



# Results of ICI's Member Reporting Exercise – 2022

April 2024



International  
**COCOA**  
Initiative

## Background

Child labour and forced labour in cocoa are complex issues, linked to the realities of rural poverty. The majority of cocoa in West Africa is grown by smallholder farmers, who face issues such as land scarcity, food insecurity, limited access to quality education, lack of access to drinking water and inadequate health services. Because of these multiple root causes, no one actor alone can solve child labour or forced labour. All parties, the cocoa industry, governments, civil society organizations and farmers themselves have a role to play.

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is a non-profit organization, tackling child labour and forced labour by uniting the forces of the cocoa and chocolate industry, civil society, farming communities, governments, international organisations and donors. ICI innovates, catalyses and supports the development, implementation and scale-up of effective policies and practices that promote child rights and that prevent or remediate child labour and forced labour.

One approach that has found to be effective in tackling child labour in cocoa are Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS). Originally developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO), these systems were adapted for the cocoa sector by ICI and its members in 2012. Since then, they have been put in place by many cocoa and chocolate companies, and have been significantly scaled up in recent years. These systems are designed to identify, address, and prevent child labour. They are built around community facilitators (often farmers themselves) who visit households, raise awareness on the dangers of child labour, and identify children engaged in hazardous work. If a child is found in child labour, they are recorded in the system and support is provided to the child, their family and/or community. Support can include things like help to access quality education, support for farmer livelihoods, or women's empowerment.

**Child Labour:** Child labour is defined by the International Labour Organization as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development”. (ILO Conventions 138 and 182 refer to child labour.) Not all work done by children is classified as child labour. For instance, children carrying out light, non-hazardous tasks on the family farm for a limited period of time, under supervision, and without compromising their schooling, is considered as acceptable child work.

However, when activities are hazardous, such as carrying heavy loads or using sharp tools, working too many hours, or the work interferes with a child's schooling, this is considered child labour.

**Forced labour:** Forced labour is defined by the International Labour Organization as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily." Cases can often involve deception and manipulation, such as workers doing work they did not originally agree to, having their identity papers taken from them, or their wages withheld, in addition to physical violence or its threat.

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

## The reporting exercise

In 2021, ICI and its members introduced new reporting responsibilities, to support the drive for rigour and transparency in the sector, to recognize efforts currently being made and to motivate further action. Under this agreement, ICI members report details of activities underway to tackle child labour and forced labour in cocoa, such as the coverage of CLMRS or equivalent systems, the number of children found in child labour, the support being provided, and the work being done to strengthen local and national systems in cocoa-producing countries.

The following results are from the reporting season October 2021 – September 2022.<sup>1</sup> They are aggregate figures and reflect the collective efforts of ICI members to date (please [see the full list of ICI members](#) on our website). Please note, this selection of figures may not reflect all efforts made by ICI members to tackle child labour and forced labour (other projects may be underway that are not captured in this reporting exercise). Furthermore, these figures should not be taken as a reflection of the work of the sector as a whole, as they do not include data from organizations that are not part of ICI (or are not supplying an ICI member).

Agreeing on collective definitions and indicators (a necessary step in measuring progress) is a challenging task, and we are proud of the progress we have made in this exercise. Nevertheless, as we move forward with this process, we will be making improvements to ensure better data quality and will continue to modify the process, to ensure we are getting the most reliable results.

## Main results

### 707,925 households in West Africa are covered

- Thanks to the collective efforts of ICI civil society and industry members, 707,925 households in West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon) are covered by a Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS) or equivalent, up from just over 591,000 last year. When a household is “covered” by a CLMRS it means that it has been enrolled in the system and the risk of child labour has been assessed. When this is done by a visit from a local monitoring agent the household has been “monitored”, in other cases it may have been done using a risk model. This means that data about the household (things like the number, age and sex of children living in the household, or the household's access to basic services) are used to assess the risk that the children are in child labour. In the 2022 reporting season, 679,704 households were covered through monitoring visits and just over 28,000 were covered with a risk model.
- These systems are a key part of companies' human rights due diligence approaches and identify, address and prevent child labour in their supply chains, helping to support farming families and ensure their human rights are respected. Such systems alone cannot solve child labour, but they play an important role, complementing other efforts such as investments in social protection, quality education and healthcare, from companies, governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.
- The significant scale up of such systems is in line with ICI's strategy and key strategic objectives. Building on this strong foundation, it will be important to intensify efforts and accelerate scale up, if we are to hit our target of covering all cocoa-growing households in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana by 2025. We must also continue our collective efforts to support the development of an enabling environment in cocoa-producing countries and ensure all stakeholders continue to work in a collaborative manner.

<sup>1</sup> Independent external auditor, PwC, has provided limited assurance on the International Cocoa Initiative's member reporting process for 2023 (covering the previous cocoa season ending 30 September 2022). This assurance covers the suitability of the design of the reporting process and of the related controls implemented by International Cocoa Initiative.

### 14% of children covered by these systems are identified as being in child labour

- 145,641 children have been identified in child labour, which is about 14% of the total number of children covered by these systems. Once identified, support can be provided to help these children out of child labour.
- These results cannot be compared to national prevalence surveys. This is because both the scope and methodologies differ (national prevalence surveys consider the country as a whole whereas this report only considers households covered by a CLMRS or equivalent, and estimating the prevalence of child labour on a national scale is not the same as identifying cases of child labour in specific communities or supply chains in order to provide targeted support).
- While any amount of child labour is unacceptable, and 14% is a proportion that is much too high, we believe the systems in place today may not currently succeed in identifying *all* children in child labour. This can be explained by the complexity of identifying child labour in the context of rural communities, as well as the relative lack of maturity of some of these systems, which are being rolled out at a fast pace over a large scale. As systems get more mature, they get better at identifying cases, monitors become more experienced, are better trained and supported, trust increases within the community and families feel they can be more honest with their answers.
- The objective of these systems is to identify vulnerable children so that the necessary help can be provided. It is important, therefore, that they aren't missing children who are in need of support. More needs to be done to train monitors and improve monitoring techniques particularly in newer or rapidly expanding systems, to ensure they are identifying all children in child labour correctly. This may lead to an increase in identification rates in the future. Finding child labour is the first step in tackling it, not finding it when we know it is there, is much more concerning.

### 352,626 children, their families or their communities have received support

- 352,626 children, their families or their communities, have benefited from support under these systems. This is significantly more than the number of children found in child labour (145,641) as often support activities are provided on a family or community basis (such as the construction of a new school) and therefore benefit many more children than those identified in child labour.
- The aim of these systems is to provide support to all vulnerable children. In 2022, 61% of children identified in child labour had received support. There can be a time lag between identifying a child in need of support, deciding which activities will most benefit the child and their family, and putting those activities in place. However, efforts are being made to provide support to all children identified, and as quickly as possible.
- Examples of support that can be provided to help children out of child labour includes helping the family to cover school costs (uniforms and books), supporting children to get birth certificates (required to access secondary level education in Côte d'Ivoire), investing in education infrastructure, supporting the development of alternative income generating activities for cocoa farming households and raising awareness on the dangers of child labour.

### ICI members are supporting local and national stakeholders to strengthen child labour and forced labour prevention and response

- 76% of all ICI members are supporting local and national authorities to strengthen child labour and forced labour prevention and response, and 78% are supporting local NGOs, communities and farmer organizations.
- 49% of ICI members are sharing data with national authorities. Both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have national systems that track child labour on a national level across many sectors. A lot of effort and progress has been made by all stakeholders over the last few years to make sure that systems implemented by others can feed their data into those run by national authorities. We expect this % to increase rapidly over the next few years as data sharing becomes easier.
- Child labour and forced labour are complex problems and no one actor alone can solve them. All parties, the cocoa and chocolate industry, governments, civil society organizations and producers themselves have a role to play. It is pivotal that all stakeholders work together, and it is really positive to see that underway.



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