

Media Release

The Jacobs Foundation pledges CHF 30M to address child labor through quality education

Zurich, February 13, 2020

- ***Quality education is key to improving the lives of children and to tackling one of the root causes of child labor in cocoa-growing communities.***
- ***The Jacobs Foundation and its philanthropic partners have pledged an initial investment of CHF 30M with the objective of leveraging CHF 150M for quality education in cocoa-growing Côte d'Ivoire.***
- ***The seed funding aims to catalyze a multi-stakeholder partnership for systemic change. This can only be achieved with significant co-investments and joint action by the government, the cocoa and chocolate industry and development organizations.***

The Jacobs Foundation, the UBS Optimus Foundation and other philanthropic partners have pledged CHF 30M to support the Ivorian government's strategic objective to fight child labor and to provide children in Côte d'Ivoire with a good start in life and quality education.

Through their seed funding, the partners aim to incentivize relevant stakeholders, including the cocoa and chocolate industry, the Ivorian government and other international donors, to join forces and mobilize at least CHF 150M. Different stakeholders have made substantial individual efforts to address the problem over the last 20 years, yet given the size and complexity of the challenge, a gap in funding, effective solutions and coordination remains. A pooled funding facility would contribute to reducing this gap.

Côte d'Ivoire leads the world in the production and export of cocoa beans for the production of chocolate, and its smallholder cocoa farmers account for almost 40% of global cocoa production. In rural areas, nearly 30% of primary school-aged children are out of school, and this figure rises to 50% for children of lower secondary school age. Only one in two children who finishes primary school is proficient in literacy skills, and only 25% have proficiency in numeracy skills. Without access to quality education, children are at higher risk of child labor.

A comprehensive, systemic approach is required to address this situation sustainably. We believe that quality education is part of the solution. The Jacobs Foundation, the UBS Optimus Foundation and other philanthropic organizations are seeking to partner with further key actors to provide children with quality education opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire.

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About the Jacobs Foundation

The Jacobs Foundation operates globally in the field of child and youth development. It was established by entrepreneur Klaus J. Jacobs in Zurich in 1989, and funds research as well as learning and education programs.