

# Children's Rights in the Cocoa-Growing Communities of Côte d'Ivoire

Synthesis Report

# Acknowledgements

This document summarizes findings in the report *Children's Rights in the Cocoa-Growing Communities of Côte d'Ivoire*, which was prepared by Jessica Davis Pluess, an independent consultant, based on initial research conducted by Nassrin Farzaneh.

The study benefited from the direction and invaluable contributions of Miranda Armstrong, Christina de Bruin, Emanuele Biraghi (UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire) and Bernadette Gutmann (UNICEF Child Rights and Business).

Vital inputs were received from colleagues from UNICEF's sections in New York, including Roland Kupka (Nutrition), Cindy Kushner and Kelly Ann Naylor (WASH), Cristina Colon and Salma El Yamani (Policy, Strategy and Network), Elizabeth Kiewisch (Gender and Rights), Catalina Gomez (Social Policy), Joost Kooijmans (Child Protection & New Aid Modalities), Valentina Buj (Health), as well as Subajini Jayasekaran and Ida Hyllested (UNICEF Child Rights and Business), Alanna Khalil (UNICEF Regional Office Eastern and Southern Africa) and Mark Wijne (UNICEF Netherlands).

Research from Henrietta Dorfmueller (Master Graduate HEC Lausanne) also greatly contributed to the content of the study.

Many stakeholders contributed to the study; we specifically extend our appreciation to Michiel Hendriksz and Jean-Benoit Charrin (FarmStrong Foundation), Matthias Lange (International Cocoa Initiative), Richa Mittal and Kevin Bosson (Fair Labor

Association), Caroline Lubbers (Solidaridad), Michele Nardella (International Cocoa Organization), Sabina Vigani (Jacobs Foundation), Antonie Fountain (VOICE Network), Anna Laven (Royal Tropical Institute), Marc Pfitzer (FSG), Henriette Hanicotte (Innovations for Poverty Action) and Michael Posner and Dorothee Baumann-Pauly (NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights).

The support and technical contribution of several government agencies has been remarkable and of absolute value, hence the sincere gratitude to the members of the National Committee for the Monitoring of Actions to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour (CNS) including the Conseil du Café-Cacao (CCC) and the members of the Inter-ministerial Committee to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labour (CIM).

The study also benefited from the vital inputs provided by many chocolate manufacturers, processors, retailers and certifying bodies.

The synthesis report was edited by Catherine Rutgers and designed by Cecilia Silva Venturini.

The qualitative field research run by the Ivorian National Institute of Statistics has been kindly financed by the Jacobs Foundation

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November 2018

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# Key Definitions

## Child

The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger

## Rights of the child

The term "the rights of the child" includes all the fundamental rights established by the United Nations in the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" (CRC) and intended to protect children, such as access to education, sufficient nutrition or appropriate care for their condition. (<https://www.unicef.org/crc/>)

## Child labour

The concept of "child labour" encompasses all activities that deprive children of their childhood, potential and dignity, and undermine their schooling, health, or their physical and mental development (<https://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>).

## Worst forms of child labour

According to Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, the term "worst forms of child labour" includes:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

These types of work are totally unacceptable for anyone under 18 years of age.

## Hazardous child labour

Work that endangers the physical, mental or moral well-being of the child, either by its nature or by the conditions in which it is performed, is referred to as "hazardous work".

## Children's socialising work

In Côte d'Ivoire, national legislation considers as socialising work any unpaid work performed by a child between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) years, under the supervision of the legal representative, for the purposes of education and social integration and which is not likely to prejudice: (a) the child's health or physical, mental, moral or social development; (b) school attendance or vocational training and weekly rest<sup>1</sup>.

This kind of work concerns tasks that are limited to helping parents at home, in the family business under certain conditions, earning some pocket money outside school hours or during school holidays and are not considered as child labour tasks as such.

[1] Ordinance No. 2017-016 MPES/CAB of 2 June 2017 determining the list of light work authorized for children between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) years.

## Children's light work

In Côte d'Ivoire, national legislation considers light work as: (i) work done by children as part of their learning in homes, general education establishments, vocational or technical schools or any other institution of accredited professional training; (ii) work carried out by children in corporations, where the work is performed as part of an education, vocational training or orientation program to facilitate the choice of career or a form of vocational training.<sup>2</sup>

## Child trafficking

According to article 3 of the Palermo Protocol, trafficking in children is "any act of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child within or outside a country for the purpose of exploitation, regardless of the means used".

## Poverty

Poverty is the lack of a socially acceptable standard of living or the inability to achieve it.

## Quality education

Quality education is characterized by five major dimensions: student experience, environment, content, process and results. These elements provide a basis for quality monitoring. (<https://www.unicef.org/education>)

### 1. The "personal baggage" that the student

**brings to school.** What experiences has he/she had? has he/she suffered from an emergency, abuse, HIV/AIDS or has he/she been forced to do a daily job? Has the child had a positive experience, without discrimination on the basis of sex, in his or her family, community and pre-school? Has the child been sufficiently prepared to adapt to school rhythm?

**2. The school environment.** Is the environment healthy, safe, protective and non-sexist?

**3. Educational content.** Are the curriculum and teaching materials relevant? Do children acquire basic knowledge, including literacy and numeracy, as well as practical skills and concepts in areas as diverse as gender equality, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, peace, or other priority areas at national and local levels? Do the curriculum and learning materials tend to include or otherwise exclude girls?

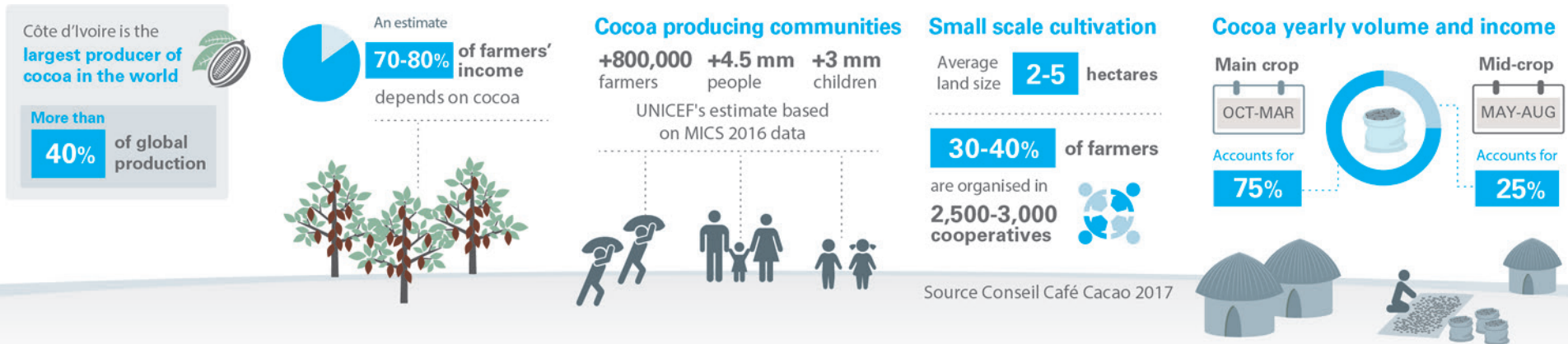
**4. The processes.** Are there competent teachers using child-centered teaching methods in well-run classrooms and schools? Do teachers conduct well-designed assessments to facilitate learning and reduce disparities? What are the methods of teaching and learning, or the learning support - at the community level, parents, supervisors, and teachers - that help or hinder girls from achieving good academic results?

**5. The results.** Do they include knowledge, skills and attitudes and are they consistent with national educational goals with positive participation in society? How can we know if girls' schooling is successful and what are the pathways that will enable them to continue their education and realize their potential?

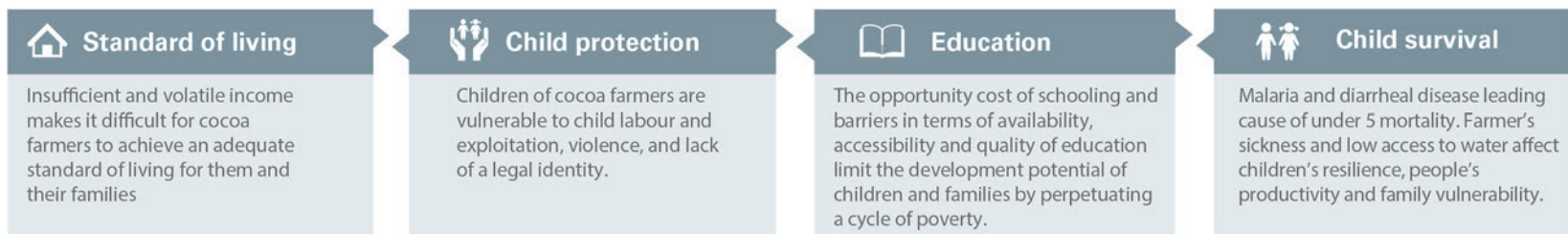
[2] Ordinance No. 2017-016 MPES / CAB of 2 June 2017 determining the list of light work allowed to children between the ages of thirteen (13) and sixteen (16) years.

# Overview:

## Children's rights and cocoa sustainability in Côte d'Ivoire



### Most salient children's rights issues in the cocoa context



### Interconnected root causes



### Critical considerations to advance children's rights



### Opportunities for action





# Introduction and Methodology:

## Children’s rights and the cocoa sector in Côte d’Ivoire



Côte d’Ivoire is the largest producer of cocoa in the world, with more than 40 per cent of global production.<sup>1</sup>

### More than 3 million children live in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>2</sup>

*Children’s Rights in the Cocoa-Growing Communities of Côte d’Ivoire* aims to bring attention to the diverse challenges faced by these children and their families, and highlights the extent to which these challenges are overlapping, deeply interrelated and mutually reinforcing.



In 2016, UNICEF Côte d’Ivoire launched an exploratory study to understand how the cocoa sector directly and indirectly impacts children’s rights. The aim was to help UNICEF have informed, comprehensive and outcome-focused discussions with business, government and civil society on how to advance the rights of children touched by the sector, as well as to inform UNICEF’s programmatic priorities in Côte d’Ivoire and policy recommendations for the Government.

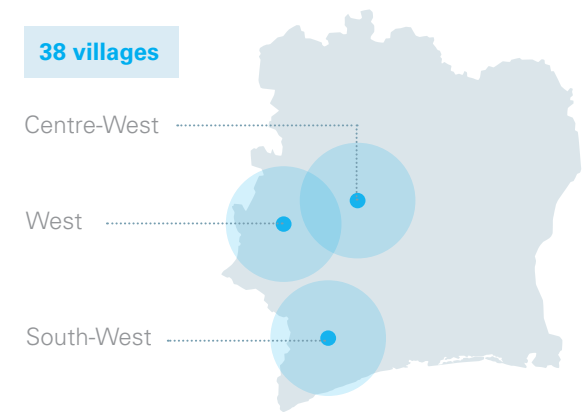


Following an extensive literature review and analysis of demographic data sets, such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) 2016,<sup>3</sup> key informant interviews were held with government, civil society and business stakeholders. Qualitative fieldwork was conducted by the Ivorian National Institute of Statistics in 38 villages in the south-west, centre-west and west areas of the country. Children, mothers and cocoa producers participated in focus groups, while teachers, village chiefs and health clinic staff also participated in individual interviews.

Despite Ivorian cocoa’s significance to the local and global economy, the sector has struggled to live up to its potential as a driver of inclusive growth and poverty alleviation. By embracing research on the full range of children’s rights, **this study promotes a holistic view of children’s rights and the root causes of child labour. Further, it encourages a ‘shared responsibility’ approach to strengthening systems** and structures benefiting the future of cocoa production, farming families and children in cocoa-growing communities.

## Methodology

Conducted by the Ivorian National Institute of Statistics



### Literature review

+70 reports and articles



### Key stakeholder interviews

+30 interviews with companies, industry associations, government officials and experts



### Qualitative Field Research

+1000 people consulted between focus group and individual interviews





**This document also includes some of the following important considerations for promotion children's rights by examining the sector of cocoa in a broader perspective.**

These considerations have mainly emerged during the confrontation with stakeholders questioned and go beyond the rights of the child in the strict sense, but rather try to observe broader dynamics that may have a strong, direct or indirect impact on rights of the children themselves (these reflections look at the current approaches to production, to sustainability interventions and to the response to certain economic and social challenges that characterize the cocoa sector).

Each observation or statement made in this report is the result of an analysis carried out by the consultant from a triangulation of three sources: existing literature, interviews with stakeholders and the evidence collected during the field study.

Finally, **this report has been validated following a participatory process including members of the Comité National de Surveillance des Actions de Lutte contre la Traite, l'Exploitation et le travail des Enfants (CNS) and those from the Comité Interministeriel de Lutte contre la Traite l'Exploitation et le Travail des Enfants (CIM).**

This allowed to increase the accuracy and relevance of the content of this report, to stimulate valuable reflections and exchanges, and to contribute to the creation of a common vision among the stakeholders on the key issues raised.

## Limitations of the study

Given the limited size of the study sample and the short duration of data collection, the field research did not provide an exhaustive overview of the situation of children in cocoa-producing communities, and does not take into account the diversity in individual communities.

The use of MICS 2016 data has been an important resource for statistically representative quantitative data, and despite the prevalence of cocoa production in the regions concerned as well as the challenges common to the different farming communities, the regional aggregation level may conceal some of the unique characteristics of the communities.

As the field study was conducted in July, this study may not have captured all the risks that would occur during the main cocoa harvesting season from October to December; moreover, as the data were collected before 2017, the results do not take into account the sharp drop in cocoa prices that occurred in 2017.

Although French is generally understood in Côte d'Ivoire, some respondents only spoke local languages, which meant that the questions had to be translated by other respondents since the data collectors did not speak the local languages. This may have had some influence on the validity and reliability of some data.

Finally, it should be noted that interactions with the stakeholders interviewed, a new international consultant and increased support from new members of the UNICEF team were factors that contributed to reorienting the study during the work, with the aim of increasing its pertinence and accuracy.





## Child rights and interconnected root causes

While parents and caregivers have the primary responsibility to protect their children and help them develop to their fullest potential, government systems have an important role to play in setting rules and regulations that protect and support children's rights. Furthermore, the issues faced by children and cocoa-growing families do not occur in isolation: They are intricately linked to the challenges faced by the cocoa supply chain in securing a productive and sustainable future.



This synthesis report focuses on **four areas of children's rights that are at risk of the most severe negative impact** through the cocoa sector's activities and business relationships:

- (1) **an adequate standard of living;**
- (2) **child protection** from all types of **violence and exploitation;**
- (3) **education**, including preschool and **early childhood development services**, as well as **primary and secondary school**; and
- (4) child survival, particularly **health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)**.

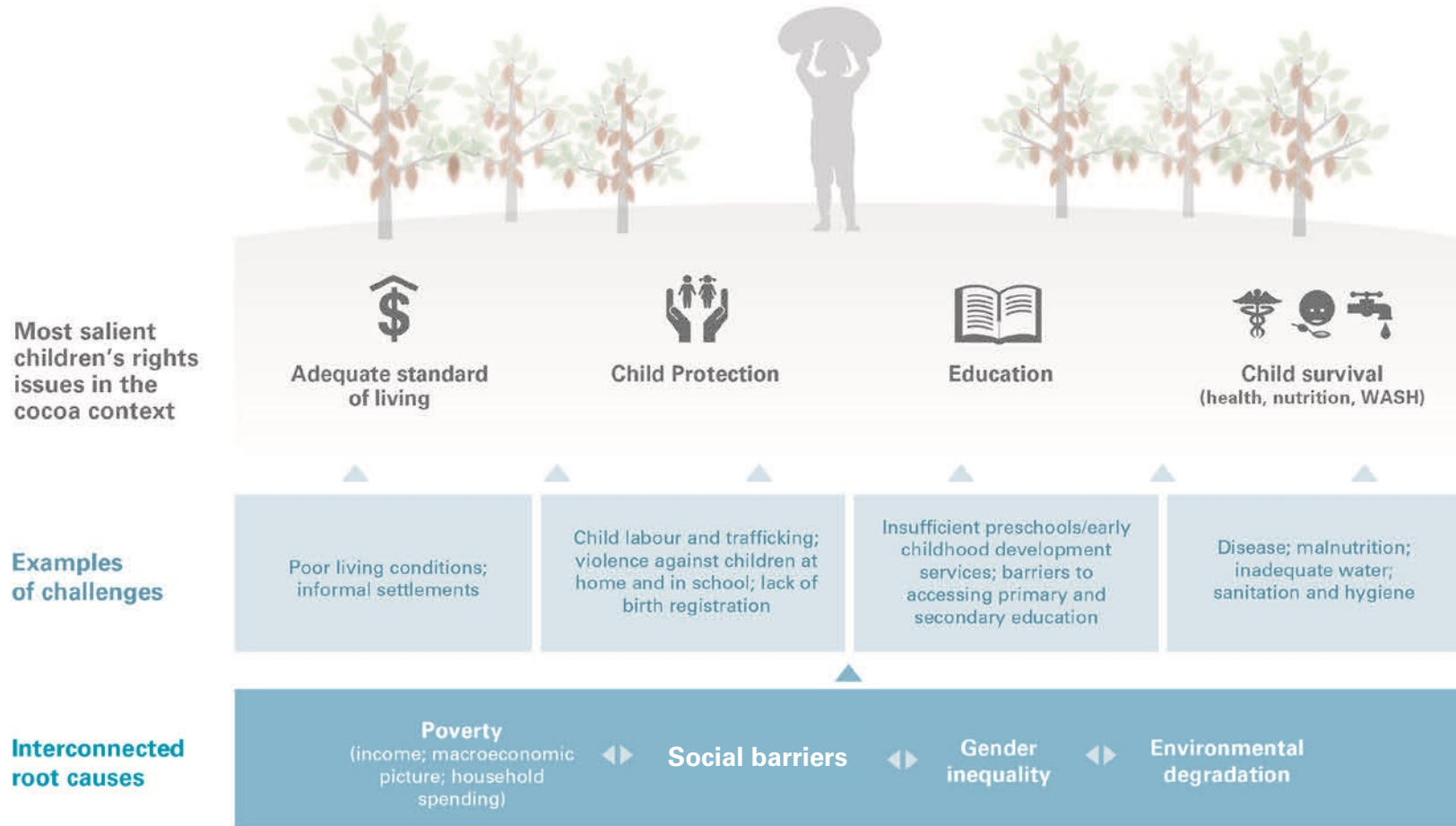
The scope of children's rights was defined in reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and in relation to UNICEF's programme areas. In addition to using 'saliency'<sup>4</sup> as a selection criterion, based on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, **the study also prioritizes children's rights that may not be impacted directly by the cocoa sector but if addressed by the sector, would substantially improve children's resilience and cocoa sustainability.** One example relates to health. Addressing preventable illnesses like malaria and diarrhoea could significantly reduce children's mortality rate while reducing risks for farmers to become sick (which ultimately impacts their productivity, their ability to generate income and the need of using alternative forms of cheap labour).

Gender inequality, social exclusion and environmental degradation are all underlying factors for children's vulnerability and also perpetuate poverty. **While poverty and other root causes are not unique to cocoa, the cocoa supply chain contributes and, in many cases, reinforces structural poverty, inequalities and exclusion.** Basic connections between the selected rights, challenges and structural causes that are a focus of this study are illustrated in Figure 1.



## Summary of children’s rights issues

FIG. 1: Basic connections between children’s rights, challenges and interconnected root causes.





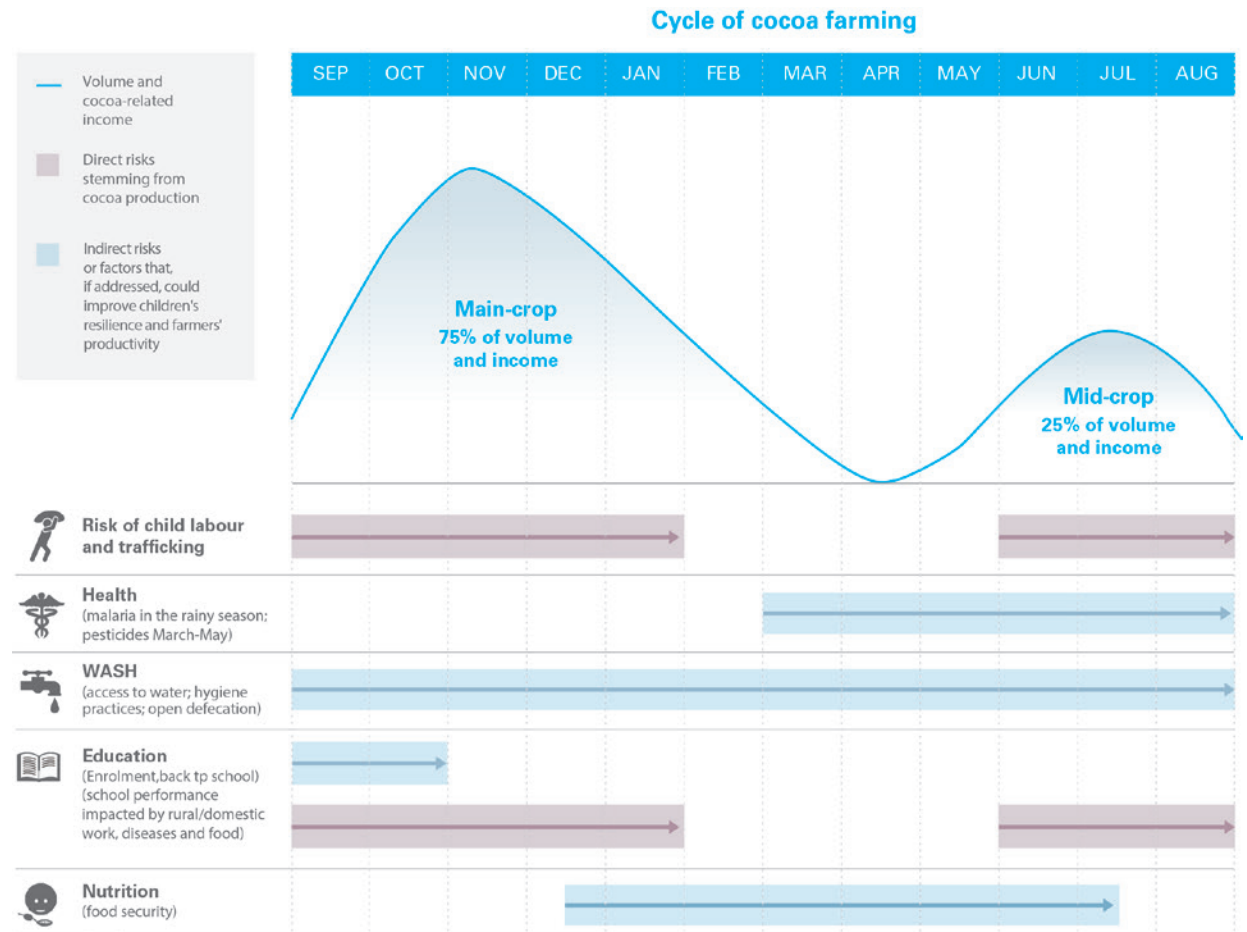
Moreover, specific challenges in Côte d'Ivoire are directly associated with the cocoa life cycle and the farming practices required to produce this delicate crop. There are two harvest seasons for cocoa: (1) the labour-intensive 'main crop' from October–March, which typically peaks in November and accounts for 75–80 per cent of yearly volume and farmers' income; and (2) the 'mid-crop' from May–August, which accounts for 20–25 per cent of production. **Observing children's rights risks from the perspective of the cocoa production cycle (Figure 2) offers interesting opportunities to optimize responses to these risks (e. g. economic strengthening of families at the start of the school year).**

Smallholder farmers form the backbone of cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire, where between 800,000 and 1.3 million small-scale cocoa producers work plots that average 2–5 hectares in size.<sup>5</sup> While myriad local farmers, sellers and traders are involved with production and marketing in the cocoa supply chain, processing and manufacturing are largely done by global players in facilities outside the country.


**The small-scale and informal sector faces multiple difficulties**, including weak negotiating power at the farmer level, fluctuating global cocoa prices, and limited international coordination of agricultural policies, as well as low crop yields from small-sized plots, aging trees and escalating deforestation. These issues have both direct and indirect impacts on children, as described in the following sections.

## Children's rights issues in relation to cocoa production cycle

FIG. 2: Main children's rights issues in the context of the yearly cocoa farming cycle



Source: Based on UNICEF estimates combining key informants interviews and <https://www.icco.org/faq/58-cocoa-harvesting/131-what-time-of-year-is-cocoa-harvested.html>

A photograph of two young children playing on a colorful playground structure. The child in the foreground is sitting on a green chair, smiling and looking towards the right. The child in the background is also smiling and looking towards the camera. The structure is made of green and blue metal bars. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with a sandy ground and a building in the distance.

Children playing outside at a school in Côte d'Ivoire.

# 1 Adequate standard of living

*Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. While parents have the primary responsibility to provide the living conditions that are necessary for the child's development, governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.*

**– CRC, article 27**



**Many of the challenges facing children are rooted in inter-generational poverty.** Low and volatile incomes make it difficult for cocoa-farming families to achieve an adequate standard of living, and remain one of the primary reasons child labour persists in cocoa communities, where an **estimated 85 per cent of farmers' incomes depends on cocoa.**<sup>6</sup> When faced with price shocks, production losses due to disease and weather, or household emergencies between harvests, the economic resilience of these families is severely limited.



Although cocoa is considered to be a better option than subsistence farming or alternative livelihoods in poorer northern areas or neighbouring countries, several studies estimate that **average cocoa farmer daily income is among the lowest of all producing countries and falls within the range of US\$0.50–\$1.25.**<sup>7</sup>



*“There is very little that farmers can buy with their incomes. The purchasing power of farmers has gone down dramatically. Everything has gotten more expensive – firewood, charcoal.”*  
– Stakeholder interview



The majority of cocoa producers and parents interviewed for this study indicated that their income is insufficient to meet their families' needs, especially with an average household size of 8–11 people. Even at cocoa price levels before the recent decline, the average income of most farmers is well below the international poverty line.<sup>8</sup> (*For a snapshot of the macroeconomic context, see Box 1, page 15*).

**Poverty impacts the children in cocoa-growing communities directly by limiting households' ability to pay school-related and health-care expenses, purchase nutritious food, and invest in the long-term viability of their farms.** Focus group discussions revealed that farms receive a small share of the total value in the cocoa value chain, and they are often undercut by brokers or not paid on time. Farmers frequently request credit from local vendors or intermediaries in order to cover basic expenses – finding themselves trapped in a cycle of debt and repayment, and making it difficult for families to escape poverty over generations.

**Child poverty and access to basic services is a particular concern in the informal settlements or *campements*.** Lack of clear land titles, combined with greater competition for suitable land, has led to increased cocoa cultivation in protected forests, often by migrant families. These informal settlements, known as *campements*, are located far from basic services and have less visibility in the supply chain.

Not appearing on administrative maps, and therefore not reached by the government provision of basic services, their illegal status leads to greater risks in the use of undocumented workers and child labourers. The *campements* are only partially covered by national household surveys and by development programmes as well as formal sustainability programmes led by cocoa and chocolate companies.

*“Campements are not registered, and there are no services in these communities. Campements are largely made up of migrants. Children are more at risk of child labour in these campements.”*  
– Stakeholder interview

### Consequences of poverty in the lives of children in the cocoa-growing communities

Poverty limits households' ability to provide:



Health-care services



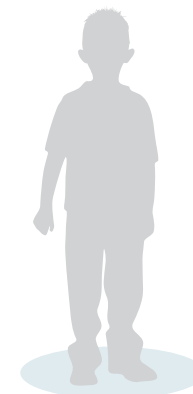
Nutritious food



School supplies



Investment in long-term viability of the farms





## BOX 1. Lower incomes, rising costs of living: A snapshot of the macroeconomic context

**Poverty is one of the greatest threats to children’s rights**, as low incomes force farmers to make a choice between meeting immediate needs and the long-term viability of their farms and opportunities for their children. The low incomes of cocoa-farming households are part of a **vicious cycle of low prices, low productivity and small scale cultivation, combined with poor investment in farms.**

This is exacerbated by rising costs of living, some of which are due to monoculture approach to farming. Farmers focussed on rearing a single crop such as cocoa need to pay additional expenses out of pocket to buy vegetables, grains and fruit for consumption.

The low international cocoa price is one of the key reasons poverty persists among cocoa farmers. In Côte d’Ivoire, the farm gate price is regulated by the Conseil du Café-Cacao (Coffee and Cocoa Council), which publishes the price scale at the beginning of each harvest season, based on forward sales.

**Major fluctuations in international markets can have devastating impacts on the final price paid to farmers.** Since September 2016, the price of cocoa plunged by US\$1,000 per metric ton, a loss in value of over 30

per cent,[1] while production costs have risen, according to stakeholders consulted for this study. In response, the Council dropped the farm gate price to 700 CFA (US\$1.18) per kilogram, which is significantly lower than the 2015/16 price of 1,100 CFA (US\$1.85).[2]

**Difficulty in developing accurate supply and demand forecasts adds uncertainty and heightens farmers’ vulnerability.** After fears about a shortage of supply in 2014/15, estimated production for 2016/17 harvest was 18 per cent higher than the previous harvest due to good weather, increased production surface and investments in production – one of the key factors for the drop in the global cocoa price.[3] This is exacerbated by such factors as the inelasticity of demand for cocoa, economic recession or less-than-expected consumption of chocolate in emerging markets.

Although production increased in absolute terms in the 2016/17 harvest, productivity levels are low on average relative to many other producing countries due to aging trees, weather conditions, pests and outdated production techniques. Many trees in Côte d’Ivoire are more than 20 years old, far beyond their productivity plateau of 5–10 years.[4]

These factors are compounded by a **lack of income diversification and farmers’ weak bargaining power in the supply chain.**

It is estimated that only 30–40 per cent of farmers are organized, in 2,500–3,000 cooperatives in the country, and according to stakeholder consultations in the research, a large share of these cooperatives are not functional. **Farmers’ weak bargaining power is exacerbated by power asymmetry as mergers and acquisitions have increased integration and market concentration in the value chain.**[5]

### Cocoa price and poverty



#### Inelastic demand



Production



Price



Need for additional labour force, impossibility to hire labourers



Higher risk of using cheap forms of labour force like children

[1] International Cocoa Organization, ‘The World Cocoa Economy: Present and future’, ICCO, April 2017, p. 3. [2] Le Conseil du Café-Cacao, accessed 20 December 2017, <www.conseilcafecacao.ci>. [3] Fountain A. C., and F. Hütz-Adams, ‘Cocoa Barometer 2015’, Barometer Consortium, 2015, p. 7. [4] Hütz-Adams, Friedel, et al., ‘Strengthening the Competitiveness of Cocoa Production and Improving the Income of Cocoa Producers in West and Central Africa’, Südwind Institut, Bonn, Germany, 31 December 2016, p. 6. [5] Oomes, Nienke, et al., ‘Market Concentration and Price Formation in the Global Cocoa Value Chain: Final report’, SEO-report No. 2016-79, SEO Amsterdam Economics, Amsterdam, 15 November 2016, p. 24.

## 2 Child protection

*Children have the right to be protected from all types of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation. This includes protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. To help secure these rights, every child should be registered immediately after birth and have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by her or his parents.*

**– CRC, articles 19, 32 and 7**

◀ A girl holds up her birth certificate at a school in a cocoa-growing community of Côte d'Ivoire, February 2016.



N°gbe  
REPUBLIQUE DE COTE D'IVOIRE  
ETAT-CIVIL  
CIRCONSCRIPTION D'ETAT-CIVIL  
à ANYAMA  
CENTRE de M'pody  
N° 184ul6/10/01 du registre  
NAISSANCE DE  
KANGBE Chiebe Josephine  
Thérèse

**EXTRAIT**  
du Registre des Actes de l'Etat Civil  
pour l'année 2001

Le quinze octobre deux mil un  
est né(e) CHIEBE Josephine Thérèse 1/  
à M'pody 2/Pd'ANYAMA  
Fille de YAPI Kangbé Alfred 1/  
et de SANDRE Chiebe Bernadette 1/

MENTIONS (éventuellement):  
Marié à \_\_\_\_\_ à \_\_\_\_\_  
avec \_\_\_\_\_  
Mariage dissous par décision de divorce en date du \_\_\_\_\_  
Décédé le \_\_\_\_\_ à \_\_\_\_\_  
Certifie le présent extrait conforme aux indications portées au registre.  
Délégué à ANYAMA le 5 Octobre 20 08





## Child Protection



As a result of years of conflict and internal and cross-border migration, along with low education levels and poverty, children of cocoa farmers are particularly vulnerable to child protection issues including child labour and exploitation, violence, and the lack of a legal identity. **Within the cocoa sector, persistent child labour is a symptom and self-reinforcing cause of poverty.** It affects children's health and well-being, deprives them of the chance to develop and go to school, increases risks of violence and abuse, and perpetuates inter-generational cycles of poverty.<sup>9</sup>



The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has taken a number of major steps to tackle child labour, particularly its worst forms, for example, the revision of the Labour Code, raising the minimum age from 14 to 16 years; the inclusion of the fight against child labour in the priority action matrix of the National Development Plan 2015-2020 (NDP); the adoption and implementation of the 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 NDPs to combat Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL); the National Child Protection Programme (NPCP); the law on compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 16; the law prohibiting trafficking in persons; the 2010 law on the prohibition of trafficking, exploitation and child labour; the Decree prohibiting hazardous work for children under 18.

**Stakeholders from the cocoa industry, at the same time, have increased investments**



**in awareness raising, improved monitoring and remediation services and community development** through company-specific sustainability programmes and industry-level coordination frameworks such as Cocoa Action.

Different studies and field researches found that **it remains common for children to work on family farms.** Most children in the focus groups said they work on cocoa farms, but the majority indicated that this was only on days when they were out of school. Children reported performing various tasks that support cocoa production throughout the cocoa lifecycle, including weeding, and helping to plant and harvest food crops. Children, mostly girls, also carry water and firewood to the farm, help with the cooking, and care for younger siblings while their parents work on the cocoa farms.

Other studies, however, indicate that working in cocoa farms is arduous and often needs to be done fast and efficiently during the two harvest seasons, requiring long hours, making the work particularly challenging for children.

Activities performed by children include clearing land, using sharp tools such as machetes to open cocoa pods, and carrying heavy loads – which are all prohibited by the Government in laws to combat the worst forms of child labour.

**A recent evaluation of a child labour monitoring and remediation system** put in place found that **the two most common types of hazardous work are carrying heavy loads (85.7 per cent), and selling, transporting or handling of agro-chemical products (16.3 per cent).** It also found that nearly **one fifth of children aged 5–17 were involved in some type of hazardous labour.**<sup>10</sup>

However, the proportion of hazardous labour is significantly higher (more than 1 child out of four) when the **age group 12–17 years** is considered. In fact, in cocoa-growing communities, **many secondary school-aged children are out of school, and often can be used as labour on family farms or to pursue other income-generating opportunities,** but due to low education levels,<sup>11</sup> they often find themselves in precarious, informal work. Strengthening basic numeracy and literacy skills, alongside vocational training on good agriculture practices and business management, is essential for youth to make cocoa farming a viable career and in general to increase their employability chances.

Moreover, with the aim of positively leveraging the interconnection of challenges, all types of **jobs that could enhance communities' resilience should be further explored and promoted** (i.e. community health workers, community teachers, water transportation/treatment/maintenance services, etc.).



**Another issue that has long-term impacts on the lives of children is the lack of birth registration and a legal identity.** This is a major concern throughout the country, as more than 28 per cent of births are not registered, according to MICS 2016; this number is higher in cocoa-growing regions of west and centre-west Cote d'Ivoire, where **an estimated 40 per cent and 50 per cent of births are not registered.**<sup>12</sup>

By recognizing the importance of the issue, the Ivorian Government has already taken an important first step with a special operation to issue a birth certificate to more than one million primary school children throughout the country (see BOX 6 page 35)



The research for this report found that most parents wait until their children are of school age before applying for a birth certificate. Although registration is free during the first three months after a child is born, obtaining a birth certificate after that period is complicated and costly (between 30 and 50 USD). In addition to the late-registration fee, the process typically requires documentation of the mother's and father's identities, and a medical certificate from the child's birth, which is only provided when childbirth takes place at a health clinic or hospital (in the absence of a medical birth certificate, the physiological age certificate issued by a doctor is used).

Teachers interviewed for this study reported that, in some schools, more than half of the children did not have a birth certificate and that most of these children had parents



from neighbouring countries. Without documentation, children are more vulnerable to child labour, human trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Birth certificates are mandatory to attend secondary school and, as a result, unregistered children are more likely to drop out of school and work on plantations. Finally, when the child becomes an adult, the security of legal identity and nationality will be important to facilitate access to certain social protection measures, and also to reduce the socio-economic vulnerability of his or her future family (e.g. land tenure, access to credit, etc.).

**Without documentation, children are more vulnerable to child labour, human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.**

Birth registration is required to attend secondary school and thus, unregistered children are more likely to drop out of school and work on farms. **Finally, when the child becomes an adult, the security of legal identity and nationality will be important to facilitate access to certain social protection measures, and also to reduce the socio-economic vulnerability of his or her future family (e.g. land tenure, access to credit, etc.).**

### Children of cocoa farmers are particularly vulnerable to child protection issues including child labour and exploitation, violence, and the lack of a legal identity

FIG 3: A spotlight on birth registration and child labour.





## [ ] BOX 2. Multiple barriers to securing social inclusion

In Côte d'Ivoire, nationality and identity issues, linked to migration trends, have fuelled the tensions that led to the 2002 civil war and continue to pose a risk to peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

**Following its independence, the country focused mainly on agriculture for the development of its economy, which encouraged the massive displacement of people from northern Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries (particularly Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea [1]) to the country's forest areas** (in the south and west). And **the cocoa sector was one of the main economic drivers and beneficiaries of this migration**, which helped to increase cocoa production from 300,000 tonnes in 1977/78 to 880,000 tonnes in 1988/89. [2]

**Land ownership and land use rights are a major concern in the country.** Indeed, very few landowners have a property title because customary law has historically governed 98% of rural land. Customary land management in Côte d'Ivoire differentiates between land ownership and the right to use land. So historically, land ownership belonged to the first to arrive and could not be sold under any circumstances, while land use rights could be transferred or sold [3].

**The 1998 Land Law (Law 98-759)** established that both Ivorians and foreigners must prove ownership

of the land they claim by producing either a land certificate or a land title obtained by registering their land in the land register. However, in order to register the land it is required to the landowner to hold customary rights on such land, which by law is allowed only to indigenous people. Thus, **indigenous customary rights are confirmed as a precondition for land ownership. Non-indigenous people may enter into long-term leases or leases but cannot claim ownership of cultivated land, except in the case of possession of land title regularly purchased from indigenous people.**

Nevertheless, because of the lack of knowledge of the law, and motivated by the maxim of the first President that "the land belongs to the person who valorises it," several migrant farmers have continued to claim ownership of the land they have cultivated for decades. Therefore, the misinterpretation of this law has made its implementation difficult and **the country has witnessed violent conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous people** (Ivorians from other regions and foreigners from neighbouring countries) **throughout the national territory but with particular intensity in the west and southwest of Côte d'Ivoire.**

Armed conflict, illegal occupation of the land of displaced populations, and irregular sales of land by non-owners have led to conflicts after the return of

beneficial owners, some of whom have not yet taken possession of their land [4]. The armed crisis has also favoured the establishment and illegal exploitation of forests classified by Ivorians and non-Ivorians.

**After the post-electoral crisis, there has been a greater commitment to ensure that land ownership and citizenship laws support the inclusion of migrants, especially those who have been in the country for many years.**

In order to reverse this conflict trend, the State set up programmes to secure rural land territories in the aftermath of the post-election crisis in 2011, by implementing a programme to delimit the territories of each village. By setting up **land management committees** composed of landowners and administration, the delimitation of village land also makes it possible to limit land conflicts between villages, the land certificate obtained after a land survey constitutes a title that can be used as proof of land ownership before registration in the land register [5].

**A new Forest Code has also been adopted to improve the security and clarity of communities' rights to land and forest resources** [6]. In 2013, the National Assembly approved **new laws that aim at granting citizenship to foreign nationals living in Côte d'Ivoire** [7].

[1] l'Institut National de la Statistique, 4ème Recensement Général de la Population et de l'Habitat (RGPH) 2014 de Côte d'Ivoire, INS, 2014, p. 34, open PDF from <[www.ins.ci/n/documents/RGPH2014\\_expo\\_dg.pdf](http://www.ins.ci/n/documents/RGPH2014_expo_dg.pdf)>. [2] Ruf, François, and P. S. Siswoputranto, *Cocoa Cycles: The Economics of cocoa supply*, Woodhead Publishing, Cambridge, England, 1995, p. 46. [3] McCallin, Barbara, and Marzia Montemurro, 'Whose Land Is This? Land disputes and forced displacement in the western forest areas of Côte d'Ivoire', Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and Norwegian Refugee Council, Geneva and Abidjan, October 2009, p. 14, open PDF from <[www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2009/200911-af-cdi-whos-land-is-this-country-en.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2009/200911-af-cdi-whos-land-is-this-country-en.pdf)>. [4] Ibid., p. 16. [5] Ibid., p. 5. [6] Fern, 'Nouveau Code forestier en Côte d'Ivoire: quelles implications pour les droits fonciers', Fern, 2015, p. 2, available at <[www.fern.org/fr/codeforestierCl](http://www.fern.org/fr/codeforestierCl)>. [7] Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Côte d'Ivoire Reforms Citizenship and Land Ownership Laws', The Economist Group, 29 August 2013, <[http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=30905187&Country=Côte%20d%27Ivoire&topic=Polit\\_3](http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=30905187&Country=Côte%20d%27Ivoire&topic=Polit_3)>.

# 3 Education

*In recognition of the right to education, primary schooling should be compulsory and free to all, and various forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, should be available and accessible to every child.*

**– CRC, article 28**

Children attending class in a school  
in Côte d'Ivoire. October, 2017. ▶





## Education



In previous decades, the **country's education system has made significant progress**, thanks to the law on compulsory schooling for all children aged 6 to 16 years, and significant investments by the Government in infrastructure and teachers. Nevertheless, **many challenges remain to be addressed, and this is particularly true for rural areas.**



**Children in cocoa-producing communities** face similar challenges as children in other rural areas in terms of **availability, accessibility and quality of education, and often their learning outcomes remain insufficient.**



**The opportunity cost of schooling** can be perceived as high for poor families, while at the same time creating a vicious circle in which families' low level of education keeps them in a **cycle of poverty** by compromising children's long-term prospects and limiting their development potential, as well as that of future generations. **Access to quality education is one of the most effective tools to reduce the risk of child labour.**



Good-quality childcare is essential for child protection, early learning, and health and nutrition, but **pre-school education coverage remains insufficient** and mainly concentrated in urban areas, with an average of only 8.2% of eligible children enrolled.<sup>13</sup> According to interviews with cocoa-growing communities,



even in cases where an early childhood development centre exists, it is not always equipped to meet children's needs.

Focus group discussions revealed that **mothers in cocoa-growing families typically take their young children to cocoa farms**, carrying them on their backs or leaving them in the care of older siblings while they work. **This can expose young children to potential hazards** on the farm as well as increase the likelihood that older children, usually girls, drop out of school to help with childcare.

With more than 40 per cent of the population under age 15, to achieve universal enrolment, **the Government is planning a large-scale programme to build and rehabilitate classrooms and recruit teachers, which will require the mobilization of significant additional resources** to complete the school supply. Many schools are overcrowded and have difficulty maintaining basic water, sanitation and canteen services. Teachers interviewed for the study reported managing classrooms with 70 or more students. Teacher shortages and absences, as well as limited opportunities for teachers to participate in training, also affect the quality of education in cocoa-growing communities.

**In lower secondary education**, the gross enrolment rate (66.5%) and the completion rate

**"Almost all of the families in the community can't pay for school. My three children are at home. I feel bad, but I don't have a choice, so they go to the farm."**

**– Mother, Luehouan**

(54.6%) **remain too low**, particularly in cocoa-producing regions, for various reasons.

Children can enrol in primary school without a birth certificate, **but students are required to have a birth certificate to access secondary school classes.** In addition, although primary school is free, the **additional costs for uniforms, textbooks and other indirect contributions can represent financial barriers for many families.**

Moreover, **violence in schools**, including gender-based violence, is also a factor that hinders children's access to and retention in school<sup>14</sup>.

Children in focus groups reported that they **often walk between 45 minutes and one hour to school**, although those living in campements sometimes have to walk up to two or three hours<sup>15</sup>. Teachers noted that children who lived far from school often arrived late and that, sometimes, they were forced to be absent from school during the rainy season, when road conditions made travel difficult.



In cocoa growing communities (and in rural areas in general), the need for support in rural or domestic work, children's illness and the opportunity cost of schooling also play a role in decisions to keep children in school. Many cocoa farmers have had little to no formal schooling and, in discussions, questioned its utility. Some parents in focus groups view education as the only path to a brighter future but had to make an economically rational choice to take children out of school in order to reduce expenses and help on the farm.



**Thanks to the government's efforts, enrolment and completion are on the rise, but gender disparities persist.** For example, at the national level, the lower secondary completion rate has increased from 34.6 per cent (2013-2014) to 54.6 per cent (2017-2018), but the rate for girls in 2018 is 17 per cent lower than that for boys.<sup>16</sup> The difference is even more pronounced among the poorest families in rural areas, where, for example, according to MICS 2016 data, the literacy rate for young women (15-24 years) is on average 35% lower than that of young men in the western, central-western and south-western regions.



**Decisions about girls' education are deeply rooted in cultural norms and societal expectations.** While boys tend to drop out of school to participate in income-generating activities, **girls often leave school to care for their siblings or sometimes because they become pregnant**, making it difficult for them to continue their education and financial independence in the long term.



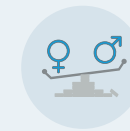
### BOX 3. Gender inequality: An entrenched issue, with multiple impacts

Cultural norms and societal expectations about gender roles on and off farms affect family income, food production, and women's participation in decision making. In turn, all of these factors affect children's resilience. Despite the important role of women in cocoa farming, their contributions are often unrecognized and unrewarded. Focus group discussions with mothers found that although all of them invested 4–5 hours a day working on the farms, only a few referred to themselves as cocoa farmers and instead indicated that it was simply their duty to help their husbands.

Women are primarily responsible for meeting their family's nutritional needs, including through food production and marketing of small crops. But low levels of education, limited influence over household decisions, and the heavy burden of collecting and transporting water and wood for cooking and energy place considerable constraints on women's ability to invest in food production. Poor access to nutrition and counselling services during pregnancy and early childhood also have long-term effects on children's health and development.

When gender inequality blocks women from achieving their income-generating potential, an opportunity to transcend the cycle of poverty is lost. Various initiatives have identified women's economic empowerment as vital to strengthening sustainability in the cocoa sector. For these efforts to be effective, it is essential to address the causes of gender inequality, focus on daycare or preschool services or centres to free mothers and daughters, increase the provision of maternal health services, reduce gender and role inequalities through a greater empowerment of women and fight against harmful social and cultural practices deeply rooted in communities (also involving men).

#### Gender inequality and children's rights



Despite the important role of women in cocoa farming, their contributions are often unrewarded.



#### Women and girls are often affected by:

- Low levels of education
- Limited influence over household decisions
- Heavy burden of collecting and transporting water and wood
- Poor access to nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood



Aziz, who is suffering from malaria, smiles while his temperature is taken at a health centre in Côte d'Ivoire. ▶

## 4 Child survival

*Every child has the right to live, survive and develop in health and well-being. All children have the right to the highest attainable standard of health, and must not be deprived of health-care services or access to treatment and rehabilitation facilities. Appropriate measures should be taken to combat disease and malnutrition, including the use of readily available technology and the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water. To support this right, all segments of society – in particular parents and children – should have basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents, and have access to education, supporting the use of this information.*

**– CRC, articles 6, 24**



## Child Survival

Access to health-care services and sanitation infrastructure is particularly constrained on cocoa farms and in informal settlements. Exposure to pesticides or chemicals and hazardous work (such as carrying heavy loads, or the use of machetes, etc.) in cocoa production can increase safety risks, while illnesses, decreasing water quality and availability and decreased local food production, in turn, impacts children's survival and development.

*"No one eats well here because there is not enough money and it is difficult to find food on the farm because we only produce cocoa and rubber."  
– Mother, Ottawa*

**Malnutrition, exacerbated by the high prevalence of infectious diseases, is a serious concern in cocoa communities in Côte d'Ivoire.**

Food shortages are common, especially between harvests and during the rainy season, from June–September, when farmers have exhausted their income from the main harvest. Parents participating in focus group discussions indicated that they tried to make sure that their children ate at least twice a day while they themselves would only eat once a day during 'hard times'.

**Cocoa production is often pursued at the expense of food crops, especially in the face of growing competition for land. In addition, interviews with health workers revealed that**

**facilities often do not have access to electricity and optimal sanitation conditions (water being a particular concern). focus group participants mentioned that due to the lack of certain services and medicines in health centres, they should visit larger medical facilities or hospitals for many interventions, but many of them do not.**

According to producers, rice is the most commonly grown food crop but production levels are too low to meet families' dietary needs. As a result, many families buy rice that is increasingly expensive at local markets. **Diets in cocoa-growing communities also lack diversity and nutrient-rich foods** due to the limited space for food crops, a lack of knowledge about proper nutrition, and the unaffordable prices of nutritious foods.

**Malaria is endemic in cocoa-growing regions.**

Government-initiated campaigns to distribute free insecticide-treated mosquito nets with a focus on children and pregnant women have helped reduce malaria incidence rates. But focus group discussions indicated that many cocoa-growing families wait to go to health centres until absolutely necessary, often complicating treatment. Moreover, **when farmers themselves fall ill they are likely to rely more heavily on family members, including children, to help with tasks on the farm.** This in turn affects children's school attendance, their education, and inter-generational

poverty, as well as the impacts that reduced incomes have on nutrition, health and well-being.

According to interviews with village chiefs, 93 per cent of villages in the study had a health-care centre, but to get from the farms to a village health centre, many people in the focus groups had to travel more than an hour. In addition, the interviews with health-care workers revealed that **the facilities often do not have access to electricity and adequate sanitation conditions (water being a particular concern).** Focus group participants mentioned that because important services and medications were lacking in the health centres, they would have to travel to larger medical facilities or hospitals for many procedures, and many of them do not do that.

Although many maternal and neonatal care services are provided to communities, **many mothers interviewed indicated that they have difficulty paying for the high cost of medicines,** which leads them to regularly use traditional healers' services. The work is physically demanding and has an impact on women's health, and women often delay their medical appointments until very late stages of the disease so as not to disrupt daily tasks. **As women rarely have formal employment relationships, they do not receive maternity leave** or prenatal allowances.





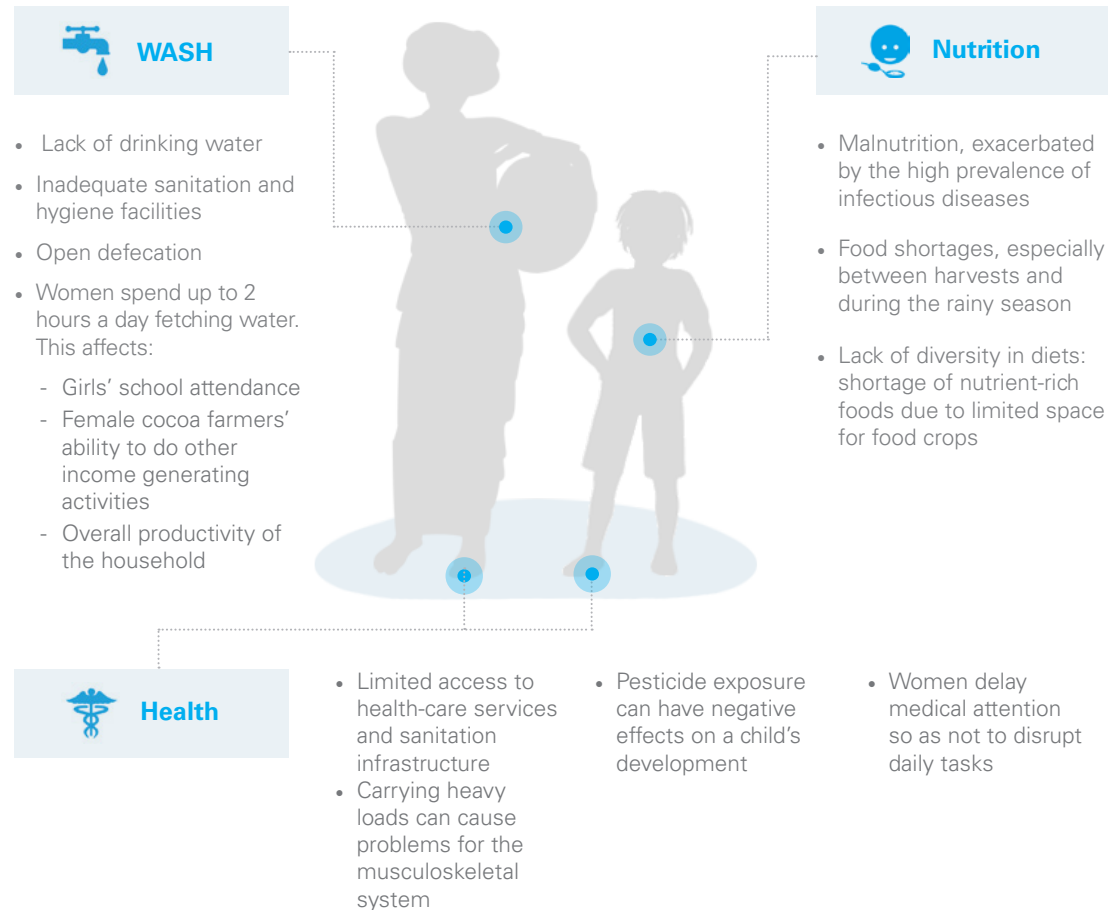


While pesticides are often necessary to improve productivity and eliminate pests and disease, if applied inappropriately or in excessive amounts, they can lead to a range of health problems for farming communities. Recent studies in Côte d'Ivoire show that **children are exposed to a growing amount and variety of chemical fertilizers and pesticides via direct contact or through contaminated water.**<sup>17</sup> Children are especially vulnerable to toxins due to their physiology, behaviour and possibility of prenatal exposure from mothers exposed to pesticides, **and the adverse effects to pesticide exposure can be manifested during all stages of a child's development.**

With regard to child safety more generally, the majority of children (average age 14 years) in focus groups reported being injured during field work. In addition, the **transport of heavy loads** (the most frequent task) can **cause serious short and long-term health problems, particularly for the musculoskeletal system.**

## Women and children's well-being is vulnerable in poor living and working conditions

FIG 4: Child survival factors that affect children's resilience, people's productivity and family vulnerability.





**Lack of drinking water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities** are the result of both limited or non-existent infrastructure, and local traditions and norms. Cocoa-farm families participating in the study noted that they frequently relied on village pumps for household water use, many of which were in disrepair. As an alternative, they draw water from unprotected sources such as ponds and rivers. **Open defecation is commonplace** on cocoa farms and in villages in cocoa-growing areas. These unhealthy conditions and practices worsen a range of issues related to nutrition and health, especially diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia.



The lack of essential WASH services is interlinked with child protection and gender equality issues. Children (mostly girls) and **women reported spending up to two hours per day fetching water**, in addition to other household activities for which they are primarily responsible. **This limits girls' school attendance, the number of hours that could be spent on higher value-added activities and, consequently, women's ability to earn income that would empower them.**



#### BOX 4. Deforestation: A risk to the industry and to cocoa-growing communities

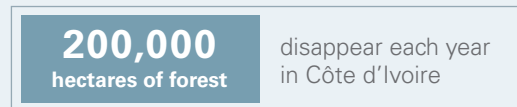
The deforestation rate in Côte d'Ivoire is one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the 16 million hectares of forest in 1960, fewer than 4 million remain today. As 200,000 hectares disappear each year, Côte d'Ivoire could lose its entire forest cover by 2034.[1]

**Deforestation threatens to severely undermine the cocoa sector's resilience**, and with it the livelihoods of millions of smallholders and their families. It further affects biodiversity, which can increase the risks of parasitic diseases, and aggravates shortages of food production and water supplies, as competition increases between drinking water and agricultural needs.

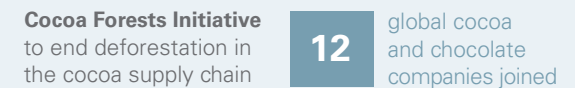
Most focus group participants indicated that they are pessimistic about the future of cocoa. The majority of producers and mothers do not want their children to become cocoa farmers – citing lack of forests and land availability as the primary reasons.

**There is greater recognition of the need for change though.** In 2011, Côte d'Ivoire joined the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism, and recently made a commitment to halt deforestation by 2020 and increase forest cover to 20% by 2030. In addition, 12 global cocoa and chocolate companies have joined the Cocoa Forests initiative to stop deforestation and forest degradation.[2]

#### Deforestation in Côte d'Ivoire



#### Goals of the Ivorian Government:



[1] Dontenville, Adeline, 'Mapping Financial Flows to Support REDD+ Efforts: Côte d'Ivoire', European Forest Institute, <[www.euredd.efi.int/publications/mapping-financial-flows-to-support-redd-efforts](http://www.euredd.efi.int/publications/mapping-financial-flows-to-support-redd-efforts)>. [2] World Cocoa Foundation, 'Cocoa & Forests Initiative', WCF, 2017, <[www.worldcocoafoundation.org/cocoa-forests-initiative](http://www.worldcocoafoundation.org/cocoa-forests-initiative)>.



# Reflections on achieving results for children

Two girls laughing in a village  
of Côte d'Ivoire. May, 2017. ▶

# Reflections on achieving results for children

The conditions of Ivorian children overall and the avenues open or closed to them are tied to decisions made along the cocoa value chain, as well as economic and agriculture policies.

The many challenges faced by children in cocoa-producing communities are rooted in interrelated **structural and systemic problems such as poverty, the lack of basic services, and social exclusion due to social norms and cultural constraints.**

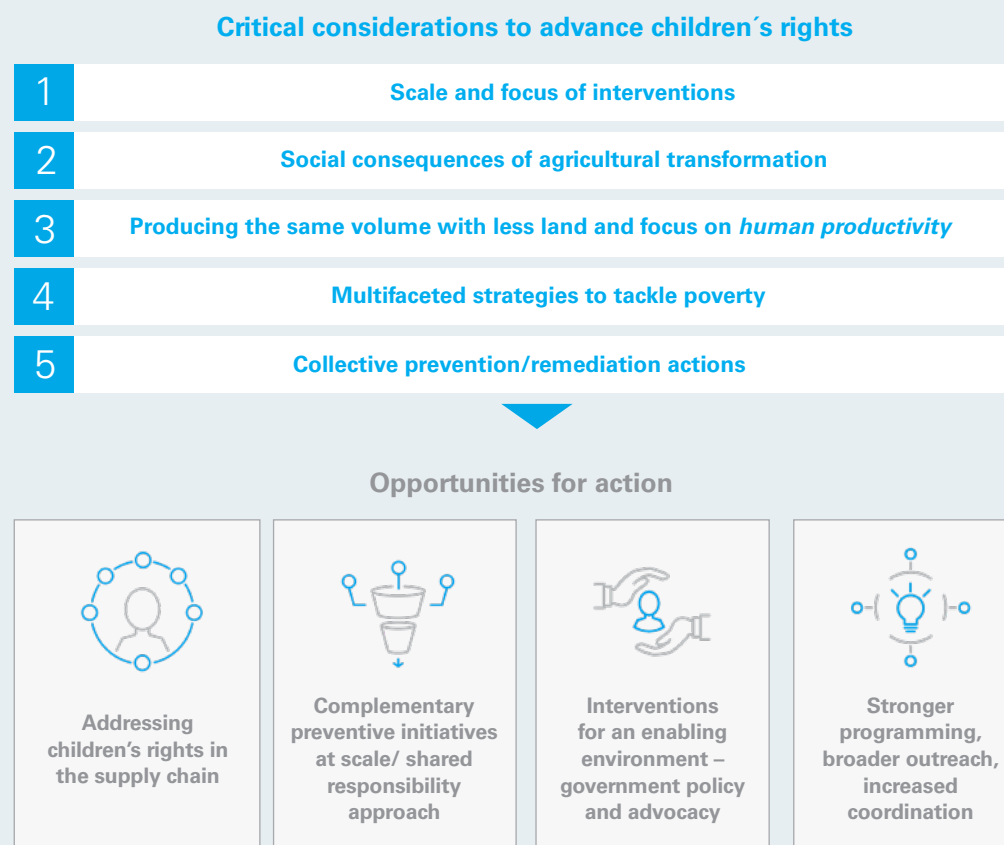
While primarily a government responsibility, the lack of access to essential services, such as quality education, health care, drinking water and sanitation facilities, affects the productivity and vulnerability of cocoa-farming families and, as a consequence, both their household income and use of child labour.

**The strong political will, and the existing public and private sustainability initiatives, frameworks and platforms, as well as an increasingly vibrant civil society, represent a strong foundation to build on.**

The Conseil du Café-Cacao (Coffee and Cocoa Council), for example, uses a public-private platform to mobilize resources and improve coordination of efforts to promote sustainable growth in the sectors. Among the many other actors that are contributing to overall sustainability goals, the World Cocoa Foundation established an industry-wide strategy to transform the sector;<sup>18</sup> the International Cocoa Initiative has significantly advanced knowledge and practice in addressing child labour; and the International Cocoa Organization provides strong economic analysis and involves both importing and exporting governments; the Jacobs Foundation supports both research and practice to improve the quality of education in cocoa-growing communities through its TRECC program; and the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) provides sound economic analysis and guidance to both cocoa importing and exporting governments.

## The strong political will, combined with existing initiatives and the increasingly vibrant civil society, represent a strong foundation to drive change

FIG 5: Critical considerations to overcome barriers and opportunities for action to advance children's rights in the cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire.

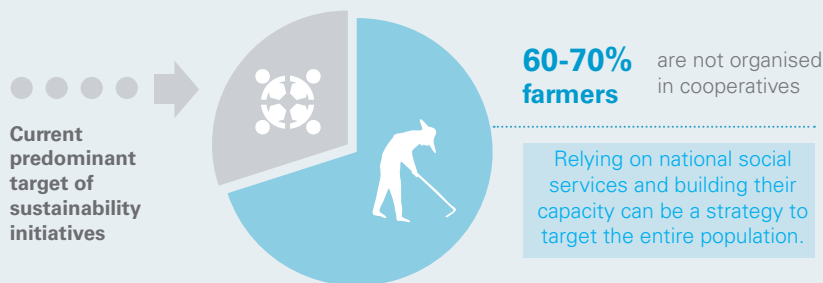


# Critical considerations to advance children's rights

These are encouraging signs of a brighter future for children and the sector as a whole. Considering the complexity of the challenges, however, further reflection is encouraged on how to overcome some of the existing barriers and achieve desired outcomes. The following list outlines a selection of topics that should be explored in this regard.

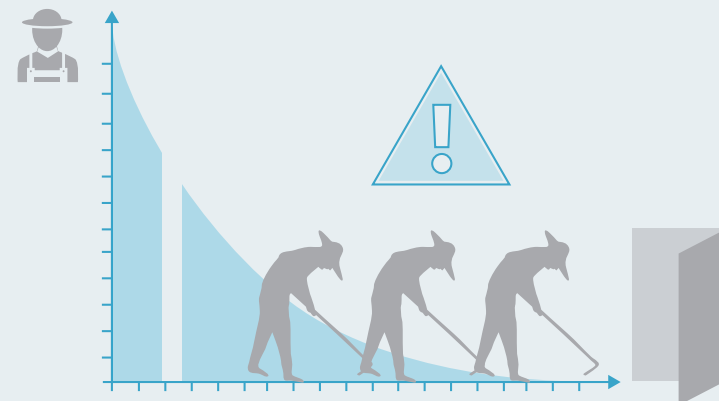
## 1 Scale and focus of interventions

Most sustainability initiatives are directed to organized farmers and cooperatives but stakeholders consulted for this study estimate that 60–70 per cent of cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire operate through informal traders and do not benefit from participation in cooperatives. **In order to reach this population (between 480 and 600,000 farmers and their families, including more than 2 million children), different strategies will be necessary;** this includes a better leverage of national actors and child protection mechanisms (e.g. social workers, regional/departmental platforms, etc.) and enhancing their technical and financial capacity whenever needed. Finally, in view of the commitments made by the sector (such as the Harkin-Engel protocol), in order to accelerate progress, it will be **necessary to significantly increase the scale of intervention** as well as the investments required to deliver such commitments.



## 2 Social consequences of agricultural transformation

A 'concentration' strategy that targets investments towards increasing production among a limited portion of organized farmers carries a high social risk as it could force hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers to abandon cocoa when the supply becomes saturated and prices drop even further. However, switching to other crops is very difficult given the long lifespan of cocoa trees and the fact that most farmers have no savings or access to credit and social protection. Therefore, **along with possible agricultural conversion and diversification policies, measures that strengthen economic resilience (e.g., access to financial services such as banking, savings and insurance; social protection schemes) should be in place to protect farmers and their families** from becoming even poorer and more vulnerable.



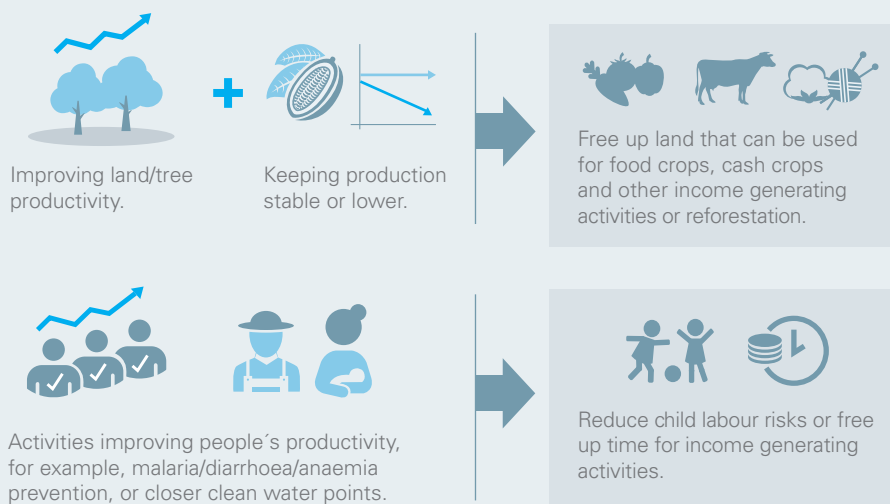
### 3 Producing the same volume with less land and focus on people's productivity

The strong focus on cocoa productivity/production improvement that can be found in the current framework like the Global Cocoa Agenda and Cocoa Action has been significantly influenced by the economic situation in 2012-2015 when there were major concerns about the ability of cocoa supply to meet projected demand growth.

In 2017, however, the outlook drastically changed, with 40 per cent price drops and high stock levels that are expected to remain stable during the next few years<sup>19</sup>.

Therefore, nowadays the main objective of improving cocoa yields should be to **reduce the land needed to grow the same volume of cocoa, while freeing up space for other food crops for safe and diversified food, as well as other cash crops for a higher and more balanced income throughout the year.**

In addition, **human productivity** (e.g. prevention of malaria and/or diarrhoea, reduction of women's walking time to fetch water) should become an integral part of future development priorities.



### 4 Multifaceted strategies to tackle poverty

Poverty is widely understood as a root cause of child labour and other child rights issues. While efforts to improve prices paid to farmers are important, there is also a **need for a broader suite of strategies to strengthen farm family income and economic resilience.** This could include cash transfer or other social protection schemes; reductions in household expenditures by eliminating school fees and providing affordable health care; and diversifying income sources by freeing up women's time for various income-generating activities and land for diversified food and cash crops.

### 5 Collective prevention/remediation actions

In alignment with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, companies have the responsibility to avoid contributing to or causing negative impacts on human rights and to have remediation mechanisms in place if adverse human rights impacts occur. In a smallholder farming context, however, many of the identified challenges are linked to structural causes beyond the purview of a single company or sector. National-level and cross-sector **collective prevention/remediation actions could therefore play a significant role in cocoa sustainability**, and the underlying systems that benefit all sectors and communities in the country.



# Opportunities for action

The long-term viability of the cocoa supply chain depends on the resilience and well-being of children and families in Côte d'Ivoire. But most of the entrenched child rights issues in complex supply chains will never be addressed in a meaningful way if the burden is solely on companies or governments.

Therefore, a **coordinated response** from business, governments (exporting and importing), producers and trade unions, international development and financial organizations, civil society and private philanthropy is needed to find **collective solutions and proportionately share costs and commitments**.

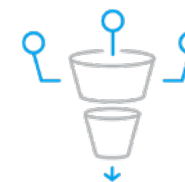
In concrete terms, four areas have been identified where a shared responsibility approach could be effective in advancing children's rights.

**Concretely, there are four areas where a shared responsibility approach could be effective in advancing children's rights:**

## Addressing children's rights in the supply chain



## Complementary initiatives at scale, with a shared responsibility approach



## Interventions for an enabling environment – government policy and advocacy



## Stronger programming in cocoa-growing communities, broader outreach and increased coordination





## Addressing children's rights in the supply chain



While the study aimed to identify the most relevant child rights issues and drivers linked to the cocoa supply chain, the nature of cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire makes it difficult to draw clear links between various actors. Unlike a factory operation, farmers are not centralized in one location, they are working largely in the informal sector, and they are often several tiers removed from the global buyer. In addition, while most income comes from cocoa, farmers are increasingly moving into other commodities such as palm oil and rubber.



**Tackling the negative impacts on children's rights may require an approach to respecting child rights that goes beyond individual company supply chains and instead focuses on the community and/or sector level.** In addition, this study revealed that in order to address negative impacts such as child labour, it may also be necessary to invest in promoting or advancing children's rights that are not directly linked to cocoa. For example, sustainability initiatives that seek to improve farmers' incomes might require addressing gaps in maternal health or childcare that limit women's ability to achieve their productive potential.



### This includes activities to:

- **Work with willing companies to incorporate** the smallholder farming context and **child rights** considerations **into corporate policies and supply chain practices.**
- Conduct and share research that can inform and **refine corporate child rights due diligence processes** – from policy commitments to impact assessments and reporting – that are effective throughout the supply chain.
- Work with companies to **generate evidence about a more holistic approach to child rights and community development,** encompassing water access, health care, early childhood development, social protection, gender equality, etc.
- Use the evidence generated, as well as considerations emerging from this study and UNICEF field experience, to **inform existing and future industry standards.** This includes fully integrating children's rights and the root causes of issues in the smallholder farming context in such platforms as the new Cocoa Action framework; the Cocoa Agenda and key performance indicators; private certification schemes; and the International Organization for Standards-European Committee for Standardization standard.
- Collaborate with the ILO, civil society and legislators of **importing governments (e.g. the EU) to develop due diligence laws that could create an enabling environment** for respecting and promoting children's rights in agricultural supply chains.





## [ ] BOX 5. Learning from other sectors for more effective sustainability initiatives

**Companies across many sectors are working alongside government and civil society actors to tackle health challenges, recognizing the heavy burden placed on employees, families, health systems and companies by malaria and waterborne diseases, among other illnesses.** A study of 62 businesses in Ghana, for example, found that **3,913 workdays were lost due to malaria during 2012–2014, and due to this disease, the companies lost US\$6.58 million**, of which 90 per cent was direct costs, in 2014.[1]

Two initiatives in Ghana are described below, illustrating the potential of business actors to improve overall productivity in their sectors by addressing systemic issues that go beyond the companies' direct responsibilities.

To improve access to safe water in locations where **a global beverage company** sources raw materials, the company worked with its local subsidiary and a non-governmental organization. An impact study of this programme in Ghana

sampled 49 projects in 40 communities, and found that **improved sources of water not only helped reduce the prevalence of waterborne diseases but also strengthened women's empowerment and girls' education by reducing the time women and girls spend fetching water.** The specific outcomes, covering around 150,000 people and 21,500 households, include:

- 79 per cent of beneficiary households provided with a reliable source of water through this intervention;
- Incidences of waterborne diseases reduced from 15 per cent to 3 per cent;
- Girls' time spent collecting water reduced by 23 school days a year, significantly increasing their school attendance;
- 33 per cent reduction in women's time spent daily fetching water, enhancing their participation in income-generating activities and community governance;
- Support for 34,000 local jobs and livelihoods following implementation of the projects.[2]

In an example from the extractives industry, a large-scale mining company invested in a malaria control programme in Ghana after identifying the disease as the most significant public health threat

to its operations in the country. The **company supported an integrated malaria prevention strategy** that included indoor residual spraying, distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, and community communication and education initiatives, among others.

By 2012, the programme had reduced malaria cases in the mining area by about 75 per cent, with large reductions in child and infant mortality, and improvements in school attendance rates and school performance. Many non-mine communities also benefited, and employment opportunities were made available through the residual spray programme.[3]

While in other sectors the economic and social rationale for such interventions is obvious, the small-scale agricultural setup makes these investments less immediate for cocoa companies (farmers are not directly employed). Nevertheless, **to the light of their enabling power on other issues at the core of the cocoa sustainability debate (i.e. child labour, access to education, poverty), considering them more strategically may represent an interesting opportunity.**

[1] Nonvignon, Justice, et al., 'Economic Burden of Malaria on Businesses in Ghana: A case for private sector investment in malaria control', *Malaria Journal*, vol. 15, no. 454, 2016, pp. 1–10, open PDF from <[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5011924/pdf/12936\\_2016\\_Article\\_1506.pdf](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5011924/pdf/12936_2016_Article_1506.pdf)>. [2] WASH4Work, 'Diageo's Water of Life Program', Diageo <<https://wash4work.org/tools-resources/diageos-water-of-life-program>>. [3] African Natural Resources Center and African Development Bank, 'AGA Malaria and Public-Private Partnerships in Ghana's Health Sector to Obtain Value from Extractives Projects: A case study', African Development Bank, Abidjan, 2016, p. 11.



## Complementary initiatives at scale, with a shared responsibility approach

**Collective prevention/remediation initiatives could effectively complement the existing interventions that most companies are already implementing.** Such initiatives should be designed to operate at a broad scale (national or regional) through a multi-leadership model – engaging government, development actors and/or industry – and employ innovative financing mechanisms to tackle some of the main root causes of children’s rights issues.

The ‘special operation on birth registration in schools’ launched by the Government of Côte d’Ivoire in June 2017, with UNICEF support, highlights the benefits of adopting a broader scale of intervention (see Box 6, on page 35). In order to achieve their full potential, **new initiatives should be designed in a participatory way from the outset** to capitalize on the strengths and assets of each actor (e. g. reach, financial contribution, influence).

Though this approach **requires a high level of coordination**, because it involves a large number of actors, **it is likely the only way to ensure equitable interventions that reach the entire population, including those who are most vulnerable**, isolated and excluded – e.g., the ‘long tail’ of smallholder farmers, and the communities that do not currently benefit from the support/influence of a major private company.

**Possible areas of intervention** to consider for this type of approach include: birth registration particularly for out-of-school children, diffusion of early childhood development services, access to quality primary and secondary education (infrastructural interventions, bridging classes, school canteens, etc.), social protection measures for farmers and their families (e. g. cash transfers, health insurances), access to water, behaviour change communication campaigns for children and nutritional support during the first 1000 days of a child’s life.

It will therefore be useful to **include in the new National Action Plan to Combat Child Labour, Public-Private Partnerships to accelerate progress on some key child rights** (see list above) and facilitate the convergence of actions of different actors.

### This includes activities to:

- **Design a Public-Private initiative focusing either on birth registration or access to education for out-of-school children to test a “prevention/collective remediation”/shared responsibility approach.**
- **Work, at all stages of the initiative’s development, in close collaboration with CNS and CIM members**, taking advantage of existing coordination mechanisms such as the Coffee-Cocoa Council Platform for Public-Private Partnership to coordinate interactions with the cocoa sector, but also seeking to **involve stakeholders from other sectors** (such as mining or palm oil) and the General Confederation of Enterprises in Côte d’Ivoire (CGECI).
- Collaborate with companies, government, international development agencies and financial institutions to **design innovative financing mechanisms** that enable such initiatives.



## BOX 6. Promoting birth registration through Government-UNICEF cooperation

In May 2017, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior proposed a 'special operation' to register 1,165,325 children, covering more than 14,000 government primary schools. Birth registration is free within three months of a birth, but obtaining a certificate after that requires a judgement suppletif. This process is time-consuming and costs US\$30–\$50, not including related expenses such as travel to a civil registration office. The special operation provides birth certificates for just US\$1.77; UNICEF agreed to provide US\$2 million for funding the operation through the Ministry.

The process began with collecting enrolment information from school directors. These data are sent to a private operator (UNITEC) for input to a computerized database. Following verification, the file is ultimately returned to the civil registry system to produce the birth certificate – thus providing another child with a key to accessing vital services.

The birth registration campaign has a number of advantages that could be applied to collective remediation initiatives, including:

- **The benefits of economies of scale achieved through a large, united campaign.** In the national birth registration example, the Government lowered the cost per birth certificate, UNICEF provided financial support, and multiple levels of government are involved in expediting the process.
- **A broader mandate that offers the possibility of attracting a wide range of contributions from various partners** (companies from other sectors, governments, development actors, financial institutions, consumers, etc.) that would not typically be involved with company-specific remediation.
- **Big and highly visible steps** that could well serve the needs of the country and the industry to create a positive cocoa narrative, creating momentum for further change.



## Interventions for an enabling environment – government policy and advocacy



**The complex challenges** in cocoa-growing communities **require improved governance systems** locally and globally, **including increased coordination** and a defined vision and strategy, and the promotion of **transparency and accountability**<sup>20</sup> – as well as efforts to address systemic poverty through increased incomes and reduced household expenditures.



In developing interventions to promote an enabling environment, advocacy initiatives to support the appropriate government policies as they relate to business practices are one important factor. This is particularly true when addressing a supply chain where there is no 'direct cause' attribution. In the case of cocoa, the recently evolving transparency and accountability measures and due diligence laws can be used as calls to strengthen governance.



Other elements of promoting an enabling environment are related to reducing poverty and increasing incomes, e.g., by lessening expenses for universal health services coverage, advancing agricultural transformation through social protection schemes (access to market, credit, etc.), and achieving the goal of education for all.



### This includes activities to:

- Advocate with the government for **universal health coverage, social protection** measures for informal workers, and **reduction of hidden costs related to education** in order to fight poverty by reducing household spending.
- **Work with the technical and financial partners of the Ministry of Agriculture**, including other UN agencies, the Conseil Café Cacao, government entities and business platforms to ensure that cocoa-specific dynamics are carefully monitored and mitigation measures are taken. When considering agricultural transformation/concentration, for example, this would encompass an agricultural diversification policy, interventions to increase food security, social protection schemes to support the most vulnerable people, and facilitated access to credit.
- Advocate and work with relevant agencies to **support sustainable prices and adequate incomes resulting from the crops**.
- **Encourage the discussion of topics** that may be beyond a particular agency's mandate but are **critical to address underlying causes of child labour and vulnerability**, e.g., **land tenure, access to social services in campements**.
- Integrate into the **2018-2020 National Action Plan** to combat child labor, key national interventions in **education** (e.g., school canteens, free kits, kindergartens), **health** (e.g., center construction, initiatives to increase the coverage of community health workers), **social protection** (extend the program of social transfers, universal health insurance), and in **child protection** (increasing resources for social workers, child protection committees, birth registration, etc.)
- Promote the organization of producers into trade unions and realise an inventory of the existing unions.



## [ ] BOX 7. Child Protection monitoring and remediation systems

In Côte d'Ivoire, different child-protection monitoring systems are being piloted or cover specific geographical/thematic areas:

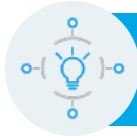
- **Child-labour-focused monitoring and remediation systems (private and public)** – this category identifies both the International Cocoa Initiative and 'company-led' child labour monitoring and remediation systems (focusing on farmers/children within specific cocoa companies' supply chains), as well as the government-led child labour monitoring and remediation systems *Système d'Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d'Ivoire (SOSTECI)* currently under pilot in seven departments in the South West of the country (focusing on communities)
- **Violence** database supported by the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA)
- **Vulnerable children affected by HIV** database supported by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).
- The **integrated child protection system** (*Systeme integrée de protection de l'enfant, SIPE*), promoted by the Ministry of Woman, Child Protection and Solidarity, which could be considered an 'umbrella system' that aims at driving convergence among different protection issues to which children are exposed

For effective monitoring, the **scale of coverage** is critical. Therefore, to maximize the impact of those systems particularly in the light of the limited resources available, it will be important to:

- (i) pursue harmonization among similar systems (as started in 2017 through the development of an integrated framework of collaboration between public and private child labour monitoring and remediation systems)
- (ii) look at opportunities for integration among "thematic" and "umbrella" systems to optimize costs and achieve full national coverage in a financially viable way.

Such reflections should also consider the **mechanisms used to deliver responses to the critical cases identified**, and, as a principle, **leverage as much as possible the existing national structures (i.e. social workers) working to strengthen them, if needed.**

At the same time, considering the dimension of the child labour issue, a parallel reflection on the balance among case-by-case responses and **preventive actions at scale** seems pertinent. In light of the diffused vulnerability and lack of infrastructure that often rural communities are exposed to (i.e. limited access to quality education, clean water, etc.), and considering the knowledge generated in the past years by the monitoring systems mentioned above, qualitative and quantitative evidence is available to identify key child labour root causes and to develop interventions to address them at national scale. Such approaches could complement the existing monitoring systems well, while accelerating progress and maximizing the return on investment of the current remediation interventions by better leveraging economies of scale.



## Stronger programming in cocoa-growing communities, broader outreach and increased coordination

Reaching the most vulnerable farmers and their families in cocoa-growing communities will require stronger programming, based on an understanding of the context's specific challenges and circumstances (e.g., the crop cycle). In many cases, there will be a **need to link multiple interventions within a programme, for example, providing child protection programmes** that include village saving and loan schemes and/or cash transfers to increase farmers' economic resilience.

Recognizing that this is a new area and approach to programming for development actors, the focus should be on working jointly – **linking development expertise with business know-how and farmers' perspectives to achieve results for children.**

This may also be fostered by coordination with specific cocoa industry initiatives that are already in place. Additionally, **many of the systemic issues cannot be addressed in just the cocoa-growing communities.** Therefore, linking to global campaigns and engaging cocoa sector actors will be a vital part of this work.

### This includes activities to:

- **Complement existing child protection programmes with economic-strengthening measures** (cash transfers and/or community-based village saving and loan schemes).
- **Assess whether and how UNICEF's 'child-friendly communities' framework could be integrated** in community-based interventions that are addressing child labour.
- **Encourage the cocoa sector to contribute to global campaigns** such as Early Moments Matter<sup>22</sup> and Ending Violence Against Children<sup>23</sup>, which have a critical relevance in the cocoa context.

## Conclusion

**The cocoa sector has tremendous potential to be a positive driver of change in favour of the most disadvantaged households** in communities and especially in promoting the rights and well-being of children.

This can only be achieved through a shared commitment and vision among all stakeholders that focuses on building the systems and structures for long-lasting change for children, their families and the sector as a whole. It is our hope that this research will serve as a foundation for discussion about systemic actions that sustainably address children's rights in cocoa-growing communities.

Achieving this aspiration will require additional research, changes in key business practice, robust government legislation, and continued monitoring and evaluation to ensure that efforts are delivering their intended outcomes – in the best interests of children. **We invite stakeholders to jointly work with UNICEF to holistically address the challenges faced by children.**

## Endnotes

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3. Côte d'Ivoire's MICS 2016 (in French) is available at <<http://mics.unicef.org/surveys>>.
4. The concept of salient human rights is outlined in the United Nations Reporting Framework for the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It is designed for individual company activities that impact human rights, and thus UNICEF has adapted the concept to refer to impacts of an entire sector on children's rights specifically. For more information about saliency, see: Shift Project Ltd. and Mazars LLP, 'Salient Human Rights Issues', <[www.ungpreporting.org/key-concepts/salient-human-rights-issues](http://www.ungpreporting.org/key-concepts/salient-human-rights-issues)>.
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10. Nestlé Cocoa Plan, 'Tackling Child Labour: 2017 Report', Nestlé and International Cocoa Initiative, 2017, p. 17, available at <[www.nestlecocoaplanreport.com](http://www.nestlecocoaplanreport.com)>.
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**Published by:**

**UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire**

Cocody Riviera Golf, face Direction des services  
techniques de la Mairie de Cocody  
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Switzerland

November 2018

