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# Advancing Early Childhood Development Research in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso: Insights from IPA and CAPEC Seminar



*Participants and the IPA and CAPEC seminar. © IPA 2023*

Research on early childhood development (ECD) plays a crucial role in informing policies and programs aimed at fostering optimal development in young children. Recognizing the significance of this area of study, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) and the Cellule d'Analyse de Politiques Économiques du (CAPEC) attached to CIRES, organized a research seminar focused on ECD projects in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The seminar aimed to

share experiences, foster collaboration, and shed light on public policies related to ECD in these two West African countries. This article provides an overview of the seminar and highlights the common interests driving ECD research in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.

On January 24, 2023, researchers from the Paris School of Economics, CAPEC, and local research universities and institutes gathered at the library of the Economics department, University Félix Houphouët Boigny in Cocody-Abidjan. The seminar focused on two significant ECD projects: a cost-effectiveness study of distinct parental education interventions for ECD in Côte d'Ivoire, conducted by IPA in collaboration with researchers from the Paris School of Economics and local partners, and an impact evaluation of community-based socio-educational programs for early childhood development and women's empowerment in disadvantaged areas of Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, implemented by CAPEC in collaboration with the Groupe de Recherche et d'Analyse Appliquées pour le Développement (GRAAD) du Burkina.

Andreas Holzinger, IPA's Country Director for Francophone West Africa, expressed his honor and pleasure in co-organizing the seminar. He emphasized the necessity of stimulating and strengthening ECD research in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, to better inform public policies in this domain. Both IPA and CAPEC have been collaborating for several years, working not only on ECD research but also on other topics such as education and employment. The seminar served as a platform to promote knowledge exchange and enhance the visibility of ECD-focused public policies in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.

IPA's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) aligns with its commitment to expanding the network of local researchers. The organization recognizes that producing high-quality evidence and advancing policies and programs depend on collaborating with researchers from the countries where research and policy work is conducted. In line with this commitment, IPA launched its strategy for diversifying researchers in low-income countries in 2021, aiming to foster research excellence and inclusivity, including the field of ECD.

The research seminar highlighted the shared interests and common goals in ECD research between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. By evaluating the cost-effectiveness of distinct parental education interventions in Côte d'Ivoire and examining the impact of community-based socio-educational programs on women's empowerment and ECD in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, the projects address critical issues related to early childhood development. The findings from these studies are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in ECD initiatives.