RESEARCH REPORT

Effectiveness Review of Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems in the West African Cocoa Sector

Summary

A review of systems to prevent and address child labour in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and their outcomes for children.

July 2021

International COCOA Initiative

Protecting children and their families in cocoa growing communities

The International Cocoa Initiative is a non-profit partnership organisation dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults in cocoa growing communities. We are experts on child labour and forced labour in cocoa, undertaking and disseminating research, advising governments and corporations to inform their practices and influence decisions-making, and working with NGOs in the field. We are committed to achieving sustainable cocoa production that protects the rights of children and adults worldwide.

We are grateful to all the stakeholders who shared data for this review, as well as to a Technical Working Group, consisting of industry representatives and international non-profit organisations, who guided the development of this study from start to finish.

We would also like to thank our peer reviewer, Andrew Dillon, who provided valuable insights and feedback on the analysis. The study was written by Anna Brüderle, with contributions from Laurent Foubert and Megan Passey.

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About this report

This study was conducted by ICI at the request of its members, as part of a collective learning process. Building on the report from the first phase, published in 2017, this study provides in-depth analysis of data from over 200,000 children covered by Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) across West Africa.

Drawing on information shared by different stakeholders implementing these systems, including ICI, it aims to answer the following questions:

- How does the design and set-up of these systems affect their ability to identify children in child labour?
- How effective are these systems at protecting children from hazardous work?

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Executive Summary

This study provides an in-depth analysis of data from Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) from cocoa-growing areas of West Africa. It aims to answer two questions: 1) How does the design and set-up of these systems affect their ability to identify cases of child labour? 2) How effective are these systems at protecting children from hazardous work?

What is a Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System?

Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) represent a means of targeting prevention, mitigation and remediation assistance to children involved in or at risk of child labour, as well as to their families and communities.

The concept of Child Labour Monitoring was initially developed in the 1990s by the International Labour Organization (ILO), as part of its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour:

> *"The immediate goal of child labour monitoring is to identify and remove girls and boys from child labour. It is an active process that involves regular, ongoing direct observations to identify child labourers and determine risks to which they are exposed. It also includes referring children to services, verifying that they have been removed and tracking them afterwards to ensure that they have satisfactory alternatives."*[1]

Since 2005, the ILO's *Guidelines for Developing Child Labour Monitoring Processes* have come to serve as the basis for developing and implementing systems to monitor child labour in a wide variety of geographic contexts and across supply chains. In West Africa's cocoa sector, where child labour is a persistent human rights concern, CLMRS are increasingly being promoted by a range of stakeholders, including governments, certifiers, companies and membership organisations. Moreover, several stakeholders have recently made commitments to scale up these systems significantly across the entire cocoa supply chain.[2]

One factor that may have contributed to the increasing adoption of such monitoring systems is their use as a due diligence tool. The 2011 UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights sets out the responsibility of businesses to put in place "a human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights" and to "enable the remediation of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or to which they contribute".[3] A raft of legislation that has been adopted or is currently being drafted in various countries is making human rights due diligence mandatory for businesses operating global supply chains. In contexts where the use of child labour in agricultural production is recognised as a salient human rights risk – as is the case in the cocoa sector – increasing numbers of businesses are using CLMRS to conduct due diligence.

1 ILO (2005) Guidelines for Developing Child Labour Monitoring Processes, 66.

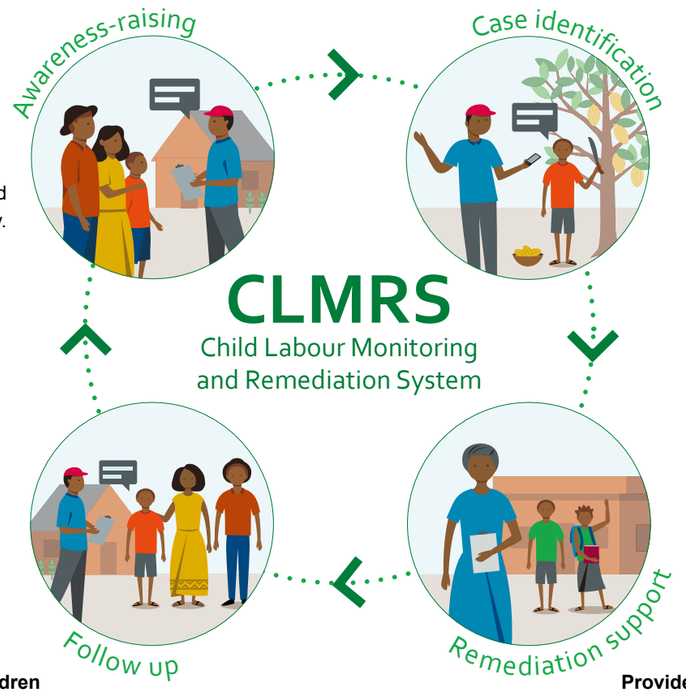
2 See, for example, ICI Strategy 2021-26; WCF Strategy: Pathway to Sustainable Cocoa (2020). Most recently, in order to mark 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, ICI and its members have pledged to scale up system coverage.

3 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011: 20-21.

The overall aim of the study is to identify ways of improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems, as a means of supporting ongoing efforts to scale them up.

In this review, we use an operational definition of Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (as set out in a benchmarking study previously conducted by ICI), according to which they must include the following core activities:[4]

Raise awareness about child labour and the resulting harm amongst farmers, children and the wider community.



Identify children in child labour through active, regular and repeated monitoring, using standardised data collection tools.

Follow up with children identified in child labour and continue to monitor their status on a regular basis until they have stopped engaging in child labour and have satisfactory alternatives.[5]

Provide support (prevention and remediation) to children in child labour or at risk of child labour, their families and communities, and document the support provided.

Wherever possible, all these core activities should be implemented alongside structures already in place to address child labour, especially government systems, and at the same time seek to strengthen them. They should also pursue capacities building of all local stakeholders involved in the system. Outcomes should be independently verified by third parties.

4 ICI (2021) Benchmarking Study: Overview and Definition of Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems.

5 ILO (2005) Guidelines for Developing Child Labour Monitoring Processes.

Objectives, scope and structure of this review

In this study, we examine several child labour monitoring and remediation systems currently in place in the West African cocoa sector. Our aim is to identify ways of improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of these systems, as a means of supporting ongoing efforts to scale them up. Building on the 2017 *Effectiveness Review of Child Labour Monitoring Systems in the Smallholder Agricultural Sector of Sub-Saharan Africa*,[6] this second-phase study was able to adopt a more detailed approach that made use of data from systems implemented in a range of different contexts and using different modalities. We analysed data from a total of 12 CLMRS projects, in order to understand how differences in their design, set-up, operation and management affect their functioning. We draw on these insights not in order to recommend a single approach or to propose a 'gold standard' for such monitoring systems, but rather to highlight the variety of approaches that have been adopted, as well as to compare, wherever possible, their effectiveness using a range of different criteria. In this context, the study aims to answer two main questions:

1. **How does the design of specific components affect a child labour monitoring and remediation system's overall ability to identify cases of child labour?**
2. **How effective are these systems and the different types of support provided when it comes to protecting children from hazardous work and improving their access to education?**

Our focus here is primarily on those elements that could be examined on the basis of the quantitative data provided by the participating stakeholders.

The analysis is divided into two parts: Part A addresses the question of how effective the different systems are at identifying cases of child labour, using data obtained from monitoring visits. Part B addresses the question how effective the different systems are at reducing children's exposure to hazardous work and increasing their participation in school, using data obtained from follow-up visits to children who have received support. Appendix A provides a detailed overview of the different systems currently in place in the cocoa sector while the online appendix contains additional details about the data and methods used, along with supplementary analytical results.

6 ICI (2017) Effectiveness Review of Child Labour Monitoring Systems in the Smallholder Agricultural Sector of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Data sources and methodology overview

In preparation for this review, ICI requested that participating stakeholders in the sector share two types of data:

1. Key information about the system set-up, including the institutional set-up, implementing partners, coverage of farmers, details of data collection and the provision of support to farmers and their children.[7]

2. Selected anonymised data from monitoring visits conducted at the child level (including basic demographic information, whether the child was identified as participating in child labour and whether they received any support).

In total, data from six stakeholders has been included in this review, albeit with some variation in the level of detail provided.

Data from monitoring visits is available from 12 CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, including seven implemented directly by ICI, two implemented with ICI support and three implemented independently of ICI. The compilation of this child-level monitoring data has enabled us to address questions related to the identification of child labour cases. More detailed information is available for ICI-implemented CLMRS, allowing us to raise further, more detailed questions concerning where and when visits take place, as well as the characteristics of monitoring agents.

Data on follow-up visits to children previously identified as participating in child labour (which were available only from systems at an advanced stage of implementation) is used to evaluate a given monitoring system's success at improving children's situation over time.

Key recommendations

The main measures identified in this review that could improve the effectiveness of child labour monitoring systems include:

1. Scheduling and adapting awareness-raising campaigns to match the seasonal patterns of certain hazardous tasks, thus improving their effectiveness by helping to increase perceived relevance and to prevent awareness-raising fatigue.

2. Using a combination of household monitoring visits and farm visits to increase the likelihood that all cases of child labour are identified and can be addressed.

3. When recruiting locally based monitors, making efforts to recruit and retain more female monitors, incentivise experienced monitors to stay in the job and set a minimum level of education for prospective monitors (secondary school, if sufficient candidates are available).

4. Focusing extra attention and remediation efforts on out-of-school children, children not living with a biological parent (e.g., children living with relatives or adopted children), boys, older children and eldest siblings, as data suggests these are the hardest profiles to keep away from hazardous work.

5. Verifying through multiple follow-up visits that a child has stopped hazardous work after having received remediation support. We recommend following up on children's progress until they have no longer reported engaging in hazardous child labour for at least two consecutive follow-up visits, with a minimum three-month interval between the visits.

Data from monitoring visits is available from 12 CLMRS, including 7 implemented directly by ICI, 2 implemented with ICI support and 3 implemented independently of ICI.

7 Information concerning the cost of the systems was also provided by some stakeholders. However, this information refers to different elements in different systems, meaning that it could not be used for a comparative analysis. Such an analysis will be the subject of a follow-up study, once more consistent and complete information on system costs has been shared and compiled.

Findings and recommendations

Raising awareness about child labour and the resulting harm amongst farmers, children and the wider community

What we learn from the data

We analyse the types of tasks children report engaging in throughout the year. The data shows that different types of hazardous tasks follow different seasonal patterns.

What we recommend

Awareness-raising campaigns addressing specific hazardous tasks could be scheduled to coincide with their peak seasons, for example:

- application of agro-chemicals (May–June)
- land-clearing tasks (May–July)
- use of sharp tools (July–September).

Adjusting the content of awareness-raising sessions on a seasonal basis could help to increase perceived relevance and prevent awareness-raising fatigue, thus enhancing effectiveness.

Identifying cases of child labour
through active, regular and repeated monitoring

What we learn from the data

We compare child labour identification rates under various CLMRS projects with child labour prevalence rates as measured by survey research. While some systems are reasonably effective at identifying a significant proportion of child labourers, there is still room for improvement. **Most monitoring systems are not likely to capture all cases among monitored households.**

We find important discrepancies between CLMRS projects with respect to the number of hours children report working per week. This most likely reflects differences in data collection tools, interview techniques and enumerator training.

What we recommend

Continued efforts should be made to revise and improve protocols for monitoring visits, data collection tools, messaging around monitoring objectives and training and support for monitoring agents, to minimise under-identification.

Obtaining adequate estimates from children concerning the number of hours worked on specific tasks is challenging. CLMRS implementers should therefore:

- ensure that data collection tools, interview techniques and enumerator training follow best practice guidance on survey techniques with children (e.g. https://childethics.com/ethical-guidance)
- use short recall periods (maximum one week) for questions relating to the time spent on certain activities
- schedule sufficient time in each monitoring interview to go through questions about the tasks the children engage in, recognising how difficult it can be for them to accurately estimate time spans
- use a simplified module to estimate work intensity for children below 10 years of age

What we learn from the data

Cases of child labour in the cocoa industry are identified year-round, but the data reveals that **there are periods of the year when child labour identification rates increase,** notably during the peak harvest season (October to January) and during school holidays.

What we recommend

In order for systems to detect a high share of child labour cases, monitoring visits could be intensified during certain periods of the year, notably:

- during peak harvest season
- during or just after school holidays

Monitoring agents and other staff involved in the management of CLMRS should be informed about these typical seasonal patterns in child labour identification. This will allow them to adjust their operational strategies and activity planning.

Under most CLMRS, agents visit farmers at home to conduct interviews about the participation of children in farm work. In some systems, these home visits are supplemented by random visits to cocoa farms to check on-site for cases of child labour. We find that **farm visits frequently lead to the identification of children living in the household, who were absent at the time of the home visit** and not mentioned by the parents, as well as of children not living in the farmer's household.

CLMRS should use a combination of household visits and farm visits to increase the likelihood that all cases of child labour are identified and can be addressed. Farm visits provide an important additional layer of monitoring, particularly when it comes to ensuring that children not living in the farmer's household (e.g. children working on their relatives' or neighbours' farms) do not fall through the cracks.

In any monitoring system, the agents in charge of data collection play a crucial role in producing some of the most important outcomes. When monitoring visits are conducted by locally based monitoring agents, we find that **agents with specific profiles have a higher likelihood of identifying cases of child labour**; notably:

- **female agents** identify more cases than male agents per number of visits
- agents with **higher education** levels identify more cases per number of visits than those with primary education only
- with **experience**, agents become better at identifying cases of child labour
- agents identify fewer cases per number of visits, the more farmers they are required to cover
- agents identify slightly more cases of child labour per number of visits outside of their own communities than within them

For systems that hire locally based agents, it is recommended to:

- set secondary school as a minimum level of education (if sufficient candidates are available)
- make efforts to recruit and retain more female monitoring agents
- incentivise agents to stay on the job after they have acquired experience
- adjust the number of farmers covered by each agent to match the time the agent can dedicate to the job, thus ensuring that each household visit can be completed with due care
- help agents to reach farming households outside of their own community (e.g. by ensuring they have bicycles or motorcycles at their disposal, or by paying transport allowances)

Provision of support (prevention and remediation) to children in child labour and others at risk

What we learn from the data

We look at contextual factors which are correlated with the likelihood of a child stopping hazardous work under a CLMRS. The data shows that **these systems are better at stopping some children from engaging in hazardous work than others**: girls, children who were in school at the time they were identified as participating in child labour, children living with at least one biological parent, children without older siblings and children living in a community with a primary school.

What we recommend

Children with specific profiles are particularly difficult to keep away from hazardous work and therefore should be given extra attention and be the subject of extra effort for remediation, notably:

- out-of-school children, especially when there is no primary school present in their community
- children not living with a biological parent (e.g. children living with relatives or adopted children)
- boys, older children, and children with older siblings.

What we learn from the data

We look at how different types of remediation given to child labourers are associated with the likelihood of their stopping hazardous work. First of all, since **CLMRS are capable of reducing children's engagement in hazardous work**, the range of remediation provided to children under these systems proves to be effective on the whole. If we compare the different types of remediation, **interventions to improve access to and quality of education** (e.g. school kits, bridging classes and school renovations) **appear to be a particularly promising remediation strategy** under the systems in place in Côte d'Ivoire.

Other forms of remediation implemented under various systems include birth certificates, vocational training, literacy classes for parents, income generating activity support, setting up savings groups, VSLAs and community service groups. The data also suggests that birth certificates, school improvements, bridging classes, tutoring and awareness-raising might be more effective for girls than for boys (at least in the context of ICI-implemented systems in Côte d'Ivoire), while school improvements might be more effective for younger children.[8]

What we recommend

In light of preliminary results concerning the effectiveness of different types of remediation, CLMRS should scale up their interventions to improve access to quality education in order to help children stop hazardous work.

In order to inform cost-benefit analyses of the effectiveness of different remediation types, more solid evidence is needed about the kind and magnitude of the impact of the various types of remediation. Experimental research and the careful analysis of additional data from follow-up visits to remediated children should be conducted, in order to make the evidence base more robust.

What we learn from the data

We look at how different types of school-related remediation given to out-of-school children in child labour are associated with the likelihood that these children start attending school. Results suggest that the provision of school kits and school uniforms is a promising strategy for increasing school participation amongst child labourers covered by CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire. Different types of remediation produce different results, depending on which outcome we look at.

Types of remediation which appear less effective at keeping children away from hazardous work may be effective at increasing school participation and vice versa.

What we recommend

According to preliminary results, CLMRS should scale up the provision of school kits and school uniforms, which can help to overcome some of the financial barriers to school attendance for poor households and thereby increase school participation amongst child labourers.

Remediation planning should also take into account the effectiveness of different forms of remediation in relation to different objectives. For example, types of remediation that are less effective at stopping children from engaging in hazardous work may facilitate school participation, leading to better learning and development outcomes. However, these broader outcomes lie beyond the scope of the data collected from the monitoring systems.

8 All the results concerning the effectiveness of different types of remediation are purely descriptive, because remediation is allocated to children based on their specific needs and profiles.

Following up with children identified as participating in child labour and monitoring their status

What we learn from the data

Of the children identified as participating in hazardous child labour, who were interviewed under ICI-implemented CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire:

- 38% reported no longer performing hazardous tasks during their **first follow-up visit.**
- 54% reported no longer performing hazardous tasks during **one of a series of follow-up visits.**
- 29% reported no longer performing hazardous tasks after **two *consecutive* follow-up visits.**

What we recommend

Standardised, precisely defined indicators should be used to determine the effectiveness of a given CLMRS at reducing children's exposure to hazardous work.

What we learn from the data

CLMRS can help not only to identify whether a child is engaged in child labour or not, but also the extent of their exposure to hazards. Under the ICI-implemented systems in Côte d'Ivoire, **children who continue to engage in hazardous work are exposed to fewer different types of hazard when follow-up visits are conducted** (on average, child labourers report exposure to two different hazards; **23%** of follow-up visits recorded a **decrease** in hazards, while **19%** of visits recorded an **increase** in hazards). On average, however, there was no reduction in the length or frequency of work (child labourers aged 10+ monitored by ICI-implemented systems in Côte d'Ivoire work on average 3.2 hours on a working day, 3 days a week).

What we recommend

CLMRS should track the evolution of the severity of child labour among children who continue working. Severity can be measured in terms of the different types of hazards they are exposed to or in terms of working time. These indicators provide a means of assessing whether the situation is improving or worsening.

What we learn from the data

The sequences of visits to individual children represent a valuable data source for understanding the dynamics of child labour in the context of monitoring systems in the cocoa industry. The data shows that **children who appear to be out of child labour during one visit may be found participating again in child labour when visited a few months later**. Among all child labourers who at one point reported no longer performing hazardous tasks, 24% reported performing hazardous tasks again during a subsequent visit.

What we recommend

Monitoring systems should verify through at least two follow-up visits that a child has stopped hazardous work after having received remediation support.

We recommend continuing to follow up with children until they no longer report having engaged in hazardous child labour for at least two follow-up visits, with a minimum three-month interval between the visits. The data suggests that after this point, the risk of a child falling back into hazardous child labour is reduced to 16%.

What we learn from the data

In addition to addressing child labour, CLMRS aim to improve children's access to several fundamental rights, including to quality education. Under ICI-implemented systems in Côte d'Ivoire, **around one in four out-of-school child labourers began attending school**. This shows that these systems are effective not only at reducing children's participation in child labour, but also at getting children back into school.

What we recommend

Children who both participate in child labour and do not attend school are particularly vulnerable and should be prioritised to receive support.

Monitoring and remediation systems should identify improved access to quality education as a central objective and indicator, as well as developing strategies to further improve the effectiveness of support related to education.

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