

West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Côte d'Ivoire
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

Major developments

The wave of violence in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2004 had an immediate disruptive effect on regional peace efforts but did not translate into major population movements until the end of the year.

Continuing joint efforts by the international community, including UN agencies and the Government of Sierra Leone to reinforce stability in Sierra Leone, paved the way for the successful completion of repatriation to that country. During 2004, some 26,000 Sierra Leonean refugees returned home with UNHCR's assistance, bringing the total number of returnees to 272,000, exceeding the target of 270,000 set for the end of the operation.

Positive developments in the Liberian peace process led to the beginning of repatriation. At the same time, the prospects for humanitarian intervention in all parts of Liberia increased markedly with the deployment throughout the country of a 15,000-strong UN peacekeeping force. By the end of 2004, all but two counties were declared safe for return and this created an incentive for refugees to return to their places of origin. As a result, some



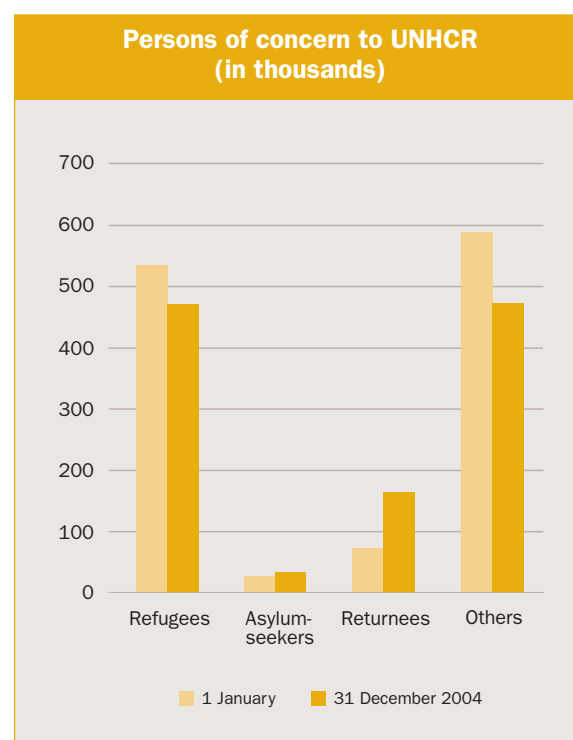
16,000 refugees, mainly from the camps in Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone, went back to their homes with UNHCR's assistance. At the same time, more than 56,000 Liberians returned spontaneously, mainly from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire.

carried out, the region still hosted more than 400,000 refugees from various conflicts on the continent. UNHCR continued to help governments to provide protection and assistance to more than 200,000 camp-based refugees and thousands of refugees who settled spontaneously outside camps.

Challenges and concerns

Overall, the sub region remained volatile, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, with UN Inter-Agency teams constantly on alert. Contingency plans were regularly updated in response to events, as was the newly introduced UNHCR system for early warning under the Office's emergency and security management initiatives.

The main challenges for the reintegration of returnees were the absence of employment opportunities and the implementation of the regional Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) process. UNHCR's overriding concerns were conflict prevention and the negative effects of socio-economic and political instability throughout the region. Despite the efforts of WFP, sufficient food assistance was a major issue of concern for both returnee and refugee operations. Although major repatriation exercises were successfully



Economic stagnation and high rates of unemployment were major constraints to local integration and efforts to promote refugee self-reliance in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo. Attempts by UNHCR and its partners to make refugees more self-sufficient through micro-credit initiatives were thwarted by the economic realities in the region. The need for stronger involvement by government counterparts in activities linked to the local integration of refugees was felt in all four countries, particularly in Benin and Burkina Faso, where a pilot resettlement programme was implemented in 1998.

While the Governments of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo have adopted and implemented national refugee legislation, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone have not yet implemented similar laws. In Cape Verde, Guinea and Nigeria, national refugee laws have yet to be drafted.

Progress towards solutions

The repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees was successfully completed at the end of the year. Some 199,000 out of the 272,000 Sierra Leonean returnees were assisted by UNHCR to return since 2001. UNHCR's reintegration activities in the main returnee areas of Sierra Leone will, however, continue throughout 2005, with hand-over to development agencies. With the deployment of UNMIL peace-keeping troops in Liberia and all but two districts declared safe for return, the organized repatriation of Liberians, started in October 2004, is beginning to gather momentum. Although by the end of the year only some 15,000 refugees had gone back to Liberia in UNHCR convoys, many more returned spontaneously, bringing the estimated total number of returnees to some 56,000. Working jointly with the UN Country Team, the Government and other partners, UNHCR contributed to creating conditions conducive to the sustainable return of Liberian refugees, through the 4Rs strategy (as refined on the basis of lessons learned from the operation in neighbouring Sierra Leone).

Resettlement continued to be a vital tool of international protection and an important durable solution for refugees in the sub-region, particularly those in protracted refugee situations. In 2004, over 7,300 persons were submitted for resettlement to Australia, Canada and the United States. In addition, the

"emergency" and "medical" case quotas were used for resettlement in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

UNHCR actively explored all possible durable solutions for refugees in the region. In line with the Convention Plus initiative on resettlement, the Office emphasized the coordinated, strategic use of resettlement to help those in need of this solution. At the same time, the importance of repatriation and local integration was stressed whenever appropriate.

In order to provide technical support to the UNHCR's offices in the region, a Regional Technical Support Hub was established in Accra. The hub is staffed by 14 Regional Technical Officers responsible for field safety, finance, geographic information systems, health, HIV/AIDS, information technology, refugee women and children, registration, repatriation and mass information, resettlement, staff welfare, supply, telecommunications and public information, and local support staff. Contacts with other UN agencies, governments, NGOs and local companies facilitated the work of the regional officers and ensured that the hub functioned effectively.

Operations

The following section outlines UNHCR's activities in West Africa by country, except for Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which are described in separate country chapters. It should be noted that the Central African Republic (CAR) and Gabon are covered in the chapter on Central Africa and the Great Lakes.

The office in **Benin** coordinated operations for **Burkina Faso, Niger** and **Togo**. These four countries have shown hospitality towards refugees and maintain policies that favour local integration. Benin is host to a long-standing group of some 4,800 refugees, mainly from Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Republic of the Congo (RoC), Rwanda and Togo, of whom 700 are living in Kpomassè camp. Programmes were focused on local integration activities to help refugees achieve self-reliance. In 2004, 491 asylum-seeker applications were processed and 93 were granted refugee status. Some 272 refugees were assisted to return to Burundi, Chad, DRC, RoC, Rwanda and Togo while 54 people submitted their applications. Food and



Liberia: Owing to favourable security conditions in several counties in Liberia, UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation from Guinea by road in November 2004. Here, a UNHCR convoy on the way to the border. *UNHCR/P. Flomoku*

other items were distributed to over 3,000 vulnerable refugees and over 500 women received sanitary materials. Medical assistance was granted to some 5,600 refugees and five mentally ill persons were assisted in a psychiatric centre. Self-reliance projects were implemented for 38 persons. UNHCR assisted 429 children in need of primary education, provided secondary educational grants to 259 students and post-secondary educational grants to 12 students. Vocational training assistance was provided to 38 female refugees and 17 male refugees.

Burkina Faso hosted 492 refugees and 518 asylum-seekers originating from Burundi, Chad, DRC, RoC and Rwanda. At the end of 2004, the number of refugees initially integrated under the UNHCR-sponsored local settlement scheme was reduced from 75 to 45. Under the repatriation programme, nine refugees from Burundi, RoC and Rwanda were assisted to return home and four refugees were resettled. The Office supported vocational training for 32 refugees. Loans for micro-projects were given to 18 beneficiaries. In 2004, RSD was carried out by the National Eligibility Committee more effectively than in 2003;

75 asylum applications were examined and 25 asylum-seekers were granted refugee status.

The office in **Cameroon** reopened in 2003. Its activities cover two categories of refugees: *prima facie* cases comprising almost 17,000 Nigerians settled since 2002 in the north west of Cameroon and some 40,000 urban refugees settled in Yaoundé and Douala. The majority of the urban refugees are from the Central African Republic, Chad, DRC, Liberia, RoC, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Although the Government of Cameroon has ratified the main international instruments related to refugee protection, it has not yet adopted refugee legislation, nor established coherent and systematic practices with regard to asylum-seekers and refugee protection. In 2004, a draft law on refugee protection and a national eligibility committee were developed by government experts with guidance from UNHCR. In addition, UNHCR continued to promote and disseminate information regarding refugee law with the Cameroonian authorities and civil society. UNHCR conducted Refugee Status Determination with the Cameroonian Red Cross. Some 1,600 asylum applications were processed, resulting in 672 individuals

being recognized as refugees. An estimated 40,000 refugees were under UNHCR's mandate.

During 2004, UNHCR was involved in individual repatriation for urban refugees and group repatriation for Nigerian rural refugees. Some 10,000 Nigerian refugees indicated that they were willing to repatriate. Pending the signature of a tripartite agreement with the Government of Nigeria, the first assisted repatriation movement of 311 refugees took place in December 2004. A total of 57 urban refugees, mainly from Burundi, CAR and RoC were assisted to return to their country of origin while 51 others were resettled. Humanitarian assistance was provided to vulnerable urban refugees, basic health care was available to the whole refugee population and sanitary materials were provided to female refugees. UNHCR developed a micro-credit scheme to assist refugees' efforts to generate income and become self-supporting, but only relatively few families were able to generate a sustained income. In 2004, 27 refugees obtained micro-credit, over half of whom were women. Support for primary education was provided for over 500 urban refugee children and support for secondary education for 159. Food was provided by WFP to the Nigerian refugees in the north of the country, while UNHCR continued to provide domestic and shelter items, health care, rehabilitation of the water system and basic primary education for refugee children.

The Office in **The Gambia** is host to over 7,300 refugees, mainly from Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone and Central African countries. Basic humanitarian assistance was given to camp-based refugees in Bambali and Bassé, and health and education was provided to those living in towns. UNHCR promoted the voluntary repatriation of 750 Sierra Leonean refugees who went home before December 2004. Bassé camp, where a great number of Sierra Leonean refugees resided, was closed in July 2004. UNHCR continued to negotiate with the Government for the recognition of the remaining Sierra Leoneans as refugees. In the meantime, over 760 refugee children received primary and secondary school fees. Seventy-one refugees in the two camps, mainly women and girls, and 29 in urban areas were assisted with small business projects. A multi-purpose skills-training centre and vegetable gardens were constructed in Bambali Camp, and refugees, mostly women, were trained there in various income-generating activities. About 1,700 medical consultations took place and sanitary materials

were distributed to 546 refugee women. In collaboration with health authorities, a workshop was organized at the camp to sensitize the refugees on the causes, prevention, control and effects of HIV/AIDS.

In **Ghana**, UNHCR focused on strengthening the physical security and legal protection of refugees; ensuring that basic services available to them met minimum standards, with special support for community based activities; enabling the authorities to determine asylum applications more fairly and effectively; and enhancing gender equality as well as the empowerment of refugee communities.

Efforts to achieve durable solutions were systematized with the completion of the registration of over 48,000 refugees and asylum-seekers (almost 41,000 Liberian refugees, and others mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Togo), using the new Project PROFILE software, introduced in Ghana as one of the pilot countries. As a result of measures in line with the Convention Plus initiative and the Agenda for Protection, over 1,900 refugees benefited from voluntary repatriation, mainly to Liberia and Sierra Leone, over 1,700 were able to start new lives in resettlement countries, and local integration opportunities were generally improved.

Skills training, income-generating activities, post-conflict trauma counselling and peace education were conducted. UNHCR continued to ensure that all refugee children were able to access high quality education, with special emphasis on school attendance for girls. However, the sectors of health and sanitation required further attention. In cooperation with WFP, a targeted food distribution programme was introduced for some 10,000 of the most vulnerable refugees. Security and physical protection of the refugee populations in Buduburam and Krisan refugee settlements were improved through enhanced police presence, combined with support to Neighbourhood Watch Teams comprising female and male refugee volunteers. A comprehensive strategy to address SGBV was consolidated as SGBV awareness activities reached a record audience. Support systems included protection activities, and psychosocial and community services for refugee children. Over 700 unaccompanied minors/separated children living in Buduburam settlement without adequate support were identified and appropriate measures taken.

Progress was made in capacity-building efforts for the Ghana Refugee Board and other governmental bodies such as the Ghana Immigration Service, which is now an established partner in many of UNHCR's registration, repatriation, resettlement, and contingency planning activities. Ghana is politically stable but given the fragile security environment in neighbouring countries in the sub-region, UNHCR remained active in developing and updating contingency plans jointly with all relevant stakeholders.

Guinea Bissau hosted over 7,500 refugees and 141 asylum seekers in 2004, the vast majority of whom were Senegalese living in the north in Jolmète site. The Peace Agreement signed between the Government of Senegal and the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance* in December 2004 was viewed as a positive development for the repatriation of Senegalese refugees. UNHCR continued to provide protection and basic assistance in health, sanitation, community services and education to the refugees. Two wells, hen-houses and temporary shelter for sewing and embroidery training were constructed and run by refugee committees. Three hectares of arable land were made available to 46 women for farming. Micro-projects were financed, benefiting 268 rural women. More than 95 per cent of children attended primary school and 85 young persons received vocational training. Under the repatriation programme, 31 Sierra Leonean refugees were assisted to return home. Support and training were provided to government bodies dealing with refugee matters and UNHCR also supported the ad hoc eligibility commission which processed 141 applications.

In 2004, **Mali** hosted over 11,200 refugees, mainly from Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Mauritania, RoC and Sierra Leone. Following the political instability in Côte d'Ivoire, UNHCR deployed an emergency team to Mali, to be maintained until June 2005 for the delivery of protection and assistance to some 2,700 Ivorian refugees who settled in Loulounie and Faragouaan camps. Mali also received over 1,200 asylum seekers: 872 of their applications were processed and 864 were granted refugees status. A series of training sessions on the rights of refugees were provided to government bodies and UNHCR's partners. During the year, 972 identity cards and 27 travel documents were delivered to the refugee population. Efforts were pursued to assess potential durable solutions for the

Mauritanians who have been in a protracted refugee situation. Some 282 urban and 90 rural refugee children were given primary education and 15 students were given the opportunity to study in Dakar under the DAFI education programme. HIV/AIDS awareness activities were undertaken.

Under the repatriation programme 58 Sierra Leoneans and seven Congolese (Brazzaville) were assisted to return to their countries of origin and nine Sierra Leonean refugees were resettled in the United States. In the two camps, food distribution was carried out for over 400 refugees; sanitary materials and condoms were distributed. Of the camp-based population, 43 per cent were involved in agriculture, while 17 per cent of men and 36 per cent of women participated in micro-credit projects.

Niger hosted 41 asylum-seekers and 344 refugees, of whom 139 were Chadians living in Gouré, with the remaining 205 from DRC and Rwanda, living in Niamey. Vocational training was provided to 14 urban refugees; 26 refugee children received scholarships for secondary education and 49 for primary education. Support for four micro-projects was provided to refugees, including one group project.

Some 9,000 refugees resided in **Nigeria** in 2004, mainly from Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan. Through close collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees and the Nigerian Red Cross, UNHCR pursued durable solutions for refugees through repatriation of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees to their home countries and continued efforts for local integration of the remaining populations through self-reliance schemes. Some 903 Liberian refugees repatriated, but registration for more voluntary returns continued; one hundred and fourteen Sierra Leoneans were repatriated and more than 1,600 of the remaining refugees required protection assistance. The return of 311 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon and their reintegration in Benue State was facilitated by the Office. A field office was opened in Jalingo to manage operations for this group.

Efforts were pursued to bring basic health, sanitation and education facilities up to acceptable minimum standards for over 5,300 refugees living in Oru camps. Vulnerable groups received food rations and malnourished and newborn babies were provided with baby milk, soya and other supplements. Medical subsidies and assistance were also provided to

the disabled as well as for tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS patients. In addition, health education including counselling on health-related problems, family planning, SGBV and HIV/AIDS were provided. Some 250 primary school students attended school in Oru camp and received uniforms and examination fees. A scholarship allowance was paid to 20 urban students and 50 camp-based students attending secondary school or technical college. Vocational training was also provided to 170 refugees (137 girls and 33 boys). Small business start-up loans were given to 93 refugee women seeking to support their families.

The main UNHCR office in Nigeria moved to the capital and started operations from Abuja in September 2004, along with other UN agencies. UNHCR worked with the Government, ECOWAS and the UN Country Team to fulfil its international protection mandate.

The office in **Senegal** coordinated operations in **Guinea Bissau, Mali and Senegal**. Senegal hosted over 20,000 refugees and 2,400 asylum-seekers. The majority were Mauritians while the remainder were from Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, RoC, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Nineteen Sierra Leoneans were assisted to return to their country of origin. The Office received over 4,300 applications for resettlement and 13 applications were submitted to the Accra Regional Resettlement Hub for further consideration. UNHCR continued its efforts to find durable solutions for Mauritanian refugees, in view of recent positive political and diplomatic developments between Senegal and Mauritania. Some 3,500 refugees received medical assistance, 68 per cent of them women and children. HIV/AIDS awareness activities and counselling services were provided to almost 2,000 refugees.

Refugees and vulnerable asylum-seekers residing in urban areas in Dakar were provided with subsistence allowances. Some 50 urban refugee children were

supported to attend primary school and another 30 to attend secondary school. Vocational training was granted to some 60 beneficiaries, while 30 students were awarded post-secondary scholarships. Individual micro-projects and two collective projects were offered to 16 urban refugees. In rural areas, micro-projects were offered to over 1,000 refugee women, more than half of them in agriculture and the others in small-scale trade.

Togo hosted over 11,000 persons including 390 asylum-seekers. UNHCR provided assistance to some 1,200 urban refugees: 273 children received primary and secondary education and 61 attended vocational training; loans were given to 15 refugees for micro-credit schemes. Under the repatriation programme, 10 refugees from Burundi, CAR and Rwanda were assisted to return to their home countries and one family was resettled to Canada. During the year, 107 asylum-seekers were granted refugee status. Some 10,000 rural refugees from Ghana living in northern Togo have integrated locally.

Funding

The Annual Programme budget for West Africa decreased by three per cent during the year to just under USD 90 million. A Supplementary Programme for Liberia of some USD 39 million was established to facilitate the repatriation and the reintegration of Liberian refugees, following positive developments and growing international mobilization.

UNHCR was involved in the consolidated appeal process and its projects were included in the CAP for Cote d'Ivoire (USD 12.2 million) and Guinea (USD 23.6 million).

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget
Benin			
	United States of America	149,001	0
Sub-total		149,001	0
Cameroon			
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	128,482	0
	United Kingdom	14,501	0
Sub-total		142,983	0
Côte d'Ivoire			
	Japan	1,500,000	0
	Netherlands	167,000	0
	United States of America	2,519,684	0
Sub-total		4,186,684	0
Ghana			
	Netherlands	307,882	0
	United Kingdom	153,943	0
	United States of America	634,439	0
Sub-total		1,096,264	0
Guinea			
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	19,925	0
	Canada	763,359	0
	Germany	296,209	0
	Italy	367,647	0
	Japan	2,000,000	0
	United Kingdom	932,836	0
	United States of America	4,634,480	0
Sub-total		9,014,456	0
Liberia			
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	2,860	0
	Canada	0	229,008
	European Commission	0	2,598,525
	France	132,626	0
	Germany	0	1,522,173
	Ireland	0	612,745
	Japan	2,000,000	0

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget
	Netherlands	0	2,223,000
	Sweden	0	686,813
	United States of America	1,200,000	0
	USA for UNHCR	0	3,477
Sub-total		3,335,486	7,875,741
Senegal			
	United States of America	168,950	0
Sub-total		168,950	0
Sierra Leone			
	Canada	152,672	0
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe</i> ²	623,223	0
	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	96,270	0
	European Commission	573,772	0
	Germany	2,014,218	0
	Italy	245,098	0
	Japan	2,000,000	0
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Italy	2,472	0
	Norway	983,607	0
	Spain	1,320,710	0
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i> ³	1,383,946	0
	Switzerland	1,210,318	0
	United Kingdom	836,573	0
	United States of America	5,421,150	0
Sub-total		16,864,027	0
West Africa			
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	6,219	0
	Canada	0	373,134
	Denmark	1,647,446	1,153,213
	European Commission	0	782,190
	Finland	1,827,694	497,512
	France	594,787	0
	Ireland	122,549	0
	Japan	5,500,000	0
	Luxembourg	1,129,585	0
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Italy	0	37,413
	Monaco	20,000	0

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget
	Netherlands	307,882	0
	Norway	1,874,984	2,183,141
	Spain	0	167,549
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i> (NED)	0	184,729
	Sweden	7,005,495	800,000
	United Kingdom	0	513,896
	United States of America	0	11,000,000
	USA for UNHCR	0	23,257
Sub-total		20,036,641	17,716,035
Total		54,994,491	25,591,776

¹ For more information on the earmarkings, please refer to the donor profiles.

² This contribution from RTL-TV Germany was channelled through *Deutsche Stiftung*.

³ This contribution from the Dutch Postcode Lottery was channelled through *Stichting Vluchteling*.

Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Revised budget			Expenditure		
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget ¹	Total	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget ¹	Total
Benin	1,144,416	0	1,144,416	1,144,417	0	1,144,417
Cameroon	1,853,207	0	1,853,207	1,847,715	0	1,847,715
Côte D'Ivoire	15,156,896	0	15,156,896	15,151,919	0	15,151,919
Gambia	520,530	0	520,530	517,353	0	517,353
Ghana	5,796,472	225,613	6,022,085	5,790,469	277,209	6,067,678
Guinea	20,949,474	0	20,949,474	20,931,916	0	20,931,916
Liberia	5,125,991	13,243,927	18,369,918	5,099,149	11,117,601	16,216,750
Nigeria	1,931,804	40,000	1,971,804	1,888,466	27,056	1,915,522
Senegal	2,082,981	0	2,082,981	2,082,981	0	2,082,981
Sierra Leone	31,324,949	0	31,324,949	31,297,064	0	31,297,064
Regional projects ²	3,635,512	23,118,161	26,753,673	3,550,449	16,987,881	20,538,330
Total	89,522,232	36,627,701	126,149,933	89,301,898	28,409,747	117,711,645

¹ The supplementary programme budget for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Liberian Refugees includes emergency assistance to Liberian returnees from Côte d'Ivoire as well as emergency assistance to Ivorian asylum-seekers in West Africa.

Note: The supplementary programme budget does not include a 7 per cent charge (support costs) that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² Includes care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation and resettlement assistance for urban refugees in the region, as well as scholarships for refugee students in West African countries.