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**Daily life, social norms and child labour in the cocoa-producing communities.**

***Socio-ethnological research carried out in Adansi South (New Edubiase), Assin North (Assin Foso) and Wassa Amenfi East (Akuropon) districts, Ghana.***

**Clarisse BUONO**

**Collaboration: Martina Odonkor**

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*The opinions expressed in this report are exclusively those of the consultant.*

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This report is an abridged version of the final report submitted to ICI on 31 October 2011

## 1 Introduction

This study was commissioned by the International Cocoa Initiative foundation (ICI), established under Swiss law. It follows a study on the same topic carried out in Côte d'Ivoire from March to November 2010.<sup>1</sup>

In order to improve its interventions and better target its strategic approach in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, ICI has endeavoured to obtain socio-ethnological information about cocoa-producing communities in these two countries, the highest cocoa producers in the world. The methodology and some of the results of this study carried out in Ghana, are similar to those of the Côte d'Ivoire study. In order to avoid pointless repetition, we will hereby summarize each of the points that are common to both countries.

In keeping with the Côte d'Ivoire study, the Ghana study had the following objectives:

- To assess the general situation in terms of sociocultural norms in the village communities engaged in cocoa farming in the country
- To have a more thorough understanding of sociocultural norms in general, and more specifically, of those associated with child protection within those communities
- Lastly, to establish a set of *ad hoc* recommendations based on the materials collected in the field and their analysis. These recommendations would allow for a new strategy to be developed that would take into account the improved and contextualized model for intervention in the community as a whole.

In view of the good results obtained through the socio-anthropological methodologies applied in the previous study, it was decided that the same methodologies would be applied in Ghana. The review of existing documentation, the selection criteria for communities and the field research methods were thus replicated for this study.

While there are many commonalities between the lives of cocoa producers in the two countries, differences perceived particularly in terms of land and traditions, have their own distinct implications for child labour in farming. Such differences have been taken as the basis of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> «Vie quotidienne, normes sociales et travail des enfants dans les communautés productrices de cacao. Recherche socio-ethnologique réalisée dans les zones de San Pedro, Soubré, Divo et Alépé, Côte d'Ivoire », Rapport final. Version intégrale. Clarisse BUONO. Collaboration: Alfred BABO. Pour I.C.I., 15 novembre 2010. Translation: "Daily life, social norms and child labour in cocoa producing communities: Socio-ethnological research carried out in San Pedro, Soubré, Divo and Alépé, Côte d'Ivoire", final report, full unabridged. Clarisse Buono. Collaboration: Alfred Babo. for ICI, 15 November 2010.

## 2 *Summary of main points of the research*

- The traditions of commerce, state centralization and communication that stem from the Ashanti influence in this part of the country have enabled a spectacular expansion of cocoa cultivation since the 40's.
- Economic gains from cocoa cultivation have triggered an evolution from traditional matrilineal inheritance towards formal, legal inheritance, overturning traditional referents for solidarity and social protection.
- People envisage their ambitions (education, living in the city, never returning to farming work or even to the village) within an individualistic and nuclear family context.
- The scarcity of land and the poor yield of old farms are driving farmers to look for ways to increase productivity.
- Since formal models of social protection are difficult to access for populations in the grip of poverty, they resort to traditional modes instead but these have become ineffective because the redistribution of wealth means that the 'wealthiest' now protect themselves through social welfare contributions.
- Since the work of children on the farms has lost its socializing aspect, the risks to which they are exposed on the farm are heightened by the pressure to increase productivity.
- In the poorest families, both children in school and children out of school are equally subjected to hazardous labour;
- Children are simultaneously engaged in schooling, farm work (more subsistence than cocoa), domestic work and petty trading.
- Five distinct groups of children doing farming work can be identified, as follows: children in school who farm at the weekends and during school vacations, sometimes engaging in dangerous tasks but continuing their education; children in school who default on attendance in order to farm, especially during harvest time; children who drop out of school before the secondary stage due to poverty and work full time on their family farms or hire out their farming labour; children who have never been to school and work on cocoa farms; and finally, children engaged for farming labour through extended family or community members (neighbours, friends, cousins, members of the same ethnic group).
- In terms of cocoa farming, the types of task given to children vary from weeding (digging out weeds with a cutlass and clearing them away) to the application of fertilisers and insecticides, the harvesting and splitting of cocoa pods, the carrying of sacks of cocoa beans and the fermentation of the beans by spreading them on drying racks or in the sun.

- Hazardous tasks and the negative consequences of farming work on the development of children are classified into five categories: carrying of heavy loads, inhalation of toxic substances, farming injuries: bites from insects and other parasites, falling branches or coconuts, falling trees, injuries from farming tools (like cutlasses and hoes), fatigue hindering schoolwork.
- In line with an integrated community approach, the recommendations of this report have three main angles: to increase productivity by small-scale farmers, to encourage rural communities to combine their traditional welfare systems with formal modes of social protection and finally, to offer the new generations an alternative to city life by increasing professional opportunities in the villages.

### 3 The Research

This research was carried out using the same methodology as for the Côte d'Ivoire study. In fact, the researchers had to answer the same questions in order to be able to produce a list of modified recommendations:

- What is life in the communities like? What are the relationships between the different groups they comprise (ethnic, national, social etc.)
- What ties do migrants working in these communities maintain with their communities of origin?
- What are the different types and status of work and workers in the communities?
- Are these various communities in touch with economic entities specific to their activities (economic interest groups, cooperatives as project stakeholders, etc.). What kind of relationship do they have?
- What are the perceptions of the communities with relation to the role of children, schooling, and education?
- Do general or child-specific mechanisms of community solidarity and social protection practices<sup>2</sup> exist? If so, what are these mechanisms/practices and could they provide a 'point of entry' for external intervention?
- How do they perceive the intervention of NGOs, government, industry, the development world etc.?

In order to answer these questions, bibliographical research and field research were conducted and the results analysed and collated.

An initial round of research was carried out from:

- Bibliographical research (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre d'Etudes Africaines, Bibliothèque des Recherches Africaines, Centre d'Etudes des Mondes Africains, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Institut d'Etudes Politiques...)
- A review of reports commissioned by agencies or NGOs (ILO, IOM, UNICEF, Save the Children, etc.)
- An analysis of reports commissioned by ICI.
- In addition, on an initial field trip, we completed this literature review by obtaining the same type of data locally available (from libraries, universities, NGOs, agencies) and through discussions with the heads of ICI's implementing partner NGOs.

An initial field trip was conducted at the end of February 2011 in order to select our research areas and to introduce ourselves and our study to the various relevant authorities in order to obtain permission to return to their communities for longer periods within the following months.

This initial trip enabled us to do the following:

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<sup>2</sup> "Social protection practices," refers here to all initiatives that transfer resources or wealth to the poorest people, protect the most vulnerable against social and economic hazards and improve the status of socially excluded and marginalized people. Such informal social security networks are generally rooted in the culture and traditions of West and Central Africa, in the form of solidarity based on kinship, community, ethnicity, peer-groups, cooperatives etc.

- Define the research areas
- Decide on the types of interviews to be applied
- Decide on the sample size
- Put observation strategies in place
- Collate information necessary for the formulation of hypotheses and the design of the interview guides.

Based on a comparative approach, four main criteria were identified for the selection of research communities:

- Ethnic composition (indigenes, non-indigenes, foreigners)
- Type of settlement (villages, districts, camps - )
- Their relationship with the development world (sensitized or non-sensitized villages)
- Socio-geographical zones (immigration zones)

### **3.1 The research sample**

Readers of this report should bear in mind that the study was conducted for the purpose of obtaining qualitative data. Thus, the humanity, subjectivity and sociocultural reflexes of our research subjects were more the focus of investigation than the quest for figures or statistics. Extensive interviews were conducted on the basis of a pre-established sampling system that, together with the selection of research communities, was validated through a field-testing trip. The reader will not find quotas or percentages in this report but rather, individuals who were interacted with and interviewed according to their roles within their households and communities. These were sometimes multi-faceted; for example, an interviewee could simultaneously be a household head and an employer. Our sample was structured according to the types of interviews required as follows:

- Community Leaders
- Prominent citizens: Teachers, heads of institutions, religious leaders, informal leaders
- Adult workers: men and women, indigenes, non-indigenes, seasonal, salaried and independent workers
- Household heads: men and women
- Working children: girls and boys, in school and out of school, indigenes, non-indigenes, working and/or living with biological parent(s), working and/or living with extended family member, working and/or living with guardian, on their own, paid workers, family helpers, unpaid workers
- Employers: Sharecroppers or land owners

### 3.2 The communities visited

Dates of field work	Host NGOs	Villages	District Capitals	Ethnic groups <sup>3</sup>
From 11 to 22 April 2011	OASIS	<i>Gold Coast Camp</i>	Assin Foso	Majority: Fanti Ewe, Krobo , Ga
		<i>Endwa</i> (not sensitized)		Assin 70% Ewe 14% Fanti 14% 2% : Krobo, Ada, Northerners (10), Wassa, Bono
From 5 to 13 July 2011	SLF	<i>Wuruye</i>	New Edubiase	60% Fanti 40% : Ewe, Grunshie, Adansi and Akwapim
	RECA	New Aboi	Akuropon	Ewe Wassa Dagare

### 3.3 Methodology

Three types of methodology were used in this research.

As in Côte d'Ivoire,<sup>4</sup> we conducted:

- Comprehensive interviews (individual or group interviews with the purpose of obtaining 'life histories').
- Participatory observation (immersion in the community, participation in daily life, informal conversations...)

One method not used in Côte d'Ivoire proved necessary in Ghana. After interviews with children in the first two communities (Gold Coast Camp and Endwa) proved rather unproductive, it became evident that local structures of authority did not permit children to be at their ease in the interview setting.

<sup>3</sup> The percentages and other data concerning ethnic groups present in the communities were obtained from community elders. Thus they may be subject to inaccuracies. Generally, all the information making up the community profiles (population, infrastructure etc.) was provided by people within the communities, since ICI's partner NGOs were mostly unable to furnish such information. For this reason we will limit ourselves to this local data.

<sup>4</sup> p.14, "Daily life, social norms and child labour in cocoa producing communities: Socio-ethnological research carried out in San Pedro, Soubré, Divo and Alépé, Côte d'Ivoire," final report, unabridged. Clarisse Buono. Collaboration: Alfred Babo. For ICI, 15 November 2010.



Always needing an adult or an 'educated' person to translate from English to Twi, we noticed that the children's responses were influenced by these people who were anxious for us to receive answers that corresponded to what they imagined we wanted.

Already timid by nature and inclined to answer a simple 'yes' or 'no' even to open questions, the children did not feel free to express themselves under these conditions. To overcome this obstacle, we decided at a subsequent community, Wuruye, to let the children draw rather than talk.

Thanks to François Mascarello, painter and visual artist, who graciously came to our aid, we were able to carry out this experiment under the best possible conditions.

This method, now classic in the field of anthropological methodology (*Luquet, 1913, 1927*), allowed for an uninhibited rapport between interviewer and interviewee while at the same time being an approach particularly suited to our subjects.

Thus, in the course of various sessions with about forty children in Wuruye, we were able to obtain information on:

- Their families
- The daily activities of their parents
- Tasks which they considered easy/difficult at home/on the farm
- Tasks which they considered dangerous to perform at home/on the farm
- What they wanted to be in future

We collected more than a hundred drawings, which were analysed side by side with the interview transcriptions from adults and children.

We realized through this exercise how much the received wisdom about Worst Forms of Child Labour was contradicted by the pictorial representations delivered by the children. Spraying, carrying of heavy loads, bush burning... a number of children drew themselves engaged in such tasks while in interviews, adults and children denied this reality due to awareness of child labour legislation.

#### **4 Socio-economic elements of cocoa farming in Ghana**

According to the study conducted on a significant number of communities by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment, men cultivate cocoa farms of 1.5 to 7.5 hectares in size (between 3,8 and 18,7 acres). Women, for their part, work on farms from 1.5 to 9 hectares in size (between 2,8 and 22,5 acres). The size of farms can thus vary from less than a hectare as in Kurofa (Ashanti Region), to almost 40.5 hectares (100 acres) as in Akaatiso in the Western Region. The lowest average recorded was in Akim Wenchu in the Eastern Region and the highest in Tema in the Western Region. This study found that the biggest cocoa farms are located in the Western Region.

In all three regions, both men and women reported that cocoa yields have reduced in the past three to five years. Many reasons were advanced for this phenomenon:

- Impoverishment of the soil
- Aging cocoa trees
- Witch's broom and black pod (caused by the *Phytophthora palmivora* pathogen).
- Mass spraying and the lack of fertilizers
- Rising cost of labour
- Lack of credit

The same reasons were cited by our interviewees during research for our study. Nevertheless, interviewees expressed the desire to expand or at least, to continue their cocoa production. The fact is, cocoa remains the most profitable crop and part of a long- and well-established industry. With these factors in mind, this crop remains profitable in comparison with other options available to them. The main problems are still lack of accessible credit and dwindling production.

In more detail, a common complaint relates to spraying, including the use of poor quality pesticides, organizational problems with spraying teams who do not do their work properly, faulty spraying machines, late arrival of chemicals and insufficient personnel to cover all the farms.

The use of fertilizer is considered crucial for obtaining higher yields, which they fear will be low without it. The cost of acquiring land combined with the aging of cocoa farms has necessitated the use of fertilizer to boost production. However, farmers in most communities complained that fertilizers were too expensive and often not available. Less than one per cent of farmers in the Western Region had received fertilizers.

Cocoa is a labour-intensive crop. The labour required, though available in most communities, is rather expensive and the majority of farmers cannot afford it although this can also be a matter of their priorities. In the study conducted by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment,, immigrant workers were available for hire in certain communities for approximately 2.5 – 4 million (old) cedis per person per year, (but this was not common as most villages did not have immigrant workers.) The desire of farmers to extend their farms depends mainly on the availability and accessibility of land. Previously available land in the Western Region no longer has any opportunity for expansion. In other regions, land is only available at very high prices.

In all the regions, food crops (cassava, maize, plantain) and fruit/vegetable farming (like citrus) occur side by side with cocoa. These crops are used for food and to supplement the income from cocoa. Cocoa is harvested annually or twice a year but part of the harvest is available all year round. However, there is no market for this cocoa harvested out of season. On average, 25 to 75 per cent of cocoa sold is harvested during the main seasons.

#### 4.1 Labour in cocoa production

The cocoa farmers encountered in this study were generally small-scale farmers working on family farms and cultivating plots of land that vary in size between 0,60 hectares (1,5 acres)<sup>5</sup> to 1,6 to 3,2 hectares (4 to 8 acres). In a few exceptional cases, one can find farms of less than one hectare (0,40 to 1 acre) and farms as large as 24 hectares (60 acres)<sup>6</sup>. Thus one cannot speak of 'cocoa plantations' in Ghana in the industrial sense.

The majority of cocoa harvesting work takes place between July and December, no matter the year. The peak demand for labour (clearing, felling of trees, bush burning) occurs from January to March. Weeding under mature trees is required in the months of July and August. Spraying is generally done in August-September.

Finally, November is the month for the plucking of pods through to the carting of dry beans to the cooperatives for sale.

Still according to the study carried out by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment, the age range of adult workers in the community is from 18 to 70 years, with most of them (76.3%) between 18 and 35. In fact, 98.2 per cent began working at the age of 18 years during the 50's and confirmed that cocoa farming requires a relatively youthful and physically fit labour force. If our observations tally with these - that workers are mostly between 18 and 35 years of age - it also emerged that women and children are significantly involved in farm work, side by side with these male salaried workers or sharecroppers.

#### 4.2 Sharecropping systems<sup>7</sup>

There are two types of sharecropping in cocoa farming: *abunu* and *abusa*. *Abunu* is a system whereby the farming revenue is divided into two and shared between the sharecropper and the land owner. *Abusa* is a system whereby the sharecropper is only entitled to a third of the farming revenue and the landowner to two-thirds. *Abunu* or *abusa* systems are selected according to the amount of farm labour required and the relationship between the sharecropper and the landowner.

Some adult labourers complained of abuse on the part of farmers although the practice did not appear to be widespread. The cause of this is that in the course of their supervisory activities on their farms, they see nothing wrong with asking their labourers to carry out specific or additional tasks.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Margaret, 40 years, 5 children, Gold Coast Camp, 20/04/11

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Kobina, 84 years, 16 children, Gold Coast Camp, 15/04/11

<sup>7</sup> Sharecropping is a form of agricultural production in which land is rented to someone who cultivates it on the condition that he shares the harvest with the landowner.

It was this tendency that was considered abusive by labourers. However, no formal evidence of bonded or forced labour was encountered in our communities.

The typical adult labourer generally commits to a verbal contract (76 per cent of those interviewed) with the farmer for his labour. The number of written contracts currently in existence, although rising, is virtually insignificant.

In the majority of cases, the allocation of land under the *abunu* or *abusa* systems follows an inherited pattern that is decades old. These particular forms of land acquisition cannot be properly understood without a knowledge of traditional land ownership patterns in Ghanaian agriculture.

### 4.3 Migrants

According to Casely-Hayford (2010), migration is an important factor that must be taken into consideration in the cocoa sector. Historically, labour for cocoa farming was provided by migrants from the north and east of Ghana. People from these areas engaged in seasonal migration to the south (Volta, Eastern, Central, Ashanti and Western Regions) when cocoa labour was needed. Gradually, many of these migrants acquired their own land for cocoa farming especially in the Ashanti and Western Regions.

A lack of labour in many sectors and above all in the cocoa sector has stimulated internal migration within Ghana, for many years now.

Many migrants settled in communities where they had previously only been seasonal migrants and thanks to the *abunu* and *abusa* systems, were able to acquire land, which was plentiful at the time. Holdings like that of Joseph Kodjo were numerous, particularly at the higher end of production and especially in the Western Region. And the villages today are often composed in the majority of migrants working on the land of indigenous land owners.

The flow of seasonal labourers including children to cocoa-producing communities, correlated to the presence of previously settled members of their same ethnicity or village or family who would request periodically for their labour - especially during harvest time - hosting them and providing them with work.

These traditional systems, which regulated migratory patterns in the country for years, are now, together with cycles of seasonal migration, being disrupted due to the scarcity of land.

According to Guy Massart,<sup>8</sup> reduced availability of land for the extension of cocoa farms is transforming migratory patterns. Whereas previously, a sharecropper had the opportunity to develop his own independent landholding after five to ten years, these opportunities are now severely reduced or limited to inadequate plots, thus restricting the prospects of economic growth and resulting in poor migrant families.

Increasing production now thus depends on intensifying cultivation. Productivity between farmers varies enormously (from 2 bags per acre to 14 bags).

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<sup>8</sup> According to discussions with Guy Massart and in anticipation of the publication of his on-going study on mobility in cocoa-producing communities in Ghana.

With limited financial resources and technical skills, small plots and poor access to inputs subsidised by Cocobod, recent migrants remain in relative poverty. This is in spite of the fact that their elders asserted that they could be richer than the indigenes. Despite this, the status of non-native cannot be shaken off for many generations and their culture is stigmatised.

The children of recent migrants go to the lowest quality schools while those of the landowners go to the best schools, often in the small towns of the district, and thus have more opportunity for social advancement. Schooling contributes to the perpetuation of cultural, social and economic inequalities in the villages despite the theoretical 'education for all.'

In Ghana more than anywhere else in West Africa, education is viewed as a magic portal to a better life. This is borne out by those who are able to access quality education. Nobody wants their children to remain farmers. The migration of the wealthiest to the towns is an imperative, a universal pursuit. However, for the children of small farmers, education is little more than a dream without any concrete hope of fulfilment. (*Massart, 2011*)

These different elements reveal a very strong process of social differentiation with widening gaps and social hierarchies. This situation will lead to a process of proletarianisation in cocoa-growing areas.

In response to this hiatus in social advancement in the communities, child migration to urban areas is on the rise. Children leave alone, with or without their parents' knowledge, exacerbating a phenomenon of mobility that is not taken into account by community or family systems of protection.

If the impoverishment of people in cocoa-growing areas is due in large part to the scarcity of land, it has a complementary cause in the breakdown of traditional social support systems that paradoxically follows in the wake of the flourishing of the cocoa industry.

#### **4.4 New aspirations for a future beyond the village**

Because the dream of a life in town is plausible<sup>9</sup> and because the attachment to the land is weak due to the inadequate size of farming plots and/or the mode of inheritance,<sup>10</sup> people do not see themselves staying in the village to take over their parents' farms or even leaving the city life behind and coming back one day to help their aged parents.

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<sup>9</sup> Unemployment rate in Ghana: 11% CIA World Factbook, January 2011-11-18.

<sup>10</sup> Every year since the initial success of cocoa production in the 40s, the value of subsistence agriculture and the ideological value of land have fallen while the value of cocoa farms as capital has risen. This phenomenon has given rise to a tendency towards individual possession of land, a tendency to go from matrilineal possession to family possession to outright ownership, due to the following factors: the first is the significant revenue generated by a cocoa farm, which maintains itself at the same level for some decades without any need for further investment and the second is the amount of labour invested by the creator of the farm and his family, which exceeds the value of labour formerly invested in subsistence farming. If it is no problem to give up a paternally inherited farm which at least ensured one's annual subsistence, in order to take over a maternally inherited one that does so to the same level, it is much harder, if not impossible to give up the farm on which one probably toiled since childhood, to inherit in its place an uncultivated piece of land. The traditional type of family no longer fits in with the new conditions created by a capitalist agricultural economy, which entails a fundamental change in inheritance systems from matrilineal to patrilineal. This social process has upset the balance that formerly characterized traditional societies, and this, from a formal perspective, transforms the whole network of ties that bind the local community and narrow social gaps of all kinds.

The ideal plan for the children's futures as encountered almost systematically during interviews and recounted by the children themselves or by their parents, was as follows.

Once the children have completed their junior high schooling in the village, they will go away to senior high school, which is inevitably boarding,<sup>11</sup> to further their education. They may or may not continue to tertiary education but whatever the case they will have the option of finding work in the town, where they will start their own families. Their own children will be sent back to the village to join their grandparents and attend school until the end of junior high when, ideally, they will go back to the town.



*Apia and her granddaughter, Endwa*

Even if fulfilling this plan is only possible for some of the villagers, it is the professed goal of all. The ambition to leave the village and move to town for good was expressed by the majority of those interviewed:

*“Once I have work to do over there, I cannot come here but rather I will take my parents to where I am. »*  
Patience, 16 years, Endwa, 18/04/2011

*“When my parents will be old. I will just come and visit them and go. I will let somebody take care of the cocoa farm. I won't sell but I will let somebody take care of it so that I will pay the person. And that person too must take care of my parents because as for me I can't stay here. I will be working somewhere else so I don't think I can take care of the cocoa. I will come back when I will be retired. Till the end of my life. »*  
Joanna, 17 years, Gold Coast Camp, 21 april 2011

The notion of needing to learn farming skills is no longer central. The socializing aspect of children's farm work is declining, no longer considered as anything more than a temporary assistance to the family. In all cases farming was not seen as any kind of retirement plan or solution to unemployment.

Certainly not for sharecroppers and not even for landowners who even talked about selling their land if and when the abunu or abusa system becomes less profitable than before.

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<sup>11</sup> More specifically, the children who pass the BECE examination at the end of JHS choose four senior high schools in order of preference. They will get into one of these schools depending on how high their grades are. However, if they do not make the grade, they will be allocated a different school through a computerized placement system.

What came out of all the interviews was that farming as an occupation is considered to be the fate of failures and thus one to be avoided.

*« Sometimes my parents find it difficult to weed and they have to hire a labourer and that one too demands money. So if they don't have money, they have to stop. So if I see all these conditions, I wish not to be a farmer. Even if I become a nurse, soldier or police officer, I would prefer that to becoming a farmer. It's difficult to be a farmer. As for me, I dislike farming with my life. [...] First of all if you want to plant the cocoa, you have to weed during the season. And after you have planted it you have to keep weeding until the cocoa grows up. And you will suffer a lot. By the time you finish, you will have so much backache. When you are working, you will not be stable enough and you can't even walk. So I don't think it's fine. It's fine for some people but as for me I hate it. If I have money, I will try to help my parents to stop farming. When I grow up and I have money, I will not let them farm again because right now, I can see they are suffering but if they stop they don't have any work to go and do so they have to do it. »*

Joanna, 17 years, Gold Coast Camp, 21/04/2011

#### 4.5 Institutionalization of the nuclear family

Where certain authors (Cox and Stark, 1994), applying the notion of imitative behaviour or the effects of demonstration, explained that an individual helped his/her parents in order to serve as an example to his/her own children and to influence their future behaviour (the absence of a capital market equally explaining the adoption of such codes of conduct, in particular children working for their parents (Diallo, 2001), one finds today that aspirations for the future are no longer centred on attachment to the land but on economic contributions and financial success.

This is going to have an impact on child labour. In effect, those who have the means to provide their children with a quality education that will lead to employment (in the town, ideally), will not be interested in using socializing forms of work on the farms with their children. The children of these families will certainly participate in farming work during the course of their schooling but in a less invested way than if they were engaging in farming for the acquisition of social tools. The consequences are thus diverse:

- Such children may be exempted from the most tiring tasks in order to conserve their energy for their schooling.
- Such children, working as family helpers during the course of their schooling, will be given all types of tasks including the most dangerous and arduous, because farming is considered a temporary activity in their lives.

In all cases, a divide is created between these children who are the potential hopes of the future and those condemned to remain in the village to continue tending the family farms. The latter, at the mercy of rural poverty, will remain in the social triptych illustrated by the case of Côte d'Ivoire without finding in it the economic and social compensations which this form of socialisation provided them until now.

The designated roles of children in Ghana will in part be the same as in Côte d'Ivoire, with those in school only engaging in them for a limited time. However, children will fulfil these roles not in a spirit of pride but rather of failure, especially for those who will end up having no choice but to stay and work on the farm and carry on the family tradition.

The economic situation has changed things around so that it is no longer through farming and following in their parents' footsteps that children will become independent and capable of supporting the family's needs but by succeeding in their studies and getting work in the towns.

The consequences of this shift in educational goals will only change some of the traditional roles assigned to children in African societies. In keeping with the findings of the Côte d'Ivoire study, the designated roles of children in the communities visited were as follows:

***The child: symbolic representative of his/her family***

In all the societies researched for this study, the child represents his or her family. What he is, what he does, his education, his relationships with others, with the community, with the village; his actions all put at stake the honour of the family that has raised him and that, for the duration of his existence. Regardless of the age of the 'child,' his actions will always be judged against the upbringing he had. In this sense, the autonomy of the individual always hinges on family interactions. If he misbehaves with a third party, if he does not provide for the needs of his next of kin, if his conduct, even as an adult, is subject to reproach, it is those who were in charge of his upbringing - whether parents, teachers or members of the extended family - who will take the blame.

***The child: a future of family responsibility***

To the question "What is a child?" many interviewees responded "A child is a gift." This assertion can be taken literally. In fact, the child is brought to the world in large part for the best possible economic return he will one day be able to bring to his family. If he 'succeeds,' his success will rebound on the family, certainly in a symbolic sense but also and above all in the form of financial assistance which he will be obliged to provide throughout his life. Whether the child succeeds professionally or not, he will be expected to take care of his parents in future when they become dependent due to illness or old age. The interdependency of the generations is thus ingrained so that each and every child, right from infancy, is aware of his future responsibility to take care of his elders.

From this perspective, the child needs to advance as far as possible in his education, so that he will have the best possible chance of being able to take care of his extended family in future (*Buono and Babo, 2010*).

This is where the first difference was noted with regard to the definition of these roles in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. While in Côte d'Ivoire we came across many 'children' who had returned to the village, some even having had to abandon their careers in the town prematurely to take care of their aged parents, no parallels to this were found in the Ghanaian villages. There, the grown-up children who had 'succeeded,' lived and worked in big cities (Kumasi, Obuasi, Accra), had started families there and had no plans to return to the village to look after their aged parents. They provided their needs by sending money, they sent one or more of their children to live with them in a spirit of generational solidarity (grandchildren helping their grandparents and the latter letting them go to school more easily in the village and, in extreme cases, they brought them to live with them in the city if they became totally incapable of fending for themselves.



### **Success: an honour and a responsibility**

On this point in particular, there is a divide between the designated roles that the children of families in Ghana and in Côte d'Ivoire are respectively subject to. At this level, the transformation of sociological characteristics of Ghanaian families make children detach themselves from traditions of family solidarity still prevalent in Côte d'Ivoire.

The evolution of family models clearly oriented towards the individualisation of the family support system has had as a consequence the narrowing down of family obligations for those who 'succeed,' to looking after their aged parents.

Many instances were encountered in Côte d'Ivoire whereby it was commonplace for 'the successful one' - who could be a teacher, a nurse, a civil servant, a wealthy farmer - to take in and become a guardian of the children of less fortunate members of the family or village who were entrusted to him. In Ghana, however, such examples were rarely encountered in the study communities.

Certainly, even in the villages, children whose parents live in town are entrusted to their grandparents for the duration of their basic schooling, in a spirit of equitable exchange: the child helps the elder (with farmwork, household chores, petty trading), who allows him/her to go to primary or junior high school, financially assisted by his/her parents who are working in the town. However, social pressure such as the fear that the refusal to accept and mentor a child could earn the disapproval of one's peers, did not come up in discussions with interviewees in Ghana. Teachers, prominent citizens, members of the extended family, members of the same ethnicity etc., did not feel themselves to be under this obligation.

#### **4.6 Economic needs and education as priorities**

The wishes of the families interviewed are in one sense all the same: parents and children want to succeed in their education and increase their income. It is in the hope of improving the second that the first is aspired to.

##### **4.6.1 Schooling**

Educational ambitions are, at first sight, promoted and encouraged by villages that are well equipped with school infrastructure. All the communities visited have, in fact, Kindergarten (approx. 3-6 years), Primary School (6-10 years) and Junior High School (11-15 years).

*« In the previous years, many brilliant students left for other towns because there was not the existence of JHS. But they returned when they knew there was a JHS here, and that explains the improvement in the results. »*

Sarah, primary school headmistress, New Aboi, 07/07 and 10/07/2011

If access to free, compulsory education is thus theoretically possible in these well-equipped villages, the problem is the chronic shortage of teaching staff as well as the run-down condition of the buildings, which pose a real problem with regard to access to quality education.

*« Due to the uncompleted nature of the school, children are disturbed by other classes because classrooms are close to each other, and are open. Also, parents do not co-operate with us when we instruct their wards to bring items such as pen, pencil and exercise books. Parents level their thoughts to the fact that the government helps the school. »*

Sarah, primary school headmistress, New Aboi, 07/07 and 10/07/2011



*JHS block, New Aboi*



*Playground with rusty equipment, Wuruye*

The alternative, which is chosen by parents who have the means, are the private schools which are found in most of the villages or in neighbouring ones, and to which they send their children. In addition to the cost of uniforms and school supplies, there are also the school fees, but nevertheless, many of them are prepared to make the investment in order to make it possible for their children to access the second cycle of secondary education (Senior High School approx. 16-18yrs)

Despite the disparities in access to quality education, enrolment figures in schools in cocoa-producing communities are good. Thus, according to the study by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment the proportion of children actually enrolled in schools is about 91% with a school attendance ratio rising to 71%. This enrolment average is higher than the 88.1% noted for the same category of children nationwide, according to the Ghana Living Standards Survey of 2000.

More recent figures indicate that the school attendance rate for persons aged 6-25 is 86.1 per cent at the national level. Attendance rates are generally high in all localities except in rural savannah (the northern part of Ghana). While the rates range from a high of 97.0 per cent in the other localities, in rural savannah it is 63.5 per cent for males and 56.6 per cent for females. Generally, attendance rates for males are higher than for females but the differences are minimal at both the national and local levels.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.6.2 Causes of school dropout

Even if school represents a magic portal for these communities, school dropout persists. Different elements contribute to this phenomenon. They affect mainly large and/or poor families and are caused by:

- Lack of money. Even if uniforms and school supplies do not in themselves represent excessive costs, when multiplied by ten children, they become impossible to afford for farming families.
- Farming work. Certain families have no choice but to work with their children who thus supplement the labour necessary for the farming of food crops and cocoa.
- Tiredness. Even in cases where children are not considered as part of the daily farming workforce and are encouraged by their families to pursue their education in addition to some part-time farming, the combination of these activities makes it impossible for them to concentrate properly on their studies.
- The distance to schools. When schools are too far from pupils' homes, particularly those in surrounding communities, the kilometres between school and home can become a cause of dropout.

«[We have a lot of children who drop out because of the farming] *especially in the villages. We have a lot of villages over here, even I don't know all the names.[...] That one we have a lot. Some will come; first year, second year you will not see them again. Later you see the person he is old, out of age and he can't even be in the classroom again. They don't even have the idea of coming back. They are farming in the villages. At times too the distance to cover before coming to the school is also another problem. Before they will get to the school they are tired. They come and they sleep. You teach them, nothing is getting in. they close and they will go. At times some will complain that at dawn they go to the farm before they come and dress up. It becomes a burden especially on the teachers because you come and four periods are over. In the JHS too we teach according to subjects. Maybe Maths will be over, English will be over, Science will be over; you come and meet other languages. That one too is a problem. So those periods that you miss, you miss forever.* »

Okai Harrison, 30 years, teacher, Endwa, 14/04/2011

- Marriage and teenage pregnancy: Although this did not appear to be an endemic phenomenon, cases were reported to us of young girls who chose to get married or get pregnant in order to escape from schooling and farm work. In one community, even the daughter of the primary school head had dropped out of SHS due to teenage pregnancy. The reasons given for this worrying phenomenon relate to the school dropout rate among girls (mainly between primary and JHS levels), the load of domestic labour they bear, the absence of family planning, the lack of access to contraceptives and the indulgence often found among parents faced with a fait accompli.

<sup>12</sup> Ghana Living Standards Survey. Report of the fifth round (GLSS5). Ghana Statistical Service. September 2008, p.28.

*« Let's say we have parents-teachers association meeting at the school, we teachers identified problems, parents also identified problems, the community also identified problems, the district directorate of education also identified problem, we solicit ideas from the children first, why they not excelling in education, a girl child says and I quote: "because I am lazy I can't do any farm works so whatever I would do to make money is to have a boy friend" »*

Robert, 31 years, teacher, Endwa, 14/04/2011

If enrolment rates in village schools are higher than the national average, this reverses at the second cycle of secondary (senior high school).

This cycle takes place in the boarding schools located in the towns, where the children continue their education as boarders. The additional expenses entailed in attending these establishments are a problem for most parents. In fact, the accommodation generally offered by members of the extended family in Côte d'Ivoire when children go to 'college' is impossible for the Ghanaian pupils, who are subject to a computerized system of placement to second cycle educational institutions after sitting the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the end of junior high school.

#### **4.6.3 Absenteeism from school**

More common than actual dropout is the plague of absenteeism in village schools, not only of pupils, but also of teachers.

With regard to children the problem is worst, not surprisingly, during the cocoa harvest. This activity requires all hands in the family for about two months. Thus it is paradoxically at the beginning of the school year that absenteeism is at its peak.

*« Yes, for some parents if you don't go to the farm at dawn, they will not give you money for school. Especially during the cocoa season, you go there, you carry the cocoa beans, you come, you go about two or three times. At times you come you'll be late. But if you don't go in the morning, don't expect money for schooling. »*

Okai Harrison, 30 years, teacher, Endwa, 14/04/2011

Equally problematic, teacher absenteeism stems from different causes:

*« they [problems of discipline] are everywhere it's there, even on the part of teachers, I would see teachers going to school very late, teacher wouldn't teach when it is his time to teach, it is also disciplinary cases. Yeah, on both sides; on the side of the children the truancy level is on the increase, you would see a child come to school today; the next day he won't come. Because the child, this assimilation to be able to absorb is very low sometimes if you are trying to assess them with exercises or assignments or home works or whatever they won't do it because he did not absorb well to be able to deliver well; it is also a disciplinary case and then if a teacher is right in the classroom with the children they wouldn't learn on their own so what they want is that always a teacher must be with them before they learn; so in the absence of a teacher a child would not learn. »*

Robert, 31 years, teacher, Endwa, 14/04/2011

If the lack of discipline among teachers stems from poor motivation, the logical explanation for their absenteeism is their quest to supplement their meagre incomes. Numerous examples of this were encountered during fieldwork. For instance, in Wuruye, a young woman offered to work as a 'cook' for our team for the duration of our stay in the village. It was only after the fact that we learned she was one of the five teachers struggling to manage the 500 primary school children in the community and that she had absented herself from her teaching duties in order to work for us.

In New Aboi, the man who volunteered himself as a guide and translator to the research team turned out to be the only teacher of the only school in a neighbouring community, who had abandoned his teaching post for six days without making us - or the chief of that village - aware of this. In the same way, the quest for quick money is one of the reasons behind the absenteeism of school children.

*« Right now if you move from house to house you won't see the parents; they've gone to the farms to work and if you follow them now you would not see the children with them, the children have also gone their way because knows if he follows the parent to the farm he won't get money, so they have also gone their way in search of money.. »*

Robert, 31 years, teacher, Endwa, 14/04/2011

These instances of people looking for quick income occur not only in relation to education but generally, in the daily life of these communities. Thus, most aspects of daily life here are permeated with an economic pressure and an urgency to modernize, which do not permit traditional forms of social protection to play their role.

#### **4.7 A difficult transition to make**

The desire to be economically competitive thus makes communities subscribe to new social norms that make them feel compelled to reject their traditional norms and support systems. This desire, reinforced by the actions of NGOs and government who may lack understanding of the roots of these communities' endogenous traditions, is going to tear these populations apart, effectively destroying ties of solidarity that have been functioning until now. The result of this is already clearly visible in the communities: there are "those who get out" by, in effect, possessing the economic capital that gives them access to this opportunity to modernise (the owners of cocoa farms) and those who remain condemned to further poverty by no longer even having, as in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, recourse to traditional rural values.

The gap is thus widening between rich and poor in the villages in a factual sense but even more in the way they perceive themselves. They feel that being poor is shameful, just like having a large family (for which they cannot assure an ideal future) or identifying with traditional practices or beliefs, or being a farmer, etc.

Traditional support systems are no longer utilized, having been obliterated by the urgency of an individualistic drive for success. Examples of this divide are numerous, beginning with one relating to traditional birth practices. Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) are found in all villages and are an excellent example of a traditional support system that has lasted for a long time in Ghana.

TBAs have, since time immemorial, been in charge of monitoring pregnancies and presiding over births in the communities. Passed from mother to daughter, this pro bono profession endures but is now confined

to the monitoring of pregnancies. Except in extreme cases, TBAs are no longer authorized to deliver babies and their role has been taken over by the closest health facility to which they can refer women in labour. However, the potential cost of hospital bills, of travelling to health facilities, of precious time taken away from farm or domestic work as well as the necessary trust in public service personnel is not within the grasp of everyone in the villages. For this reason, many have-nots prefer or have no alternative to putting themselves completely in the hands of the TBAs, who have neither the means nor the freedom to practise their duties under the same conditions as before. Thus the numerous deliveries over which they preside are subject to risk factors: all they have to cut the umbilical cord are unsterilized razor blades, they are not authorised to dispense medication, they generally arrive when labour is already far advanced, etc.

The divide between the two worlds is equally visible in terms of healthcare in general. Despite the fact that Ghana alone among West- and Central African countries, has succeeded in establishing a comprehensive health insurance system that is heavily subsidized by the government - The National Health Insurance System (NHIS), which, by the end of 2008, covered 45% of the population, coverage remains lowest amongst the poorest sectors of the population, for whom the registration fees are too high.

Traditional systems of social protection that require the cooperation of the entire community are no longer functioning. While in the past, everyone participated in these, those who have the means to protect themselves via public social protection systems are now withdrawing from under the communal umbrella, leaving in place nothing more than piecemeal forms of community assistance for the most deprived.

In the same way, health insurance for farmers is problematic due not only to its high subscription fee (GH cedis 17 per family member, which, multiplied by 10 or 15, represents a significant cost) but equally to a lack of confidence or knowledge with regard to the benefits of social welfare. John and Comfort have nine children of whom one is handicapped (through polio). They had health insurance coverage for this child but they lost the membership card and since then, the demands of their farm work, the time and money they would need to invest and the bureaucratic hurdles they would need to surmount in order to get the card replaced, have deterred them from recouping the benefits of this coverage.

*« All of them go to school except one who is disabled. [...] The boy does nothing. He wakes up, eats and sleeps. [...] He used to go to school but he got a sore on his buttocks and the pupils used to laugh at him so he stopped. [...] For some time now he hasn't been to school at all. His last class was class five and he's been home for a year.[...] Previously we had some expatriates of the UK Trust come in to help us but since they left, we've had no help.[...] They helped us take him to Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra but afterwards, we had no further help. [...]*

*We don't have health insurance except one of our children. It covers just the child.[...]We subscribed earlier but the insurance card got misplaced. When we reported it to the insurance office, they insisted that we found the card and we can't find it so we just forgot about it. We are interested in it now and intend to register again. I got seriously ill and there are still traces of that illness. I often feel pains in my joints. To take health insurance, it's 17 Ghana cedis per year per person. »*

John, 54 years, couple, Endwa, 17/04/2011

The drive for quick economic gain is ubiquitous and has harmful consequences for deprived families who are torn between the obligation to give their children the best possible chance in life by sending them to school and the awareness that even with this opportunity, their prospects of success are slim.

Moreover, even if the children are in school, their motivation for education is reduced. Thus, teachers find themselves faced with children dreaming of rapid financial success, which their schooling will be too slow to deliver.

The pride and expectations of parents measured against what their children can realistically offer them in terms of financial rather than just symbolic support (eg. returning to the village to help them, inheriting land in the matrilineal tradition, maintaining family, community or ethnic ties), only add to the reasons why children need to participate in the struggle for quick economic gains.

*« Martina: If parents do not have money, what duties do they have towards their children?*

*Q: They would send them to someone to assist them to get money.*

*Martina: Is it only money that is needed to help children?*

*Q: Yes, money is everything and without it one cannot do anything meaningful. »*

Mary, Queen Mother, 56 years, GCC, 13/04/2011

With regard specifically to cocoa production, the equation is obvious: people are proud to be producers if the crop is lucrative. However, what we described above with regard to migrants is also true for everyone else. With land for expansion of cocoa farming so restricted, the mode of production has been transformed. While the possibility formerly existed of acquiring one's own land after five to ten years of sharecropping, this possibility is now severely curtailed or limited to tiny plots. This restricts prospects for economic growth and produces families with minimal income who, to make matters worse, need to keep increasing their productivity.

Traditional values that formerly guaranteed the perpetuation of work for the producer with the necessary skills have now been obliterated by the desire to conform to the new norm: to 'make it' and get rich by entering the world of capitalism. The measure of economic success and social prestige still accorded even to small producers in Cote d'Ivoire, is absent here.

Those who are able to leave the village are seen as the successful ones. Those who stay behind are failures twice over: they are poor and at the same time, subject to the disregard of the community. Old people, women who have been abandoned by their husbands or the fathers of their children, deprived families etc., rub shoulders with the owners of the land on which they work. If the way people relate to each other has changed, so has the way they relate to the occupation of farming, particularly as concerns child labour.

## **5 *Child labour in cocoa-producing communities***

Our observations and conclusions have yielded information about child labour in cocoa. This research was undertaken by ICI for the purpose of carrying out a qualitative study, so we cannot furnish any figures to give a quantitative idea of this phenomenon. Thus, in this chapter we will lay out our observations, followed by figures obtained through a pilot study conducted by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment which are in line with our conclusions and can therefore give a more precise idea of the trends observed.

We observed that children in these communities generally live with their parents. According to the pilot study carried out by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment in similar areas to ours, 24 per cent of them are indigenes while 36 per cent are from immigrant families. Internal migration (from region to region) represents 31 per cent of the total sample, intra-regional migration: 9% and external migration (with one or both parents living abroad), only 0.7%.

These figures correspond perfectly with our field observations. The majority of families encountered were non-indigenes but had been settled in the villages for more than a generation. The other children were from indigenous families while the number of non-national families was negligible.

The majority of children we met were living with a family member (father and/or mother and/or grandparents) and only a few cases of fostering were verified. Similarly, according to the study by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment, more than 84 per cent of children live in the community with one of their two parents. Those living with relatives represent 13.5 per cent and those living with non-relatives, 2.4% of the sample.

Our research did not encounter any evidence of restriction of movement among children. Children interviewed indicated that they could leave the farm or household to travel to town or to other villages without any restriction. In the case of the few children who said they were restricted, it was due to parental discipline and not to any kind of labour bondage.

We observed that children are involved in cocoa production activities as soon as they are physically capable. However, their participation differs according to their ages and to the activity in question. The older they are, the more intensely they are involved in farming. Weeding (removing weeds with a cutlass), constitutes the greatest proportion of children's activities on the farm. Other tasks are the harvesting of pods, cutting them open, carrying the cocoa beans, fermenting them, drying them on drying racks or in the sun and to a lesser extent, activities connected with the application of fertilizers and pesticides.

Children engage in cocoa farming activities mainly during the weekends (90 per cent regardless of age range according to statistics from the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment) and during school vacations (85 per cent). Outside of those periods, reasons given for going to farm were: not wanting to go to school (10 per cent); working as daily wage labourers (14 per cent); working when their parents need them (21 per cent) and after school hours (34 per cent). It emerged that this participation in cocoa production and consequent exposure to farm work is dangerous for a variety of reasons.



In terms of health hazards, analysis of our data indicated that the participation of children in agricultural work exposes them to hazards inherent in the following activities:

- Carrying of heavy loads is common as well as use of the cutlass. To a small extent, spraying of pesticides and application of fertilizers are done by children.
- Illnesses or injuries due to farming work: cuts from cutlasses – 60% and other injuries or illnesses due to hazards of farming work – 65%
- The incidence of use of protective gear is virtually zero.



*Helping on the farm, New Aboi*



*Saturday in New Aboi*



*Cutlass and firewood, Endwa*

Child labour in cocoa-producing communities is the product of a sociocultural phenomenon and not of organized child trafficking. Nonetheless, a disturbing development is the engagement of a small number of children in activities considered dangerous and verging on Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL).

Our research did not encounter any cases of trafficked children, of slavery or of any other types of victimisation. On the other hand, as far as our study could perceive, exposure to hazardous activities, affects a sector of children who are just as likely to be in school as out of school.

The social pattern noted in Côte d'Ivoire with respect to the fundamentally socializing aspect of farm work is in the process of disintegrating in the communities we visited in Ghana. Because of the decrease in agricultural productivity and consequent pauperization, it seems destined to disappear altogether in the long term.

Where, in Côte d'Ivoire, farm work was largely a process of socialization, it would seem that in Ghana it is envisaged more and more as a temporary activity in the socialization of the child with the ultimate goal that he/she contribute to the family economy to help propel them up the social ladder. It is thus during a given period and in a short-term perspective that we see a concentration of the following different aspects, already cited in the case of Côte d'Ivoire.

## 5.1 Reasons why children farm

### ***Farming: a skill inextricably linked with education, domestic work and assistance with petty trading.***

For the vast majority of people, the child, as we have seen, comes into the world with a destiny charged with family responsibility. The first requirement of this destiny: to be capable from the youngest possible age to take on tasks that will make him/her independent of a parent or relative who, in line with high mortality rates in rural areas, can be taken away at any moment. The second requirement: if he/she wants to support his/her family of origin in future in addition to the new family he/she will create, the child must acquire as many skills as possible in order to succeed. During interviews, these skills were always cited in threes: knowledge of farming, successful education and knowledge of domestic work.



*Helping in household chores, Endwa and Wuruye*

Within this framework, farming is never presented exclusively on its own as an occupation but always as a complement to the other two.

The diversification of parental activities to meet the economic needs of their families is such that petty trading is almost systematically added to the existing plethora of women's duties. In addition to their domestic work and to their daily farming work, they supplement the family income by keeping a little shop or kiosk in the village, by selling some of their food crops at the market or by the roadside and by making palm oil for sale.

Children are expected to play a big role in these supplementary activities.



*Doing homework in Auntie's kiosk, New Aboi*



*Small kiosk, Wuruye*

### ***Early training to be independent***

A child should not be resented as a burden. In extended and often polygamous families, this training is a safeguard upon which the child can fall in case of any maltreatment they might suffer at the hands of a profligate father or an unpleasant stepmother. In all cases, the child has to show him/herself capable of supporting the efforts of the family that raises him/her.

### ***Farming as a guard against hunger***

If schooling, farming and domestic work are inextricable in the upbringing of the village child, farming remains the most effective guard against hunger as long as the child stays in the village. In all the villages surveyed, the only escape from hunger or malnutrition that poverty offers is the cultivation at least of one's own food crops. It is simply one of the golden rules that children learn from their elders: to do nothing means to risk dying of hunger. Conversely, farming, whether for oneself or for others, is a protection against hunger.

### ***A trinity of skills for early acquisition***

Schooling, farming and domestic work are viewed ideally as complementary and never in isolation from each other (except in the case of children with little academic inclination). School children do domestic work in the morning before school (dishwashing, sweeping, fetching water...), and then go to school and help again with domestic chores in the evening. On days when there is no school, they follow their parents to the farm.

Children who drop out of school due to poor grades or lack of motivation and who do not farm either, are regarded as good-for-nothings, condemned to a wasted and debauched life.

Thus, farm work for children is seen as a guard against idleness that can lead to delinquency and putting children in school additionally represents a double insurance for financial success. Combining farming skills with schooling and domestic work remains the magic portal not for "success in life" as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire, but at least for a successful childhood.

### ***A non-negotiable financial supplement***

The revenue from farming and petty trading made by children during the course of their schooling, however minimal, is viewed in the long run as a substantive supplement to the parental investment in their education. Clothes, school supplies and so on can thus be paid for by the child him/herself thanks to this work undertaken to supplement the family income.

### ***A form of social integration***

As part of this process and until changing times re-oriented community members towards more individualistic and contractual forms of social protection, children had to work on the farms of their elders or relatives with a view to social integration.

In return, they were assured of various benefits including finding marriage partners, a place to stay and land to farm for themselves. Each child was thus conditioned to support his/her elders from the moment he/she could anticipate his/her own need for family support in the short or long term.

Now that the community no longer provides these benefits, children's work on the farm has, to some extent, taken on an aspect of coercion for both them and their parents. The latter will do everything in their power to prevent their children from having to work with them on the farm. For the majority, however, this is simply impossible. Children's farm labour, then, is required purely as a temporary supplement that can only be justified by the increase in productivity that it enables and not by any need for them to be grounded in traditional modes of socialization and social protection.

### ***An insurance against retirement and unemployment***

It is equally on this point that there is a difference between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, with respect to the mechanisms of social protection associated with child labour in farming.

In Côte d'Ivoire, even for those who have made it professionally (ie. procured 'work in town,' preferably in the civil service), returning to the village is still a universal prospect. When they retire, they may return to their farms (which, in their absence, will have been run either by family members or by hired hands), re-invest in them and work on them as long as their physical strength endures and it is thanks precisely to the training they received in their youth, by combining schooling with farm work during their school and working holidays, that they are able to effect this return. Thus, in the Ivorian villages, if children fail at school, they can always fall back on farming (their own land or that of their family or other community members) to make an income and gain independence. In Ghana, on the other hand, things are completely different. Here, for quite dispassionate reasons, the prospect of returning to one's rural home is not viewed in any positive light even among village families. "Coming back to the village" equates to failing in life and is systematically regarded as just not an option.

That these aspects of farm work are viewed in a short-term perspective is not anecdotal. The child who goes to work on the farm does it with the intent to help his family for a while and does not envisage it as a lifelong occupation. Thus...

- Lack of motivation will cause him/her to perceive this work psychologically as the most tedious of the many forms of physical labour required of him/her.
- This labour will be perceived as a 'personal' economic investment (the fruits of it being seen as a contribution towards the family's educational effort) and thus the child will not be excused from any task, no matter how arduous or hazardous.
- In the best case scenario, which is rare and has previously been referred to, children may be exempted from some or even all farm work in order to allow them to focus on their studies.

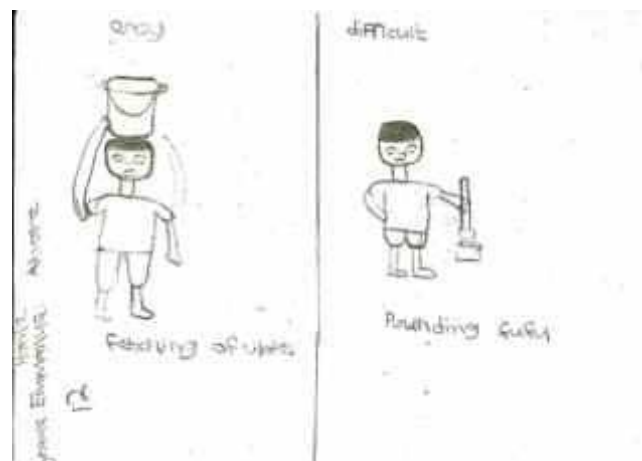
It is of course, on the first two of these categories that initiatives to eradicate WFCL must be focused. In fact, paradoxically, children both in and out of school are equally confronted with the risks of hazardous work in the course of their farming activities.

In the same way, children both in and out of school, failing to find even in farming a means of social and economic affirmation, will seek informal employment in order to supplement their incomes and those of their families.

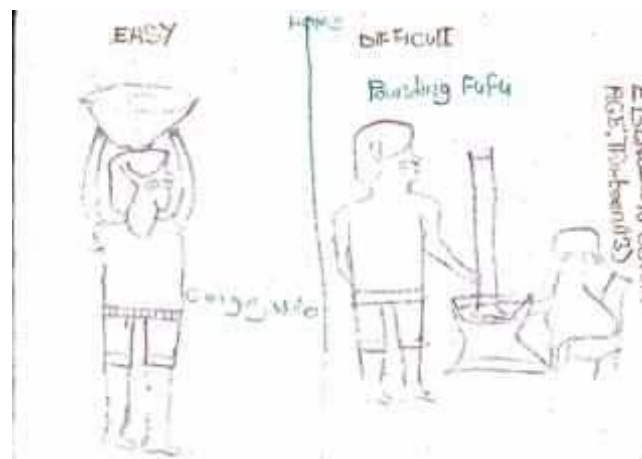
The numerous interviews carried out with children as well as our own observations, revealed notable similarities between the ways in which children in different villages spend their time. Girls, boys, indigenes, non-indigenes, ranging in age between 5 and 17, all described days spent in quite similar ways. They all follow a social pattern that features the trinity of skills: domestic work, school, farming and often also, participation in the family's petty trading activities.

## 5.2 Children's activities: between school, domestic chores, farming and petty trading

Daily activities during school term are divided between household chores carried out before and after school. All children perform these tasks: washing dishes, sweeping, fetching water and helping to prepare meals (often by pounding fufu). This last activity is one of the most difficult and tiring as demonstrated by these pictures drawn by children of household chores assigned to them:



Emmanuel, 12 years, Primary school, Wuruye



Ebenezer, 13 years, Primary school, Wuruye

### Typical day of a school girl during school term

*"I wake up at 6:30 or 5am. When I wake up I wash my face and paste my teeth. I sweep the compound, wash my utensils, take my bath and go to school. School begins at 07:30am. It is in Endwa. There, we learn, we do some compound activities like weeding the compound, going to the library for some story books and read. I am in form three. Today, there is a party because we have completed. Usually, I am come back at 2:30pm at home. I cook in the evening and fetch water for my parents to bath. Then I also take my bath and I learn small then I sleep. [...] I pound fufu. Sometimes I prepare banku and ampesi. I cook with my mother. [...] My brother is ten years and my sister is 13 years. They help me sometimes. I wash, I sweep, then I take my bath. After school, I take some time to learn before I begin to cook. »*

Patience, 16 years, Endwa, 18/04/2011

At weekends and during holidays, children go to the farm with their parents. For the youngest children, most of their farming activities are focused on the food crops which need daily attention.

During the cocoa harvest, farm work intensifies for families who need the maximum labour possible for two months. The children's help is required and as previously mentioned, this is when school attendance drops and fatigue during lessons increases.

Children learn to farm and use the cutlass and hoe by copying their elders.



Isaac, 15 years, Primary school

Children 'authorised' to use cutlasses to weed are between 10 and 15 years old. Before that age, as much for the safety of the child as to avoid the risks of inexperienced harvesting, tasks requiring the use of cutlass and hoe are not assigned to the younger children.

The main factor in deciding whether children are capable of farm work is not their age but their physical development and maturity.

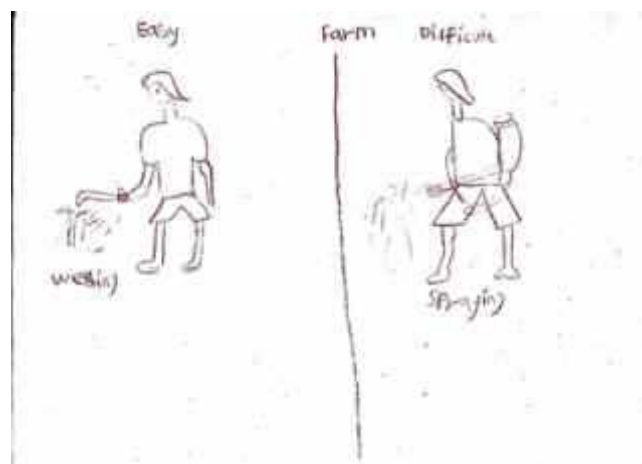
*"The form (body) of an individual will also determine whether he or she is a child or adult.[...] Each person in a household judges it in his or her capacity as an elderly person. »*

Anthony, 66 years, GCC, 13/04/2011

### 5.3 Dangerous and exhausting work

If the government and NGO messages regarding child labour have been perfectly absorbed into community life and everyone can tell you that even if children work on the farm, they should not perform dangerous or even tiring tasks, the situation on the ground and the productivity requirements of farming households reveal a reality that is very far from these ideals and good intentions.

Thus, the carrying of heavy loads, application of fertilizer and pesticides, weeding, burning, dangers of the bush (animal bites, insect stings, parasites...) etc., are the lot of almost the totality of children who have no choice but to live the farming lifestyle with the sole aim of providing needed assistance to their families, to help them finance their education.



*Essah, 10 years, Primary school*

Thus, schooling is not seen as a buttress to farming but rather the other way around and families who want to send their children to school must, together with their children, redouble their efforts to earn the money required for school expenses.<sup>13</sup>

For this reason, school children are made to perform all manner of farming tasks. The danger of these tasks to their health and safety - such as they are aware of - does not seem as bad to them as the prospect of obstructing their future by not getting an education, especially since they do not see such work as permanent.

In light of the above, the drawings made by primary and JHS pupils in Wuruye are very eloquent. Whether or not they are aware of the danger involved, children perform tasks such as weeding and application of chemicals, which are not good for their health.

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<sup>13</sup> The highest (but not the only) budgetary allocation for families, is that for uniforms and school supplies. Since they usually own their homes and have no means of transportation or household appliances and grow the food they eat, their only other budgetary allocations are for small expenses like clothing, condiments, health costs and occasional ceremonies (funerals, weddings).



*Eric, 12 years, Primary school*



## 6 *The role and influence of external messages*

Many are the children who, just like their parents, are well versed in the activities prohibited to them under current legislation. Sensitization by NGOs and messages from the government proliferate and anybody can recite examples of such teachings, which they endorse.

*« Last when the NGOs came to us, they told us to whip up the children's interest in the school. So we asked some people to volunteer to bring the children who stay away from school to school. So the chief's wife in particular, took it upon herself to do that. Each day, she went round the houses, sometimes with a cane, to get the children to school. She was discouraged, so she stopped. »*

Sarah, headmistress, New Aboi, 07/07 and 10/07/2011

*« I give them [children who go farming] wellington boots and protective clothing like a cap and long sleeved shirts.*

*Martina: In the olden days, were people protecting children in this manner on the farm?*

*Tahiru: Not really. The government and other bodies like the NGO increased education in that regard. »*

Tahiru, 54 years, GCC, 14 /04/2011

However, even if they all say the same thing, the good intentions of the villagers to follow rules dictated by entities external to their communities are not sufficient on their own. Unable to make a decent living, parents are cornered into making their children work in the fear of appearing to exploit them. Thus the denial is systematic and the constant reassurances that children do not work on the farm or only do light work actually impede any external initiatives from addressing instances of children in WFCL.

As far as the Impact Programme or the UK Trust projects are concerned, external assistance is most appreciated when it is targeted at capacity-building to improve cocoa production and increase harvests, thus strengthening the economic base of farming families.

## 7 Conclusions

The aspirations of people in cocoa-producing villages are in tune with NGO-inspired norms: for their children to go to school, not have to farm, to progress to the next cycle of education (senior secondary school), find work in town, settle there, start a family and support their elders back in the village with financial assistance.

If people in these communities are unanimous in their wish to see their children leave the village after completing a cycle of education without having had to farm, the reality is that they do not see themselves as having access to any other alternative. Those who do have the option, do without the labour of their children and use hired labourers to supplement their labour needs during harvest time. If their children succeed in their education, they do indeed follow the dream path of most villagers.

However there is still a lack of alternatives for out-of-school children or for those who remain in the village after primary school. If farming does not appeal as an option for a comfortable life, they may choose instead to work in the informal mining industry that is going on all around them or in small businesses in the towns, that force them to be highly mobile and to engage in activities that may be even more hazardous to their health and development than farming.

In addition, with waves of 're-urbanised'<sup>14</sup> people currently returning to the villages of Côte d'Ivoire, the possibility of urbanized youth returning to the villages is not to be discounted.

Initially, the reasons for this virtually universal ambition had more to do with the economic upheavals experienced by cocoa-producing villages than with external messages delivered by NGOs. Indeed, the expansion of economic gains made possible by cocoa cultivation has transformed traditional inheritance systems, bringing in its wake a modification of the whole system of social ties that unified the local community.

The increasing scarcity of land combined with the consolidation of new types of social links in the communities, has resulted in a general impoverishment of people who do not own land or only have inadequate plots.

Traditional social protection systems only function among the poorest families and communities are seeing their populations torn apart. The wishes of everyone, even if they are similar, require an individualistic effort that no longer allows for assistance from the wealthiest to the most deprived.

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<sup>14</sup> The premature return of young people to the village – due to an economic crisis that has affected the urban centres where they intended to pursue their active lives, has upset a long-standing social pattern in Ivorian villages. The inactivity of these youths in the villages is striking. Without land, they have no other option but to join an already numerous labour force on the farms. Whether they are school dropouts or unemployed graduates, they display very uncompetitive behavior when it comes to farming and are hardly encouraged in it by their elders. Struggling to diversify, one finds them in most cases on committees of youth who help run the village but more often they are grouped into 'syndicates' whose activities centre on the collection of dues from populations who are not at all convinced of the legitimacy of these entities. In all cases, none of their activities allow them to support themselves, much less a family. They end up as a burden on their parents on whom their unenviable fate rests.

Farming conditions for children under these circumstances are such that they are pushed into tasks more dangerous and risky than those they would be undertaking if they were enrolled in a long-term apprenticeship. Whether in or out of school, most children today have to contribute to their household economies.

External interventions must take into account these structural and cyclical forces in order to be able to offer effective assistance to such populations. To centre everything on children and pressure parents to send them to school is not the solution.

Helping parents and the community to rebuild mechanisms of community solidarity is one way to improve social protection for children in the villages.

The needs for assistance are many and cover different issues.

The need for labour is great, land is scarce, the size of farming plots is reducing, the profits, despite record national cocoa production figures, are meagre for the families who desperately need to increase their income and for whom children's education simultaneously represents an additional expense and a lowering of productivity.

Resolving this equation is a veritable challenge for NGOs operating locally. Three main objectives must be targeted in the provision of integrated community assistance<sup>15</sup>:

- To increase productivity by small-scale farmers
- To encourage rural communities to combine their traditional welfare systems with formal/public modes of social protection
- To offer alternatives to those who do not have the chance to pursue a life in the town.

Our recommendations are made within this framework.

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<sup>15</sup> i.e.: Ceasing to isolate issues concerning children from those of community life. Focusing on the child leads to the creation of an external and rather vague category while neglecting what childhood really is here: an element that is inalienable from the social whole. The child is clearly a part of the community's social setup, it is on this premise and basis that programmes should be carried out.

## **8 Recommendations**

### **Increasing productivity without using child labour:**

- Develop the organisational capacity of agricultural producers and improve the efficiency of the marketing chain;
- Provide services targeted at boosting production (planting, replanting and diversification) and marketing;
- Provide information and facilitate access to credit or microcredit assistance.
- With a participatory approach, train small-scale farmers in integrated agricultural systems for harvesting and post-harvest losses, techniques for regenerating cocoa, improving quality, establishment of nurseries, organization of cooperatives, marketing and good governance.

### **Facilitating the reconciliation of traditional welfare systems with formal modes of social protection:**

- Assist in the de-compartmentalization of social protection mechanisms by encouraging equitable wealth distribution through assistance to local societies and cooperatives;
- Set up focus group discussions to assist community members to articulate and share their knowledge about traditional forms of social protection which could still be utilized today (TBAs, fostering...)
- Improve access to formal/public modes of social protection in terms of health insurance, retirement benefits, capital demise (provision of information in the villages, support to administrative structures).

### **Offering alternatives to those with no prospects of pursuing a life in the town:**

- Develop professional training courses adapted to the needs of each village (based on the model of family farming schools developed by I.E.C.D);
- Work with communities on strategies to expand activities that actually generate supplementary income: intensification of subsistence farming with a view to commercialization: animal husbandry, oil palm production, transport;

### **Working with local and national partners:**

- Stop the guilt-provoking sensitizations about child labour and presumed child trafficking as they are duplicating government efforts and are expensive but pointless given that community members are now the first to reproach themselves;
- For optimal targeting of social protection mechanisms that are to be put in place or rehabilitated, work in collaboration with cooperatives, local authorities and community members;
- Identify informal leaders (community members working in towns, youth returning to the village, old people involved in leadership committees, prominent women...) and seek their advice for the design of action plans;
- Create or reinforce partnerships with entities already working in community outreach;
- Work on the basis of knowledge and experience that is objective and adapted to each community, formulating diagnostic analytical frameworks to be studied by NGOs prior to the launching of any action plans;

- Invite NGO partners to position themselves as planning entities and not just agents of implementation;
- Expand the coverage of action plans to ensure that all members of communities are integrated: village, hamlets, isolated settlements etc.;
- Work specifically on and with children below 13, between 13-15 and above 15 years (in accordance with the terms of ILO Convention 138 as ratified by Ghana) who are engaged in child labour, in order to seek joint solutions to their plight.
- Diversify modules for sensitization (to be given twice or three times per year according to the farming calendar) to ensure that they are holistically designed to reflect the ways in which children actually spend their time, whether in or out of school. Such modules should encompass the totality of children's daily activities, rather than just farming (i.e. they should include petty trading, household chores etc.): thus fostering instincts of self-protection in children that may extend to their farming work;
- Guard against the loss of input of children consulted in focus groups, at the point of implementation.
- Just like farming, good practices will logically also be imitated. In order to achieve this, parents will have to provide the example and receive prior training. Discuss, for example, the possibilities of making protective equipment available through a cooperative common fund and of training a suitable person in the spraying of pesticides;
- Conceptualise the child as an integral element of a greater whole (ie. the community), and address child protection through the conditions of everyday life in the community; work with a more holistic approach towards community development;
- On the basis of experience gained through community intervention (research and documentation), promote, encourage and support platforms for discussion, information and dialogue (feedback, workshop, conferences, publications, etc.) which allow the full variety of actors and stakeholders to discuss the norms, values, behaviours and legislation concerning children's rights and development.

In this way, international initiatives can be made more efficient and effective thanks to the study and recognition of the social norms of the populations they serve. In line with this, the ICI foundation could initiate a strategy based on the existing/potential logic of and capacity for protection among people and networks (such as couples, families, communities, intermediaries) who remain the most important and effective players in child protection and prevention of hazardous labour by children in cocoa production.

If it is crucial to ensure that the participation of children and communities is central to child protection initiatives, a comprehensive mobilisation of governmental and non-governmental actors on platforms of discussion, study and reflection is also necessary. To this end, ICI should base its actions on an engagement with the Government of Ghana and its development partners as well as its target populations, for mutual learning and understanding, with the support of experienced mediators.

The purpose of this new strategic direction is to offer a form of protective support to children engaged in cocoa production or, in other words, a constant and collaborative network accessible to children throughout their development.

## 9 Annexes

### 9.1 Location of villages



- RÉGIONS
- |               |                            |                   |
|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| ① ASHANTI     | ④ HAUTE RÉGION OCCIDENTALE | ⑥ RÉGION CENTRALE |
| ② BRONG AHAFO | ⑤ HAUTE RÉGION ORIENTALE   | ⑦ RÉGION EST      |
| ③ GRAND ACCRA |                            | ⑧ RÉGION NORD     |
|               |                            | ⑨ RÉGION OUEST    |
|               |                            | ⑩ VOLTA           |

## 9.2 List of Acronyms

COCOBOD	Cocoa Board
CLU	Child Labour Unit of Labour Department
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EHESS	Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales
EIB	Employment Information Bureau of Labour Department
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
GNP	Gross National Product
ICI	International Cocoa Initiative
IECD	Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NPECLC	National Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Cocoa
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
STCP	Sustainable Tree Crops Program
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour

### 9.3 List of interviewees

Below is a list of the people who were formally interviewed for this study and whose transcribed interviews are in the possession of ICI.

Within the framework of the participatory methodology used, the people - including many children - whom we talked to informally, accompanied to the farm or followed in their daily lives, were not officially identified within the report. These people numbered approximately a hundred between the four different field locations.

#### **Interviews in Gold Coast Camp (April 2011)**

- Mary, Queen Mother, 13/04/2011
- Anthony, 66 years, 13/04/2011
- Community Leaders, 12/04/2011
- Joseph, 60+, 20/04/2011
- Faustina, 13 years, 21/04/2011
- Joanna, 17 years, 21/04/2011
- Kobina, 84 years, 16 children, 15/04/2011
- Tahiru, 54 years, 14 /04/2011
- Angela, cocoa buyer, Producing Buying Company : PBC-COCOBOD, 21 April 2011
- Margaret, 40 years, 5 children, 20/04/2011
- Adwoa, 10 children, 60 years, 20/04/2011
- Elders, 11/04/2011
- Chief, 12/04/2011
- Martha, 55 years, 14/04/2011
- Asante Catechist, approx.50, 17/04/2011
- Kwaku , 68 years, 20/04/2011
- Ralph, JHS teacher, approx.35, 20/04/2011
- Gloria, 12 years, 21/04/2011

#### **Interviews in Endwa (April 2011)**

- Chief, approx.55 years, 12/04/2011
- Bea and Andrew, approx.40 and 70 years, 13/04/2011
- Apia and Adelaide, approx.65 and 16 years, 14/04/2011
- Robert Abu, approx.45 years, 18/04/2011
- Pregnant woman, approx.30 years, 18/04/2011
- Frank, 16 years, 18/04/2011
- Comfort and John, 47 and 54 years, couple, 17/04/2011
- Okai Harrison, 30 years, teaching JHS, 14/04/2011
- Robert, 31 years, teaching JHS, 14/04/2011
- Queen Mother, 13/04/11
- Mary, in charge of the clinic in Endwa, 13/04/2011
- Margaret, 60 years, Traditional Birth Attendant, 15/04/2011
- Patience, 16 years, 18/04/2011



### **Interviews in New Aboi (July 2011)**

- Nana Kojo, chief, 06/07/2011
- Community leaders, 06/07/2011
- Six school children, P4 (2), P5 (2), P6 (2), 06/07 and 07/07/2011
- Anastasia, chief's wife, 07/07/2011
- John, Unit Committee Chairman, household head, 07/07/2011
- Sarah, primary school headteacher, 07/07 and 10/07/2011
- Yaa, household head, 08/07/2011
- Edward, community elder, 08/07/2011
- Four JHS pupils, 08/07/2011
- Comfort, woman, 08/07/2011
- Nana Twumasi, PTA chairman, 08/07/2011
- Kwesi, JHS teacher, 08/07/2011
- Isaac, household head, 09/07/2011
- Kwame, JHS headmaster, 10/07/2011
- Nicholas, household head, 10/07/2011
- Andoh, CCPC secretary and leader of Apostolic Ghana Church, 10/07/2011
- David, household head, migrant from Bolgatanga, 11/07/2011
- Yaa, daughter of the chief linguist, 11/07/11
- Rockson, migrant from Akim Oda, household head, 11/07/2011
- Aikens, RECA facilitator, 11/07/2011

### **Interviews in Wuruye (July 2011)**

- Deborah and Dorcas, 24 and 29 years, primary school teachers and CCPC members (Community Child Protection Committee), 07/07/2011
- Godfred's father, approx. 45 years, household head, 09/07/2011
- Primary School headteacher, 08/07/2011
- Mary and husband, couple 11/07/2011
- Female Committee member, 11/07/2011
- Chief and Elders, 09/07/2011

About forty children in Wuruye agreed to participate in our study by taking place in a drawing game that we requested in order to get an account of their daily lives. Once these drawings were made, we asked each one of them to comment on them for us. Thus, it was partly through the commentary provided on the drawings of the following children that we were able to complete our study:

- Abraham, 13 years, Primary school
- Hanah, 14 years, PS
- Peter, 10 years, PS
- Emmanuel, 11 years, PS
- Mavis, 10 years, PS
- Samuel, 12 years, PS
- Sarah, 15 years, PS
- Joseph, 10 years, PS
- Vida, 10 years, PS

- Porcia, 12 years, PS
- Linda, 14 years, PS
- Emmanuel Abore, 12 years, PS
- Ebenezer Odoom, 13 years, PS
- Emmanuel Essel, 12 years, PS
- Eric, 12 years, PS
- Isaac, 15 years, PS
- Isaiah, 10 years, PS
- Raphaël, 16 years, Junior High School
- Abraham, 15 years, JHS
- Stephen, 20 years, JHS
- Elizabeth Akuffu, 15 years, JHS
- Godfred Essel, 15 years, JHS
- Bright, 10 years, JHS
- Kennedy, 15 years, JHS
- Ebenezer Okwan, 16 years, JHS
- Alex, 16 years, JHS
- Emelia, 16 years, JHS
- Solomon 16 years, JHS
- Michael, 10 years, JHS
- Sabine, 17 years, JHS
- John, 16 years, JHS
- Elizabeth Anyiglah, 14 years, JHS
- Paulina, 16 years, JHS
- Vivian, 16 years, JHS
- Georgina, 12 years, JHS
- Godfred Arhin, 14 years, JHS
- Kate, 15 years, JHS
- Daniel, 18 years, JHS

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