

Overcoming a History of War
Project on Human Resource Development for Strengthening Local Administration in Central and
Northern Areas of Côte d'Ivoire

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A painful legacy caused by the division between north and south

Côte d'Ivoire is an agricultural country in west Africa that boasts the world's highest exports of cacao and cashews. It is also famous for its strength in soccer. However, another famous profile of the country is its history of war that lasted for over 10 years from 2002.

During the war, the country was being divided between north and south, basic administrative services such as health care, education, and water supply stagnated, and people in rural area and/or poverty ridden area were largely left behind from development. The civil war that began following the presidential election in January 2011 ended by April of the same year, but brought about major negative consequences including expansion of internal disparity, confrontation between different social groups, and erosion of confidence of citizens in the administration.

Toward reconciliation among people and recovery of trust from the public in the administration

This project (implementation period: October 2013 – April 2017) was launched with the aim of recovering the administration's function to provide basic social services and promoting reconciliation among people and their coexistence.

The target areas were Bouaké City, which was the central city in the northern part of the country when the country was divided into the two areas, and Gbêkê Region where Bouaké is located. Through the "Pilot Project" which improved elementary schools and water well facilities, technical support from

Japanese specialists was conducted that enabled the regional government to carry out the chain of functions for providing public services that appropriately met the needs of residents, including grasping the residents' needs through surveys of the current situation, selecting projects through agreement with residents, establishment of coordination functions between the central government and the regional government, and fair supply and contract execution supervision of contractors.

Residents and the administration working hand in hand

As a result of the project, 11 elementary schools and 77 borehole facilities were either constructed and/or rehabilitated in a total of nine municipalities in the Gbêkê Region. In addition, citizens' committees were organized with the support of the administration in a bid to help local people manage to maintain and utilize those schools and boreholes for themselves with the result that they became authorized to decide on how to collect the usage fees.

At the completion ceremony of the project, officials and residents expressed their gratitude by saying, "We have not been left behind in the society" and "Japan considered with us community-building methods by using our own strengths." They added to say with a firm determination "It is our responsibility to sustainably implement these methods."

It is difficult for us to regard the impact of the history of warfare in Côte d'Ivoire so negligible as to be able to overcome with the great success of those projects alone, but the courage and wisdom bestowed by the project as well as the experience learned from Japan will form a foundation for future proactive community-building.