



Fairtrade Addresses Child Labour in Cocoa Production

Working with small-scale producer organizations is at the core of Fairtrade's approach to improving the livelihoods of Fairtrade cocoa farmers. Through the **Fairtrade West Africa Cocoa Programme (WACP)**, cooperatives are becoming stronger organizations, responsive to their members' and business partners' needs and beneficial to their communities. Our long-term aim is a sustainable relationship for all stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain.

Child labour is widespread in West Africa, the world's largest cocoa-producing region. Children are also trafficked from Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to work in dangerous conditions.

Consumers, the media, global corporations, NGOs and policymakers are all calling for cocoa production to meet higher standards. Fairtrade seeks to address the root causes of child labour, which include poverty and a lack of good and accessible schools. Our approach includes:

- Implementing Fairtrade Standards and auditing on child labour and human rights issues.
- Increasing incomes and improving access to education.
- Training through the Fairtrade West Africa Cocoa Program and other partnerships.
- Implementing monitoring and remediation systems, including Fairtrade's Youth-Inclusive Community-Based System.

No one can provide a 100 percent guarantee that a product is free of child labour. However, if Fairtrade finds breaches to our child labour requirements, we will take immediate action to protect the impacted child or children. We work with national child protection agencies and children's rights organizations to enable safe alternatives for children and young people withdrawn from labour. We then support the producer organization to take corrective actions, including setting up monitoring and remediation systems and relevant awareness raising projects.

1.6 million
children work on cocoa farms.

45%
of households use child labour, mainly because of poverty.

Fairtrade improves cocoa farmers' incomes, living standards and access to education.²

Through the Fairtrade Minimum Price and cash payments from Fairtrade Premium funds, Fairtrade certified cooperative farmers in Côte d'Ivoire receive benefits.

Cocoa cooperatives paid out **20%** of their Fairtrade Premium directly to members in 2022.

Additional Premium funds are spent on educational facilities or services in cocoa farming communities.

Fairtrade increases households' investments in education, according to several independent studies.³

Fairtrade cocoa **farmers in Côte d'Ivoire were able to spend 33% more** on their children's education when they were living above the poverty line and their other basic needs were already met.²

Increasing awareness and strengthening monitoring and remediation

Fairtrade's West Africa Cocoa Program includes training on children's rights and child labour. It supports cooperatives to put in place child labour monitoring and remediation systems.

We have developed our own Youth-Inclusive and Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System which integrates with local government child labour systems and responses. It covers more than just farming households, and is effective in preventing and remediating child labour.⁴

All stakeholders, not just farmers, should be responsible for preventing child labour. Fairtrade partners with donors and businesses to develop targeted programs in specific regions or supply chains. For example, in 2019 Fairtrade joined the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) as a non-profit contributing partner. ICI shares our goal to eliminate child labour. This partnership allows both organizations to share learnings, improve operating models and reach more children and their families in cocoa communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.⁵

Our Impact



Members of Fairtrade cocoa cooperatives understand the importance of children's rights, and the role cooperatives can play to protect them.



Fairtrade's West Africa Cocoa Program 2021 Monitoring Report analyzed the effect of training on Fairtrade cocoa farmers.

Household Index measures signs of understanding:

- **The community's involvement in stopping child labour**
- **The importance given by the community to the schooling of boys and girls**
- **The community's understanding of the difference between allowable child work and child labour**

After training, farmers feel that:

- **Children should not engage in hazardous, exploitative or abusive labour**
- **Girls and boys should go to school**
- **Children should only work in a way that doesn't disrupt their schooling**

¹NORC (2020) Assessing Progress in Reducing Child Labor in Cocoa Growing Areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

²Knösslsdorfer et. al. (2021) Effects of Fairtrade on farm household food security and living standards: Insights from Côte d'Ivoire, *Global Food Security*, 29; Sellare et. al. (2020) Fairtrade, Agrochemical Input Use, and Effects on Human Health and the Environment, *Ecological Economics*, 176.

³There is external research evidence of significantly greater household level investments in the following studies that are not cocoa specific: Meemken, E.-M., Spielman, D.J., Qaim, M. (2017) Trading off nutrition and education? A panel data analysis of the dissimilar welfare effects of Organic and Fairtrade standards. *Food Policy*, 71, 74–85; Akoyi, K.T.,

Mitiku, F., Maertens, M. (2020) Private sustainability standards and child schooling in the African coffee sector. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. 264, 121713; Becchetti, L., Conzo, P., Gianfreda, G. (2012) Market access, organic farming and productivity: the effects of Fair Trade affiliation on Thai farmer producer groups. *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*. 56, 117–140.

⁴Fairtrade (2021) Comparative Assessment of Monitoring and Remediation systems on Child Labour as implemented by Fairtrade Small-scale Produce Organizations.

⁵Fairtrade West Africa Cocoa Programme, Monitoring Report, First Edition, page 32.

Fair is working together

Fairtrade offers multiple ways that cocoa companies and brands can put their values into action. Work with us to transform your supply chain and discover what is fair. For more information on how Fairtrade addresses child labour visit: fairtrade.ca/issues or contact: license@fairtrade.ca.

