External evaluation of ICI's Community Development Programme

Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Since 2015, the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) has been implementing its 'core' community development programme in 75 cocoa-growing communities, 46 in Côte d'Ivoire and 29 in Ghana. The programme set up and supported community groups to put in place a range of activities focused on child protection, education, women's empowerment and income-generation. This external evaluation was commissioned by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) in January 2019. The main objective of the evaluation was to assess *to what extent has progress been made since 2015 in ensuring that cocoa-growing communities are more protective of children and their rights?*

Although the initial scope of the evaluation included an estimation of the programme's impact on child labour prevalence, the consultants were not able address this question in the time available. The impact on child labour has been analysed and presented separately in another report.

Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach that comprised of two principal elements: quantitative data analysis from datasets related to the programme; and qualitative data collected by the consultant:

a) Sources of quantitative data include: (i) Community-level assessments conducted using ICI's *Protective Cocoa Community Framework* (PCCF) tool in all ICI-assisted communities in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018; (ii) Community-level assessments conducted using ICI's *Protective Cocoa Community Framework* (PCCF) tool in control communities in 2015 and 2018; (iii) Datasets from ICI's *Monitoring tool*, providing annual records of activities in each assisted community from 2015 to 2018; (iv) *Knowledge Attitudes and Practices* survey data collected from a sample of community members in assisted communities in 2016, 2017 and 2018; (v) Data from *Women's Empowerment* surveys in assisted communities 2017 and 2018; (vi) *Child labour prevalence* survey data for ICI-assisted and control communities, collected in January 2019; and (vii) *Follow-up surveys* administered to the participants and recipients of education interventions, collected in January 2019.

b) Qualitative data sources include 11 key informant interviews and 45 focus group discussions (involving 390 participants) held in Ghana, and 12 key informant interviews and 40 focus group discussions (involving 600 participants) held in Cote d'Ivoire. In total, nearly 1000 participants shared their perspectives on the project. The key informant interviews were held with relevant stakeholders at the community and district levels including community chiefs, elders, representatives from local authorities and ICI project staff. The focus group discussions were held with community members who had participated in the project activities in some way. They include members of Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs), income-generating activity (IGA) groups, savings and loans groups (CFREC), community service groups (CSGs), child members of Child Protection Clubs (CPCs), selected children who were not part of the CPCs, school management committees (SMCs) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs).

Data Analysis

To determine the progress, effectiveness, and by extension the impact of the ICI interventions, the methodological approach used to compare changes between 2015 and 2018 in the ICI-assisted communities with those occurring in 'control communities' during the same period. The statistical

approach taken to derive average treatment effects of the ICI core programme is the difference-in-differences (DiD) estimator, which is typically used to estimate the effect of a specific intervention or treatment by comparing the changes in outcomes over time between a population that is enrolled in a program (the intervention group) and a population that is not (the control group). Qualitative data were analysed to identify patterns, narratives and themes around the various subjects of interest.

Summary of Findings

The set-up, activeness and performance of Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs)

- **The programme contributed significantly to the set-up of CCPCs**—key actors in ICI's community development approach. Overall, the proportion of ICI-assisted communities with Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) increased from 8% to 99% between 2015-18, while in the control communities it increased from 14% to 18%. The difference between ICI-assisted communities and control communities was statistically significant overall (80 percentage points), as well as in Ghana (90 percentage points) and in Cote d'Ivoire (84 percentage points).
- **CCPCs in the ICI-assisted communities were more active than their counterparts in the control communities, where they existed**. For example, the evaluation found that the share of CCPCs holding meetings at least once a quarter was 55 percentage points higher in the ICI-assisted communities than in control communities, a difference which is statistically significant.
- **Assisted communities were more likely to have rules and regulations to support children.** Between 2015-2018, the proportion of ICI-assisted communities with rules and regulations to protect children increased from 18% to 87%, while in the control communities it increased from 9% to 43%. The 36-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- **Across all the communities visited, participants in focus group discussions consistently reported that the CCPCs are performing their roles**: undertaking awareness raising activities on child labour, facilitating the development of community action plans and identifying and supporting vulnerable children.

The programme's role in empowering beneficiary communities

- **The programme was effective in building communities' capacity to approach local authorities for development assistance.** The share of ICI-assisted communities with the capacity to approach local authorities for assistance for development increased from 49% to 77%, while in control communities the proportion decreased from 49% to 33%. The 44-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- **Assisted communities were better able to mobilise resources for community development**. The share of the ICI-assisted communities reporting the ability to mobilise resources for community development increased from 47% to 71%, while in the control communities it increased from 40% to 44%. The 19-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- **The programme was effective in facilitating resource mobilization to benefit children.** The proportion of ICI-assisted communities with the ability to mobilize resources to benefit children increased from 47% to 87%, while in the control communities it decreased from 31% to 28%. The 43-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- During focus group discussions with the various community groups (such as CCPCs, CFREC, CSGs), participants stressed that **Income Generation Activities (IGAs) played an important role in enhancing the commitment and motivation** of members and promoting the sustainability of these groups.

The programme's role in empowering women

- **The evaluation found that income generating activities had made a modest contribution to improving women's livelihoods**. In Côte d'Ivoire 42% of women surveyed in 2017 (n=701) perceived either a *high* or a *very high* increase in their income as a result of the IGA. In Ghana, 59% of respondents interviewed in 2018 perceived either a *high* or a *very high* increase in their income as a result of the IGA.
- **Findings from multiple sources of qualitative data suggest that participation in the various women's groups improved social interactions and solidarity among women**, both in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Several respondents reported that they now feel more confident and emboldened to speak and express their opinions at meetings. However, socio-cultural factors often continue to constrain women's ability to participate in decision-making.

The programme's role in improving access to quality education

Côte d'Ivoire:
- Between 2015 and 2018, **average gross enrolment rates increased in ICI-assisted communities compared to control communities at all levels of schooling, except kindergarten**.
- At **primary school** level, average gross enrolment increased from 70% to 92% in ICI-assisted communities, while in control communities it decreased from 86% to 84%. The difference is *not* statistically significant.
- At **Junior High School** level, average gross enrolment increased from 7% to 21% in ICI-assisted communities, while in control communities it increased from 60% to 73%. The 20-percentage point difference is statistically significant. The difference for girls (from 6.1% to 58% in assisted communities compared to 59 to 63% in control) is also significant, but not for boys (8 to 22% in assisted communities compared to 60 to 80% in control communities).
- At **Senior High school** level, average gross enrolment stayed at 3% in ICI-assisted communities but decreased from 28% to 20% in control communities. The 6-percentage point difference is statistically significant overall and for both girls and boys.
- Compared to control communities, there was **no statistically significant difference in the distances travelled to educational facilities at any level**.
- Compared to control communities, there was **no statistically significant difference in the** proportion of ICI-assisted communities with a **school canteen, access to Government school feeding programmes** or **toilet facilities**.
- Compared to control communities, **there was no statistically significant difference in the pupil to teacher ratio in ICI-assisted communities.**
- The proportion of ICI-assisted communities with a **School Management Committee** stayed at 93%, while in control communities it decreased from 100% to 80%. The 21-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- The remediation or support components of the ICI core programme were perceived by beneficiaries (parents and pupils) to be helpful - children are reportedly able to attend school more regularly compared to before receiving the items. Adult literacy classes for women made participants 'feel more independent' due to reading and writing skills gained.

Ghana:
- Between 2015 and 2018, **average gross enrolment rates increased in ICI-assisted communities compared to control communities at all levels of schooling, except kindergarten**. No data was available for technical/vocational schools in control communities.

- At **primary school** level, average gross enrolment increased from 84% to 99% in ICI-assisted communities, while in control communities it decreased from 105% to 42%. The 80-percentage point difference is statistically significant overall, and for both girls and boys.
- At **Junior High School** level, average gross enrolment increased from 80% to 86% in ICI-assisted communities, while in control communities it decreased from 70% to 32%. The difference is *not* statistically significant overall or for boys but is significant for girls.
- At **Senior High School** level, average gross enrolment increased from 59% to 73% in ICI-assisted communities, while in control communities it decreased from 30% to 10%. The difference is statistically significant overall and for both boys and girls.
- Compared to control communities, there was **no statistically significant difference in the distances travelled to educational facilities at any level**.
- The proportion of ICI-assisted communities with a **school canteen** increased from 25% to 52%, while in control communities it decreased from 22% to 10%. The 40-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- Compared to control communities, no significant differences were observed for the proportion of communities with access to **Government school feeding programmes**, nor for the proportion of communities with **school toilets**.
- **Compared to control communities, the pupil to teacher ratio increased significantly** in ICI-assisted communities. Qualitative data suggests that the refurbishment of school facilities in some communities made them more appealing, attracting children from neighbouring communities as well as from the ICI-assisted communities.
- The proportion of ICI-assisted communities with a **School Management Committee** stayed at 88%, while in control communities it decreased from 100% to 65%. The 35-percentage point difference is statistically significant.
- The remediation or support components of the ICI core programme were perceived by beneficiaries (parents and pupils) to be helpful. For example, children are reportedly able to attend school more regularly compared to before receiving the items. Adult literacy classes for women made participants 'feel more independent' due to reading and writing skills gained.

Relevance, efficiency and sustainability of the programme
- Qualitative interviews showed that communities have positive views and perceptions about the relevance of ICI work. There is unanimity in the responses provided by participants in the various focus group discussions and key informant interviews that the main components of the project (child protection, community and women's empowerment and education support) have helped communities to become more protective of their children and minimized involvement of children in activities such as carriage of heavy loads, and use of dangerous tools.
- In both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, responses obtained from staff and community members suggest that the ICI core programme deployed 'adequate' human, material and financial resources for the implementation of the programme—though staff recruitment in some regions (e.g. Soubre in Cote d'Ivoire) was more delayed than expected.
- In both countries, feelings about the sustainability of the programme was mixed. On the one hand, communities feel enthusiastic about the activities implemented. On the other hand, all the ICI-assisted communities expressed the need for more time for ICI to be with them to fully mature.

Recommendations

How could ICI improve the design and implementation of future community development projects?

1. **Consider rolling out community savings groups (CFREC or VSLA) in Ghana, as well as in Côte d'Ivoire**. This is because we found CFREC to be successfully contributing to women's economic empowerment and members reported many social benefits.

2. **Improve community participation in the procurement of project equipment, specify items carefully, and ensure clear communication with communities throughout the procurement process**. In some communities, participants reported that they had not been consulted about the model or type of items purchased – for example mills, knapsack sprays and tricycles – resulting in the procurement of equipment they perceived as inappropriate or poor quality. The evaluation team observed that some equipment was idling or had broken down, confirming this challenge. More careful specification of items prior to tender could help avoid such problems in the future.

3. **Improve data collection tools and information management systems** to ensure that all data are properly cleaned and checked in a more systematic way. This would allow for more efficient analysis and reporting, as well as facilitating the identification of challenges during project implementation.

4. **Consider complementary approaches, beyond awareness-raising sessions, to effectively change knowledge, attitudes and practices on child labour**. Despite the awareness raising activities conducted by CCPCs, knowledge, attitudes and practices still require further improvement.

5. **Consider conducting monitoring visits to assisted communities to observe progress and support in an advisory capacity.** Communities reported that they would like ICI to continue to pay occasional visits now that the project has ended, so that they could continue to benefit from the advice as they continue project activities themselves.

6. **Plan additional ways of improving the mobility of the child protection committee members, for example through the provision of motorbikes**. This would help CCPC members to reach all homes in a community, even those in more isolated locations that are harder to reach

7. *Consider providing training to CCPCs in resource mobilization with other external actors* to facilitate the implementation of actions that decrease children's vulnerability. This is because despite community's ability to approach local authorities, many actions in the Community Action Plans do not get implemented as local authorities lack enough funds.

What could communities do to continue to combat child labour?

1. **CCPCs should continue to identify children without birth certificates and collaborate with authorities to ensure they can acquire them**. This is a particular challenge in Côte d'Ivoire, where children cannot enter secondary school without birth certificates.

2. **Community groups, such as savings groups (CFREC) and Community Service Groups should continue to use part of the revenue from income generating activities to support children**, for example donating funds or produce to school feeding programmes. Although it is important to note that this is not a substitute to other sources of funding.

3. **Community leadership should encourage community to pay Community Service Groups after using their services** helping these groups to stay afloat so that the community can continue to have access to affordable adult labour.

What could local authorities do to improve the protection of children?

- **Provide more housing and other resources for teachers**. This would contribute to reducing absenteeism and increase regular attendance to schools.
- **Local authorities should continue to be responsive to community requests for assistance**, including facilitation of projects to improve the availability accessible roads, water and basic social infrastructure.

Contents

Acronyms

BIRD	Bureau of Integrated Rural Development
CANR	College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
CAPs	Community Action Plans
CCPC	Community Child Protection Committees
CFREC	Cellules Féminines d'Epargne et de Crédit
CL	Child Labour
CPCs	Child Protection Clubs
CPE	Comités de Protection de l'Enfant
CSGs	Community Service Groups
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GE	Groupements d'Enfants
GF	Groupements de femmes
GSC	Groupes de Services Communautaires
ICI	International Cocoa Initiative
IGA	Income Generating Activities
KII	Key Informant Interview
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations

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Introduction

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) works with the cocoa industry, civil society, farmers' organisations, communities and national governments in cocoa-producing countries to ensure a better future for children and contribute to the elimination of child labour. Since 2015, ICI has been implementing its community development programme, as part of its 2015-2020 strategy, in 75 communities: 46 in Côte D'Ivoire and 29 in Ghana.

The programme is premised on the fact that cocoa growing communities are exposed to many development challenges which include poverty, limited access to water, sanitation and basic health care, inadequate schools and poor quality of education, poor roads, limited communications infrastructure, over dependence on one livelihood source and low productivity. Coupled with these is the involvement of children in hazardous activities in cocoa farming and inadequate protection of children. These challenges affect children's health and social development and can also prevent or limit their school attendance.

The issues of child labour, child protection and inadequate development in cocoa growing communities need to be tackled in context. At community level, this means promoting inclusive community development, economic empowerment (particularly for women and young people), as well as strengthening social protection structures and social services. The objective of the ICI community development programme was to enhance cocoa communities' capacities to protect children, through:

   a) strengthening community knowledge, systems and services that contribute to increased child protection and reduced child labour
   b) developing and enhancing locally identified initiatives to supporting these systems and services
   c) empowering the whole community to take decisions aiming at increasing child protection, including women, youth and children, through an inclusive community-based approach

The theory of change behind the programme assumes that, if Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) are established and strengthened, and communities are economically empowered to mobilize resources, and investment is made on social infrastructure such as education, then cocoa communities will be more protective of children and their rights.

Planned around a community development approach, the programme was driven by three main components: Child Protection; Community Empowerment; and Education.

The programme included activities such as community sensitization, awareness raising and education on child labour and child protection; the development of community action plans; the mobilization of resources for development projects, including basic infrastructure; the creation of Community Child Protection Committees, Child Protection Clubs for children; the setup of Community Service Groups as alternative sources of affordable adult labour; the facilitation of income generating groups; and promotion of additional livelihood activities.

Evaluation purpose and scope

Evaluation Purpose

The overall purpose of the external evaluation was to assess the degree to which the community development approach has made cocoa-growing communities more protective of children and their rights. It sought to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the

interventions carried out. It also identified some lessons learned and suggested practical recommendations that could inform the future strategy of ICI and other actors in the sector.

Objectives, Scope and Evaluation Questions

The specific objectives of the evaluation and evaluation questions that guided this research are summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of evaluation questions and data sources

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data source(s)/ Comments
Objective 1: To evaluate to what extent are communities are more protective of children and their rights		
1.1 **To what extent are communities more protective of children and their rights?**	1.1a) To what extent did the programme impact child labour rates in the supported communities?	*Answered in a separate report.*
	1.1b) What difficulties were encountered?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
Objective 2: To evaluate the capacity and performance of Child Protection Committees		
2.1 **What capacities have been developed among the Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs)?**	2.1a) What is the role of the programme in facilitating the setup of CCPCs in communities?	PCCF, MTool
	2.1b) What is the level of capacity and activeness of the CCPCs?	PCCF, MTool
	2.2c) To what extent are CCPCs able to fulfil the role according to their Terms of Reference?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
	2.2d) How did income generating activities for CCPC members affect members' commitment, motivation and ultimately the CCPCs sustainability?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
Objective 3: To evaluate the extent to which the programme has empowered beneficiary communities		
3.1 **To what extent has the ICI programme empowered beneficiary communities?**	3.1a) To what extent have Community Action Plans supported community development?	PCCF & MTool
	3.1b) Did the development of CAP motivate the community members to mobilise resources (internal to the community and external) to implement actions that decrease children's vulnerability?	MTool, IGA datasets
	3.1c) To what extent are beneficiaries and local authorities satisfied with the project strategy/approach and implemented activities?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
Objective 4: To evaluate the extent to which the programme has improved access to quality education		
4.1 **To what extent has the programme improved access to quality education?**	4.1a) How has the programme promoted improved access to quality educational services?	PCCF, Education beneficiary data
	4.1b) How has the programme affected school infrastructure, equipment, canteens and latrines?	PCCF, MTool
	4.1c) How did programme affect school enrolment?	PCCF
	4.1d) How much was the individual remediation component effective in supporting identified vulnerable children?	MTool, education beneficiary data
Objective 5: To assess the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of the programme		
5.1 **Was the programme relevant?**	5.1a) How appropriate and relevant is the ICI community development approach, components and activities to achieve the strategic objective and goal?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
	5.1b) How do communities and authorities perceive the relevance of ICI work?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
5.2 **Was the programme efficient?**	5.2a) Were the financial and personnel resources adequate to implement the core programme package and to achieve its objectives	Qualitative data collected by BIRD

5.3 **Is the programme sustainable?**	5.3a) What is the level of community ownership over the activities implemented?	PCCF, qualitative data collected by BIRD
	5.3b) How likely are the target communities to maintain the same (or higher) levels of child protection, community empowerment, education and livelihoods reached during the project implementation?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
	5.3c) What are the key bottlenecks, if any, on obtaining sustainability of the ICI programme and focus components? What could be improved and how?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
	5.3d) How much were communities empowered to strengthen the linkages with local authorities?	PCCF, qualitative data from BIRD
	5.3e) To what extent were the local authorities involved in the project, and contributed to its objective?	PCCF, qualitative data collected by BIRD
Objective 6: To identify lessons and good practices that have resulted from the project		
6.1 **What lessons and good practices can be identified within the project key components**		Qualitative data collected by BIRD
Objective 7: To provide recommendations to inform further programme development		
7.1 **What specific, actionable and practicable recommendations can be made from the three thematic areas of the programme?**	7.1a) What specific, actionable and practicable recommendations can be made on *child protection*?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
	7.1b) What specific, actionable and practicable recommendations can be made on *community empowerment*?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD
	7.1c) What specific, actionable and practicable recommendations can be made on *education*?	Qualitative data collected by BIRD

Approach and methodology

This section presents the approach and methodology used for the evaluation. Three main complementary approaches were used to collect data for the evaluation: a) document review b) quantitative approach and (c) qualitative approach.

Document Review

The evaluation began with a critical review of programme documents supplied by the ICI to the external consultant. These documents included ICI strategy, ICI annual Plans of Action (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018), Annual reports (2015, 2016, 2017); Technical progress reports (sent to the companies); Annual PCCF reports; Annual Community Development reports (2015-2017); Budget plan; Annual Financial report (3-year report); ICI training manual and materials and internal evaluation reports. The document review focused on understanding the theory of change of the programme and activities implemented to date.

Quantitative Approach

In order to facilitate the analysis of quantitative data, the following datasets provided by ICI were used for the evaluation. Table 2 provides a brief description of these datasets.

Table 2: Overview of data sources and dataset used for the evaluation

Source of data	Description
Protective Cocoa Community Framework (PCCF)	A community assessment tool administered annually in ICI-assisted communities through group discussions with children, women's groups, teachers/school management committee, community leaders, farmers, community child protection committee members and district child protection committees. The PCCF collects **demographic data** (population by age group, gender), **community development** (access to basic services, presence of schools by level, presence of health centre, connection to national electrical grid, safe water point)**, community empowerment** (community resource mobilisation, community action plan implementation)**, education** (school enrolment, teacher-pupil ratio, school feeding programme, attendance), **child protection** (community rules and regulations to protect children, presence and capacity of community child protection committees), **gender** (women's education levels, income-generating activities, leadership positions) and **livelihoods** (no. of farmers, cocoa production, accessibility and affordability of day labourers and inputs). The PCCF collects, therefore, community-level information on key indicators and proxies related to community development, community empowerment, education, child protection, gender and livelihoods, through group discussions and key informant interviews.
Monitoring tool	Data collection tool that captures community, government, other organisational and ICI's support and actions in the communities – related to **capacity building interventions** (trainings), **school interventions** (construction of a sanitation facility), in-**kind and financial support**, progress of **community action plan implementation, income-generating activities** for women, community service groups . The data is collected and compiled on a monthly basis. The monitoring tool currently serves primarily as a reporting tool to record the actions and support that have taken place in a community. Data is also used for programming purposes to identify potential gaps in interventions, monitor progress and support intervention design.
Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey	A survey covering knowledge of child labour (for example: list at least 3 hazardous activities in agriculture), attitudes, and practices in relation to child labour, as well as child protection and children's education are also covered. This is often administered

	before a training (pre-test) and a few months after a training (post-test), or once a year to a random sample of people in the communities where ICI works.
Women's Empowerment survey	The women's empowerment survey is collected annually in each of the communities where ICI operates. It is administered to women participating in ICI's Income-Generating Activity Groups. Data is collected on whether women have experienced an increase in their income, by what amount, to what degree, and the use of the income. Additional questions are also asked on the control of the income and household decisions-making (who decides what to do regarding the use of cocoa and non-cocoa income for different expenditures for the household and family). There is a second section of the tool which is administered to women in farmer organisations or community organisations which captures women's participation in decision-making within farmer and community organisations
Community Register	The community register consists of a list of all the households in a community, the family members (adults and children) and additional information on children, for example, whether they are enrolled in school and whether they work, and if yes, on which activities. The community register is updated regularly (every 6 months in Ghana and once a year in CDI) and the data is used for reporting on demographics and children engaged in hazardous child labour.
Child labour prevalence survey	The child labour prevalence survey was collected from a representative sample of 1897 children and heads of households in both Ghana and Côte D'Ivoire in January 2019. The survey gives information on the prevalence of child labour, as well as the kinds of hazardous activities undertaken by children on cocoa farms.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative data was collected and analysed to complement the quantitative data analysis, using participatory approaches. These were:

1. *Key informant interviews* (purposive sampling) with relevant stakeholders at the community and district level (where possible), and with ICI project staff (to collect information on achievements, impact and difficulties faced). These focused on gathering qualitative data on the project structures.
2. *Focus Group Discussions* (FGDs) with community members involved in the project including members of the different community groups. Some of these were mixed meetings, others were male only, female only, or children only focus group discussions, ensuring that all individuals could freely articulate their views.
3. *In-depth Interviews* with randomly selected beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Among other things, this generated stories and narratives about the impact, effectiveness and lessons about the programme.

During the collection of qualitative data, some respondents used score cards (either during the focus group discussions or in-depth interviews) to assess the impacts (intended and unintended), relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. Recordings of focus group discussions and key informant interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically.

Field Visits for Qualitative Data Collection

To enable the evaluation team to interact with communities to obtain qualitative information, a sample was drawn from the 75 communities using multi-stage and purposive sampling. Field visits were undertaken in 17 ICI-assisted and 8 control communities, as detailed in the table below. The fieldwork began with an in-depth interview with ICI project staff/technical officers before we moved to the selected communities for engagement.

Table 3: List of Communities Visited in both Countries

Cote d'Ivoire				
Region	**Department**	**Sous-prefecture**	**Assisted communities**	**Control communities**
Gagnoa	Oume	Oume	Loua	Brozan
	Gagnoa	Cuiberoua	Atonhio	Zongokro
Soubre	Soubre	Grand Zattry	Krakro	Godiayo
	Meagui	Oupoyo	Bledoukangakro	Kosoyo
	Meagui	Meagui	Issakro	
	Gueyo	Gueyo	Kouamekro	
Divo	Tiassale	Tiassale	Ketasso	
Gagnoa	Lakota	Niabezaria	Wosso	
Ghana				
Region	**District**		**Assisted communities**	**Control communities**
Western	Sefwi Wiawso		Abonse	Gyatokrom
Ashanti	Atwima Mponua		Kwankyeabo	
	Ahafo Ano South		Yaw Boadi	Kunsu
			Bonkron	Dotiem
Central	Assin South		Akweteykrom	Nkrumahkrom
			Abease	
Eastern	New Juaben		Mpea	
			Agyekumhene Akuraa	

In total, 11 key informant interviews and 45 focus group discussions (involving 390 participants) were held in Ghana and 12 key informant interviews and 40 focus group discussions (involving 600 participants) were held in Cote D'Ivoire. Thus, the evaluation interacted with nearly 1000 participants during the fieldwork.

In order to effectively cover the communities within the limited time for the fieldwork, interviews/focus group discussions were held concurrently among different community structures/respondents. The team used maximum variation purposive technique for the in-depth/key informant interviews. The use of purposive sampling ensured diversity of participants' views, opinions and experiences.

Data Processing and Analysis

To analyse the quantitative data, the main methodological approach to the evaluation was to compare changes between 2015 and 2018 in the ICI-assisted communities with those occurring in 'control communities' (communities not supported by ICI, in which baseline and endline data was also collected) to determine the progress, effectiveness, and by extension the impact of the ICI interventions.

The PCCF data set was used for this analysis, as it contained baseline information on programme indicators in all 75 ICI-assisted communities, as well as 32 communities (16 in Ghana and 16 in Côte D'Ivoire) that did *not* receive interventions, the latter group were used as control communities. The PCCF community assessment tool was administered annually in the 75 treatment/assisted communities from 2015 to 2018, the last year of the programme. To obtain data about the endline situation in the control communities, ICI administered a "light" version of the PCCF in all 32 control communities in January 2019.

Difference-in-Difference Approach

The statistical approach we took to derive average treatment effects of the ICI core programme is the

difference-in-differences (DiD) estimator. DiD is typically used to estimate the effect of a specific intervention or treatment by comparing the changes in outcomes over time between a population that is enrolled in a program (the intervention group) and a population that is not (the control group). Thus, the approach entailed calculating the change in an indicator prior to program initiation in 2015 and post intervention (2018) for treatment and the comparison or control groups. An advantage of using a DiD for an evaluation is that using pre- and post-treatment measures allows us to 'difference' out unmeasured fixed characteristics which may affect outcomes. It also allows us to 'benchmark' the change in the indicator against its value in the absence of treatment. DID is usually implemented as an interaction term between time and treatment group dummy variables in a regression model. The empirical model used in estimating the difference-in-difference approach can be expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1*[Time] + \beta_2*[Intervention] + \beta_3*[Time*Intervention] + \beta_4*[Covariates] + \varepsilon$$

Where:
Y = DiD estimator
β_0 = Baseline average (2015)
β_1 = Time trend in control group
β_2 = Difference between two groups pre-intervention
β_3 = Difference in changes over time

Limitations

It is important to bear in mind the following limitations when considering the findings of this evaluation:

- There was no available baseline (2015) data on the prevalence and incidence of child labour at the individual/household levels, for which the January 2019 data could be compared with.
- The approach used to measure change in community development indicators ('difference-in-difference') assumes that ICI-assisted and control communities will be equally exposed to other risks/opportunities over time. However, there is no data available from before the programme start to justify this assumption.
- The PCCF, which is the main source of information for calculating the difference-in-difference situations, is a community-level assessment, based on data collected from a small sample of community representatives—which makes generalisation of results difficult.
- **Though qualitative data** provides illustrative examples of the programme's strengths and weaknesses, these findings **cannot also be generalised** to other communities.
- Some of the datasets (e.g. PCCF) had missing values and incorrectly entered values. This limitation was addressed though by excluding those from the analysis.

Results

The capacity and performance of Community Child Protection Committees

To improve child protection capacities in communities, the ICI core programme focused on the set-up of Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs). This section reports on the progress and the extent to which the ICI programme facilitated the setup of CCPCs in communities; the level of capacity and activeness of the committees; the extent to which the committees are able to fulfil the role according to their terms of reference; and the role of Income Generating Activities in aiding committee members' commitment and motivation.

The role of the programme in facilitating the setup of Community Child Protection Committees in Communities

When progress made by ICI-assisted communities is compared to progress made by control communities over the same period, we find that **the 75 ICI-assisted communities had a stronger outcome on the set-up of CCPCs than the control communities**. The analysis showed 86 percentage points difference in progress between programme and control communities, significant at 1%.

In Ghana, the analysis showed 90 percentage points difference in progress between programme and control communities, and 84 percentage points in Côte D'Ivoire. Both results are statistically significant at 1%.

Table 4: Differences in CCPC Outcome variables - Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire combined

	2015			**2018**			
Indicator/s	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	Diff-in-diff (Δ_{2018}-Δ_{2015})
Share of communities with a CCPC	0.08 (0.27)	0.14 (0.36)	-0.06 (-0.91)	0.99 (0.12)	0.18 (0.39)	0.80 (11.59)***	0.86***

*Source: PCCF 2015 and 2018. Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations. *, ** and *** denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.*

The level of capacity and activeness of the Community Child Protection Committees

The overall level of activeness of CCPCs was evaluated by condensing five binary indicators on different CCPC activities. These indicators include whether the committees have:

    (i)   influenced community action plans
    (ii)   sought children's views on the quality and running of the CCPCs
    (iii)   reported on activities to NGOs and/or government
    (iv)   met at least once every three months; and
    (v)   conducted at least one awareness raising event in the last three months.

The evaluation found that **the share of communities in the ICI-assisted communities influencing community action plans increased** from 0 to 93% over the period 2015 to 2018. Similarly, **the share of communities seeking children's views on community development issues increased** from 0 to 83% over the same period. The proportion of ICI-assisted communities providing reports on their activities to third parties such as government agencies, NGOs or private firms, increased from 1 to 93%. However, for all these indicators, there was insufficient data to make comparisons with control communities.

Where comparisons with control communities were possible, the evaluation found significantly more progress in that the proportion of CCPCs holding meetings at least once a quarter, compared to control communities (by 55 percentage points), and significant more progress in the proportion of CCPCs in ICI-assisted communities conducting at least one awareness raising event in the last three months (by 97 percentage points).

Table 5: Level of capacity and activeness of the CCPCs, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire combined

Indicators	2015			2018			
% communities in which CCPC…	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	Diff-in-diff (Δ_{2018}-Δ_{2015})
…influenced community action plan	0.01 (0.12)	0.13 (0.34)	-0.12 (-1.60)	0.93 (0.25)	-	-	-
…sought children's views on quality	0.00 (0.00)	0.04 (0.21)	-0.04 (-1.00)	0.83 (0.38)	-	-	-
…reported on activities	0.01 (0.12)	0.04 (0.21)	-0.03 (-0.66)	0.93 (0.25)	-	-	-
…held meetings in the last 3 months	0.05 (0.23)	0.00 (0.00)	0.05 (2.04)**	0.60 (0.49)	0.00 (0.00)	0.60 (10.54)***	0.55 ***
…conducted at least one awareness-raising session in past 3 months	0.05 (0.23)	0.11 (0.32)	-0.06 (-0.99)	0.91 (0.29)	0.00 (0.00)	0.91 (26.81)***	0.97 ***
Overall activeness of committees	0.12 (0.91)	0.32 (1.47)	-0.25 (-0.77)	4.20 (1.02)	-	-	-

*Source: PCCF 2015 and 2018. Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations. *, ** and *** denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.*

The five indicators in the table above were consolidated to compute for a single index, with a maximum score of 5. Our assessment showed that activeness of CCPCs in the ICI-assisted communities increased from an index of 0.12 in 2015 to 4.2 in 2018, implying that the CCPCs in the ICI-assisted communities more active overall.

During the qualitative fieldwork, there was unanimity from the separate focus group discussions that CCPCs are generally effective and active in dealing with child labour prevention issues, corroborating these quantitative findings. Although some committee members mentioned that they face challenges in the areas of logistics.

During group discussions with women's groups and children's groups, participants explained that the presence of CCPCs adds important value to efforts of reducing child labour, due to their dedicated responsibilities on awareness raising activities and support to vulnerable children.

During interviews in some of the control communities *without* CCPCs, (eg. Zongokro, Scierie Jacob and Brozan in Côte d'Ivoire; and Kunsu Dotiem, Gyatokrom, Kruwa and Nkrumah in Ghana), community leaders explained that although some committees existed to protect children from child labour, they were confronted with a lot of challenges due to the difficulty of getting dedicated membership and lack of support from other community members, which undermined their efforts to raise awareness of child labour issues.

The ability of Community Child Protection Committees to fulfil their roles

The terms of reference for CCPCs tasks them, among other things, to undertake awareness raising activities on child labour, facilitate the development of community action plans, and identify and

support vulnerable children. Qualitative information triangulated from community leaders or elders, women groups, child protection groups and the community service groups showed that CCPCs in the ICI-assisted communities were able to fulfil these roles. Across all the communities visited, information obtained during focus group discussions was consistent that the CCPCs go around communities and nearby hamlets to inform parents for them to understand the rights of children and the importance of measures to prevent child labour. Some of the common responses received from membership of IGA groups, CSGs and leadership of communities about the roles of CCPCs were that they continue to engage their communities to make sure that children attend school regularly. Children (from CPCs) also mentioned that CCPCs assist them to organise meetings to educate other children on their rights and importance of education amongst other issues. The awareness creation activities undertaken by the CCPCs were usually carried out at general community durbars, homes and in nearby hamlets, and in the case of Ghana also through information centres. Box 4.1 provides some of the illustrative comments shared by participants about the role, activeness and importance of the CCPCs in their communities.

Box 1: Excerpts of comments on the roles of CCPCs

"The CCPCs have really done well with their awareness raising activities. They have been moving from house to house and to villages nearby to undertake education. I can now distinguish children from adults, and the respective roles that each of them can play when it comes to cocoa farming"

-Male participant in Krakro, Côte d'Ivore, during community durbar

"I will be frank with you. In the past, we were not doing well to protect children from hazardous tasks so our children were extensively involved in the weeding, spraying and harvesting of cocoa. But through the regular sensitization from CCPCs and ICIs, we have become more aware about the need to protect their rights. My children, and many others in this community rarely get involved in hazardous farming activities these days"

-Member of IGA group, Issakro, Côte d'Ivoire

Contribution of income generating activities to the commitment, motivation and sustainability of Community Child Protection Committees

Consistent with national conventions, the ICI core programme intended not to remunerate members of the CCPCs. Also, unlike structures such as the Income Generation Activity (IGA) groups, CSGs and CFREC, income generation activities were originally not incorporated into the activities of the CCPCs but attempts have been made to incorporate this for some CCPCs since 2017.

During focus group discussions with CCPC members, participants perceived Income Generation Activities (IGAs) to be important for enhancing the commitment, motivation and sustainability of their committees, as illustrated below.

In all communities visited during the fieldwork, discussions around the sustainability of CCPCs after the ICI core programme had come to an end further highlighted the importance of income generating activities for CCPCs, of which a proportion could be used to compensate the members (of CCPCs). CCPC members suggested that some allowances to compensate for their time would further motivate them and enhance their commitments to the committee and its activities. Some CCPCs suggested one-off financial support for their activities in a year while others wanted monthly incentives (monthly allowance).

Challenges faced by Community Child Protection Committees

In performing their roles, CCPC members encounter challenges. Some of the main challenges reported by CCPC members include:

- Inadequate means of transport to cover catchment areas; the bicycles/tricycles supplied to CCPCs for their outreach activities were considered not adequate or appropriate for their activities. Often, members believed motorbikes rather than bicycles would have been more appropriate to facilitate mobility (e.g. Krakro in Cote d'Ivoire). Broken bicycles were also often repaired with money or resources of individuals since most CCPCs in both countries do not have IGAs. In Ghana, however, monthly allowance was given to CCPCs to repair their bicycles and other equipment.
- Membership strength of CCPCs are affected regularly by regular relocation of some members (e.g. Loua in Cote d'Ivoire), which required replacement and retraining etc.
- Despite the enthusiasm, some members lacked time for CCPC activities in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire
- In some communities (more particularly in Kouamekro and Krakro, all in Cote d'Ivoire), awareness raising activities were undertaken in the evenings, but solar lights supplied by ICI were not functional, which impeded their operations
- In all communities, members reported that a lack of allowances or personal benefits often discouraged some members to attend meetings and awareness raising activities
- Difficulties in working with women: in some communities in Cote d'Ivoire (e.g. Wosso) some men were not comfortable with the CCPC members (mostly men) holding long meetings with their wives
- Payment for community announcements: Some CCPCs in Ghana reported having to pay Community Information Centres to announce meetings or gatherings of CCPC with the community

Community rules and regulations to protect children

The development and implementation of community rules rules and regulations to protect children was an important area of focus within the programme.

The ICI-assisted communities made major progress between 2015 and 2018 in putting in rules and regulations to protect children. The proportion of assisted communities with child protection rules in place increased from 18% to 87% overall, a 36-percentage difference in progress compared to the control communities, significant at 10%.

In Côte d'Ivoire, there was a 67-percentage point difference in progress, significant at the 1% level. In Ghana, there was 17-percentage point difference in progress, but this was not statistically significant.

Table 6: Difference-in-difference estimation of outcome variables on child protection, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire combined

Indicators	2015				2018		
% communities reporting…	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}		ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}
Existence of child protection rules	0.18 (0.38)	0.09 (0.29)	0.08 (1.25)	0.87 (0.34)	0.43 (0.53)	0.44 (213)*	0.36*
Documented child protection rules	0.03 (0.16)	0.04 (0.20)	-0.01 (-0.29)	0.51 (0.50)	-	-	
Application of child protection rules	0.08 (0.27)	0.00 (0.00)	0.08 (2.54)**	0.79 (0.41)	0.67 (0.58)	0.12 (0.36)	0.04

*Source: PCCF 2015 and 2018. Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations. *, ** and *** denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.*
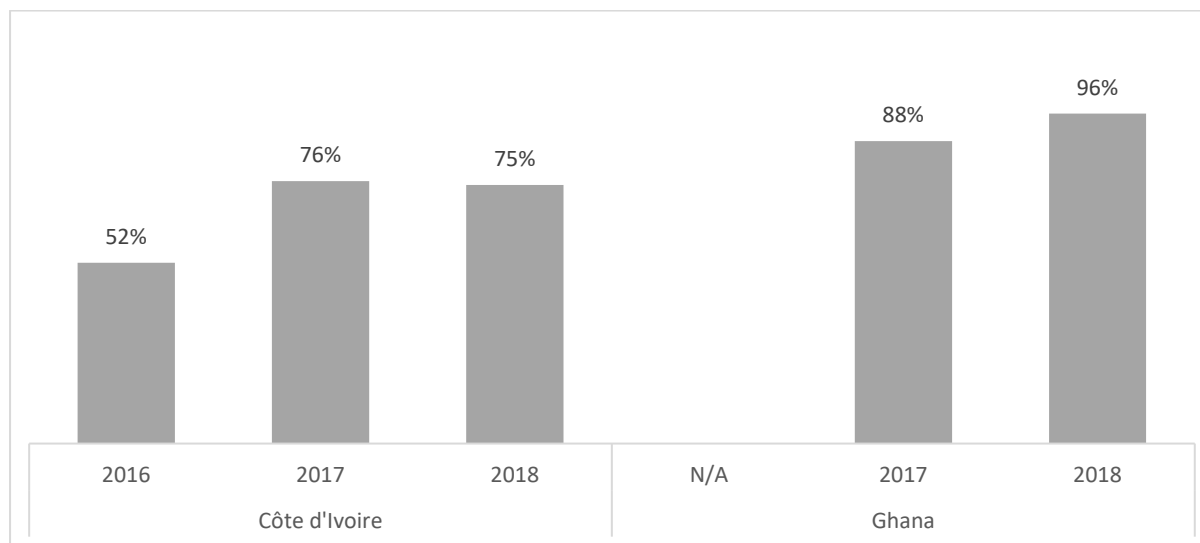
Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of community members towards child labour

Among the key responsibilities of the Community Child Protection Committees was to raise awareness among members of their communities on child labour, child protection and education. To understand how knowledge, attitudes and practices have changed, this evaluation draws on datasets from annual surveys on the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys, conducted in the assisted communities in both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, as well as on information from interviews with community members during the qualitative data collection.

According to data from the KAP surveys, **knowledge on child labour and child protection has generally improved during the three years of programme implementation in both countries, while the trend in attitudes is less clear**.

Respondents surveyed were marked as having a "good" level of knowledge or a "good" attitude if at least 2/3 of their responses were correct. It is important to note that while surveys were administered with a random sample of community members and CCPC members in the communities, the same respondents were not followed over time. The figures below show how knowledge on child labour (Figure 1) and attitudes (Figure 2) and child protection issues have evolved over the years in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents with "good" knowledge on child labour and child protection issues, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (2016-2018)
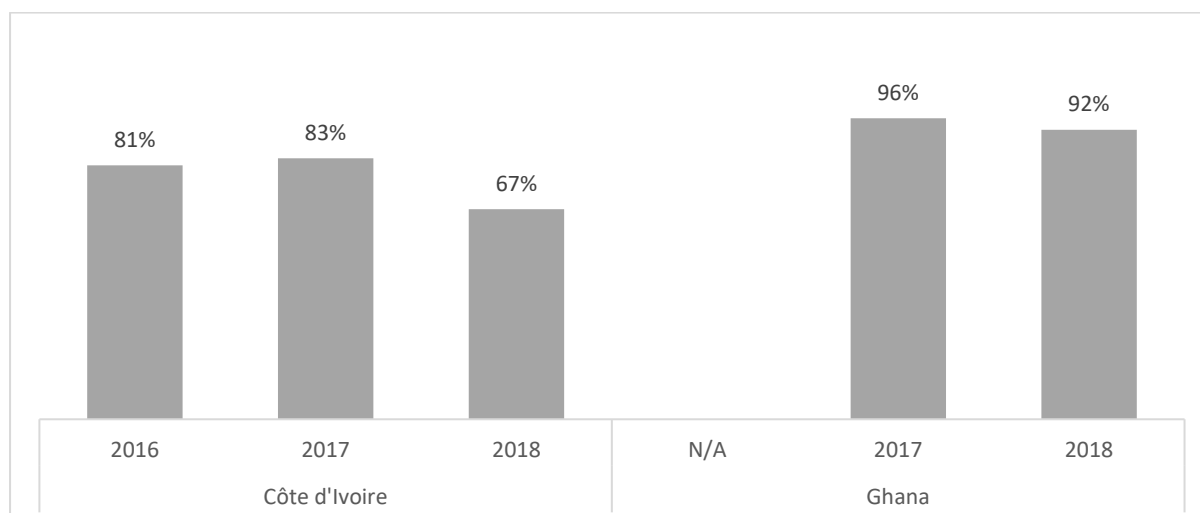

Source: KAP Surveys in assisted communities (Côte d'Ivoire 2016-2018, Ghana 2017-2018)

The proportion of all respondents with a good level of knowledge on child labour and child protection has increased since the baseline in both countries. In Côte d'Ivoire, no significant change in knowledge was observed between 2017 and 2018.

There is less of a clear pattern in terms of people's attitudes towards child protection and child labour. In Côte d'Ivoire, the share of all respondents demonstrating good attitude towards child protection issues improved from 81% in 2016 to 83% in 2017 but declined to 66.8% among the sample respondents. In Ghana, while more than 9 out of every 10 respondents demonstrates good attitudes towards child protection, the decreased slightly between 2017 and 2018, from 96% to 92%.

Figure 2: Proportion of respondents with "good" attitudes towards child labour and child protection in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (2016-2018)
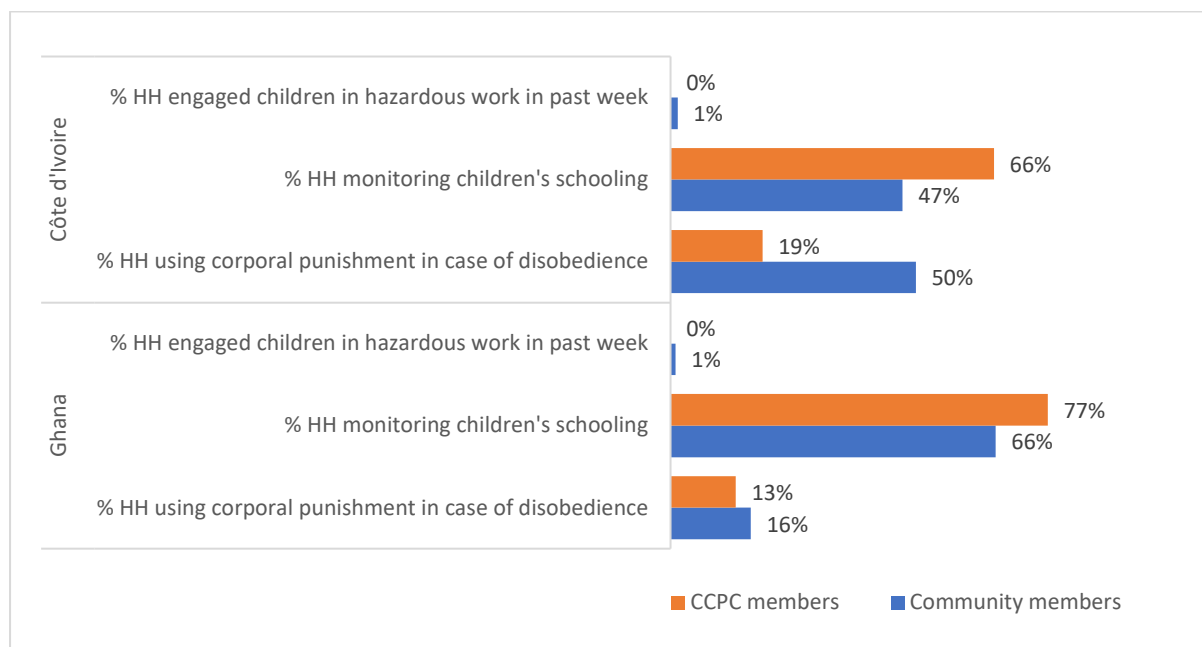

Source: KAP Surveys in assisted communities (Côte d'Ivoire 2016-2018, Ghana 2017-2018)

Further result from the latest KAP Survey in 2018 provide indications that while some positive changes can be observed on knowledge and attitudes compared to previous years, perhaps as a result of sensitization and other activities, some respondents continue to report harmful practices.

In terms of practices, we look at three indicators reported by heads of households: engagement of children in hazardous work; monitoring of children's schooling; and the use of corporal punishment if children disobey. As data was only available for 2018, it is not possible to compare progress over time. However, we can examine the different responses of community members and Child Protection Committee members.

In both countries, CCPC members were less likely than community members to engage children in hazardous work or to use corporal punishment if their children disobeyed. They were also more likely to report monitoring their children's schooling. While this suggests that the CCPC members are generally putting into practice the same messages they are spreading, the results show they are not always setting a good example. In the case of corporal punishment, 19% of surveyed CCPC members in Côte d'Ivoire and 13% in Ghana reported beating or withholding food from their children if they disobeyed, suggesting that further efforts may be needed change these practices.

Figure 3: Reported practices in relation to child labour, child protection and education, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana (2018)

Source: KAP Surveys in assisted communities, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana 2018

Evaluating the extent to which the programme has empowered beneficiary communities

This section examines changes in community empowerment from several angles: communities' ability to develop and put in place inclusive Community Action Plans; their ability to generate resources for community development; whether the resources generated are used to benefit their children; and the capacity of the communities to approach government authorities.

To what extent have Community Action Plans facilitated community development?

Community Action Plans were an important vehicle through which the ICI core programme supported communities to identify and prioritise their needs and conduct activities to improve the situation of the community and its children.

During qualitative data collection, all the communities visited in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire produced copies of the Community Action Plans they have prepared. During focus group discussions, participants explained that the Community Action Plans had facilitated community development in their communities in several ways, including promoting community spirit, helping communities to prioritize development goals, encouraging people to commit to specific objectives, making resources available for collective action and enabling community members to successfully lobby for inclusion in local government plans. Some of the illustrative narratives around how CAPs were perceived to facilitate community development are in the box below.

Box 3: Perceptions of Community Action Plans

"The Community Action Plan really helped us a lot. It enabled us to prioritise our needs. It also prepared us to be ready for any institution that was willing to offer help. For instance, the local authorities were surprised that a small and hard-to-reach community like us could have a community action plan"

    -CCPC member, Ketasso, Cote d'Ivoire

"The preparation of the community action plans and engagement with ICI has increased our 'communal spirit'. Because of this, our people are now more committed to initiatives that propel community development and protect child welfare"

    -CCPC member, Abonse, Ghana

"There are plans for our primary school block to be renovated because the Assembly has integrated the action plan we prepared into the local government plan"

    -CCPC member, Pakyi, Ghana

"One way through which the action plans have helped us has been that it has given us the basis to lobby and mobilise resources to pursue the urgent needs of the community "

    -CCPC Chairman, Kouamekro, Cote d'Ivoire

Community resource mobilization and ability to raise resources for community development

Income generating activities have been an important component of ICI's strategy to address household poverty, one of the root causes of child labour. The ICI programme has made great progress with empowering communities to raise resources for community development. The analysis of the difference-in-difference situation showed that the proportion of ICI-assisted communities with the ability to mobilise resources for community development increased by 19-percentage points more in the ICI-assisted communities than in the control communities, though this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 7: Difference-in-difference estimation of resource mobilization capacity

Indicators	2015			2018			
% communities reporting…	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	Mean Diff $\Delta_{2015-2018}$
Ability to raise	0.47 (0.50)	0.40 (0.50)	0.07 (0.71)	0.71 (0.46)	0.44 (0.51)	0.26 (2.64)***	0.19

resources for community development						
Children benefitted from resources	0.47 (0.50)	0.31 (0.47)	0.16 (1.61)	0.87 (0.34)	0.28 (0.45)	0.59 (6.90)***	0.43 ***
Improved capacity to approach authorities for support	0.49 (0.50)	0.49 (0.51)	0.00 (0.01)	0.77 (0.42)	0.33 (0.48)	0.44 (4.71)***	0.44 **

*Source: PCCF 2015 and 2018. Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations. *, ** and *** denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.*

Analysis of data collected using the Monitoring Tool data provided further indications of the improved capacity of the ICI-assisted communities to mobilise resources (both internal and external) for community development. The number of development actions mobilised and funded exclusively by community themselves more than doubled between 2017 and 2018, from 11.8% to 23% of all actions. Similarly, the proportion of development actions supported by other stakeholders, including local authorities increased from 21% to 25% between 2017 and 2018.

Interviews gathered from the qualitative fieldwork from community leaders, women's groups and members of Child Protection Committees confirmed this. Participants explained that resources mobilized had been used to purchase rice and other materials to support children under the school feeding programme, especially for the communities in Côte d'Ivoire.

Figure 4: Percentage of development actions by reported funding source, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana 2017-2018

Source: Mtool 2017-2018

Communities' ability to raise resources to benefit children

In order to implement their Community Action Plans, the communities had to lobby for external support and resources, as well as contribute their own resources when they could, often in-kind contributions or local materials. The result of the difference-in-difference estimation showed that overall, **ICI-assisted communities increased their ability to raise resources to benefit children by more than control communities,** a statistically significant difference of 43 percentage points. In

Ghana, the proportion of the ICI-assisted communities with the ability to raise resources to benefit children increased with a difference of 71 percentage points compared to control communities. The same trend was observed in Côte d'Ivoire, with a difference of 20 percentage points.

Capacity of communities to approach government authorities

The ICI programme has also been effective in strengthening communities' ability to approach government authorities. The difference in difference estimation showed that **the proportion of ICI-assisted communities with the ability to approach government authorities for development assistance improved by 43 percentage points**, a statistically significant increase, compared to those in the treatment communities.

The qualitative field visits found evidence that **ICI-supported communities were regularly approaching local government authorities for development assistance**. In Antoninho in Côte d'Ivoire, community leaders explained that a teacher had been posted to the community in 2018, following requests from the community to the educational department, which they believed to have been aided by the construction of a primary school block by ICI. In Ghana, Abease and Mpaem engaged their members of parliament and the district assemblies in their respective constituencies for the construction of school blocks and a health facility, which were at different stages of completion by the time of data collection. Community networking efforts also led to effective collaboration between some communities and relevant decentralized departments such as the Agric Extension Office (AEOs) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Non-formal Unit of the Ghana Education service (GES) and the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI).

Box 4: Perspectives on collaboration between communities, authorities and ICI

"…Formerly, we were not covering most of the beneficiary communities that much because of inadequate logistics. But with the ICI bringing that project, we had no excuse than to go there, because if you don't go, most of the activities to facilitate the ICI programme will be lacking. So the ICI intervention has helped open the entire area and has even broadened the scope of MOFA accessible areas. If you talk of a community like Banahenekrom, we were supposed to be going there, but we were not going. But when ICI got to Yaw Boadi it facilitated MOFAs access by the surrounding villages. Formerly we were not even going to Yaw Boadi, but now because of the ICI project we often go there. So the collaboration has been strong."

Staff member from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana

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Women's empowerment: economic empowerment, group dynamics and participation in leadership positions

The main interventions to contribute to women's empowerment include income generating activities for women, adult literacy and numeracy classes, and savings groups (known as CFREC, following the Village Savings and Loans Associations model).

To understand specific changes for the situation of women, the evaluation focused on whether women in the programme communities held leadership positions; the extent to which they influenced decision-making at home and in the community; and their perceptions of how participation of income generating activities and saving groups had changed their livelihoods. The evaluation drew on the dataset of empowerment surveys, as well as qualitative interviews.

In Ghana, 315 women from 24 communities participated in the women's empowerment survey conducted in 2017. Out of the total number, more than a third, or some 36.5%, reported that they had perceived either a high or a very high increase in their income as a result of the income generating activities. In 2018, the number of respondents participating in the income generating activities that perceived either a high or a very high increase in their income as a result of the activity was 59.1%.

In Côte d'Ivoire, 701 women participated in the survey from 44 communities in 2017. The majority of respondents, 42.2%, perceived an 'average' increase in their income levels as a result of participation in income generating activities while about 12.7% perceived either a high or a very high increase in their income as a result of the income generating activities. In 2018, approximately 5% of the respondents in Cote d'Ivoire reported a perceived high or a very high increase in their income as a result of the activity.

Qualitative data collected suggests that after the first year, 2017, the income generating activities in many communities experienced difficulties, affecting the groups' earnings. **Some of the recurring difficulties with income generating activities include challenges finding buyers for agricultural produce, the fluctuations in weather that affected production, difficulties accessing land for further cultivation (e.g. in Bledoukangagro) and the breakdown of cassava processing machines**. These problems might have contributed to the lower perceived revenues in Côte d'Ivoire in 2018, although the same trend was not found in Ghana.

The qualitative data collection with members of the CFREC and income generating activity groups provides further indication that even if participation resulted in limited financial benefits for some participants, there were other advantages. Group members in both Ghana (e.g. Yaw Boadi, Banahenekrom) and Côte d'Ivoire (e.g. Issakro, Wosso, Bledoukangro, Akroufla) indicated that because of the group membership and activities, social interaction had increased and within the groups some of them have been encouraged to take up leadership roles. Some respondents said that they now feel more confident and emboldened to speak and express their opinions at meetings.

Box 5: Women's perspectives on participation in income generating activities and savings groups

"…We are each other's keeper. We work, consult and engage as sisters. Although I have lived in this community for years, I cannot imagine relating to many of my sisters present here who are now my best friends, had it not been this group (CFREC). We support each other and I benefit greatly from the advice I receive from them. We are now known all over because of the cassava sticks we supplied to the Department of Agriculture"

    Woman participant, focus group discussion with women, Bledoukagangro, Côte d'Ivoire

"My membership of the women's groups and the CFREC has been a biggest blessing. Through my participation, I have now increased the capital for my business. I am now able to travel to Ghana where the prices are low quite regularly to purchase general goods which I come to sell for a reasonable profit"

    CFREC chairperson, Bledoukangagro, Côte d'Ivoire

> *"Through this programme, I have improved on my financial management and numeracy skills. Each time I get money, I now know exactly what to save, what to spend on family and what proportion I have to put into the business"*
>
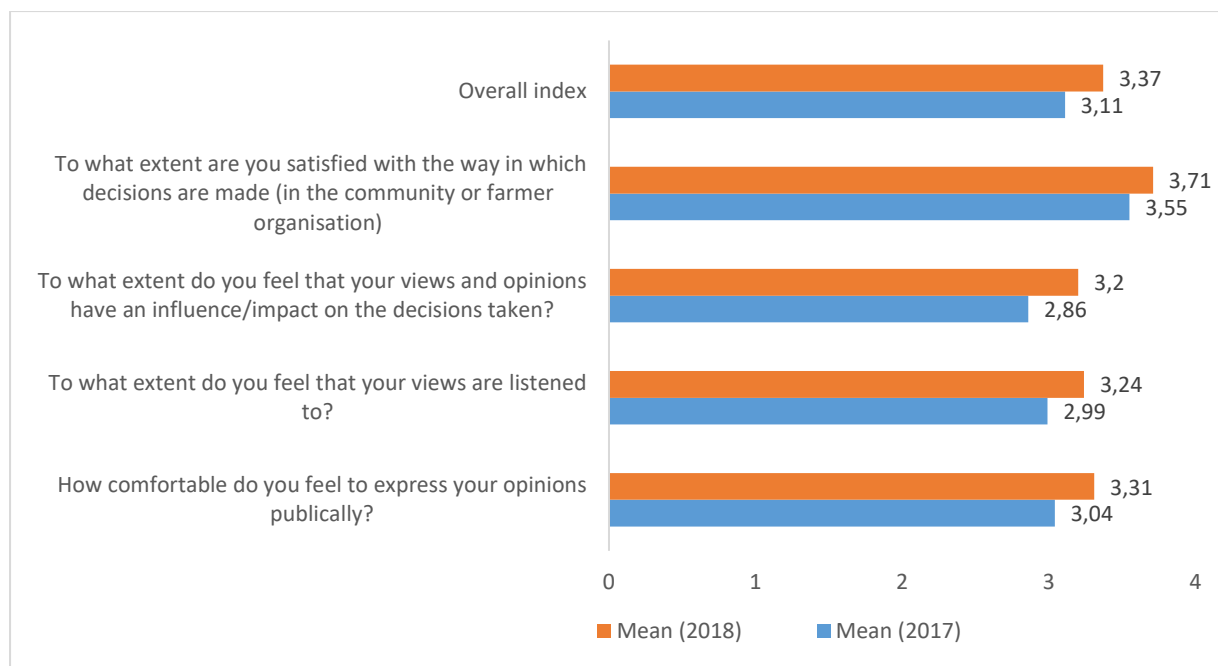> Woman participant, focus group discussion with women, Issakro, Côte d'Ivoire
>
> *"For me, one key benefit I have derived from participating in women group is that I can write my name because of the adult literacy classes. All my sisters can also write their names. I can read and count up to one hundred. This has helped me a lot as I am now able to memorise my phone number, and I perform better when I go to the market. Unlike before, I am also able to make contributions and express my opinion at meetings. The training we received has boosted my self-confidence"*
>
> Member, IGA and Literacy class, Akweteykrom, Ghana

Our analysis also looked at the progress made by the programme in improving women's leadership positions. Using the available women's empowerment datasets (from 2017 in Ghana and 2017-18 in Cote d'Ivoire), we measured the extent to which women have been empowered by condensing four main factors to calculate an index (see Figure 5 below): (i) How comfortable do you feel to express your opinions publicly?; (ii) To what extent do you feel that your views are listened to?; (iii) To what extent do you feel that your views and opinions have an influence/impact on the decisions taken?; (iv) To what extent are you satisfied with the way in which decisions are made (in the community or farmer organisations). The survey questions asked women participants to rate themselves in these areas from a scale ranging from 1(very low), 2 (low), 3 (average), 4 (high) to 5 (very high).

In Côte d'Ivoire, the overall women's empowerment index improved slightly from 3.11 to 3.37—but this can still be interpreted as 'average' when used against the Likert scale, indicating there is still some margin for progress to be made.

Figure 5: Comparison of indicators of women's empowerment, 2017 and 2018 Côte d'Ivoire,

Source: Women Empowerment Dataset 2017-18. n=701 (2017), n=472 (2018)

Links between women's empowerment and child labour?

An observation made during the fieldwork was that most women participants across the communities visited were quick to link discussions of their empowerment to reduced child labour. To investigate this further, we used the empowerment dataset held by ICI and matched it with the child labour incidence data to understand what, if any, associations existed between women's empowerment and child labour. The analysis explored the relationship between women's empowerment and child labour prevalence using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Analysis of the combined data for Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire showed that there was a moderate, negative correlation between women's empowerment and child labor prevalence [$r=-0.353$, $p<0.01$]. **This implies that high levels of women empowerment are associated with lower levels of child labour prevalence**. Thus, a deduction can be made that an increased focus on women's empowerment could indeed play significant roles in the reduction of child labour.

Evaluating the extent to which the programme has improved access to quality education

The impact of the ICI programme on education was measured largely in terms of enrolment, access to educational facilities and school quality (using infrastructure quality and pupil-teacher ratio as proxies). Statistical comparisons in this section come from come the PCCF dataset (2015 and 2018), which includes a specific section on education. This section reports the findings from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana separately, rather than combined, due to the marked differences in each country's educational systems.

Gross Enrolment Rates (GER)

In both countries, gross enrolment rates generally increased between 2015 and 2018, with the exception of kindergarten level, which was not the focus of the programme, although the difference-in-difference results were not always statistically significant.

In Côte d'Ivoire, there was no significant change in primary enrolment compared to control communities, although average gross enrollment at primary level increased from 69% to 92% in ICI-assisted communities between 2015 and 2018. However, **significant increases in enrolment were observed at Junior High School level (especially for girls) and at Senior High School level (especially for boys) compared to control communities**.

Table 8: Changes in school enrolment, by level, Côte d'Ivoire

Gross Enrolment Rate	Sex	2015		2018		Difference-in-difference
		ICI-assisted	Control	ICI-assisted	Control	
Kindergarten	Girls	2.0	3.2	6.4	22.6	-23.52
	Boys	1.5	3.6	6.6	26.2	-15.72
	Total	**1.7**	**3.4**	**6.5**	**24.3**	**-18.77**
Primary	Girls	66.3	82.4	87.5	81.4	12.25
	Boys	72.2	88.4	96.3	85.5	19.37
	Total	**69.4**	**85.6**	**91.9**	**83.6**	**15.93**
Junior High School	Girls	6.1	58.3	20.3	62.8	25.08**
	Boys	8.1	60.3	21.9	79.8	22.07
	Total	**7.1**	**59.5**	**21.2**	**72.9**	**20.32***
Senior High School	Girls	1.4	29.4	1.5	22.1	18.21*
	Boys	3.4	26.6	3.6	18.0	34.74**
	Total	**2.5**	**27.7**	**2.7**	**19.7**	**5.52****

In Ghana the ICI-assisted communities had a stronger progress of increased GER ratio at all levels, except Kindergarten. Between 2015 to 2018, **primary enrolment in ICI-assisted schools increased by 80 percentage points more than in control communities**, a difference which is statistically significant at the 1% level.

At the Junior High School level, gross enrolment rates in ICI-assisted communities increased by 28.83 percentage points between 2015-18 compared to those in the control communities. This difference was only statistically significant for girls, but not overall. At the Senior High School level, progress on enrolment increased by 39.75 percentage points in the ICI-assisted communities than those in the control communities, a statistically significant difference. In control communities, gross enrolment rates at junior high school and senior high school level dropped markedly in control communities between 2015 and 2018.

To better interpret the results at kindergarten level, it is important to note that some control communities own and manage the kindergartens schools without following the standard rules. The result is that the appropriate age for kindergarten was disregarded to the extent that children up to the age of 8-9 years were still in kindergarten, and thereby causing abnormally high GER at kindergarten level in these communities.

Table 9: Changes in school enrolment, by level, Ghana

Gross Enrolment Rate	Sex	2015		2018		Difference-in-difference
		ICI-assisted	Control	ICI-assisted	Control	
Kindergarten	Girls	86.6	79.7	87.1	135.0	-92.93
	Boys	92.6	61.7	85.9	149.2	-156.34***
	Total	**89.4**	**70.5**	**86.5**	**140.9**	**-122.12**
Primary	Girls	80.4	99.5	100.5	51.2	87.79***
	Boys	88.2	111.6	98.0	34.2	77.53***
	Total	**84.2**	**105.1**	**99.2**	**42.0**	**79.85***
Junior High School	Girls	75.1	60.9	81.3	21.4	38.91**
	Boys	84.5	79.4	90.0	43.3	14.88
	Total	**79.6**	**70.1**	**85.6**	**32.2**	**28.83**
Senior High School	Girls	55.5	24.8	69.3	8.5	36.39***
	Boys	63.1	33.8	76.7	10.6	43.26***
	Total	**59.2**	**29.6**	**73.0**	**9.6**	**39.75***

Changes in school attendance

In Côte d'Ivoire, while primary attendance rates in ICI-assisted communities increased for both boys and girls between 2015 and 2019, the increases in control communities outweighed those in ICI-assisted communities. The difference of difference of -26 percentage points is statistically significant.

In Ghana, primary school attendance rates also increased by more in control communities than in ICI-assisted communities, a statistically significant difference of -24 percentage points.

Table 10: Changes in primary school attendance rates, Côte d'Ivoire

Attendance rate	2015		2018		Difference-in-Difference
	ICI-assisted	Control	ICI-assisted	Control	
Girls	77.18	34.5	95.46	92.89	-40.11***
Boys	80.32	34.5	94.92	94.00	-44.90***
Total	95.12	68.79	94.96	94.21	-25.58**

Table 11: Changes in primary school attendance rates, Ghana

Attendance rate	2015		2018		Difference-in-Difference
	ICI-assisted	Control	ICI-assisted	Control	
Girls	67.49	57.34	63.40	72.55	-19.24*
Boys	68.43	51.87	65.23	72.29	-23.63**
Total	84.37	57.47	86.43	83.97	-24.45**

Access to education facilities

In both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, there was no statistically significant change in distances travelled to school infrastructure at any level compared to control communities.

Table 12: Changes in distance to educational infrastructure, Côte d'Ivoire

Indicators	2015			2018			Mean Diff $\Delta_{2015-2018}$
	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	
Distance to Kindergarten	20.03 (12.40)	12.78 (10.60)	7.24 (1.79)*	14.71 (12.20)	13.14 (11.30)	1.57 (0.43)	-5.67
Distance to Primary	5.50 (2.39)	2.25 (1.50)	3.25 (3.39)**	4.38 (1.77)	3.25 (2.87)	1.13 (0.72)	-2.12
Distance to Junior High School	20.56 (11.00)	18.85 (17.89)	1.71 (0.33)	14.28 (10.37)	13.38 (10.36)	0.90 (0.30)	-0.27
Distance to Senior High School	22.16 (12.69)	19.17 (9.15)	3.00 (0.2)	20.45 (13.29)	15.20 (10.76)	5.25 (1.68)*	2.25
Distance to Vocational/ tech.	25.93 (15.42)	31.00 (19.06)	-5.07 (-0.90)	31.20 (23.08)	28.50 (17.50)	1.70 (0.33)	6.77

Table 13: Changes in distance to educational infrastructure, Ghana

Indicators	2015			2018			Mean Diff $\Delta_{2015-2018}$
	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	
Distance to Kindergarten	2.50 (1.18)	1.00 (0.00)	1.50 (3.11)**	2.60 (1.39)	2.95 (1.90)	-0.35 (-0.31)	-1.85
Distance to Primary School	2.50 (1.18)	3.88 (5.11)	-1.38 (-0.53)	2.60 (1.39)	2.47 (1.27)	0.13 (0.14)	1.50
Distance to Junior High School	3.63 (1.74)	4.25 (4.19)	-0.63 (-0.35)	3.50 (2.07)	2.58 (1.27)	0.92 (1.12)	1.54
Distance to Senior High School	15.38 (9.53)	1.44 (0.73)	13.94 (7.67)***	18.03 (11.52)	8.33 (5.01)	9.70 (3.18)***	-4.2
Distance to Vocational/ tech.	15.85 (8.94)	15.40 (11.75)	0.45 (0.13)	20.39 (11.19)	17.56 (14.46)	2.83 (0.65)	2.3

Changes in school infrastructure and management

In Côte d'Ivoire, the proportion of *control* communities with a school canteen increased by more than in ICI-assisted communities, a statistically significant difference of -54 percentage points. Although the proportion of communities with access to a government school feeding programme, school toilets, or a School Management Committee increased between 2015 and 2018, there was no significant difference compared to control communities.

Table 14: Changes in school infrastructure and management, Côte d'Ivoire

Indicators	2015			2018			Mean Diff $\Delta_{2015-2018}$
	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	
School Canteen	0.23 (0.42)	0.14 (0.36)	0.084 (0.67)	0.19 (0.39)	0.64 (0.49)	-0.458 (4.60)	-0.542***
Government school feeding program	0.27 (0.45)	0.64 (0.49)	-0.370 (2.61)	0.46 (0.50)	0.54 (0.51)	-0.073 (0.62)	0.297
Toilet facility	0.34 (0.48)	0.64 (0.49)	-0.302 (2.03)	0.52 (0.50)	0.75 (0.47)	-0.231 (2.05)	0.071
SMC	0.95 (0.21)	1.00 (0.00)	0.045 (0.80)	0.96 (0.18)	0.96 (0.19)	0.000 (0.00)	0.045

In Ghana, the proportion of ICI-assisted communities with a school canteen increased by more than in control communities, a statistically significant difference of 40 percentage points, the proportion of communities with a school management committee in place also increased by more than in control communities. There was no significant difference in the proportion of communities with a government school feeding programme of with school toilet facilities. Between 2015 and 2018, the average pupil-teacher ratio increased slightly in ICI-assisted communities. The difference-in-difference analysis shows that this increase is statistically significant compared to in control communities.

Since the investment in school infrastructure in some communities resulted in increased enrolment, once possible explanation for the higher pupil-teacher ratios is that these increases in enrolment were not matched by increases in the number of teachers. Qualitative data confirms that in some cases, improvements to school infrastructure were a pull factor – encouraging children from other communities to attend schools in ICI-supported communities instead, which may have contributed to the pressure on teachers (see Box 6, below).

Table 15: Changes in school infrastructure and management, Ghana

Indicators	2015			2018			Mean Diff
	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2015}	ICI-assisted	Control	Mean Diff Δ_{2018}	$\Delta_{2015-2018}$
School Canteen	0.25 (0.43)	0.22 (0.44)	0.028 (0.17)	0.52 (0.51)	0.10 (0.30)	0.427 (4.18)	0.399**
Government school feeding program	0.42 (0.50)	0.22 (0.44)	0.194 (1.07)	0.50 (0.51)	0.32 (0.47)	0.177 (1.52)	-0.017
Toilet facility	0.69 (0.47)	0.78 (0.44)	-0.083 (0.48)	0.62 (0.49)	0.55 (0.50)	0.071 (0.60)	0.154
SMC	0.89 (0.32)	1.00 (0.00)	-0.111 (1.04)	0.88 (0.33)	0.65 (0.48)	0.236 (2.47)	0.347**
Pupil-teacher ratio	20.28 (23.27)	29.60 (11.63)	-9.322 (1.22)	23.58 (12.43)	21.90 (14.62)	1.677 (0.49)	10.999**

The qualitative data gathered from the field confirms the quantitative analysis presented above. We gathered that new structures, including three-classroom blocks plus offices, toilet facilities, canteens, and in some instances, teachers' quarters were put up to accommodate a significant number of teachers who commuted from outside the communities. It was also observed that some communities had instituted school feeding programmes for the children. Contributions from community members in-kind (food stuffs including vegetables) were mainly used to feed the children. In most of the ICI-assisted communities, narratives gathered showed that renovation works on old, dilapidated school buildings, often started by the communities themselves, had been supported by the ICI to their completion, which had made schooling attractive to the children (see box below). Community leadership and School Management Committees explained that the support provided by ICI in terms of teaching aids, musical instruments for school bands, uniforms, and sports equipment, such as footballs, had further contributed to increased enrolment and retention of school children.

Individual education-related support to children

As part of the evaluation, data was collected from beneficiaries of some of the remediation interventions provided by ICI. This section provides a brief description of these data to understand how the remediation or support provided by ICI added value (or not) to the lives of these children. While the provision of individual support was not originally not part of the community development programme, it was implemented in a restricted number of communities based on specific needs and available budget.

Bridging Classes

Bridging classes are specially designed to allow children who have been kept out of school or missed classes to catch up with their peers. In Côte d'Ivoire, 287 children from 4 communities participated in bridging classes.

To understand the value added by the bridging classes, 191 beneficiaries were interviewed. Most of the children interviewed reported they were "very satisfied" (70%) or "satisfied" (21%) with the bridging classes. The majority (80%) had gone on to enrol in formal school after completing the bridging class, although this was more common for boys (89%) than girls (69%).

Of those children who went on to join formal schooling, the majority reported that their grades were good, while 17% indicated they have had some difficulties. When asked about the benefits of bridging classes, children most commonly responded that they offered an opportunity resume or start school, and to be with their friends.

A minority of bridging class participants interviewed (12%) were no longer in school by the time they were followed up. Some of these students completed the bridging classes but did not join the formal school while others stopped the bridging class before the planned end date. Respondents who

abandoned the class and did not continue to the formal school cited reasons such as they lost interest/ did not feel comfortable participating in the classes. Others indicated they found their progress to be too slow, whist others enrolled in a job or travelled with the family.

Among the teachers interviewed, a third indicated they encountered some difficulty during the implementation of the bridge classes. The main challenges mentioned include irregular premium, lack of enthusiasm, and months of arrears.
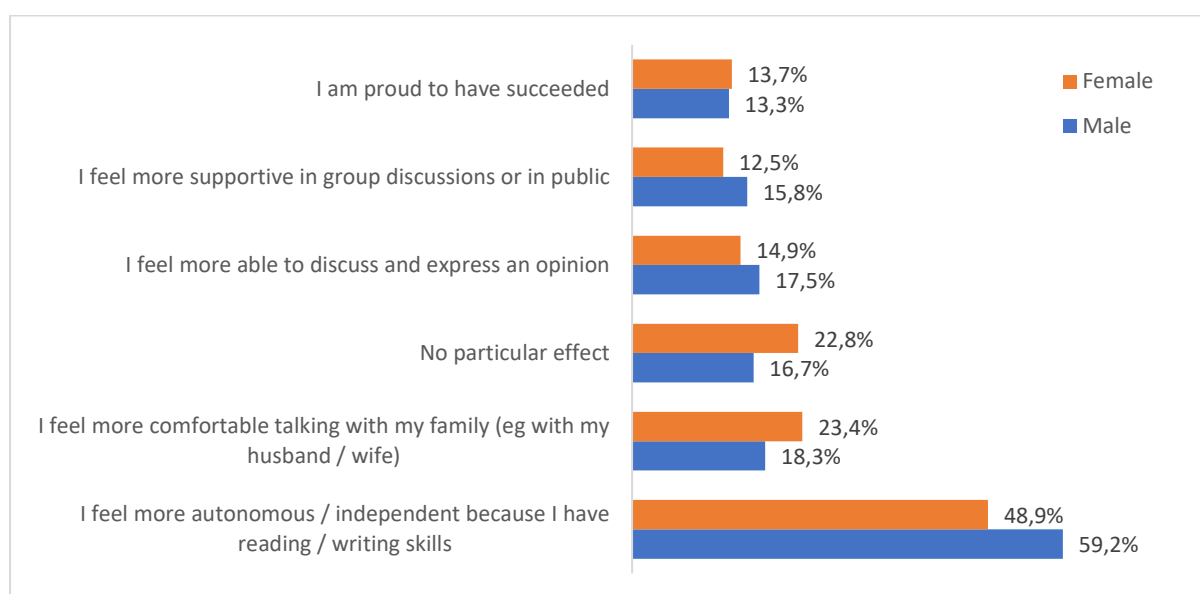
Adult literacy classes

In both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, literacy and numeracy classes were organised for adults with low levels of formal education. Of the 225 participants interviewed in Côte d'Ivoire and 151 in Ghana, 27% were males and 73% were females. The average age of participants in adult literacy classes was 38 years. The large majority had never attended school (84%), while 16% had abandoned primary school. For around a third of interviewed participants, their literacy class was linked to involvement in an income generating activity. The most common motivation for joining the course was the desire to read and write.

In Côte d'Ivoire, over half of the participants interviewed (59%) had successfully completed the literacy classes by the time of the survey, with no significant difference between men and women. These participants were asked to provide a self-assessment of their current skills: 17% rated their reading level as *very good* or *good*, 46% as *moderate* and 37% as *bad* or *very bad*.

In Ghana, only 15.2% of the participants interviewed had completed the literacy classes at the time of the survey, again with no significant difference between the proportion of men and women.

When asked how their participation in the literacy classes have benefited them, respondents mentioned they felt more autonomous or independent because they could read and write; were more comfortable talking with their family (including their spouse); and were more confident to discuss and express their opinions. However, one in five participants reported no specific benefit. The figure below shows the summary of responses among male and female participants in Côte d'Ivoire. Multiple responses were allowed.

Figure 6: Reported benefits of participating in literacy classes, Côte d'Ivoire

Source: educational beneficiary data on bridging classes (2019)

One possible explanation for the fairly high dropout rate and mixed results among adult participants in both countries is due to competing responsibilities. According to the follow up survey, 94% of respondents in Côte d'Ivoire missed at least one session, compared to 87% of respondents in Ghana. On average, participants missed between two and three sessions per month. In both countries, women were slightly more likely to miss classes or attend for fewer hours than men. For women, the top three reasons for missing classes were sickness, farm work, and housework or childcare. For men, the top three reasons were farm work, travels, and sickness.

Vocational training

In Côte d'Ivoire, vocational training and apprenticeships were organised for 136 adolescents from 10 communities. The youngest participant was aged 13 and the oldest 22, with an average age of 17. Participants learned trades such as mechanics, hairdressing, sewing, masonry, electrical engineering, carpentry and welding.

By the time of data collection, 62% of respondents in Côte d'Ivoire indicated they had successfully completed their practical training, 20% were still in training, and 18% had dropped out. Among the reasons cited by respondents who dropped out of the practical training were problems with the teacher/craftsman; being needed to help on the farm or at home; sickness; and due the training being perceived as unsuitable. When asked about challenges faced while participating in their apprenticeship, around half (49%) did not report any challenges. Other participants mentioned long travel distances to training centres, financial constraints, and difficulty in understanding what is been taught.

In Ghana, vocational and apprenticeship training were organised for some 44 older children from 16 communities.

By the time of data collection, the majority of the 41 recipients interviewed (73%) were still under training, 15% had completed their training whilst 13% had dropped out. According to students and master craftsmen interviewed, reasons for drop out included long distances travelled by apprentices to training centres, pregnancy, indiscipline and financial difficulties – more than one master craftsmen indicated having supported an apprentice's transport or food costs, since parents were unable to do so.

Provision of school kits

School kits were provided to 307 children from 25 communities in Ghana. As part of the evaluation, data was collected from 95 girls and boys who received them. The majority of children interviewed (98%) were still attending school when interviewed, while 2% had quit school. Of the recipients, 88% reported that they were now able to attend school regularly compared to when they had not received the items. According to recipients, other reported benefits of the kits were that they helped children to do exercises in class and improved their participation in class. Some children mentioned that they are happier going to school now compared to previously when they had not received the school kits. Others indicated they are more organized and look neat going to school.

According to parents and teachers interviewed, the provision of the school kits had improved children's school attendance, improved their understanding of lessons, and increased children's motivation to attend school. The idea that school kits served to motivate students was supported by qualitative interviews with children who received them.

Both focus group discussions and key informant interviews confirmed that the identification and selection processes of beneficiary vulnerable children were very transparent. However, teachers mentioned that some children who did not receive some of the items became envious of their

colleagues, suggesting that additional sensitization could be helpful before the distribution of kits, to avoid such tensions. Participants in the focus group discussions across the various communities perceived that the provision of these free items has had positive impact on how the children dressed to school and on their ability to attend school regularly.

While the majority of school kit recipients interviewed (98%) reported being satisfied with the quality of what they received, 96% expressed the need for at least one item that was not provided, while 24% indicated they had a problem with the kit received. Reported problems ranged from faulty zips in bags to school uniforms/shoes which were too tight or big for beneficiaries.

Evaluating the relevance, efficiency and sustainability of the programme

Relevance

To assess the relevance, the team undertook an analysis of *the appropriateness of the programme in relation to national and community development priorities, the programmatic approach, and the components and activities implemented*.

The documents reviewed and qualitative interviews revealed **that the ICI core programme was highly relevant for the national development priorities of both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire**. In Ghana for instance, the programme was consistent with and supportive of the *Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda* (GSGDA, 2014-2017) and the *National Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour*, which are all geared towards reduction of child labour and improved children's rights. In Côte d'Ivoire, the ICI core programme strongly aligns with the *National Policy on Child Protection* (PNPE) (2014–2018), which seeks to reduce the incidence of violence, abuse, and exploitation of children. Relatedly, the school canteens and nursery schools provided by the programme are also in line with national programme on school canteens in Cote d'Ivoire (*Programme National des cantines scolaires*). The construction of the primary and nursery classes and support for acquisition of birth certificates is further consistent with the Ministerial Decree on setting-up of child protection committees, the national education policy and the national priority given by the country to identity documents such as birth certificates, which is a condition for accessing some social services, sitting primary school exams and attending secondary school. In Ghana, the programme's approach of combining infrastructural support with strengthening of structures such as CCPCs, CSGs is in line with the 2018 Educational Policy. aimed at expanding access to education at all levels.

Qualitative interviews showed that communities have positive views and perceptions about the relevance of ICI work. There was unanimity in the responses provided by participants in the various focus group discussions and key informant interviews that the main components of the project (child protection, community and women's empowerment and education support) have helped communities to become more protective of their children and minimized the involvement of children in activities such as carrying of heavy loads, and using dangerous tools on the farms and in schools. Some community members talked about the relevance of the programme by narrating how it has helped to send more children to school and provided professional training opportunities to older ones who previously had avoided or dropped out of school. Other participants, particularly women, across the various communities visited referred to how the integrated focus of the programme on child protection, empowerment and education has enabled their income-generating activities which are being used to support expenses related to school fees, children's health, food and transportation to schools. Data gathered from the separate focus group discussion at the community level show that **the ICI programme is considered highly relevant by women, men, children, community leaders, parents, teachers, youth groups and local government officials as it**

has served as an important platform for meeting the needs and priorities of the communities in terms of protection of their children, resource mobilization and ability to reach external actors for development work.

Box 7: Narratives around the relevance of the programme

"How can we say this programme is not relevant? We all hope to give our children a better future. We are more aware now that child labour can negatively affect this future expectation. The ICI programme has helped to send more children to schools and provided professional training opportunities to older ones who avoided or dropped out of school"

> -Focus group participant, Issakrom, Côte d'Ivoire

"The programme has highly been relevant in creating development opportunities for the communities. Formerly, we were not covering most of the beneficiary communities that much because of inadequate logistics. But with ICI bringing that project, we had no excuse than to go there...so the ICI intervention has helped opened the entire area and has even broadened the scope of MOFA accessible areas. If you talk of a community like Banahenekrom, we were supposed to be going there, but we didn't do that initially. But when ICI got to Yaw Boadi it facilitated MOFA's access to the surrounding villages. Formerly we were not even going to Yaw Boadi, but now because of the ICI project we often go there to carry out extension education to support the farmers.

> - MOFA staff, Ahafo Ano South West District, Ghana

Efficiency

The efficiency of the ICI core programme was measured largely in terms of *the adequacy of financial, human and material resources deployed for the programme and its relationship with the outputs achieved*. The evaluation also looked at the monitoring and evaluation approach of the programme.

In both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, responses obtained from staff and communities suggest that **the ICI core programme deployed adequate human, material and financial resources for the implementation of the programme**, although staff recruitment in some regions (e.g. Soubré in Cote d'Ivoire) was more delayed than expected.

Respondents from national offices in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire further indicated that they received adequate support from the Geneva office. Staff were of the view that there is adequate degree of autonomy for them when it comes to planning of annual programmes.

The evaluation found that ICI invested heavily in monitoring and evaluation, which was a plus for the programme. There was copious attention to data collection to monitor and track progress of implementation in both countries from the onset of implementation. However, data quality appeared questionable in several instances. For several of the datasets (e.g. PCCF, M-tool and community register), the evaluation team found a significant number of missing values, missing entries, missing labels and mixed-up entries (e.g. mixing-up other PCCFs, which were unrelated to the core programme), unclear coding, lack of coding, clearly erroneous entries that had not been corrected (eg. 300 km reported as the distance to the nearest kindergarten), and inconsistent entries

(eg. interchanging **e**ducational facilities, **E**ducational facilities and educational **F**acilities in the same dataset). Data cleaning and management of monitoring data could have been more efficient, in order to minimise the time needed by the consultant to clean, edit and exclude elements of the datasets, which can also impact on the validity of analysis.

We also gathered that though the national offices follow a rigorous procurement process, breakdown or malfunctioning of equipment is quite common, especially in Cote d'Ivoire, where we received reports of breakdown of pressers, knapsack sprayers, tricycles during focus group discussions in nearly all the communities visited. It is not clear whether the problem had to do with the type, brand and model supplied or incorrect use from the community members. But from communities' point of view (e.g. Ketasso and Kouamekro), the equipment appeared faulty before they were supplied to the communities. The frequent breakdown undermines the potential of recipients to undertake income generating activites as planned.

Sustainability

In this context, we considered sustainability as *the prospect for ownership and scaling-up of the project achievements after the withdrawal of ICI*.

In both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, the determination of the sustainability of the programme was mixed or inconclusive at this stage. On one hand, there is high enthusiasm for communities to own the activities implemented. On the other hand, all the ICI-assisted communities expressed the need for more time for ICI to be with them to fully mature as 'it is not too prudent to abruptly leave a lactating baby to tend itself'.[1] It will therefore be important for any exit strategy to proceed quite slowly. The evaluation demonstrated the following prospects for sustainability:

In both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, there was the general feeling among CCPCs in nearly all the ICI-assisted communities that they would continue to work, even if the programme finishes. Project beneficiaries reiterated their desire to continue the activities being carried out, including awareness raising, child labour monitoring, child rights etc., but also made passionate appeals for ICI to continue supporting them, especially in terms of regular visits or interactions. One promising sign for sustainability has been that Government departments responsible for children protection – including the Department of Social Welfare in Ghana and local government authorities – have incorporated community action plans prepared by some of the communities in their midterm development plans, and had already supported implementation of some activities specified.

The qualitative discussions further highlighted that the ggricultural departments in some of the districts in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire (e.g. Bledikangakro) were engaged directly in the income-generating components of the interventions. They continue to visit the various IGAs to ensure the sustainability of activities, including networks and the provision of assistance for groups that find it difficult to sell their produce. This gives an indication for ownership and suggests that activities for community empowerment and child protection could continue with support from these state entities after the programme exits. A further assessment would need to be made as part of the exit processes to understand how and what the bottlenecks and challenges are that may inhibit the motivation and enthusiasm of the various structures, after the exit of the programme.

Interviews held with CCPC members showed strong signs of their willingness to continue with their work, especially on awareness raising, even after the project has finished. However, lack of income generating activities that motivate members to stay commited (similar to those of CSG or CFREC), relocation of members, and delays finding new members to replace them can all have a negative

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[1] Quote from the CCPC chairman of Kouamekrom

effect on committee membership, and as a result, their future sustainability. A recurring theme emerging from the qualitative fieldwork was that the differences in **the strength or activeness of the CCPCs depended on community leadership, the proactiveness of the CCPC leader, the regularity of interaction with ICI and other bodies, and the presence of income-generating activities** that allow members to receive compensation, either financially or in-kind, for their efforts. As such, the key elements for sustaining the CCPCs include proactiveness of the leaders/chairmen especially on how they mobilise other members for meetings, and the existence of income-generating activities or inflow of funds, which allow committees to repair equipment and stay motivated. **CCPC members across all the communities also suggested that motivating elements could further boost the activeness and sustainability of the CCPCs after the programme exits**, for example the provision of tools, wellington boots, or allowances (cash or in-kind support, such as cocoa farming inputs).

Child Protection Clubs (CPCs) usually use diverse strategies to build awareness of child protection and child rights. For these structures, the departure of members to other communities, especially after completion of their basic education, remains a significant threat to their sustainability. A recurring theme from the qualitative fieldwork accounting for differences in the observed activeness or strength of the CPCs include the extent of support (or oversight) provided to the clubs by CCPCs, and how quickly members are replaced if someone leaves a community. In the future, ICI should consider opening CPC membership to all interested groups, as opposed to placing a cap on membership at 10, in order to boost the activeness and sustainability. Additionally, more capacity building initiatives to build the confidence level of the children will be needed.

Community Service Groups are an innovative approach to provide affordable adult labour to local farmers, with the aim of reducing the need to use child labour. From the qualitative interviews held in the communities in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, a recurring theme threatening the sustainability of the CSGs was delayed and non-payment of fees by clients (e.g. Akroufla). Also, some communities reported frequent departure of members to other communities (e.g. Loua in Cote d'Ivoire).

Regarding the Income Generating Activities (IGAs), a key threat to sustainability has been the rather limited market for goods sold, especially agricultural produce. The sustainability of the IGAs can therefore be enhanced with integration of other non-agricultural produce that have market within and outside the catchment of the communities.

In Cote d'Ivoire, the CFREC savings groups showed some of the strongest signs of sustainability in all the communities where they existed. Members in all the communities visited shared the view that these groups would continue to function even after the programme exits, since beyond the initial seed capital received from ICI, they have in most cases reduced their dependence on them.

As evaluators, we expect that women's groups such as the IGAs and CFREC may need to continually receive training in new skill areas, as well as on group dynamism and conflict resolution, in order to continue to function effectively after the close of the programme.

Despite the prospects of continued activities by the various groups or structures, the results of community score cards administered to community members, showed mixed feelings about the extent to which activities are truly sustainable. The recurring theme from the interactions has been that the communities may require more time and a lot more engagement with ICI before they can wean themselves—with several communities suggesting about three more years. The mixed feelings and expressions about the *sustainability* of the project suggested that most of the project structures and activities could not be sustained without a carefully thought out exit/withdrawal plan, ideally one which recognises the fact that different communities have different degrees of maturity.

Further capacity strengthening of CCPCs is also likely to be an important element, since every aspect of the project revolved around them.

Lessons and good practices identified

Some of the lessons and good practices that were garnered during the evaluation exercise are summarized as follows:

- **Integrated and synergistic approach:** The integrated nature of the ICI core programme on child protection, education and community empowerment contributed to its success. The programme ensured that advocacy and awareness raising are supported by infrastructural development, an empowered community and access to income-generating activities. The synergies between the activities undertaken to achieve them (including setup of CCPCs, CPCs, IGA/CFEREC etc) worked together to drive the success achieved. In several places, building education infrastructure has been instrumental in efficiently mobilizing the targeted beneficiary communities to undertake activities to support child protection in such communities.

- **Selection of beneficiary communities**: Documents reviewed, and the qualitative interviews suggested that ICI went through a very rigorous and careful processes of selecting beneficiary communities, to ensure that interventions went to communities that really needed support. This is a good practice that needs to be considered in further works. However, we also encountered some control communities (e.g. Kossoyo in Cote d'Ivoire) which was in a fairly 'good standing' in 2015 but its progress on child protection is slowing in recent times. Thus, it is equally important that targeted communities will not only include communities with worst indicators on say child labour but that some communities that exhibit 'good standings with child protection issues' but likely to retrogress should be integrated and supported (even if minimal support) in future programmes to enable them sustain progress made on areas such as child protection.

- **The emphasis on inclusive approach for the development of community action plan as a foundation of interventions**: The emphasis placed on the development and review of community action plans ensured that development interventions, whether financed by ICI or others, are true priorities for communities. In Kwankyeabo in the Atwima Mponua District in Ghana for instance, the community made their inclusion for the school feeding programme a priority in the review their CAP. They were able to contact the District Assembly with a request to be included in the programme. This request was granted and it changed the previous situation where children went home for their meals and most times a few did not return to school, but rather went to the farm with their parents.

- **Investment in data collection to track progress**: The ICI core programme invested heavily in monitoring and evaluation to ensure that progress of achievement is effectively tracked. This helped to track how the programme was progressing at the various years. This is a great lesson and a good practice that could inform future works.

- **Finding market for IGA activities**. In both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, some communities (e.g. Bledoukangakro in cote d'Ivoire and cassava producers in Pakyi and soap producers in Saakrom in Ghana) faced challenges with finding markets for their products. In Ghana for instance, the soap producers had to sell on credit and a lot of their buyers defaulted in the payment. This has caused a decline in soap production in some communities. In the future, before the start of any IGA there should be a comprehensive market survey to establish the

presence of available markets, especially for highly perishable commodities, to prevent the situation where groups are unable to sell their produce. The situation was different for IGA groups that produced non-perishable food. For example, rice growers in Yaw Boadi had no problems in selling their produce and were unable to keep up with the demand. Also, non-farm activities could be promoted in future programmatic activities.

- **Training and selection of membership to committees:** We gathered that membership of CCPCs and CSGs has not been static, especially in Ghana. The membership of some Community Service Groups (CSG) has dropped, in Kwankyeabo for instance started with 21 members, 14 left the group and currently they have seven members who are committed and very active. Members indicated that some people joined because they thought they would be given grants to support their farming activities. When they realized that was not going to happen, they decided to leave the group. Those who continued with group activities have realized the benefits of being members. Training and selection of membership to committees should therefore emphasise more on the expectations and economic and non-economic benefits.

- **Emphasis on children's participation in programme activities**: Our interactions and the datasets reviewed revealed that the programme placed emphasis on participation of children in the community action plan and the various structures created. In many areas, children often do not take part in plans that affect them. It is therefore a good lesson and the best practice to allow children to influence decisions on child protection. The programme setting up of CPCs offered children opportunities to contribute to the programme activities.

- **Setting up of CSGs was very innovative, but more work is required to sustain them:** The setting up of the CSGs as alternatives to using children on the farm was very innovative, though some of the CSGs face challenges of non-payment of fees from clients. CSGs also helped to empower youth members in some communities. In Ghana, several communities recounted that some of the youth were not interested in engaging in farm work initially. However, through training, they became interested and agricultural activities. In cote d'Ivore, the CSGs have triggered spontaneous formation of similar groups which are in competition with those facilitated by the project, creating a critical mass of youthful labour force in agriculture—but there is enough work for the CSGs.

- **Linkage with local authorities to ensure sustainability of activities when the project finishes:** In several communities, there have been attempts to link programme to statutory institutions, or there have been conscious attempts to build communities' capacity to do so. This is a good practice to enhance the sustainability of the programme. For example, in Ghana, the Non-formal Education Department continues to support the activities of the Literacy and Numeracy groups in the beneficiary communities. They supervise, monitor and assess trainees. If they identify any problems, with the trainees the inform the trainer.

- **School uniforms can boost motivation to attend school:** The approach of supporting vulnerable children through the provision of school uniforms and other items in Ghana was effective because it motivated them to attend school regularly. A related lesson here is that the provision of school kits inadvertently caused envy among some children who did not receive the items. Perhaps, before the distribution, orientation and sensitisation meetings

on the rationale may have to be intensified to deepen understanding of community members.

- **CCPCs can add value beyond their own communities:** With the right support, CCPCs can share messaging beyond their own community. The evaluation also has sufficient evidence that the CCPCs have been instrumental in creating awareness on child labour and protection of children in neighbouring communities. Some CCPCs have started creating awareness and use the community radios to spread the knowledge about child protection to change attitudes in various communities. In Ghana for example, the advent of community radios and community information centres have allowed CCPCs in communities such as Yaw Boadi, Ahafo-Ano South District and Saakrom in Atwima Mponua district in Ghana to use the community radios to spread the knowledge about child protection to change attitudes in various communities

- **Awareness raising alone may not be enough to change attitudes and practices on child protection issues:** The evaluation has revealed that although knowledge and awareness raising on child protection is high, this has not necessarily translated into more effective practices to protect children. As such, complementary approaches need to be investigated and added on to effectively change knowledge, attitudes and practices.

- **Non-agricultural revenue generation activities are less vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations:** activities such as use of a tricycle for transportation, or solar panels, appeared more attractive to the income-generating group members than agricultural group activities, may be because of the difficulty of finding market or perhaps these activities are not affected by vicissitudes of the weather and they do not rely heavily on a particular season. One other lesson is that linking income generation activities with community groups help to promote sustainability in the eyes of members.

- **People's willingness to contribute to savings groups (VSLA):** the CFREC is a revenue generation activity that succeeded in mobilizing resources for its members wherever it was introduced. Even in places where other forms of saving and credits was put in place the beneficiaries indicated their willingness to benefit from this type of support partly because of its flexibility in contributions, low interest rate and readily availability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following recommendations have been proposed for ICI, communities and authorities:

How could ICI improve the design and implementation of future community development projects?

1. **Consider rolling out community savings groups (CFREC or VSLA) in Ghana, as well as in Côte d'Ivoire**. This is because we found CFREC to be successfully contributing to women's access to finance and women economic empowerment

2. **Improve community participation in the procurement of project equipment, specify items carefully, and ensure clear communication with communities throughout the procurement process**. In some communities, participants reported that they had not been consulted about the model or type of items purchased – for example mills, knapsack sprays and tricycles –resulting in the procurement of equipment they perceived as inappropriate or

poor quality. The evaluation team observed that some equipment was idling or had broken down, confirming this challenge. More careful specification of items prior to tender could help avoid such problems in the future.

3. **Improve data collection tools and information management systems** to ensure that all data are properly cleaned and checked in a more systematic way. This would allow for more efficient analysis and reporting, as well as facilitating the identification of challenges during project implementation.

4. **Consider complementary approaches, beyond awareness-raising sessions, to effectively change knowledge, attitudes and practices on child labour**. Despite the awareness raising activities conducted by CCPCs, knowledge, attitudes and practices still require further improvement.

5. **Consider letting ICI staff pay occasional visits to the project communities in the short-term after the end of the programme**. This is because communities felt such occasional visit to monitor progress and provide advisory/facilitation services to them will be important for the post-programme transition process.

6. **Consider improving the mobility of the child protection committee members with further provision of motorbikes**, in cases where they have to travel long distances to reach to people living in the *hard-to-reach homesteads*.

7. **Consider training CCPCs in resource mobilization with external actors to implement actions that decrease children's vulnerability across communities**. This is because despite community's ability to approach local authorities, there are many actions in the Community Action Plans that do not get implemented.

What could communities do to continue to combat child labour?

8. **CCPCs should continue to identify children without birth certificates and collaborate with authorities to ensure they can acquire them**. This is a particular challenge in Côte d'Ivoire, where children cannot enter secondary school without birth certificates.

9. **Community groups, such as savings groups (CFREC) and Community Service Groups should continue to use part of the revenue from income generating activities to support children**, for example donating funds or produce to school feeding programmes. Although it is important to note that this is not a substitute to other sources of funding.

10. **Community leadership should encourage community members who in some case delay payment Community Service Groups after using their services** helping these groups to stay afloat so that the community can continue to have access to affordable adult labour.

What local authorities do to improve the protection of children?

11. **Local authorities should continue to be responsive to community requests for assistance**, including facilitation for accessible roads, water and basic social infrastructure.

12. **Provide more housing and other resources for teachers**. This reduces absenteeism and increase regular attendance to schools.