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# Mobilizing social capital to deal with child labour in cocoa production: The case of community child labour monitoring system in Ghana

Rita Owusu-Amankwah <sup>1\*</sup>, Guido Ruivenkamp <sup>1</sup>, Godfred Frempong <sup>2</sup>,  
George Essegbe <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Social Sciences, Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

<sup>2</sup> Science and Technology Policy Research Institute, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Ghana

## Abstract

The Government of Ghana is leading the implementation of Community Child Labour Monitoring (CCLM) System as remediation and monitoring tool to free cocoa production from the worst forms of child labour and trafficking. Through a mixed-method approach which combines exploratory qualitative and quantitative methods, this paper sought to understand how CCLM operates and its ability to mobilize or generate social capital to deal with worst forms of child labour. It also ascertained the emerging household labour re-arrangement to facilitate a more sustainable change in cocoa production systems. The results indicate that the CCLM as a voluntary social auditing system is working in the community where members hold themselves accountable for the welfare of children. Task distribution was developmentally determined and tasks considered appropriate for children are based on their body and psychosomatic maturity and not only on the age of the child. Again the study asserts that the willingness of children to support parents even at the expense of school suggests that child labour is family embedded and that children should not only be targeted for separation from work but should be offered appropriate avenue to nurture their skills through cultural-legally acceptable work frame.

**Keywords:** Child labour monitoring system; Worst forms of child labour; Innovation; Social capital; Human capital

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\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: [rita.owusuamankwah@wur.nl](mailto:rita.owusuamankwah@wur.nl)

## 1. Introduction

Globally, over 200 million children are involved in work that is classified as hazardous and injurious to the health and morals of children (International Labour Organization (ILO), Global Report, 2010). Child labour is a problem worldwide that affects the physical, psychological, moral and educational development of children. The global concern for child labour has gained expression in a number of international instruments notably UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990; ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age Of Employment 1973; ILO Convention No 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) 1999; OAU Declaration on the Rights of the African Child. These in addition to national laws such as the Ghana Children Act, 560, 1999 defines child labour as work that is harmful and hazardous to a child's health, safety and development; taking into account the age of the child, the conditions under which the work takes place, and the time at which the work is done (MMYE, 2008, p.4; ILO 2002).

Child labour has become a critical developmental issue in West Africa's cocoa socio-economic since 2000 after media exposed trafficked children being forced to work in cocoa farms in Cote d'Ivoire. For the Global Chocolate industry, it has become a moral and business threatening issue, as governments, consumers and child right advocates pressurize it to deal with the issue or face a ban on cocoa products. Consumers in the North who are highly concerned about ethical issues in relation to the use of children on cocoa farms, advocate for trade sanctions and even request for a complete abolition of child labour. Consequently, the Global Chocolate Industry was compelled to adopt the Harkin-Engel (H-E) Protocol in 2001 which aimed at ensuring that cocoa beans and their derivative products are grown and processed in a manner that complies with ILO Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the WFCL.

## 2. Problem statement

Although there is a general agreement to abolish the WFCL, Basu and Pham-Hoang (1998), Jafarey & Lahiri (2002), among others are of the view that complete abolition of child labour is an ineffective approach to dealing with issues of child labour vis a vis the many socio-cultural challenges. In the South, the child labour issue is embedded in family life and must not be discussed in isolation but in the framework of the socioeconomic and socio-cultural environment within which cocoa cultivation takes place. In Ghana, for instance, child work and child labour is under the influence of the extended family system (Ministry of Manpower Youth & Employment (MMYE), 2007). It is acceptable for parents to send their child to live with a relative such as the aunt, uncle or grandparents living in the same village or town as part of the social bonding within the kinship system. The upbringing of the child therefore becomes, not only the responsibility of the parents but the whole family (MMYE, 2008). Except for hazardous work or the unconditional WFCL, activities such as house chores and light work on the farm are considered good for the appropriate nurturing of the child. Culturally, working alongside parents on family farms is seen as essential part of skills transfer. There is however a thin line between what is acceptable and unacceptable child activities.

The use of children in economic activities tends to interfere with their education, and in WFCL, interfere with the health and development of the child. Ensuring that all children go to school and that their education is of good quality are key to preventing child labour (UNICEF, 2012). Therefore, addressing this problematic issue of child labour is vital for the development of Africa. The child labour issue is central in the fight against poverty (Nkamleu and Kielland, 2006) and also for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (Rena, 2009), especially the achievement of universal primary education (Goal 2).

In view of this, H.E protocol was introduced to be adopted by Chocolate industries. This was a system that called for a mutually acceptable, voluntary, industry wide standard of public certification by July 1 2005. The public certification was defined by industry as a transparent, credible and progressive process that reports on the incidence of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) and forced adult labour (FAL). It also reports on progress made in reducing this incidence, with the goal of eliminating WFCL and FAL from the sector. It was obvious that the industry underestimated the tasks involved because the deadline ended without much work done (ILRF, 2008).

In Ghana for instance, it was the ILO International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) West Africa Cocoa Commercial Project (WACAP) that submitted a report on a pilot work done on Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS). Based on this among others, the key stakeholders reviewed the protocol and extended the deadline to 1 July 2008 by which date, certification would have covered 50% of cocoa growing areas of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

In this regard, the Government of Ghana collaborated with the Global Chocolate Industry to conduct surveys to ascertain the extent and nature of WFCL, as part of the implementation of public certification system. The report was verified by FAFO of Norway and Khulisa of South Africa, independent organizations commissioned by the erstwhile International Cocoa Verification Board (IVCB) set up by stakeholders for the purpose of verifying the process of data collection adopted by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. The Cocoa Labour study in Ghana (2008) provided empirical data on profile of children in cocoa communities (Figure 1).

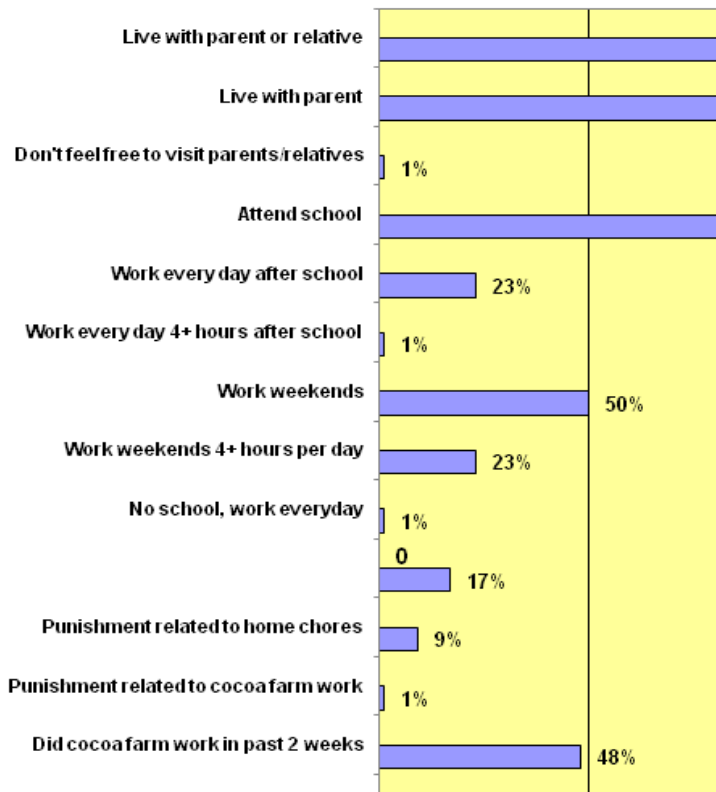
In addition, the report on weighted data accompanying the Cocoa Labour Survey in Ghana (CLS) (2009) provides an overall estimate of children engaged in at least one hazardous cocoa related activity (particularly carrying of heavy loads) as 839,867, representing 10% of children in cocoa growing communities. This shows the need to intervene.

The progress made under the protocol has received mixed reactions from various stakeholders. Although the implementation of the protocol is seen as a catalyst for change (Tulane, 2010 p.14) and that it has enabled stakeholders' gain better understanding of the complexity of child labour, but some critics believe that the methodology of the surveys was flawed (WVIP, 2011) as it could not identify any child trafficking which was the main issue for the emergence of the protocol (Sheth, 2009; FAFO, 2008). Although there were no reported child trafficking cases or children in slavery conditions in Ghana cocoa sector (MMYE, 2008), this assertion has been challenged with the argument that internal and cross border movement of labour has not been evaluated by available studies (Sheth, 2009).

The voluntary nature has also not gone without attacks. According to Cameron Neil,

There were no “enforcement mechanisms” (Neil, 2011 p.5).

This argument is said to be theoretically sound because the primary disadvantage of voluntary agreements arises from the collective nature of their benefits where participants have a strong incentive to act as free riders (Mazurek, 1998).The industry has been attacked also on the grounds that ‘none of the activities undertaken under the auspices of the protocol has attempted to monitor or improve labour conditions within the cocoa supply chain of any chocolate company’ (ILRF, 2008, p2).



**Figure 1.** Profile of Children who live in Cocoa Farm Households (Source: Ministry of Manpower Youth and Employment, 2008)

Reviewing the progress of H-E protocol in 2010, stakeholders pledged to reduce WFCL in West Africa cocoa farms by 70% by 2020 and included community based child labour monitoring system as one of the key objectives to pursue (Declaration of Joint Action, 2010). The question therefore is why CCLM? Does CCLM have something new to offer to the certification process and is it innovative enough to put the best interest of children at the centre that leads to structurally sustainable change in the production, marketing and consumption of cocoa products and their derivatives? This study therefore sought to examine how the CCLM is being operated at the community level, its potential to mobilize or generate social capital within the community to deal with worst forms of child labour as well as ascertaining the emerging household labour re-arrangement and coping strategies being adopted by farm families to facilitate a more sustainable change in the cocoa production systems.

In the next section, related literature concerning child labour and the evolution of community child labour monitoring system as a concept that could mobilize social and human capital for development of children is reviewed. Section four presents the methodology employed and the methods of data analyses. Section five then presents the case study and results of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted including the views of children. Section six discusses the results and examines the influence of social capital in changing the child labour situation using CCLM. The last section then concludes.

### 3. Literature review

Agriculture is the sector in which most child labourers work, yet it is the least intervened sector (ILO, 2010). It follows that a breakthrough in the agricultural sector is needed in order to meet the 2016 global target of eliminating the WFCL. In Ghana, some children are involved in work that is intrinsically dangerous to their health and safety such as mining, prostitution, fishing, selling on busy streets in the cities, and working with dangerous machinery, tools and chemicals in the field of agriculture including cocoa sector.

Cocoa production is prominent in the Ghanaian agricultural sector. It is grown in six out of the ten regions in Ghana. Currently Ghana is the world's second largest producer contributing 40% of world's output (ISSER, 2011). Cocoa farming in Ghana is usually a small holder family business and children often offer some form of assistance. Most children work in family farms and are unpaid (MMYE, 2007, 2008); ILO 2010). The average farm size is six acres (approximately 2 ha) and farmers own or operate an average of two farms (MMYE, 2007). Cocoa sector employs an estimated number of 800,000 farmer households with 3.2 million farmhands giving a total of 4 million people engaged in the cocoa sector (Ghana News Agency, 2011). The community of cocoa farmers in Ghana is made up of owners, caretakers and farmhands (Mitchell, 2012; Khan (2007)). Over 80% of the cocoa farmers are owner-operators with about 16% being caretakers (MMYE, 2008). In terms of foreign exchange, cocoa earned the country \$2.2 million in 2010 as compared to \$1.87 million in 2009 representing 22% increase (ISSER, 2011). This represents 28% of total agriculture foreign exchange earnings in 2010 (ISSER, 2011).

#### 3.1. Child labour, child work and WFCL

In discussing child labour within the socio-economic context, it is important to provide distinction and a clear understanding between child work, child labour and the WFCL for better contextualization and interpretation. Not all work done by children is classified as child labour, and therefore needs to be targeted for elimination. The ILO Convention 138, Minimum Age for Admission to Employment permits light work for children from the age 13 for developed countries and 12 for developing countries. The Children's Act, 560, 1998 of Ghana permits light work from the age 13. Hazardous child labour according to ILO Convention 182 is defined as work which by nature or circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety, morals and/or development of the child. This definition which relates very well to cocoa farming charges national government to determine what constitutes hazardous activities. Some cocoa activities have been described as hazardous by nature. This may be due to the arduous nature of the activities and skill

required of the task, the use of unsafe tools, or the insecure setting in which the task is performed. Subsequently what is permissible or hazardous has been culminated into Ghana's Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (HAF, 2008) for the cocoa sector. The essence is to fulfil ILO requirement (ILO C. 182) for national determination of hazardous child labour, provide an important tool for educating communities as well as provide standards and indicators for measuring progress.

### 3.2. Conceptualization of the Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) process

The concept of child labour monitoring (CLM) especially in the informal production processes such as cocoa is relatively new, and therefore not much literature is available. According to ILO (CLM Brochure, 2005, P1), *CLM involves the development of a coordinated multi-sector monitoring and referral process that aims to cover all children living in a given geographical area and it closely linked to the enforcement of national child labour legislation* (ILO 2012, Evolution of CLM, P1) and standards such as HAF. Its prime actions include frequent direct observations to find child labourers and to define risks, to which they are exposed, refer these children to services such as education, verification that they have been removed and tracking them afterwards to ensure that they have satisfactory alternatives (ILO 2005 p. 1). This measure was introduced by ILO in early 1990s to serve as a tool initially to identify and monitor formal workplaces where there was child labour. It was first applied in Bangladesh Garment Industry (Vahapassi, 2000). Later the system was used in an informal setting of Sialkot soccer ball industry in Pakistan to monitor and ensure that child labourers removed from their workplaces do not return and prevent new group of children from commencing work ((Lund-Thomsen and Nadvi, 2010 p.10; ILO, 2006). These practices aided the addition of social protection to monitoring, in order to offer viable alternatives to the withdrawn child labourers (Lund-Thomsen and Nadvi, 2010; ILO, 2006).

CLM system could therefore be 'highly structured and institutionalized process with specific aims, objectives, resources, and content' (Winrock, 2008, p. 162). In the cases of Bangladesh's garment industry and Sialkot soccer ball, monitoring was carried out by professional labour inspectors and skilled personnel (Vahapassi, 2000). CLM can also be community based (CCLM) and more informal and flexible by involving the wider stakeholders, such as parents, peers, teachers, chiefs and other community members (WINROCK, 2008). In other words it is anchored in community structures and institutions (MMYE, 2008). Community participation in identifying and monitoring child labour in cocoa farms is critical because labour inspectors are usually too few to adequately cover all farms and will therefore confine their inspection to large agricultural enterprises (Khan, 2007). Khan again asserted that

*"as insiders, local people knew how child labour was embedded in local culture and everyday life"*  
(p20).

She further gave two additional reasons why CLM should be grounded at the community level: that insider knowledge could be combined with outside technical expertise to find the most feasible approaches and solutions that enable the local people to understand, confront and solve their child labour problems.



A typical example of CLMS as applied in the cocoa sector in Ghana, Cote 'd'Ivoire, Nigeria and Cameroon was coordinated by ILO/IPEC/WACAP where community stakeholders were the pivot around which implementation evolved with inbuilt linkages to other child welfare monitoring systems in education, health and human rights. WACAP's experience presented three stages of important elements in establishing an effective CLMS: preparation stage that included awareness creation; mobilization of groups and key actors and building their capacity; monitoring stage which involved the development of monitoring instruments, data collection and collation; follow up stage involved reporting and retraining of stakeholders. This indicates that the active participation of community members as well as community structures both formal and informal is very critical for the effective operationalisation of CCLM.

### 3.3. Social and Human Capital in the cocoa-producing communities as resources for facilitating Change

When rural development and agriculture are concerned, social change is always implied (Bock, 2012). Social and human capitals are critical resources for facilitating change. Utilizing available community capital including social and human capital in a manner that enables them to lead the change process could yield positive results and improve the quality of community life (Haines and Green, 2002). Social capital in the family as well as in the community plays a key role in the creation of human capital (Coleman, 1988). The high education and financial status of family members, available and accessible to the child are all indicators that measure the social capital available to the child. In dealing with social capital outside the family, Haines & Green (2002) profess that, social structures that make possible social norms, sanctions that enforce, the role of community, local government institutions, leaders and professional human capital such as teachers, all facilitate the creation of social capital. This enhances children's access to facilities which in turn facilitate their learning and development.

Sandra Franke (2005), distinguished three major approaches to measuring social capital: the micro approach that deals with actors propensity to cooperate which is referred to as 'cognitive' (p.2); the meso level that focuses on structures that facilitate cooperation; and the macro level that emphasizes a

*"community's environmental, social and political structures that convey values and norms which in turn create certain condition for social engagement and civic and political participation"*  
(p.2).

Sandra further emphasizes three areas of concentration at the micro level: firstly, the values and aspirations that underpin the cooperative relations; secondly, their behaviour and thirdly their perception about collective issues. At the meso level, the focus should be on the type of network, the position of members within the network, the types of interactions and the conditions in which they occur (Franke, 2005 p.2). The implications of the key elements in the approaches such as collective actions, structures, participation and social networks on the outcomes of the implementation of CLMS were key in this study.

#### **4. Methodology**

A mixed-method approach combining both exploratory qualitative and quantitative methods were used for collection and collation of responses to two main research objectives: the first was how the CCLM is being operated at the community level and its potential to mobilize or generate social capital to deal with worst forms of child labour. The second was to ascertain the emerging household labour re-arrangement and the coping strategies being adopted by farm families in the face of their challenges will also be explored.

Two contrasting case studies were pursued. Firstly, a community in which there has been a CCLM intervention was studied. Since 2008, most cocoa growing districts and communities have been beneficiaries of the National Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour (NPECLC) led by the Government of Ghana and have created child labour structures at the district and community levels. Dwease, in the Ashanti region of Ghana, is among 10 communities in Asante Akim Municipality that has a functional programme dealing with child labour. Secondly, to enable comparison in the assessment of impact of CCLM on children's social situations, data was collected from other communities in two high cocoa producing regions in Ghana where there were no CCLM interventions. The communities were Kwassusu, in the Asutifi District in the BrongAhafo Region, New Agogo in the Bia District and Aboboyaa in the SefwiWiawso district all in the Western Region. Whilst the residents of Kwassusu were migrants from the Volta and Northern regions who have settled mainly to farm, New Agogo is a community of about 800 inhabitants of which the indigenous Akans represent about 80 percent.

While the exploratory case study was adopted as a primary research methodology (Yin, 2003; Franke, 2005), the quantitative survey method was used to confirm results from the case studies especially on children social situations such as school attendance and participation in child work and hazardous work. The qualitative methods included participant observations, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). The FGDs sought to answer questions such as the extent to which CLMS has prevented/reduced the WFCL; the factors, mechanisms and processes responsible for change including the roles of individual community members and groups; and how these factors expressed in social-organizational arrangement and social networks are impacting on the community. Since the issue is mostly about children, their views were considered very important to this study. The children groupings were done by age so that the views of all the relevant age groups could be ascertained. Consequently, three (3) categories of age groups were interviewed in the study communities: 8-11 years; 12-14 years and 15-18 years respectively. These groupings were based on the categorization by the children Act 1998; Act 560 (13 years for light work; 15 years minimum of employment and 18 years for hazardous work) and the Ghana's Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (see Appendix 1).

A total of 6 of such groups were interviewed. With regard to adults at the community level, the categories included male cocoa farmer group; female cocoa farmer group and child protection committees. In-depth interviews were conducted for other stakeholders including assembly persons, programme managers, district officials, child labour committee chairpersons, head teacher/teachers, religious leaders and chiefs. Responses of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. In order to ensure confidentiality the



interviewees were framed anonymously as possible. Permission was sought from the persons before quoting into the report.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Socio economic analysis

Dwease consists of about 90 percent indigenous Akans and 10 percent Kusasis and Dargatis from Northern Ghana. Most of the residents in the Dwease community are cocoa farmers who also cultivate other crops such as cassava, plantain and maize. It was observed in the community that only a few women own cocoa farms. Most of the farms are owned by the men whilst their wives work alongside with them.

Labour on the farm consists of 60 percent self-labour, 10 percent family labour including wives and children, 10 percent hired labour on 'by day' (daily contract basis), 15 percent "nhwesoo" (caretaker) system and 5 percent "nnoboa" system. The "nnoboa" system is where farmers help each other in turns on their farms. It is used mainly for breaking of cocoa pods and few of the farmers use it for weeding but this system is less utilized in the cocoa communities due to lack of trust among farmers, lack of management and resources to maintain the "nnoboa" groups, and lack of technical support from appropriate institutions. The cost of "by day" differs from activity to activity. For instance, the cost of weeding or clearing is Gh 6.00 (\$4<sup>1</sup>); planting, Gh. 5.00 (\$3) whilst harvesting and carting cost Gh7.00 (\$4.6). In addition to the money, food or foodstuff is provided by the farmer. The farmers consider this source of labour as a big strain on their incomes but they are compelled to go for it as it is difficult to get labourers for long term (1year) contract for a fixed fee to be paid at the end of the contract. The average number of hours worked per day by a daily labourer on a farm is 4 hours (*from 8am -12 noon*). The shortage of labour availability leads to the involvement of children in some hazardous cocoa activities, and calls for the child labour monitoring system.

### 5.2. The Community Child Labour Monitoring (CCLM) process

The CCLM in Dwease was seen as the process that,

*"monitors children's school attendance and involvement in hazardous activities in line with the Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (HAF, 2008) and apprehend those who do not go to school"* (a respondent).

#### 5.2.1. The process, structure and roles of actors

The structure of the monitoring system (Figure 2) consists mainly of the Municipal Assembly, the Community Child Protection Committee (CCPC), the Child Panel (CP) and the Chieftaincy institution which is headed by the community Chief. The CCPC was set up as part of CCLM implementation by the community and the

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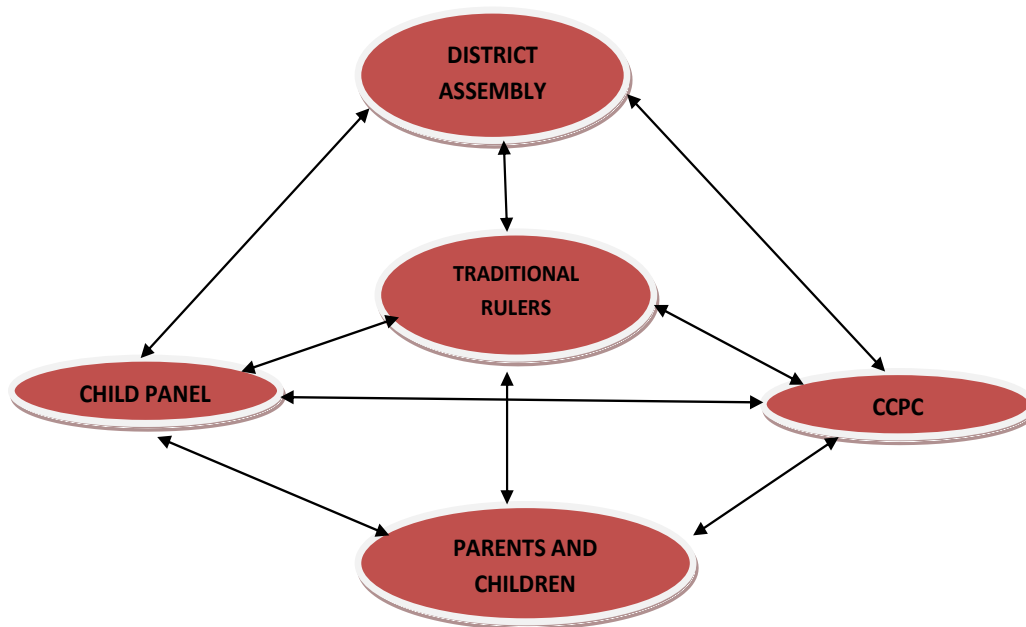
<sup>1</sup> Gh1=\$1.5

Municipal Assembly under the direct supervision of the Municipal Social Welfare Office which coordinates child labour intervention in the Municipality. The CCPC members were nominated and confirmed by community members through a durbar. The CP is a provision in the Children Act of Ghana, 1998, with non-judicial functions to mediate in civil and minor criminal matters concerning children. These structures work together and ensure harmony in reducing child labour as mentioned by one opinion leader:

*“people report cases on children involvement in hazardous activities to CCPC member when necessary, if CCPC could not solve it, it is reported to CP before it reaches Nananom (Chief and elders)if need be for further action. After we have handled it, we warn the person not to repeat what he/she did. If it is beyond us we refer it to the Municipal Social Office”.*

This statement depicted a typical key structure and institutions responsible for the CCLM process at the community level.

Appendix 1 depicts the key operational elements of the CCLM in the community and the roles of key actors. These are: awareness creation, law enforcement and sanctions, advocacy, child surveillance, conflict resolution, collection of data on the activities of children below age eighteen (18) years to know the children in WFCL and those at risk of WFCL. The data gathered by the CCPC is sent to the municipal social welfare for collation and generation of report. The Municipal Assembly in turn submits the data to the national Labour Department for collation and preparation of national report. In spite of the importance of data on the children’s activities, the data collection aspect is yet to be in operation. Another important aspect of CCLM in the community is child surveillance which entails monitoring of the children in the community, to identify the children who skip school to go to farm as well as monitoring the weight of the loads they carry from farm.



**Figure 2.** Structure of CCLM in Dwease

All the key actors and stakeholders interviewed confirmed the effectiveness of the CCPC as far as these roles (Appendix 1) are concerned. From the responses it could be observed that the CCPC's monitoring activities are mostly done in homes and schools in the community. Monitoring activities could not be extended to farms since it is not possible to visit the farms of the numerous farmers. This is a limitation that needs to be addressed. While the CCPC is responsible for raising awareness, data collection and monitoring child labour issues, the CP handles cases brought to it by the CCPC where financial or other circumstances pose a threat to the maintenance of child's rights. The CCPC which is a voluntary group reports to the Municipal Social Welfare Office.

### 5.2.2. Motivation for participation in the CCLM

According to older respondents, the CCLM process especially child surveillance is similar to the good old communal system which used to be practiced in Ghana whereby the whole community had joint responsibility for the protection and proper upbringing of the child. Even though this system is fading away due to urbanization, the willingness of community members to offer assistance in protection of children was being rekindled by the CCLM. This explains why even though the work is voluntary, yet some individuals have committed themselves to it. Every individual, whether an office holder or not tries to provide the needed support to make the CCLM work in the community. As the Assemblyman at Dwease put it "I was one of the people who started the programme. I had to go round driving children to go to the classroom to avoid being sent to the farm. I visit the teachers to find out how the children are doing in school, and also make follow ups on those who do not go to school. Now with the presence of the CCLM and other committees, the children are going to school".

On the part of Nana Banahene, the Chief of Dwease, his personal life has been his motivation. He had this to share:

*"I initially thought it was a disgrace to us if we do not let our children work harder on the farms because we thought we were rather helping the children. But I have come to realize that this issue of reducing child labour is to help the children. They have to match others in lifestyle and in everything. I want the children in my community to excel academically'. My personal exposure and experience have motivated my involvement in child labour reduction. I had been a messenger, a clerical assistant, sales representative, a security-man, a chief security-man, sales manager and commercial manager. Because of what I've gone through, I want to encourage all the young ones to study hard so they could make it in life".*

Mr. Adjei, a head teacher who was key in mobilizing the other head teachers to be involved in the CCLM activities, took a lesson from his father's advice. He said that:

*"I'm from this community and have observed several children growing in the community I know that if I do not take good care of them, they'd grow up disturbing both the community and the nation".*

Mr. Mensah, who is very instrumental in both the CP and CCPC said:

*"I want to see other people get there. Everyone has a kind of character. I have volunteerism in my life that's why I am into this activity. I want to be appreciated for good work and also see results in the community. I've dedicated myself to the job. I don't want to disappoint my generation and the people who have given me this role to play".*

The permeation of CCLMS in the Dwease community faced some challenges at the initial stages because both leaders and residents in the community did not understand the concept and issues. According to the chief,

*"a training that we attended at Bunsu after the Scale-up survey changed my perception about the child labour issues and realized that the issue was not that all forms of children contribution to farm work was wrong, but the WFCL. That motivated me to mobilize my people to deal with the issues".*

Opanin Kwadwo Duah, a farmer also mentioned that:

*"we thought the issue was about children not participating in farm activities at all, a move that will "seinkwadaa no na won aye akwadwofo" (spoil our children and eventually make them lazy) and therefore I was not cooperating until we were sensitized about the WFCL".*

Once there was that understanding by the community on the issues surrounding hazardous child labour they easily accepted. The way was thus paved for the system to work effectively. Consequently the CCPC had to meet every Thursday to solve issues pertaining to child labour attesting to how active the system was.

There were also stable conditions prevailing in the community provided by the leadership of the community, which strongly supported the activities of the CCLMS. The general consensus of the citizens was that the chief's behaviour and activities helped to promote social cohesion. MaameAkuaAbayie had this to say:

*"the good work of Nana (Chief) is impacting positively on the programme in the sense that he does not joke at all with issues of child labour which I think is helping to sustain the programme".*

According to respondents, Nana has been instrumental in ensuring that members of the community adhere to the regulations of the child monitoring system. He is sincere and administers justice, punishes those who deserve it and makes sure his words are taken seriously. He is the type that makes follow up on assignments given to the elders to make sure they are working. The other committees' members of the CCLM confirmed that the Chief's involvement in the child monitoring system has gone a long way to help reduce child labour and motivated them to work.

Another area that has caused community members to cooperate with the CCLM was the sanctions they fear to suffer if they fail to adhere to HAF. As one woman farmer put it,

*“Since the programme started, children are no more used for strenuous farm work again. When a parent allows the child not to be in school and the parent is caught, he/she will be in trouble”.*

A child remarked that:

*“I was absenting myself because my mother usually would ask me to stay in the shop whenever she travels. But when the child labour programme started, she realized if she continues that way she will be in trouble, so she stopped”.*

A test case was when a woman was fined two bottles of Schnapps (which costs about \$8) by the chief of the village for allowing her daughter to carry heavy fire wood. The impact was that parents were more responsible towards their children.

### 5.2.3. Challenges to the CCLM

It was observed that there was still a lot of work to be done in terms of continuous sensitization of both adult and children and in sustaining the referral system for social services. According to respondents, there was no referral system in place and most of children face a lot of needs in terms of school materials and food. A 15 year old boy talked about skipping school the previous week because of ₵2.5 (\$1.7) printing fee –

*“I weeded for half a day on a cassava farm before getting the ₵2.5 to pay for extra classes and printing fee.*

Even though there is free school system policy in place, other expenses serve as hindrance to their education. The last time identified child labourers were supported was about 4 years ago. There are no existing interventions to empower parents economically to better cater for their wards. Lastly, the lack of motivation (monetary allowances) for the CCPCs threatens the sustainability of the intervention as one of the CCPCs remarked that:

*“If someone does something voluntarily, he relaxes with time especially when not motivated”.*

### 5.3. Perceived Impacts of CCLMS on children’s social situations

In order to make comparison between a beneficiary CCLM community and non beneficiary communities, data was collected from non beneficiary communities in two high cocoa producing regions in Ghana. The communities were Kwassusu, in the Asutifi District in the BrongAhafo Region, New Agogo in the Bia District and Aboboyaa in the SefwiWiawso district all in the Western Region. Whilst the residents of Kwassusu were migrants from the Volta and Northern regions who have settled mainly to farm, New Agogo is a community of about 800 inhabitants of which the indigenous Akans represent about 80 percent.

The impact of the CCLM intervention was assessed in terms of school enrolment, attendance at school, academic performance of pupils, and proportion of children involvement in hazardous and child work, and parents’ responsibility towards children. A total of 299 pupils were interviewed from the various

communities and were categorized into various age groups: 8-11, 12-14 and 15-17 years in that order (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Age distribution of children who were interviewed

		Age			Total	
		8-11	12-14	15-17		
Community	Dwease	60	60	59	179	
		33.5%	33.5%	33.0%	100.0%	
	New Agogo	15	15	20	50	
		30.0%	30.0%	40.0%	100.0%	
	Kwasusu	10	9	17	36	
		27.8%	25.0%	47.2%	100.0%	
	Aboboyaa	15	9	10	34	
		44.1%	26.5%	29.4%	100.0%	
	Total		100	93	106	299
			33.4%	31.1%	35.5%	100.0%

#### 5.4. Impact of CCLM on children's attendance to school

The CCLM have also had relative impact on the attendance of pupils in school. This was evident in the responses to the interview with the students. Whilst only 19% of the students interviewed at Dwease, where the CCLMS intervention was taking place had skipped school *at least once* in the current school term, On the other hand the absenteeism at Aboboyaa, Kwasusu and New Agogo was 52%, 50% and 32% respectfully (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Distribution (%) of students who have missed school for at least once in total number of children interviewed

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Dwease	34	19
New Agogo	16	32
Kwasusu	18	50
Aboboyaa	18	52.9
Total	84	28.8



The reasons for absenteeism from school were categorized into sickness, financial constraint, cocoa farming and others and have been tabulated in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Reasons for missing school

Community	Reason for Missing School				Total
	Sickness	Financial Constraint	Cocoa Farming	other	
Dwease	20	12	1	1	34
	58.8%	35.3%	2.9%	2.9%	100.0%
New Agogo	7	3	5	2	17
	41.2%	17.6%	29.4%	11.8%	100.0%
Kwasusu	12	3	1	2	18
	66.7%	16.7%	5.6%	11.1%	100.0%
Aboboyaa	3	7	8	0	18
	16.7%	38.9%	44.4%	.0%	100.0%
Total	42	25	15	5	87
	48.3%	28.7%	17.2%	5.7%	100.0%

From Table 5, only 3% of the children who absented themselves from school in Dwease, where there was a functional CCLM, was due to cocoa farming (providing labour). This compares to 29.4%, 6% and 44% of the children who absented themselves from school in the non-CCLM intervention communities to work in the cocoa farms. It was noted, however that the large number of children in Dwease who absented themselves from school attributed it to sickness (59%) and financial constraints (35%) This was relatively high compared to the non-CCLM communities.

#### 5.4.1. Children's involvement in child work and hazardous activities

The Ghana hazardous child labour activity framework<sup>2</sup> (HAF, 2008) defines what constitutes child work (non hazardous) and hazardous work in cocoa production processes. Using HAF standard in assessing the activities of the students most of them were found to be involved in child work. Parents and even children indicated that that is the only available way cocoa farming skills could be transferred to the children. Table 6a below presents the various non-hazardous activities and the number of children involved in it from the various communities. It can be seen from the table that almost all the children partake in activities that are

<sup>2</sup>Helping in cooking and serving food; assisting in taking care of babies and toddlers on the farm; running errands on the farm; filling nursery bags with black soil; watering seedlings at the nursery; assisting in planting seedlings; uprooting weeds around young cocoa plants; fetching water for spraying and leaving the farm before spraying commences; gathering plucked cocoa pods; carting loads not exceeding 30% of the person's body weight over a 2-mile distance or less; breaking cocoa pods with a mallet or hitting; it on the ground; plucking pods within the reach of the hand; weeding with age-appropriate cutlass; scooping and removal of beans from broken pods (HAF 2008)

non-hazardous. However child work activities are predominant among the children where the CCLM intervention had taken place. Whilst all the children from 8-11 years in Agogo were involved in picking harvested pods from under cocoa trees in the company of adults, 80 percent, 60 percent and 88.3 percent of the children from 8-11 years in Kwasusu, Aboboyaa and Dwease were involved in the same activity respectively. In Dwease almost all the children are involved in gathering of cocoa pods, assisting in planting of cocoa. Or plucking within hand reached pods. The results suggest that most of the children in communities without CCLM intervention are involved in hazardous and non – hazardous activities whilst children in the CCLM intervention community are mostly involved in child work activities which the HAF allows. In addition to age, respondents also mentioned the physical maturity of children as additional criteria for assigning work.

**Table 6a.** Children in various communities involved in non-hazardous child labour activities (Child Work) in cocoa

Age	Non-Hazardous Activity	New Agogo	Kwasusu	Aboboyaa	Dwease
<i>Number of Children interviewed</i>		<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>60</b>
8-11	Helping in cooking and serving food	13(86.7)	5 (50.0)	5 (33.3)	15 (25.0)
	Running farm errands	-	6 (60.0)	5(33.3)	-
	Picking harvested pods from under cocoa trees in the company of adults	15 (100.0)	8 (80.0)	9(60.0)	53 (88.3)
	Uprooting weeds around young cocoa plants	12(80.0)	5 (50.0)	-	-
<i>Number of Children interviewed</i>		<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>60</b>
12-14	Filling of Nursery bags with black soil	7 (46.7)	9 (100)	5 (33.3)	24 (40.0)
	Gathering of cocoa pods	15(100.0)	9 (100.0)	9(100.0)	55 (91.7)
	Scooping and removal of beans	15(100.0)	5 (55.6)	9 (100.0)	-
	Carting minor loads	15(100.0)	9 (100.0)	9(100.0)	-
	Watering of Seedlings at the nursery	-	5 (55.6)	7 (77.8)	26 (43.3)
<i>Number of Children interviewed</i>		<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>59</b>
15-17	Assisting in planting cocoa	14 (70.0)	17 (100.0)	9 (90.0)	59 (100.0)
	Weeding/brushing undergrowths with age -appropriate cutlass (Sua-ado or small cutlass)	-	-	3 (30.0)	10(16.7)
	Plucking within hand-reach pods	-	7 (41.2)		59 (98.3)
	Breaking cocoa pods with breaking mallet or hitting on the ground	14 (70.0)	17 (100.0)	6 (60.0)	19 (31.7)
	Carting load not exceeding 30% bodyweight for more than 2miles(3 Km)	20 (100)	13 (76.5)	8 (80.0)	45 (75.0)

NB: Figures in parenthesis are percentages

However some of the children involved in hazardous activities such as weeding with machetes or long cutlass, climbing trees higher than three metres to cut mistletoe, working with agrochemicals, present or working within the vicinity during spraying of pesticide, using harvesting hook to harvest cocoa and breaking of cocoa pods with knife (Table 6b). At Dwease where there was an intervention and the existence of the CCLM, the involvement of children in the hazardous activities was not as pronounced as in the non-CCLM communities. For example, whilst the use of long cutlasses for weeding (15%) and the breaking of pods with pod knives (42%) among the children in Dwease are comparably high, the other HAF indicators are relatively low in the CCLM community than the non-CCLM communities.

**Table 6b.** Children in various communities involved in hazardous child labour activities in cocoa

<i>Hazardous Activity</i>	<i>New Agogo</i>	<i>Kwasusu</i>	<i>Aboboyaa</i>	<i>Dwease</i>	<i>Overall</i>
Using machetes/long cutlass for weeding	19 (38.0)	13 (33.3)	5 (14.7)	4 (15.4)	42 (23.7)
Climbing trees higher than 3metres (9 feet's) to cut mistletoe with cutlass	3 (6.0)	2 (5.1)	3 (8.8)	0	8 (4.5)
Working with Agrochemicals i.e. Purchasing, transport, storage, use (mixing, loading and spraying/ applying), washing of containers and spraying machine and disposal.	7 (14.0)	0	1 (2.9)	1 (3.8)	10 (5.6)
Present or working in the vicinity of farm during pesticide spraying or re-enter a sprayed farm in less than 12 hours	19 (38.0)	0	0	0	19 (10.7)
Harvesting overhead cocoa pods with harvesting hook	10 (20.0)	5 (12.8)	6 (17.6)	2 (7.7)	24 (13.6)
Gathering of pods	40 (80.0)	30 (76.9)	31 (91.2)	0	122 (68.9)
Carting of cocoa into boxes	43 (86.0)	29(74.4)	32 (94.1)	0	125 (70.6)
Breaking cocoa pods with breaking knife	12 (24.0)	5 (12.8)	16 (47.1)	11(42.3)	44 (24.9)
Total	50 (100)	39 (100)	34 (100)	26 (100)	149 (100)

*NB: Figures in parenthesis are percentages*

A child at Dwease was identified to be involved in most of cocoa activities and when asked why he was involved, this is what the 15 year old Christian had to say:

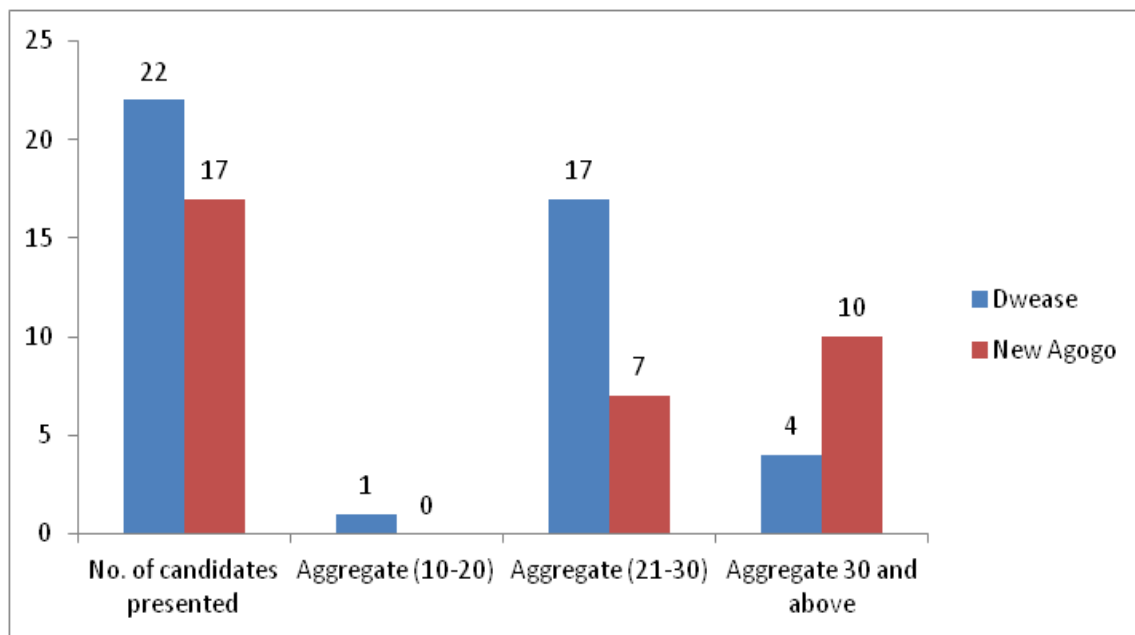
*My father works alone so I have to help him. I go along with him to the farm to help harvest and take part in other activities. I willingly do these activities to help my father however I do not miss*

*school. I do not see helping my father as impediment to my schooling. For instance last term, I was the 4<sup>th</sup> out of 26 students and with the two tests taken I had 85% in the first test and 75% in the second test I do this work voluntarily without any pay so that my father would see that I'm a good boy.*

When Christian's register was investigated he had missed school only 3 days out of the 7 weeks. His teacher however commented that Christian is an average student who sometimes contributed in class. This is an exceptional case since none of the other children could combine effectively school and work. The children mentioned that they do that as a way of contributing their quota to the welfare of the family and more importantly be accepted as a responsible growing child.

**5.4.2. Impact of CCLM on Children's Academic Performance**

On the impact of the intervention on school academic performance, the study compared Dwease school performance at the Junior High School to New Agogo. The findings from the Junior High School records show that more pupils were presented for the final examination in the child labour monitoring community (Dwease) than in New Agogo where there was no CCLM (Figure 7) and better results were achieved at Dwease than at New Agogo (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Results and Number of students presented for the Junior high school examination

## 6. Discussions

### 6.1. Structure of the CCLMS in Dwease

There was an extensive use of existing and new structures such as the chieftaincy institution and the CCPC with the chief providing strong leadership that allows the community to take responsibility for their actions. Coordination between the groups has been smooth as a result of the actors understanding their roles thus giving credence to the assertion that actors perform very well when they know their roles and how their roles relate or feed into each other (Seddon et al. 2008). This validates one of the key pillars of implementing CCLM – that it should be anchored in existing local and district structures. The structure that enables cooperation in the Dwease community as illustrated in Figure 1 is working together and ensuring cordial relationship the parties involved. While the CCPC was responsible for raising awareness, registration of children and monitoring child labour issues, the CP handled cases uncovered by the CCPC where financial or other circumstances are threats to child's rights. The intervention has also brought the District Assembly closer to the community than before and attends to both technical and material needs of the community. For instance, the District Assembly printed the examination papers free of charge for the schools in the community which relieved the parents from paying term examination fee and enhanced children school attendance. The advent of the CCLM has "strengthened and offered opportunity for institutions to prove their worth in handling children affairs as well as filling the gap in terms of institutional performance" (*Municipal Coordinating Director*). The inability of the system to check children situations in the farms could partly be solved if children are empowered through sensitization on their rights and responsibilities to the extent that they can demand those rights from their parents and guardians and report any abuses to the CCPC and their teachers without fear of victimization.

### 6.2. Individuals involved in CCLMS

The enthusiasm of the various factors involved in the community child labour monitoring system even without monetary compensation was as a result of their proper understanding of the issues, the effects of hazardous labour on the child, community and the nation as a whole as well as the willingness to protect children. According to respondents, child surveillance system was not very difficult to implement because it was similar to the communal system where a child does not belong to the parents alone but an asset to the entire community (MMYE, 2008). It was found that it was essential to have at least one highly respected person who is committed to the implementation process to be a local leader. This confirms Gutierrez, Hilborn & Defeo (2011) assertion that legitimate community volunteers and leaders when guided by collective interest and not self interest could influence community compliance of standards, enforce by-laws and resolve conflicts which otherwise could have negative effect on children. Nevertheless reliance on volunteers such as CCPCs adds complexity to the maintenance of these social partnerships and capital since they choose how and when they contribute and for what purpose (Billet et al., 2007). They are therefore disposed to enervation which may characterize a high turnover of participants and might need replacement and/or renewal more frequently (ibid). Adequate compensation for their time as well as continuous processes of

building and sustaining trust, genuine engagement and progress that reflect personal or local concerns are required to sustain and engage the 'volunteer participants' (ibid). The process whereby the community members were given the chance to select their leaders through durbar was a good strategy to get them to cooperate. This confirms literature that community interventions are more successful if they feel part and own the process (Reed 2008) but it is realized through the commitment of its leaders.

### 6.3. Children involvement in cocoa work

All the children interviewed have ever participated in cocoa work. However task distributions were developmentally determined and tasks considered appropriate for children are based on their body and psychosomatic maturity and not only on the age of the child. This brings to focus the fact that age cannot be used as sole criteria for assessing children involvement in work but should include physical, psychological and emotional maturity of the child. Again the desire of child to be seen as a 'good child' by the parents and guardians also influence the support they give to parents even at the expense of their education. Child labour could be said to be family and culturally embedded and any intervention which is oblivious of this fact is bound to suffer. The desire of children to support family business is also indication that cocoa farming will for a long time to come continue to be small holder family business.

### 6.4. Emerging coping mechanism

The main cocoa activities that engage the children when they skip school were gathering of beans and carting wet beans from the farm to the village. These two activities usually performed by children are time bound. After fermenting the cocoa for 6-7 days, it needs to be dried immediately to avoid loss of beans through over fermentation and mould leading to low quality of beans. The risk of losing beans and high cost of labour were the main reasons why the children are compelled by their parents to skip school in favor of farm. This confirms the researches in various literatures that poverty level impact the way in which households deal with shocks and the extent to which investment in children are sacrificed as a risk coping mechanism (Gorsh et al, 2008). Thus dealing with the labour constraint will not only bring high productivity and reduce labour cost; it will also minimize the withdrawal of children from school by parents to assist them on their farms. One source of labour that was underutilised was the "nnoboa" (group labour support or cooperative) system. The *nnoboa* system which formed about 5% of sources of labour according to this study has been practised in Ghana for centuries. According to Teal, Zeitlin and Maama (2004) the practice of *nnoboa* has been dwindling over the years. The key factors identified by this study and confirmed by Teal et al (2004) are loss of trust, lack of management of *nnoboa* groups, lack of resources to maintain the groups and lack of technical support from appropriate institutions. The reconstruction of *nnoboa* system by dealing with these obstacles to address labour short falls will have a positive impact on cocoa labour issues that affect both children and farmers. The CCLM intervention concentrated on the social aspect only without tackling the economic improvement of parents may cause imbalance in the system.

Since cocoa farming involves a lot of labour in its production most of the farmers are adopting strategies to deal with the shortage of labour that arise from not using children in cocoa farming. It was observed that



because of the intervention of the child labour monitoring system at Dwease, most of the farmers have resorted to seeking the services of *by day* labourers to do the farm work which increased labour cost. Most school going children were rather sent to farm on weekends to help with work that were not detrimental to their health. In the event of not being able to hire labour or have access to “nnoboa” service, farmers have resorted to persuading the children to skip school to help them especially in gathering of pods and/ or in carting wet fermented beans for drying.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper sought to understand how CCLM operates and its potential to mobilize or generate social capital to deal with worst forms of child labour as well as ascertain the emerging household labour re-arrangement to facilitate a more sustainable change in cocoa production systems. The results indicate that the CCLM as a voluntary social auditing system is working in the community where members hold themselves accountable for the welfare of children. The process has mobilized and empowered the community to continuously solve the problems confronting the community and children in a timely manner. CCLM is embedded in community structures and has established local partnerships and alliances that have fostered ownership, sustainability and brought positive changes.

The members of the CCPC, the CP and even the chieftaincy institutions are premised on the social capital agency of individuals, their interests and their energies are influenced by social pressure that regulate, coordinate and exert pressure on farmers and parents to change their attitudes towards the use of children in cocoa farms and offer general protection. The main limitation of the CCLM is that due to the peasant and numerous small holder nature of farmers scattered around, it is extremely difficult to check the extent of children’ involvement from farm site. This challenge can be remedied if the children are empowered through sensitization on their rights and responsibilities to the extent that they can demand these rights from their parents and guardians and report any abuses to the CCPC and their teachers without fear of victimization.

The Ghana HAF has provided a clear framework for children participation in cocoa farming which takes into consideration the socio-cultural situation in cocoa growing communities. This is essential and provides the opportunity for continuous impartation of cocoa farming skills to children in the absence of available formal training. This means that the socio-cultural and socio-economic considerations are critical and can boost the confidence of local people to accept change in the interest of all. All the children interviewed have ever participated in cocoa activity. However task distributions were developmentally determined and tasks considered appropriate for children were based on their body and psychosomatic maturity and not only on the age of the child. This brings to focus the fact that age cannot be used as sole criteria for assessing children involvement in work but should include physical, psychological and emotional maturity of the child. Again the desire of a child to be seen as a ‘good child’ by parents and guardians also influence the support they give to parents even at the expense of their education. Child labour could be said to be family and culturally embedded and any intervention which is oblivious of this fact is bound to suffer. The desire of children to support family business is also indication that cocoa farming will for a long time to come continue to be small

holder family business. This is critical for children involvement in cocoa work and those children should not only be targeted for separation from work but should be offered appropriate avenue to nurture their skills through cultural-legally acceptable framework that provides for their involvement and eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

The seasonality of cocoa production also exerts pressure on farmers to perform certain tasks at stipulated periods in the process in order to achieve maximum yield. As a coping strategy, children still have to skip school to support parents. The risk of losing beans and high cost of labour were the main reasons why parents occasionally withdraw their children from school. The time bound nature of drying wet fermented cocoa beans causes parents to withdraw children from school to perform that service unless alternative labour arrangement is found. This confirms the researches in various literatures that poverty level impacts the way in which households deal with shocks and the extent to which investment in children are sacrificed as a risk coping mechanism. Encouragement and improvement of nnoboa system are recommended to boost labour availability. This will have positive impact on cocoa labour issues that affect both children and farmers. It will enhance income and productivity of farmers and thereby reduce children involvement in hazardous child labour by attacking its structural determinants.

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