

# Voices

F R O M   T H E   F I E L D

## Chantal Boni

Program Officer, JICA Côte d'Ivoire Office

PHOTO: MASATAKA OTSUKA



Chantal Boni has worked in JICA's Côte d'Ivoire Office since December 1998. Just a year after she joined JICA, in December 1999, a coup d'état touched off a tumultuous period in Ivorian history, including the First Ivorian Civil War in 2002-7.

This turmoil "considerably reduced the activities of not only JICA but also its partners in the country," states Boni. JICA's Japanese staff left the country from 2004 to 2010 due to political uncertainty, leaving the office in the hands of the national staff members. But it did not put all activities on hold. "We were continuously in contact with the Japanese staff," Boni notes. "During this period, the training programs continued, although reduced in number." During the hottest period of the crisis, the Ivorian staff closed the office for a few weeks, but on the whole things went surprisingly smoothly.

Boni has a strong international background, having studied in several European countries before working in the private sector and with the African Development Bank. She now handles training programs in the education, health, and environment sectors. In 2013 she shared the JICA President Award with two colleagues for her efforts in maintaining the JICA presence in Côte d'Ivoire.

She is now focusing on a project that will help put her country back on its feet. "The accent is not on construction and rehabilitation, but on capacity building. Human resource development is an important point of JICA policy and a key to development. The Côte d'Ivoire government is in charge of duplicating this project in all regions of the country." As Boni notes, this is just what her country needs after its years of crisis.

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**Cover:** An *ukiyo-e* print from the Edo period (1603-1868) shows townspeople suffering in a flood. (AFLO)

**Photos on pages 2-3:**  
Akio Iizuka, Shinichi Kuno, Koji Sato, Maki Tsukamoto, and Getty Images.



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