review activities conducted by ROCARE-CI between May and July 2018. As part of these activities, targeted document reviews were conducted, as well as interviews with key officials from MENETFP, private school associations and the World Bank.

Over one third of all lower secondary students are currently enrolled in private schools funded by the government.

Based on the findings from review activities MENETFP expressed a desire to work with EPG to improve the current subsidy system and ensure that the private sector is leveraged as effectively as possible. This review thus serves as a starting point for elaborating more detailed policy studies and experiments to provide recommendations about cost-effective ways that the Ministry can use subsidies to improve the quality and equity in lower secondary schools.
2. International experiences of subsidies to private schools

The theoretical framework for this review is based on the public-private partnership (PPP) concept, which is defined as an arrangement usually formalised by a contract between a government and one or more private actors. These private actors can be both non-profit and for-profit organisations. The contract specifies, among other things, the type of service, its duration, the risks and the responsibilities of each party.

PPPs can contribute to several policy objectives if the arrangement is well designed and accompanied by an effective accountability system, such as:

- **Increasing access to services** — often for specific groups. Private organisations offer a potential flexibility that allows them to customise services more specifically to the needs of their clients. For example, government school providers typically have less autonomy in the recruitment and effective management of teachers than schools in the private sector.

- **Improving the quality of services**. The entry of private organisations into the education market can stimulate competition between private schools and public schools, with the threat of losing students acting as an incentive for them both to provide services offering high quality and value for money.

- **Improving the efficiency of budget expenditure** through risk sharing. Certain types of PPPs offer the government and private sector the ability to share risk, which is likely to encourage private providers who may otherwise be reluctant to bear the full financial burden (or other risks) of entering the education market. For the state, this means that partnering with existing private schools may be a more cost-effective way of increasing access than building new schools and hiring more teachers.

There are four types of relevant PPP in the education sector: (i) private management of public schools (schools under contract); (ii) public-private infrastructure partnership; (iii) education vouchers (or vouchers); and (iv) subsidies. Table 1 below shows the principles of each type of PPP and countries around the world where they are used.

Table 1: Principles of public-private partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of PPP</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private management of public schools (schools under contract)</td>
<td>Public schools built by public funds, whose management is entrusted to a private organisation through a contract.</td>
<td>United States, Colombia, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure PPP</td>
<td>The government grants a private operator the right (concession) to fund, build and manage a school, building or university residence. The government leases the infrastructure to the private sector for a specified period of time, after which the infrastructure is transferred to the state.</td>
<td>United Kingdom, Australia, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education vouchers or vouchers</td>
<td>The government directly gives pupils vouchers or scholarships to enable them to attend the private school they choose.</td>
<td>Chile, India, Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies</td>
<td>The government directly funds private schools. These subsidies may take different forms, including direct financial support or material contributions (equipment or human resources) to enhance enrolment and quality of education.</td>
<td>Colombia, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Venezuela, South Africa, Cameroon, Madagascar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. “Public Private Partnerships in Education in Developing Countries” (2017), Ark Education Partnerships Group (EPG).
Examples of subsidies in Sub-Saharan Africa

The review of international experiences with subsidies in secondary education highlights various types of PPP in sub-Saharan African countries aimed at promoting access, quality and equity. In many cases, the subsidies are intended to encourage the private sector to serve more underserved and disadvantaged populations and to encourage diversity and the dissemination of new approaches and technologies. The following provides a summary of some experiences in these countries:

Madagascar: The government transfers funds to private education providers through: (i) a subsidy for teaching staff with a teaching license; (ii) a contract programme which helps schools purchase equipment and teaching materials or finance training programmes; (iii) the alleviation of fees charged to parents; and (iv) the provision of school kits by the government to newly enrolled children in the first year of study.

South Africa: Subsidies to schools depend on the registration status of schools and the size school fees that parents have to pay. Schools with the lowest fees receive the largest public subsidies.

Uganda: The Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme, which ran from 2007 to 2017, allowed private secondary schools to receive public funding in areas without any public secondary schools. Three studies suggest that the programme had positive effects on access to school, but limited impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Private institutions enjoyed full autonomy in the recruitment and management of teachers. Private students followed the same curriculum and took the same national exams as those in public institutions.
3. Review of subsidies to private lower secondary schools in Côte d’Ivoire

Since the 1990s, the government of Côte d’Ivoire has provided private schools with pupil-indexed subsidies to address the lack of public sector capacity and to make secondary education more accessible. Subsidies to private lower secondary schools are based on Ivorian principles that guarantee a free education and require compulsory schooling from age 6 to 16. The approach aims to help the greatest number of children access secondary education and to provide those who need it with financial support to ensure their schooling.

The legal and regulatory framework of the subsidy programme is based on a variety of laws, decrees and conventions. The pillars of the framework include: (i) laws that confirm the commitment to human rights and the right to education for every citizen; (ii) decrees that articulate the conditions for public engagement in the private education sector, and have led to the creation of the Department for the Supervision of Private Schools (Direction de l’Encadrement des Etablissements Privaux — DEEP); and (iii) conventions between the government and the main private education providers to determine the terms and conditions of the subsidy scheme. Conventions were signed between the State of Côte d’Ivoire and three different types of private provider: private secular education providers, private religious denominational education providers, and Catholic and Protestant private education providers. The conventions require to: (i) guarantee non-discrimination, particularly regarding origin, race, opinion and belief of pupils; (ii) comply with the pedagogical requirements, programmes, schedules and vacation periods in force in public schools; (iii) comply with all safety standards; (iv) have a “creation licence”; and (v) have an “opening licence”.

The institutional framework to manage the government’s relations with private providers is set out in a decree issued in July 2016 by MENETFP. This decree designates DEEP as the body responsible for the private education sector. The purpose of this department is to monitor the management of private schools; to issue the various authorisations to schools and staff; to monitor the process of paying school fees; and to administer sanctions according to operating criteria.

A number of other government and private actors are also involved in the design and implementation of the subsidy programme. On the MENETFP side, five other departments collaborate in the co-ordination and disbursement of the subsidies, as well as regional education offices (Direction Régionale de l’Education Nationale de l’Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle — DRENTEFP). Other government actors include the Treasury, Financial Controller and the National Education Inspection Unit (Inspection Générale de l’Education Nationale — IGEN). In addition to government actors, a number of private school networks and unions also interact with the subsidy programme.

The school assignment process and subsidy allocation

Student choices

The preparatory work for school assignments starts before the Certificate of Primary and Elementary Studies (Certificat d’Etudes Primaires et Elémentaires — CEPE) exam. Students indicate their first, second, and third school choices on forms collected by, and registered in, their regional education department (DRENETFP). In March and April, these choices are registered in the Department of Orientation and Scholarships (Direction de l’Orientation et des Bourses — DOB) database. In June and July, the DOB matches these choices with the Ministry’s database.

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2 The Department of Strategies, Planning and Statistics (Direction des Stratégies de la Planification et des Statistiques — DSPS); Department of Orientation and Scholarships (Direction de l’Orientation et des Bourses — DOB); Department of Pedagogy and Continued Education (Direction de la Pédagogie et de la Formation Continue — DPFC); Department of Administrative and Financial Affairs (Direction des Affaires Administratives et Financières — DAF); and the National Orientation Commission (Commission Nationale d’Orientation — CNO).

3 These include the Union of Non-Faith Based Private Schools (Fédération des Etablissements Privés Laïcs de Côte d’Ivoire — FENEPLACI) and the Network of Faith-Based Private Schools (Réseau des Écoles Confessionnelles — RLEC).
Following this, the National Orientation Commission (Commission Nationale d’Orientation — CNO) reviews the choices of each pupil and his/her chosen schools, taking into account student test scores, their age (which must not be over 15) and the capacity of the schools.

**Assignment of students to schools**

In the first round, students are assigned to schools on the basis of their choices, merit and capacity of schools. In cases where the first round does not result in an assignment to a public school, and all choices are exhausted, another search is made for a private school. An assignment will then be made according to the place of residence and the choice of the student, with the objective of finding a school within a radius of 5 kilometres. At the end of this process, pupils assigned to private schools fall under the framework of the subsidy convention. In order to maintain the subsidy, the students must remain students of good standing.

**Monitoring and supervision**

MENETFP organises follow-up actions and inspections to ensure effective and quality services. The regional level is responsible for inspecting public and private schools. Inspections are intended to ensure consistency between the number of students assigned to a private school and those present in that school who are subsidised by the state. This is achieved by collecting data from online registrations collected by the Department of Strategies, Planning and Statistics (Direction des Stratégies de la Planification et des Statistiques — DSPS), and then conducting a physical ‘head count’ of students. These physical inspections are carried out by agents from different departments: IGEN, DEEP, the Department of Administrative and Financial Affairs (Direction des Affaires Administratives et Financières — DAF) and the Ministry of Budget. If there is a complaint made by a school due to a discrepancy between the online and inspection numbers, the minister can authorise and additional subsidy.
4.
Main findings of the review of subsidies to lower secondary private schools

The number of per-student subsidies provided to schools quadrupled between the 2010-11 and 2017-18 school years. The number of student for which private schools are receiving subsidies increased from 129,066 in 2010-11 to 547,045 in 2017-2018. Graph 1 below shows the increase in enrolment in public, private and subsidised private lower secondary schools between 2011 and 2018.

The number of students receiving subsidies quadrupled between the 2010-11 and 2017-18 school years.

Graph 1 — Number of per-student subsidies provided to schools between 2010-11 and 2017-18

4 Figures from MENETFP
The increase in student numbers is especially marked during the two school years between 2011-12 and 2013-14, which is probably due to the MENETFP lowering entrant test scores. In the 2011-12 school year, the admission bar dropped from 110 to 90 points, which resulted in an increase in the number of admissions of subsidised students from 143,036 in 2011-12 to 199,988 in 2012-13 (an increase of 39.8%). In the 2012-13 school year the minimum score was further lowered to 85 points, which accounts for another increase in enrolments in private schools, after which enrolments stabilised (Graph 2).

Graph 2 — Proportion of enrolled students that schools are receiving subsidies for between 2010-11 and 2017-18
The proportion of students in private schools who benefit from the subsidy has more than doubled between the 2010-11 and 2017-18 school years. The government has been the main provider of tuition fees in private secondary education since the admission grade was reduced to 85 points. This has reduced the share of non-subsidised students in private schools, as indicated in Graph 3 below.

The distribution of students benefitting from subsidies varies across regions. There is a significant disparity in the regional distribution of subsidised students assigned to private schools. As Graph 4 below shows, students whose tuition fees are paid by the government is concentrated in eight regions, which account for 70.5% of subsidised students in the 2017-18 school year. The district of Abidjan has the highest percentage of subsidised students in private schools (66.0%) in the country.

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**Graph 3 — Share of students for which private schools are receiving subsidies, 2011–2017**

**Graph 4 — Percentage of subsidised students in private schools across regions in 2017–18**

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
To meet demand, the number of schools serving subsidised students nearly tripled between 2010-11 and 2017-18. As indicated in Graph 5 below, the number of private schools with subsidised students increased from 356 to 1,025 between 2010-11 and 2017-18. Taking into account the overall growth in the number of private schools, the proportion of private schools with subsidised students doubled from 39.6% in 2010-11 to 79.7% in 2017-18.

The number of schools serving subsidised students nearly tripled between 2010-11 and 2017-18.

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8 Data from MENETFP and calculations by ROCARE-CI.
5.

Comparative analysis of costs

The total value of subsidies to private lower secondary schools has increased fourfold between 2010-11 and 2017-18, from 15,488 billion CFA to 65,646 billion CFA. Secular secondary schools, together with a significant number of private religious schools, account for a large share of subsidies. For the 2016/2017 school year, religious secondary schools received only 3.7 billion CFA. Whereas secular secondary schools received 62 billion CFA.

The total value of subsidies has increased fourfold between 2011 and 2018.

The unit cost of education to the government in the public sector tends to be higher than the cost of education in the private sector, particularly at the level of secondary education. A 2017 World Bank review of public expenditure in the education sector in Côte d’Ivoire indicates that the total unit cost for private schools with subsidised students (those with assigned students that receive public transfers) is 351,538 CFA compared to 373,768 CFA for public schools. For private schools not receiving subsidies, the total unit cost is 231,538 CFA.

Costs to households vary by school type and income quintiles. On average, households spend 123,334 CFA per child in public lower secondary schools and 231,538 CFA per child in private lower secondary schools, although these costs vary substantially by level of income (see Graph 7 below). The amount of 231,538 CFA applies to both private schools receiving subsidies and private schools not receiving subsidies; additional data sources would be required to establish the separate cost to households in private schools receiving subsidies.

Graph 7 — Total value of subsidies (in CFA) to private lower secondary schools between 2010-11 and 2017-18

Data from MENETFP.

Graph 8 — Average household expenditure on lower secondary education by wealth quintile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wealth quintile</th>
<th>Q1*</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost (CFA)</td>
<td>37,074</td>
<td>53,888</td>
<td>81,970</td>
<td>103,568</td>
<td>131,243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Q1 = poorest quintile

Data from the World Bank Côte d'Ivoire Education Expenditure Review 2017.
Achievements and challenges of the private lower secondary school subsidy policy

The introduction of subsidies to private lower secondary schools in Côte d’Ivoire has facilitated:

- **An increase in enrolment.** Subsidies have responded to a strong growth in demand for school enrolment, with subsidised students quadrupling between 2010-11 and 2017-18.

- **A diversification of education providers.** Subsidies have fostered a quantitative increase in the different types of private institutions, including secular, Islamic, Catholic and Protestant providers. As a result, the number of private schools receiving subsidies increased from 356 in 2010-2011 to 1,025 in 2017-2018.

- **The establishment of a mechanism for regulating the private education sector,** including several government actors.

However, several challenges remain in the areas of:

- **Sustainability of government expenditure in lower secondary education.** The amount allocated to subsidies quadrupled from 2010–11 to 2017–18, placing significant constraints on the education budget. Under the current subsidy programme, additional students can only be accommodated with further funds from the government. Furthermore, the increasing number of students in private schools will likely result in additional staff and staff training required in MENETFP, including for monitoring and supervision.

- **Impact of subsidies on the equity of access to lower secondary education.** Currently, the subsidy programme does not target students from low-income households, which may limit the access and retention of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **Impact of subsidies on the quality of private schools.** There is currently no information available on the criteria for the allocation of private schools receiving subsidies based on performance. Subsidies are therefore paid independently of the results obtained by schools.

- **Governance and performance of subsidies to private schools.** There is a challenge in co-ordinating all the different actors involved in the subsidy programme to ensure efficient supervision and management. Irregularities in the law — for example the MENETFP’s ability to control enrolment numbers and adjust payments — have led to inaccurate and late allocation of subsidies to private schools.

**Conclusion**

While the subsidy programme has allowed a growing number of students to access lower secondary education in Côte d’Ivoire, there is an opportunity to leverage the programme to improve equity and quality. The subsidy programme has filled an important access gap over the past decade. As spending increases, MENETFP is committed to elaborate more detailed policy studies and experiments to explore cost-effective ways in which subsidies can be used to improve equity and quality.