ICI **Analysis**

Changes in hazardous child labour in Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa communities before and after Covid-19 partial lockdown

November 2020

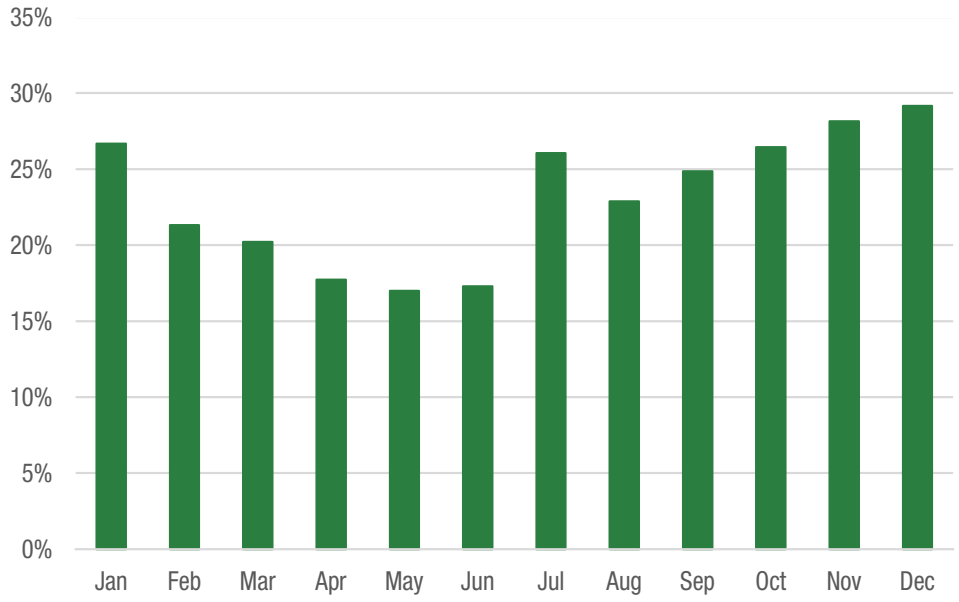
Analysis of data from 263 communities in Côte d'Ivoire shows that during the Covid-19 related lockdown from March to May, child labour was higher than we would have expected for the time of year, but that rates returned to expected levels by September 2020.

Summary

Data emerging from the International Cocoa Initiative's Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS), which are collected continuously by local monitoring agents, suggest that child labour in cocoa follows a seasonal pattern (see figure 1). Child labour identification rates under the CLMRS are usually highest in the months of July and November, and lowest between February and April. This trend reflects the varying labour needs at different times of the year, as well as the availability of children's time during the school holidays

There was no statistically significant difference between average child labour identification rate observed for July-September 2020 compared to previous years, suggesting a stabilisation of the child labour situation.

Figure 1: Mean child labour identification rates[1] within each month of the year under ICI CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire, 2016-2019



[1] Number of cases of hazardous child labour identified over number of child interviews held in a given month.

To assess changes to child labour during the global Covid-19 pandemic, ICI analysed data on hazardous child labour, collected through local monitoring agents as part of its CLMRS work, from 263 cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire, both during and after the implementation of partial lockdown measures. To assess the child labour situation during the lockdown period, we compared hazardous child labour cases identified per monitoring visit between 17 March and 15 May 2020 with those in a reference period – the same months in previous years and just before the lockdown in March 2020.

The analysis found that in these communities, the number of hazardous child labour cases identified during the partial lockdown from March to May was higher than we would have expected at that time of year.

To re-assess the situation after the end of the partial lockdown, we compared cases of hazardous child labour identified by the CLMRS during July to September 2020, in the same communities, with those identified in the same period of previous years (2016 to 2019). For the post-lockdown period, the data shows hazardous child labour rates which are indistinguishable from previous years' levels for the time period in question.

During the partial lockdown in Côte d'Ivoire, from 17 March to 15 May 2020, the average child labour identification rate recorded by ICI's CLMRS in the sample of 263 communities was 19.4%, compared to 16% in the reference period. This 21% increase in child labour identification was statistically significant.

After the progressive easing of partial lockdown measures from mid-May 2020 onwards, we examined a second period, from 1 July to 30 September 2020. During this period, there was *no statistically significant difference* between average child labour identification rates observed for July-September 2020 (at 23.7%) compared to previous years (22.1%), suggesting a stabilisation of the child labour situation. Note that the higher rates recorded for the July-September period compared to the March-May period follow a normal seasonal pattern that occurs throughout an average year (see Figure 1 above).

Method and Results

ICI's analysis draws on data captured by its CLMRS which have been operating in these communities for several years. During and after the partial lockdown, locally based agents have continued to collect data in their own communities, while respecting precautionary hygiene and distancing measures. Due to the unique structure of the CLMRS, data collected during these two periods – *during partial lockdown,* from mid-March to May 2020; and *after partial lockdown*, from July to September 2020 – could be compared to data collected in previous years, allowing us to assess the short term impact of the pandemic and related measures on rates of hazardous child labour identified.

Data from two different time periods clearly demonstrate how child labour identification rates in cocoa fluctuate significantly throughout the year, in line with the different labour needs of different seasons.

We used a simple means comparison of child labour identification rates to compare the two time periods *during* and *after* partial lockdown in 2020 to relevant previous time periods in the same communities.

The difference between hazardous child labour identification during partial lockdown on the one hand, and the same period in previous years on the other, is statistically significant, suggesting that child labour had increased. When we make a similar comparison for the period July to September, we see no statistically significant difference between identification rates in 2020 to those of previous years. We therefore deduce that the increase in the March to May period was temporary.

Data from these two different time periods clearly demonstrate how child labour identification rates in cocoa fluctuate significantly throughout the year.

It is important to highlight that child labour identification rates under the CLMRS vary not only with the seasons, but also with several other

Figure 2: Means comparison (t-test) of child labour identification rates among children visited *during* partial lockdown from March to May 2020; and *after* partial lockdown July to September 2020; compared to the same months in previous years.

	Observations (# of children)	**Mean child labour identification rate**	Standard error
During partial lockdown: (17 March - 15 May 2020)	2910	**19.4%**	0.0073
Situation in same months of previous years: (March-May 2016-2019, and March 2020 prior to lockdown)	2171	**16.0%**	0.0079
Difference:		**3.4%***	0.0109
After partial lockdown: (1 - July - 30 September 2020)	295	**23.7%**	0.0248
Situation in same months of previous years: (1 July - 30 September 2016-2019)	2464	**22.1%**	0.0083
Difference:		**1.6%**	0.0256

* Denotes a statistically significant difference

factors, including the interview techniques applied by the individual monitoring agent, accessibility and infrastructure present in the community (including access to schools), the profile of farmers monitored etc. For these reasons, for our analysis we have selected as comparison groups children interviewed in the same communities before, during and after the partial lockdown (implying also that most of the data were collected by the same monitoring agents). In addition, this means that while child labour identification rates emerging from the CLMRS can be used as a proxy to understand patterns in child labour practices among specific groups of farmers, they cannot be directly compared to child labour prevalence rates measured through other research surveys.

Conclusion

ICI's CLMRS continues to provide a valuable source of real-time information to help us understand how child labour among monitored farmers in some cocoa communities is evolving, and how it might be affected by specific events, such as the partial Covid-19 lockdown.

While the differences observed between the partial lockdown period in March-May 2020 and relevant periods prior to the lockdown are likely to be due to the pandemic and the necessary measures imposed to control it, there may also be other factors at play such as the price and availability of basic goods and services, fluctuations in household composition and the availability of hired labour.

Continued analysis of the situation into the last quarter of 2020 will help us to better understand and contextualise the trends observed. ICI will continue to monitor the situation, as well as to work closely with authorities, communities, industry and civil society to provide support to vulnerable children in cocoa-growing communities.