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A Study of Child Mobility and Migrant Flows to the Cocoa-Producing Communities in Ghana

Guy MASSART, Songes.
Collaboration: Kasim SALIFU, Centre for Migration Studies
University of Ghana, Legon.

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the consultant and none other.

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Summary

The study was conducted from July to October 2011. It was carried out in five phases: establishment of a working methodology; review of bibliography; itinerant fieldwork in Ghana from 7 September to 7 October and, finally, preparation of a study report and production of a multimedia montage, “Out of childhood, Away from poverty”, accompanied by a video of an interview with a farmer, Mr. Ansah. The fieldwork enabled visits to cocoa-producing areas (Western-Asankrangwa) and Brong Ahafo Regions-Gaoso), to an area of origin for migrant children in the Upper West Region (Bawku), and to staging towns through which the children pass when travelling from the North to the Centre and South of the country (Bolgatanga, Tamale, Sunyani, Kumasi). Two workshops were held with ICI’s partners in Ghana, one to introduce and plan the study, and one to share and discuss the preliminary results.

Our observations showed that children migrate to the cocoa-producing areas. The majority of these children are young boys whose homes are in the northern regions of the country, or even in neighbouring Burkina Faso. However, there are also girls working on the plantations. These children generally follow patterns of temporary migration. They leave the savannah where they were born in order to earn money by selling their labour during periods when there is no agricultural activity in the North. These movements can begin when the children are 13 or 14 years old. The migrant children working in the cocoa-producing areas identify opportunities for work through their family networks, through individuals from their nuclear or extended family, or through people from their village working on the cocoa plantations. These social networks are of crucial importance in finding employment. Forms of remuneration for the work vary. The ideal for the children is to receive a daily wage, but often there basic remuneration is in the form of board and lodging.

These children choose to migrate. For them, migration practices represent tactics to address the fact that their families are too poor to “take care of them”, that is, to give them the chance to continue their education, but also to provide for their basic needs. If their parents cannot take care of them, they have to take care of themselves and, better still, contribute to the family’s resources. Their migrations effectively remove them from the framework of childhood, since they gain in autonomy and create their own dependants. These migrant children also seek to build a future for themselves, to enhance their autonomy. The girls in particular express their desire to escape from family control.

Their mobility thus represents a response to three types of incentive: economic (money, poverty), social/identity related (to become somebody, gain respect, get to know the world) and imaginational (to explore future opportunities and potentials, to explore more valorised spaces, and hence better futures). According to the observations and analyses carried out in the course of this study, child migrations are deliberate strategies on the part of the children and often of their families, and not criminal acts involving trafficking. Intervention to help mobile and migrant children must be based on the effects (results) that these children seek to achieve through migration, since the effects (aims) pursued identify the active constraints impelling them to migrate. Thus to criminalise child migration would be to aim at the wrong target. These observations oblige us to recognise the active role of children and young people in their mobility practices. Their situation, both objective (lack of resources, structural and environmental imbalances between the regions) and subjective (dependency, lack of future prospects in their areas of origin, dependent status

within their families), stimulates their efforts to escape from childhood. In order to do so, they launch themselves into a quest to acquire capital, not only financial (having money to study, support their close family, survive), but also social (networks, social recognition □respect) and human (learning about other lifestyles, how to behave in the “modern Ghana”, becoming street wise).

Often migrant children working in cocoa production areas have low visibility: they are integrated into family production units — frequently living in isolated areas of the forest — with whom they work.

By comparison with other forms of mobility, migrations to the cocoa-producing areas are relatively limited and often carried on within a personalised framework. Other forms of mobility are far more common, particularly those of young girls. Over the last decade, girls have been leaving the rural regions of the North to go and work en masse, from the age of 12 or 13, in the big cities. They work there as market porters or small traders, or in popular canteens, or perform domestic chores. In the forest areas, there aare other activities which attract young people and children from the North (between the ages of 12 and 24), in particular small-scale gold mining (galamsey), which has been on the increase over the last three or four years. This is a lucrative activity, but also an extremely dangerous and exhausting one.

Travel is by public transport. When they set out, the children have enough money to pay their transportation and not linger on the way. Journeys seldom last more than 24 hours. As well as a sum of capital, they also need to have a contact, a friend or family member — someone they know — in the destination area. These two items of capital represent safeguards against bad experiences when they travel.

These migratory movements are based on a collective vision in which Ghana, the national space, is divided into hierarchised spaces according to the opportunities for employment that they offer, and hence their capacity for innovation, and to the amount of financial and cultural information circulating within them. Migrant children are associated by ethnicity and birth with an area of origin, which is decisive for their personal identification. Spatial hierarchisation is thus the basis for a hierarchisation of categories of persons. The subjectivity of migrant children is marked by the subordinate statuses attributed to them because they originate from a poor region of the country, come from a poor family, are children, or of the wrong gender (if they are girls), and by discourses which define the normality of childhood as attending school. All the migrants contacted emphasise their inferior, subordinate status and the sacrifices and suffering which that implies for them. Subordination implies reduced powers of assertion, a vulnerability to exploitation. This subordinate status is experienced as a sense of pain, and falls within a long history of exploitation clearly still shaped and tainted by the traumas of the past.

The forest, and more specifically the cocoa sector, has played an important role in the integration and advancement of peoples who have suffered deprivation for centuries, acting as a motor of integration and advancement, which, over a relatively short cycle, enables migrants to acquire capital, which they invest elsewhere, in particular in education and business.

The forest is a land of migrants, constantly receiving new blood and “ejecting” the old, thus maintaining a virtuous circle of integration, a sort of transit area in a wider movement from the North to the South, a staging post for one, two or three generations, who accumulate the necessary capital there in order to pursue their self-redefinition. The reduction in the land available for the expansion of cocoa-producing areas and the appearance of a category of new national investors keen to invest in the cocoa sector may jeopardise this integrational function, which moreover, has the virtue of operating through a multiplicity of small family holdings.

The observed relationship with the forest as an economic tool has to be viewed in light of the "capitalist" spirit which animates the region's producers. It has to be seen in the context of a long regional history of commerce and of relatively centralised political entities, of which the present Ashanti kingdom is merely the latest form. If Ghana's current cocoa production is to be increased, cultivation needs to be intensified, which means significant investment in services to small producers. What must be avoided at all costs is a massive increase in the size of farms, which could in the long term lead to proletarianisation of the agricultural labour force.

Given these dynamics, it appears pointless to seek to change the working and living conditions and aspirations of migrant children, who are the motors driving mobility practices, simply by information and awareness programmes. Children's mobility and working practices are not perpetuated out of ignorance on the part of those involved, nor in most cases by ill-intentioned individuals seeking to exploit the labour potential of children for the sole benefit of intermediaries and other adults in charge of children. Changes and improvements in living and working conditions, in short, respect for the rights of the children, will be achieved by a different strategy, based on organisation of the children concerned, strengthening of family production units and the development of popular education activities; through the undertaking of advocacy initiatives with the responsible authorities, and the development within a network of agencies and institutions of permanent learning programmes and facilities for the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge.

On the basis of these observations and studies, and of meetings with State institutions and research bodies and with NGOs, eight suggestions are proposed in order to adapt the work of prevention and support for mobile children to the "evidence" analysed in the course of the study.

The suggestions presented fall under three main heads:

First, it is suggested that there should be closer proximity, greater inter-action, enhanced listening capacity, between children's organisations and support bodies and children working in the field. Such enhanced assistance would require support for the organisations and for formal and informal children's groups, as well as the provision of greater educational opportunities in the broad sense. In view of the central roles played by the families, and of the various constraints as a result of which child mobility is regarded by the families as a permanent tactic for survival and advancement, it is essential that actions undertaken against child labour go beyond seeking to change local attitudes to childhood. The suggestions propose the development of activities which seek to enhance the capacity of families to adapt to the economic and human challenges facing them.

Secondly, a great deal of research has been, or is being, undertaken, on the initiative of national and international universities, as well as private and public institutions, on child labour and mobility in the cocoa-producing areas. These research and learning activities need to be coordinated, and above all better exploited, with a view to programme development, information and communication. This again requires closer collaboration, dialogue between the actors, and a research programme with integrated dissemination.

Finally, in order to address structural constraints, the suggestions encourage the institutions concerned and involved in support for the well-being of children to coordinate their activities and to construct common perspectives and policies based on the practices, constraints and motivations of the children and their families. Such collaboration and network building should aim at facilitating advocacy programmes directed primarily at the State, with a view to encouraging the development of public services, as well as at key private and public insitutions in the cocoa sector.

I. Introduction

This report is based on a detailed bibliographical review, and develops the lines of enquiry and viewpoints presented therein.

In parallel with the report, a slideshow/video montage ("Out of childhood, Away from poverty") has been produced. It supplements the report and presents its principal observations and conclusions. In addition, there is a video of a discussion with a cocoa planter, Mr. Ansah, which considers some of the crucial challenges faced by farmers at the current time. Each is self-sufficient, and can be viewed on its own.

In the report, the tone varies between ethnographic study and expert report, combining observations of mobility practices and their consequences in terms of action for social change. Those interviewed in Ghana, in addition to migrant children and their families, included ICI Ghana, local NGOs associated with ICI, other childhood development and organisation services and Ghanaian researchers working on child migration practices. The work has thus oscillated between empirical observation on the phenomenonology of child mobility, the presentation of these observations and analyses to the actors, and a discussion of their consequences in terms of a development programme . The text seeks to maintain the tone and dynamic of the approach adopted throughout this study: the oscillation between empirical observation and phenomenology and the implications in terms of development policies, strategies and programmes in relation to childhood. The choices involved in this approach are described in detail in the section dealing with methodology.

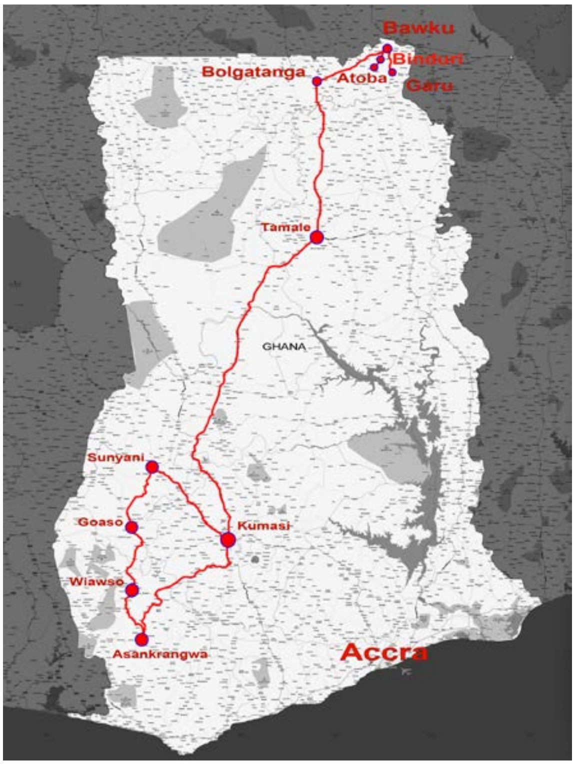
1.1. Structure of the report

The report begins by setting out elements which place the study in its context. The first deals with the study, its limits, its basic assumptions and the possibilities for its continuation and valorisation. The second presents and analyses the involvement of Ghanaian NGOs in the study as priority interlocutors. The third draws the reader's attention to religious dynamics in Ghana, and the last discusses demographic transition in Ghana.

The second part of the report presents the results of the study. They are structured in four sections. First, an analysis of child migration practices towards the cocoa producing areas. Next comes an analysis of the other forms of child mobility in Ghana. The third section describes the basic dynamics of the cocoa industry, in order that the evolution of mobility practices may be understood. Finally, the fourth section distances itself to some extent from the phenomenology of mobility practices in order to focus on four key issues: conceptions and experiences of childhood, the status of girls and women, the imaginational dynamic, and the lacunae in research on child mobility in Ghana. This part concludes with a summary of analyses of child mobility.

The third part of the report is devoted to the suggestions. This part associates the preceding analyses with proposals for the programmes and projects inspired by them.

These suggestions fall under three main heads: development of close-support services for children and their families; strengthening and structure-building in the area of childhood support and advancement; and, finally, structural measures for which advocacy campaigns should be mounted. The suggestions seek to address the various aspects of child mobility neglected by intervention programmes. They seek to be pragmatic, that is to say, both to prevent migrations and to support them. They focus on: concertation and coordination and strengthening of the role of the State; listening to the children and their families and supporting them; dissemination of knowledge to national audiences and advocacy campaigns.



1.2. Contextual elements

1.2.1. Limits of the study, methodological bases, future research

This report is not an evaluation of efforts in the campaign against child labour in cocoa-producing areas. The suggestions put forward at the end of the report are the author's own, and seek simply to be consistent with his own positions, in particular the view that there has to be a productive and dynamising dialogue between research methods and results and the modes and aims of intervention. In other words, a pragmatic approach to migrations (which concentrates on the effects of actions and on the actors) inspires a pragmatic approach to programmes. A presentation of the phenomena associated with migration from an anthropological point of view opens new perspectives. It is these perspectives that underlie the suggestions.

This study is in large part based on a critical summary of existing work on the phenomena associated with child mobility in Ghana. While the study's fieldwork may be described as "anecdotal" , that does not mean either useless or pointless. It has in fact enabled new issues to be raised, as well as a consideration of under-developed aspects in studies of child migration, principally the following: the need for a better understanding of the imaginational processes (often wrongly dealt with in terms of non-explanations of "culture") which motivate mobile children; the importance of a diachronic study of mobile children, so as to view these strategies in the context of the children's life cycles and evaluate the impact of their migrations on children; finally, the importance of addressing this information in the context of the evolution of the family and of the notion of childhood in Ghana, of the evolution of gender identities, and of social and spatial stratifications.

Over and above the limitations described below, it is apparent that there were not enough contacts and individual exchanges with older people, particularly in the areas of origin. Exchanges of this kind emphasised other aspects of youth migration (independence, pleasure, discovery, family poverty) and placed them in a historical context. Moreover, it was found that the young people themselves produced a discourse of justification, invariably focused on poverty and the quest for formal education, while at first sight lacking any more personal motivations, such as a desire to protect — and possibly reassure — themselves (denial), or indeed to appear compliant with the values conveyed by efforts to raise awareness regarding child labour (see section 2.1.5. below). Moreover, these encounters indicated changes in family organisation, inter-generational tensions, and specific challenges to the status of women.

In this study, it has been sought to assemble factual information which could lead to a redefinition of priorities in terms of actions to support mobile children. However, the available time and budget were not sufficient for an exploration of three additional geographical areas which would have enriched the study:

The extreme east of the Western Region around Akontombra. This area presents three matters of interest: first, it is located at the extremity of the area where cocoa cultivation is expanding, along the border with Côte d'Ivoire. The surface area of plantations is generally greater there, and their productivity is 56% higher than that of the average farm in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions (Cocoa Labour Survey 2008, 80). The question of the availability of, and access to, land may be different there, and result in differing mobility practices (see section 2.3 below regarding the economic dynamics of the sector). Moreover, as well as a more significant presence of recent investors in the cocoa sector, there are other entities which interact with cocoa planters and farmers, namely the forest reservations. Finally, this situation of dialogue between farmers and State entities regarding the issue of access to and authority over land is of particular interest in the wider context of policy making and implementation. These aspects are important, inasmuch as they play a key role in the dynamics of labour mobility, and in particular that of child labour.

The Upper West, Wa. The decision to visit the Upper East during this one month's fieldwork was self-evident: the vast majority of migrant children encountered in the cocoa-producing areas originated from that region. However, the migration patterns of children from the Upper West are less well documented.

Moreover, large numbers of NGOs, both national and international, are very active in the region. What are the effects of those upstream interventions on mobility practices and all of the linked phenomena associated with accelerated social change and poverty?

Finally, a field visit and relevant contacts are needed in regard to the issue of the exploitation of children on the shores of Lake Volta in small scale fishing (Monghardt, 2006). Action is being taken and researchers and performing artists are actively studying this situation. Some take the view that the current practices are akin to child trafficking, the parents receiving money directly from intermediaries for the sale of a child's labour, without the latter being involved in that decision, and without any access to formal education. A study of that situation would permit a comparison between the differing economic forms of child mobility.

Still in terms of comparison and additional information, a study of migratory flows towards the cocoa-producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire would not only enable child labour practices in cocoa-producing areas in West Africa (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire) to be documented , but would also make it possible to further refine the suggestions in terms of policies and programmes on child mobility.

Throughout this work, three principles governing the method and form of the study have been applied:

First principle: in relying on national researchers, on their recent work, in engaging in active dialogue with those intervening in the field, and with a relatively limited investment, it is possible to produce relevant qualitative studies at both national and international level, based on a pragmatic approach and with perspectives which open up other potential areas for intervention. Clearly, that means that researchers must not only be familiar with the bibliography, and with current policies on childhood protection, but also have effective collaborators in the field.

Second principle: it is possible, with limited field resources, to produce visual and audio content, provided that researchers can rely on assistance from multimedia specialists in the post production phase, so as to produce material fit for dissemination based on fieldwork. From this point of view, results have not been as hoped. It is necessary to be accompanied in the field by an individual responsible for photography and video and audio recording, with whom one can then work in the post production phase. Thus, in a study like this one, where time and freedom of movement are essential, the researcher, involved in conversations with his subjects, engaged in observing and taking notes, has little opportunity for recording images. The challenges are both technical (having good quality digital equipment), artistic (producing artistically acceptable material) and quantitative (having a sufficient diversity of material to cover all important interactions). The situation is different where the task of the researcher himself solely involves gathering multimedia material.

Finally, it became clearly apparent throughout the work and its reconstitution that mobility and total commitment on the part of researchers were crucial during work in the field. It was essential to experience and reflect on mobility within the various spaces, and to conduct dialogues with the various actors involved in child migrations.

Because we are dealing here with phenomena relating to the subjects' spatial mobilities, because their experiences also represent life-trajectories over social time, it follows that diachronic studies are necessary. It is no longer simply a matter of following the subjects' spatial trajectories, but of accompanying them through time and space (whose relationship is central to the imagination of mobile children) and to conduct as many research interviews and dialogues as possible.

STOP
CHILD LABOUR
IN COCOA PRODUCTION
Cocoa Our Heritage, Children Our Future
POST NO BILL

A Gaoso

1.2.2. The role of local NGOs

Cases of child trafficking presented by NGOs active in the cocoa-producing area were analysed jointly in the course of a workshop. It was on the basis of the analysis of their relevance for the ongoing research (with which the participants had been able to familiarise themselves at the preceding workshop session) that the areas to be visited were identified.

During this selection of research sites, the NGO representatives suggested trafficking cases to be identified and followed up. Of the documented cases, I ultimately only received particulars of two. Moreover, the cases mentioned and proposed by the participants during the workshop were small in number, vague, and outdated.

There are a number of possible explanations for this: the NGOs argue that, because they do not have the resources to take responsibility for children whose situation would require immediate intervention, or indeed repatriation, they no longer concern themselves with such cases. The lack of any material ability to intervene would make any involvement useless, indeed counterproductive, in relation to the "victims".

The NGOs deplore and regret this state of affairs. Their fund donor has indicated to them that it has neither any remit nor the resources to take responsibility for such cases, taking the view that responsibility in the matter lies with the agencies of the State. However, the NGOs argue that those public bodies lack the necessary resources to fulfil their mission, as various actors involved in child aid in Ghana have confirmed to me. It is for the State to take over these functions, and it is up to individual citizens to join together to claim their rights, and thus perpetuate, or strengthen, the authority of the State apparatus. That is the logic of a model for relations between “State”, “market” and “civil society”. In the context of the study of child mobilities, this poses the initial question of how the individuals constituting civil society can be effectively organised. In particular, what is the role of the families of migrant children?

The NGOs claim to be concerned by the use that the media could make of these cases. Minds are still marked by memories of the articles that appeared during the previous decade denouncing the exploitation of children in the cocoa producing areas. These concerns also reflect a perception on the part of the participants that the conceptual framework — trafficking, bondage, middleman, exploitation, labour — is not sufficient to record the phenomena observed (migration, exchange, mobility, coping strategy, investment, independence, gender, exploitation . . .). Conceptual frameworks constrain. They represent restrictions on thought and action, and it is against a power of this kind that research can be crucial in the fight for independence of mind and equality among all Ghanaians, and above all for the development of relevant social policies.

There may well be a more obvious reason for the small number of such cases — and are the more obvious reasons not the most persuasive? Either there are no migrant children in the cocoa producing areas, or they are invisible. Yet, there are independent migrant children in the cocoa producing areas, we met them. And as to their invisibility, that would suggest that these migrant children are no problem to anyone, claim no rights and thus remain unnoticed: invisible, socially integrated. This acceptance of young migrants would appear to be based on complex social and economic relations consisting in the exchange of their labour not only for money, but also for food, skills, savoir faire, social networks. . .

The non-visibility of migrants may also be the result of distrust on the part of potential employers, some of whom are owners, but more often “caretakers”. They are frightened to reveal their practices, which do not comply with what they believe the NGOs would like to see. The young workers thus remain isolated; in addition to the fact that they focus solely on their work, never attend school during their stay, the “cottages” to which they are attached are often isolated. The cottages are in fact homes to production units: family production units, often scattered through the forest. Slightly larger in size, uniting two close families for example, are “hamlets”. The village, the “community”, houses a larger population and in particular the basic services; moreover, it is where the local Chief lives. A production unit is grouped around one or more individuals responsible for the cocoa plantation in the field. This unit shares housing, a household and fields for food production. The size of units varies. Certain young male workers, some temporary, some not, hire out their services to various units and live either in the village or in one of the hamlets where they have found work. The youngest children of both sexes (13 or 14 years old), at the start of their careers as migrants, often work on just one farm, where they also live.

Finally, there are more basic, but nonetheless compelling reasons to explain the relative invisibility: the lack of logistical and human resources (and hence of the opportunity for interaction in the field) on the part of local NGOs. Moreover, to follow-up and document cases would require appropriate training for field personnel, particularly in the techniques of child and youth motivation and development, and of information gathering.

1.2.3. The religious institutions

Before continuing with the analyses of mobility, we need to discuss religious fervour, simply to underline certain features which the reader will need to keep in mind. As with local Muslim communities, the Christian churches are social and human spaces, but also spaces for the redistribution of resources. Contemporary religious forms appear to have retained the holistic vestiges of ancient religions and bear witness to a great contemporary spiritual vigour.

Churches establish develop programmes and implement them, organise solidarity networks, gender and age group associations, etc. In short, they are major actors in the Ghanaian public sphere (see section 3.3.1. below), in particular through their impact on the subjectivity and morale of their members.

To appreciate the centrality of religious practices in the daily life of so many Ghanaian Christians, over and above their omnipresence in the public space, it suffices to stress the slogans, disseminated on hoardings, on the radio and on television, which sum up in two words what religion has to offer: "healing" and "prosperity" — two offerings which must thus reflect desires shared by the faithful. It has not been possible in this study to exlore in detail the relationship between child mobility and religious fervour. However, both the quest for healing and the search for prosperity strongly indicate the imaginational climate among the population: healing refers to a wound. The emotion and pain felt at having to take orders from somebody else to whom one offers one's labour is a recurrent theme in discussions with migrants, both children and adults. The pidgin expression "Work under somebody", so frequently heard, already suggests the weight and pain of exploitation. As regards prosperity, this is always associated with respect for norms, individual strength, whether moral or the ability to endure hardship. It is noteworthy that, in sociology, normative approaches to society in terms of function, after the Durkheimian model, are quite incapable of reflecting change; on the other hand, they are relatively well suited to expressing the way in which the social system perpetuates itself.

Logically then, it could well be that this is the result sought through the immense efforts (the quest) for normalisation (and thus moralisation) on the part of the faithful: control, the "halting" of change, stabilising "the system", or "a system", its foreseeability — as presented by normative social theories.

We should thus keep in mind the roles of the churches and religious institutions in the public sphere, their role in promoting the moral and spiritual well being of their members, but also their power to produce certain types of individuals. Note should be taken of the way in which, committed to a pragmatic approach, they adapt themselves to the expectations of their members and of the dialogue between institutions and faithful.

1.2.4. Ghana and demographic transition

Ghana is more advanced than the majority of its neighbours in terms of the demographic transition model: Ghana is considered to have reached the phase of population stabilisation. Two very significant elements flow from this: first, over and above the reduction in mortality, it indicates that the birth rate has declined significantly. However, the population is still growing and the proportion of young people in the population is high, though both of these elements will decline. The national economic challenge in enabling the well-being of this population and increasing consumptions of goods and services remains enormous. It also means that, as with Senegal, in Ghana the urban population is larger than the rural one. However, this observation has to be viewed in the local context of patterns of mobility and of the forms of relationship with the land discussed in this report: the fact of living in a city does not imply that the subjects are active only in the city.

Mechanical breakdown

II. Results, Analyses

2.1. Migrant children on the cocoa plantations

2.1.1. The subjects — migrant children

Migrant children and young people work on the cocoa plantations. Some of them are unaccompanied (independent migrants); they move and find work on the plantations on their own, and are generally aged between 13 and 24. Other migrant children are entrusted by educators in the area of origin to members of the family network, and are often younger than those in the previous group. Others come with their parents (children of migrants). There are also young men and adults, who often go off to work in the cocoa-producing areas on a temporary basis. Finally, recently married young men and women migrate to the production areas in order to settle there and take over a plantation. The majority of these migrant children and young people come from the northern region (Upper East and Upper West, Northern) sometimes from Burkina Faso.

The subjects of this study were more particularly children migrating independently, unaccompanied. Migration is a form of mobility. Migration presupposes an area of origin, and an area of settlement, an intention and a re-settlement. Among young people and children we can observe various forms of mobility, and in particular various phases of mobility and return which can occur within a migration. The term “mobility” covers practices involving all of the forms of child movement, including, for example, what is called “fostering” in English, practices which transfer risks and responsibilities for children.

When they work in the cocoa producing areas, children mainly carry out the following tasks: weeding, transporting the beans from the plantation to the house for drying, transporting water for crushing, de husking. But they may also work in the production of food crops or livestock within the family production unit. The majority of migrant children and young people on cocoa plantations are temporary workers. They are children, and above all young people and junior (unmarried) adults, who move during periods of seasonal agricultural inactivity in their home areas (the Northern Savannah) and come to work on the cocoa plantations for a limited period. The ideal from their point of view is to be paid by the day (between five and seven Ghana cedis per day).

However, there is a variety of formulae: provision of food, shelter and money for the journey is common. Depending on the closeness of the family relationship between the employer and the migrant child, enabling the child to acquire training and regularly to attend school is one of the types of remuneration included in the terms of the exchange (or “help”, as it is often presented). It is important to understand more precisely the forms of exchange involved in child migration. In many cases, migration consists in transferring responsibility for education and giving access to new opportunities and envisaging future horizons, these two latter elements being effects deriving from the imaginational domain.

As in the more traditional forms of fostering, the child's labour and the opportunities that its presence in another place are felt to open up for it are also taken into account. During the dry periods in the North, the mobility which enables migrants to obtain food and a little money in exchange for their labour is important. Some of the sharecroppers originally from the northern regions who thus take in individuals from their region of origin describe themselves as "good Samaritans" towards their "brothers".

An initial experience of mobility will very probably be followed by others. The first experience is always the most dangerous: the child is younger (under 14), without experience and with limited capacity for strategic action ("agency"). Its social networks are narrow, its contacts are often indirect, through intermediaries rather than individuals known personally, and capacities for negotiation with employers are also weak. Flight is often the most common reaction of migrant children when confronted with difficult situations such as abuse or illness.

We never met any children in the cocoa producing areas who claimed to have been forced to work beyond their capacities. Children who considered themselves underpaid, yes. We found no cases of children, or traces of them, who had been victims of intermediaries exploiting unpaid child labour. Thus no child trafficking in the areas visited, or in the experiences recorded. Everyone agreed that such practices have become extremely rare, thanks to suppression campaigns widely publicised in the media. Even the cases presented by local NGO associations at the first week's workshop did not lead to any meetings with child victims of "middlemen", still less with such intermediaries themselves. These intermediaries do probably still exist, but it is by no means sure that they regard their role illegal. They provide placement services, which are remunerated. It should be understood that the exchange between labour and "remuneration" takes many forms. We are not dealing here with a trade in human beings, but with strategies for survival, emancipation and economic integration. Such tactics and strategies fall outside the framework of effective regulation — obviously in a context where in practice the status of children and childhood is perceived and applied in differing ways.

The tactics vary from one unequal social category to another, with differing demands. Among these social categories, children (and in particular young female children) remain the weakest, and hence the most vulnerable to exploitation. These mechanisms and strategies are a temporal phenomenon and must be analysed over time, diachronically, failing which they make no sense. It is only over time that the child will succeed in creating dependants and thus escaping from its status as child; alternatively, he or she will flee the original environment in order to immerse him or herself in a quite different context, where new identities and a new future can be forged, or indeed a new life — which may turn out to be a miserable one.

There can, however, be no doubt that adults are involved in the mobility of children and young people. The literature shows that, in almost one half of the cases, the parents are involved in the decision to migrate (Kwankye, 2011; Kwankye et al, 2009), sometimes encouraging it and investing funds in it. It is unthinkable for a child to move without starting with financial capital in order to pay for its transportation and initial needs.

In the Northern Region there is a practice consisting in trusting the first daughter of a marriage to the father's sister, in other words the aunt. This aunt, known locally as "pruba", is offered, and takes charge of, a child who is not her daughter, and who will retain within her host family an inferior status by comparison with the children of the house. Often, the pruba facilitates the migration of her brother's daughter by enabling her to acquire a trousseau (physically, in terms of bowls and cooking utensils, and symbolically: experience, knowledge of other ways of life, or of language and savoir-faire), a responsibility which normally lies with the "aunt" and which she discharges by facilitating her "niece's" migration.

Independent mobile children and young people migrate voluntarily, which is to say that they are not constrained by individuals, but by their "situation" as they put it. Certain children and former migrants regret their migration: they have not earned enough, they have been victims of violence, the migration has not enabled them to achieve their aspirations to independence . . . We should not under-estimate the power of physical and mental endurance and sufferings which such mobility involves for children. Nonetheless, the vast majority declared themselves satisfied with their decision. The migrant children interviewed in the cocoa producing areas prefer to remain there rather than to return home. Many others were involved in the practice of seasonal migrations. It should be understood that these seasonal migration practices not only involve children. Adult farmers from the northern regions, often young and unmarried or recently married, widely practice this type of migration.

2.1.2. Child migrations to the plantations

The itineraries followed by migrant children are well known. They travel by the lowest quality and cheapest means of public transport. They follow the major roads. These journeys from the area of origin to the place of work generally take no longer than 24 hours. The children, even when they are alone, sleep in the bus during the journeys and not at the bus stations. Most of them know where they are going. They have been "briefed" by an adult before leaving, who has explained to them what to do and how much to pay for what. It is essential that children travelling alone have a certain amount of money with them, since otherwise they will expose themselves to serious difficulties and obvious risks in order to pay for their transportation. Often, they have a specific contact person in the village where they are going, someone who is part of the family network. Several individuals explained to me how they used mobile telephones in order to guide travellers to their destination; host persons normally have a telephone.

Kumasi, bus station

In order to be able to work on the plantations, one needs to have social networks with farm "caretakers" (working under the abunu or abusa system) or owners who are themselves from the same area of origin. The social capital is constituted by the "family", a very extendable notion which ranges from brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles, up to members of the same ethnic group. Thus, information on the possibility of working for a few weeks or months, or even of settling as a new long term sharecropper, is conveyed by persons already active in the cocoa producing areas. Some sibling groups of Kusasi migrants interviewed had arrived one by one, as individuals matured and land became available and demand for labour arose. Often, all of the brothers are living in a particular forest village, the mother having stayed at home in the North with a sister.

Thus, children who go to work on the plantations get their information through their family members (from their village or from their ethnic group) who are working there as sharecroppers, either by telephone contact, or when the latter visit their area of origin. Parents are informed of the intention to migrate, and often encourage it. The first trip/working spell is the most difficult, but, over the course of a series of migrations, the young migrant gradually builds up his or her own social network, acquiring social capital. For, clearly, capital is acquired through mobility.

Some young women report that, having gone to work in Kumasi, they weren't happy there, had bad experiences, or couldn't find sufficiently well paid work. Thus one of them contacted a married sister living in the cocoa planting area with a migrant from the North, while others contacted cousins from the village with a small cocoa production unit, and went to work there.

Experiences vary: some complain that all they received after six months of work was the cost of transport. Others boast that they were paid seven cedis per working day.

The majority of the "migrations" of children and young people to the cocoa producing areas are by young men working temporarily on the farms of individuals from their social network and often from the same ethnic group. After two or three years, the young men succeed in matching their migration patterns to the agricultural or scholastic cycles in their areas of origin and have established sufficient contacts to know where they are going to work and with whom.

2.1.3. Children and Childhood in context

In order to get a better idea of mobility as a tactic of children, we have to understand the status of childhood in local society. First, the child is part of a family production unit, which will constitute a reference point throughout its life, even if its efforts, notably through mobility, appear nowadays to be focused on the construction of its own individual identity. It is normal and desirable that the child should take part in productive activities without being paid. Even if the role of formal education is increasingly recognised as the legitimate educational regime for "modern Ghana", work plays a very active part in the education and socialisation of African children whether within or outside their families (Nieuwenhuys, 1996; Weyer, 2011). Instances of learning acquired through imitation, submission to the decisions and guidance of adults, are numerous and go beyond the technical aspects, falling within the framework of savoir-faire, of social hierarchies, and representing a particular kind of relation ship. To earn money, it is thus essential that a relative social distance should exist between the employer and the child (who thereby ceases to be part of childhood).

In the first years of life, the child enjoys freedom of movement and freedom to explore its surroundings (Lancy, 2008). But it is a political and economic object, not participating directly in the decisions of the adult social units to which it belongs. It is dependent, without autonomy, first enjoying a great deal of freedom and then less and less (particularly for girls approaching puberty). The child is both a resource and a burden, according to the economic circumstances and social relations within that unit, but always a gift from God. These propositions are subject to qualification, and it has to be recognised that, more and more, such children do influence strategic family decisions as a result of an increasingly widespread desire to allow children to attend school. In this sense, school has in practice increased children's power. They now influence the allocation of resources within the family unit, but always as an object of education, an investment, rather than as an agent.

The individuals of rural origin whom we met share a specific conception of human life, a life governed by a rhythm of distinct cycles (baby, child, young person, adult, old person), cycles marked by social rites and acts (circumcision, baptism, puberty, marriage, paternity, maternity), events which give, or used to give, a logical pattern to the future. These cycles are clearly now in the process of being redefined. Moreover, this is a conception of human life hierarchised according to gender, or to tasks, with many matters remaining very specifically "gendered".

These major hierarchic distinctions condition rights and give meaning to the tactics and strategies of the various agents.

2.1.4. The children and employers

There is no specific desire on the part of planters to recruit children. On the other hand, the planters appreciate the workers from the North, because they are “more humble”, “easy to work with”, “more submissive”, “do not charge much”, derive this discipline “from Islam”. All of these descriptions apply particularly to children and young people migrating from the North. They refer to a submissive, flexible, cheap and Muslim (from the North?) labour force. The demand is thus quite specific; it falls within a context based on economic reasoning and economic power operating on several levels: ethnic, regional, individual, religious. The section describing the dynamics of the cocoa sector will explain the economic logic within which potential employers operate.

When questioned on how they preferred to obtain labour, the cocoa sharecroppers or planters presented the following options: they prefer young migrants to come and live on their land under the abunu and/or abusa system. That provides stability, a motivated labour force, which requires no liquid cash. However, that is only possible for farmers who are already well established, who have enough land and probably also other activities or farms. Employers also use labour from families who have stayed in their areas of origin. Spontaneous offers of labour are also appreciated when they come from an individual, but not from a group of individuals. Finally, a further solution is to employ an intermediary, travelling between areas of origin and cocoa producing areas, but they state that this solution is more difficult and risky. In every case, before employing outside individuals, the farmer first looks to the family labour force directly associated with the production unit, including young people and children who no longer attend school, or during school holidays and at weekends. The children attending primary school interviewed in the course of this study confirmed that, after coming home from school, they help with work in the house, including both household tasks and those connected with the production of food for home consumption or sale. They found this situation normal, complaining rather about the long journeys between home and school. The child regards itself as an integral part of the production unit, which is its sole resource during its early years.

Ismaël, age 14, arrived in this hamlet, some 15 km from Asankrangwa, through the intermediary of Steve, who is 22 and has been working there for six years. Ismaël is from the same village as Steve, in the Upper East Region. On a visit to his home, Steve met Ismaël, who was working as a herdboy. They talked about the work in the cocoa business. Ismael’s mother was dead and his father had remarried. New children had come along and Ismaël was no longer his father’s first priority. They talked to Ismaël’s father, who gave his permission for Ismaël to leave. Ismaël has been there for six months, doing unskilled chores. He hasn’t yet received any money. He doesn’t know if he will be paid, or how much. He eats, he is clothed, he works. Later he will be found a piece of land which he will clear himself and work under the abunu/abusa system. However, even Steve doesn’t have any land. Steve has even ended up getting married but is still obliged to sell his labour wherever it is needed. Neither of them envisages returning to the North; they prefer “to be here”.

Female seasonal migrant, Binduri

2.2.5. School as a motive for mobility

In their discourse, migrants draw little distinction between motivation and results; they are totally focused on their aim. They leave because they are poor (motivation). They go in search of money (result, aim). To earn something. "Small small". Money for what? To pay for their schooling, which they wish to continue, for their parents don't have the resources. Isn't school free? Yes, but they have to pay for the uniform, supplies, books. It is also to help their family, to help their brothers and sisters, in short to contribute to the income of the family unit. Contributing to the family unit also means removing from it a mouth to feed during difficult times, and/or when the need for labour is low. Thus, one migrant confided: "The family [in the North] doesn't have enough money to send a child to school, so they send it to migrate". The first reaction of all children who have migrated independently is to justify their mobility by poverty and a desire to continue their studies.

The pursuit of education first: in saying that they migrate in order to be able to go to school, the children and young people refute a logic that is well established among those who campaign against child labour. They don't migrate because they don't go to school, but because they want to, or because they want to continue doing so and have to undertake seasonal migrations during the school holidays. This constant refrain has to be understood in relation to awareness raising campaigns on the obligation for all children to attend school. It is also a fact that formal education remains the best mechanism of social advancement. Even if the mechanism only operates grudgingly and even if, in practice, other resources, other activities, such as business and politics, are also important means of social advancement. Education is thus the first justification given. Migrants tell us that the first benefits of education are that they enable a person to get a better job. You have to be able to read and write in order to deal with "papers", which enables you to earn more money and take care of your parents. They also say that school teaches you "how to behave"; it even inculcates personal style and how to dress. These functions of alphabetisation, minimal familiarisation with contemporary discourse and normative regulation — education in the broad sense outside the family — are also provided by other institutions, in particular the religious institutions and their networks.

In the same way, for these young people, mobility provides education: “When we move, we also learn”: learning English and understanding different people, getting to know people, being able to take advantage of the opportunities of “modern Ghana”, understanding the rules and laws in each community — “Migration taught me how to behave with different persons” —“different types of jobs”, and, finally, migration also provides an opportunity to escape from domestic and local conflicts : “Small towns are also troublesome, some are hiding. With migration, you know where to run away and hide”.

However, these young people do not appear to be unaware of the risks: they recognise that “you are not always in your village, you may be treated anyhow”, “you may be treated as slaves”. Indeed, all of the children say that “work under somebody is hard”, or that the fate of the migrant is “suffering from others”, “suffering and accepting”, or again, “serving somebody”. “You have to accept the conditions they are offering you. You are suffering”. A series of expressions which seem to be drawn directly from a vocabulary of exploitation, or indeed of slavery; expressions which mark the subordinate status of migrants, the posture of supplicants, of potential exploitees — a position in which they are placed by their poverty and identities: expressions which indicate the pain of finding oneself in a position chosen under the pressure of constraints (“It is not easy, but what else can we do?” “There is no choice”), and from which one cannot escape. It is because it is a solution forced upon them by outside constraints that child migration often represents a tactic; it sometimes happens, however, that for some migrants it turns out to be an effective strategy.

These ways of discussing and perceiving socio economic inequality have profound roots in the social history of Ghana. As will be discussed later, these representations of the self, this way of discussing the work relationship between the owner and the migrant carries its own entropy, its weight, its own dynamic. As discourse, it has its own substance and materiality, tending to perpetuate itself as a normal way of speaking of this situation, and hence of perpetuating it socially. This discourse doesn’t merely reflect a state of fact, but enables these relationships to perpetuate themselves. This hierarchisation of individuals according to their origin and socio economic situation perpetuates itself through spatial hierarchisation. In other words, the hierarchisation of social categories (ethnic, geographical, socio-economic) and hierarchisation as between spaces belong to the same discourse. Migration as a tactic consists in exploiting value differentials between resources and labour. It is the reverse of the coin of the scenario of cheap and flexible workers described above by farmers (see section 2.1.1.). Migration is a tactic, a decision and a behaviour which makes sense for the aspirational actors involved — a sense deriving from Ghana’s inherent social and structural inequalities (the constraints), which are reproduced daily in individual experiences.

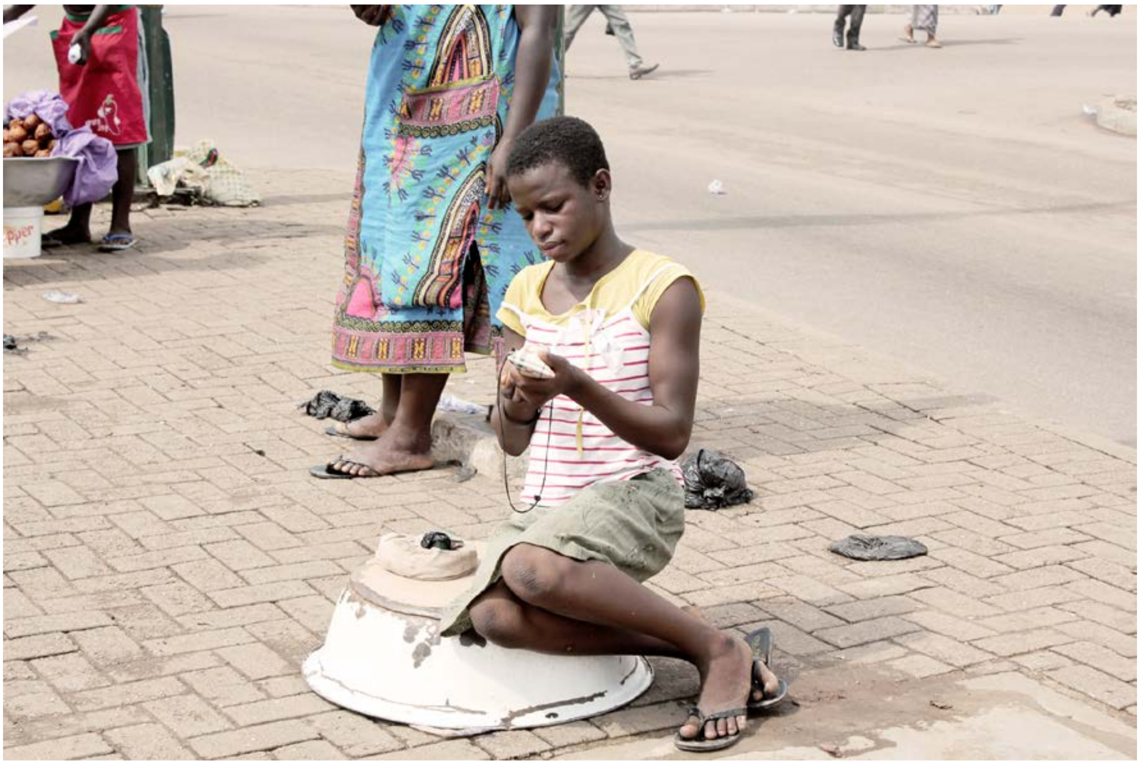
Since 2005, in Ghana passage from Junior High School (JHS) to Senior High School (SHS Years 10, 11 and 12 of schooling) is on the basis of a competitive examination, the BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination). The placement of students in the public senior high schools and in the commercial and technical colleges, is done through a computerised lottery system called the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS). The aim of the system is to remedy the situation where the richer students were buying their places in the better public schools. Thus now, the students who do best in the BECE are placed in the best schools by the computer system.

While this new system avoids corruption, it continues to favour the students with the best results and those with the greatest endowment of socio cultural capital (but not in the traditional register). There are many who fail the exam and who will then try to continue their schooling in order to sit the exam again and secure a placement. These placements are carried out not on a geographical basis, but on results. It thus often happens that students have to leave their families in order to live in the town where their school is located. Here again, in order to reduce costs, family networks are essential. Social capital is a real capital, which gives access to numerous resources. Large numbers of young people are thus motivated to migrate in pursuit of an education, even if they are not attending school, and perhaps will never return to school. This belief in the virtues of education is very strong, to the extent of being raised to the level of an imperative norm: a child must go to school.

2.1.6. Poverty as a cause of mobility

Poverty as a cause of mobility: “We are leaving because we are poor.” It is self-evident for all interviewees. But what does “being poor” mean for migrant children and their families? Not having enough money to pay for schooling, to be able to send one’s children to school. Young migrants say: “My parents don’t have anything”, “Your parents do not take care of yourself”. “You have to take care of yourself.” It means being excluded from the public mechanisms of social advancement. Not having proper shoes. Only having manioc flour to eat at school. Not having enough reserves of food to get through the year. Poverty means not having the resources to survive, to rise in society, not having a “parent” to provide for one’s basic needs (food, education, respect, being “modern”). It also means knowing nothing, being “ignorant”. The opposite of poverty is a proper, regular job, with a monthly salary. Whether to launch your own business, to get married, to achieve recognition by your parents and family, you have to earn money. Thus the children of poor families suffer deprivation in terms of access to basic goods and services.

Since leaving childhood involves a change of authority for the child (Jenks, 1996), that departure or passage manifests itself (a more accurate term would be “is performed”, which evokes the performative function of the action) by the creation of dependants, since authority is based on age, position within the kinship group, gender and, above all, control of the means of production. Obtaining money is thus not only a question of economic survival, but also a question of identity. Poverty doubly handicaps children. Migrant children are involved in constant interchange: “becoming someone”, “taking care of oneself”, and contributing to the family budget (see Derby, 2001, 11): thus a young female seasonal migrant (aged 17) from Binduri (Upper East Region) says that she migrates “to become somebody and help my parents”, another from Atupa, “to take care of myself and help my siblings…”. Escaping from childhood, from poverty, means creating dependants, contributing with external resources to the perpetuation of the family, the solidarity network, which remains the most relevant and significant for children.



Kayayei, Kumasi

Questioned on their reasons for migrating, the children repeat endlessly: money. In emphasizing, as their principal intention, earning money, young migrants point up the mediating role of money, and at the same time the value-scales of spaces. Money is the mediator between aspiration and possibility, but also between spaces; the areas of origin are the areas of non-money, of non-opportunity, while the areas of destination are those where there is money, and thus objects and services for which it can be exchanged. They are “greener pastures”. Money is a complex symbolic mediator. Mediator between extremes: poor and rich, boredom and inactivity and work, isolation and development, traditional and modern □“yesterday’s Ghana” and the “modern Ghana”, “the North” and “the South”, the “cities”. This invites us to consider the aspirations, other than the strictly economic, which money enables to be realised. Money as mediator opens horizons to the children, and it is these aspirational horizons that need to be ascertained.

Temporary migrations bring limited financial benefits to those who undertake them. Daily remuneration varies from 2 cedis (young girls working in canteens), to 12 cedis (boys working as porters at the markets), and 7 cedis a day on the cocoa plantations, from which some 40 cedis have to be deducted for the cost of travel by private transport from the North to the Centre and South. At all events, the children’s monetary remuneration is low and the financial gain is meagre. These low earnings have to be set in the context of the family economy, which is sometimes barely monetised and poor. Remuneration is not only in money. Food is acquired or earned and brought to the home. For migrants, in the cocoa growing areas there will be no lack of food, and having food to eat can be a form of remuneration. When a migrant child is entrusted by its parents to another family, often linked by kinship bonds, the child receives little or no remuneration.

He or she may perhaps go to school, and will perform household tasks; on the cocoa farm, He/she will take part in the farmwork as a member of the production unit. This may in the long term lead to the possibility of specialised training, with a craftsman or skilled worker, for example. Thus the forms of the exchange are varied. In the destination areas of the cocoa producing region, the forms of remuneration for services rendered vary greatly, depending on age, gender, family relationship, duration of stay(s).

Poverty is reflected in the experience of subordination. The subjectivity of the actors is marked by the perception of subordination. But, as the planters' description of the ideal workers shows, poverty is not simply an individual marker. It also marks territories and characterises and hierarchises spaces: the North is poorer. That is also an environmental fact inscribed in the spatial perception of potential migrants. Without this perpetuation of hierarchisations of national and regional space, migration would be symbolically disactivated. When young children speak of their aspirations and imagine their future, they perpetuate spatial hierarchisations. The rural environment is always at the bottom of the ladder of spatial values. The city, headed by Accra and Kumasi, is always the most valued environment, followed by Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States. For the children of the North, the "South", is overflowing with opportunities. These are the "greener pastures". Naturally, this contrast is strongest in Bawku, a town torn apart by violent ethnic conflict, the subject of which is the Chieftancy, and authority over the land. This situation, aggravated by the environmental characteristics of the Savannah region, perceived as dry and infertile, encourages the exodus of the energetic, depressing still further the value of Bawku as a town, deserted by its economic and innovating motors.

2.1.7. The effects of mobility on children

In order better to understand the motivations of young people and children who migrate, we have to study the effects on them of migration. First, the positive aspects. All migrant children and young people state that their mobility has brought them the "respect" of their family and community. A successful migration has an empowering effect on its actors. The acquisition of respect is linked to the ability to participate in the struggle against poverty of the family entity, the size of which varies (a mother and her children, a monogamous or polygamous family with its children, a nuclear family core extended to other closely related individuals: grandmother, aunt, cousin, niece, foster children…).

But the most basic relation remains that with the mother and the younger siblings. This acquisition of respect, also marks the passage from childhood to adulthood, indicates the possibility for the young person to participate politically from now on in the life of the family entity. A child has no right of expression. It is by showing that he/she has acquired the skills and maturity to take care of him/herself and to take care of others that he/she acquires independence and respect. That is why this identical dimension has led some researchers to speak of migration as an initiation test, a rite of passage (Castle & Diarra, 2003). However, the analogy has its limits. Contrary to the rite of passage as conceived in twentieth century social anthropology (Van Gennep), this does not give the initiate access to a system which will guarantee him a maturing process, combined with a long term continuing gain in personal autonomy — an escape, as it were, from human constraints, which often dissolve themselves into a spiritual interiority.

On the contrary, at the present time, the system into which the individual has to integrate him or herself has to be discovered and forged by the individual. This rite of passage is in reality no more than a test designed to enable the individual to create his or her own world — as we can observe in contemporary town and cities.

“Respect” is not always the prime motivation: some never return, or only much later. According to my interviews with researchers, former migrants and parents of migrants, children and young people — above all young girls — seek independence. “They want to get away from the control of their parents”, “They want to enjoy”, “they want freedom”, and when they come back “they do not obey their parents anymore”. Migration may thus indeed represent a normal way of gaining independence, of freeing oneself from parental authority. Does this desire for independence indicate inter-generational tensions? As stated earlier, the family is the basic emotional and physical unit: young people want to valorise themselves, “become”, above all in the eyes of their family. Which doesn’t prevent migrant children questioned on the responsibility of their parents for their current situation from being either critical of adults, or from absolving them of responsibility for their unfortunate circumstances, because of their “ignorance”. This ignorance is a reflection of the fact that the parents are ignorant of “modern Ghana”, “they are not educated”, “they know nothing”. Time and again, the past and past generations, are criticised, and are used in order to emphasise the specificity of the challenges of the modern world.

Respect is a public recognition of worth, a space offered for expression, a right to be present, a right to hold an opinion and to participate in decisions concerning the production unit. The desire for respect also refers to the evaluation of the image that the person makes of him or herself: a key identity building process for the child. Thus the attraction exerted by the city on children and young people must be understood in the context of this construction of the self, which always goes together with a projection into the future: “I study to get a different job, a different life”. And it is the cities, as centres of innovation, which are the most apt to offer opportunities, possible futures. Children and young people are convinced of this: for them, migrating to the city means increasing one’s social, human and economic capital, guaranteeing one’s life and its worth. It should not therefore surprise us that behaviours as hazardous and difficult as migrations also represent quests for capital, or a normal means of securing capital in an unequal national economy — in a symbolic economy, where you are defined by your lack of capital (child, girl, from the North, poor, from a village, illiterate or barely able to read and write…).

Social capital protects migrants (see 2.1.2.). The child who knows where he or she is going, whom to look for there and how to reach that person, has a greater chance of enjoying a safe experience of migration. For some indeed, it is a case of re-joining a family community, a community of brothers, now more significant in the cocoa-growing area than in the area of origin. The great difference between children who have migrated only once and those who are more experienced is that the latter appear to be far more at ease, in control, whilst the younger ones, and particularly the girls, seem to be far more anxious, fearful of difficulties. Social capital is not only necessary in order to find a job, an opportunity, but it is also essential in the workplace. In the cocoa producing areas, young migrant workers often live in a small village, sometimes even a forest hamlet, in a farmer’s “cottage”. Thus, they share the living conditions of the other family members, are fed and lodged, have company.

These are conditions in which the migrant feels relatively secure. But such integration into a production unit is not enough: the young migrants must avoid becoming a sort of second class family member; they must retain their capacity for self-assertion. For any assistance, they will certainly need to count on allies outside the production unit which employs them: peers, other children or young people, possibly sympathetic adults. However, many migrants explain that personal conflicts, ill treatment, the fact the boss “did not give me what I wanted”, frequently impel the migrant to leave, although, in order to be effective, this flight reflex needs to have some aim in view: flee, yes; but where, and to whom?

The effects of migration on children can obviously be dramatic. Young girls appear to be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual violence, depending on the places and conditions in which they sleep. Children may lack clothing, not be able to go to school, not have enough to eat, not be paid. And always this perception of being in a position of inferiority.

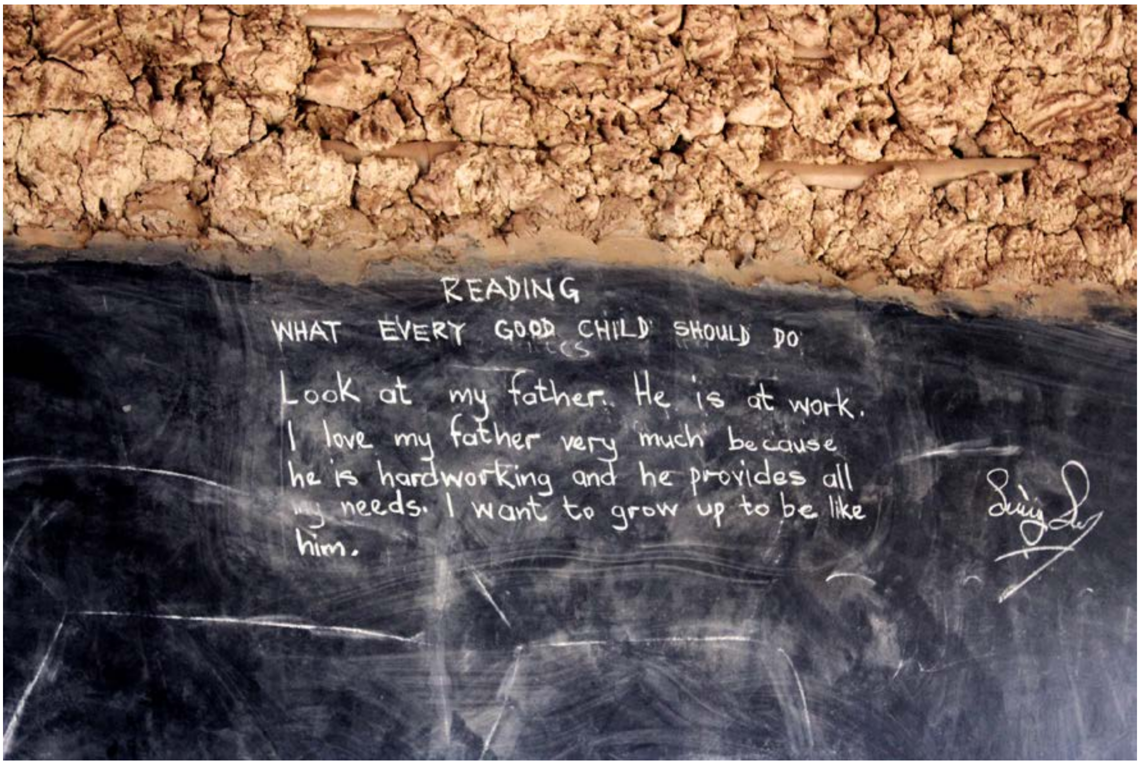
The worst cases concern children whose family situation in the area of origin is a critical one: the loss of one or both parents, extreme poverty. They are then entrusted to members of the more or less extended family. The death of a parent, or of both, the remarriage of the survivor, the lack of father and/or mother in the area of origin these unstable family situations are synonymous with risk and in particular with prolonged stays, with emigration and with low or non-existent remuneration. Childhood support groups should clearly pay particular attention to this kind of family situation in the departure areas.

2.1.8. The children of migrants

The situation of the children of migrants. A particular feature of the cocoa sector from the point of view of migrants is that temporary migration can evolve into immigration into the area, with the migrant becoming, in turn, a cocoa planter. To do this, a migrant has to acquire an area of land where he can grow food and cocoa. A small start-up capital is necessary, which may be provided by the local Chief, but primarily by the “parents” who brought him there. Young men settle when they are in their 20s, and marry a woman from their home region who will come to live and work with them. Alternatively, they will come and settle when they are already married, with young children. Those children are not regarded as indigenes.

In a village in the Western Region, near Asankrangwa, the village school is attended by a large number of children who have only recently arrived in the area (less than five years ago). They come from Burkina Faso, from the Upper East and the Eastern Region. Most of these children can speak Twi, the local language, as well as their mother tongue. They are educated in English. The quality of the educational infrastructure in this area is lamentable, as are the facilities. Some of the teachers were frightened of my speaking to them in English. The Cocoa Labour Survey (2008) highlights the very poor quality of teaching in the cocoa producing areas. I will simply repeat the remarks of a head teacher and a Chief: the children of plantation owners and of indigenes go to school in the district capital, where the schools, whether public or private, have better reputations. They do not attend the rural schools. Thus, the children of immigrants have to make do with the bush schools, with long walks, without proper food during the day. These children regard it as normal to work on the family holding after school and at weekends.

For they say that they know that their parents suffer and work hard, and that they must help them as much as they can and obey them.



READING

WHAT EVERY GOOD CHILD SHOULD DO

Look at my father. He is at work. I love my father very much because he is hardworking and he provides all my needs. I want to grow up to be like him.

Today’s reading. Amoaman

2.2. Other forms of mobility

2.2.1. Working in the city

The majority of children and young people migrating on an independent basis do not go to work on the cocoa plantations, they go to the city. Young girls from the North tend to move more than boys, and leave at a younger age. The majority go to the city, where they carry loads wherever goods are bought and unloaded, work as small traders or perform various household tasks. They generally first leave home around the ages of 12, 13 or 14. This is because they mature earlier and because of the strict control of parents over young girls. These girls, and indeed the boys too, say that they are going off to look for money to pay for school, and also because their family is “poor”. But they are also seeking “freedom”. Neither girls nor boys like to admit that escaping the control of their parents, and “to enjoy”, are very important. But married women who have migrated, as well as parents, emphasise the importance of these reasons. This is a sign of the tension between generations and a desire to “discover the world”, but also represents a series of denials specific to a normalising, patriarchal society.

What then are the factors which guide the choice of destination? For migrant children, the choice of place depends on skills (“what you know to do”), “we are farmers, we do farming”, and on the skills attributed to them: “Girls don’t know how to farm”.

Which is of course untrue. In migration, and in the exchanges which it involves, there is this notion of labour force, incarnated by masculinity. Girls go to work as porters, work in popular canteens, or as street traders, take care of household tasks. This distribution of work according to gendered, symbolic “skill”, combines with the effectiveness of networks, of information passed on by word of mouth. The majority of the children and young people whom we met working on cocoa plantations got there through the intermediary of other individuals from their family or from their village.

In Sunyani, porterage of goods in the market is carried out by boys from the Northern Region, from Tamale Lamshegu, Aboabo, Savelugu, Nanton, Nanton Kurugu. Here, there are no young girls, as there are in Kumasi, Accra, Tamale… Another special feature: they use wheelbarrows. When questioned on these specificities, the boys explained that “here, it is ours”, and that this work enabled them to make “good money” . By word of mouth, the young people know that there is portering work available. They are clearly effective at protecting their monopoly. Here again, migration becomes a practice governed by collective knowledge, shared within social networks based on place of residence, kinship, ethnicity and gender, which, although innovative, perpetuate ancient social structures.

Kayayei is the commonest term used for these porterage services provided by children in and around the city markets. The children engaged in this work are often temporary migrants, some of whom may then settle in the cities where they work. Many of the children whom we met doing this kind of work sleep in the market stalls, or in still less secure places. This exposure naturally involves high risks of sexual abuse. FAFO (Hatløy & Huser, 2005) found that the majority of street children in Accra did not stay long on the street, less than six months, and this was because these were temporary migrations, and also because, being aware of the risks of sleeping in the street or in exposed places, the children, as soon as they can, seek other safer refuges.

It also has to do with the ability of migrant children to switch from one occupation to another; in the urban context, they are always on the lookout for opportunities which will earn them more money. And indeed, the accounts of successful migrant experiences describe increasingly lucrative job changes. Tasks are hierarchised according to the degree of dependence on a boss which they involve and the level of remuneration and necessary skills. Young men and children who migrate to the cocoa producing areas rapidly specialise in cocoa. Some hope, as they establish connections within the cocoa producing areas, that they will be able to become caretakers, point of entry into a typical migrant career in cocoa production.

For young girls, the last resort in poverty is to sell themselves, give their body to a man. This is not a form of prostitution; few will ever become prostitutes in the strict sense, but may occasionally exchange sexual (or sex related) services for money, “presents”, services, protection. Moreover, the exchange of money between lovers, from man to woman, is normal, without that exchange being the primary purpose of the relationship. In such cases, money is a mediator of positioning. When a young girl who has immigrated to the city has run out of friends and resources; when she “does not know anybody” who can help her, she finds herself in the common, unenviable situation of having to give herself to a man, form an alliance with a man, who will enable her to survive, who will support her needs while she satisfies his needs, and with whom she will probably have a child (see section 2.4.2., ‘Being a woman’).

Porters, Sunyani

2.2.2. Gold-mining (Galamsey)

In Ashanti and the Western Regions, there has been an explosive upsurge in informal gold mining activities (“galamsey”). These attract large numbers of youngsters and compete with work on the cocoa plantations; the supply of young labour is accordingly reduced for the farmers and sharecroppers. This work in the gold mines is much more profitable for the workers, but also much more exhausting and dangerous. The young people and children working there risk falls and injuries and are sometimes victims of landslips and rockfalls.

Most often, the children and young people carry the extracted ore from the mine to the sites where it is crushed and washed. In such cases they are paid by the day by the gold-miners. In the small-scale mining undertakings, everything is done by hand on the same site by small teams of young men known as “gangs”. They work together, and the daily product of their labour is shared among them. They extract the ore, mix it, wash it and recover the nuggets — gold particles — from a fibre mat over which the wash is poured, and to which the particles adhere.

Mercury is used to bind the particles together. The gang often hires a young local girl who washes, fetches the water and pours it. They sell their daily gold production (by their accounts, between three and four “blades” a razor blade, + 1 gram at 48 cedis per blade) to a local entrepreneur, who has told them where they are to work. This entrepreneur buys every blade of gold from them. They boast that they make a good living. The proportion of boys to girls in these activities is more or less five to one.

The environmental degradation caused by these activities is considerable. Too often, the exploited sites are not restored to their original condition, leaving large clearings churned up to a depth of several metres; sometimes whole hillsides in the forest are stripped bare in this way. Cocoa plantations have been disturbed by galamsey activities. However, there apparently cannot be said to be any real competition between the two activities in terms of land occupation.

There could be competition between them for young labour — hard-working, energetic, cheap and tough — but there is little likelihood of this as things stand at present, given the huge numbers of potential workers. The risks to health are high and the work is hard. Certain youngsters from the North who regularly hire themselves out on the cocoa plantations claim to have tried galamsey and given it up: too hard, too dangerous. While I was preparing this study, the authorities undertook operations against these illegal gold mining sites, destroying equipment and facilities.

2.2.3 Attitudes of society to child labour and the underlying values

It is surprising that the issue of child labour and of child migration to the cocoa plantations continues to be the subject of so much debate and campaigning (which appears, indeed, to contribute positively to limiting abuses of child workers) while, for some years now, children have swarmed around the markets and work at very young ages for derisory sums over which they have little or no bargaining power. The proliferation of such children unquestionably indicates that their services are in demand.

For what reasons? Many people hire children because they accept social distinctions as a natural phenomenon. Is it because they dissociate themselves from the unequal relations which they perpetuate by hiring children? Is it because they know that these children are poor and have to do this in order to survive? Because the service is there, available, they need it, and it is cheap? If, as is the case at Sefwi Wiawso, the authorities were to ban all kayayei workers from the market, would we no longer see young children engaged in this kind of work? While such action cannot neutralise the multiple phenomena underlying migration which are presented in this report, the fact remains that intervention at two levels is required: attacking the structural reasons for child labour and its concrete manifestations. Ghana, as a collectivity, cannot afford to do without a genuine childhood protection policy which takes account of the country's prevailing conditions, norms and practices.

The government's awareness campaigns against child labour and trafficking are endlessly rehearsed by all, including the actual employers of such labour. However, this situation produces a denial reflex, which is surprising in a country where the normalisation of behaviours through discourse demonstrates the force of the State, the power of religious morality and an ubiquitous rights discourse. Denial may in practice reflect a collective desire to control the profound and rapid changes which Ghanaians are undergoing; social order is thus an acute permanent concern. Behind these affirmations, which are not always accompanied by acts (the chairman of a local rights-watch committee himself employs a young boy from the North who doesn't go to school and receives no wages), lie good faith, a tenacious will, a belief in rights and a keen sense of justice (it was this same committee chair who would remove a young female independent migrant worker from a neighbour's farm because she was being ill-treated).

Once again, one can observe in practice notions of justice and law and of their local infringements, but separate and distinct from international norms.

What are we to make of this toleration? We have to begin by understanding that every situation generates specific knowledge and opinions; would a father, a farmer, talk to an NGO representative in the same way as he would to his brother, also involved in cocoa growing? Obviously not. In order to understand, we have to put ourselves in the situation of the farmer and consider his choices, his options and his interests. We have to follow his emotional, social and economic reasoning, which differs according to his various life-situations. For these farmers are deeply imbued — and have been for many years — with a “capitalist” mentality.

The farmers working the land are all migrants: “Indigenes don’t work” is the constant refrain of all the migrants we met. The dominating mindset is an enterprise or “capitalist” mentality, a concept employed here in the sense of the economist Polly Hill in The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana. A Study in Rural Capitalism. In that book, the author seeks “to regard the migrant farmer as a ‘capitalist’, whose primary concern has been to the continued expansion of his business” (2008 (1963), 3). Ms Hill describes the impulse driving migrants from the Akwampim towns to the west, where they establish plantations, as “a contagious enthusiasm for private enterprise” (2008 (1963), 181). Ms Hill, through her analysis of the dynamism of the cocoa sector in Ghana in the mid twentieth century, shows how deep rooted this capitalist mentality is. The reader needs to enter properly into this mindset of an economic relationship with the land under which small cocoa farmers operate. They are thus rational agents, and they and their families need to be provided with assistance for investment in their production unit, so that they can acquire and utilise simple tools which will enable them to improve their management of the business and the entire unit itself, including the children.

This tolerance of the contradiction between discourse and practice encountered among employers of children — both adult farmers and the better-off urban classes — points up certain aspects of the daily experience of Ghanaians and of their identities. Two frequent popular discourses are indicative: first, very frequently encountered among junior managers and farmers, a sort of popular sociology, a discourse which devalues Africa and its leaders, an “Afro pessimism” which feeds on the prevailing patrimonialism, stigmatising the African. This is a very widespread attitude and encourages a negative collective image, a collective identity still unsure of its intrinsic worth and humanity. Secondly, a discourse on collective poverty — perceived almost as a natural phenomenon — where socio economic conditions are presented as generally poor.

Thus, in our interlocutors’ eyes, the best indicator in evaluating socio economic conditions is the number of formal, stable jobs on the market. These narratives convey representations of the self (collective and individual) and identifications which reflect and contribute to the process of individualisation and fragmentation. Ghanaians seek a sort of comforting stability. These constraints are thus accompanied by a dual tendency: on the one hand, a strong re-focusing on the close family, and, on the other, the extension of looser networks, new proliferating and diversifying attachments. Figuratively, we may speak of fragmentation, or, more precisely, of multiple identifications and relatively weak ties.

The general feeling is that wealth is the primary indicator of individual self-actualisation, and appears consistently to be regarded as an essential core value. Moreover, everyone wants the best for their children, which means that strategies are focused on relatively small units, the more or less nuclear family, centred on the mother, ideally with a father or an uncle.

As regards collective representations, during numerous conversations both with young people and with farmers and other adults, it is apparent that their daily lives are affected, or have been affected, by corruption. However, it is the very concept of corruption that appears to be still more damaging in practice. It is presented as the ultimate cause of the problems they experience. “Suffering because of others”, through the fault of corrupt practices, affects the image that these individuals have of themselves as citizens who are totally powerless (subjectivity). One effect of such discourses on these individuals is to persuade them that it is “each for himself and God for all”. Naturally, in its perpetual quest for legitimacy, or rather, in the continuing performance of its legitimate role, the modern State must prove, by ensuring that fair rules are respected, that it is working for the common good, that the common good is a reality — a huge task.

2.2.4. Summary

In a few somewhat crude brush strokes, I have sought to outline the ideological currents which flow through the universe of the small agricultural producer in Ghana — currents which constrain and guide him. They show us that, in this context, childhood in Ghana has multiple aspects: we should therefore speak of childhoods. And it is in this plural sense that the threat is revealed: a threat of producing childhoods of increasingly different kinds, with activities, rites, life-trajectories, resources and responsibilities differing widely from one another and inhabited by different categories of children — the phenomenon of a multiplicity of possible childhoods, accompanying the contemporary changes described above. Childhoods which come to an end more or less quickly. There are categories of young girls who leave childhood and, without any form of transition, without any adolescence, become somebody’s wife. There are children whose only future is to leave, in order to explore the possible, to survive, and to fulfil themselves. We also find children whose childhood and adolescence are governed by the rhythm of schools and learning.

From the point of view of enhanced respect for the rights of the child, this situation of multiple inequalities is a negative factor, which makes it harder to develop programmes for effective child development. In the face of these variable experiences of childhood, the challenge consists, first, in developing a collective perception of childhood and children which takes account of these different experiences and engages with a national vision and, second, in concentrating on the poorest children.

Migrant, Supanso

These differences need to be highlighted, exposed, discussed; they must serve as guides for developing childhood support programmes, in order effectively to forestall the marginalisation of a large proportion of the child and youth population (or of the population of Ghana as a whole, where, in 2000, almost 57% were under 19 years of age) .

Finally, as has been noted, young people and children who migrate to the cocoa-producing areas are often from the North. Many arrive in villages where they will find work through the intermediary of individuals originally from their home district, or even from their family. These temporary stays may develop into permanent settlement and the exploitation of an initial area under the abunu or abusa régime. This trajectory is followed by many young boys, who will no longer be able to return to school. To that extent, it can be said that the temporary migration of children and young people to the cocoa farms are preliminary stages in settlement as a planter. That said, it has to be borne in mind that not every temporary migration results in settlement. Migrants are not afraid to explore other opportunities during their period of mobility. Moreover, they want this mobility to be also a form of social mobility.

There are also young girls working on the farms, sometimes directly on the cocoa plantation, sometimes in food growing, or in household tasks: collecting water, gathering firewood, washing clothes and dishes.; in short, helping the production unit to perpetuate itself. Children from the northern regions come to settle on production units on a long-term basis. Often, their objective will be to become a “caretaker”, on the basis of their skills, and of the relationships which they have been able to build in and around the village or hamlet where they live and work. Young girls are more mobile than boys.

They more often go to work in the towns and cities. It is important to consider specifically the migration practices of girls. Migration practices are largely determined by the way information circulates about the South and the North, and between North and South.

The following table presents somes profiles of migrant children interviewed in Ghana in the course of the study. These six profiles, while far from being exhaustive, do, however, allow identification of the key characteristics distinguishing the various experiences of migrants. These profiles are snapshots. In reality, the focus of discussion should be migrant children's careers, and migration practices over time. An example is the case of the child sent at a very early age to the cocoa-growing region, then returning later to his/her area of origin and continuing to migrate from time to time to farms in the region which he/she knows.

Migrant children interviewed

Types of children	*Type of migration*	*Gender*	*Age*	*Cooperation*	*Destination*	*Occupation*
Children of migrants accompanying their parents	Immigration	Male and female		Parents	Rural	School Farming
Children joining a family group	Immigration	Mainly male		Parents Sibling group	Rural	Farming
Attending school in their place of origin, migrating during the holidays	Repeated temporary migrations	Some male, but mainly female	12 to 16	Parents Peers Random Extended family network	Mainly urban, some rural	School Family Street-trading Porterage Gold-mining
Not, or no longer, attending school	Repeated temporary migrations	Some female, but mainly male	From 12	Parents Peers Random	Mainly urban, some rural	School Farming Street trading Porterage Gold-mining
Fostered	Migrations	Female and male	As soon as weaned	Extended family network	Urban Rural	Housework Farming Street trading School
Newly married	Immigration			Extended family network	Rural	Farming

The determinant factors in children's mobility practices identified during the fieldwork are the following:

- Gender ;
- Age at time of migration;
- Geographical, ethnic, linguisitc and religious origin;
- Characteristics of the family prior to migration (socio-economic, composition, family history);
- Spatial distribution of those considered close family ;
- Work experience and, "skills" acquired as a child (what did he/she learn as a very young child?)
- Type of work;
- Aims of migration according to the child ;
- Conditions of travel (with whom did the child travel? Alone, with its parents, with intermediaries, with other children…) ;
- Links and contacts maintained with the family of origin during the period of migration;
- Duration of absence from family's home area ;
- Previous experiences of migration (how, where, how long?)
- Social integration during the phases of mobility. (At the workplace, lives, sleeps and eats where? And with whom?) ;
- Type of work during periods of mobility ;
- Modes of remuneration;
- Geographical itinerary (how many stages before reaching current workplace?)
- Attendance at school or other formal educational institutions ;
- Social links with employer(s).

« Galamsey »

2.3. Dynamics within the cocoa sector

By comparison with Côte d'Ivoire, the cocoa sector in Ghana is often characterised by the family nature and small size of the farms composing it (Bøås & Huser, 2006). The work of economists and anthropologists has stressed "the importance of migration and land purchase to the development of cocoa farming in the country [Ghana]" (Austin, 1971, XIII). In fact, according to the Cocoa Labour Survey of 2008, less than 50% of the population is indigenous to the area. What has to be envisioned is not a freeze frame of the composition of the population, but the historical process of population movements, the migratory dynamic over time, in order to appreciate how it affects child migration practices.

2.3.1. Indigenes and migrants

The first major feature characterising this dynamic of occupation of the forest area is the statement by migrant farmers heard over and over again in the course of the fieldwork: "Indigenes do not work". The indigenes, who are indigenous in that they have legitimate access to the land, live off the income obtaining from sharecropping. In brief, the process of exploitation of plantations is the following: until the 1960s, the migrant bought land and developed cocoa plantations. Nowadays, he obtains access to the land through the régime of abunu or abusa sharecropping.

After five to ten years of sharecropping, he himself acquires sole rights to the produce of the plantation, whilst the preceding farmer, having sold land to him, retires, handing over to his successors. As long as land is available, the new migrant can extend the area planted to cocoa bushes. The migrant, initially a temporary or family worker, will become a sharecropper during his early years in the cocoa producing areas, and may ultimately acquire sole rights to the produce of a plantation which he has created or acquired by sharecropping during his later years. As he declines physically and needs liquid cash for his own domestic investments, he will increasingly entrust his plantations to young migrants, who may become responsible for the cost of investments and inputs.

This formula enables the established planter to free up cash for his domestic investments, principally the education of his children and the construction of a house, generally in his region of origin, although a number of migrant planters prefer to build on the outskirts of the large cities rather than investing in their area of origin, which by definition is under privileged. In other words, these cocoa farmers tend to invest their own profits in activities outside the cocoa sector, principally in the education of their children (Jolliffe, 2004).

In these circumstances, the relationship to the land of the majority of cocoa farmers is an instrumental one, a relationship of a "capitalist" towards a means of production, rather than to a plot of land linked to the history, identity and livelihood of a family. Access to cocoa production depends on financial capacity.

Thus, according to migrants and indigenes, the “strangers”, migrants long settled in the area, may be wealthier than the indigenes, the local “rentiers”. A crucial feature of the dynamics of the cocoa producing sector is that, in the hamlets closest to the plantations, in the forest, we find large numbers of young migrants — sharecroppers — with small land areas and very limited resources for investment in planting and inputs, and thus with very low productivity. Thus the prosperity of young migrants depends very largely on their ability to gain access to new land, although expansion is tempered by the temporary nature of migrations. Families, originally sharecropping planters, leave the sector and are replaced by new farmers from the Upper East, West and Northern Regions, and also, since longer ago, from the Eastern Region.

2.3.2. Migrants in the forest

“Indigenes do not work”, but live off the income from their lands. The majority of land-owners do not live in the production areas. They carry on a variety of economic activities and have left the rural areas. Thus the residents of the rural areas of the forest are mainly migrants. “Strangers”. This term “strangers” is frequently used by the migrants themselves. They complain of this stigmatising label, which continues to adhere to them over several generations.

In one of the villages visited the Chief profits financially from this stigmatisation by obliging each migrant farmer to pay him 50 cedis a year. The migrants themselves are increasingly organised. They have their own local chief, but seem a long way from a structured movement capable of defending the short and medium term interests of migrants, or small producers, in local arenas. This situation is also an incentive to move on, as Jolliffe has shown, and gives particular relevance to a strategy consisting in educating their children.

Nobody wants their children to devote their lives to cocoa. The aim of all parents is to enable their children to go to school and to have access to stable employment, or at least to enter a non-agricultural economy. As we have seen previously, the cultural traits of these populations are aspects of the stigmatising characteristics of migrants, who sometimes find themselves forced to disguise their identity in order to facilitate their integration (see, for example, PPVA 2011, 39 43).

Questioned on the local integration capacities of migrants, the local Chiefs have always manifested an understandable optimism. They attribute the remarkable ability of migrants to integrate to three factors: first, a powerful nationalist ideology: “we are all Ghanaians”. Such nationalism promotes a solidarity transcending region and ethnicity.

However, this nationalist ideology — or discourse — is undermined in practice by individualistic behaviours in which the importance of the family, perceived as a relatively restricted unit, has already been stressed earlier (see section 2.1.1.). Then there is the forest. “You do not want to live alone in the forest.” The forest has always been an area of wealth, a haven of security from hunger, but on the other hand an area of great spiritual and physical danger (animal predation, from tiny viruses to large predators, not forgetting snakes, which in themselves represent a symbolic focus of the danger and fear which the forest inspires). Its imagined ancient inalienability is no more than a memory in Ghana.

The forest is a resource to be exploited rationally through practices which are now completely secular. It is currently increasingly demystified, in that it has become the object of various types of exploitation and uses which desacralise it — which objectify it as a potential source of economic value, for timber companies, gold miners, cocoa and hevea planters. And now, with the establishment of natural reservations, the forest has become part of a global environmental economy, in which it also increases in value.

This symbolic pressure on a forest which is claimed to place all men, in the face of its dangers and spiritual qualities, on an equal footing, and to create among them a sense of mutual complementarity, has lost its credibility, which exists only in an imaginary version of a mythical pre-colonial Africa — a far cry from the economic and political history of this central region of Ghana. Ultimately, according to the migrants themselves, the basis for this positive assessment of the capacity for reception and integration is to be found in the privileged position of the indigenes for whom they work. A migrant works “under” or “serves” an indigene; hardly surprising that the rentier believes that the situation of his sharecropper is a satisfactory one.

This relative discrimination can be seen in the services to which the migrants, and particularly their children, have access. The children of recent migrants attend rural schools of lesser quality (of very low quality - see Survey 2008, 102 105); those of the land-owners go to the better schools, often in the small district towns, and thus have a greater chance of social advancement. In the context described above, access to education is essential to the strategy of parents, who invest as soon as they can in the education of their children. In that sense, the school contributes to the perpetuation of economic, social and cultural inequalities.

In dialogue with children attending schools which barely teach them to read and write, their visions of the future, of their possibilities and their aspirations, are astonishing. The disparity noted in the course of the study between aspirations and actual capital is immense. For example, we see girls of sixteen wanting to become doctors and attending rural schools of very limited quality, which won’t even give them access to the senior secondary school cycle. This discrepancy is worrying, and demonstrates the urgency of working with these children and young people in order to help them to think more objectively about their situation, because it is their future which is at stake. Thus, in current circumstances, the risks noted are twofold: on the one hand, as is shown by the proliferation of private educational facilities, the competitive educational system perpetuates social inequalities, based on different starting capitals, where the richest and best-off have access to better educational facilities. On the other hand, there is a risk of creating illusions, of encouraging dreams and promoting frustration among under-privileged rural children in relation to possibilities to which they have no means of access.

2.3.3. Availability of land

According to the actors whom we met, the availability of land is diminishing, at the same time reducing the opportunities for young migrants to settle and develop holdings of sufficient size and productivity to ensure their survival and that of their family in the broad sense. In effect, they are also supposed to contribute to the resources of the family which has remained in the area of origin, through transfers of money, but not only of money.

The forms of exchange are varied, encompassing the sharing of resources, but also the sharing of responsibilities and burdens, as well as the diversification of risks, as has already been explained.

Nana Appiah Kubi, Chief of Yawkra

The actors questioned in the field — migrants, local Chiefs, land-owners — thus recognise that the availability of land for the expansion of farming is limited. Yet families of young migrants continue to come and settle in the cocoa growing areas. Indeed, the high proportion in rural schools of children of migrants recently arrived from the northern provinces and from Burkina is striking. Mr. Quaicoo, a researcher with the Ghana Cocoa Board, states that anyone who wishes to invest in cocoa at the current time will find land to do so. However, Mr. Quaicoo is referring here to the possibility of young investors being able to enter the sector. Provided such investors have access to capital, they can acquire land, hire labour and purchase inputs. In this sense, cocoa becomes an investment sector like any other for actors on the national scene with capital. We shall return to this below.

The reduced availability of land has the result of limiting the ability of recent migrants to develop a profitable holding based on expansion. For Ghana's aim is to continue significantly to increase total annual production. The objective of one million tonnes was reached in the preceding season, although it is true that this was a favourable year in climatic terms. Investors and Cocobod are clearly confident that growth will be maintained . The challenge for owners, migrants and Cocobod itself (inasmuch as they all share a desire to increase production, and hence their income), lies in intensifying cultivation. Such intensification inevitably requires some form of subvention of inputs, through access for producers to savings and credit facilities and to effective rural extension services.

That entails substantial investments in the sector, which are necessary in order to increase productivity while preserving the integrational dynamic of the sector, and of the forest in general. The farmers interviewed showed extreme disparity in productivity (from two bags per acre to fifteen). The longer farmers have been settled, the more productive they are. Young migrants have low productivity, for, on their own admission, they don't spray enough, often enough or well enough, don't fertilise their land sufficiently, and their cocoa rootstock is old. They lack funds, technical savoir faire, the ability to analyse their activities (see the video of the conversation with Mr. Ansah).

2.3.4. New investments, the future

Mr. Gaicoo states that cocoa can become — is becoming — the subject of investments by economic actors endowed with financial resources, very different from migrants endowed with labour, motivated by survival. These investors have access to greater areas of land. This profile of the contemporary owner/investor is clearly distinct from those of the migrant sharecroppers described above.

We are not talking here of an entrepreneurial rationalisation driven as in the past by agricultural actors endowed with financial resources , but of contemporary investors with financial resources who are seeking to diversify their investments. We must avoid this leading to the expansion of plantations and to the relative long term concentration of land, as is happening in the neighbouring countries — Mali, Senegal, Burkina, for example — leading (at best) to workers becoming waged employees. This process could already be under way. Thus, in the Western Region, we note that the production units are larger and more productive than those in the other regions planted earlier (Cocoa Labour Survey, 2008, 80).

The western part of the Western Region is the western border of the cocoa producing area in Ghana, the last frontier, since the expansion of cocoa cultivation has travelled from the east towards the west north west, and then to the south, along the frontier with Côte d'Ivoire. This process may, on the one hand, result in increased control of working conditions on bigger farms and, on the other, in the absence of significant controls and appropriate policies, hinder social advancement and access to means of production on the part of farmers from the poorest areas of the country. In other words, there is a risk that the tried and tested strategies of families from the North for escaping poverty will be rendered obsolete, thus nullifying the endogenous, inter-generational strategies for the economic advancement of children.

In these circumstances, it would seem that these new actors can either choose to entrust their land to small migrant production units, or to rationalise their holding as a single unit, no longer managed by families, but a business undertaking. Thus, the role of absentee owners entrusting their farm to migrant caretakers may potentially change. Interviews with absentee owners who have inherited increasingly scattered plots of land, combined with the interest of the sector as a destination for financial and industrial investments, suggest that the sector may evolve towards an aggregation of larger parcels, managed by investors who can choose between different models of organisation and production.

It is important to preserve the “pump priming” and poverty reduction function played by the forest, and more specifically by the cocoa sector, and thus to encourage small production units by supporting them with technical, financial and extension services. Thus the small size of family managed plantations enables a large number of migrants from poorer regions, in one or two generations, to send their children to school, and in any event to leave the cocoa business. The extension, intensification and industrialisation of cultivation, and the limits on the expansion of cultivated areas for poor young migrants, may lead to an increasing proletarianisation of the labour force in this sector, threatening the role of the forest in integrating migrants from poorer areas of the country, and then sending their sons and grandsons on to the South (where this ongoing formation of large groups of urban poor is manifest), or to other regions, making room for new migrants, new holdings.

As land becomes increasingly significant financially in terms of profit potential, at the same time the economic growth prospects for poor migrant families become more limited. In these circumstances, public (Cocobod) and private investments in favour of small farmers are decisive for the future, if we wish to preserve and support the ability of the sector to integrate poor farmers.

The presence of investors with access to funds (in line with Ghana’s economic growth) and the reduction in the availability of land (in line with population growth in the cocoa-producing areas) invite us to consider possible developments in the sector, and how such developments could affect children and young migrants and the children of migrants.

Supanso, entretien

The dynamics considered in this section are outlined on the basis of an experience which is limited and quite inadequate to address the complexity and specificities of land rights.

A thorough study of local conditions of land management and ownership is essential before any attempt can be made to produce a realistic study of future prospects. It can, however, be said that these various elements point to a very powerful process of social differentiation at work, that is to say, social inequalities are growing and social hierarchies are becoming more sharply defined.

Migrants Kusasi, Domeabra

2.4. Four key issues of a less empirical nature

Before continuing this report with the presentation and justification of suggestions for action and policies, some more fundamental considerations:

2.4.1. The perception of childhood

It is undeniable that, in the current processes of transformation, local perceptions of childhood are evolving and diversifying. Here, childhood is understood as a period of life, but above all as a condition and social experience undergone by individuals, who at the same time find themselves defined and identified thereby, with the power-related effects attaching to every identity claimed to be rooted in nature (such as gender, and, to a certain extent also, culture).

It is a regrettable fact that the forms of childhood vary according to social class and inherited capitals. Whilst every parent struggles to ensure that his or her offspring has access to education and to upward social mobility so that every child’s potential may be realised, at the same time it is common practice to hire the services of a poor child for next to nothing.

Confined to a duty of silence, obedience and work, poor children struggle to escape their status of child, combining the struggle for material survival with that for self-actualisation (becoming independent). They are constrained to escape from childhood. Childhood appears to represent for the poorest children a form of “discomfort”, while at the same time they share the ideal that parents should be responsible for the cost of educating their children until they acquire a higher qualification and become a “bank manager”, a “medical doctor”, a “nurse” . . . or even a “footballer”.

In other words, the children feel this urgent drive to be responsible for the exploration of futures, to escape childhood, so as ultimately to have a future and to survive, whereas “child labour” is condemned by powerful institutional actors, while the mechanism for constructing the better future, the school, is not accessible to them, or is incapable of endowing them with the necessary capital for their development (Nieuwenhuys, 1996). This is the essential paradox: the conflict between a global ideology of childhood and the reality of the contemporary economic system.

At the heart of this paradox lie the notions of “participation” or “agency” of children (Lancy, 2008; De Boeck and Honwana, 2005), or “citizenship” (Barrata, 2001). Discussions of these concepts all reflect the relationship between the child and power. In Ghana it seems that, basically, childhood is defined by non participation in decisions within the formal social units to which the children belong and with which they collaborate (family, school), by their subordination to an adult authority, of a different generation. Inasmuch as migrant children assume responsibilities, take decisions, participate in the economy of their country, they must be given the opportunity to participate fully in the political and social forces of their society.

Possibly the worst thing would be, by confining them within the category of ‘children’, to keep them in this ambiguous, not to say paradoxical, situation of persons with rights, but limited ones, and at the same time objects (not subjects) of special protection. The status of victim is not what the children want, but respect.

It should never be forgotten that the rural child in the cocoa-growing areas is integrated into a production unit, a family. It is normal and traditional (Berlan, 2011, 13-14) that the child should be involved actively with that unit, in a whole range of activities. Even when he/she seeks to escape from dependency, from childhood, from the unit’s authority, in order to go off and “earn something”, the family often participates in that decision (Kwankye, 2011). No intervention in favour of childhood can therefore be considered without its first being positioned within this family context; the internal dynamics of the family play a major role in the determination of histories of child mobilities.

This situation is further complicated by the multiplicity of experiences of ‘childhood’ in Ghana, which parallels the country’s social differentiation and fragmentation. While migrant children “actualise themselves” through their explorations of space and their future, and the possibility of acquiring resources, a different childhood is being produced by good-quality educational institutions and by the families of children who provide them with access to these.

I am Your Future: Protect Me!
Talk to your midwife/doctor about Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV!

Protect me

2.4.2. Being a woman

The importance of migration practices among young girls from the North should be noted. This is also a relatively recent phenomemon (ten years at most). The active participation of the majority of the children involved in these decisions to leave home indicates a change in relations of gender and agency among children. While patrilocality has always made women the primary mobile category within the population, up to the present time their mobility has always been within the framework of exchanges of wives among families.

They now take a more active role in their mobility. In practice, migration has had the effect in the longer term of disclosing another way of becoming an adult woman, without the active intermediation of the father or the uncle. What is at stake in these new female behaviours is power over their person, which is why being reduced to trading their body, and its potential for pleasure and reproduction, in order to survive, entering into a marriage relationship — forming a partnership with a man — is frequently seen by migrant women as a sign of failure. “I did not have any resources to start my business and men were disturbing me sometimes, so I had to get married”, says an older migrant woman. While another active female migrant told me: “Some of the girls have to enter themselves to a man, because you do not have anything”.

The parents of migrant girls, former migrant women and current migrants repeatedly say it: in leaving home, they seek independence, “freedom”, “good times”.

Markers of gender are present everywhere in rural society: the “natural” vocations of girls and boys for certain types of activity match the way certain matters are reserved for men (firing the forge, animal meat) and others for women (cooking food; soap and washing materials). Migrant men questioned on the subject of their partner insist on the importance of having a wife from their region of origin, who speaks “your language”, “knows your food”, in short, shares the same cultural universe and accepts sharing the condition of migrant with her husband. Her role as labour in the production of cocoa, but also in food production, in the perpetuation of the family and in the diversification of sources of revenue is essential.

The adult migrant women questioned identify themselves totally with their production unit, with their family. In this sense, women participating in cocoa production conform with their habitual subordinate status. However, evidence noted in the course of the fieldwork shows that some women also achieve responsibility on plantations and claim the right to manage the plots which they have contributed to creating.

In every area of the definition of central identities, such as childhood and womanhood, the religious institutions play a central role in legitimating or refusing emancipational claims and practices. Moreover, the common and extremely widespread sense of homophobia indicates that the definition of categories of gender and their relationship continues to be constructed in contemporary Ghana on identities strongly defined by forms of sexual practice which perpetuate “natural” categories. Gender relations continue everywhere (Butler, 2005) to be based on recognised sexual practices.

This is a clear indication of an extremely controversial social area, constrained by patriarchal power and the allocation of roles and powers based on a rigid sexual order. These migration practices of young girls thus ultimately point to a certain masculinisation of women, achieved through the pursuit of an individual construction of the self, while at the same time not depriving the family, as redefined, of its central role. Thus the circulation of resources as between individuals and their families remains very much a consensual one.

2.4.3. The imaginational element

Over and above the economic motivations, whose rational basis is clear to everybody, the imaginational aspects appear central to understanding child migrant behaviours. Analysis of the imaginational dynamics of mobile children involves a study of the effects of constraint (powers) on individual conducts, on the production of certain forms of subjectivities. It appears that it is at the level of the imaginary that this convergence occurs, creating an interchangeability between independence and the creation of dependants (or reorganisation of dependency relations), between spatial exploration and exploration of the future, between spatial exploration and exploration of the society in which they live, between physical mobility and social mobility.

These interchangeabilities indicate at least three things: first, a strong hierarchisation of spaces (and thus of regional inequalities); secondly, changes at spatial level; it is because, for Ghanaians, relevant space is opening up, globalising, that we are witnessing lengthy and impressive child migrations.

Finally, we would emphasise the strength of the constraints which impel children to leave their home areas, the basis of who they are, their family, their community, in order to improve their lives — the obligation to become somebody else (which is underlain by an experience of subordination).

It is clear from the indications in this report of the very important imaginational role played by education, by the school, by concepts of childhood as conveyed by international conventions, how much the ideals conveyed in the public domain by various forms of awareness-raising structure subjectivities and influence actions, not so much by inspiring the behaviours which they claim to encourage, but by creating categories which hierarchise conducts, behaviours, forms of childhood. It is impossible to remain unaware of these effects of power: school is touted as the preferred means for the promotion and recognition of the rights of the child (and still too often, and wrongly, as the alternative to child labour: attendance at school doesn't mean that the child doesn't work), whereas a great many children have no access to any form of education capable of providing a means of advancement, but which, on the contrary, contributes to devalorising traditional modes of education through work and local occupations. This ability to influence aspirations, models of childhood, to engender frustrations, is a significant power.

Young Ghanaians today have a variety of ways, quite distinct from those of their elders, of constructing their identities. The agents of dissemination of models, of references —the cultural mediators — have proliferated, become global; there has been a media-led explosion of popular culture. It should be noted that, increasingly, both spaces and possibilities are viewed on the basis of their ability to offer alternatives to the present and to the past.

For young people, participating in the construction and constant redefinition of this spatial reality is a way of being part of the world and of being able to exist within it. Mobility thus becomes, in this imaginational sense, a way of being oneself, the only one capable of opening up future horizons, and often of simply surviving. This imaginational dynamic has its own constraints and energies, of which account needs to be taken in any understanding of, or intervention in, children's migration practices.

The regulation of migration practices, of child labour, is taking place within a much wider social arena, which assigns certain categories of person to certain territories, certain functions, certain institutions. For potential migrants and Ghanaian social groups, the management of migration by regulation — or indeed its suppression — is a major social concern. It is not so much that the fate of these migrants disturbs the dominant classes (we see how, through their everyday practices, they can completely dissociate themselves from this reality of the migrant other).

But the fact is that migration practices disturb, question the social order, question key social distinctions: between gender identities, between childhood and adulthood. This diversity of childhoods and the profound familial changes that go with it, the proliferation and redefinition of norms of age and gender and the resultant transformation of social relations, represent fundamental challenges in constructing a childhood policy in Ghana and in understanding the debate which shapes it.

2.4.4. What we still need to know

In order to establish a view of future prospects for the cocoa sector, and hence of the evolution of the demand for labour, of its monetarisation and “financialisation”, we need to investigate further the issue of access to land and conflicts over land rights, of their management and effects. The various existing practices appear to have resulted in low-cost forms of local distribution of resources (land, principally).

The evolution of the roles and prerogatives of the Chiefs since colonial indirect rule up to the post Nkumah era has been constant, and often locality specific (Benneh, undated). One political option is to act at an informal level in the settlement of conflicts over land rights, in the hope that such settlements will create precedents and that there will be a redistribution of land and inheritance regimes. Any attempt at formal regulation would be a titanic undertaking, requiring efficient, decentralised State services.

For reasons that I will develop in the “suggestions” section, certain essential aspects are lacking in the study of forms of mobility of children and young people:

We need detailed studies enabling mobility practices to be placed within a diachronic perspective, studies which situate mobility practices within the life-cycle of mobile individuals (Woodhead, 2007; Berlan, 2011). What happens to migrants? Which ones return to their areas of origin? These long term studies should include as many forms of mobility of children and young people as possible, in order to secure bases of comparison. Of course, the ideal would be to follow entire individual career paths of migrants. Inasmuch as the Centre for Migration Studies and the National Population Council are permanent institutions, we can envisage that, sooner or later, such a monitoring programme could be established, taking advantage of the results of synchronic studies conducted elsewhere. Since the effects of migration on life-cycles are not known, we must take steps to enable us to measure them. The three dimensions suggested by Woodhead (2007) in order to evaluate the socio-psychological impact of labour on children require diachronic data and work covering several aspects. The few narratives heard during this brief research were extremely fruitful and instructive, and enabled us to gain an understanding of typical migration careers.

We need to examine in depth exchanges between migrant children and other individuals and entities, stimulate and feed the networks for the exchange of various human, social and financial capitals. Migrant children constantly stress the importance of the contribution to the resources of the nuclear family: the parents, the mother and the siblings. Existing studies don’t deal sufficiently with the various exchange flows, in particular those between migrant children and other children, their families, their employers…

The forms taken by exchanges are very varied: acquisition of a trousseau, money, food, shelter, training, symbolics, alliances, knowledge. . . The economics of migration falls within a family framework, and the exchanges that take place within that framework are far from being solely monetary, or even material. This is an extremely important fact for policy makers: child migrations occur within an economy that is less monetised than would appear from observations in urban environments.

Lack of liquidity is an economic factor that is central to the situation in which the families of migrant children live, a situation which valorises exchanges of a non-monetary, social and human kind. . . We need to determine precisely the forms and modalities of exchanges which irrigate migrations. Over and above their material nature, such exchanges and benefits are also imaginational: “freedom”, escaping from the “control” of parents, “becoming somebody”, “to know the world”, earning “respect”. . . These exchanges and their effects likewise need to be described and analysed.

2.5. Conclusions

The factors determining children’s mobilities are multiple, and operate at different levels (Silvey, 2004). They act not only at the level of self-perception, of self-esteem, of subjectivity, but also at the level of the family, which is also, within a rural environment, an economic production unit. These factors also operate at regional level: regional imbalances and representations are central to the dynamics observed. The national level plays an essential role. Thus, for example, the role of the State is decisive in the areas of social protection, education, access to land…, but also at the level of the collective national imagination. The structural conditions that affect migrant children and their families are also linked to forces operating at global level. For example, the efforts undertaken in the campaign against child labour in the cocoa-producing areas are a function of the fact that cocoa is itself a global product. We see how gold-fever, and the successful outcome of galamsey activities, are linked to the world price of gold. We also see how the insertion of Ghana into the world financial system can transform the type of labour sought and, hence, the cocoa sector’s capacity for the advancement of poorly off migrants.

As well as taking acount of the multiplicity of factors affecting child mobilities, we need to set these mobilities and the migration of child labour to the cocoa-producing areas in a broader historical perspective: family labour has always been an essential element of the Ghanaian cocoa industry, it is one of its characteristic features (Berlan, 2011; Hill, 2008). The forest and the coast have always been centres of innovation, of capitalisation. The rich history of political centralism has produced particular mentalities and economic forms (i.e. “capitalist” forms: Hill, 2008; Amanor, 2001).

Any policy on child mobility will need to take account of these different dimensions. Too often, childhood policies operate primarily at two levels, that of local cultural norms and that of social relations at community level. Although they focus on the community level, these policies do not appear to take account of the omnipresent sense of justice, or even of the rights which, through day-to-day practices, are de facto accorded locally to these migrant children, as well as to other children.

These policy choices are based on a conception of the child (a citizen, but one to be protected, set apart) which is very different from the childhood actually lived by migrant children. That difference is prejudicial, in that it creates between those involved in child mobility and activists a climate of suspicion, a gap which needs to be bridged. What is needed, on the contrary, is to make every effort to establish visibility, exchanges. Given that, in practice and under international conventions, the role of the State is central, the latter needs to be questioned, urged and encouraged to take action.

These issues of interpretation of the phenomena of mobilities are not mere academic hair-splitting. Recent academic studies of migrant children in Ghana (Kwankye, 2011, 2009; Hashim, 2005 ; Derby, 2011 ; Survey, 2008) have sought to demonstrate the extent to which such mobilities represent family and individual tactics for survival and social mobility, education in the broad sense. These studies all avoid focusing attention on dishonest, guilty individuals allegedly exploiting the poverty of the children and their families (criminalisation of mobility), but rather consider the complexity of mobility practices, their social and historical dimensions and their roots in contemporary social reality.

Finally, in light of the structural constraints which engender child mobility and the risks run by them—the factors which impel them to move — it seems to me that any intervention on their behalf must operate at the level of prevention, but also in support of those who have already left home.

Domeabra, Asankrangwa

III. Suggestions

A major part of this report is devoted to the section “Suggestions”, which follows. Once the phenomena of mobility have been established, it is important that this understanding of them should be reflected in policy guidelines. The link between suggestions and the analyses set out above is repeatedly emphasised. It is thus crucial that those involved with child advancement should retain a permanent capacity for learning and analysis.

The suggestions are organised in terms of three areas of action: first, the development of close support services, actions directed at children and their families; the second concerns the strengthening and structuring of childhood support and advancement services generally; finally, the third contains general suggestions to be incorporated in structural policies and advocacy programmes.

Before describing these suggestions, we will discuss some of the observations and principles underlying them.

3.1. Constraints on the suggestions

It is apparent from the observed practices of child and youth mobility that migration is not so much a criminal act as a behaviour which enables children, young people and certain members of their family to address problems, and above all to open up new horizons. These difficulties are principally of an economic order. Presented in a more active manner, taking account of the aims pursued by the mobile actors, migration can be seen as a way for these children and young people to fulfil themselves in contemporary society; such behaviour contributes to actualisation of the contemporary self. As workers, children and young people are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The lack of capital in human, social and identity terms (age, gender, origin) all represent factors of vulnerability.

Efforts in the campaign against child labour have focused on changing local social norms and the taking over by State groups and agencies of responsibility for “trafficked” independent migrant children, that is to say, their “repatriation”. However, labour and mobility do not depend solely, or even mainly, on cultural factors. Action is also required at other levels. Moreover, there is a risk, in seeking to change practices and outlook frameworks (and hence to devalue or disregard endogenous local norms, rights, notions of justice and caring mechanisms), of giving way to the temptation to “preach”, which is ultimately to deny the stated principle of establishing a dialogue. These suggestions propose that more time and resources be devoted to informing, organising and supporting children and farmers.

By the same token, while media pressure against child labour and awareness campaigns are useful in order to create a climate of pressure and criminalisation in relation to the worst forms of exploitation (bonded labour, sexual exploitation, economic exploitation of young workers . . .), it is clearly the role of the State to impose these values, to which it has subscribed as the government of the nation, for it alone has legal responsibility for organising systems (of social protection, of courts, of campaigns) designed to ensure compliance with the principles which it has established. The role of civil society is thus to develop the abilities of citizens to negotiate their rights with the State. It is more a matter of organising, developing capacities for analysis, reflection and production than of imposing changes of mentality as such, always a questionable undertaking in terms of the relationship between results and intentions. This brief analysis of child mobilities has shown how children's behaviours are the result of powerful processes. Where behaviours such as child mobility are so deeply rooted in survival and in self actualisation, behavioural change in terms of norms and values will not be achieved merely by acting at the level of opinion or information.

On contact with local NGOs, it rapidly became apparent that their relationship with the communities with whom they work for change is tainted by suspicion: the representatives of those organisations assume in their discourse that the "communities" (?) have an interest in dissimulating, and in hiding behaviours which are thought not to be acceptable. This climate of suspicion cannot achieve emancipation. By definition, emancipation is incompatible with an authoritarian moralisation of behaviours; it cannot be built on prejudice based on ignorance, but rather on self education.

The practice of establishing local community watch committees has been tested in the area. It consists in delegating oversight of international norms to adults living locally. From the point of view of this study, this amounts to entrusting potential employers of cheap labour with oversight of abuses of that labour. Moreover, it follows logically that, in order to render redundant practices in the use of family and migrant labour that are rooted in the history of the cocoa industry, it is necessary to invest in the sector with a view to strengthening the productive capacity of small farmers. However, community watch committees do exist and should be encouraged. Once again, it is not so much a matter of adopting norms as of enhanced oversight and listening capacity. Moreover, migrant children say that they would prefer not to move in order to find work, yet make strenous efforts to do so: by choice — in order to fulfil aspirations and as a result of constraints — because the means to enable them to achieve such fulfilment are not available to them. The effects of power are crystallised in this ambiguity; it needs to be understood how greatly such children would seem to represent the focus of the uncertainties, the fear, the needs and the desire of an entire society.

It will be said that the campaign against child labour cannot be relativised; but the issue of child labour cannot be solved (or indeed understood) simply by criminalisation. Moreover, current criminalisation efforts are far from being generalised, since abuses are tolerated on the streets and in the most public of public spaces, the markets for example, in Accra, in Kumasi. These situations of denial, of contradiction, contribute to creating a distance between different categories of the population, even between different forms of childhood. Moreover, stigmatisation of the past, and of ignorance, inevitably leads to stigmatisation of parents and of previous generations, notwithstanding the fact that the family, primary locus of articulation between the generations, remains the basic unit for protection of the child and its capital endowment, and is underpinned by this inter generational relationship. If the family remains the essential protective and dotational unit for contemporary children, then any intervention, however well intentioned, which undermines this unit would appear to be counter productive and should rather seek to support intra family dialogue and strengthen the capital producing capacities of such families. It has been apparent throughout this study that diversification of social networks — of social capital — is fundamental to the emancipation of children.

Any development programme in favour of children whose effect would be to encourage dissimulation needs to be reconsidered. A major difficulty of the work to be done lies precisely in the invisibility of the children on the cocoa farms, their dispersion within the forest. Access roads are poor, the time that representatives can spend in the field is limited. In short, it is clear that for this type of support, as for any educational project in the wider sense, the challenge for such interventions lies in mobilising sufficient human resources, in terms of both quantity and quality, to ensure continuity of interactions and relevance and command of methods. Educational capacity thus depends on the quantity and quality of interventions. In terms of policy strategy, it would appear that, over and above actions aimed at local norms, the focus should be on organising events for children and young people and production units. Such events should be designed to attract their target audience, given the impossibility of visiting all of the latter, and that any attempt to do so would, moreover, result in the benefit of meetings and mutual exchanges being lost.

Before continuing with the proposed suggestions, we need to revisit the issue of the visibility of mobile children and the protection which it offers. Such protection addresses intermittent abuses, acting rather by default: to be hidden makes you vulnerable to abuse.

In the towns and cities, what is precisely so striking is the evidence of children working publicly (with the exception of the example of Sefwi Wiawso, where the State social welfare service ensures that no child works as a market porter). The residents of Tamale point out that the phenomenon of kayayei at the markets — children, often young girls, selling their services as porters — has seen a particular upsurge over the last five to six years. In town, there seems to be a toleration, if not indifference, in regard to this phenomenon. It has to be recognised that the services of these children are purchased. At the very same time that activists rail against the exploitation of children on the cocoa farms, those of their social class have recourse to this type of labour on an increasing scale.

On the one hand, this double standard relies on public entities — or private ones, if they have the resources and sufficient legitimacy — to enforce respect for norms. On the other, it enables us to observe the operation of the socio cultural hierarchies specific to Ghana, including ethnicity, origin, level of formal education, economic resources, residential environment (rural, small town, big city, hierarchisation of spaces), as well as the processes of individualisation and global media pressure. Cocoa is a global product, part of an economy of global norms, constrained by values tending increasingly to apply worldwide, whilst the kayayei simply carry goods from market to store, from store to restaurant, etc. — too local an activity, too little regulated to attract a normative sanction from social classes intent on their own individual advancement and involvement in the global system (another redefinition of the relevant space). Whilst a local coherent, universal discourse is taking shape, based on the right to education, in practice the absence of any form of social assistance, the double standards resulting from compromises with the interests of various social categories, and regional imbalances between the contrasting weaknesses and capital endowments of social networks, result in a range of different childhoods. It is around these diversified experiences of childhood that the policies of the State must be articulated and hence, likewise, civil society advocacy programmes.

3.2. Close support services

3.2.1. How to organise the children: connect them, make them visible

Our observations, as well as data in the public domain, indicate that the Ghanaian State has the necessary means to develop economic and social policies which specifically address the living conditions of the majority of its population. The establishment at national level of a national health system is an encouraging sign. Published economic growth rates suggest that the State should have the resources increasingly to fulfil its roles in social services, education, expansion of independent justice services …

However, as in any political system, in order to guarantee the rights and well-being of specific social categories such as children from poor families — or in any case vulnerable categories — it is necessary to have a diversified public sphere that is both dynamic and open: spaces where the various actors can meet one another and have their say, and where policies can be negotiated for the distribution of resources among these different agents, both private and public. In order to become genuine, legitimate agents in this public sphere, the actors, the groups, the categories, must join together and organise themselves.

This necessarily includes children, since it is clearly apparent that, while they have a significant cultural and economic role, their political agency is very limited, except through the productions of popular entertainers. The extent to which children and young people are organised depends on the children themselves, on their willingness to cooperate, their intentions and their interest. They have to be able to create their own structures, to organise themselves with the assistance of adults, in order to defend their interests as a group.

The idea put forward by PDA (Participatory Development Associates, Ghana), of working to launch a movement for the establishment of relevant childhood policies, is in line with these suggestions, in that the aim is to form alliances and develop thinking on childhood issues in Ghana. The word “movement” is thus particularly significant.

Child exploitation derives its strength from the children’s desires, the inferior status of childhood, poverty, family problems, the search for cheap labour, and, above all, unequal development. The moralisation of child labour will not be sufficient to end such exploitation. It must be accompanied by the establishment of agencies to ensure respect for children’s rights and the allocation of funds to support a policy for the emancipation of childhood. Economic conditions in Ghana to support such policies are favourable.

Focus group, Amoaman

The tactics of responses to the poverty suffered by children, principally those from the North, and the tactics of investment in the cocoa growing areas by young migrants, in all cases have their origin in spatial differentiation, and the perception of the existence of "greener pastures". These "greener pastures" are exploited according to available capital. The process of acquisition of such capital, often at a very young age (12, 13), is a painful one.

Mobility practices, whether temporary, seasonal or permanent, consist in seting out in search of resources and independence, of emancipation. In that sense, the discovery of space conjoins with the discovery and realisation of one's future; these two quests become one. However, such tactics always remain the project of an individual or of his or her close family. The social capitals mobilised in the course of migrations indicate the social resources which programmes need to strengthen, such as the family, associations of migrants, their informal structures, and above all young people and children at all levels. These actions should be carried out in parallel with the school system, which remains extremely competitive, and whose quality and access to which is still restricted, in particular for the poorest. We have to make our presence felt in the villages.

However, the social ties involved are relatively loose: an older family member (brother, cousin, aunt, uncle . . .), someone from the same village, the same town, the same ethnic group . . . Moreover, for a child, a certain kinship distance is also a factor which will assist him or her in negotiating remuneration (a child cannot ask remuneration of a close relative), yet without compromising his/her security; this implies "being under someone", working for someone, an exchange in which the seniority and social network of that person protects the child. Financial remuneration, food, shelter, access to land, to training, to school, are all forms of remuneration received by children.

This suggestion proposes that a system of children's meetings be developed in the cocoa-producing areas, as a model for associative practices among children, whether or not they are attending school. Since field officers cannot reach all of the scattered localities where the children live and work, the latter have to be given the opportunity to come to them. This suggestion is based on the principle that changes in children's working practices have to be effected through empowerment of the children themselves. The empowerment of children and young people is desirable not only because it provides children with the means to defend their rights and have them better respected, but also because vigilant watchers and the strength of movements for the defence of children in the cocoa growing areas guarantee civic control of abusive child labour practices. Migrant children are better able to communicate with potential male or female migrants from the North. Dissemination of migrant experiences plays a priority role in research, but also, and above all, in preventing young children from migrating and in ensuring the security of those who do migrate.

Child organisation can simply take the form of organising meetings with children living around a specific hamlet. The aim is to form groups of children irrespective of their educational level, and to establish bonds between them and opportunities for the transmission of information, for reflection (investigation, research), self-expression (theatre, music, role-plays, photography . . .). There has to be a regular programme of meetings. Such meetings should also enable local group organisers to remain in regular contact and to develop educational and recreational programmes for the participating children. Such training programmes should not be viewed in a formal way, but, rather, they should reflect the educational modes and needs of rural children. The aim is to develop learning programmes based on children's own questions and involvement, as well as a mentoring role, which means that local group organisers need to be appropriately trained and supported.

Market, Tamale

It is already clear that the development of such activities means being able to mobilise entertainers and technicians, who could participate from time to time, according to the activities conducted. Thus the aim is to enable children who are not attending school and living in isolation in outlying hamlets to become visible and to participate. Their social visibility is essential. They are being offered a space for exchange and discussion. The maintenance of contacts among children is essential. Interviews with migrant children have demonstrated the importance of being able to confide in one another, to mobilise a group of close peers. Protection is thus linked to a social network that is sympathetic, or indeed empathetic. As I was told by Aimé Bada, who is responsible for education and training with Enda and works with the African Movement of Working Youth and Children (e-mail of 3/10/2011), the ability of young people and children to share knowledge among themselves is remarkably effective, because this is a form of communication between equals and agents sharing the same social position, running the same risks of exploitation.

MAEJT (Mouvement Africain des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs www.maejt.org / AMWYC African Movement of Working Youth and Children), is an association of "working" children created in Côte d'Ivoire in 1994. It is present in 22 African countries. The Movement's structure consists of a basic group, local associations, national associations and finally a pan African movement. When the movement began its operations in Ghana, it established itself in the Volta Region and commenced activities in Ashanti. The movement's aims overlap with the desire to protect and secure children's rights pursued by the State and civil society organisations. The AMWYC could become a partner in the development of close-support work with children. However, as has been shown in recent studies by Wouango in Burkina and by Lavan in Senegal, a "protagonist" approach still requires a presence and a permanent listening relationship between the children and mentors/educators in the field. Inasmuch as they are workers, we might consider whether they should not seek membership, be trained, represented and supported, within workers' rights associations and other basic community organisations.

3.2.2. Close support work with family production units

Several of the suggestions presented here take their inspiration from the Latin American approach to popular education (Bengoa, 1999) and the research/action developed by Enda. In this "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", to cite Freire's title, acquiring individual autonomy requires the development of analysis and decision making capacities, but also the development of a capacity for organisation and self-assertion on the part of the oppressed (or 'subordinate', as we have referred to them earlier), through the construction of social movements.

In terms of popular education, and in the imagination and behaviours of children and young people, the notion of autonomy is an imposed principle transformed into a value. It is in this context, but also with a view to the coordination of efforts developed in the previous suggestions, that the idea of launching a "movement" in Ghana in favour of childhood must be understood.

What is needed is an expanded movement on a national scale, having as its objective the conduct of realistic childhood policies, taking account both of current practices and of future prospects, particularly demographic.

Given the complementary relationship between the pursuit of autonomy through popular instruction, as well as by the children themselves, and the launch of a movement, there is thus a case for looking at methods of popular education, in that these seek to enhance both the participants' existing learning practices and their social position by encouraging them to think and act for themselves.

A distinguishing feature of cocoa bean production in Ghana is the small size of holdings. Throughout this report, the concept of the family production unit has shown itself to be, physically, the identifying social reference unit, which is why we need to focus on the study and support of these basic units of children's "production". The family production unit is not just a business. It is responsible for the perpetuation of the group, in all its human aspects. It concerns almost all children aged from 0 to 5, and more than three quarters (76.5%) of children aged between 5 and 17 living with both parents (Cocoa Labour Survey, 2008, 107). It is thus understandable that participation, work, education, leisure and spirituality constantly combine within it, making such units a priority space for intervention.

Mass Spraying

We suggest that this family environment be approached through its economic aspect, which is recognised as the primary one by all of those involved. This suggestion proposes working with the production units with a view to the preparation of a participative analysis.

All members of the production unit will participate in the preparation of a const-benefit map based on a simple calculation of input and output. This analysis has to be tailored to the nature of the unit's inputs and outputs, which are not solely financial.

The analysis, which is educational in itself, an extension method based on farmers' practices, has to be conducted by all of the actors within the production unit, under the supervision of a group leader or facilitator. It will enable all of the unit's actors to study its profitability, and the nature of inputs and outputs, with particular attention to labour and the circulatory relationship between sales and the acquisition of exogenous goods. Involvement of the members of the production unit in this process will enable dialogues and actions to be conducted regarding adjustments based on the findings of the analysis.

This may raise technical or economic considerations, but also lead to the renegotiation of power relations and of the rights of the women and children who participate intensively in production with little say in the management of the product of their efforts. The strength of such activity is based on involvement and on the production of a participative diagnosis focusing on the key concerns of the families — on family life itself. Involvement in the analysis and in the discussions based on the facts established by the participants will influence the families' relationships and strategies. Cost-benefit mapping of rural family production units is believed to have been first introduced by an association of Burkina Faso farmers, the Naam from Kumbri. It is essential that we familiarise ourselves with that experience.

Development of such a system requires an initial period of preliminary, experimental work, in order to establish a methodology and then to train local group leaders capable of supervising and supporting the process. The methods adopted should obviously be based on agricultural practices in the cocoa sector, and on modes of presentation relevant to the participants: graphics, narration, installations. Once the tool-production phase for the implementation of the system has been completed, the circle of group leaders involved in its preparation will need to be enlarged in order to launch the first trials. As with any novel action, tools will need to be monitored and constantly adapted in light of the initial programming, so as to enable a decision to halt the project, either because the tool is sufficiently mature and ready to be disseminated more widely, or because it has been taken as far as it can.

3.3. Construction and strengthening of structures among children

3.3.1. Building alliances and strengthening networks

The most effective approach in the campaign against abusive child labour practices, is to secure greater public impact by concluding alliances with individuals, groups and institutions who support an effective emancipation of children through realistic public policies. The problems of childhood in Ghana — of Ghanaian childhoods — has to be addressed through a national programme, diversified and adapted to the different groups, supported by State institutions. There is a multiplicity of non-governmental bodies working to secure respect for the rights of children. Short of federating their efforts, we need to identify common aims and strategies. It is a matter of coordination, in which one institution needs to take the lead.

In Ghana, as in the rest of the world, there is a multiplicity and diversity of sources of information, the cultural mediators. The mass media, in particular television, as well as individuals travelling within the country, convey a range of models of childhood, a variety of references.

There is thus a multiplicity of sources of subjectivity for contemporary children, even for rural children. Migrants, popular entertainers, singers, musicians, story tellers, street performers, scenarists, actors, are particularly effective conveyors of information, above all to the poorest rural children, who have little access to the written word and receive little education about the contemporary world at their schools. It is important to bear in mind that popular entertainers not only give expression to existing sentiments circulating in the public sphere, but also create their own interpretations, which they disseminate. To reduce their role to mere “broadcasters”, loudspeakers, parrots, disseminators, of musical values, would be a serious error and a waste of resources. They need to be associated with research and activities in the field. They will have a fundamental role to play in such popular education activities.

There are also numbers of academic researchers working in recognised research institutes within Ghana on the issue of children’s rights and producing empirical studies. The work of such researchers is always aimed at the development of policies in favour of children, whose practices they study. Their articles frequently contain recommendations. It would be possible, through specific consultancy activities and discussions, to form meaningful links among researchers. There are a number of Ghanaian institutions and researchers which focus on child migrations (National Population Council, Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon). Intervention programmes would involve taking over and circulating the information produced in research studies. The forms in which the information was circulated would be determined according to the target public or publics, and with their participation.

The building of such alliances cannot be conducted without the involvement of the children and young people themselves, who are the primary agents of their own mobility. It is clear that “trafficking” is no longer the target. We no longer have to deal here simply with criminals, or to criminalise actors involved in a phenomenon which is a great deal more complex. It is the children themselves who decide to move, and are constrained to do so, in order to earn money. It is on this contradiction that programmes for child advancement need to focus. Often their parents and family members participate in their efforts, and such behaviours demonstrate the central role of children within the family, regional, national and global economy. We have to understand this and to remedy this initial injustice, which consists in giving children economic responsibilities without any right to public expression; on the contrary, their capacities for self-expression and co determination, for mutual protection and support, must be developed. Any action which implicitly accords no active role to working children is an action which perpetuates their “subordinality”. The direct involvement of individuals often turns into “tokenism”, to “walk-on” roles. The children must therefore be included as actors and citizens, properly organised and represented.

A powerful force within civil society in Ghana, as organised actors sharing resources, is to be found in the many churches. It is not only that churches develop action programmes through their own organisations (see, for example, http://www.agreds.org/, which works specifically in favour of children), but also that within the churches, as well as within Muslim communities, individuals form groups and develop mechanisms of social support, deriving particular assistance from the fact that religious authority is very strong in Ghana and involves a great many individuals. Along with the entertainment sector, these powerful forces need to be associated with an extended discussion on childhood in Ghana, and with information and communication programmes.

It is clearly apparent that there are multiple capacities among the country's farmers for creating and mobilising resources. Observing and supporting these capacities represents a promising policy strategy.

On several occasions during the fieldwork, individuals mentioned advocacy, or even lobbying, with local authorities to request an improvement in public services. The idea of advocacy indeed seems to be growing stronger as the State gains in capacity and recognition. This is in itself doubly encouraging evidence of a sense of civic responsibility, and a recognition of the State as the entity responsible for the provision of basic services and justice.

In planning advocacy programmes, we need to ascertain the children's views, in order to identify and support the subjects of advocacy campaigns. Advocacy activities will need to be coordinated with other institutions, and conducted on a collaborative basis. Potential allies are numerous, both institutional and individual. Particular attention again needs to be given to entertainers and their communities, to associations of children and young people and to the State's academic research centres. However, since the development of advocacy capacities has its technical aspects, the formation of alliances will indeed be essential.

There are certain recurrent themes which could be the subject of advocacy programmes:

- Schools, their quality and quantity, training of teachers, food, equipment, etc.;
- The preservation of small production units within the cocoa sector, and hence their technical and financial support (rural extension services, access to credit);
- Development of a childhood policy based on local realities and thus integrating all forms of childhood, with the secondary objective, inter alia, of regulating child mobility practices in a realistic and effective manner.

3.3.2. Learning Organisations

Two key notions underlie this suggestion. The first is that, in developing a practice of permanent learning, the institutions, in particular development aid organisations, become most effective (Britton, 1998), since their actions are then guided by their previous results, and the actual conditions of the individuals on whose behalf they work. The second is that, given the complexity of the factors involved in child labour and mobility, and the discussions which these entail (multiplicity of childhoods, gender relations, regional imbalances. . .), it is necessary to develop actions at numerous levels in order to take account of the complexity of the factors causing mobility behaviours.

We have raised the issues of networks, of awareness, of organisation and of education. This suggestion proposes increasing the capacity for the acquisition of knowledge and its dissemination, as well as its valorisation by the actors involved with childhood policies. The information gathered must become knowledge. It needs not only to be shared, but to be assimilated. The primary factor in assimilation is involvement in the development of knowledge (Calhoun, 2005). That is why networking (researchers, entertainers, NGOs, the State) and alliance-forming are so crucial.

The value of the information gathered naturally depends on its dissemination and on the quality of the “evidence” produced.

There are three realistic priority targets: production of knowledge in order to support advocacy programmes, whose public target is national and international decision makers, but also, and in particular, to identify advocacy pleas (“asks”). Knowledge production must also serve to inform and educate children and young people ☐target: Ghanaian children and youth. Lastly, knowledge serves as a guide for policies and programmes (innovation management, activity monitoring, development of modes of intervention in favour of childhood) ☐target: donors, policy makers and institutions working in the field.

Advocacy programmes should be designed within a group or network of organisations. This accordingly requires a concerted involvement of organisations sympathetic to the advancement of children or active in the sector.

All information, documentation and research should not only be produced or carried out in concert with the other Ghanaian actors involved in information and research on childhood, but must also be the subject of a coherent plan for dissemination, exploitation and valorisation. Coordination of efforts and dissemination are the two basic principles to be respected by the network of actors involved with childhood.

All information produced together with children, young people and communities can become useful knowledge for them; education in the broad sense remains a right and a priority objective. These products need to be developed in conjunction with entertainers and technicians from the relevant branch of the media, but also with the subjects. Information needs to be distributed in a format suited to the media branch concerned: music, image, brochure. Each format can target a different audience. Using this study as an example, accounts of the migration experiences of children and young people could be the subject of an information video and of discussions on the issue and conditions of child and youth mobility in the North

As this example suggests, activities dedicated to dissemination are as important as the research itself. Both need to be planned together and not retrospectively. Research and dissemination must be planned at the same time, dissemination being a participative process in itself. Research commissioned by an NGO is useful and central to structural decision making and guidance, but, if its mission is to be successful, it also needs to be valorised. That requires additional investment, which is preferable to the cheaper alternative of a research report skimmed through once or twice, then left to gather dust on the shelf.

3.4. Advocacy and structural conditions

3.4.1. Improving schools

The suggestion in section 3.2.1., “How to organise the children: connect them, make them visible.”, stresses the importance of developing alternative sources of education, orientated towards development of the existing human capital within the communities themselves, of their networks and the children’s power of self-expression and reflexivity. The source of this suggestion is the perception by the children and young people themselves of what it means to be educated (see sections 2.1.5. and 2.1.7.). School is one of the particularly effective channels or methods for structuring the experience of Ghana’s children and young people. As a powerful mechanism of social advancement, the primary school, as it exists in the cocoa producing areas, must be improved. These improvements need to focus on five main areas:

The infrastructures and equipment themselves require substantial improvement;

- The quality of the school depends equally on the quality of the teachers, on the quality of their training. That requires not only continuing in-service training, but also, clearly, a sufficient number of trained teachers;
- The conditions encountered by children in attending school need to be improved. For too many children, the distance they have to cover, and the absence or reduced availability of snacks, makes school a real trial for rural children.
- The children’s schedules and curricula need to be adapted by taking account as far as possible of their out of school activities. Limited and non-harmful (physically or mentally) involvement in the family production unit continues to have a socialising effect for children and is essential to the family economy. Curricula and schedules need to be tailored to the children’s specific situations, and to the agricultural cycles in which they take part.
- The management of schools , of teachers, of available resources, needs to be improved. Development of such management capacities requires continuing in-service training of head teachers and of the local authorities.

Visiting a predominantly middle class neighbourhood of Accra, one is struck by the large number of private nursery schools and kindergartens. Clearly, such services correspond to the needs and resources of parents employed in the formal, tertiary sector. Make no mistake, these are not simply crèches, but places where the child can socialise and basically develop its human capital. Support for pre-schooling services for the youngest children must be pursued as a priority aim in childhood-advancement programmes.

3.4.2. Investing in the cocoa sector

The State monopoly of international trade in cocoa enables it to conduct a relatively active sectoral policy and thus to develop the industry in the national interest. The principal challenge for the cocoa industry in Ghana is its need for a massive investment, aimed at increasing productivity and maintaining the effects of resource distribution shaped by the organisation of the industry in small production units. The small size of holdings favours the protection of children, in that they are cared for within close family structures, and this needs to be preserved. This dual requirement can only be met through massive support for the small producers. Extension services are too limited (according to the Cocoa Labour Survey, 2008, 95, 72.8% of farmers have never had any contact with extension services, and just 7.9% have had contacts once every three months). Cocobod is attempting to develop services to help planters (child education, pensions). Questions about these services in discussions with the planters produced nothing but ironic comments. Access to credit, purchase of inputs, insecurity of land tenure, are constantly evoked as sources of problems.

Asankrangwa

3.4.3. Investment in the North and prevention

Like the preceding one, this suggestion may be seen as a subject for pressure and advocacy. Given that the phenomena relating to the situation of children in the cocoa producing areas can only be properly understood within a family, national and regional framework, the intervening institutions themselves must take account of this spatial dimension by forming alliances, exchanging information, co ordinating their actions on specific problems such as child mobility (just as researchers studying child mobility must be mobile themselves).

In terms of prevention and providing information to potential child migrants, existing research needs to be valorised and adapted to different audiences, including, in particular, children from the North. Such valorisation must take as its starting point personal accounts and studies of migrants both former and current, and address the key issues which this study has highlighted, namely the risks, the need for capital and the effects and consequences of migration (from the positive to the traumatic). The information must be in the local language, in various formats: videos, brochures, music, children's games, exhibitions.

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