



NOT JUST COCOA

Child labour in the agricultural sector in Ghana

Executive summary

NOT JUST COCOA: CHILD LABOUR IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN GHANA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme

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As part of broader efforts towards durable solutions to child labor, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank initiated the interagency Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme in December 2000. The Programme is guided by the Roadmap adopted at The Hague Global Child Labour Conference 2010, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labor. Research on the work and the vulnerability of children and youth constitutes the main component of the UCW Programme. Through close collaboration with stakeholders in partner countries, the Programme produces research allowing a better understanding of child labour and youth employment in their various dimensions and the linkages between them. For further information, see the project website at www.ucw-project.org.

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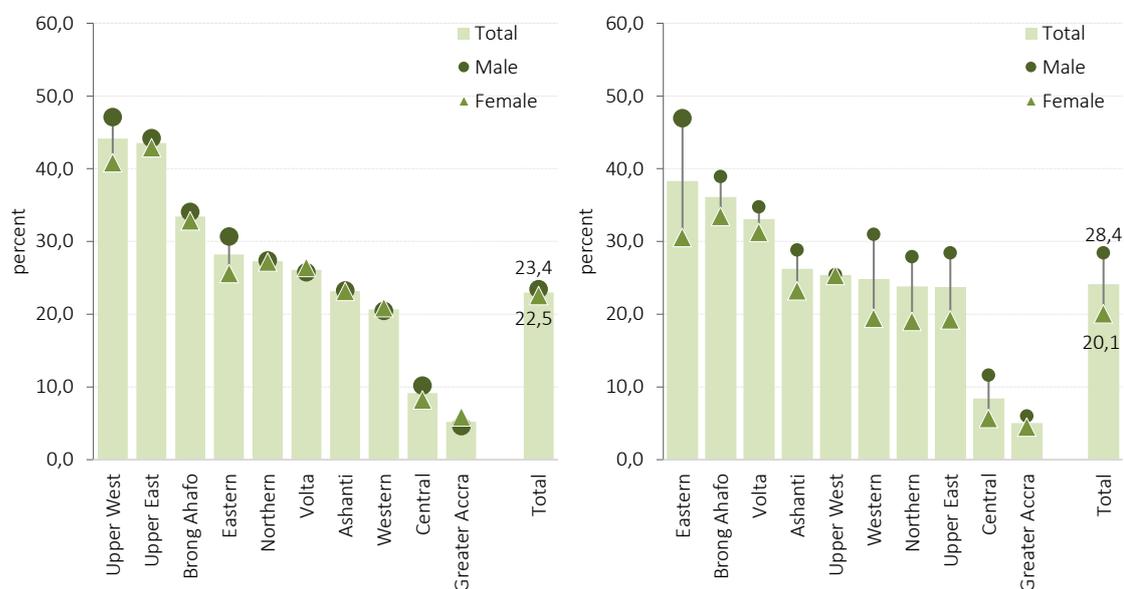
The current Report is designed to provide a detailed picture of child labour in Ghana, both within and outside the cocoa sector, building on results of a companion study conducted in 2016.¹The Report forms part of a larger effort to the build evidence base needed to guide accelerated action against child labour in cocoa-growing communities and against child labour more broadly in the country.

Overall picture

Child labour in Ghana remains a pressing concern. More than one in five children aged 5-14 years (23%), 1.6 million in absolute terms, are involved in child labour. The incidence of child labour among 15-17 year-olds is even higher. Almost 24% of all children in this age range, 424,000 in absolute terms, are engaged in child labour. These overall estimates of child labour mask important differences by age, residence and sex. In short, child labour increases with age and is much higher in rural areas than in cities and towns. Differences in terms of involvement between boys and girls are negligible among 5-14 year-olds, but significantly more boys than girls work in the 15-17 years age range. Child labour incidence also differs considerably across regions, as also shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Rates of child labour vary considerably across regions

(a) % of children in child labour, children aged 5-14 years, by sex (b) % of children in child labour, children aged 15-17 years, by sex



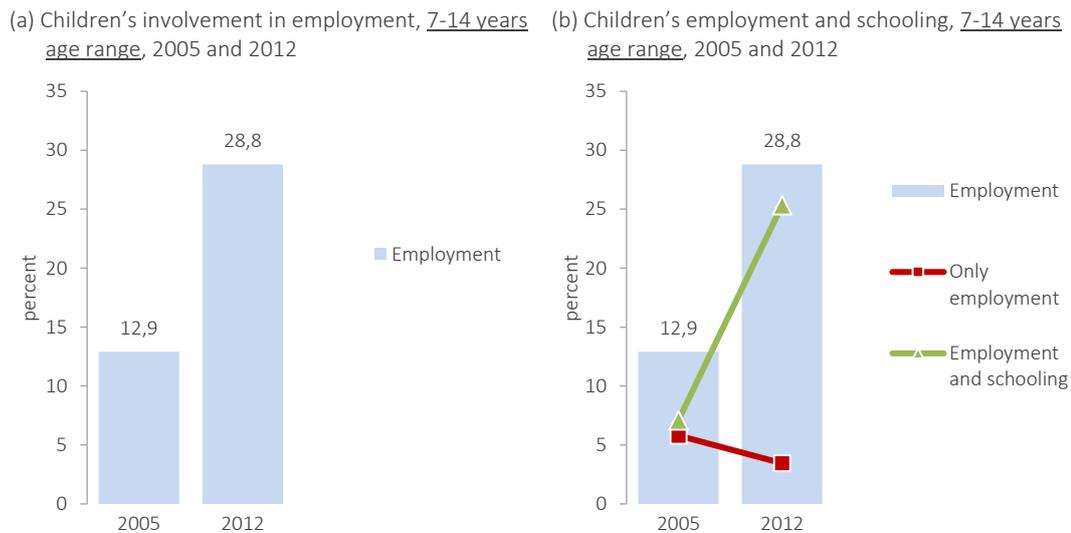
Source: UCW calculations based on the sixth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey 2012/13 (GLSS 6, 2012/13)

¹Child labour and the decent work deficit in Ghana, 2016. Understanding Children's Work (UCW) country study. Available at www.ucw-project.org

Children’s employment appears to have risen considerably in recent years. Data restrictions unfortunately prevent the estimation of child labour for the 2005 round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS). It is possible, however, to compare the estimates of children’s *employment* for the 7-14 years age range from the 2005 and 2012 rounds of the Ghana Living Standards Survey. While children’s employment is a slightly broader concept than child labour, it nonetheless provides a useful proxy for assessing changes in child labour. The comparison of the results from surveys conducted in 2005 and 2012 points to a sharp *rise* in children’s employment: the percentage of children in the 7-14 years age range in employment more than doubled from 2005 (13%) to 2012 (29%)(Figure 2a).

The rise in children’s employment occurred entirely in the sub-group of children combining school and work. The group only in employment (i.e., not also attending school) actually declined over the 2005-2012 period (Figure 2b). Children, in other words, must increasingly shoulder the burden of work in addition to their studies. These stark results underscore the need for more information on the causes of the rise in children’s employment, and the need to adjust policy responses accordingly.

Figure 2. Changes in children’s involvement in employment, 2005-2012



Source: UCW calculations based on the fifth and sixth rounds of the Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2005 and 2012/13.

Child labour in cocoa production

Ghana stands alongside Cote d’Ivoire as the most important producer of cocoa in the world. Cocoa represents the main agricultural export in Ghana, with an estimated one and half million growers almost exclusively on smallholder farms. Cocoa child labour is concentrated in five principal regions in the lower half of the country – Western, Central, Eastern, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo. Almost nine percent of all children in these principal cocoa-growing regions are in cocoa child labour, translating into 464,000 children in absolute terms.²

² These figures do *not* include children in cocoa child labour outside these five regions. As reported in Appendix **Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.**, some 6,529 children aged 5-17 years in the Volta

Incidence of children’s employment in cocoa appears to have risen even faster than children’s employment elsewhere. A simple comparison of estimates from surveys undertaken in 2005 and 2012 suggests that the incidence increased from 3.5% to 11.2% of 7-14 year-olds in the principal cocoa-growing regions. This increase in children’s involvement in the cocoa sector actually exceeded the increase in children’s employment in other sectors over this time period.

The majority of children involved in cocoa production are working as unpaid family workers. Almost 95 percent of 5-14 year-olds children working in cocoa in the principal cocoa-growing regions are unpaid family workers, a direct effect of the smallholder production structure of the cocoa sector in Ghana.

Most children working in cocoa production are exposed to hazards in the course of their work. Eighty-four percent of all children working in cocoa production, 294,000 children in absolute terms, are exposed to at least one hazard in the course of their work. Children’s exposure to hazards frequently translates into episodes of work-related injury or ill-health. Two-thirds of all children working in cocoa production self report at least one injury or ill-health episode. A significant minority of children working in cocoa production, almost 56,000 in absolute terms, are also exposed to verbal and physical abuse, a frequently overlooked form of workplace hazard.

Other forms of child labour

While the preceding discussion makes clear that cocoa child labour remains an important priority, child labour in Ghana extends well beyond cocoa farming, even in the regions where cocoa farming is concentrated. Children in other forms of child labour account for 18% of all children in the 5-17 years age range, while those in cocoa child labour account for about five percent of children in this age range. About three out of every four of those in child labour in Ghana, in other words, in fact work *outside* of cocoa production.

Table 1. Percent of children in cocoa child labour and other sector, children aged 5-14 years

Region	Total child labour	Child labour in Cocoa	Child labour in agriculture other than cocoa	Child labour in other sectors
Ashanti	23.2	7.6	9.9	5.7
Brong Ahafo	33.4	8.2	19.4	5.8
Central	9.2	4.7	3.4	1.1
Eastern	28.2	9.4	13.1	5.7
Greater Accra	5.2	-	0.5	4.7
Northern	27.3	0.1	23.8	3.5
Upper East	43.5	-	38.6	5
Upper West	44.1	-	43.6	0.6
Volta	26.1	0.8	21	4.3
Western	20.7	12.4	2.7	5.6
TOTAL	23.0	5.0	13.3	4.6

Source: UCW calculations based on the sixth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey 2012/13 (GLSS 6, 2012/13)

region, 395 in the Northern region and 243 in the Upper East region are also in cocoa child labour. Nationally, about 5.4% of all 5-17 year-olds are in cocoa child labour (Appendix **Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.**).

Table 2. Percent of children in cocoa child labour and other sector, children aged 15-17 years

Regions	Total child labour	Child labour in Cocoa	Child labour in other agriculture	Child labour in other sector
Ashanti	26.2	5.1	10.7	10.4
Brong Ahafo	36.1	7.3	10.8	18.1
Central	8.4	1.5	2.7	4.3
Eastern	38.3	9.6	14	14.7
Greater Accra	5.0	4.6	-	0.5
Northern	23.7	4.8	0.3	18.6
Upper East	23.8	3.3	-	20.6
Upper West	24.8	6.9	14.5	3.4
Volta	25.4	0.4	-	25.0
Western	33.1	6.1	0.9	26.1
TOTAL	24.1	5.4	6.6	12.2

Source: UCW calculations based on the sixth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey 2012/13 (GLSS 6, 2012/13)

Child labourers working outside of cocoa production are generally worse off in terms of their ability to attend school. The school attendance of child labourers outside the cocoa belt is eight percentage points lower for 5-14 year-olds, and seven percentage points lower for 15-17 year-olds, compared to their same-aged peers in cocoa child labour. But high rates of school attendance among cocoa child labourers does not of course mean that work in cocoa production is not harmful to education in other ways, as the time and energy required for this work inevitably affects the ability of children to benefit from their classroom time and ability to study outside of the classroom.

Differences in school attendance are likely in part a product of how children's working time is distributed over the day and week. The overwhelming majority of children in the cocoa sector (93%) work either on the weekend (89%) or during holidays (3%) when school is not in session. Other child labourers by comparison are relatively more likely to work at some point during the school day, when the interference with schooling is more direct.

The time intensity of child labour is also considerably higher for child labourers working outside the cocoa sector, another factor affecting their ability to combine work and education. The differences in this regard are particularly pronounced between cocoa child labourers and child labourers living outside the cocoa-growing regions. The latter group must work on average almost twice as many hours each week than the former group; this pattern applies to both the 5-14 and 15-17 age ranges.

But cocoa child labourers appear clearly worse off than other child labourers in terms of exposure to hazards, abuse and injuries. While the preceding comparative statistics on school attendance and working hours cast cocoa child labour in less negative light than other forms of child labour, this is not the case when looking work-related hazards and ill-health. Cocoa child labourers are much more likely to be exposed to hazards and abuse in the workplace, and are much more likely to suffer work-related injuries. But as we have no information on the severity of the injuries and hazards, this comparison should be interpreted with caution.

Children's role in agricultural production

Children appear to play a substantial role in agricultural production, both inside and outside of the cocoa sector. The estimated marginal products of labour in agriculture indicate that the productivity of children is high and indeed not dissimilar to that of adults, suggesting in turn that the opportunity costs of removing children from agricultural work are relatively high. Calculations of labour contributions also point to an important role of children in production. Children account for about 15% of total crop production and for about 13% of crop production in the cocoa sector.

Estimated elasticities of substitution indicate that child labour and productive assets can be readily substituted in agricultural production. This suggests in turn that the introduction of production technologies that are more reliant on non-labour inputs is likely to result in a substantial reduction in the use of child labour.

Conclusion

The evidence reported in preceding discussion underscores the continuing urgent need to address child labour in cocoa production in Ghana. According to the results of the GLSS 6, almost half a million children, about five percent of all children aged 5-17 years, are in cocoa child labour, and comparisons with estimates from previous national surveys suggest that the incidence of cocoa child labour has in fact *increased* in recent years, despite national efforts against it. The reported evidence also highlight the smallholder production structure of the cocoa sector in Ghana, with the majority of child labourers working as unpaid family workers. What is more, child labourers in cocoa production appear much more exposed to workplace hazards and abuses, and much more susceptible to work-related injury and ill-health, than child labourers working elsewhere.

But the evidence also makes clear that child labour in Ghana concerns much more than just cocoa production. Indeed, more than three-quarters of all child labourers in the country work *outside* the cocoa sector, and these children must clearly not be forgotten in child labour elimination efforts. While less hazardous than cocoa production, the work performed by non-cocoa child labourers is nonetheless *more* time intensive and *more* likely to interfere with schooling. Like cocoa child labour, child labour outside of cocoa production appears to have *increased* in recent years, calling for renewed efforts to address child labour in Ghana in all sectors.

What are the priorities moving forward? The 2016 study cited at the outset emphasises the importance of a comprehensive approach build around a set of key policy pillars – basic education, social protection, public awareness, social mobilisation, legislation and advocacy – and discusses priority intervention areas in each.³ These policy pillars and intervention priorities are relevant to addressing child labour both within and outside of cocoa production.

³Child labour and the decent work deficit in Ghana, 2016. Understanding Children's Work (UCW) country study. Available at www.ucw-project.org

With specific reference to the cocoa sector, the current Report points to at least three additional priorities.

First, evidence of the very high elasticity of substitution between child labour and productive assets suggests that the introduction of non-labour-intensive production technologies could play an important role in reducing cocoa child labour.

Secondly, the high levels of productivity of cocoa child labourers, both relative to other child labourers and more generally, means that households bear high opportunity costs in removing their children from cocoa child labour, pointing in turn to the importance of strategies aimed at compensating households for these costs.

Third and more broadly, in view of evidence indicating that cocoa child labour has actually increased in recent years despite intensified efforts against it, there is an urgent need for impact evaluations designed to identify effective policy interventions.