



combating child labour in cocoa growing

ILO/IPEC'S Contribution

In late 2000 and early 2001, media reported that children were being trafficked and employed in large numbers in hazardous work and in slave-like conditions in West Africa. A BBC documentary highlighted the problem on cocoa farms in autumn 2000. In April 2001, additional news stories in the international press about children being trafficked for labour between countries in the region aboard the MV Eterino, again reminded the world of trafficking practices and their consequences for children.

an industry protocol to end child labour

Faced with the risk of boycotts and/or sanctions in the US and the UK in particular, representatives of the cocoa industry met with a number of trade union, consumer and non-governmental organizations and elaborated a strategy to deal with the problem. This strategy was codified in the Protocol to eliminate the worst forms of child labour from the cocoa and chocolate sector, signed by representatives of the major stakeholders in September 2001 with the ILO, labour, NGO and consumer organizations witnessing. The Protocol formed the basis for intensive, ongoing consultations between these parties as well as with technical and donor agencies including ILO/IPEC. It laid out a timetable to eliminate both child labour and forced labour in cocoa growing and set a timeline for the creation of a foundation and its secretariat by July 2002. It also foresaw the establishment of a viable and credible monitoring and certification system by July 2005.

the participation of the ilo

From the beginning, the global chocolate and cocoa industry invited ILO/IPEC to play an advisory role in several areas, including the consultative process, the setting up of partnership structures, and concrete activities to address the child labour problem on the ground. In the protocol the cocoa industry cites "the ILO's unique expertise and welcomes its involvement in addressing this serious problem [of child labour]". It further states that, "the ILO must have a "seat at the table" and an active role in assessing, monitoring, reporting on, and remedying the worst forms of child labour in the growing and processing of cocoa beans and their derivative products".



[World Cocoa Foundation](http://www.worldcocoa.org)

ILO/IPEC has substantive experience with other sector-specific alliances to combat child labour (i.e. the garment and sporting goods industries; tobacco-growing and other agricultural activities). These have made clear that a participatory approach with multi-

stakeholder involvement and multi-year commitments are essential prerequisites to effectively contributing to the elimination of child labour.

the international cocoa initiative

On 1 July 2002, this partnership established, as promised in de Protocol, a foundation under Swiss law called the **International Cocoa Initiative: Working towards Responsible Labour Standards for Cocoa Growing (ICI)**, aimed at eliminating child and forced labour practices in cocoa cultivation and processing. This foundation operates from Geneva, Switzerland. Co-presidents, one from industry and one from outside the industry, head the Board of the ICI. The Board of Directors is composed in equal numbers of industry and non-industry representatives and meets three times a year. It held its first meeting on 17 September 2002 at the premises of the International Labour Office. The cocoa industry funds the secretariat's staffing, running costs and projects. The ILO serves as an advisor to the foundation.



[International Cocoa Initiative](#)

ILO/IPEC advice to the Protocol stakeholders and the ICI thus far has covered options for the partnership formula (with participation from all relevant stakeholder groups); the consultation mechanisms with governments, the private sector and social partners in the cocoa growing countries; the monitoring and analysis of child labour; and the rapid implementation of practical and sustainable solutions. ILO/IPEC was also active in ensuring a coordinated approach of the many multi- and bilateral (donor) agencies working on child labour, child protection, community development and agronomic development in the countries concerned.

It is important to note that the cocoa/chocolate industry links combating child labour to the parallel efforts they are undertaking to respect the environment and to improve agricultural marketing and productivity and support farmer organizations under the banner of “promoting socially, economically and environmentally responsible cocoa-growing”. These specific efforts are entrusted to the Sustainable Tree Crops Programme of the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture.

surveys on child labour west africa

Surveys were carried out during the first semester of 2002 to clarify the incidence and nature of hazardous child labour in the West-African countries most directly concerned in cocoa growing. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods and fixing sizeable samples, data were collected by the Sustainable Tree Crops Programme of the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria. The surveys covered several themes, including the prevalence of child labour on cocoa farms. The ILO/IPEC provided advice and supervised, but did not manage, these surveys. The survey report, published in July 2002, found that 284,000 children were working in hazardous conditions on cocoa farms in West Africa, the large majority in Cote d’Ivoire. However, the details of the survey results were never released and there has been some questioning of the validity of the data. ILO/IPEC is therefore planning further surveys, e.g. in Côte d’Ivoire, and

qualitative studies to create a more robust knowledge base on child labour in cocoa growing, other agricultural sub-sectors, and on child labour in general in all countries concerned. This will enable governments and private sector actors to adopt appropriate policies and design and implement programmes to combat child labour effectively, including the provision of alternatives to children (schooling) and their families (incomes, employment).



[Sustainable Tree Crops Program](#)

284,000 children are estimated to be employed in child labour in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria (the four countries researched), the majority of them (200,000) in Côte d'Ivoire. These are either involved in hazardous work, unprotected or unfree, or have been trafficked.

Many child labourers came from impoverished countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo. Parents often sold their children in the belief they would find work and send earnings home. However, once removed from their families, the boys were forced to work in slave-like conditions. In the Ivory Coast alone, nearly 12,000 of the child labourers had no relatives in the area, suggesting they were trafficked.

Children often worked for more than 12 hours per day, beginning at 06:00, and were beaten regularly. Child labourers were less likely than other children to attend school: in the Ivory Coast, for example, one-third of school-aged children living in cocoa producing households had never attended school and only 34% of children working on cocoa farms attended school, compared with 64% of those not working on cocoa farms. Only one third of the children of immigrant cocoa farmers were enrolled in school, compared with 71% of children of local farmers. In all cases, girls had lower enrolment and attendance rates than boys.

In spite of some shortcomings identified in data sets and analysis, the survey nonetheless confirmed overall that hazardous child labour in agriculture and the trafficking of children in West Africa is a very serious issue that needs priority attention.

The most significant statistical findings were:

A majority of the 284,000 children used machetes to clear fields;

153,000 children applied pesticides without protective equipment;

Other children picked cocoa pods and sliced them open to remove the cocoa beans;

64% of children on cocoa farms were under the age of 14 and 40% of child labourers in cocoa farming were girls.

the west africa cocoa and commercial agriculture project

In parallel to its assistance in the consultative process and the statistical surveys, ILO/IPEC also elaborated a large-scale programme of concrete action to eliminate child labour in cocoa production in the countries directly concerned. This undertaking combines awareness-raising of families and communities; capacity enhancement of farmers/producers, inspectors and workers; pilot interventions to remove children from work and facilitate their enrolment in education and training programmes; pilot projects to improve income-generating capacity

of families; and an active child labour monitoring and feedback system to be introduced in selected areas initially.

This programme, known as West Africa Cocoa and Commercial Agriculture Project to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (**WACAP**), has a resource outlay of US\$ 5 million funded by the United States Department of Labor, with an additional US\$ 1 million funded by the chocolate industry (International Confectionary Association, World Cocoa Foundation). It started in January 2003, and will run for three years. It was intended to be located in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, but operates temporarily out of Accra, Ghana.

As at 31 December 2004, progress made by the WACAP programme is as follows:

- Awareness raising and capacity building activities are underway and have been carried out by way of campaigns, workshops, and training of trainers that reached upwards from 25000 people from national to community levels. Tailor made materials covering the child labour concept, its causes and consequences, and measures to identify and combat child labour have been developed, translated and disseminated.
- More than 3000 children have been identified, counselled, withdrawn from work and placed in educational or vocational training facilities. The targeted total number for the three year programme intervention is 9,700 children aged below 13 years involved in child labour, who will be withdrawn and given access to education. Moreover, some 80,000 children below 18 years will be the direct and indirect beneficiaries of various interventions.
- In all five countries, coordination mechanisms have been set up or reinforced, for the purpose of effectively combating child labour. These include participation from different government agencies, trade unions, employers- organizations, civil society and research and academic institutions. ILO-IPEC has provided assistance to these efforts in all countries.
- Close cooperation has been established with the Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP) as WACAP uses the extensive Farmer Field Schools network to carry out part of its awareness raising and training activities. Cooperation with a number of bilateral aid programmes (such as USAID, GTZ) and NGO activities has been intensified.
- A special purpose child labour monitoring system has been designed and is being pilot-tested in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire at present. It is based on the well-known monitoring first used in Bangladesh (garment industry), Pakistan (soccer ball production), and in East Africa and Central America (agriculture). In the pilot areas in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, tools and training for monitoring have been made available, and a model for analysis and certification at district and national level prepared.
- Research is being undertaken in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana to gain more in-depth knowledge about the safety and health hazards to which children are exposed in agriculture, and particularly in cocoa farming; a knowledge, attitudes and perceptions study on hazardous child labour in agriculture is being carried out by the Sociology Department of the University of Ghana; various baseline studies are underway to measure the incidence of child labour in different countries and regions – these will feed into regular national child labour surveys being planned and also serve as benchmarks for national policy planning and for progress assessment of programmes.



[Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa](#)

other complementary ipec programmes

WACAP complements other large-scale, ongoing IPEC programmes to combat child labour and child trafficking in the West-African region and in most of concerned countries individually.

Nigeria and Ghana are running national programmes for the elimination of child labour with ILO/IPEC assistance. They have built up the means and experience to combat child labour in different sectors. Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea have not yet initiated such national comprehensive programmes but are taking steps now. Côte d'Ivoire has ratified both the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No., 182), has set up a tripartite national steering mechanism for a country-wide programme to combat child labour overall, including especially in cocoa growing and other agricultural activities. A workshop was organised by the Cote d'Ivoire Ministry of Labour in May 2004 to draw up a national plan to address child labour. Nigeria has been addressing child labour since 1999 and now emphasizes action to eliminate it from the agricultural sector. The government of Ghana has taken steps, as from 2002, to intensify action against child labour in a pioneering undertaking to eliminate all child labour through a time-bound approach closely linked to poverty reduction.

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Geneva, February 2005