WHY THE NEED

With 4.8 million inhabitants, the Central African Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world. Over three-fifths of the population live on less than $1.25 a day. Although public education in the CAR is free and compulsory from ages 6 to 14, about 67% of the population (75% of the women) is illiterate. Given the need to structurally improve the educational system, Cordaid has supported the CAR Ministry of Education since 2011, striving together to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education.

BUILDING EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Children in the Central African Republic (CAR) suffer from a massive shortage of quality education services. This is caused by a myriad of factors, such as insufficient financial resources to build and maintain schools or afford learning materials, shortages of qualified staff, lack of adequate quality control mechanisms and an unsafe learning environment due to the violent conflict. Moreover, movements of internally displaced people cause an increase in the demand for educational services.

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The ongoing war has greatly affected the education sector of the CAR. The budget of the Ministry of Education is insufficient to meet the demand for education. Children have difficulty accessing basic education, given the limited means of their parents to pay school fees, the lack of functional schools and a shortage of qualified teachers. Cordaid has launched an emergency education program in the northwest of the country, in the sub-prefectures of Bocaranga and Koui in Ouham Pendé and the sub-prefecture of Bouar in Nana Mambéré in September 2017.

FACTS AND FIGURES

4.7 million inhabitants in the CAR

63% of the population lives on less than $1.25 a day

69% primary school enrolment ratio

29% of children are involved in child labor

CAUSES OF POOR EDUCATION

Literacy is the foundational skill for any other education. Several cultural and economic barriers are hampering access to quality education:

- Poverty, discrimination and child labor;
- Lack of teachers and low teacher motivation;
- Substandard teaching skills;
- Inadequate school building infrastructure;
- Inter-ethnic and religious divisions;
- Population displacement
OUR APPROACH - RESULTS BASED FINANCING

Cordaid has a long track record with Results Based Financing (RBF) in the health sector. Following this success, RBF was also introduced in the education sector in 2012 in the CAR. RBF is a system strengthening approach that introduces checks and balances along the service delivery chain, encouraging better governance, transparency and enhanced accountability. It achieves this by linking payments directly to performance. Where possible, Cordaid works with and through existing structures and institutions, involving local actors. Education stakeholders and partners include school inspectors and staff of the Ministry of Education, school directors and teachers, community-based organizations, parents and children. In this way, we help to build resilient and sustainable public systems, even in complex and unstable settings like the CAR.

Service providers such as schools are paid on the basis of agreed indicators and verified output. A detailed monitoring and evaluation system is set up to track and award performance. Service providers are autonomous in how they spend the funds in order to achieve their own aims. RBF motivates service providers to deliver more services of higher quality.

LINKING RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT

To enhance institutional capacity, Cordaid trained school directors and staff members of the Ministry of Education, including the in 2014 established ‘Cellule National RBF in education’. Cordaid seized the momentum in June 2015: the newly appointed Minister of Education declared RBF as a national education strategy.

“With Cordaid’s RBF approach, our country has the chance to strengthen the war-torn education system.”

Cabinet Director of the Ministry of Education, CAR

EMERGENCY EDUCATION PILOT

Based on our respective experiences with emergency service delivery and RBF for education system strengthening, Cordaid designed a Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) approach and linked it to the existing education delivery system. This emergency education pilot has two goals:

1. At a strategic level, the goal is to develop and apply a flexible LRRD approach in a protracted crisis context, such as the CAR, using the RBF approach to strengthen the educational system where possible, accounting for different security contexts.

2. At a programmatic level, the goal is to improve access to and quality of education for an estimated 10,800 children, aged 6 to 14 years, enrolled at 18 schools in the Bocaranga-Bouar region of the CAR. The project runs for two years with a specific focus on the creation of safe learning environments.
BUILDING EDUCATION IN FRAGILE AREAS

STEP ONE: Construction and rehabilitation of buildings
In areas affected by war and conflict, it is imperative that houses and school buildings are restored so that people can return and children can pick up on their education. In the Cordaid LRRD approach, we link education strengthening efforts to humanitarian interventions that focus on shelter, WASH, and nutrition. While implementing activities, we account for different contexts in terms of population needs, level of security and population dynamics. It involves:

- Assuring financial means and technical advice to build new school buildings and rehabilitate those that are damaged;
- Using local materials and involving local communities in construction processes;
- Assuring essential educational equipment;
- Addressing malnutrition by providing seeds, tools and training for parents and school staff to start and maintain a school garden and a school canteen.

STEP TWO: Strengthen the school system through RBF
When schools are built or restored, they are further supported by Cordaid through RBF, an approach that awards schools for obtaining good results, as measured and verified according to pre-determined performance indicators. This involves:

- Training school directors on school management, administration and involvement of parents;
- Supporting fees for schools to steer for better management and administration, as well as higher motivation of teachers;
- Supporting fees for each child enrolled with a minority status as well as for quality indicators;
- Setting up and implementing a triangulated data verification system to monitor the RBF routine and to assess the progress according to the performance indicators. Data are collected by Cordaid, school inspectors affiliated to the Ministry of Education and community organizations.

STEP THREE: Invest in current and future generations
One of the main reasons for girls to drop out of school prematurely is early marriage and pregnancy. This is not only affecting girls’ health status negatively, but also leaves them with an unfinished education, lower job opportunities and relatively more subsequent pregnancies and children than their educated peers. In addition, in the conflict-prone CAR, gender-based violence is massively affecting society. It involves:

- Breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty by providing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education to prevent adolescents’ pregnancies and early drop outs;
- Inviting school teachers, directors and school inspectors for trainings on SRHR for youth and adolescents;
- Providing trainings by the local Cordaid SRHR experts working for the Jeune S35 program;
- Monitoring of outputs and results which is done through RBF indicators.

RESULTS*

123
schools strengthened and rehabilitated in 2016 - 2018

53,913
boys and girls enrolled at beginning of school year 2016 - 2017 and 43,678 of these children retained until end of school year

73%
of the parents satisfied about the education services offered by the contracted schools in 2016 - 2017

1,500
refugee teachers returned, contracted by the Ministry of Education, to their schools all over the country (together with UNICEF) in 2013

*figures relate to the regions Ombella-Mpoko, Lobaye and Nana-Mambere

RETAINED AT END OF SCHOOL YEAR
Percentage of children retained at end of school year 2016-2017, by sex and region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage Retained</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ombella-Mpoko</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobaye</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana-Mambere</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75% of the parents satisfied about the education services offered by the contracted schools in 2016 - 2017
Cordaid’s Work on Education in the CAR

Cordaid supports primary education in the CAR since 2011. In 2013, the Cordaid country office in Bangui participated in the implementation of the Emergency Transition Plan (2014-2017) funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) through UNICEF. The focus was on construction, rehabilitation of schools and sending teachers back to schools.

Following good results within the health sector, Cordaid introduced Results Based Financing (RBF) to the education sector. This RBF education program was gradually but steadily making progress. During school year 2014-2015, Cordaid contracted 141 schools in four prefectures (the Nana-Mambéré, Ombella-Mpoko, Lobaye, Ouham and Ouham-Pende), covering approximately 10% of the country’s schools. As a result of the program, access to education was established for approximately 60,000 underprivileged children.

5 Jeune S3 (Santé, Sexualité, Sécurité) is an alliance of nine partners led by Cordaid. Jeune S3 ensures that young people are able, motivated and have the opportunity to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and that their sexual and reproductive rights are respected.

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ABOUT CORDAID

Cordaid works to end poverty and exclusion. We do this in the world’s most fragile and conflict-affected areas as well as in the Netherlands. We engage local communities to rebuild trust and resilience and increase people’s self-reliance. Our professionals provide humanitarian assistance and create opportunities to improve security, healthcare and education and stimulate inclusive economic growth. We are supported by more than 300,000 private donors in the Netherlands and by a worldwide partner network. This gives us the leverage and implementing power to solve problems and create structural change in the most challenging settings.