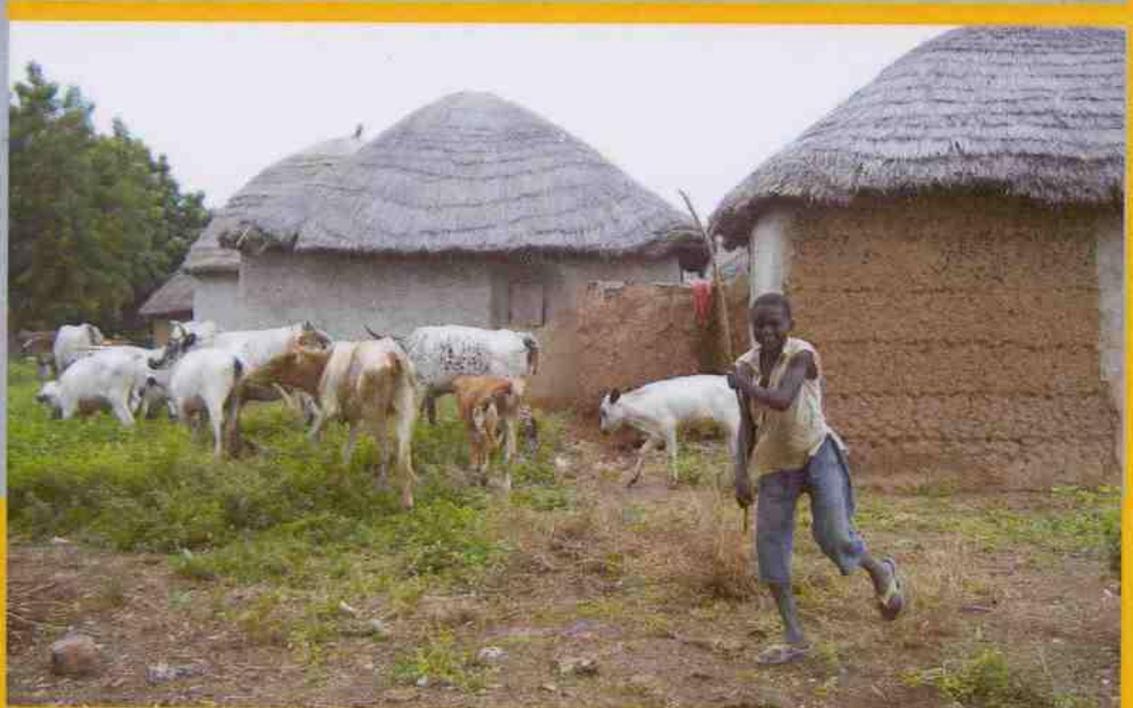
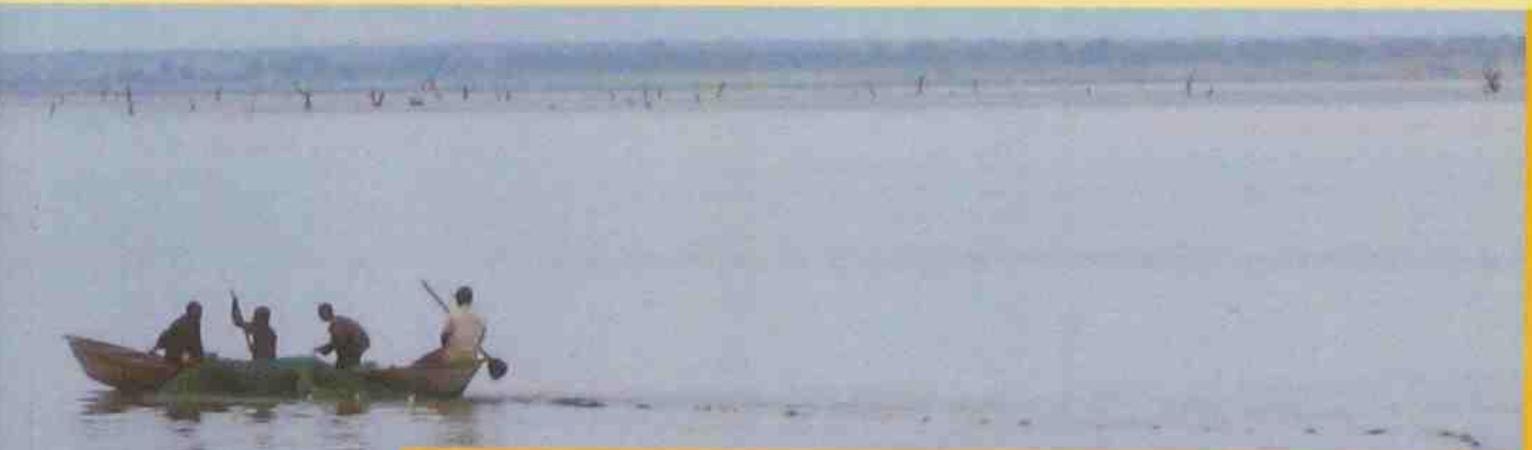


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**Child Labour and Children`s Economic
Activities in Agriculture in Ghana**



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Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development (SLE)
on behalf the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Child Labour and Children's Economic Activities in Agriculture in Ghana

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Summary and Main Recommendations

Summary

Increasing concern that a large number of children are exposed to harsh or hazardous work conditions has led to global efforts to put an end to child labour in agriculture, particularly to its worst forms. Cooperation is actively being developed between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and international organisations involved in agriculture, notably the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF). Their aim is to bring concerns about child labour into the mainstream of agricultural policy and to promote strategies and programmes aimed at improving rural livelihoods including the promotion of decent youth employment. A Declaration of Intent on cooperation on child labour in agriculture was signed on the World Day against Child Labour in June 2007.

The research project "Child Labour and Children's Economic Activities in Agriculture in Ghana" was initiated jointly by the FAO and the Seminar for Advanced Training in Rural Development of the Humboldt University Berlin. Ghana was chosen for the study because it is documented that a high number of children work in agriculture. According to the Ghana Child Labour Survey carried out in 2001 – the first and only nationwide data collection on working children – half of the rural and about one fifth of the urban children is economically active. Nearly 60 percent of them are engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Another reason for the choice of Ghana was that the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and unions implement a range of policies for the reduction of worst forms of labour, making it possible to analyse their impact as a starting point for future strategies.

The goal of the study is to address knowledge gaps on child labour issues prevailing in the agricultural sector and to prepare recommendations on how to address them in the policies and programmes of various stakeholders: FAO and other international organisations involved in agriculture, government institutions and civil society groups. The study focuses on:

- the identification of major legislation, institutions, policies and processes affecting the economic activities of children and child labour

- case studies on children's economic contribution and on child labour in cocoa production, fishing and cattle herding, sectors in which a considerable number of children work
- the identification of initiatives and practices which have been successful in addressing issues of child labour
- the review of the available statistics relevant to child labour in agriculture and an assessment of whether and how the improvement of data availability through national data collection processes might be achieved

In general, Ghana has a comparatively progressive child labour law; enforcement, however, is still inadequate. Since the 1990s, the government has carried out various initiatives to protect children from exploitative and hazardous work. It has implemented legislative reforms, developed a range of interventions in rural areas and is now in a process of mainstreaming child labour concerns into policy approaches such as Poverty Reduction Strategies. In recent years, unions such as the General Agricultural Workers' Union and several NGOs have also devoted increased attention to the problem of child labour. In 2008, the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment drafted a National Plan of Action for the Elimination of (the worst forms of) Child Labour 2008-2015 as an overall strategy and basis for cooperation between institutions and organisations. However, it has yet to be assessed how far legislative reforms, programmes and activities have contributed to a reduction of child labour.

The case study on children's work in the cocoa sector is based on a literature review. In 2000 and 2001, the media – especially in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America – reported that a large number of trafficked children were employed in slave-like conditions on cocoa farms in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Subsequently, several studies with quite large representative samples have been conducted on children's work in cocoa production. In all surveys carried out in Ghana it is reported that a considerable number of children participate in cocoa production and are to some extent involved in activities considered hazardous. Yet all in all, the authors maintain that most of them perform acceptable and light work. However, on the whole, the line between acceptable work and child labour might not always be clear-cut. Only in June 2008, the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment released a Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework for the cocoa sector to clarify the definition of acceptable work and child labour. It consists of a catalogue specifying activities considered hazardous for children for the whole seasonal calendar. In addition, the number of working hours and education opportunities are considered.

Apart from cocoa production, little information on working conditions and the kind of tasks boys and girls perform in agriculture exists. For this study fishing and cattle herding have been selected because it was known from sketchy information that a large number of children work in these sectors. Similarly, as in cocoa production, child labour in fisheries has recently attracted the attention of the media; in films and articles it was maintained that a high number of children were trafficked to work in fisheries at the Volta Lake and exposed to hazardous and worst forms of labour.

The case studies in two districts at the Volta Lake and two in coastal areas show that a large number of children are involved in fishing and that they perform a wide variety of tasks. Whereas fishing is mainly the work of men and boys, it is largely women and girls who process and market the fish. Typical for the work of girls is that they combine fish processing and trade with various household chores. From the interviews undertaken and observations made it can be concluded that children in fishing are engaged under different conditions ranging from light and regular work that can be combined with school attendance to worst forms of labour. Many children work under conditions not in accordance with Ghanaian law either, because they have not reached the minimum age or because they do work such as going to sea or carrying heavy loads, which are considered hazardous and/or because their economic activities affect their school attendance. In the districts of Tolon-Kumbungu and North and South Tongu the cattle boys either worked for their families or under contracts which committed them for several years. As they herded the cattle from morning to evening none of the boys in the sample was enrolled in school. The violation of child protection laws as well as the Ghana Human Trafficking Act is particularly evident in the case of children who have a contract and work for an employer for several years; however, it is difficult to assess the number of cases in fishing or cattle herding.

In fishing as well as in cattle herding the children face a number of hazards – for example they are exposed to extreme weather conditions or can be bitten by insects or snakes. However, it is difficult to assess the actual risks involved and the number of cases in which the children get work-related injuries or sicknesses. Some of the hazards mentioned by children and parents – such as insect bites – might be less related to work than to the dangers of everyday life in rural areas. To correctly define hazards, risk assessments have to be conducted. The Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework released by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment for the cocoa sector could be an example for the development of definitions of hazardous work both in fishing and livestock keeping as well as in other sectors of agriculture.

Children's economic activities in agriculture are influenced by a multitude of factors on the supply as well as on the demand side. Poverty is considered a major determinant of child labour; however, manifold other factors also influence children's work such as the accessibility and quality of education and the impact of interventions.

The accessibility and quality of education and its relevance to the labour market is one factor in parents' decisions to send their children to school. Although many boys and girls combine school attendance and work, increased enrolment rates can have an effect on working hours and on the kind of work done. One element in sensitisation programmes for the reduction of child labour is the creation of an awareness of the value of education. However, as Odonkor (2007a:1) claims "rural parents should rather be seen as dissatisfied clients of the education system than as illiterates ignorant of the value of education". In this study it was confirmed that because of the low quality of education, difficulties in access and also the uncertainty of finding an adequate job after graduation, parents have developed a coping strategy by which they send some of their children to school and the others help in fishing, farming or other economic activities. Realistically, the role model quoted in interviews and focus group discussions included not only persons who were better off because of their education but also examples of Senior High School graduates who could not find a job and had been "spoiled" for the work on the farms through the expectations they had developed.

At the moment, the impact of policies and interventions for the reduction of child labour is difficult to assess because they have been implemented only recently as in the case of the ILO Time-Bound Programme, or have hardly been evaluated at all as the remediation projects in the cocoa sector (Payson Center 2008). Four of the six districts visited (Ketu South, Pru, North and South Tongu, Tolon-Kumbungu) are among the total of 20 collaborating with the Time-Bound Programme since 2006. Altogether, several hundred children and, to some extent, their families received assistance; for example, young children have been enrolled in schools and supplied with school uniforms and other items while, for older ones, training opportunities have been sought, and in some of the districts parents have been provided with skills training and financial support. However, it appears that many of the children supported under the Time-Bound Programme who are now enrolled in schools continue to participate in fishing and farming. It is difficult to assess the extent to which they work less or their general situation might have improved. Especially in North and South Tongu the activities to reduce child labour have led to controversial debate, opposition and conflicts in the communities. Some cattle owners see the efforts to withdraw boys from herding as an "attempt to crash local economy" (Afenyadu 2008). To date, no solutions have been found.

During the research phase, the team found several policies and activities on national, regional and district level that might contribute to the long-term reduction of the worst forms of child labour. Promising are efforts to mainstream child labour issues into existing policies and programmes because this enlarges capacities and helps to lay the basis for cooperation and networking between institutions and organisations. An example is the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment. For effective mainstreaming it is crucial to sensitise and train the personnel at all levels; for this reason, the development of teaching material on child labour in agriculture is seen as another case of good practice. The third example is the establishment of Child Labour Monitoring Systems at district and community level with the aim of documenting the incidence of child labour and development trends. The data and information collected can be used as a basis for immediate interventions or – when they are transferred to stakeholders at district and national level – for appropriate future actions and the improvement of current policies and programmes. Apart from approaches aiming at capacity building in institutions and organisations and/or data collection, it is relevant to give immediate support to children in, or at risk of, the worst forms of labour. One good practice example is the provision of transitional schools, because they open up new opportunities for working children. The other example is the direct action approach to withdrawing children from the worst forms of labour (in fishing and other occupations) as long as law enforcement remains inadequate.

The Ghana Child Labour Survey of 2001 is the first and only nationwide data collection on working children. While it is possible to extract some information from other Ghanaian statistics, they are fragmentary and inconsistent. As early as 2005, a Technical Working Group on Integrating Child Labour Indicators on Socio-Economic and Demographic Surveys was established to develop recommendations for the improvement of data collection. The Technical Working Group makes a number of suggestions to counter the shortcomings of existing surveys. The recommendations are in a work-in-progress stage. Yet, they have been already considered in the Ghana Cocoa Labour Survey conducted by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment in 2007. Evidently, to effectively assess children's engagement in exploitative, hazardous or worst forms of labour in agriculture and fishing, the existing surveys would have to include many of the Working Group's recommendations, a requirement that may not be realistic. Thus, it may be necessary to undertake separate quantitative surveys on the different sectors where hazardous work by children plays a prominent role, as in fisheries and livestock keeping.

Main Recommendations

International agencies and organisations can have a considerable impact on the enforcement of internationally agreed goals, conventions and standards. The main recommendations on how FAO – in cooperation with the partners of the Declaration of Intent and ministries – can contribute most effectively to the reduction of (worst forms of) child labour in agriculture and fisheries refer to:

- the mainstreaming/integration of child labour issues into its departments, programmes and activities¹
- the increase of the knowledge base on the worldwide incidence and forms of child labour in various agricultural sectors as well as on (successful) policies and interventions for its reduction
- the support of capacity building by making available or improving training and education material on child labour issues for decision makers, agricultural extension services, farmers, children, youth and other groups

Because of its mandate FAO in particular could serve as a centre for information and knowledge on the topic of child labour in agriculture and fishing and as a forum for policy dialogue. Because of its close relationships to national ministries and departments of agriculture FAO could assist member countries reaching the internationally agreed goals; at the same time FAO could play an essential role in supporting global monitoring processes on the development of child labour. To achieve synergy effects, in general, FAO should work closely with other United Nations programmes and agencies addressing child labour and establish structures for cooperation. To intensify collaboration, regular meetings with relevant cooperation partners are proposed. Regarding activities at national, district and community level, FAO and partners should make use of, and build upon, existing programmes and structures concerned with children's rights.

Mainstreaming child labour issues

One aim of the Declaration of Intent on Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture of the ILO, FAO and other organisations involved in agriculture is to “mainstream child labour concerns into existing activities, programmes, and projects of agricultural organisations” and “into agricultural policy making” (ILO/FAO et al. 2007:4). It is

¹ For a definition of mainstreaming and examples for processes see chapter 4.1.

strongly recommended that mainstreaming processes are initiated at FAO to involve the capacities and specific expertise of different departments and programmes in the efforts to reduce child labour. As initial actions the following is proposed.

- With the aim of identifying cost- and time-effective options, FAO should commission a feasibility study on how to integrate child labour issues into the work of its different departments at the headquarters and the decentralised offices.
- The results and recommendations of the study should be presented in workshops with representatives of different departments, work units and programmes at FAO headquarters and the decentralised offices. The objectives of the workshops should be to discuss organisational aspects of processes to mainstream child labour concerns such as the creation/nomination of focal points, and to determine priority areas for future work. The experience of other organisations working on the reduction of child labour, such as ILO, should be considered. In addition, FAO's experience with the integration of other cross-cutting topics, such as women's and gender issues, into the activities of different departments and programmes should be taken into account.
- As the various FAO departments and programmes will be of different relevance to the goal of reducing child labour, in the workshops it should also be discussed how the integration/mainstreaming of the issue could contribute to achieving the respective mandates.

Furthermore, FAO should use its connection with agricultural ministries and departments to support member countries in processes for mainstreaming child labour issues into policies, programmes and projects. The following recommendations refer mainly to the Ghanaian context, but may also be applicable to other countries and regions.

- Currently, FAO is assisting the Ghanaian Ministry of Fisheries in drafting a national Fisheries Policy. Because of the importance of child labour in fisheries, it is recommended that FAO and the ministry consider a mainstreaming approach for the future policies.
- FAO should give technical support to the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture and to the Ministry of Fisheries in its efforts to integrate child labour concerns into extension services and other activities at community, regional and national level.
- FAO and partners, in particular ILO, should give technical support to the Ghana Statistical Service and to the relevant ministries to help them implement the

proposals made both by the Technical Working Group and in this report for the integration of information on working children into Ghanaian national surveys.

- FAO should encourage its member countries to integrate child labour concerns in its Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Extension of Knowledge Base

Through the development of knowledge and expertise on the problem of child labour and on successful interventions and policies for its reduction, FAO could be a centre for awareness-building, knowledge exchange and capacity building for other international organisations, multi- and bilateral agencies for development cooperation and for national ministries or agriculture departments.

- It is recommended that FAO technically supports government efforts to establish data bases on children's economic activities in agriculture. These efforts could be linked with the ILO International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour and to initiatives such as Understanding Children's Work by ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank. In addition, data should be made available, for example by posting it on the homepages either of FAO or of other international organisations. If this is done, institutions, ministries, NGOs and the general public will have access to the information needed for the development of policies and interventions.
- As many children are involved in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, the data collection should consider the various components of the value chain.
- Often, children work extensively by combining work in agriculture with household chores. It is therefore suggested that household activities are also included in research and data bases.

Training and Education

For effective mainstreaming of child labour concerns into the work and activities of institutions and organisations involved in agriculture it is essential to sensitise and train personnel and stakeholders at all levels. ILO/IPEC and other organisations and institutions have already developed teaching material on tackling child labour addressed to different stakeholders. Specifically, for institutions or organisations which are new to the child labour issue, such as the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture, adequate teaching material can contribute to integrating the issue into extension services and other activities.

- It is proposed that FAO commissions a review of existing manuals and material for addressing and integrating child labour concerns into training on agricultural

issues in Ghana and other African regions. If necessary, FAO should give partners technical support in the updating and adapting of manuals and in the training of stakeholders in their use. For agricultural sectors not yet covered, FAO should provide technical assistance to ministries and other partners in the development of new training material. In Ghana, the sectors yet to be addressed include, for example, fisheries and keeping of livestock.

- FAO should support the development and implementation of curricula relevant to the rural and agricultural context for primary and secondary schools. Examples are the planned Junior Farmer Field and Life Skills Schools in Ghana as well as the already established curricula in selected schools in fishing communities in Malawi.