



# How is the promotion of employment contracts perceived in cocoa communities in Ghana?

Understanding the perceptions, use and relevance of the promotion of farm employment contracts under ICI's Forced Labour Innovation pilot project

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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, 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.

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## List of Acronyms

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| CBC   | Cocoa Buying Company                                  |
| CCLPC | Community Child and Labour Protection Committee       |
| CHRAJ | Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice |
| DSW   | Department of Social Welfare                          |
| FGD   | Focus Group Discussion                                |
| ICI   | International Cocoa Initiative                        |
| IGA   | Income Generating Activities                          |
| KII   | Key Informant Interview                               |
| LBC   | Licensed Buying Company                               |
| NCCE  | National Commission on Civic Education                |
| PPE   | Personal Protective Equipment                         |

## Executive Summary

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In West Africa, labour arrangements in cocoa farming are often informal, with many workers hired through verbal agreements. This lack of formal documentation can create uncertainty around working conditions, wages, and responsibilities and make it difficult to address labour-related disputes or identify risks of forced labour.

To address these challenges, the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), through its Forced Labour Innovation Project (2019–2025), introduced visual and written employment contract templates to help formalise employment relationships, clarify the rights and responsibilities of both employers and workers, and promote fair labour practices. Under the project, Community Child and Labour Protection Committees (CCLPCs) were formed and engaged to raise awareness about labour rights, encourage the use of written contracts, and support the resolution of related grievances within communities.

### Purpose of the study

- Assess perceptions of employment contracts introduced by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) in cocoa-growing communities in Ghana.
- Explore relevance, benefits and challenges.
- Derive recommendations for improvement.

### Methodology

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** and **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** were conducted with farm workers, farm owners, grievance committees, representatives from Cocoa Buying Companies and Government Authorities.

### Key findings

- Employment contracts are **highly appreciated** for reducing conflicts, formalising employment relationships and protecting workers' rights.
- The contracts help provide **clarity on roles, responsibilities, and benefit-sharing**, fostering mutual respect.
- **Challenges remain**, including low awareness and education of community members, delays in signing due to long absence of farm owners, and resistance from some farm owners linked to concerns about the perceived legal implications, reduced control over workers, and limited understanding of the benefits of formal contracts.

### High-level recommendations

- Sustained, well-designed awareness efforts are needed to continue building trust and encourage broad acceptance of employment contracts.
- Stakeholders recommend further simplification of the contracts, continued promotion of both texts and graphic versions and the inclusion of a practical worker-protection clause.
- Providing adequate resources is essential for CCLPCs to operate safely, raise awareness on the contract, reach remote areas to facilitate signing, and effectively sustain their effectiveness.

## How is the promotion of employment contracts perceived in cocoa communities in Ghana?

- Regular training, transparent selection of CCLPC members, enhanced collaboration with Cocoa Buying Companies and Cocoa Health Extension Division, as well as a clear monitoring system, should be implemented for sustainability.

## Context

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Forced labour remains a critical challenge in the West African cocoa sector, undermining workers' rights and sustainable production. Many cocoa farm workers operate under informal arrangements, with no written contract, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Unclear employment terms make it challenging to resolve disputes and complicate efforts to detect and address forced labour risks.

To tackle this, the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) piloted the Forced Labour Innovation Project from 2019 – 2025 in Ghana to identify risk factors and implement measures to address these risks. One of the interventions implemented under the project was the provision of [visual and written employment contract templates](#) to cocoa farm owners and workers in cocoa-growing communities in Ghana.

The contracts, designed for the context of cocoa farming, are intended to formalise employment relationships, prevent abusive labour practices and raise awareness among workers and employers of their rights and responsibilities. The contracts were designed with inputs from key government institutions, including the Department of Labour, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Social Welfare Department and the Judicial Service.

The contracts were promoted by the Community Child Labour and Protection Committees (CCLPCs). These committees are made up of adult volunteers who were formed and engaged to raise awareness about labour rights, encourage the use of written contracts, and support the resolution of related grievances within communities. CCLPCs encouraged farmers and workers to sign contracts, which include details of the parties involved, the terms and conditions of work (such as duration of agreement, responsibilities of both parties, compensation, the rights of both the worker and employer) and certification of the contract.

In this context, this study assessed the perceptions of farm workers, farm owners, Cocoa Buying Companies (CBCs) and government authorities (CHRAJ and Labour Department) on the use of employment contracts as a tool to formalise employment relationships and reduce the risk of forced labour in Ghana's cocoa communities. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Gather stakeholders' perceptions on the **use and relevance** of employment contracts.
- Examine stakeholder preferences regarding **text-based versus graphic contracts**.
- Identify **benefits and challenges** associated with the adoption and use of employment contracts.
- Document **recommendations** for improving the content, format, and implementation of employment contracts for future interventions.

## Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach, employing Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to gather insights on stakeholders' views on the employment contracts. FGDs were organised separately for each key stakeholder group (farm owners, farm workers, and Community Child and Labour Protection Committees) within selected communities to capture diverse perspectives.

In addition, KIIs provided detailed input from relevant stakeholders who had been involved in or influenced the implementation of the project, including representatives from CBCs and government authorities, mainly the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and Labour Department.

Perceptions gathered during FGDs were checked against insights from KIIs to identify consistencies or discrepancies in views across stakeholder groups. This approach ensured that findings were not based on a single perspective and strengthened credibility by integrating data from different levels (community and institutional actors), allowing the study to confirm patterns and highlight unique viewpoints.

### Sampling and community selection

Data was collected across five pilot districts - Suhum, Ayensuano, Ahafo Ano North, Ahafo Ano Southeast, and Sefwi Wiawso. One pilot community was randomly selected from each district, resulting in a total of five communities targeted for the study, out of a total of 12 pilot communities which are located within the five districts. A detailed breakdown of the sample is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Table of participants

#### Summary of focus groups conducted

| Region                      | District            | Community | Farm Workers | Farm Owners | CCLPC |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Eastern                     | Ayensuano           | New Alema | 1            | 1           | 1     |
| Eastern                     | Suhum               | Krobom    | 1            | 1           | 1     |
| Ashanti                     | Ahafo Ano Southeast | Gyaukrom  | 1            | 1           | 1     |
| Ashanti                     | Ahafo Ano North     | Amakrom   | 1            | 1           | 1     |
| Western North               | Sefwi Wiaso         | Kramokrom | 1            | 1           | 1     |
| <b>Total number of FGDs</b> |                     |           | 5            | 5           | 5     |

#### Summary of key informant interviews conducted

| Stakeholder          | Count | Details            |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Cocoa Buying Company | 1     | Tony's Chocolonely |
| CHRAJ                | 3     | District Officers  |
| Labour Dept          | 3     | District officers  |

## Findings

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### Perception of the benefits of the employment contracts

Respondents perceived the introduction of employment contracts in cocoa-growing communities to have delivered several notable benefits:

#### Conflict reduction

Employment contracts have reduced disputes between farm owners and workers by clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and benefit-sharing arrangements. This clarity minimises misunderstandings and prevents exploitative practices that were common under verbal agreements.

Stakeholders reported fewer cases of cheating, fighting, and workload disputes, leading to improved harmony and reduced intervention needs from local and government authorities.

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*“For me, it is good. The contract has helped me a lot and stopped misunderstandings between farm owners and farm workers. Issues of stealing and cheating, and fighting have been reduced”. (Female farm worker, Krobon)*

*“We were receiving a lot of cases between the farm owners and the workers, but it has been reduced now because of the contracts. This has reduced our workload at the office” (Male staff, Labour Department, Suhum).*

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#### Strengthened trust and stability

Another key perceived benefit is the increased trust and stability for both farm owners and farm workers. Contracts provide legal and social protection for both farm owners and workers. Workers are less likely to be dismissed arbitrarily, and farm owners feel that their land rights are safeguarded. These foster trust and stability in employment relationships.

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*“Initially, some farm owners will bring trivial issues during the harvesting season and just sack the workers. But since the contracts are now signed, they [farm-owners] are afraid to do that.” (Male farm worker, Kramokrom).*

*“Yes, it has assured us of employees working as planned and prevented workers from abandoning the farm to do other jobs.” (Male farm owner, Krobon).*

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#### Improved service delivery

An additional benefit identified is that the implementation of the employment contracts has contributed to improving the quality of service delivery among farm workers. Workers demonstrate higher commitment and better performance when contractual obligations are clear, and they are assured of a fair wage for their hard work. Timely harvesting and proper maintenance of farms have improved, contributing to increased productivity.

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*“The workers see it as a motivator and a protector, and some even feel proud that they have signed the contract with their farm-owners, saying, ‘I have finally signed a contract*

*with my farm-owner so he cannot cheat me anymore'.* (Male staff, Labour Department, Suhum).

*"The contract has improved our service delivery because we are also obliged to fulfil our part of the contract, for instance, some of us used not to weed or harvest as expected. A farm that should be harvested within two weeks, some of us will delay it to about a month, and some fruits get spoilt and that affects the yield."* (Female farm worker-Kramokrom).

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### **Empowerment of farm owners and workers**

Contracts, together with rights education, have empowered both farm owners and workers to know, claim, and defend their rights, leading to more fairness and accountability in their working relationships. Both farm owners and farm workers have become more assertive about their labour rights. This increased assertiveness is because the contract protects the interests of both parties, and it is well explained before signing, so each side feels more secure.

Sensitisation and education conducted by the CCLPC and district-level institutions (CHRAJ, Social Welfare, Labour) have helped community members better understand their rights. As a result, both groups now speak up more confidently and are more aware of the fairness of the contracting process. Supporting quotes highlight:

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*A female CHRAJ officer, Ayensuano, confirmed that the existence of the contract has made farmers and workers more aware of their rights.*

*A male farm owner, Krobom, notes that the contract is applied fairly because both parties must agree before the contract can be signed.*

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### **Enhanced access to conflict resolution**

The study also found that the employment contracts have improved access to conflict resolution by serving as clear reference documents during disputes.

Supported by witnesses, who are present at the signing of the contract and can be called upon to validate agreements, and the CCLPCs, which mediate disputes, these contracts facilitate cost-free, accessible mediation and reduce reliance on traditional systems that often involve financial charges and biased judgments. When disputes cannot be mediated by the committee and are referred to other relevant stakeholders, record books and signed contracts provide credible evidence in formal legal settings.

Supporting examples show that, in the context of contract-related disputes, community members now prefer using the CCLPCs because they do not charge fees, helping them avoid the high costs and partial decisions sometimes associated with traditional authorities.

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*"The committee has cut my food, somehow. Now everybody runs to the CCLPCs as they do not charge anything, so now I don't get any money in dispute resolutions".* (Male CCLPC member and a traditional community chief, Kramokrom).

*"All we can say is thank you so much, it has saved us money we pay at the chiefs' palace before a conflict is resolved, which doesn't always go well because it is the word of the farm owner against me, the worker, and it is sometimes partial. The CCLPC and contracts have made it easy to find the truth".* (Male farm worker, Kramokrom)

*A court requested CCLPC records to validate its verdict, reinforcing the committee's legitimacy in dispute resolution (Male CCLPC member, Kwaboanta)*

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### Perceptions of use and relevance

One of the objectives of the study was to gather stakeholders' perceptions on the relevance of employment contracts. The findings show general consensus among the various stakeholder groups that employment contracts are useful and relevant and have helped protect workers' rights as they formalize the working relationship between farm owners and workers.

Participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the use of the contract and have specific expectations regarding its contents, including: the names of the parties involved and their witnesses, signatures, the responsibilities of each party, the size of the farmland involved, and procedures for sharing proceeds.

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*"It has replaced the verbal contract and placed more formalization in the work. It provides a job description and mutual agreement on what is expected." (Male CCLPC member, Amakrom).*

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However, a participant from a CBC expressed the view that the employment contract was excessive and ineffective in a context of low literacy amongst workers and farmers. He classified it as a certification requirement only and argued that the contract was overly detailed - a simple signed declaration between the farm owner and the worker, confirming that both parties understand and consent to the working arrangements, would be sufficient.

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*"We all know that this contract thing is for certification purposes. This is our community; most of them are not educated. So, there should just be a declaration form for the farm owner and the worker to sign that they are ok with the terms and conditions they have agreed to work with, and this should be enough" (Male CBC Officer, Suhum).*

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The above perception highlights some of the challenges that remain and the need to continue raising awareness at all levels.

### Preferences for text and graphic contracts

Stakeholders expressed a strong preference for using both text-based and graphic employment contracts to accommodate varying literacy levels. While written contracts are currently in use, farm workers and committee members favour graphical versions for easier understanding, particularly among those with limited education. Government authorities also recommend a blended approach, recognising that each format has unique advantages and contributes to inclusivity and clarity in contract implementation.

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*"The written contracts are simple. With the written contract, we read and interpret each sentence, but the graphical one will be even clearer. The contract has pictures of the roles, so you just show them and ask that this is what your landowner says you should do, do you agree?" (Male CCLPC member, Gyaukrom)*

*"Pictures are powerful and would be easier to understand and more convincing than the written format" (Male Officer, CHRAJ, Ahafo Ano North)*

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## Challenges

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### High illiteracy rates

A major barrier to the wider adoption of employment contracts is the high illiteracy rate among farm owners and workers in rural cocoa-growing communities, which perpetuates certain prejudices, stereotypes and misconceptions.

Limited literacy skills make it difficult for individuals to comprehend written documents, leading to scepticism and resistance toward formal agreements. Many community members perceive contracts as complex or intimidating by nature, associating them with legal disputes rather than the protection of rights. This cultural and educational gap reinforces reliance on verbal agreements, which are seen as simpler and more familiar and highlights the need to continue raising awareness and educating people about contracts in order to promote social, cultural and behaviour change.

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*“The challenge with them [farm owners and their workers] accepting the signed contracts is illiteracy. The illiteracy rate is high here. They are scared of papers. They say farming is for the illiterates, so if you are bringing papers into farming, what are you trying to do?”*  
(Male staff, Labour Department, Sefwi Wiawso).

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### Worker-centred awareness raising

The study revealed that awareness campaigns disproportionately emphasised benefits for farm workers, with limited focus on advantages for farm owners. This imbalance may have created negative perceptions among some farm owners, who often viewed the contracts as favouring workers and posing risks to their land ownership. Such miscommunication has contributed to the resistance and reluctance of some farm owners to participate in the contract signing process.

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*“When the facilitators are raising awareness, they focus more on the benefits of the contracts to the workers, thinking they [workers] are the victims, but, in some cases, though it is rare, it is the farm owners who become victims.”* (Male Labour Department Staff, Suhum).

*“When the workers call the farm owners to sign the contracts, the farm owners perceive that the contracts favour the workers more. They [farm owners] think the moment you hear come and sign a contract, it means my land is going to be taken away from me by the worker.”* (Male staff, Labour Department, Ahafo Ano)

*“Why should a worker bring me (farm owner) a contract to sign if it is not more beneficial to him?”* (Male farm owner, Amakrom)

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### Community members' mistrust of contract administrators

Trust deficits between some community members and implementing stakeholders, including CCLPCs and ICI, emerged as a challenge. Some stakeholders (particularly farm owners) expressed suspicion about the motives behind the initiative, questioning why external actors were investing resources to promote contract signing.

This mistrust was compounded by fears that administrators (CCLPCs) were selectively disclosing contract content to encourage signatures. Such perceptions, which undermine confidence in the process and hinder adoption, were mainly due to misunderstanding and ignorance and require more awareness raising and exposure to the benefits of the contracts.

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*“They (farmers) always think someone is playing at an angle, because if an NGO is bringing a contract to sign, what are they getting from it? They feel like if they sign the contract, you people are using it to get something. (Male staff, Labour Department, Sefwi Wiaso).*

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### Inadequate community awareness of the contracts

Inadequate awareness of the contracts at the community level was another key challenge identified. Awareness-raising efforts were especially limited in communities without information centres, where the CCLPCs are unable to reach segments of the population (particularly those in hamlets) due to various constraints. Some CCLPCs also reported lacking materials (such as audio recordings) to support sensitization, further complicating the process and making it difficult to communicate the purpose and importance of the contracts effectively. These limitations have contributed to community members viewing the contracts as complex or associated with litigation, reinforcing existing cultural resistance.

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*“Still, in some communities, the community members are not clear about contract issues. They see contracts as book-long or something like litigation matters. Per our tradition, anything relating to books, they see it to be like a long issue and the moment they even hear contract; it sounds like a very big thing. The education has not gotten down well with them that contracts are not a big issue but rather something that’s coming to protect you”.  
(Male staff, Labour Department, Suhum).*

*“I’ve been in the community for over a year, but I have not heard about any farmer and worker contract, I would have signed one” (Female Farm Owner, Amakrom)*

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### Operational constraints for committees

Most of the CCLPCs are tasked with overseeing their communities, including the widely dispersed hamlets, which create significant operational challenges. The wide geographic coverage requires committee members to travel long distances to facilitate contract signing and deliver related services. This situation not only increases the time and resources needed for outreach but can also limit the frequency and effectiveness of committee interventions. Consequently, logistical constraints such as lack of transportation (bicycle and motorbike), protective wear (PPEs) and communication tools (megaphones or information centres) hinder the timely implementation of employment contracts and reduce the overall efficiency of the initiative.

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*“Visiting other hamlets and communities is a challenge for the committees because the places are quite far” (Male CCLPC member, Amakrom)*

*“On my way to make a follow-up on a farmer to sign the contract, I met a big snake, so I had to come back. Sometimes we are beaten by rain on follow-ups” (Male CCLPC Member, Amakrom)*

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### Obstructions to contract signing by middlemen

Some farm owners reside outside the communities in which their farms are located and rely on middlemen to manage daily operations. These middlemen serve as a link between the farm workers and the farm owner, forming a chain of three parties. Some participants mentioned cases of middlemen obstructing efforts to facilitate the signing of contracts between farm owners and the workers under their supervision. This resistance is largely driven by concerns that formalising these agreements may diminish their role, render them redundant or put them out of business.

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*“There is one farmer in this community. He owns a lot of cocoa farms, but he does not live in this community. There is someone who looks after the workers on his behalf. We and his farm workers have tried on different occasions to meet him so that he and his farm workers can sign the contracts but the person looking after the workers has been convincing the man not to come and sign the contracts. If we can get that farm owner, a lot of workers will have the contracts signed in this community because he has a lot of farm workers on his farms”. (Male CCLPC member, New Alema).*

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### Resistance to the contracts by farm owners

According to several informants, while workers generally welcomed the contracts, some farm owners actively resisted signing. This resistance often stemmed from entrenched practices that allowed owners to exploit informal arrangements, such as imposing additional tasks or withholding payments. Formal contracts threaten these practices by introducing accountability and legal obligations. Overcoming this challenge requires targeted education for farm owners, highlighting how contracts protect their interests and reduce disputes, alongside enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance.

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*“Generally, the workers are ready to sign the contracts, but some farm owners resist. When you invite them both, the workers usually will come, but the farm owner will not come. They resist because they cheat their workers, and they know if they sign the contracts they would no longer be able to cheat them, so they are afraid.” (Female CCLPC member, Krobon).*

*“Greediness on the part of the farm owner will not make a farm owner avail him/herself to sign the contract”. (Female farm owner, New Alema)*

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### Farm owners living outside the communities

A significant challenge to contract implementation is the absence of farm owners from the communities where their farms are located. Many owners reside in urban areas and visit their farms infrequently, often only during harvest periods. This results in delays and incomplete contract signing processes, as owners are either unavailable or arrive unprepared for formalisation. In some cases, contracts remain unsigned for months despite workers' willingness to proceed. Addressing this issue requires proactive scheduling, remote facilitation options, and stronger follow-up mechanisms to ensure timely completion of agreements.

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*“Some of the farm owners do not live here, but in Kumasi and Accra, and it is difficult to get them to sign the contracts.” (Male CCLPC member, Amakrom)*

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*“There is a delay in signing some of the contracts because the farm owner is not coming to the community, though his worker has signed the contract and an incomplete contract because the landowner is not available”. (Male CCLPC member, Gyaukrom)*

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## Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to improve the content and implementation of employment contracts for future interventions and to ensure better adoption, utilisation, and dissemination.

### Awareness and education

To ensure widespread acceptance and signing of employment contracts, continuous awareness and education by the CCLPCs with technical guidance from ICI is critical. Communities need dedicated information centres for audio-based sensitisation, supported by credible government agencies such as the Labour Department, CHRAJ, Social Welfare, and Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) to build trust and legitimacy. Persistent education will help dismantle cultural misconceptions about hidden agendas, while outreach through social gatherings (such as durbars) can maximise engagement.

Awareness creation should be conducted with visually appealing materials such as posters, paired with balanced audio messages that speak to both farm owners and workers. Particular attention should be given to farm owners and LBC staff, who often resist signing, through targeted education and monitoring visits. Finally, improved documentation and showcasing of success stories from communities that have already embraced contracts will inspire others to follow suit, proving that formal agreements protect the rights of both parties.

### Contract content

To build trust and encourage wider adoption of employment contracts, government stakeholders (CHRAJ and the Labour Department) recommend that committees receive technical guidance on the authenticity and binding nature of the contract once it has been signed by both parties. This approach, they note, is more appropriate than the CCLPC's request for government officials to append their signatures or provide a stamp/seal on the contract.

Equally important is making the contracts accessible: ICI should promote both text and graphical formats to ensure clarity for all literacy levels, while further simplifying content by using plain language to eliminate confusion. Beyond format, stakeholders such as the CCLPCs and farm workers recommended the inclusion of practical clauses that protect rights and safety, including provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by farm owners, clear compensation terms for contract termination, and a next-of-kin clause to safeguard benefits in unforeseen circumstances. To address this, it is recommended that ICI review the current contracts in consultation with relevant stakeholders (such as CHRAJ, CCLPC, and District Labour Officers) based on this feedback to improve contract credibility, inclusiveness, and fairness, thereby strengthening trust and cooperation among parties.

### Resources and logistics

To guarantee the success and sustainability of CCLPC operations, the provision of adequate resources would be essential, particularly mobility tools (bicycles or motorbikes) and protective gear (raincoats, wellington boots, and cutlasses), to empower them to reach remote hamlets, conduct timely follow-ups and ensure safe field operations. Without these tools, committees face delays, exposure to hazards, and reduced effectiveness, as illustrated by members who report abandoning follow-ups due to dangerous terrain and severe weather. CCLPCs also recommended the provision of identification cards to committee members to preserve legitimacy beyond the project period. While this proposition was considered, it was not retained due to misuse in previous projects and misalignment with ICI's community-based approach. The specific needs and gaps of each community must be assessed, and support must be tailored to each CCLPC's unique needs.

### Training and monitoring

Regular refresher trainings conducted by ICI for committee members should place greater emphasis on practical sessions on contract interpretation and conflict resolution. Government agencies like CHRAJ, Labour, and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) should be actively involved in reinforcing compliance

and credibility. Training must also clarify transparent committee selection criteria that emphasise integrity and inclusion. Additionally, ICI should design and implement monitoring frameworks with clear timelines, standardised tools, and feedback mechanisms to ensure accountability and sustained performance. Finally, fostering collaboration through regular review meetings and engaging LBCs to support farmers and promote best practices will strengthen outcomes and encourage sustainability.

### **Sustainability**

The sustainability of the contract initiative relies on clear communication and proper use of resources to ensure continuity. In certain communities, collective Income Generating Activities (IGAs) have been established to support the CCLCPs' work. While this has been a positive measure to support their activity and recognise their efforts, explicit guidance must be provided on their intended purpose to prevent misinterpretation. Currently, some committees view IGAs as personal compensation, while others assume they cover operational costs such as photocopying contracts and transportation. To address this, stakeholders should establish clear guidelines on IGA utilisation, train committees in financial management and accountability, implement monitoring and reporting systems to track usage, and conduct community sensitisation sessions to reinforce that IGAs are tools for sustaining project activities rather than personal incentives.

## Conclusion

The introduction of employment contracts is perceived to have had a **transformative impact** on labour relations. These contracts have formalised working arrangements, reduced conflicts, enhanced job security, and improved service delivery among farm workers and farm owners. They also provide a cost-free mechanism for dispute resolution through CCLPCs, contributing to fair labour practices and sustainable cocoa production.

However, some **persistent challenges** remain, including high illiteracy rates, partial awareness, mistrust of implementing bodies, resistance from some farm owners, and logistical constraints, limiting the reach and effectiveness of the initiative. These barriers hinder full adoption and require targeted interventions to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness.

Looking ahead, the **sustainability outlook** is promising if all stakeholders (ICI, CCLPC, CBCs, CHED, Labour department and CHRAJ) prioritise continuous education, resource provision, and monitoring systems. Effective interventions for sustained resource generation and documenting best practices should help to strengthen community ownership and long-term viability.

**Scaling this initiative across cocoa-growing regions and embedding it into national labour and agricultural policies would likely amplify its impact.** Government endorsement, integration into farmer support programs, and collaboration with LBCs can institutionalise fair labour practices. By aligning with Ghana's labour regulations and global sustainability standards, employment contracts can become a cornerstone for tackling forced labour risks and promoting ethical cocoa production.

### Key Takeaways

**Impact:** *Employment contracts have formalized labour relations, reduced conflicts, and improved job security and service delivery in cocoa-growing communities.*

**Challenges:** *Adoption is hindered by high illiteracy, mistrust, resistance from some farm owners, and logistical constraints for committees.*

**Sustainability outlook:** *Promising if continuous education, resource provision, and monitoring systems are prioritized*

**Forward-looking:** *Scaling the initiative and integrating it into national labour and cocoa sector policies will institutionalize fair labour practices and strengthen Ghana's compliance with global sustainability standards.*