



CHILDREN AT THE HEART

Assessment of child labour and child slavery
in Ghana's cocoa sector and recommendations
to Mondelēz International

Executive Summary

COMMISSIONED BY
Mondelēz International's Cocoa Life program



Executive Summary

The issue of child labour, including the worst forms of child labour, such as child slavery, has been of significant concern to the cocoa industry, particularly in West Africa, over the last two decades.

This report presents an assessment of child labour and child slavery in the cocoa sectors of Ghana as commissioned by Mondelēz International. The methodology was collaboratively agreed by Mondelēz and Embode and consisted of briefings and stakeholder consultations, a literature review and visiting cocoa-growing communities.

Despite efforts over the last decade, child labour is largely prevalent in Ghana, across many sectors in both urban and rural contexts. There is an estimated 880,000 children engaged in hazardous work in cocoa production in Ghana, according to Tulane University's 2013/14 survey.¹ Of Ghana's total child population in cocoa-growing areas (2,236,124), a total of 957,398 (42.8%) were estimated to be working in cocoa production, 918,543 (41.1%) were child labourers working in cocoa production and 878,595 (39.3%) were estimated to be engaged in hazardous work in cocoa production. Although Ghana has seen an overall decrease of 6.4% and 8.8% in child labour and child labour in hazardous work respectively between 2008/9 and 2013/14, the numbers of children estimated to be engaged in child labour activities is still alarmingly significant. Hazardous child labour activities in cocoa production span a wide range of tasks and include clearing forests, felling of trees, working with or being present around the spraying of agro-chemicals, using machetes/long cutlasses for weeding, heavy-loading soil, carrying and transporting water and crops, and pod-breaking.^{2 3}

Ghana has a strong legal framework for child protection with comprehensive national laws protecting children from child labour and exploitation, including the Children's Act 1998 and the Labour Act 2003. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has the primary responsibility for child protection and social welfare services across the country. In 2015 it launched the Child and Family Welfare Policy setting the platform for a modern-day reform of child protection system for Ghana. The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations is mandated with tackling child labour through its Child Labour Unit, which coordinates the national response and provides a secretariat function to the National Steering Committee on Child Labour. Other bodies previously set up to look at child labour in cocoa specifically, are in need of restructuring and integration into the existing government infrastructure.

A complex array of causes and conditions, enablers and push factors results in children being exploited in cocoa farms. These include persistent cultural practices, gender inequalities, child vulnerabilities and youth labour migration patterns. Deep underlying factors include, among others, economic and structural lack of access to basic services such as education, health, sanitation and justice.

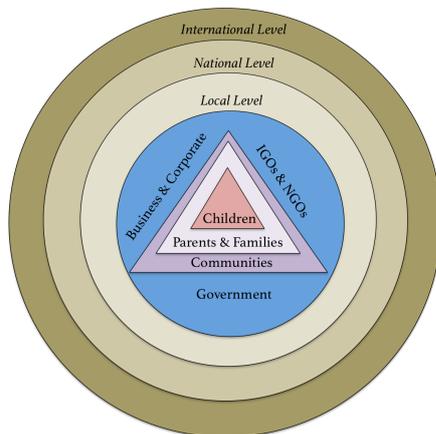
¹ Tulane University, 2015, '2013/14 Survey Research on Child Labor in West African Cocoa Growing Areas'

² Ibid

³ Korboe, David, 2012, 'Study on Child Labour, Education and Cocoa Production', Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (CCP), October 2012 (page 16)

Ghana's cocoa economy is undergoing a rapid and dynamic shift impacted by land scarcity, increasing urbanisation of its rural communities and improving access to education for children. These factors are changing the demands and drivers for child labour in cocoa-growing communities and impact the future sustainability of cocoa. It is important to understand and work alongside such trends because they remind us that child labour and child slavery do not exist in a vacuum. Responding to them as if they are unconnected or unrelated to anything else will only result in undermining those very efforts. If it takes a village to raise a child, then stakeholders must step back and see children at the heart of their families and communities.

A sustainable child-centred approach to child labour and child slavery calls for the integration of the viewpoint of the child and his or her family and community. For a child, she or he needs protection from all forms of exploitation and abuse. Focusing on one type of harm may push children into other more hidden forms of exploitation. Without systemically responding to the root vulnerabilities and enablers of child labour, efforts run the risk of simply plastering over the issue in ways which externalise it to another sector or



geographical area. In order to put children at the heart of efforts against child labour in cocoa, the focus must be on the holistic well-being of the child. Every child has the right to grow up in an environment, conducive to safety from harm and with access to education and care. This also requires all stakeholders to strengthen and build upon existing national support systems and mechanisms, in partnership with the Ghanaian government. These include strengthening of basic support services such as education, health, justice, as well as water and sanitation.

Mondelēz International's Cocoa Life programme provides a comprehensive framework, which sets it apart from most other approaches to cocoa sustainability. The most distinguished feature of the Cocoa Life programme is its direct work with communities with a broader intention than cocoa farming and child labour. Due to this holistic approach, as well as the significant financial and technical investment being dedicated to the programme, Cocoa Life holds the potential to make a significant difference to hundreds, if not thousands, of communities and their children. The sincere objective to not only develop, but *transform* communities is not too an ambitious task, if done with sustainability in mind, and children at the heart.

Recommendations

1. Mondelez International to develop and implement a child protection policy and code, which explicitly includes the reporting and referral of child protection cases, including child labour and child slavery.
2. Cocoa Life adopt a child well-being approach to child labour and child slavery, starting with adding a formal 'children's access to education' component into Cocoa Life; and actively utilising this as an entry-point for identifying children at risk.
3. Cocoa Life to develop a robust and transparent internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure impact and effectiveness of programmes are regularly measured and built upon.
4. Cocoa Life to review its child well-being targets and indicators to ensure impact on child labour and child slavery integrates with sustainability and effectiveness of outcomes.
5. Mondelez International to develop and follow a public engagement stance and strategy at the sector level, which more clearly represents its distinct development approach to cocoa sustainability.
6. Cocoa Life in Ghana to review how it takes up its role and public engagement at national level, in support of the national and sector-wide response to child labour and child slavery.
7. Cocoa Life to more explicitly incorporate a 'systems-strengthening' approach, working alongside communities, to support sustainability of its programme outcomes.
8. Mondelez International to set up a broader accountability structure and mechanism to actively engage with its work to respect human rights in its supply chains.