

Feasibility study for a child-friendly grievance mechanism in Ghana

October 2026

Children in Ghana's cocoa-growing communities face a range of child rights risks, including child labour and hazardous work, violence, neglect, trafficking, abuse, and barriers to education. To better understand how children can safely report concerns and access support, ICI commissioned Partner Africa to conduct a feasibility study on child-friendly grievance mechanisms (CFGMs) in Ghana.

Drawing on consultations with 195 stakeholders, including 45 children, the study examined child rights risks, existing reporting pathways, barriers to reporting, and opportunities to strengthen access to remedy in cocoa-growing communities. It found that while Ghana has established quite extensive legal and institutional child protection systems, many children continue to face significant barriers when seeking help or reporting concerns, including social norms that discourage children from speaking out, fear of retaliation, limited trust in reporting channels, and low awareness of available support.

The study highlights that effective child-friendly grievance mechanisms should go beyond reporting channels. In line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, they should also ensure that children can access appropriate support, effective referral, remediation, and, ultimately, the restoration of their rights.

A key finding is that Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) are often among the most trusted and accessible child protection structures in cocoa-growing communities. Widely viewed as a bridge between communities and formal child protection services, CCPCs frequently serve as the first point of contact for children and families and play an important role in identifying, resolving, and referring child protection cases. However, their effectiveness is often constrained by limited resources, weak referral pathways, inconsistent case management, and insufficient institutional support.

While the study identifies an independent Child Rights Office as a potential best-practice model for a CFGM in the longer term, it concludes that the most practical and feasible approach in the current context is to strengthen existing CCPCs and improve coordination between community-based and state-based child protection systems. Recommended actions to strengthen CCPCs and coordination include clarifying and reinforcing CCPCs' governance and mandate, strengthening referral pathways and integration with district systems, improving child-friendly access and participation, enhancing training and resources, and expanding access to support and remediation services.

Ultimately, the study concludes that improving children's access to remedy in Ghana is both necessary and achievable. Building on trusted community structures, strengthening links with formal protection services, and ensuring that children's voices help shape the systems designed to protect them will be essential to creating a more accessible, responsive, and child-centred protection ecosystem.