



Annual Report

2024



International
Cocoa
Initiative



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Message from ICI Executive Director, Matthias Lange



Looking back on 2024, I recall another productive year of championing human rights and child protection, alongside our members and partners, building on the goals set out in our Strategy.

We continued to enhance our impact and expand our reach across the cocoa sector and thanks to the efforts of the collective, **ICI and its members covered 1.17 million cocoa-farming households** across West Africa with systems designed to prevent and address child labour.

Last year also saw significant advances in policy development, and while certain international frameworks, such as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D), may not be evolving as expected, it is encouraging to see that the sector continues to progress despite this. This reflects growing international recognition of the urgent need to uphold human rights and safeguard well-being throughout global supply chains.

We were also proud to play a key role in the signing of the Child Labour in Cocoa Coordinating Group (CLCCG) 2024-2029 Framework of Action. This framework brings together the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, in addition to the cocoa and chocolate industry and the US Department of Labor, to coordinate and accelerate the prevention and progressive elimination of child labour in cocoa-growing communities through improved monitoring systems, education access, strengthened social services and social protection, and household income support (see Technical Advocacy on [page 34](#)). In a similar vein, we are also driving collective action to better integrate the different systems implemented by industry (such as CLMRS) and governments (such as GCLMS and SOSTECI) to tackle child labour. We believe improved integration will enable a more efficient provision of support to cocoa farmers and their families (see Support to authorities in cocoa-producing countries on [page 36](#) for work already started in this area).

At ICI, we know that meaningful, lasting change happens when we address the full ecosystem that surrounds a child. A holistic approach remains central to the work that we do, and in 2024, our ambitious learning and research agenda continued to drive innovation.

We've seen numerous pilot projects expand into scalable programmes, offering robust evidence on what works in practice (see Research and Innovation on [page 16](#)). This continued commitment to testing, learning and adapting is vital to achieving long-term, systemic change.

We were also delighted to welcome five new members to our organisation this year: CARE International, Feastables, Kellanova, Lindt & Sprüngli, and Transcao-CI. Their addition brings fresh energy, insights and momentum to our shared mission. We are grateful to them—and to all our members, partners, and donors for their dedication and collaboration (see ICI board members, contributing partners and other donors at end 2024 on [page 42](#)). These relationships are essential to building sustainable systems that place child protection and human rights at their core.

Together, we are moving steadily toward a world where every child in cocoa-growing communities is protected, supported and given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Matthias Lange, ICI Executive Director



Snapshot of our work in 2024



In 2024,
347,018



households were covered¹ by ICI-supported CLMRS

In addition to directly supporting the implementation of these systems, we also advocate and encourage others to put them in place themselves. We believe this will help maximise scale-up, so more cocoa-farming households can receive support.

Collectively, ICI and its members covered 1.17 million households with CLMRS by September 2024.

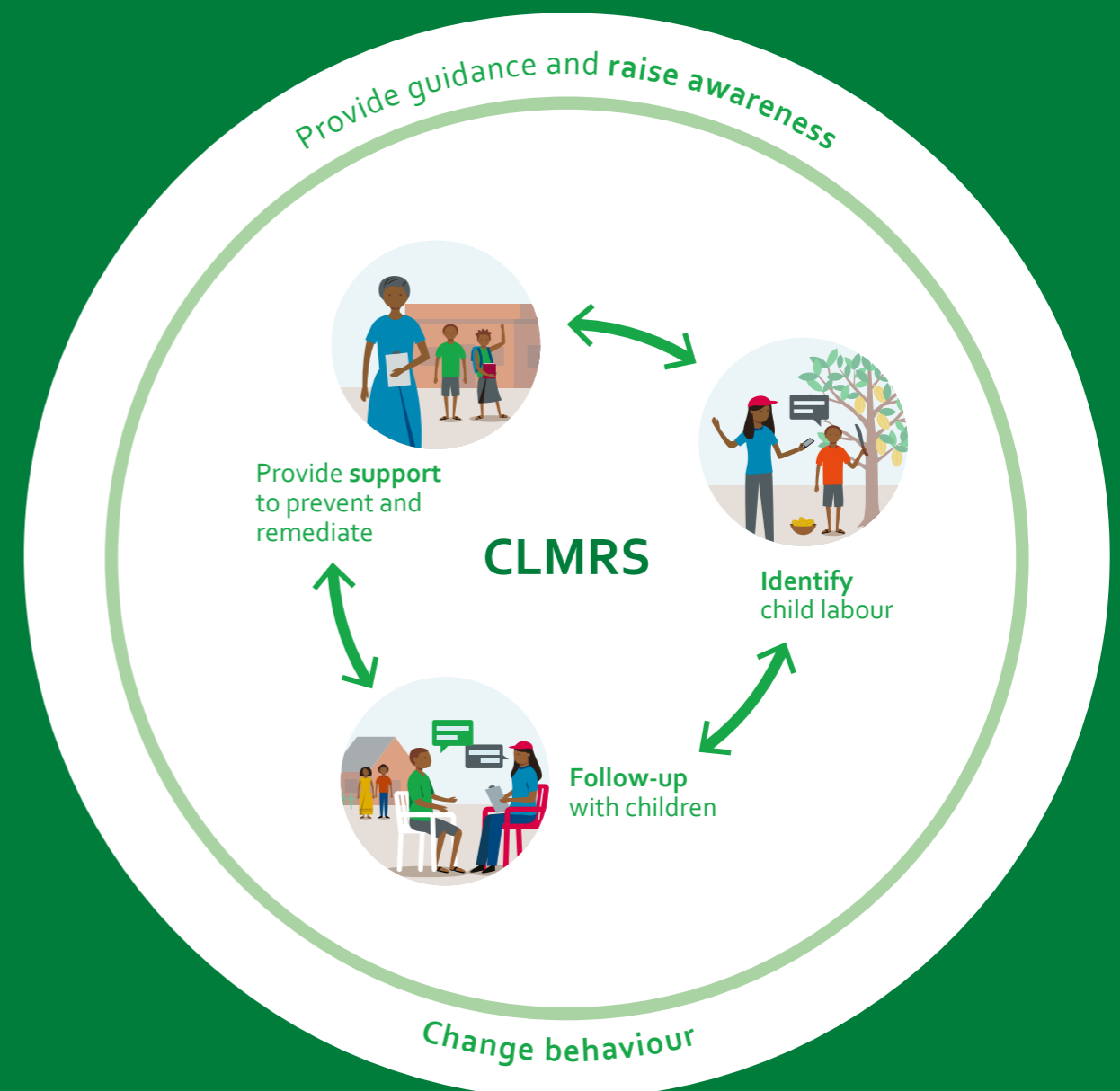
ICI-supported CLMRS, therefore, make up about 30% of the total number of households covered. The remaining 70% are covered by systems run independently by ICI members or cooperatives, showing the widespread adoption of such an approach in the sector.

¹ Covered means that a household is registered in a CLMRS, and a monitoring visit or household-level risk assessment has been done.

What is a CLMRS?

Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) are **child-centred support systems** designed to **identify children in child labour**, or at risk of child labour, put in place activities to **provide support** to improve their situation, and **follow their progress** over time. In parallel, CLMRS **raise awareness** and provide guidance to cocoa-growing households to **change behaviour**.

Each of the actions of a CLMRS contributes to guiding and supporting households through the process of behaviour change. They are part of a cyclical and iterative process, and there is no fixed order in which they must occur. Many companies are using CLMRS as part of their efforts to tackle child labour in their supply chains.



What is a child labour?



Child labour is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development” (ILO Conventions 138 and 182 refer to child labour). Not all work done by children is classified as child labour. For instance, children carrying out light, non-hazardous tasks on the family farm for a limited period of time, under supervision, and without compromising their schooling, is considered as acceptable child work. However, when activities are hazardous, such as carrying heavy loads or using sharp tools, working too many hours, or the work interferes with a child’s schooling, this is considered child labour.

By end 2024, within the systems supported by ICI:²

26% of children were found in child labour

26% of children in the system were found to be engaging in child labour.

77% of children received support

77% of all children in the system received support to prevent and address child labour.

44% stopped engaging in child labour

44% of those found in child labour were no longer in child labour after two consecutive visits.

(See *How do we measure when children are “out of child labour”* on the next page)



How do we measure when children are “out of child labour”?

Child labour is a complex problem. Even after receiving support, it is not always easy for a child to stop working definitively, especially as the risk of child labour increases as a child grows older. This is why it is important to conduct regular follow-up visits – facilitators aim to do so every six months – to check how children are getting on and determine whether further support is required.

Data collected by the CLMRS shows us that while many children found in child labour have stopped doing hazardous work by their first follow-up visit, some may be involved in child labour again by their next visit. However, if children have stopped doing hazardous tasks for at least two consecutive visits, they are much less likely to return to child labour again in the future. This is why we have chosen to look at **two consecutive follow up visits**, when measuring whether the child is out of child labour. A child is “out of child labour” if they are not in child labour at both the first and the second follow up visit.



The three most common hazardous tasks in cocoa are:³

- Carrying heavy loads
- Using sharp tools
- Working long hours

² Percentages calculated on data from the launch of the CLMRS - end 2024.

³ ICI-supported CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, 2024

Striving for impact: Support to prevent and address child labour

Child labour is a complex issue, but solutions do exist. Tackling child labour requires a comprehensive response aimed at addressing the many challenges faced by cocoa-growing households, and support can be provided to children directly, at the household level, and/or at the community level. In our drive for impact, we test different approaches to address and remediate child labour cases, while empowering farming communities and increasing child protection. Here are some of the ways ICI provided support through CLMRS in 2024.



We provide support to children by



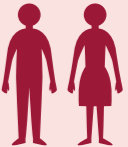
Providing school kits



Helping to establish birth certificates



Offering bridging classes to reintegrate children into the formal education system



Enrolling young adults in apprenticeship and skills training programmes

“

I didn't have the means to get (my child) a birth certificate. I know that not having a birth certificate creates obstacles for a child, they won't be able to go to school or travel. That's why I'm committed to requesting (their sister's) certificate myself at the Gouiné sub-prefecture.

Father of student in CM1, Côte d'Ivoire

”



A birth certificate is one of the administrative documents required to register a child in school and for a child to sit exams.





We provide support to the household by



Providing income support through cash transfers
(See more about our cash transfers pilot project on [page 18](#))



Providing adult literacy and numeracy programmes



Assistance in developing Income-Generating Activities (IGAs)⁴

“

For most of the women, the adult literacy classes are already helping them carry out their income-generating activities more effectively. With the knowledge they have acquired so far, some of them can even keep up with their children's studies and help them.

ICI Technical Officer managing the local adult literacy classes, Côte d'Ivoire

”

⁴ **Income-Generating Activities (IGAs)** are initiatives aimed at diversifying income for cocoa farmers by providing additional income.

We provide support to the community by



Helping set up Community Service Groups (CSGs)⁵ and providing equipment



Establishing group IGAs



Creating and/or supporting Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)⁶



Building and/or renovating school infrastructure or supplying equipment (like desks, canteens, and latrines)



“

Before the group was established our fellow farmers could not afford to hire responsible labour and therefore resorted to using their children. But now, farmers can hire us to perform those activities.

Male Community Service Group member, Côte d'Ivoire

”

⁵ **Community Service Groups (CSGs)** are labour groups made up of trained and equipped adults who provide agricultural services at an affordable rate.

⁶ **Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)** are community-based savings groups that promote saving and borrowing in communities where access to formal financial services is limited.



“

At ICI, we know that meaningful, lasting change happens when we address the full ecosystem that surrounds a child. A holistic approach remains central to the work that we do, and in 2024, our ambitious learning and research agenda continued to drive innovation.

ICI Executive Director, Matthias Lange

”

Research and Innovation



As part of our Strategy to tackle child labour in the cocoa sector, ICI manages a collective learning and research agenda to **identify and improve effective practices**, test **innovative approaches** for impact and scalability, develop **common tools** and shared metrics to advance accountability, and foster the **exchange of knowledge and learning**.

Over time, we have collaborated with our members and partners on many innovative pilot projects to test the effectiveness of new approaches. By conducting these tests on a small scale, we can make informed recommendations about what works best to prevent and address child labour, so that the most effective approaches can be scaled up.

From pilot to scale

In 2024, we published the findings from several pilot projects aimed at testing new strategies and approaches to combat child labour and forced labour in the cocoa sector. We worked to implement these findings or encourage their adoption by other partners, fostering collaboration and innovation across the sector.



The positive effects of cash transfers to tackle child labour

Poverty is one of the root causes of child labour. Unable to access affordable adult labour, some farmers resort to using their children to work on the farm, when they have no other option. To address this, we investigated the feasibility of providing cash transfers, with an incentive to spend on adult labour, to reduce child labour in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire.

Project summary



CFA 50,000 + Incentive to hire labour

*Subsidy provided if a household spent part of the cash to hire a Community Service Group (CSGs)




15 communities in Côte d'Ivoire





584 cocoa farming families


Key findings

 **Recipient households spent most of the cash transfer on adult labour**, followed by agriculture, food, and children's education.



 **Men and women spent differently**; women spent more on food and children's education than men.

 **The pilot boosted demand for Community Service Groups (CSGs)**, which remained high, even after the cash transfer project ended. Groups were more profitable, new members were recruited and new CSGs sprung up to meet demand.

 **Children were better protected:** child labour decreased and households spent more on education, health and food.



“

Before the group was established our fellow farmers could not afford to hire responsible labour and therefore resorted to using their children. But now, farmers can hire us to perform those activities.

Male Community Service Group member, Côte d'Ivoire

”

Challenges

In some communities, the project raised envy and resentment amongst community members who were not selected to receive a cash transfer.

Recommendations

- **Communicate openly and transparently** about the selection process.
- **Encourage inclusive decision-making** within households to ensure women can bring their priorities to the table.
- **Support adult labour groups** to meet the high demand and deliver quality services.
- **Upscale this approach** and include it in systems to prevent and address child labour.

Toolbox



[Learning Report: Innovative strategies to stimulate adult labour and tackle child labour](#)

[Learning into Action: Cash transfers to tackle child labour in cocoa](#)

[Implementation guide: Cash transfers to promote access to adult labour in cocoa communities](#)



Trends show that **cash transfers are increasingly being used as part of large-scale strategic programs implemented by industry**. Many ICI members also use labour groups.

To learn more about this innovative pilot, scan here:



Addressing forced labour risks in cocoa-growing communities

Forced labour, like child labour, remains a critical human rights concern in cocoa-growing communities across West Africa. A few years ago, ICI launched a pilot project to better understand and manage the risks associated with forced labour affecting both adults and children. Many of the tools and strategies tested in this pilot were refined and shared in 2024, supporting their adoption within the sector.

Project summary

The pilot was implemented in 18 communities (13 in Ghana, 5 in Côte d'Ivoire), where a range of tools and methodologies were tested, including:



Contextualised data collection questionnaires



Employment contract templates



Awareness-raising materials on forced labour and child protection



Forced labour policy template for cooperatives



Context-specific grievance mechanisms and community mediation



Having received these materials (i.e. awareness-raising materials on forced labour, including a flipbook, posters, etc.) I want to be part of the campaign... I will present them to visitors who come to my office... to eliminate child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in our district.

Female participant in workshop on forced labour risks and grievance mechanisms, Ghana



What is forced labour in cocoa?

Forced labour is defined as work that is done involuntarily and under the threat of penalty. In practice, this means that both an absence of consent and the threat of penalty are required to make it a case of forced labour.

In cocoa, common indicators for:

- An absence of consent includes workers doing tasks that were not specified at the time of recruitment, working for longer hours than was specified, or performing tasks for other employers.
- The menace of penalty includes withholding a salary or retaining identity documents.

All stakeholders involved need to understand what forced labour looks like in cocoa today, and the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers.

For children, forced labour is understood as working because of a penalty (or the threat of one) from someone other than the parent. This could be a threat to the child or to the parent. At times children are considered in forced labour because their parents themselves are in forced labour.

Key findings



Awareness is low: Many community members had a limited understanding of labour rights and what constitutes forced labour, underlining the need for awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.



Formal contracts reduce risk for workers and employers: Disputes about working conditions and pay are common due to traditionally informal employment relationships. Signing formal contracts provides clarity on rights and responsibilities for both workers and employers.

Grievance mechanisms can work: This is especially true when they're set up at the community level, are inclusive and representative, and have been trained on mediation. In Ghana, Community Labour Protection Committees⁷ were trusted and effective in resolving disputes such as those relating to unpaid wages or working conditions and formalising work agreements.

Successful collaboration: Government partnerships, such as the collaboration with the Commission for Human Rights in Ghana and the MoU with the CNLTP in Côte d'Ivoire, have helped to leverage expertise and resources, build capacity at all levels, and provide legitimacy to the initiatives and mechanisms implemented.

⁷ **Community Labour Protection Committees** are groups bringing together a diverse range of individuals from the community who are trained, supported and able to refer cases they cannot solve to a mandated higher authority.

Challenges & Recommendations

- **Focus on preventive measures:** Employment contracts help provide clarity on working conditions and roles and are a means of addressing vulnerability.
- **Awareness raising is key:** Tailored cocoa-specific awareness-raising materials (like radio spots, leaflets, videos, and illustrated contracts) can educate communities on the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers.
- **Community grievance mechanisms are well placed to raise awareness and manage minor disputes,** but severe cases may need specialist support and risk reprisals. Strengthening community committees and links with effective referral channels can better manage these severe cases.
- **Keeping track of concerns requires care:** community grievance committees need support to keep good records for case management and reporting purposes.
- **Community grievance mechanisms have helped identify and manage many types of labour rights abuses,** but ongoing efforts are needed to support individuals in particularly vulnerable situations.
- **Achieving sustainability for community-based structures presents a unique challenge:** It is essential to support community ownership, build local capacities, and connect them with supply chains and government frameworks for ongoing oversight and active engagement.



Toolbox



[ICI awareness-raising material on forced labour](#)

[Awareness-raising materials: Protecting labour rights through grievance mechanisms](#)

Visual and written [employment contract templates](#)

[Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices \(KAP\) survey on labour rights](#)

[Learning into action: Community-based grievance mechanisms to address forced labour risks](#)



In 2024, ICI set up **95 grievance mechanisms**, **3,463 people were trained on grievance mechanisms** and **2,629 people were trained on forced labour**. These kinds of practical activities to assess, prevent and address forced labour risks have been put into action by many ICI members.

To learn more about our work to combat forced labour, scan here:



The effects of reading clubs on children in cocoa communities

A reading club initiative, known as the “Boîte à Livres”, allows children to borrow books and participate in workshops designed to strengthen their reading skills. ICI has been piloting this initiative in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d’Ivoire, with encouraging results.



Project summary



33 reading clubs were set up in primary schools in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d’Ivoire



Children participate in weekly interactive workshops run by trained facilitators



Children borrow books to read at home



Children participate in inter-community reading competitions to win prizes

Key findings



Reading skills for participating students improved significantly.



481 out of 765 students in the treatment group participated in Boîte à Livres activities, including borrowing books.



Girls participated in the activities as much as the boys.



The children in higher school grades participated more in activities.



Children who participated were the most skilled at baseline.



“

I’ve seen an improvement in my daughter’s grades, reading makes it easier to learn her lessons.

Male cocoa farmer and parent of a girl participating in the Boîte à Livres activities, Côte d’Ivoire

”

Challenges

- The programme was initially more attractive to children with already higher reading skills, which may have impacted the motivation of those with lower reading levels to engage.
- There was demand from a greater number of children than the programme could accommodate.
- Participants were not made aware of the link between the reading clubs and the fight against child labour, resulting in minimal impact on behaviour change.

Recommendations

- **Integrate a child labour component into the project design:** Combining the Boîte à Livres with awareness-raising on child labour would help caretakers connect the reading club and the fight against child labour, contributing to encouraging behaviour change.
- **Encourage everyone to participate:** Address barriers to ensure children most in need/least likely to join participate in the reading club activities.



While there was a slight decrease in child labour among children participating in Boîte à Livres activities, the difference was too small to attribute directly to the project. However, the results indicate an opportunity: **integrating child labour components into the project and increasing efforts to onboard children most in need could enhance its impact.**

To learn more about this innovative pilot, scan here:



Pilot approaches with potential

We also explored various approaches that we believe could be effectively scaled up within the sector, making a significant impact. The child-friendly spaces pilot project exemplifies this.



How child-friendly spaces help protect children in cocoa-farming communities

Child-Friendly Spaces are supervised environments where children can come together outside of school hours to play, relax, express themselves, participate in choosing and developing activities, feel supported and develop skills. Recently, we piloted the use of Child-Friendly Spaces in Côte d'Ivoire to assess their feasibility and effectiveness at protecting children from harm, including hazardous child labour.

Project summary



3 communities identified and equipped with child-friendly spaces



Facilitators recruited and trained



Community awareness-raising campaign



Centres were open on days when the local school was closed



This project has enabled our children to learn outside school hours. For us, it's a daycare centre for our children. When we're out in the field, we know that our children are safe. The child-friendly space has helped us to guide our children to listen better and show more respect.

Mother of child who attended the child-friendly space, Côte d'Ivoire



Key findings

Attendance was higher amongst children in child labour, and children attending the spaces were more likely to stop working.



NB: The number of children followed up is too small to draw robust conclusions on the impact on child labour.

Child-friendly spaces respond to a need for childcare, including while parents are in the fields.

Parents and children alike valued the child-friendly spaces. Children liked the games and activities on offer, while parents appreciated their importance in supporting children to develop life skills. Parents appreciate the concept and pedagogical approach of child-friendly spaces.

Challenges

- Our research revealed that a greater number of boys attended the child-friendly spaces compared to girls.
- The child-friendly spaces require long-term investment by the government or investors in order to be sustainable.

Recommendations

- Scale up this approach and incorporate it into systems aimed at preventing and addressing child labour.
- When setting up and equipping child-friendly spaces, ensure infrastructure and equipment meet the communities' and children's needs.
- Ensure the sustainability of this and future projects by securing long-term funding for facilitators.

Toolbox



[Learning report: How can child-friendly spaces help protect children in cocoa-growing communities](#)

[Implementation guide: Child-friendly spaces in cocoa-growing communities](#)

[Learning into Action: Child-friendly spaces in cocoa communities](#)



Child-friendly spaces have clear benefits for children, and while the communities involved demonstrated strong engagement, it was challenging for them and other local stakeholders to fully take on the ongoing costs of implementation. This type of initiative could be an interesting opportunity for investment from industry and other partners.

To learn more about this innovative pilot, scan here:



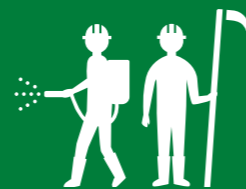
In the pipeline

Reflecting on these innovative pilots, many of which are being scaled, we also anticipate the impact of those initiated in 2024. We are optimistic that the projects we are currently testing will make a meaningful difference in cocoa-growing communities.



Protecting children from pesticides

Over the last decade, there appears to be an increase in the use of pesticides in cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which may have contributed to a rise in children's exposure, raising concerns within the sector (NORC, 2020).

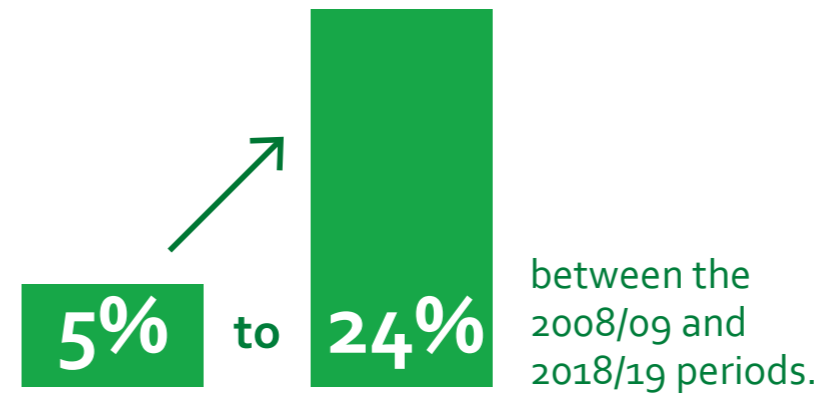


While knowledge about pesticides and their risks is generally high, research by ICI identified some important gaps: women and other community members are often excluded from training on pesticides and children often risk exposure off farms, for example through contact with toxic empty containers and used protective equipment, or when chemicals are applied in family vegetable gardens. In 2024, our pilot sought to fill these gaps by providing targeted training to community groups involving women (VSLAs) and to adult labour groups.

Project aim

The goal of this pilot project is to evaluate the effectiveness of these activities in reducing children's exposure to agrochemicals, make necessary adjustments for improvement, and explore how the approach can be expanded to reach more communities in the future.

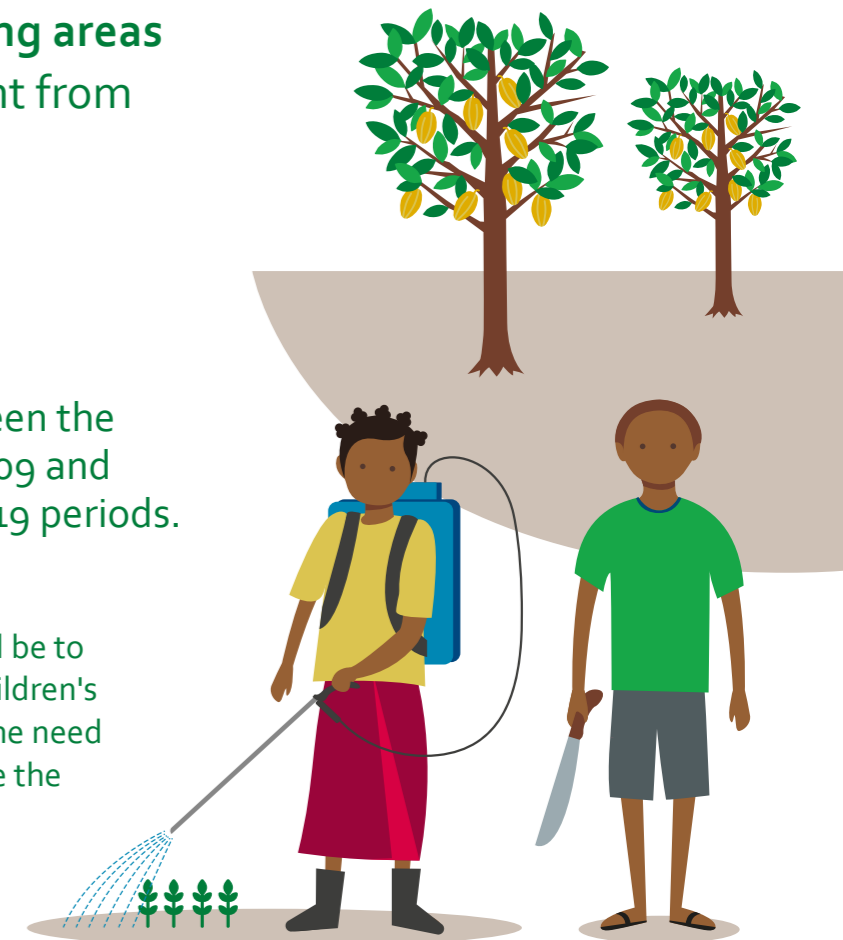
According to a study by NORC (2020), the **proportion of children exposed to pesticides in cocoa-producing areas in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire** went from



“ We suggested that the first step should be to raise awareness. If parents, who are children's first contacts, are not made aware of the need to protect them, children will always be the victims of bad behaviour.

Participant in pesticides workshop, Côte d'Ivoire

”



New resources

Formative research

A comprehensive study is underway to explore how children are exposed to pesticides, current practices among various stakeholders, and the barriers and opportunities for effective intervention. Findings will be published in a report in 2025.

Awareness-raising materials



Videos encouraging behaviour change to protect children from pesticide exposure, and a radio campaign are being developed.

Capacity building

New, innovative training modules are being developed and tested with Community Service Groups and Village Savings and Loans Association members in both countries. An evaluation report and the final training materials will be released in 2025.

Working groups

A working group was established in Côte d'Ivoire and a workshop held in Ghana, bringing together experts from public health, agriculture, child protection, law enforcement, and other key sectors, are supporting the definition of pilot interventions. In collaboration with these national experts, ICI will continue to advocate for systemic solutions, including improved labelling and the safe disposal of empty containers.



Latest tools and publications

Our open-access Knowledge Hub brings together the latest research, reports, and tools related to child labour and forced labour risk in the cocoa sector. In 2024, we developed many different briefs, tools and guides.

Learning into Action

A new series of briefs that present effective approaches to address child labour and forced labour, and provide digestible learnings and best practices from our experience in cocoa-growing communities in West Africa. The following briefs are now available on our website.

Child-friendly spaces in cocoa-growing communities

Provides guidance on how to design and implement safe, inclusive spaces that support children's development and help reduce exposure to child labour.



Community-based grievance mechanisms to address forced labour risks

Outlines key steps and considerations for establishing local mechanisms that allow community members to safely report and address forced labour risks in cocoa-growing areas.

Strengthening access to adult labour in cocoa-growing communities

Highlights practical strategies for setting up Community Service Groups, improving access to affordable adult labour, and reducing reliance on child labour.



Recruiting and retaining female field agents

Outlines targeted actions to improve recruitment, retention, and support for women in field-level roles within sustainability programmes, promoting greater gender balance.



Bridging classes in cocoa-growing communities

Provides guidance on how to roll out bridging classes that help children who have missed school reintegrate into formal education.

To view these resources, scan here:



Useful Tools



Implementation guides are practical guides that help those interested in implementing a specific initiative. In 2024, we developed:

- [Child-friendly spaces in cocoa-growing communities](#), and
- [Cash transfers to promote access to adult labour in cocoa communities](#)



Awareness-raising materials can be used to prevent and address child labour in cocoa-growing communities. Last year, we produced the following:

- A film and three radio spots to encourage the use of community-based [grievance mechanisms](#).
- The ICI awareness-raising kit on child safeguarding and child protection has been updated.
- A film and three radio spots to encourage the use of Ghana's Helpline of Hope.
- The [ICI awareness-raising kit on forced labour](#) has been updated.



[Visual and written employment contract templates and witness checklists](#) that can be used in the context of cocoa farming.



[A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices \(KAP\) survey on Labour Rights and a guidance document on how to use it for cocoa producers and their workers.](#)



[A factsheet on Human Rights Due Diligence \(HRDD\) in the cocoa sector for retailers.](#)



View these resources on our Knowledge Hub, scan here:



Technical advocacy

A key part of our Strategy, advocacy activities remained at the forefront of our actions in 2024. We continued to engage key stakeholders to develop and promote effective policies and standards, facilitating multistakeholder collaboration to harmonise approaches and foster a supportive, enabling environment, while advancing our evidence-based insights on child and forced labour.

Policy and Standards

EU legislation advocacy

- **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D):** The CS3D was officially adopted in July 2024. ICI, as part of the Cocoa Coalition, followed the trilogue negotiations and issued a joint statement. The Cocoa Coalition also engaged in bilateral meetings with certain Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and European Commission officials.
- **Forced labour:** ICI also followed the trilogue negotiation and contributed to public comment on the EU Forced Labour Regulation, which was adopted in December 2024.

National Action Plan Review

- **In Ghana:** ICI played a crucial role in convening of meetings for the review of the National Plan of Action 2 (2017-2021) and the development of the NAP 3, the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023-2027).
- **In Côte d'Ivoire:** As a member of the scientific committee supporting the development of the 2024-2029 NAP, ICI actively contributed to its content. The NAP will be officially launched in 2025.



Implementation support for ARS-1000 (African Regional Standard for Sustainable Cocoa)

- **In Ghana:** ICI assisted in the finalisation of the operational guide, its accompanying tools and its promotion to partners. For example, the COCOBOD Child Labour Desk team and cocoa extension agents in Assin Foso were trained on the child labour component of ARS-1000 and how to operationalise it in the on-going CS-CLMS pilot in Assin Foso.
- **In Côte d'Ivoire:** ICI took part in the process of developing the operational guide, its accompanying tools, and presenting it to partners.
- Additionally, ICI developed a Briefing document, available on our Knowledge Hub, describing how the ARS1000-1 standard aligns with HRDD principles and how members can support producers to be compliant with its requirements.

Standards and Policy Development Support in Cameroon

ICI engaged in a policy dialogue in Cameroon to support the development of appropriate standards and policies. This included:

- Support and advice to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MINTSS) and the Committee for the Fight Against Child Labour on the development of the list of hazardous tasks in the agriculture sector of Cameroon (comparative analysis of hazardous tasks list in Cameroon Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire).
- Technical support on the prevalence survey on child labour, conducted by the National Institute for Statistics (NIS), the MINTSS and the FAO.

2024



Multistakeholder collaboration

Technical advice to the Alliance for Sustainable Cocoa Focus Group on Standards and Traceability

In December 2024, ICI presented at the EU Sustainable Cocoa's Initiative multistakeholder dialogue ("Cocoa Talks"). ICI shared an update on the state of play, remaining gaps and desired next steps for the integration of private and public Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems, National Traceability Systems and National Child Protection Case Management Systems.

Active engagement in European Sustainable Cocoa Platforms (ISCOs)

- ICI continued to actively engage in all European ISCOs. In 2024, ICI officially became a member of the French Sustainable Cocoa Platform (IFCD/FRISCO).
- Building on alignment from previous years, there was increased interest in data-sharing of member reporting data, which was expanded in 2024 to also cover FRISCO members.
- In addition, GISCO added indicators on forced labour as part of its monitoring process, aligned with those from ICI.

Child Labour in Cocoa Coordination Group (CLCCG) Support

ICI supported the development of a new Framework of Action to contribute to the prevention and progressive elimination of child labour in cocoa-growing communities of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana under the CLCCG, both as a Technical Coordinating Partner and as a Technical Expert Organisation, alongside the ILO and UNICEF. The new Framework of Action was signed on 27 November, by the government of Côte d'Ivoire, the government of Ghana, the U.S. Department of Labor as well as the international cocoa and chocolate industry, represented by WCF.

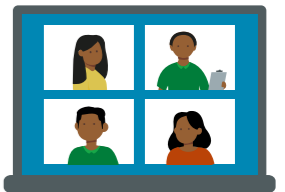
In its role, ICI has also coordinated the drafting of revised Bylaws for the CLCCG, which are available [here](#).

Knowledge exchange

Webinars

ICI organised the following webinars in 2024:

- "Stimulating access to adult labour to reduce child labour" an ICI Learning webinar (30 May)
- "Child friendly spaces" an ICI Learning webinar (3 June)
- "Landscape approaches for tackling child labour: to launch the compilation of case studies and its implications" an ICI Learning webinar (29 October)
- "HRDD for retailers", an online webinar co-organised with the ISCOs (10 September)



ICI participated in the webinar:

- "Advancing Cocoa Sustainability: addressing the sector's most critical challenges", organised by the UNDP's Food and Agricultural Commodity Systems Community (30 October)

Conferences and events

- "Unpacking the relationship between income and child labour in the cocoa sector", co-organised with KIT as part of the Amsterdam Cocoa Week (5 Feb)
- "Operationalising HRDD in the cocoa sector", in the margins of the ICCO World Cocoa conference in Brussels, (24 April)
- "Lessons and good practices on a smart mix of measures in the agricultural sector", a snapshot session as part of the UN Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva, (26 November)

Other meetings and engagements

- "Introduction to forced labour in cocoa and interventions to tackle it", ISCO Child Labour working group meeting (10 October)
- "ICI Member Services Training: Protective Community Index", in Abidjan (28 November)
- "Collective action to tackle child labour and forced labour in cocoa: ICI member commitments and accountability", organised by the ECLT Foundation in Geneva (10 December)

Toolbox



The following documents were developed by ICI to support our members and others who may be interested in understanding policy developments relative to the sector.

1. [ICI Briefing: ARS1000 and Human Rights Due Diligence](#)
2. [ICI Briefing: USDOL Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2023](#)
3. [ICI summary of the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour 2023 – 2027](#)
4. [ICI Summary of the EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence](#)
5. [ICI, a key partner for retailers: Human Rights Due Diligence in the cocoa sector – focusing on child labour and forced labour](#)

Support to authorities in cocoa-producing countries

Message from ICI Africa Director, Euphrasie Aka

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We are proud of the strong and effective systems we have established in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which continue to drive meaningful progress in the fight against child labour and forced labour.

Building on this foundation, our focus in 2024 was to extend our reach to new cocoa-producing countries. By engaging in new origins, we aim to support more cocoa-growing communities and accelerate the development of sustainable, systemic solutions across the sector.

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As part of this commitment, we deepened our engagement in high-level policy dialogues across the region, particularly in Cameroon, where we supported efforts to strengthen standards and policies on child labour and forced labour.

We provided strategic advice and technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MINTSS) and the Committee for the Fight Against Child Labour, notably contributing to the development of a comprehensive list of hazardous tasks in the agricultural sector. This work was informed by a comparative analysis of hazardous task lists from Cameroon, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire, helping to ensure alignment with international best practices.

Our technical expertise was also instrumental in the implementation of a national prevalence survey on child labour, conducted in partnership with the National Institute for Statistics (NIS), MINTSS, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This survey plays a vital role in generating reliable data to inform national strategies and drive targeted, evidence-based interventions.

We also worked to strengthen national monitoring systems by raising awareness about the links between Cameroon's National Child Labour Monitoring System (SOSTECAM) and the Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS). Through a comparative analysis of various monitoring frameworks, we identified opportunities to improve system interoperability and enhance the overall effectiveness of child protection mechanisms.

In Nigeria, we focused on capacity building by delivering a three-day training on child labour and forced labour in Lagos. This session aimed to equip ICI's local members with practical knowledge and tools to support their operational efforts. We have also provided technical support within our members' supply chains in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Through sustained engagement with governments and national institutions, ICI remains committed to promoting strong policy frameworks and systemic approaches to address child labour and forced labour. We are proud of our achievements in 2024 and look forward to continuing our mission to protect children and support sustainable cocoa-growing communities across Africa and beyond.

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Message from ICI Country Director for Ghana, Mike Arthur

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In 2024, we made significant strides in our commitment to combating child labour and forced labour in Ghana's cocoa-growing communities.

ICI played a pivotal role in convening vital meetings to review the National Action Plan 2 (2017-2021) and the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023-2027). ICI has been actively supporting the latter's implementation, which is now fully operational.



Our achievements include finalising the ARS-1000 operational guide and its tools, and ICI played a role in introducing the tools to partners. Notably, we trained key stakeholders, such as the COCOBOD Child Labour Desk team and cocoa extension agents in Assin Foso, to effectively implement the child labour components of ARS-1000 and how to operationalise it in the on-going Cocoa Sector-Child Labour Monitoring System (CS-CLMS) pilot in Assin Foso.

We also collaborated with the Social Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to enhance visibility of the Toll-Free Helpline of Hope, to raise awareness and address complaints accordingly.

Additionally, we provided crucial support to the Child Labour Unit to revise the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for child labour and forced labour. We also collaborated with them to further develop the Ghana Child Labour Monitoring System (GCLMS) for better data collection and the interoperability of systems such as the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations Child Labour Monitoring System, the Ministry of

Gender, Children and Social Protection's Social Welfare Integrated Management System, COCOBOD's Cocoa Management System, as well as private sector's CLMRS. Our efforts included developing common indicators and technical support for standard operating procedures.

Furthermore, we conducted training sessions for selected staff from the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, as well as the Minerals Commission, focusing on issues related to child and forced labour.

While we're proud of the progress made this year, we recognise that much work still needs to be done. We remain confident in our ability to continue making impactful changes and strive toward a future where all child and human rights are respected in the cocoa-growing communities of Ghana.

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Message from ICI Country Director for Côte d'Ivoire, Mel Alain Didier Lath

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Over the past year, we have made meaningful progress in our mission to protect children in cocoa-growing communities, and I am proud of the dedication and impact we have achieved in Côte d'Ivoire.

In 2024, ICI contributed to developing the 2024–2028 National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour. As a member of the scientific committee, we helped shape its content and ensure alignment with national and international benchmarks. The plan will be launched in June 2025, and we look forward to supporting its implementation.



We also worked closely with the government and the Conseil du Café-Cacao to promote greater coherence between child labour monitoring and due diligence systems (the CLMRS and the Système d'Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d'Ivoire (SOSTECI)), and the national cocoa traceability system. This included work to align the indicators used for social traceability, in addition to supporting the integration of child labour data from CLMRS into the national traceability system. Furthermore, we contributed to the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to facilitate the systematic integration of private sector data into SOSTECI. To this end, we participated in key workshops with national and international stakeholders, including the National Monitoring Committee (CNS), CCC, Directorate for the Fight Against Child Labour (DLTE), World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), Ministry for Women, the Family and Children (MFFE), Ministry of Education (MEPS), the Prime Minister's Office, International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, and Save the Children.

A significant step this year was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the General Directorate of Social Protection to support the creation of Child Protection Committees and the management of serious child protection cases.

Capacity-building remained central to our work. ICI supported training for social workers, civil society organisations, magistrates, police officers, and CCC operational agents on child labour, forced labour, trafficking, and victim referral. We also trained SOSTECI departmental committees in Vavoua, Issia, Zoukougbeu, Daloa and Guiglo, often leading training sessions and providing financial and technical support.

We are proud of what has been achieved, but we are equally aware of the work ahead. Our commitment remains strong, and our determination even stronger. We will continue to act with urgency and purpose for cocoa-growing communities.

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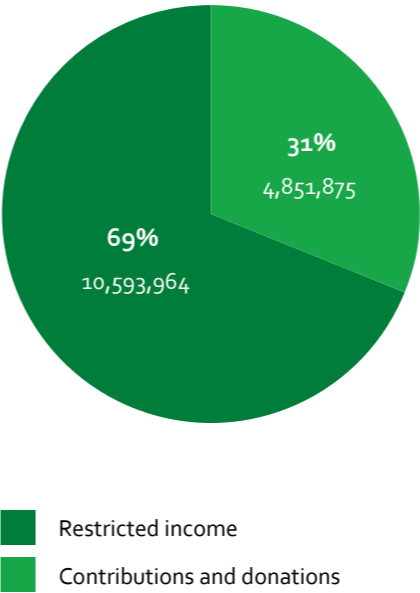
Financial Results

Several new members, in addition to new project contracts, contributed to a total revenue of just over CHF 15.4 m in 2024 (in comparison to just over CHF 14.5 m in 2023). Approximately one third of this revenue is from member contributions that serve to implement the operational plan of our strategy, and two thirds represents restricted income relating to specific projects.

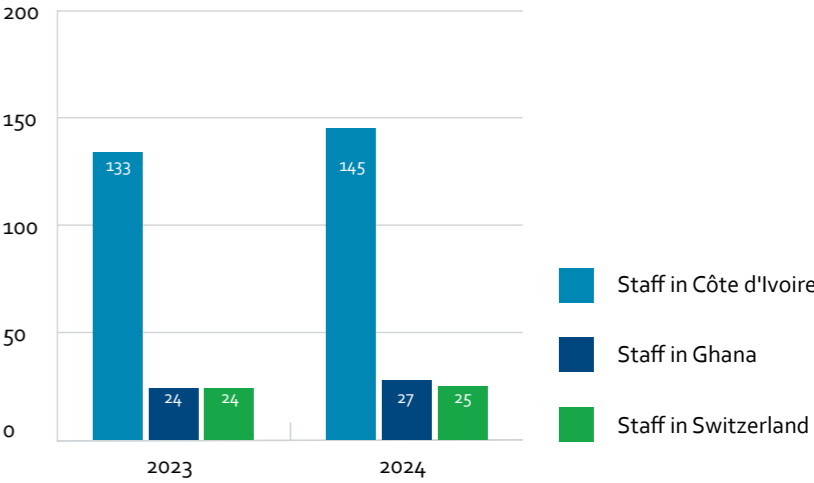
2024 financial statement

CHF	
Revenue	
Member contributions (Core funds)	4,851,875
Restricted income for use on specific projects (Project funds)	10,593,964
Total Revenue	15,445,839
Expenditure	
Activities and operations supported by Core funds	5,089,810
Activities supported by Core funds	3,135,976
Operations supported by Core funds	1,953,834
Activities and operations supported by Project funds	10,542,209
Restricted programme activities	9,142,332
Indirect costs to support restricted programme activities	1,399,877
Total Expenditure	15,632,019
Results before non-operating income / Expense and use of reserves	- 186,180
Miscellaneous other income / (expense)	- 52,003
Net use of reserves	238,183
Final results	0

Revenue



Staff figures



New members



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Welcoming four new corporate members—small and large companies—from various regions, including the US, Europe, and West Africa, along with one civil society member, strengthens our collective impact. We also expanded the ICI Board in 2024, adding Lindt and Sprüngli as an industry Board Member and Care International as a new non-industry Board member.

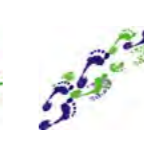
We are also pleased to have a Learning Advisory Group now represented on the ICI Board, which helps support and shape ICI's research and innovation work. These additions signify an increasing commitment to addressing child labour and forced labour across value chains, further establishing our position as a trusted partner for collaboration and shared learning.

ICI Director for Policy and Partnerships, Sarah Dekkiche

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ICI board members, contributing partners and other donors end 2024

Abou Camille
Individual farmer
representative



Edward Asiedu
ICI's Learning
Advisory Group
representative



Other donors



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Board advisors



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