

Walk Free Foundation / Tulane University / Tony’s Chocologely Foundation Study
“Bitter Sweets – Prevalence of forced labour & child labour in the
 cocoa sectors of Côte d’Ivoire & Ghana”
ICI Summary and Analysis

BACKGROUND

With funding from the Tony’s Chocologely Foundation, The Walk Free Foundation, jointly with Tulane University, have released a [report](#) on child labour and forced labour of adults and children in cocoa growing areas of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. The main research findings were also incorporated in the [2018 Global Slavery Index](#) - “Spotlight on Sectors” section, which provides a comprehensive account of the problem of modern slavery and efforts to eradicate it in each of the 167 countries reviewed. The primary aim of the study was to provide baseline estimates of the prevalence of forced labour among children (aged 10 – 17 years) and adults (aged 18 and over) working in the cocoa sector in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, as well as updated estimates of the number of children (aged 10 to 17 years) exposed to child labour.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY & RESULTS

Representative surveys of cocoa-growing households in medium and high cocoa-growing areas were administered in August and September 2017 in Ghana and in October and November 2017 in Côte d’Ivoire using a multi-stage cluster sampling design. In Côte d’Ivoire, 920 adult cocoa workers and 893 children aged 10-17 years in the same households were surveyed. In Ghana, 907 adult cocoa workers and 901 children aged 10-17 years in the same households were surveyed.

It is important to note the methodological differences between this study and the Tulane University Survey 2013/2014 on Child Labour in West African Cocoa-Growing Areas, which can account for differences in the child labour estimates. While the hazardous child labour definition used remains the same, the Tulane University Survey 2013/2014 interviewed children aged 5-17, whereas the Bitter Sweet research study surveyed only children aged 10-17 years.

The table below presents the results for both studies.

Comparison of Estimates	Côte D’Ivoire	Ghana
Children 10-17 years working in cocoa production (Walk Free et. al)	891,500	708,400
Children 5-17 years years working in cocoa production (Tulane 2013/14)	1,303,009	957,398
Child Labour 10-17 years in cocoa production (Walk Free et. al)	829,400	667,800
Child Labour 5-17 years in cocoa production (Tulane 2013/14)	1,203,473	918,543
Hazardous Child Labour 10-17 years (Walk Free et. al)	769,800	632,100
Hazardous Child Labour 5-17 years (Tulane 2013/14)	1,153,672	878,595

WALK FREE FOUNDATION'S KEY FINDINGS¹

Child Work, Child Labour and Forced Labour

An estimated **891,500** children aged 10 to 17 years worked in cocoa production in medium and high cocoa producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire in the year prior to the survey (October 2016 – November 2017), with **708,400** in Ghana (**≈1.6 million** both countries (1,599,900)).

More than **90%** of working children are exposed to **child labour**. Among the children aged 10 to 17 years working in cocoa, 93% have experienced child labour in the year preceding the survey in Côte d'Ivoire and 94% in Ghana. (**≈1.5 million** both countries (1,497,191)).

More than **85%** of working children are exposed to **hazardous work**: an estimated 86% of all children working in cocoa in the medium and high cocoa producing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and 89% of children in Ghana were exposed to hazardous work in the previous year. Working with **sharp tools**, and lifting **heavy loads** were the most common forms of hazardous labour reported in cocoa agriculture in the previous year (**≈1.4 million** both countries (1,400,948)).

Many children working in cocoa are **underage** and **working excessive hours**: 26% of children in Côte d'Ivoire and 46% of children in Ghana working in cocoa agriculture in medium and high cocoa-growing areas worked more than the allowable hours for a child of their age in the week previous to reporting (561,808 in both countries).

Evidence that children are forced to work in the cocoa sector by someone other than a parent:

An estimated **1.7 children per 1,000 children** working in cocoa agriculture in medium and high cocoa producing areas of **Côte d'Ivoire** were forced to work by persons other than a parent between 2013 and 2017. *This equates to an estimated 2,000 victims of forced child labour.* An estimated **20 children per 1,000 children** working in cocoa agriculture in medium and high cocoa producing areas of **Ghana** were forced to work by someone other than a parent between 2013 and 2017. *This equates to an estimated 14,000 victims of forced child labour in Ghana.* (**≈0.975%** both countries, 0.17% Côte d'Ivoire, 1.98% Ghana)

Limited evidence of children forced to work by someone outside of the family:

None of the children surveyed in the present study reported being forced to work by someone outside the family between 2013 and 2017 in Côte d'Ivoire. In Ghana, results of the survey suggest that, for every **1,000 children** working in cocoa agriculture in areas of medium and high cocoa production between 2013 and 2017, approximately **1.5** were victims of child forced labour at the hands of someone outside the family (= 0.15%)

Evidence of forced labour of adults in the cocoa sector:

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, **4.2 adult workers per 1,000** workers in cocoa agriculture were estimated to have experienced forced labour in cocoa agriculture between 2013 and 2017. *This equates to an estimated 9,600 victims of adult forced labour.* In **Ghana**, there were an estimated **3.3 victims per 1,000** cocoa workers in medium and high cocoa-growing areas. *This equates to an estimated 3,700 victims.* (**≈0.39%** both countries, 0.42% Côte d'Ivoire, 0.33% Ghana)

¹ The information provided in this summary paper is based on the Executive Summary of the Bitter Sweets report

Additional Findings

Poverty as a root cause of child labour and forced labour:

The reported income of cocoa workers in both countries remains very low. The clear majority of workers do not earn what can be considered a living wage in their countries. Beyond the many stresses and constraints associated with poverty, this leaves cocoa-growing households with very little capacity to hire adult workers.

Schooling and Child Labour Awareness: 88.4 percent of child respondents in Côte d'Ivoire and 99.5% of child respondents in Ghana had attended school or pre-school. In Côte d'Ivoire, 16% of the child participants reported that they were aware of the inappropriateness of child labour in comparison to 35.4% in Ghana.

Wages: For participants in Côte d'Ivoire, the average annual wage from the sale of cocoa beans was US \$980, whereas the average annual wage for work on a cocoa farm was US\$269. For participants in Ghana, the average annual wage from the sale of cocoa beans was US \$983 whereas the average annual wage from work on a cocoa farm was US\$206.

WALK FREE FOUNDATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as businesses that purchase cocoa from these countries should take action to ensure cocoa workers have the ability to earn a **living wage**, including:

- Enabling sustainable domestic and international cocoa prices
- Improving support for cocoa workers
- Improving farm productivity

Additionally, both business and governments should invest in **research** that increases the **evidence base** for effective child and forced labour **interventions** and that **monitors** the progress of existing interventions.

Detailed recommendations

Sustainable pricing

- **Farm Gate price management:** Governments of cocoa supplying countries in West Africa must introduce supply management to avoid the driving down of cocoa prices because of oversupply of cocoa beans.
- Businesses throughout the cocoa supply chain should **commit to paying a living wage** and ensure transparency regarding this.
- Businesses should implement a **code of conduct** which includes **human rights due diligence** & and include net income of cocoa workers as KPI + transparent reporting.
- Introduction of **compulsory legislative frameworks** should be introduced by cocoa-consuming countries.
- **Certification** schemes should include remunerative **livelihood criteria**.

Improved support for cocoa workers

- Purchasing businesses should offer **favourable trading terms for cocoa workers** (e.g. pre-finance, quick payments, long-term trading arrangements).
- Governments must ensure that **policies** relating to land rights and credit do **not discriminate against women**.
- **Investment in rural infrastructure**: governments of producing countries must ensure free **education** and affordable **healthcare** is accessible to all children.
- Governments and businesses should **increase investment in education programmes** for cocoa workers to **increase sensitization**.
- Governments must support workers to establish and control farmer **cooperatives** to improve the **bargaining power** of cocoa workers.
- Governments of cocoa-producing countries should enable and promote **local businesses** to **process cocoa**.

Improved farm productivity

- Governments should **promote crop diversification** to encourage sustainable farming.
- Governments and businesses should **promote mechanization** of cocoa farming.

Increase the evidence-base for effective interventions and monitor progress

- Businesses should **continue and scale-up child labour monitoring systems**.
- Governments should draw from child labour monitoring systems implemented by businesses to inform strategies to address child labour in cocoa.
- Government should **fund research** to identify **best practice**.

WALK FREE FOUNDATION'S DISCUSSION POINTS

- The estimated **prevalence of child forced labour in Ghana** exceeded estimate of adults in forced labour in Ghana.
- Ongoing **debate re the classification of child labour for children who have been forced by an extended family member residing in the household**, in the context of West African cocoa agriculture.
- Significantly **lower rate of child forced labour at the hand of someone other than a parent identified in Côte d'Ivoire compared with Ghana** may be a product of difficulties in identifying a sensitive and hidden issue via surveys in a sample of children as well as a product of the effect of the sample size.
- Previous Tulane findings suggest that, **where forced labour occurs, it is more frequently at the hands of a parent** – current findings congruent and show that in West African cocoa agriculture, caregivers and adult household members are more commonly responsible for forced child labour.
- **Lack of identified cases of forced child labour outside the family in Côte d'Ivoire** may reflect difficulty in identifying hidden populations using the methodology applied in this study.
- Experiences of **child labour** in both countries are largely attributed to the **involvement of children in hazardous work**, and children often involved in multiple forms of hazardous work.
- To a lesser extent issues of **underage work** and working hours exceeding recommended **max of hours** according to age of the child.

- The results of the study support previous findings by Tulane University that **majority of children working in cocoa have experienced child labour** and that this is largely comprised of children who have undertaken hazardous work.
- Whilst methodological differences between this survey and the previous Tulane survey dictate that direct comparisons should be interpreted with caution, the results of the current study could suggest a **potential increase in child labour amongst 10-17 year olds in the order of 2-3% in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana compared to the 2013/14 Tulane Survey**. The **increase in cocoa production** in the past 5 years may explain these increased rates of child labour in cocoa.
- **No changes in the rates of hazardous labour in Côte d'Ivoire and a decrease of just over 5% in Ghana** could be observed – while absolute numbers of children who experienced hazardous child labour is estimated to have increased in both countries, this is an effect of a growing overall population and increasing number of cocoa farms

ICI COMMENTS & ANALYSIS

- The study sheds light on a fundamental though not so much studied phenomenon and is therefore a very important contribution to a better understanding, notably by assessing the likely scale of the issue which is an important pre requisite to properly address it.
- In conjunction with the rapid assessment conducted by Verité for ICI (which focuses more on an analysis of the factors of risks), this report provides an improved knowledge base on forced child labour which ICI plans to translate into adaptations in its ongoing actions and programmes.
- The study also sheds light on the problem of forced adult labour in the cocoa sector, where the researchers found that an estimated 13 300 adults, or 0.39% of adult workers in both countries, were subject to forced labour between 2013 and 2017. Adding in the potential cases of forced child labour, this estimate of nearly 30,000 children and adults in forced labour is a sobering reminder of an extremely complex problem that merits close attention, and urgent, decisive action by all parties.
- The content of the report and the published numbers of forced child and adult labourers concur with ICI's understanding of the situation and are consistent with the triangulation of previous research on the issue. The differences between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana may be surprising but the report explains the potential methodological limitations and risks of under-reporting (see "DISCUSSION POINTS"). The usual assumption being that the risk of forced child labour is more prevalent in Côte d'Ivoire, these findings are an important contribution to show that the problem is also present in Ghana.
- ICI welcomes a number of the recommendations singled out by the report's authors, including those related to human rights due diligence and the need for the cocoa and chocolate industry to continue and scale up child labour monitoring systems, as well as the necessity of tackling

farmer poverty, and recommendations for governments to improve access to education and other services in cocoa-growing areas.

- Another recommendation of the study is for governments to also draw from the existing monitoring and prevention systems to address more efficiently child labour and forced labour. Trafficking and the facilitation of forced adult and child labour is a criminal activity that requires a robust response from the law-enforcement and judicial arms of the state to bring perpetrators to justice. It is encouraging that the governments of CDI and Ghana have both taken important steps in recent years to take a tougher stance on the issue. In 2016 for instance, the First Ladies of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana signed a Joint Declaration to Combat Cross-Border Trafficking and both countries have national laws and regulations prohibiting forced labour and child trafficking. The Human Trafficking Secretariat of the Ghana Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) also launched the Human Trafficking Rehabilitation Regulations in 2016, which aims to standardise the effective implementation of the Human Trafficking Act (2005). In the same year, 217 open human trafficking cases were reviewed and five cases were recommended for prosecution. The National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking in Ghana (2017-2021) also outlines strategies which aim to significantly reduce the incidence of human trafficking by 2021, while also providing increased care to victims and perpetrator accountability.
- Similarly, the government of Côte d'Ivoire has also taken steps to further prevent and respond to trafficking and the worst forms of child labour, which includes a Trafficking in Persons Act (passed December 2016) which makes it possible to prevent and punish human trafficking and also to protect victims and witnesses. As a result of the National Plan of Action 2015-2017 strategies, 3 rehabilitation centres are being constructed for victims of child trafficking and child exploitation (the first in Soubre is already completed and will be operational by the end of 2018). The government is also strengthening the capacity of law enforcements to combat child trafficking and forced labour – 587 police officers (2015-2017) were trained on child protection (173 of which are investigating officers). An Interpol-IOM police operation "AKOMA" was also carried out in June 2016, which resulted in the arrest of 22 suspected traffickers and 617 children being released.
- The Walk Free Foundation/Tulane University/Tony's study reveals that while the forced labour risk in cocoa in both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana is present, it is an issue that remains difficult to identify because of its sensitivity and criminal nature.
- Both this study and the recent report on Forced Labour in Cocoa done by Sheffield University, point to a pressing need to better understand the risks of forced labour in cocoa, and to adapt measures and innovate ways to tackle it. ICI recently revised its 2015-2020 Strategy to do exactly this. In partnership with external experts, ICI will further investigate how to adapt its existing interventions, as well as potential new approaches that can strengthen the prevention, identification and response to forced labour risks in cocoa-growing communities. ICI will also support collective learning across all of its members and stakeholders, in industry, civil-society and government, so that practices that show potential for tackling forced labour are applied and scaled up.
