



Publication of the NORC Report

Assessing Progress in Reducing Child Labor in Cocoa Production in Cocoa Growing Areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana

The [report](#) assessing the progress in reducing child labor was published on October 19, 2020 by NORC at the University of Chicago. The report was funded by the US Department of Labor. The main objectives of the report is to identify the various interventions carried out since the signing of the Declaration and Framework in 2010 to address child labor - tied to the Harkin-Engel Protocol - and to assess their relative effectiveness, and to measure progress.

The report states that the partners signing the Declaration and Framework - the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and representatives from the International Chocolate and Cocoa Industry - have failed to achieve the goal to reduce child labor and the worst forms of child labor by 70% until 2020.

Main findings and conclusion by the report

The 2018/2019 data from agricultural households in the cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana indicate that approximately **1.56 million children were engaged in child labor in cocoa production**, of which 1.48 (approx. 95%) million children were exposed to at least one component of hazardous child labor.

The **prevalence rate of child labor in cocoa production increased by 14 percentage points** between the 2008/09 and 2018/19 survey rounds (from 31 percent in 2008/09 to 45 percent in 2018/19). **The prevalence rate of hazardous child labor in cocoa production increased by 13 percentage points** between 2008/09 and 2018/19 (from 30 percent in 2008/09 to 43 percent in 2018/19). The most common sources of hazardous work were use of sharp tools, carrying heavy loads, and exposure to agrochemicals.

Important to notice is a 62 percent increase in cocoa production during the same time period (from 1.9 Million in 2008/09 to 3.1 Million in 2018/19). The increase in production and price may explain the findings that the proportion of agricultural households involved in cocoa production increased from 55 percent in 2008/09 to 84 percent in 2018/19 in cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Between 2008/09 and 2018/19, in the cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, **school attendance among children 5-17 increased significantly**.

Focusing only on the **recent trends** over the past five years, the prevalence rate of child labor in cocoa production **remained stable** around 41 percent in Côte d'Ivoire and around 58 percent in Ghana.

The report finds that child labor and hazardous child labor rates in cocoa production are stabilizing within areas with historically high cocoa production while increasing in medium and low production areas.

The report concludes that child labor and hazardous child labor must be understood as a **complex problem** that requires a **holistic approach** with complementary solutions – consisting of interventions targeting livelihoods, education, awareness, legislation, and community monitoring, specially focusing on medium and low production areas. Furthermore, **all stakeholders** such as governments, industry stakeholders and civil society **must work together** to combat child labor. Interventions that have been successful need to be implemented at a **large scale**.

The **need for joining forces** is one of the main learnings from the Harkin-Engel Protocol. Even though the Protocol is coming to an end with targets being failed, it serves as a model for continued engagement by all stakeholders.

Assessment of the effectiveness of Cocoa Industry Interventions

The World Cocoa Foundation commissioned NORC for an independent assessment of the impact of interventions funded by the cocoa and chocolate industry to reduce child labor. The so called "Industry Intervention Package" includes support for child protection programs, awareness raising activities, education infrastructure and school materials, gender empowerment and women's livelihood development, capacity building of community institutions like child protection committees and school management committees, and other economic and social measures to raise farmer income and build strong communities.

The results of the study demonstrated that the Industry Intervention Package has led to a **lower likelihood and lower prevalence of child labor and hazardous child labor**. Specifically, communities that received significant exposure to the Industry Intervention Package had a lower prevalence rate of hazardous child labor compared to similar communities that did not receive such interventions.

Activities of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa

As the report concludes, the complex problem of child labor requires a holistic approach and **strong collaboration of all stakeholders** involved in the cocoa value chain. The Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa bundles the Swiss stakeholders to address the key challenges in the cocoa sector, to improve the living conditions of cocoa farmers and their families and specifically to combat child labor and hazardous child labor in the cocoa value chain.

The Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa is examining **multiple approaches** to addressing child labor in the cocoa supply chain, such as:

- Efforts to improve smallholder farmers' resilience to shocks (e.g. income diversification, income generating activities, training on good agricultural practices, social protection, fair and stable pricing)
- Measures to improve access to basic services (e.g. quality education, healthcare, clean water and sanitation)
- Efforts to raise awareness on children's rights, and the risks associated with child labor
- Interventions to monitor the situation of children and protect children engaged in harmful work (child labor monitoring and remediations systems CMLRS)
- Promotion of a supportive enabling environment, through the development of policies and strategies that help the activities mentioned above to be scaled-up

The members of the Cocoa Platform **share** their **knowledge and experience** in the peer learning network consisting of several specific working groups. The aim of the Cocoa Platform's Working

Group Living Income and Child Labor is to develop innovative solutions and strategies to help members of the Platform to take actions that can contribute to closing income gaps and reducing child labor, including the worst forms of child labor.

In an attempt to better understand the effects of changes in household income on child labor, the Platform's Working Group on Living Income and Child Labor commissioned the International Cocoa Initiative to conduct a desk **study** on the relation of these issues. The [report](#), published in April 2020, showed that the relationship between income changes and child labor is complex and the effects are not unidirectional.

The Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa will maintain a focus on the issue of child labor and will continue to **support pilot projects and initiatives in producing countries**. The Working Group on Living Income and Child Labor will capture and **share best practice** among members and with the wider international cocoa community.

This will be augmented by the comprehensive **monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework**, developed by the Platform to measure the outputs of initiatives and to monitor progress on sustainability in the cocoa value chain. The MEL framework also aids continuous learning across the Platform and beyond. Under the recently signed MoU, the three European platforms from Germany (GISCO), Belgium (Beyond Chocolate) and Switzerland are developing a set of harmonized indicators to **monitor progress at the European level**.

References and links

NORC Report: <https://www.norc.org/Research/Projects/Pages/assessing-progress-in-reducing-child-labor-in-cocoa-growing-areas-of-c%C3%B4te-d%E2%80%99ivoire-and-ghana.aspx>

WCF Assessment on Effectiveness on Cocoa Industry Interventions: <https://world-cocoa.egnyte.com/dl/fyj3GSQKv/>

ICI Technical Summary of NORC Report: <https://cocoainitiative.org/knowledge-centre-post/ici-technical-summary-of-norc-report/>

ICI Blog Post by Nick Weatherill: <https://cocoainitiative.org/news-media-post/a-mixed-bag-of-sobering-reminders-lower-estimates-and-some-signs-of-progress-from-the-2018-2019-norc-report-on-child-labour-in-cocoa/>

Fact Sheet on Principle 2 for Sustainable Cocoa: https://www.kakaoplattform.ch/fileadmin/redaktion/dokumente/FACTSHEET_Principle_2_Child_Labor.pdf

Desk study on the effects of income changes on child labor: https://cocoainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ICI_Lit_Review_Income_ChildLabour_15Apr2020.pdf