



ICI technical summary of NORC Report “*Assessing Progress in Reducing Child Labour in Cocoa Production in Cocoa Growing Areas of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, 2018/9 survey round*”

During the 2018/9 cocoa-growing season, researchers from the National Opinion Research Centre (NORC) at the University of Chicago conducted a survey of child labour among agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. Commissioned by the US Department of Labour, the survey sought to measure changes in the prevalence of child labour and hazardous child labour in both countries, as well as to assess the effect of interventions conducted to prevent and address child labour in cocoa communities. It was carried out to monitor progress on the *2010 Framework of Action to Support Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol*, and follows two previous surveys, conducted by Tulane University in 2008/9 and 2013/4. The *2010 Framework* had the following objective:

“By 2020, the worst forms of child labor as defined by ILO Convention 182 in the cocoa sectors of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana will be reduced by 70 percent in aggregate through joint efforts by key stakeholders”¹

This technical summary is intended for stakeholders with an interest in the child labour situation in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. It provides a short summary of key findings from the NORC 2018/9 Report, and where possible, places them in context alongside the results of the two previous surveys from 2008/9 and 2013/4, conducted by Tulane University.

Overview

The NORC report provides a comprehensive analysis of the child labour situation in cocoa growing areas of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. Based on data collected during the 2018/9 cocoa season, it offers insights for sector stakeholders, policy makers and practitioners on a notoriously difficult issue.

The report recognises the complexity of child labour, situating changes in a dynamic context where the proportion of households cultivating cocoa and overall cocoa production levels have both increased. It encourages a more nuanced understanding of child labour in cocoa as a subset of child labour within the broader context of smallholder agriculture. It also highlights the need to better understand differences in the severity of work undertaken by children in cocoa, to better recognise where progress is being made and where challenges persist.

The report also questions the appropriateness of the original target set in the *Framework of Action to Support Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol*. Alongside this, it acknowledges efforts being made to prevent and address child labour and importantly, provides quantitative and qualitative analysis of the effects of some of these interventions on child labour.

Unfortunately, methodological differences between the 2018/9 survey and earlier ones, together with errors in the administration of the 2013/4 survey have made it especially challenging to document changes in the past five years. While commendable attempts have been made to provide some comparisons between the 2013/4 and 2018/9 survey rounds on a handful of indicators, an inability to compare other

¹ See: [Framework of Action to Support Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol](#), 2010

indicators over both the 10-year and 5-year period does deprive us of the fuller picture and potentially masks progress made in recent years.

We look forward to receiving the full datasets which will allow for a deeper analysis and which could be invaluable for informing and influencing ongoing efforts to address child labour in cocoa.

Issues affecting the comparability of results

In response to concerns over methodological challenges, an independent Expert Group was commissioned to review an earlier version of the report. In line with recommendations from the Expert Group, the NORC research team made adaptations to the report in response to concerns over methodological challenges. The following challenges and methodological differences between the 2008/9, 2013/4 and 2018/9 surveys have limited the comparisons that can be made:

- **According to the Expert Group, the estimated *numbers* of children in child labour and hazardous child labour were over-estimated in previous years.** As a result, while the NORC report provides estimates for the number of children in child labour in 2018/9, this cannot be compared with estimates for 2008/9 and 2013/4. The independent Expert Group, appointed methodology in 2020, discovered that weightings had been incorrectly applied in previous surveys, inflating the estimated population of children in cocoa-growing areas, and the derived child labour estimates.²
- **Estimates of child labour prevalence among *all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas*** can only be compared over the past decade, between 2008/9 and 2018/9. Sampling errors made during the 2013/4 survey, mean that the sample of *all agricultural households* cannot be considered representative (although the sample of *cocoa-growing households* is). This metric is highly sensitive to changes in the proportion of households growing cocoa, so the 10-year trend is likely to be heavily influenced by this.
- **Estimates of child labour prevalence among *cocoa-growing households*** can only be compared over the last five years, between 2013/4 and 2018/9. This is because of missing information in the 2008/9 sample, which prevented researchers from distinguishing *cocoa-growing households* from *all agricultural households*. This metric better neutralises the effects of demographic and production changes and effectively shows what is happening in an average cocoa-farming household, but the report is only able to document changes at that level over the more recent 5-year period.

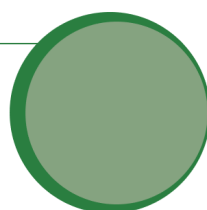
Key findings

Children's involvement in child labour and hazardous child labour in cocoa

1. **An estimated 1.56 million children were in cocoa-related child labour in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in 2018/9**, of which 790,000 children were in Côte d'Ivoire and 770,000 in Ghana. **95 percent of these children – an estimated 1.48 million children – were in cocoa-related hazardous child labour**, 765,000 in Côte d'Ivoire and 713,000 in Ghana.

1.56 million

in **child labour** in cocoa:
790,000 in Côte d'Ivoire
770,000 in Ghana



1.48 million

in **hazardous child labour** in cocoa:
765,000 in Côte d'Ivoire
713,000 in Ghana

² See report annex: 10.12 Annex XII: Expert Group Findings, p271.

Following the independent expert review, which identified errors in the weighting of previous population estimates, the researchers stress that **these numbers cannot be compared with estimates from previous years, and do not imply any reduction in the absolute number of children in child labour in cocoa.**

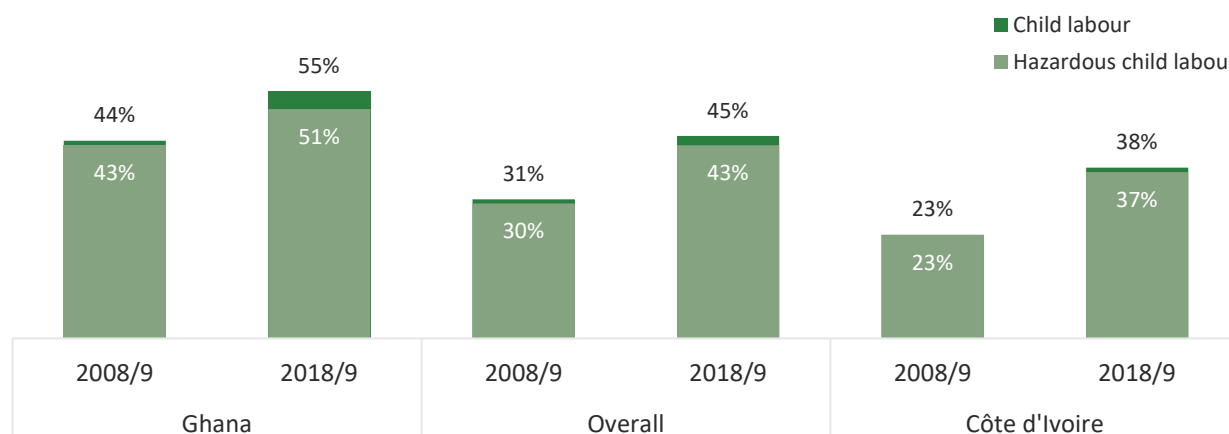
- The large majority of children in cocoa-related child labour in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana work on smallholder farms, alongside family members, supporting their household's ordinary economic activity.** The survey found that 94 percent of children working in cocoa farming were working for either their parents or other relatives (97 percent in Ghana and 90 percent in Côte d'Ivoire). The small proportion not working on their own family's farm were likely working on another farm in the same community, since 99 percent of all children interviewed were living with their parents or another relative.
- In 2018/9, 45 percent of children aged 5-17 living in agricultural households in cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana were involved in cocoa-related child labour.** Country-specific figures show that within agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas, 38 percent of children in Côte d'Ivoire and 55 percent of children in Ghana were engaged in child labor in cocoa production.

Proportion of children in cocoa-related child labour, all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (table 16)



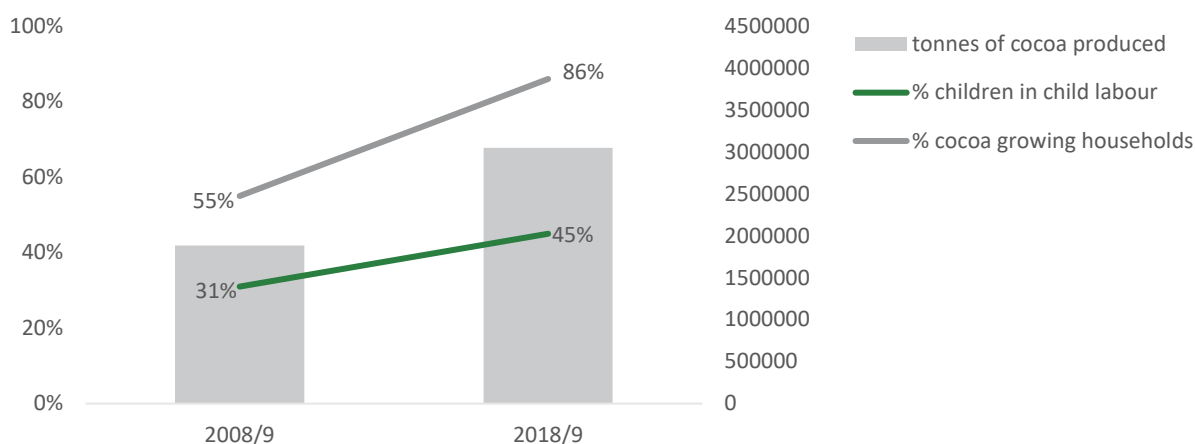
- Most children in cocoa-related child labour (95 percent) engage in hazardous work. Among all agricultural households, 43 percent of children aged 5-17 in cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are considered in hazardous cocoa-related child labour.** Among all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas, 37 percent of children in Côte d'Ivoire and 51 percent of children in Ghana were engaged in hazardous child labor in cocoa production. This means they were exposed to at least one of six specific types of hazard in the past 12 months: land clearing, heavy loads, agrochemicals, sharp tools, long working hours, or night work.
- Child labour is widespread in many types of agricultural activity, not only in cocoa production.** Among children in agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, **60 percent of children were involved in child labour in any kind of agriculture, compared to 45 percent in cocoa-related agriculture.**
- Among all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, the percentage of children aged 5-17 in child labour in cocoa has increased in the past decade, from 31 percent in 2008/9 to 45 percent in 2018/9.** In Côte d'Ivoire, the proportion increased from 23 percent to 38 percent, and in Ghana, from 44 percent to 55 percent. The proportion of children in cocoa-related child labour and hazardous child labour has remained consistently higher in Ghana than in Côte d'Ivoire.

Proportion of children in cocoa-related child labour and hazardous child labour, all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (table 16)



7. **Increases in the proportion of children in cocoa-related child labour should be seen in a context of an increasing number and proportion of households growing cocoa and increasing cocoa production.** In the past decade, cocoa production in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana has increased by 62% (from 1,885,600 tonnes in 2008/9 to 3,050,000 tonnes in 2018/9) and the proportion of agricultural households cultivating cocoa has increased from 55 percent in 2008/9 to 86 percent in 2018/9. Among agricultural households, the prevalence of cocoa-related child labour has increased from 31 percent in 2008/9 to 45 percent in 2018/9. **The proportion of children in cocoa-related child labour has increased at a slower rate than the proportion of households cultivating cocoa and the volume of cocoa produced.**

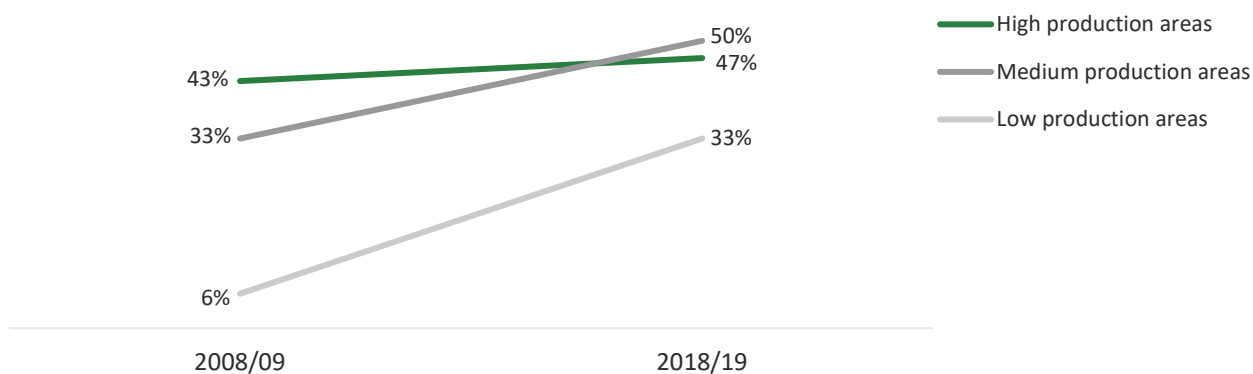
Comparison of change the proportion of children in child labour in cocoa, the proportion of cocoa-growing households and the number of tonnes of cocoa produced, 2008/9 and 2018/9



8. **Among cocoa-growing households, rather than all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas, the prevalence of child labour and hazardous child labour has remained stable since 2013/4 in both countries.** By looking only at cocoa-growing households, the increase in the proportion of households growing cocoa is neutralised. On aggregate, 50% of children in cocoa-growing households were in cocoa-related child labour in 2018/9. The report shows that child labour prevalence remained stable in both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, with *no statistically significant* increase in either country since 2013/4. In Côte d'Ivoire, 43% of children in cocoa-growing households were in child labour and 41% in hazardous child labour in 2018/9. In Ghana, 59% of children in cocoa-growing households were in child labour and 55% in hazardous child labour in 2018/9. Data is not available to monitor this change since 2008/9.
9. **In high production cocoa-growing areas, the prevalence of cocoa-related child labour among all agricultural households has remained stable, with no significant change since 2008/9. In contrast, the increases in overall child labour prevalence in cocoa over the last decade are due to increases in the medium and low production areas, supporting the hypothesis that increased child labour has largely**

been driven by households shifting to cocoa cultivation from other activities. In *medium production* areas, cocoa-related child labour prevalence increased from 33% to 50%, and in *low production* areas, it increased from 6% to 33%. In high production areas, there was no statistically significant change to child labour prevalence, which stood at 47% in 2018/9. NORC suggests that the stabilisation in *high production* areas is due to the greater presence and effectiveness of interventions in high production areas. While this is possible, the data to back up this hypothesis is not provided in the report.

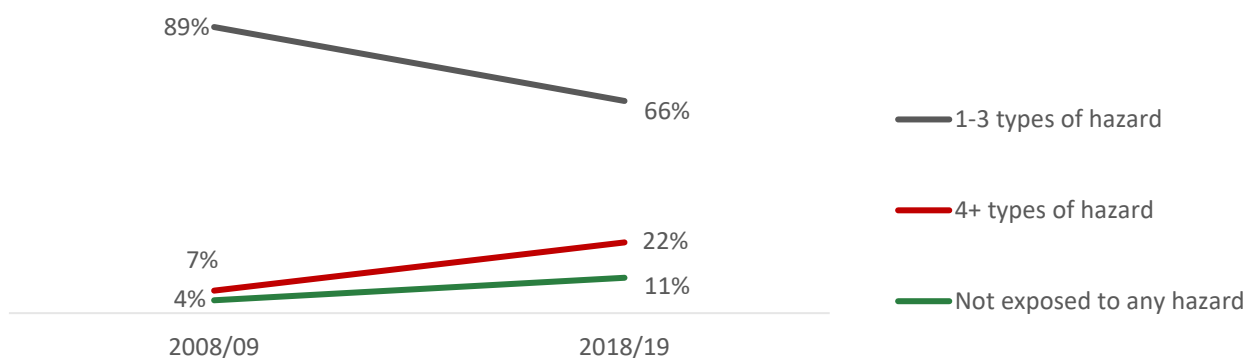
Overall prevalence of cocoa-related child labour, by production area, all agricultural households (table 32)



Children’s exposure to hazards in cocoa

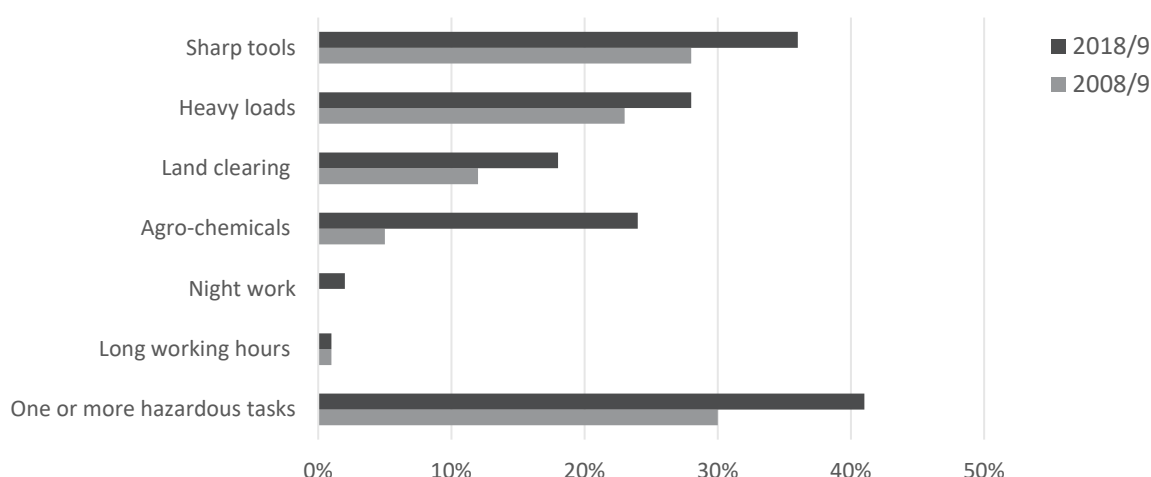
10. **Among children working in cocoa in agricultural households, the proportion *not exposed to any hazard* has increased, from 4% in 2008/9, to 11% in 2018/9. The average number of hazardous activities per working child per week has remained stable, at 2.3. While 85% of working children were doing the same number or fewer hazardous tasks than in 2008/9, risk appears to be more concentrated for a subset of children: the proportion of children working in cocoa doing four or more types of hazardous task has increased, from 7% in 2008/9 to 22% in 2018/9.**

Percentage of working children exposed to hazardous tasks in cocoa, by number of tasks, all agricultural households (table 17)



11. **The percentages of all children in agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas using sharp tools, carrying heavy loads, clearing land, and exposed to agrochemicals have all increased since 2008/9. The most prominent change is an increase in children’s exposure to agrochemicals, corresponding to an increased reported use of such chemicals by farmers and increased spending on pesticides and fertilisers. Children’s exposure to agrochemicals, which increased on aggregate from 5% to 24%, was most often linked to carrying water for spraying and being present on the farm during or after spraying. The proportion of children directly applying agrochemicals remained lower.**

Proportion of children exposed to different hazardous tasks in cocoa, all agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (table 17)

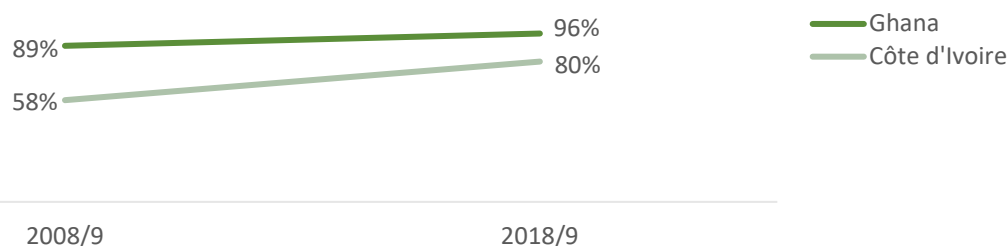


12. **While the percentage of children reporting that they had engaged in cocoa-related child labour in the previous 12 months increased between 2008/9 and 2018/9, there was no significant change in the percentage of children reporting that they had engaged in child labour in the previous 7 days.** This result *could* imply that children are working less often but should be treated with caution for two reasons. First, the timing of data collection varied not only between the two countries, but also across the survey rounds within each country. As labour intensity of cocoa cultivation is highly seasonal, this could compromise the comparability of results for the 7-day reference period. Second, survey information on child labour generally hinges strongly on the interview techniques used, since it is difficult to follow a fully standardized questionnaire when interviewing children, and so results may be affected by differing interview techniques between survey rounds and between countries.
13. **Average reported working hours for children working in cocoa have decreased in both Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in the past decade. On aggregate, children working in cocoa reported an average of 8.3h work per week in 2018/9, down from 10.6h per week in 2008/9.** These changes are driven by statistically significant decreases to average working hours among 5-11-year olds in both countries, and among 15-17-year olds in Côte d'Ivoire. While this *could* mean that children are less exposed to hazardous work, as with the 7-day and 12-month recall periods, these results may be affected by seasonality, by differing interview techniques and by children's ability to accurately recall time spent working, and so should be treated with some caution.
14. **Despite a decrease in the average number of hours worked, the percentage of children working more than the allowed number of hours per week for their age group increased in Côte d'Ivoire, from 11% in 2008/9 to 18% in 2018/9.** This change is driven by children aged 5-11, who, according to national regulations, are not permitted to work for more than one hour per week. There was no significant change to the proportion of children working more than the allowed number of hours for their age group in Ghana.
15. **Children in hazardous work in cocoa were significantly more likely to report having sustained different types of injury while working in agriculture, compared to children doing non-hazardous work in cocoa.** The most common type of injury sustained while working was wounds/cuts, reported by 35% of children doing hazardous work, compared to 8% of children doing non-hazardous work. The same trend was observed in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Access to education

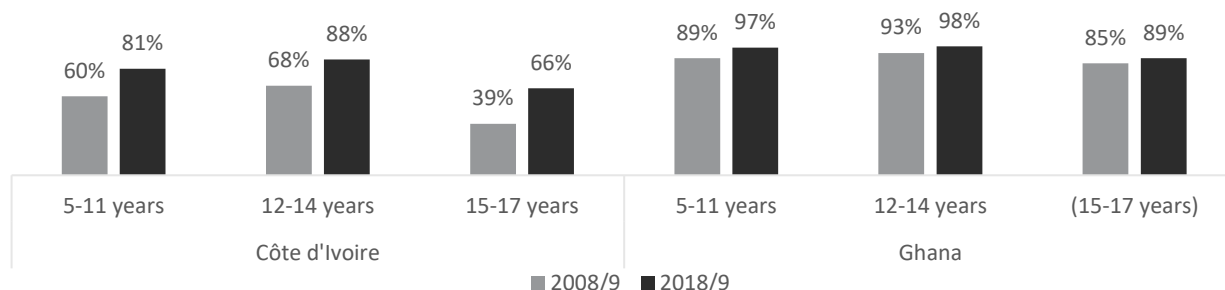
16. **Children’s school attendance has increased steadily in both Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana since 2008/9.** In Côte d’Ivoire school attendance across all levels increased by 22 percentage points since 2008/9 (from 58% to 80%), while in Ghana, it increased by 7 percentage points (from 89% to 96%) in the same period. Between 2008/9 and 2018/9, attendance increased for both girls and boys, with the greatest increases for girls, whose attendance increased by 25 percentage points in Côte d’Ivoire (from 53% to 78%) and by 7 percentage points in Ghana (from 89% to 96%).

Proportion of children aged 5-17 in cocoa-growing areas attending school, all agricultural households (table 9)



17. **By age group, significant increases in school attendance were observed at all levels in Côte d’Ivoire and for younger age groups in Ghana.** The biggest improvement in attendance were seen among children aged 15-17 in Côte d’Ivoire (an increase of 27 percentage points – or 69% – from 39% to 66%), and among children aged 5-11 in Ghana (an increase of 8 percentage points – or 9% – from 89% to 97%).

Proportion of children in cocoa-growing areas attending school, by age group, all agricultural households (table 9)



18. **Children are increasingly combining work in cocoa with attending school. The proportions of children in cocoa-related child labour and hazardous child labour attending school have increased since 2008/9.** Between 2008/9 and 2018/9, among children aged 5-11 in hazardous child labour in cocoa, school attendance increased from 67% to 88% in Côte d’Ivoire and from 91% to 99% in Ghana. **However, the proportion of children reporting that work in cocoa interferes with their education has also increased, from 5% in 2008/9 to 13% in 2018/9 on aggregate.**
19. **The proportion of children working in cocoa and not attending school has decreased between 2008/9 and 2018/9.** In Côte d’Ivoire, the proportion of children aged 6-14 working in cocoa and not attending school decreased from 33% to 11%, while in Ghana, it decreased from 8% to 2%.
20. **In Côte d’Ivoire, children working in cocoa are actually more likely to attend school compared to an average child from an agricultural household in cocoa-growing areas (84% compared to 80%), while in Ghana, the percentage of children working in cocoa who attend school is the same as the overall average across agricultural households, at 96%.**

21. **While school attendance has improved, literacy and numeracy rates lag behind the proportion of children attending school.** In 2018/9, around 40% of children in agricultural households in cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire were able to read a short simple statement, compared to 58% in Ghana. There was no significant difference between the literacy and numeracy levels of children from cocoa and non-cocoa households.

Assessment of the effectiveness of interventions to tackle child labour

22. **In addition to assessing the prevalence and trends in cocoa-related child labour, NORC also sought to assess the effectiveness of interventions implemented by different stakeholders to tackle child labour. This consisted of two components, qualitative and quantitative.** The quantitative assessment examined the effects of three *specific types* of intervention on child labour: educational materials; livelihood services; and occupational safety and health training; as well as examining the effects of a “package” of multiple interventions. All quantitative results are based on quasi-experimental methods to address selection bias in the sample. The *qualitative* component offers valuable insights on people’s perceptions of interventions. These findings help us understand how and why some issues are linked – for example how work in cocoa supports some children to access education – but cannot provide reliable information about effects of interventions on the prevalence of child labour or changes in child labour rates, nor can they be generalised across cocoa-growing areas in each country.
23. **Findings from the quantitative component on three types of intervention:**
- **Education materials:** the analysis was unable to detect a statistically significant impact of the provision of educational materials on either child labour or hazardous child labour, which could be due to low sample size compared to what one might need to detect any impact.
 - **Livelihood services** (Côte d'Ivoire only): child labour was 10 percentage points lower among children living in households that received livelihood services, but there was no statistically significant change to the rate of hazardous child labour.
 - **Occupational Safety and Health training** (Ghana only): children aged 15-17 who participated in occupational safety and health training were 14 percentage points more likely to wear protective gear, but there was no statistically significant change to the rate of hazardous child labour.
24. **Findings from the quantitative assessment of the package of multiple intervention found that households in communities receiving multiple interventions were 28 percentage points less likely to have at least one child in hazardous child labour than households in communities with no interventions.** The analysis was conducted by comparing 9 communities in Côte d'Ivoire which received interventions, with 9 similar communities that did not receive any interventions. **Since this analysis covers only a very small sample of communities in Côte d'Ivoire, its external validity is limited.** All estimated impacts are reported in terms of percentage points difference only, with no mean outcomes provided for the treatment and control group, preventing us from putting the impact on child labour into context.
25. **While few of the types of interventions assessed were found to have a significant impact on child labour, this may not mean that they have no effect at all – rather that the study design was insufficient to detect small changes.** The report mentions several caveats, which limited the ability of the quantitative component to detect significant impact: the lack of a baseline with which to compare findings; the relatively small sample sizes, since only small numbers of households that received certain types of intervention could be included; the distribution of interventions in cocoa-growing communities, which was not designed with such an assessment in mind; and the inability to observe and control for some selection criteria.
26. **A separate sub-study by NORC, commissioned by WCF, provides more reliable and detailed results** from a larger, more representative sample about the effects of recent child labour interventions (*see separate report, [available here](#)*).
