



International  
Labour  
Organization

## CREATING A PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN IN COCOA-GROWING COMMUNITIES IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Chocolate comes from the tropical cocoa tree, which thrives in hot, rainy climates. As the world's largest cocoa producer and exporter, Côte d'Ivoire accounts for 40 per cent of global production and the majority of cocoa grown and harvested is sold to chocolate companies. As the chocolate industry has grown over the years, so has the

demand for cheap cocoa. Agriculture employs more than 60 per cent of the Ivorian population, and many cocoa farms are rife with child labour. On average, cocoa farmers earn less than USD 2 per day, an income below the poverty line. As a result, many often resort to child labour to keep their prices competitive.

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**Partners:**

Mars, Incorporated

**Beneficiary country:**

Côte d'Ivoire

**Timeframe:**

30 October 2012 – present

**Budget:**

USD 1,000,000

### THE RESPONSE

Mars, Inc. has teamed up with a range of partners in Côte d'Ivoire to help farmers produce better crops and increase their incomes; to assist communities in improving their living standards; and to fight child labour by making sure that children go to school and are not trapped in child labour. Mars Inc.'s Vision for Change Programme (V4C) – an integral part of its Sustainable Cocoa Initiative (SCI) – can be seen as an innovative and holistic way to achieve and maintain sustainable cocoa production by addressing productivity and community issues together. V4C provides training, improved planting material and fertilizers to farmers. It also pursues community development work at the village level to ensure that farmers and their families address some of the social and economic challenges in their communities and directly benefit from the increased productivity that training and good agricultural materials bring in their wake.

Mars has selected Soubré, a major cocoa-growing region in southwest Côte d'Ivoire, as a pilot region for this work, and has entered into a public-private partnership (PPP) with the ILO and its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), to guarantee a protective environment for children and make sure that girls and boys in Soubré go to school and not to work. The PPP builds on and reinforces existing activities of the V4C Programme, by supporting action against child labour and creating a protective environment for children in Soubré.

This partnership has three components: (a) strengthening Child Labour Monitoring Systems (CLMS); (b) putting in place and implementing community action plans to combat child labour; and (c) building the capacities of stakeholders to implement education, training and social mobilization initiatives. In concrete terms, the project:

- Identifies girls and boys who are in – or at risk of entering into – child labour by reinforcing community-based and institutional mechanisms. This is done by referring them to schools or other services and keeping track of them in up to 20 communities and districts;
- Reinforces community development initiatives that create a protective environment for children;
- Strengthens the understanding of child labour and ways to combat it by working with parents, community leaders, local authorities, workers' and employers' organizations, and social services – to name but a few.





*"The training on hazardous child labour and occupational safety and health has allowed us to better understand the harmful consequences of child labour. We used the outcomes of this training to enrich awareness campaigns which have been organized in the 15 communities of the Mars-ILO PPP project."*

Dr. Koh Hilaire, Vice President of the NGO Ivoire Services



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## RESULTS

Some key achievements of this PPP to date are:

- Child protection committees, which are at the heart of effective child labour monitoring, have been set up in the relevant communities, districts and sub-prefects;
- The early childhood protection and social centres in Soubré have been refurbished, resulting in an increase in the school enrolment rate of girls and boys; these centres have been a key element in providing these children with a protective environment;
- A mapping of available social services in four sub-prefects has been undertaken;
- A handbook of guidelines and protocols to support child victims of the worst forms of child labour and children at risk has been elaborated;

- A range of workshops have been held with the stakeholders on key topics in the fight against child labour, such as prevention strategies, hazardous child labour, occupational safety and health, legal instruments, and child labour monitoring systems;
- The ILO's Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM) methodology has been widely used in schools, which promotes awareness among young people about children's rights with a focus on child labour, so that they, in turn, can speak out and mobilize their communities to act.

## **BENEFITS OF PARTNERING**

Communities where child labour is rife – and the key actors involved in the process – benefit from an increased awareness of child labour, so that they might mobilize action against it.

Practical tools, such as the above-mentioned handbook of protocols, have been created specifically for people who work at the grass-roots level and are confronted with the challenge of how to help girls and boys access social services.

Building the capacity of relevant actors in the areas of hazardous child labour and occupational safety and health (OSH) has resulted in an improvement of their understanding of the phenomenon and of practical ways to deal with it.