



Putting Children

First



International
COCOA
Initiative

About ICI

Founded in 2002, the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is the leading organisation tackling child labour and forced labour in the cocoa sector of West Africa, with offices in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Switzerland.

It unites the forces of the cocoa and chocolate industry, civil society, farming communities, governments, international organisations and donors, leading a collective journey towards thriving cocoa-growing communities within a sustainable and responsibly managed cocoa supply chain. See the section on **ICI members, partners and other donors** on page 5, to learn more.



Child labour and forced labour in cocoa

Child labour and forced labour are recognised as the most salient human rights issues present in the cocoa supply chain.

The vast majority of cocoa in West Africa is grown by smallholder farmers. These households face the realities of rural poverty such as a scarcity of land, food insecurity, limited access to quality

education, lack of access to drinking water, and inadequate health services, which all increase the risk of child labour and forced labour.

Child Labour

Child labour is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as any work that mentally, physically, socially or morally endangers or harms children, that interferes with their education or deprives them of their childhood, their potential or their dignity.

Almost all child labour in the cocoa sector occurs on the family farm and

usually involves children helping out their parents by performing tasks that are often hazardous.

According to a study done by NORC at the University of Chicago (2018/19), more than 1.5 million children are estimated to be involved in child labour in the cocoa growing areas of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Top 3 hazardous tasks



Carrying heavy loads



Using sharp tools



Harvesting overhead

Forced Labour

Forced labour is defined by the ILO as “work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily.”

According to estimates by the Walk Free Foundation (2018), forced labour affects less than 1% of children working in cocoa-growing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and less than 0.4% of adults working in cocoa in these countries.

Cases can often involve deception and manipulation, such as workers doing work they did not originally agree to or having their identity papers taken from them, in addition to physical violence or its threat.

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

Our work

We work together with our members and partners to improve the lives of children and adults in cocoa-growing communities and to prevent and address the risks of child labour and forced labour.

We innovate, catalyse and support the development, implementation and scale-up of effective policies and practices that promote child rights and prevent and address child labour and forced labour.

Operational Support

Effective strategies exist to protect and promote the rights of children and adults in cocoa-growing communities.

A key part of our work is supporting the cocoa sector to adopt and scale up practices that are proven to work.

We do this by:

- Directly implementing programmes to tackle child labour and forced labour, together with our members and partners.
- Supporting actors across the cocoa sector including cocoa and chocolate industry players, civil society organisations, and national authorities in producing countries to put in place effective practices themselves, by providing advice, tools and training.

Learning & Innovation

We conduct research, and we develop, test, evaluate, and share new innovations to advance the scale up of action against child and forced labour in the cocoa supply chain.

Child labour and forced labour are complex issues. We know that to protect children and workers, these issues must first be understood, and solutions must be grounded in evidence.

Policies & Practices

We work to achieve strong national and international policies and standards to ensure a supportive enabling environment in the cocoa sector, where the activities of all players are aligned.

For example, it is important that policies in cocoa-producing countries support access to quality education, healthcare, and other social benefits; that policies in cocoa-consuming countries drive good business practices; and that industry standards help companies to implement practices that tackle child labour and forced labour.

We do this through our technical advocacy work, in addition to our activities to strengthen the capacity of government stakeholders in cocoa-producing countries.

ICI Members & Partners

Our members include cocoa and chocolate companies, farmer organisations, certification bodies, workers unions, and other civil society organisations.

List as of 1 December 2023. For most recent, visit: www.cocoainitiative.org/about-us/our-members



The ICI Board is made up of both industry and non-industry members. Major UN bodies are represented as Advisors (ILO, OHCHR, UNICEF).



What works to tackle child labour?

Since 2007, we have worked closely with cocoa-farming communities, supporting them to identify their needs and contribute to their own solutions.

We've also helped reinforce capacities at different points in the cocoa supply chain, allowing businesses to manage the risk of child labour responsibly.

Once a child is identified as being in, or at risk of, child labour, support needs to be provided.

This can be tailored to the individual, the household or the community level and can include things like improving access to quality education, supporting other income generating activities or women's empowerment.

When effective interventions carried out over the long term (through Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (see page 7 for more information), community development activities, and other similar approaches), we have found that child labour can be reduced by 1/3 in cocoa communities.

Prevention & remediation



Construction of education facilities (new schools, classrooms, canteens, toilet blocks and wells)



Provision of school kits



Annual registrations to school, bridging classes, tutoring, and apprenticeships

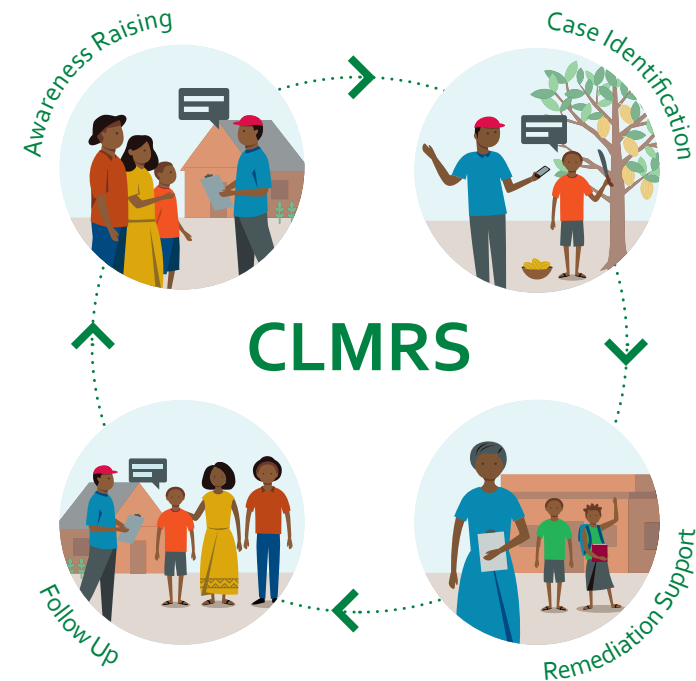


Village Savings and Loan Associations, income-generating activities and farmer support groups

Child Labour Monitoring & Remediation Systems (CLMRS)

Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) identify, prevent and address cases of child labour in a way that conform to established principles of human rights due diligence.

Originally developed by the ILO, ICI adapted the CLMRS to the cocoa industry and it is now widely adopted and accepted as industry best practice.



- **Raising awareness** on child labour and resulting harm amongst farmers, children, and members of the wider community.
- **Case identification** Identifying children in child labour through an active monitoring process, using standardized data collection tools.
- **Providing both prevention and remediation** Support to children in child labour, and others at risk, and documenting the support provided.
- **Following-up** with children identified in child labour to monitor their status on a regular basis until they have stopped engaging in child labour.

Want to learn more?

ICI's principle of shared responsibility means that all actors in the cocoa and chocolate industry are encouraged to contribute to a better future for children in cocoa-growing households; whether you are part of the cocoa industry, a civil society organisation, a government representative or just want to learn more about our work, we would love to hear from you.

Our contact details can be found below.

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