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An image book displayed by a Committee for Child Protection member in Petit-Paris. Credit: Alexis Koffi

INTERIM EVALUATION

CACAO: COOPERATIVES ADDRESSING CHILD LABOR ACCOUNTABILITY OUTCOMES IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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Lead Evaluator: Dr. John McCauley, The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG)

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INTERIM EVALUATION OF CACAO

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This report describes in the interim evaluation of the Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes (CACAO) project in Côte d'Ivoire. Fieldwork for this evaluation was conducted in February and March of 2024. The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) conducted this independent evaluation in collaboration with the project team and stakeholders and prepared the evaluation report according to the terms specified in its contract with the United States Department of Labor. The evaluation team would like to express sincere thanks to all the parties involved for their support and valuable contributions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full Phrase
2A	<i>Agriculteurs en Action</i>
AEC	African Economic Community (AEC)
ANADER	National Agency to Support Rural Development; <i>Agence Nationale d'Appui au Développement Rural</i>
ARS	African Regional Standards
ARSO	African Organization for Standardization
AU	African Union
AVEC	<i>Association pour la Valorisation des Espaces Collaboratifs</i>
CACAO	Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes
CCC	Coffee-Cocoa Council; <i>Conseil du Café-Cacao</i>
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CNS	National Oversight Committee for the Fight against Child Labor, Exploitation, and Trafficking (CNS); <i>Comité National de Surveillance des actions de lutte contre la traite, l'exploitation et le travail des enfants</i>
CPE	Committees for Child Protection; <i>Comité de Protection de l'Enfant</i>
CS3D	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
DLTE	Directorate for the Fight Against Child Labor; <i>Direction de la Lutte contre le Travail des Enfants</i>
DOPA	Directorate of Professional Agricultural Organizations; <i>Direction des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles</i>
ENACTE	Together to Act on the Causes of Child Labor; <i>Ensemble pour Agir sur les Causes profondes du Travail des Enfants</i>
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation
FAS	Focused Assessment Survey
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoCI	Government of Côte d'Ivoire
ILAB	International Labor Affairs Bureau
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
MADR	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; <i>Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural</i>
MENA	Ministry of Education; <i>Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation</i>
RC	Community Relays; <i>Relais Communautaires</i>
SHFG	Self Help Farmer Groups
SOSTECI	System of Observation and Oversight of Child Labor in Côte d'Ivoire; <i>Système d'Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d'Ivoire</i>
STC	Save the Children Federation, Inc.
TMG	The Mitchell Group, Inc.
TPR	Technical Progress Report
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's leading producer of cocoa beans, and most Ivoirians rely on cocoa production for their livelihoods. Yet, in this critical industry, the exploitation of child labor persists. To support the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (GoCI) in the fight against child labor, the US Department of Labor (USDOL) is financing CACAO – Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes. This five-year project, implemented by Save The Children Federation, Inc. (STC) in partnership with non-governmental organization *Agriculteurs en Action* (2A), engages cocoa cooperatives in the departments of Daloa and Vavoua in the Haut-Sassandra region as key actors in the fight against child labor. The CACAO project identified 50 of them across 46 different communities, selecting vulnerable communities in order to provide impact where it is most needed.

USDOL contracted The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) to conduct the interim evaluation. To perform the evaluation, TMG conducted a desk review of documents, 51 Key Informant Interviews, 12 Focus Group Discussions, and 122 Focused Assessment Surveys, in addition to observation in cocoa cooperative headquarters and participant communities.

Two contextual factors that affect the implementation of CACAO are important to underscore. First, while evidence suggests that child labor remains widespread in the study area, cases of child labor violations frequently go unreported. A comprehensive 2020 NORC report indicates that 37 percent of children in cocoa farming households in Côte d'Ivoire engage in hazardous forms of child labor, so the challenge clearly persists,¹ and numerous cases have been reported informally through cooperatives. The relative dearth of officially reported cases may be a function of oversight and incentive challenges in reporting cases, of shortcomings in the bandwidth of social services to document cases, or in information breakdowns between communities, cooperatives, and official reporting channels. In any case, opportunities exist for CACAO to further bridge those divides and maximize official accounting of child labor in Daloa and Vavoua. Second, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire is implementing standardization and traceability requirements for cocoa farms that should accelerate the shift away from child labor and that create new opportunities for complementary support from projects like CACAO.

KEY EVALUATION RESULTS

CACAO is having notable success in terms of improving awareness of child labor exploitation, which allows community members to monitor potential cases in their midst. Worth noting is that CACAO's intention is for participating cocoa cooperatives to demonstrate greater accountability in monitoring child labor in the cocoa value chain; to this point, the cooperatives are not demonstrating a commitment to such accountability. However, in terms of creating alternative sources of revenue for vulnerable households so they can move away from reliance on child labor, CACAO is surpassing expectations. Some activities that CACAO has supported, such as the formalization, equipping, and training of Committees for Child Protection (CPE) and Self-Help Farmer Groups (SHFG), represent outstanding examples of CACAO's cooperative capacity building approach. Nevertheless,

¹ NORC Final Report: Assessing Progress in Reducing Child Labor in Cocoa Production in Cocoa Growing Areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. October 2020. https://www.norc.org/content/dam/norc-org/documents/standard-projects-pdf/NORC%202020%20Cocoa%20Report_English.pdf. The report does not disaggregate cases by region or department.

some steps will be necessary to reinforce the sustainability of these key activities. In addition, the important role of social workers and other civil servants in the implementation of CACAO activities can only extend as far as state-provided resources permit. Table 1 provides a summary account of CACAO’s progress toward its two core outcomes:

Table 1. Performance Summary

Performance Summary	Rating
<p>Project Objective: Increase the number of cocoa cooperatives demonstrating a reduction of child labor in the cocoa supply chain.</p>	
<p>Outcome 1 – Improved accountability of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain.</p>	
<p>CACAO activities are improving the monitoring of child labor through direct efforts with communities; survey data indicates that community members are overwhelmingly familiar with prohibited child labor practices. Yet, a gap exists between the cooperatives and the local efforts to stem the problem.</p> <p>CACAO has improved the capacity of cocoa cooperatives. In particular, training sessions to improve their organizational management, financial management, good governance practices, and the development of action plans to combat child labor were well-received and showed evidence of improving operations.</p> <p>While cooperatives are benefiting significantly from CACAO management training, they show less interest in child labor programming.</p> <p>Local Committees for Child Protection are instrumental in both raising awareness and monitoring cases. They have little connection to the cooperatives, however, and they are not sustainable: members report working too much and receiving little in return.</p> <p>Trainings for social service workers have been effective and appreciated. Their reach, and the effectiveness of the project more generally, could be enhanced if they were better supported in terms of social service mobility to project locations. This is a persistent challenge as it fundamentally requires resources from the state. Better CACAO project marketing would also enhance project intake, both in local communities and among supporting structures.</p>	<p>Achievement: Moderate</p> <p>Sustainability: Moderate</p>

Performance Summary	Rating
Outcome 2 – Increased support to vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives.	
<p>Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) that CACAO has supported have had an impressive impact on the capacity of vulnerable households to raise revenue, and thus decrease their reliance on child labor. Primarily serving women members, the CACAO VSLAs succeed where efforts have failed in the past, because they have facilitators who are compensated and who keep the associations well-organized. Survey data shows that respondents view CACAO as a powerful source of support to women in addition to children. The VSLAs should remain effective and sustainable.</p> <p>CACAO, through the National Agency to Support Rural Development (ANADER), supports farmer field schools that have important effects on the productivity of planters. Farmers report seeing improved yields that can provide additional resources to their households. Additionally, farmers are beginning to practice agroforestry and other ecofriendly farming practices.</p> <p>As children increasingly attend school and forego working on cocoa farms, a shortage of labor can emerge, placing increased importance on local SHFGs. CACAO currently extends needed support to some SHFG, but their organizational strength varies greatly, and their path to sustainability through revenue generation is not yet secured.</p>	<p>Achievement: Above Moderate</p> <p>Sustainability: Above Moderate</p>

PROMISING PRACTICES

1. Capacity building trainings with cooperatives are helping to improve their organizational management.
2. The VSLAs associated with the CACAO project operate on a different, more professional, and vastly more successful plane than typical VSLAs. The beneficial outcomes for women, households, and communities are tangible. The key to the success of the VSLAs under CACAO is that they provide paid facilitators who oversee and guide the functioning of the groups.
3. Cultural and economic norms that perpetuate social ills like child labor can change with consistent and persistent messaging. The CACAO project perfected this practice through locally embedded stakeholders. New norms may take more time, but consistent messaging around farming techniques, childcare, and schooling can gradually shift the paradigm.
4. The practice of enlisting supporting agencies and actors, fortifying their skillsets to ensure cohesion with the project goals, and providing support for them to impact communities has been a promising CACAO practice. It is not necessary for the IP to have all the expertise internally or to conduct all the interventions aimed at improving capacities and behaviors themselves. Relying on trained experts can be both more efficient and more effective.
5. The CACAO project uses visual tools to build awareness in communities where literacy rates are low. Trainers responsible for raising awareness carry image booklets that are attractive, colorful, and easy to follow, and the practice appears to be the singular most effective way of teaching new best practices to an audience accustomed to a different set of norms.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Capacity building training that facilitates outreach to communities is valuable and sustainable, but the communities with the greatest need for social workers and other assistance are often remote and difficult to reach. Local governments have limited resources, so many of the capacity building benefits remain stuck in departmental capitals.
2. Community participants who are trained and charged with carrying out strenuous work on behalf of projects need and deserve the motivation to do so. It is important to build in mechanisms for revenue generation at the group level that can provide incentives for ongoing commitment to the mission.
3. It is critical that the work conditions and demands placed on local Implementing Partner (IP) personnel be prioritized as a key to success. When local partners are overstretched, turnover ensues and the project is forced to take steps backward.
4. The marketing of projects in government agencies, civil society organizations, and target communities is important; it reminds stakeholders of the mission on a persistent basis, which helps to engender commitment to the project outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The CACAO project, at this interim stage, is making some important inroads in the fight against child labor in the cocoa industry in target communities. Furthermore, it demonstrates promise for greater impact over the remainder of the period of performance. A slow start to some interventions can be overcome, and tweaks to some interventions should improve impact. Accounting for the implementation environment, especially in terms of forthcoming standardization and traceability requirements, may help the CACAO project to capitalize on new opportunities for impact.

OUTCOME 1. The first outcome of the CACAO project relies on cooperatives as conduits to address child labor. In this respect, the CACAO project has thus far not been fully successful; it is not stimulating committed engagement from the cooperatives to monitor child labor or facilitate the enforcement of child labor laws. Cooperatives currently operate more as businesses than as true cooperatives, so strategies that reinforce the status and roles of farmer-members might also help to improve cooperatives' oversight of child labor at the community level. Furthermore, participating cooperatives would benefit from improved understanding of key standards such as the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D), and the Africa Regional Standards (ARSO) 1000 protocols – all of which include guidelines relevant to child labor – in addition to business and regulatory incentives to prioritize the fight against child labor. Those might best come via collaboration between the CACAO project, the cooperatives, cocoa exporters, and government institutions. Conversely, in terms of reducing child labor through improved awareness and monitoring, project activities at the community level are indeed proving effective. The changing implementation environment also has implications for the current status of CACAO and its path toward successful achievement of outcomes. Pending standardization and traceability requirements in the coming year, issued by the Coffee-Cocoa Council (CCC) to meet European Union (EU) import standards, will likely have important downstream effects on child labor exploitation. CACAO can position itself as a key complement to those government policies by facilitating cocoa farmers' uptake of the identity card system.

OUTCOME 2. The second outcome of the CACAO project aims to increase support for vulnerable households. Efforts to support vulnerable households through the enhancement of social protection has been less pronounced than anticipated, as trained social workers are limited in their capacity to reach communities without greater support from cooperatives and local government. Remediation efforts by social workers have proven to be less applicable, simply because the cases of child labor exploitation are not reported frequently enough through official channels. Conversely, VSLAs, along with farmer field schools, are creating important alternative livelihood means that mitigate reliance on child labor. Labor shortages on cocoa farms may arise as a result, underscoring the importance of reinforcing the organization of SHFGs.

Table 2. Key Recommendations

For Save The Children
Continue, diversify, and expand capacity building trainings. Cooperatives and communities are benefiting, and new standards will require more training.
Incentivize cooperatives' engagement in child labor activities. Cooperatives currently see little need to embrace project activities on child labor.
Support increased visibility and leverage of SOSTECL. SOSTECL is a key link in child labor enforcement, but it needs a stronger presence.
Begin implementing revenue generating activities for CPEs. They need sustainable resources and incentives to contribute effort.
Address the relationship with local partner 2A, including resource provision. Administrative discord persists, and they need adequate resources to be effective.
Improve the visibility and responsibility of child labor champions. They currently have little presence.
Expand the marketing of CACAO activities. Too many agencies and communities are not yet familiar with CACAO.
Expand the number of VSLAs. They are effective and sustainable, and the demand exists.
Work with government agencies to support social worker outreach. Social workers play a key role, but they have limited capacity to reach communities.
Lend organizational support to SHFGs. They are effective sources of labor but differ in their organization and capacity.
For USDOL
Provide a no-cost extension. Numerous CACAO interventions are having an impact but need more time to achieve objectives.
For projects that lean heavily on training and outreach, work with grantees early and often to ensure a robust staffing plan that can withstand turnover and logistical challenges. Staff turnover and limitations in community outreach impose limits on CACAO engagement.

1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's leading producer of cocoa beans, producing over 40% of the global total. Cocoa is also central to the Ivorian economy: two-thirds of Ivorians work in agriculture, and 85% of farmers rely on cocoa production for their livelihoods. Yet, while the cocoa value chain serves as a critical component of the economy in Côte d'Ivoire, the exploitation of child labor in the cocoa industry persists. To support the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (GoCI) in the fight against child labor, the US Department of Labor (USDOL) is financing CACAO – Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes. This five-year project, implemented by Save The Children Federation, Inc. (STC) in partnership with the non-governmental organization *Agriculteurs en Action* (2A), engages cocoa cooperatives in the departments of Daloa and Vavoua in the Haut-Sassandra region as key actors in the fight against child labor.

The production model in Côte d'Ivoire relies on smallholder farmers who produce cocoa for sale on the global market. In this context, cooperatives serve as a critical link in the cocoa supply and value chains by connecting farmers to markets as middle-actors and by providing support services to farmers to facilitate their production. However, wide disparities exist in the operational effectiveness of cooperatives, and even where effective cooperatives operate, farmers in the most vulnerable communities face persistent income and labor shortages, which exacerbate the risks of exploiting child labor.

Of the approximately 3,000 cocoa cooperatives in Côte d'Ivoire, the CACAO project works with 50 of them across 46 different communities, selecting relatively weaker cooperatives to provide impact where it is most needed. Typically, a cooperative operates in several communities; CACAO is focusing its activities in one community for each cooperative, identifying a more vulnerable community again with the intention of maximizing impact. Other communities where the participant cooperatives operate function ostensibly as indirect beneficiaries of CACAO, with the intention that lessons that cooperatives learn through CACAO can be applied throughout their networks. A few communities are served by two CACAO cooperatives, and one CACAO cooperative backed out of its participation, currently leaving 49 cooperatives active in the project.

CACAO officially began in December 2020, and in June 2021, STC held a Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) workshop. After a long search for an in-country Project Director and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, further slowed by staff turnover at STC headquarters, CACAO staff recruitment was completed in early 2022. CACAO's baseline study to establish a foundation for measuring impact was conducted in August 2022; prior to that point, STC engaged in organizational and institutional steps to prepare for activity implementation, including revising its CMEP with DOL, establishing operational norms and plans with its partner 2A, and establishing committees with representatives from cooperatives and relevant agencies. Nevertheless, due in part to Covid-19, the actual implementation of activities did not begin until late 2022.

1.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVE & OUTCOMES

The objective of CACAO is to increase the number of cocoa cooperatives demonstrating a reduction of child labor in the cocoa supply chain. To reach that goal, CACAO aims to build the capacities of cooperatives to monitor child labor while also creating support mechanisms for vulnerable households.

1.1.1. OUTCOME 1

The first outcome of the CACAO project is improved accountability of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain.

The monitoring and enforcement of child labor laws in Côte d'Ivoire are challenging for multiple reasons. Farming activities typically take place in remote areas. Furthermore, children are permitted to accompany their parents to the cocoa fields and, depending on their ages, to engage in some less strenuous forms of labor participation. Effective monitoring and enforcement of child labor laws thus requires cooperation from structures that engage regularly with cocoa farmers and that have incentives to limit the exploitation of child labor. Côte d'Ivoire's child labor laws, and indeed the CACAO project, focus on protecting children from what are considered the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa industry, which include using machetes or other sharp objects, carrying heavy loads, handling chemical products and pesticides, driving motorized vehicles, and burning brush or other materials on farm plots, among other dangerous activities. CACAO works with cooperatives to raise awareness among farmers and households to these dangers, identifying cases where they occur, and help government agencies enforce the laws to keep children safe.

To achieve the outcome of improved cooperative capacity to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain, CACAO prioritizes two sub-outcomes.

SUB-OUTCOME 1.1. Strengthened capacity of enforcement agencies to enforce child labor laws within cooperatives. Outputs associated with sub-outcome 1 include:

- CACAO will increase resources for law enforcement agencies to monitor and enforce child labor laws.
- CACAO will strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies to monitor and enforce child labor laws.
- CACAO will improve coordination between social protection services and law enforcement agencies in the child labor space.

SUB-OUTCOME 1.2. Strengthened capacity of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor. Outputs associated with sub-outcome 2 include:

- CACAO will increase awareness of child protection laws within cooperatives.
- CACAO will improve the tools, avenues, and capacities of actors to monitor and report cases of child labor.

For cocoa cooperatives to demonstrate accountability in monitoring child labor and facilitating the enforcement of child labor laws, they need to have collaborative relationships with government structures responsible for addressing child labor. Activities that CACAO has planned or undertaken at this interim stage are listed below. Parenthetical notes in the bulleted list below indicate activities that are still in development or that currently do not feature notably in the CACAO project.

- Carried out a capacity assessment of organizations responsible for addressing child labor, including the police, gendarmerie, the Direction for the Protection of Children (DPE), the Regional Directorate for the Fight Against Child Labor (DLTE), and the Coffee-Cocoa Council (CCC).
- Established a steering committee to meet every six months, which includes representatives from STC and 2A, cooperatives, and implicated government agencies such as the Regional Committee of the System of Observation and Oversight of Child

Labor in Côte d'Ivoire (SOSTECI), the National Agency to Support Rural Development (ANADER), CCC, and DLTE.

- Established a platform to connect cooperative leadership and agencies that address child labor in order to facilitate referrals, best practices, and supportive engagement in combatting child labor.
- Held capacity building training for social service providers addressing social protection and child labor remediation.
- Conducted training for cooperative leadership on child protection rights and policies.
- Assisted cooperatives to develop action plans to combat child labor, including the setting up of *relais communautaires* (RCs), or community relays, to monitor child labor.
- Identified and trained a Child Labor Champion in each cooperative to lead the fight for child protection and the rights of children.
- Conducted an evaluation of SOSTECI to identify possible gaps in monitoring child labor.
- Developing Standard Operational Procedures for cooperatives and agencies to handle cases of child labor (in development; not prominent).
- Piloting a traceability mechanism for cocoa production complements the national system (currently under conceptual revision).

1.1.2. OUTCOME 2

CACAO's second outcome is increased support to vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives.

When households refrain from committing their children to prohibited labor in the cocoa industry, other challenges emerge. Smallholder farmers accustomed to relying on their children to work in their fields face a shortage of labor, which may adversely affect household revenues from cocoa production. In addition, households and communities may lack alternative activities for children. Moreover, communities may lack the social services to support both children and parents as they navigate the transition out of child labor exploitation. CACAO thus works with cooperatives to create alternative means of revenue generation among vulnerable households, in order to mitigate the potential downsides to removing their children from exacting farm labor. It also supports cooperatives to engage social services that can support households and children in the transition away from child labor.

For the CACAO project to achieve its second outcome of increasing support for vulnerable households, CACAO again prioritizes two sub-outcomes.

SUB-OUTCOME 2.1. Strengthened capacity of cocoa cooperatives to provide sustainable assistance and support to prevent child labor. Outputs associated with sub-outcome 2.1 include the following:

- CACAO will improve the institutional capacity of cooperatives to provide support to members.
- CACAO will strengthen the capacity of cocoa producing households to manage financial resources.
- CACAO will improve the productivity of farmers' cocoa farms.
- CACAO will lead to increased incomes for cocoa producing households.

SUB-OUTCOME 2.2. Increased access to social protection and child labor remediation systems. Outputs associated with sub-outcome 2.2 include the following:

- CACAO will improve knowledge about social services and child labor remediation programs within participating communities.
- CACAO will increase the capacities of social service agents implementing child protection and child labor remediation programs.

To achieve the outcome of strengthening the capacity of cooperatives to provide support to vulnerable households, the CACAO project, its implementing partners, and the cooperatives must generate a tangible connection to households within cooperative communities. CACAO activities serving Outcome 2 include the following:

- Mapped the capacity of participating cooperatives to provide services to members.
- Conducted capacity building training for cooperative leadership on management, good governance, and service delivery.
- Promoting SHFGs at the community level (a preexisting, traditional structure that varies in formality and effectiveness across communities).
- Created 84 VSLAs in project communities, primarily serving women.
- Established a system of AVEC facilitators and trained VSLA members in financial management.
- Created farmer field schools with the support of ANADER.
- Trained cocoa farmers in agroforestry, pesticide use, and other best practices with the support of ANADER.
- Training adolescent boys and girls in entrepreneurship (not yet a prominent activity).
- Created Committees for the Protection of Children (CPE) at the community level to raise child labor awareness and refer cases to social services.
- Supporting community leaders to develop community action plans to combat child labor, via partner 2A (still in development).
- Supporting and training women's associations in techniques to combat child labor (still in development; not prominent).
- Provided equipment and informational materials to CPEs to support their awareness campaigns in communities, in particular image books for instructing communities.
- Establishing community action centers in each department to provide childcare services (still in development).
- Provided support to social service agencies to assist women and children in need (e.g., the provision of rape kits at no cost).
- Trained social workers and labor inspectors to identify, refer, and support victims in cases of child labor.
- Managing identified cases of child labor to provide proper support, via partner 2A (so far, many cases are not reported through official channels).
- Provided support to the Regional Direction of the Ministry of Women, Families, and Children (MFFE) to establish host families for victims of child labor (in development).

1.2 IMPLEMENTING CONTEXT

The context in which CACAO has operated has important implications for its start, its programmatic success, and its impact on child labor in the cocoa industry in Côte d'Ivoire. Perhaps most notably, CACAO is addressing child labor in the cocoa industry under the prospect of sweeping new regulations for cocoa production and sales in Côte d'Ivoire due

to take effect in January 2025. Responding to the EUDR for imported cocoa,² the African Regional Standards (ARS) 1000-1 and ARS 1000-2³ stipulate that countries must ensure that the cocoa beans they export are produced sustainably. Further, farmers, agricultural groups, and cooperatives will need to be certified by an approved third party to demonstrate compliance with these standards. The ARS 1000-1 standard, in particular, mandates that cocoa beans be traceable to the plot on which they are grown. To conform to these standards, GoCI enlisted the Coffee-Cocoa Board⁴ to implement an identity card system that stores electronic data for every farmer, effective January 2025. In addition, cooperatives now have the strong incentive to obtain certification, which opens new opportunities to them to become suppliers to large multinational corporations that hold cocoa supply chains to higher minimum standards. Currently, most CACAO participant cooperatives are not certified, which presents opportunities for CACAO to engage with the pending initiative and assist cooperatives in meeting the new standards.

Relatedly, despite widespread evidence of child labor exploitation, cases of child labor exploitation have frequently gone unreported through official channels in the Daloa and Vavoua departments in recent years. This can be explained by numerous factors. Local observers suggest that the more severe exploitation of child labor in the cocoa industry occurs in other areas of the country, such as around Soubré in the Nawa region just to the south of Haut-Sassandra, where migrant labor from neighboring countries is more common. Further, external monitors (such as the *relais communautaires* sent by cooperatives) have difficulty gathering clear, real-time evidence of child labor exploitation in action, while community-based monitors face conflicting incentives in the reporting of cases, as they must monitor their own kin and neighbors. Finally, awareness campaigns by STC and numerous other actors over the past decade – including the CACAO project itself – have helped to create a taboo around at least the most egregious forms of exploitation of children in the cocoa industry. CACAO Technical Progress Reports (TPRs) indicate that many cases of child labor are reported informally – one cooperative, UCAPS-CI, reported 106 cases in one quarter (see TPR 7), so an important opportunity exists for CACAO to bridge the reporting divide between cooperatives and social services.

Regarding the GoCI context, the First Lady of Côte d’Ivoire has as one of her portfolios a mission to reduce child labor in Côte d’Ivoire, inaugurating the “Together to Act on the Causes of Child Labor (ENACTE) program in 2023.⁵ She is also the president of the National Oversight Committee for the Fight against Child Labor, Exploitation, and Trafficking (CNS), with whom CACAO coordinates at the national level.⁶ CNS has worked to combat child labor since its inception in 2012. GoCI has also taken steps to invigorate and expand SOSTECI, a key partner organization to CACAO in the fight against child labor. SOSTECI has not yet established offices at the local level, which, according to SOSTECI sources, will be a critical step to improving its oversight of child labor enforcement.

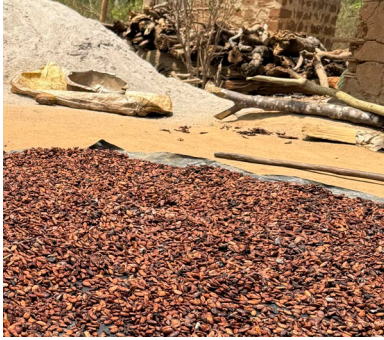
² European Union Deforestation Regulations. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/publications/unpacking-eu-deforestation-regulation-cocoa-sector_en?prefLang=sk.

³ See The Catalog of African Regional Standards. https://www.arso-oran.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Catalogue-of-African-Regional-Standards-ARS-June-2021_TC.pdf.

⁴ http://www.conseilcafecacao.ci/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=77:coffee-cocoa-board

⁵ For more information, see the Government of Cote d’Ivoire website: https://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?recordID=15055#:~:text=Le%20programme%20ENACTE%20vise%20%C3%A0,%C3%A0%20Ie urs%20parents%2C%20des%20opportunit%C3%A9s.

⁶ <https://dominiqueouattara.ci/en/dominique-ouattara/independent>



Cocoa beans drying in a family compound in Bouamwakro.

CREDIT: ALEXIS KOFFI

Internally, STC and its local partner 2A have had to navigate the administrative challenges of sharing responsibilities to implement the CACAO project. STC (and other prime grantees) was already working with 2A, so there was already a working relationship between the two organizations. Nevertheless, the organizational management of every project is unique, and it appears to have taken time for STC and 2A to fine tune their processes for approvals, payments, and other administrative matters that can have implications for project collaboration and success.

Finally, a contextual factor that merits recalling is that CACAO officially began when the Covid-19 global health pandemic was still in full swing, resulting in restrictions on movement, interpersonal interactions, and social protocols. This created some inefficiencies during the initial stages of operation.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE

This independent interim evaluation of the CACAO project is classified as a performance evaluation. During the preparation phase and the development of the evaluation work plan, USDOL, STC, and TMG collaboratively developed Evaluation Questions (EQs) to guide the evaluation of CACAO. The evaluation is not intended as an impact evaluation that tracks progress toward indicator targets in a precise manner. Rather, the purpose of TMG's interim evaluation of CACAO is to provide insight and guidance to STC and USDOL with respect to the following general themes:

This independent interim evaluation's purpose is to provide insight and guidance to STC and USDOL with respect to the following general themes:

RELEVANCE. Assessing the relevance of the project in the cultural, economic, and political context in the country, as well as the validity of the project design and the extent to which it is suited to the priorities and policies of the host government and other stakeholders and actors;

PROGRESS. Determining whether the project is on track toward achieving its overall project objective and expected outcomes, identifying the challenges and opportunities encountered in doing so, and analyzing the driving factors for these challenges and opportunities;

EFFECTIVENESS. Assessing the effectiveness of the project's strategies and the project's strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and identifying areas in need of improvement (with particular attention to equity and inclusion, wherever relevant);

LESSONS. Providing conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations; and

SUSTAINABILITY. Assessing the project's plans for sustainability at local and national levels and among implementing organizations and identifying steps to enhance its sustainability.

3. EVALUATION APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The interim evaluation of the CACAO project began in February 2024 with a desk review of relevant documents, pending final approval of the evaluation Terms of Reference. The field portion of the evaluation began on February 16, 2024, and concluded on March 5, 2024. Most of that time was spent in Daloa and Vavoua, where the STC CACAO headquarters and the participant cooperatives and communities are located. Some time was also dedicated to briefings and meetings in Abidjan, both with US Embassy officials and national-level stakeholders. This section provides a brief overview of the evaluation process and methodology and then presents the EQs, along with responses and supporting evidence for each response.

3.1 EVALUATION METHODS

Please see Annex E for a description of the methodology and limitations. The evaluation relied on five key data collection strategies: 1) desk review of documents, 2) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), 3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 4) Focused Assessment Surveys (FAS), and 5) observation of cooperative operations and communities.

The ET conducted 51 KIIs, 12 FGDs, 122 FAS, and observed two cooperative headquarters operations. The evaluators also visited and observed the programmatic context in three CACAO participant communities: Petit-Paris (Daloa department), Bouamwakro (Vavoua department), and Kirwakro (Daloa Department). Annex E provides a full listing of data sources.

Regarding data analysis, the ET coded qualitative data thematically based on the EQs dimensions and specific EQs. The team conducted descriptive analyses of the quantitative data from FAS responses using the R statistical software package.

3.2 EVALUATION DIMENSIONS AND QUESTIONS

The CACAO interim evaluation is structured around three main dimensions and 10 EQs. They are as follows, with subsequent subsections addressing each:

DIMENSION 1. Design Relevance and Validity.

- 1) Which interventions have proven to be most/least effective at achieving desired outcomes?
- 2) To what extent is the theory of change valid and coherent in the implementing environment?
- 3) To what extent does the project strategy reflect the needs and priorities of diverse stakeholders (law enforcement, cooperatives and members, vulnerable households, purchasers, etc.)?

DIMENSION 2. Effectiveness.

- 4) To what extent does the project manage community expectations from its various engagement strategies?
- 5) To what extent does the process of each major intervention support project outcomes (independent from strengths and weaknesses in results)?
- 6) What is the objective level of achievement of each major outcome (on a four-point scale), with respect to established targets and outcomes?

- 7) What, if any, unintended effects has the project had on its target communities and participants?

DIMENSION 3. Stewardship & Opportunities.

- 8) To what extent do implementation activities create or limit opportunities (environmental, climate friendly practices, farmer learning, etc.)?
- 9) What results, if any, have occurred in terms of gender equity and social inclusion, and what elements of the gender context could be better addressed?
- 10) Which outcomes and outputs have the greatest/least likelihood of being sustained after donor funding ends?

4. EVALUATION RESULTS

TMG organized the results of the evaluation around the dimensions and EQs listed above. They draw on document review, observations in participant communities, qualitative data from the KIIs and FGDs, and supplementary quantitative data from the FAS.

4.1 DESIGN RELEVANCE AND VALIDITY

EQs under the Design Relevance and Validity dimension aimed to assess the conceptualization of the CACAO project and its relevance to the implementation context and the needs of cooperatives and community members.

EQ 1: WHICH INTERVENTIONS HAVE PROVEN TO BE MOST/LEAST EFFECTIVE AT ACHIEVING DESIRED OUTCOMES?

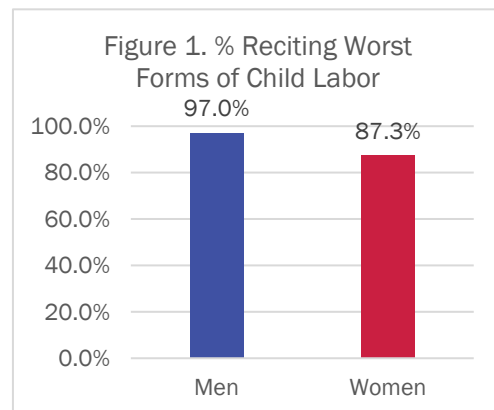
MOST EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS. Several CACAO interventions are proving to have a demonstrable positive effect on cooperatives and households within participating cooperative communities. The interventions discussed below are described in terms of their links with respective project outcomes.

Outcome 1: Improved accountability of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain.

Capacity building training for cooperatives has been highly effective. In particular, training sessions to improve their organizational management, financial management, good governance practices, and the development of action plans to combat child labor were not only well-received but are also showing evidence of improving cooperative operations. All participating cooperatives are developing action plans to combat child labor, with guidance from CACAO. During a visit to the headquarters of one participating cooperative, members of the leadership opened their books to the ET to demonstrate how they have improved their budgeting, task assignment, and other operational tasks. As cooperatives function at a more professional level, their incentives to address the child labor issue should increase, because they will be required to meet stronger standards.



Community awareness. CACAO efforts to raise awareness in communities around the worst forms of child labor are having demonstrable effects. As Figure 1 displays, nearly all FAS respondents indicated familiarity with the prohibited forms of child labor. This is largely due to the efforts of CACAO-trained members of the CPEs and 2A agents who visit communities, and to the provision of materials to raise awareness even among non-literate community members. The complementary message that the place for children during the weekday is at school is also taking hold; community members regularly mention this alongside their recognition of the ills of child labor on cocoa farms. There is also evidence that communities are putting this message into practice, contributing to school construction and the recruitment of local teaching staff. For example, in Petit-Paris, the community constructed a modest school that has been recognized by the Ministry of Education (MENA), and the community is now in the process of building self-funded classrooms using durable materials and design features. In Bouamwakro, the community constructed housing for teachers.



Outcome 2: Supporting vulnerable households and providing access to social services.

Assistance to SHFGs provides important support to vulnerable households that lose access to labor when their children no longer work on their cocoa farms. SHFGs consist of farmers in the community who work as a unit to provide supplemental labor to neighbors who need additional support on their farms, typically on the promise of a payout upon harvest. These groups, whose existence predates the CACAO project, have been energized by CACAO through capacity building and the provision of basic farming equipment. They are now establishing themselves as an alternative to child labor, and thus as a source of revenue generation, for cocoa farmers. Moreover, there is emerging professionalization among them, although their degree of organization varies by community and individual group. According to the village chief in a participating community, working with the SHFGs

is even more efficient and faster than with shareholder farmers who rely on family help, because they know what needs to be done and do not need the direction that child laborers would. In this light, the ET views the strengthening of SHFGs as an exemplar of the project's cooperative capacity building approach. An outstanding issue is the sustainability of SHFGs, addressed below.

VSLAs have proven to be the most widely-discussed positive intervention to come out of the CACAO project. To date, CACAO has supported the development of 84 VSLAs, with sufficient demand for more. While the concept of VSLAs predates CACAO and some communities had versions that petered out prior to CACAO, the CACAO groups are well-organized, productive, and moving toward self-sufficiency. In Kiriwakro, the community began with two VSLAs of 30 members each, and within three months there was sufficient demand for a third group, which now stands at 21 members. In Petit-Paris, the VSLA was so effective at generating revenue that it was able to contribute to the construction of a durable school building. In Bouamwakro, VSLA members' weekly contributions have more than doubled as they have seen the benefits from their collective savings and investment. Two key features drive the success of CACAO-supported VSLAs. First, they cater primarily (though not always exclusively) to women members, which enhances group trust and organization while improving women's empowerment. Second, CACAO's model of providing financial support to VSLA facilitators, along with technical support from 2A agents, contributes to the rigorous, effective management of VSLA revenue and operations. Participants regularly noted that even in the absence of project supervision and facilitators paid by the project, the VSLAs will undoubtedly continue to thrive.

Farmer field schools operated by ANADER are providing cocoa farmers with capacities to improve their crop yields while also, incidentally, improving the environmental sustainability of their farming methods. These activities are widely appreciated by cocoa farmers. Farmers in communities that the ET visited describe clearing weeds on a regular basis now, as opposed to doing so at distant intervals, which is making a tangible impact on their productivity. They are also implementing agroforestry; planting other tree species among their cocoa crops, which has important environmental benefits.

LEAST EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS. Some CACAO interventions, such as the community action plans that 2A is meant to lead and the revenue generating activities for CPEs, have yet to be implemented. Other interventions are underway but have shown minimal positive impact.

First, serving Outcome 1, the platforms connecting cooperatives to administrative actors and social services, have not yet proven to be effective. In no uncertain terms, cooperative leaders from multiple cooperatives informed the ET that they do not bother going to platform meetings or connecting via virtual means. The view of the ET is that they do not see value in doing so as it is tangential to their primary objective of securing cocoa profits for the cooperative. CACAO's work with SOSTECI can help to invigorate the cooperatives to engage with administrative and social services, but those efforts will pay bigger dividends once SOSTECI's planned expansion to more local levels is complete. Stronger institutional support for SOSTECI from GoCI will also be critical.

Second, serving Outcome 1, the cooperatives' efforts to send RCs to monitor and report on cases of child labor are not proving effective. The RCs visit cooperative cocoa farms too infrequently and are unable to effectively surveil the child labor context. They ostensibly receive stipends for their involvement and have assignments to conduct drop-ins on communities, but their presence is minimal. One cooperative leader stated: "Yes, we try with the *relais communautaires*, but up to the present, it's not contributing much."

Third, serving Outcome 2, supporting vulnerable households, is not a priority for cooperatives. Households are indeed getting some support from the CACAO project, but the cooperatives do not play a noticeable role. In fact, the cooperatives appear to be largely divorced from their member farmers and the households and communities around them, other than to obtain their cocoa and move it along the supply chain. A Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) official spoke directly to this challenge:

“In most communities, cooperatives are presented as a body external to the village. Even the focal points of cooperatives in the communities do not speak as representatives of an entity in which all are stakeholders. This is reciprocal from the point of view of the cooperatives, too. They are structures for purchasing and selling products. Their actions therefore target this objective much more than energizing communities around combating child labor or other objectives.”

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Official

The structure of the cooperatives may help to explain some of the disconnect between cooperative members at the community level and their leadership. Cooperatives typically maintain their headquarters in the departmental capital, which is reasonable given the breadth of communities with which they work but which also creates distance from members. Furthermore, the headquarters personnel – which may include a president, director of operations, administrative staff, and technical agents responsible for the transactions with farmers – appear to view themselves as the only real representatives of the cooperative, and they operate towards strategic objectives that do not appear to be shared at all with member farmers. Farmers also seem to view the leadership as the only real cooperative members. Thus, when it comes to the core cooperative activity, the purchase of cocoa from farmers is perceived as a transaction between buyer and seller as opposed to a collective enterprise. This context may help to explain cooperatives’ weak commitment to community social issues, and it can also explain why farmers who are cooperative members are not necessarily loyal to that cooperative and sometimes sell their products to independent cash buyers outside of the cooperative.

Finally, an important intervention that has both effective and ineffective qualities is the implementation of the CPEs. On one hand, those committees have been instrumental in raising awareness of child labor at the community level, at significant personal effort and cost to the committee members. On the other hand, their position as monitors of illegal practices within their own communities, among people they know, puts them in a challenging position, and they do not seem to have the tactical approaches to spot cases of child labor in real-time in any case. Finally, as valuable as the CPEs are for community awareness, the model as currently structured is not sustainable: they work hard for little compensation beyond the status that comes with their roles and intrinsic fulfillment.

EQ 2: TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE THEORY OF CHANGE VALID AND COHERENT IN THE IMPLEMENTING ENVIRONMENT?

CACAO’s theory of change, as articulated through the two primary outcomes, is based on the dual hypothesis that 1) if cooperatives have improved capacity to address child labor, and 2) if vulnerable households are lifted out of their precarious conditions, then both the supply of and demand for child labor will dissipate. By that process, CACAO will contribute effectively to the reduction, and eventually the eradication, of child labor.

The ET finds that the points do not all connect to fully validate the theory of change, given some of the particularities of the implementing environment. First, cooperatives working with CACAO equip and support producers during lean times or in times of financial need; this is a role they conventionally fulfill even in the absence of CACAO. They also provide cocoa farmers with agricultural and protective equipment, as well as inputs for crop improvement. Yet, this support remains limited, and this remains one of the principal reasons for the disconnect between farmers and cooperatives noted above. This disconnect was reflected in discussions with cocoa farmers, in which they almost universally referred to the cooperative in the third person, not as an entity to which they view themselves as stakeholders. Moreover, the project's theory of change posits that cooperatives are the conduits through which agencies and communities will help reduce child labor. Agencies and communities are indeed contributing to a reduction in child labor, largely through the spread of awareness and the cultivation of alternative sources of household revenue. In contrast, cooperatives remain almost singularly focused on their bottom lines. Cooperatives are mindful of the child labor issue to the extent that it can affect profits, but they lack financial incentives to invest actively in supporting CACAO's processes. To summarize, other entities may be better positioned than cooperatives to improve the monitoring of child labor, not because of cooperative capacities but rather the incentives they face.

In this respect, the pending regulatory changes in the cocoa industry in Côte d'Ivoire may have a more important impact on the role of cooperatives than do some of the current project activities. As farmers, agricultural groups, and cooperatives will need to demonstrate compliance with the ARS and EU standards and with the CCC's electronic data policy by January 2025, the elimination of child labor in the cocoa industry may accelerate as a result, particularly due to the traceability requirements that the ARS impose. There will, however, continue to be important needs for projects such as CACAO, particularly with respect to household level awareness and helping to promote alternative sources of revenue for vulnerable households. Furthermore, the CACAO project is well-placed to complement the pending administrative changes: STC may assist cocoa cooperatives that are not certified, which includes most of the current CACAO participating cooperatives, obtain certification. Projects can also work with farmers, either through the cooperatives or independently, to improve familiarity and uptake with the identity card program.

EQ 3: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE PROJECT STRATEGY REFLECT THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS (LAW ENFORCEMENT, COOPERATIVES AND MEMBERS, VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS, PURCHASERS, ETC.)?

CACAO's strategic effectively takes into account a wide diversity of stakeholders in the effort to mitigate the presence of child labor in the cocoa industry. Cooperative managers, social workers, and other members of key government structures interviewed by the ET during field work were unanimous in affirming that CACAO's trainings and awareness campaigns have provided them with important benefits. The ET observed that stakeholders and community members in CACAO communities are well-aware of the worst forms of child labor. Importantly, the project's strategy is effectively meeting the needs of vulnerable households, both through the VSLAs and the farmer field schools (albeit with a caveat below). Nevertheless, some weaknesses in outreach to various stakeholder types currently limit the full potential effects of the CACAO project. For example:

- **Law enforcement officers are trained but do not have the means to routinely carry out their activities.** This challenge lies beyond the scope of the CACAO project but

nevertheless represents a key stakeholder need that adversely affects the reach of CACAO.

- **Coordination between cooperatives, law enforcement, and monitoring structures is quite limited.** Principally, enforcement agencies are not connected in a regular manner with cooperatives or agencies responsible for monitoring of the child labor conditions, owing in part to the ineffectiveness of steering committee platforms in keeping cooperatives and other stakeholders involved.
- **While activities aimed at improving the functioning of cooperatives have demonstrable positive effects, efforts to raise their commitment to combatting child labor does not translate into real action in communities.** At the community level, cooperatives are barely visible outside of cocoa buying and selling activities, and the best functioning local initiatives that CACAO supports do not have obvious connections to the cooperatives.
- **The training of cocoa farmers through farmer field schools is improving their yields, but their needs are multifaceted, particularly during lean periods as they are experiencing this year.** Despite examples of farmers describing improved productivity on their farms, the ET did not notice signs of financial comfort related to crop yields. Lean periods are always difficult, and the financial payoffs from new farming methods typically emerge over longer time horizons.
- **Social workers are stretched too thin to effectively provide the community- and household-level support that CACAO carves out for them.** Social service workers represent a key cog in the CACAO strategy; they provide support for families moving away from child labor and handle cases of child labor remediation, all while managing related caseloads that come to them from CACAO communities (such as gender-based violence). Yet, they have great difficulty traveling to communities with limited transportation means, and they are responsible for portfolios too vast to manage effectively. While it is beyond the scope of CACAO to provide material support such as motorbikes to civil servant social workers, it is important that the project consider the practical capacities of stakeholders on whom the project's implementation relies.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

EQs under the Effectiveness dimension aimed to assess actual accomplishments and the extent to which CACAO is on track to achieve its desired outcomes. While EQ 1 highlighted the most and least effective interventions, this dimension underscores expectations, processes, and consequences.

EQ 4: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE PROJECT MANAGE COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS FROM ITS VARIOUS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES?

CACAO's engagement strategies have surpassed expectations in some regards and fallen short of expectations in others. In some cases, expectations from stakeholders may have been inflated or misguided, but those occurrences can nevertheless bear on the successful implementation of the project.

EXPECTATIONS LINKED TO OUTCOME 1. CACAO has surpassed expectations from cooperative leadership in terms of the training and capacity building they have received. Members of cooperative leadership were unequivocally pleased with the training they received, particularly those intended to improve the efficiency of the cooperatives.

CACAO has not met the expectations of CPE members. While they express an understanding of their roles, they also harbor clear expectations of remuneration for the work they undertake on behalf of the project. As background, CPEs are government bodies instituted by SOSTECL to intervene at the community level with the goals of raising awareness, monitoring, and reporting cases of child labor. CACAO trained the CPEs, provided basic necessities (vest, megaphones, etc.) and supported the official installation of the CPEs by the regional authority. The CPEs conduct regular tours in their communities, conduct awareness campaigns with households, and ostensibly report cases of child labor to authorities. The ET observed that the CPEs' work is time consuming, demanding, and costly: they have to cover fairly large distances, either by foot or with their own motorbikes and fuel, they are pulled away from their own cocoa fields to do so, and they often even have to provide small financial gestures to households in order to gain entry to do their awareness work. In each community that the ET visited, members of the CPEs pleaded with the team members to express their need for remuneration, and they either implied or stated explicitly that they would not be able to continue the work for long otherwise. The challenge for CACAO is that regular remuneration for CPEs will need to come through the state, but organizing revenue generating activities could be a mechanism to assist. To some degree, the same can be said for the SHFGs that CACAO supports. They do have built-in mechanisms for revenue generation in the form of commissions upon the harvest of crops, but many SHFGs are not sufficiently organized to take full advantage of those opportunities, so their participation currently has the air of a project-imposed obligation.



A school under construction with VSLA support in Petit-Paris.

CREDIT: ALEXIS KOFFI

CACAO's development of a Corps of Champions to monitor child labor issues at the community level has also fallen short of community expectations. Each cooperative society is meant to have a leader and two child labor champions to monitor the child labor environment. According to CACAO documentation, 78 were trained by March 2023. However, the Champions have little presence in communities, and neither their role nor their contribution is apparent to communities, unlike the CPE members and the VSLA facilitators. The ET's own observations support that perspective.

EXPECTATIONS LINKED TO OUTCOME 2. CACAO has again surpassed expectations in terms of capacity building and training linked to Outcome 2. In particular, the social service representatives associated with CACAO express having improved capacity to address issues they confront on a routine basis. For example, trainings on STEPS TO PROTECT - a STC step-by-step Common Approach for working with children; Gender-Based Violence Information Management Systems (GBVIMS) – a widely used information platform that records data for the reliable and safe tracking of GBV; and case management strategies were cited by numerous social service workers as having improved their ability to effectively serve communities.

Yet, along with those trainings comes the expectation that CACAO will also facilitate the application of their new social service capacities in participant communities. They have been disappointed, therefore, by the lack of support to do so. According to one of the Social Center Directors with whom the ET spoke, their agents' capacity does not translate into increased presence and effectiveness on the ground due to a glaring lack of resources, particularly in terms of means of transportation. Fair or not, that expectation currently

affects CACAO at the level of social service agencies, because community members familiar with CACAO seem to presume that CACAO will provide the resources for state agency activities.

EXPECTATIONS LINKED TO OUTCOMES 1 & 2. Finally, it is worth noting STC itself has had expectations regarding certain aspects of CACAO that have not come to fruition. First, STC expected cooperatives to demonstrate greater commitment to the child labor issue as they improve their operational capacities. Yet, the incentives have not emerged to encourage that kind of commitment on the part of the cooperatives. The cooperatives are not indifferent to the child labor issue; on the contrary, they would like very much for it to be eradicated. They simply do not see the financial incentives to take a more active role.

Second, STC's expectations of its partner 2A appear not to be met. Some of the challenges in 2A's performance stem from ambiguity or disagreement in administrative arrangements at the headquarter level. Others, the ET observed, stem from the conditions under which 2A agents work. With extensive community portfolios, not enough motorbikes or fuel resources for the motorbikes, cramped and unappealing office quarters, and fewer staff than originally intended, 2A has had problems keeping its CACAO-assigned staff. That turnover sets back 2A activities and limits their ability to meet STC expectations.

EQ 5: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE PROCESS OF EACH MAJOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT PROJECT OUTCOMES (INDEPENDENT FROM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN RESULTS)?

The ET took note of the process underpinning several major CACAO initiatives. Some, such as capacity building training for key stakeholders, cut across both project outcomes, so we refer to the category of intervention broadly rather than explicitly denoting the outcome.

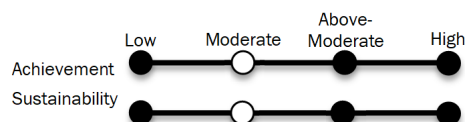
- The process supporting training interventions was well conceived and effective, drawing participants in early enough and frequently enough to generate real change in capacities. This is true of numerous trainings, including those for youth, women, social workers, cooperatives, traditional chiefs, CPEs, and law enforcement actors.
- The process underpinning the formation, promotion, and regular implementation of the steering committee meetings that link cooperatives and government institutions was strong at the outset. It is unclear that the process is designed to perpetuate regular commitment, particularly from cooperative representatives.
- Support and capacity building for institutional partners, such as SOSTECI and the Social Service Centers, followed a clear path from the outset. The relationships appear to the ET to be clear, effective, and constructed to achieve project outcomes. Social service workers have received trainings that allow them to better perform their duties in working with children and addressing GBV issues. They may be under-resourced, but the capacity building is on track.
- The process for developing action plans with the cooperatives has been effective. They seem to understand their roles and responsibilities in the fight against child labor, even if they show less interest in devoting effort to the child labor components of their assigned mission.
- The process underpinning the institutionalization of community entities has largely resulted in the efficient and effective mobilization of groups working toward their stated goals. This is true of the VSLAs, CPEs, and farmer field schools. The process for supporting SHFGs appears to be a bit less formal or refined, owing certainly to the variation in the status of those preexisting groups to begin with. Finally, the process for assigning and mobilizing the Corps of Champions seems to have missed the mark, as the initiative does not appear to have effectively generated momentum.

- The process for STC to conduct site visits to monitor, observe, and support project initiatives seems to have not taken into full account the difficulties in covering long distances on difficult roads across 46 different communities. It is simply very difficult to do this with any regularity. STC’s partner 2A also has site visit responsibilities, but its own capacities are limited for the reasons explained above.

EQ 6: WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH MAJOR OUTCOME (ON A FOUR-POINT SCALE), WITH RESPECT TO ESTABLISHED TARGETS AND OUTCOMES?

OUTCOME 1. The first outcome of the CACAO project is to improve accountability of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain.

The ET evaluates progress toward the first outcome as Moderate, represented as 2 on a scale from 1-4 (where 1 is Low and 4 is High). That evaluation is based on some plus factors as well as some minus factors. On the positive side, there is clear evidence



that the message regarding the importance of preventing child labor is reaching farmers and communities and that they are updating their priors regarding social acceptance of the practice as a result. On the negative side, the disconnect between cooperatives and the community farmers who comprise their member stakeholders, as well as the lack of project incentives to encourage cooperatives to fully invest in the child labor interventions, has so far limited the ability of CACAO to achieve this outcome. The pilot traceability program also seems to have not yet made inroads due to the pending changes regarding standardization at the national level, though there are now valuable opportunities for it to support the CCC in implementing those changes.

The ET triangulated the qualitative and quantitative data collected from the field with CACAO’s progress on Performance Indicators, as reported in the most recent (April 2024) TPR, to determine the achievement level. Please see Annex D for a full listing of results against targets for all project outputs, outcomes, and sub-outcomes. As the Performance Indicators reveal, CACAO has surpassed expectations in some respects related to Outcome 1: far more individuals have been trained to monitor and enforce child labor laws than originally targeted (OTP 1.1.1, 808 versus a target of 80), and the number of trained Child Labor champions (OTP 1.2.1.2) is four times greater than the target (85 versus 20). Conversely, some shortcomings in Performance Indicators for Outcome 1 appear primarily in terms of engagement with cooperatives. For example, only 37% of a targeted 100% of cooperatives have established complaint mechanisms for child labor feedback (OTC1); 39% of a targeted 100% of cooperatives have received training on child labor monitoring (sub-OTC 1.2); and 6% of a targeted 50% of cooperatives have reported cases of child labor to social workers (OTP 1.2.1.1). These data support the ET’s observation that CACAO has been very effective at training individuals, and that engaging cooperatives in the monitoring of child labor remains an important next step.

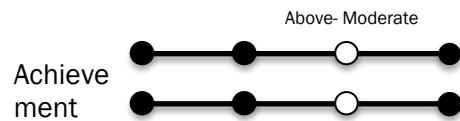
Regarding Sustainability, the capacities that CACAO has helped to develop among social workers, state agencies, CPEs, and farmers will likely remain after the completion of CACAO and will continue to support the fight against child labor. Capacity is a key success factor for sustainability according to the DOL Sustainability Guide,⁷ and it has been a

⁷ More information at https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/Sustainability_Guide_Final_Report_08-22-2018.pdf.

notable strength of CACAO. The lack of proper incentive structures for CPEs, however, is a glaring shortcoming in terms of sustainability; it suggests a gap in replacement resources, institutional linkages, and addressing felt needs that are all success factors for sustainability, as described in DOL’s Sustainability Guide. CPEs play a critical role locally in terms of awareness and potentially monitoring and enforcement, yet as currently configured, they may have difficulty remaining viable after the completion of the project. Hence, the ET rates the sustainability of Outcome 1 at the Moderate level.

OUTCOME 2. CACAO’s second outcome is to increase support to vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives.

The ET rates progress toward the second outcome as Above-Moderate, a 3 on the four-point scale. Regarding Achievement, the VSLAs have surpassed expectations and have put CACAO on track to exceed its targets in terms of providing support to vulnerable households, diversifying incomes, and empowering women. The social workers trained by CACAO are contributing importantly where and when they can. They have the capacities, but they remain limited in their ability to reach communities on a regular basis. The farmer field schools that CACAO has supported through ANADER have proven to be an effective means of improving local farming in ways that can improve productivity to support household incomes. The ET did not see evidence at this point of the entrepreneurship training for boys and girls or the community action centers, which are slated for implementation in Years 3 and 4 in STC’s activity mapping plan. There remains time for those activities to get underway.



The ET again exploited Performance Indicator data to complement its data collection from the field in evaluating the level of achievement regarding Outcome 2. Some measures remain below the target levels as of April 2024. For instance, the data indicates that 31% of cooperatives are conducting activities to fight against child labor (sub-OTC 2.1), against a target of 80%. In terms of cooperatives implementing effective approaches to deliver services to members (OTP 2.1.1), the proportion is well below the target (15% vs. 60%). And 35% of individuals in vulnerable households are demonstrating financial knowledge (OTP 2.1.2), against a target of 80%. On the brighter side, however, CACAO is surpassing targets in ways that signal practical improvements in household wellbeing. More than twice the target number of adults (1200 vs. 500) have been provided with economic strengthening activities (OTP 2.1.2/L4), including access to ANADER farmer field schools and VSLAs. CACAO has also surpassed the target in terms of the number of individuals provided livelihood services (OTP 2.1.2 /L6), with 564 counted as receiving such services against a target of 501. Importantly, nearly three times the targeted share of households have shown evidence of diversifying their incomes (OTP 2.1.4), with 73% doing so as of April 2023, against a target of 25%. This evidence underscores the patterns that the ET observed in the field: on matters that require cooperative engagement, there remains work to do, but in terms of CACAO’s outreach to individuals and households, the project is ahead of schedule in providing support to vulnerable households.

In terms of Sustainability, the ET also rates progress toward Outcome 2 as Above-Moderate; a 3 on the 4-point scale. Discussions with VSLA members provided strong evidence that the groups will function effectively and independently following the completion of CACAO. If no other project intervention succeeded, this alone would constitute a lasting positive impact on vulnerable households. Lessons from the farmer field schools and the capacities of social workers to perform remediation should also

persist, although the logistical and financial capacity of social workers to engage regularly with communities beyond the CACAO project must currently be categorized as doubtful.

EQ 7: WHAT, IF ANY, UNINTENDED EFFECTS HAS THE PROJECT HAD ON ITS TARGET COMMUNITIES AND PARTICIPANTS?

The ET observed four unintended consequences, two positive and significant ones, and two negative but more trivial ones.

First, the VSLAs are doing more than just uplifting vulnerable households. The empowerment of women that the VSLAs are engendering is an additional benefit, but that too is hopefully not a surprising one; indeed, numerous non-governmental organizations and funding agencies that have employed VSLAs, including CARE, Oxfam, World Vision, USAID, and the World Bank, do so with women's empowerment in mind,⁸ and numerous women in the evaluation's focus groups discussed the sense of autonomy they drew from their VSLA activities. Instead, what appears to be an unexpected effect of CACAO through the VSLAs is the extent to which members are not just raising revenues but using those revenues to provide public goods for their communities. Because the VSLAs serve as a savings mechanism as well as an investment mechanism, the groups are finding themselves with resource savings at the same time that their awareness is raised regarding schools as the appropriate place for children. Many of the communities in which CACAO operates do not have adequate educational institutions, relying on temporary structures and voluntary teachers. VSLA members are thus recognizing a need and learning to see it as a longer-term investment in their own families and their communities, and they are stepping in where the state is limited.

Second, cocoa farmers taking part in the farmer field schools routinely discussed the improved agricultural practices that may eventually improve their revenues. An additional benefit that some are starting to recognize is the environmental protection that those new techniques engender. For example, many farmers were initially skeptical of planting trees among their cocoa crops but are now recognizing the benefits in terms of decreased soil erosion protection and because of reforestation efforts.

A less favorable unexpected effect of CACAO is the potential cultivation of dependency on the project, particularly to support the mobility of social workers and other monitoring and enforcement agents. To suggest that this is an unexpected effect may be naïve, yet the ET lists it as such because it is not listed as an anticipated outcome and does not appear to have been mitigated in project planning. The provision of motorbikes is a sticking point for the project; it cannot provide means of mobility to state agencies on an ongoing basis, yet those stakeholders will have trouble meeting their project-related goals without such support. It is not hard to understand that they look to the project for such assistance; CACAO may simply have not foreseen the complications that this particular issue would present. Creative engagement with cocoa exporters and chocolatiers could be one avenue to address this shortcoming.

Finally, in conversations with women during FGDs, numerous mothers expressed the perverse, unexpected consequence of children appealing to the logic that certain forms of work are dangerous or unhealthy for children to avoid common household tasks. One FGD

⁸ For evidence from USAID, see https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WQ3P.pdf. For evidence from the World Bank, see <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/nasikiliza/village-savings-and-loans-associations-support-gender-based-violence-gbv-survivors-afe-0324>.

participant, for example, expressed frustration at her son's effort to avoid sweeping because he learned that children could injure their backs while doing child labor. The ET views these efforts as teenagers being teenagers, but it is nevertheless worthwhile to keep in mind that shifting norms is never done in a vacuum.

4.3 STEWARDSHIP & OPPORTUNITY

The final dimension of EQs was conceptualized to capture a few critical aspects of successful project performance. Are the project outcomes sustainable? Are its interventions inclusive and supportive of women in particular? Does it present or limit opportunities for change? The ET framed the dimension as Stewardship & Opportunity to underscore the role of intervention projects in nurturing potentially lasting outcomes and opening doors for new ones.

EQ 8: TO WHAT EXTENT DO IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES CREATE OR LIMIT OPPORTUNITIES (ENVIRONMENTAL, CLIMATE FRIENDLY PRACTICES, FARMER LEARNING, ETC.)?

CACAO is creating opportunities for sustainable agriculture and environmental protection via the farmer field schools. As communities are asked to do things differently that they have done for years, two factors are critical. First, the messaging will likely be most effective if it originates from local actors and experts. Second, the shift in practice will be better embraced to the extent that community members can see financial rewards for making the change. In the case of the farmer field schools that ANADER is leading for the CACAO project, both factors are present. ANADER agents provide training and have deep familiarity with the farming methods, weather patterns, pests, and soil conditions that local cocoa farmers face. Furthermore, farmers who are applying agroforestry techniques, regular brush clearing, appropriate fertilizer use, and other farmer field school teachings are seeing that their crop yields are improving. One cocoa farmer in Bouamwakro said the following:

“I worried that I would be wasting my time and hurting my cocoa if I cleared the brush so often. Once I started seeing the improvement in what the cocoa trees were producing, I stopped worrying.”

- Cocoa planter and cooperative member in Bouamwakro

Given the opportunities that the CACAO project is generating in the environmental space, it is fully conceivable that complementary programming could take advantage of similar farmer field schools to explicitly address environmental outcomes.

EQ 9: WHAT RESULTS, IF ANY, HAVE OCCURRED IN TERMS OF GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND WHAT ELEMENTS OF THE GENDER CONTEXT COULD BE BETTER ADDRESSED?

SOCIAL INCLUSION. The ET observed little impact from CACAO on social inclusion. Primarily, this is a function of the fact that the cocoa farming communities that feature in CACAO – at least those to which the ET was exposed – do not have notable ethnic cleavages. To the extent that religious differences arise in the communities, which they do, they do not seem to present systematic issues, either for the farmers and households or for the CACAO interventions. The ET met with Muslims, Christians, and traditional religionists and observed interactions in the communities; at no time did study participants respond to ET queries in a manner suggesting that religious divisions were a limiting factor. The communities that the ET visited did have non-negligible minorities of settlers from Burkina Faso – and the community of Bouamwakro even has an administrative position for the Burkinabé representative in the traditional hierarchy – but no study participants

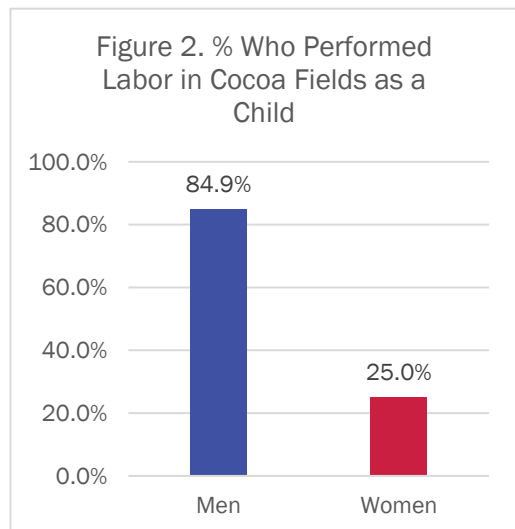
referenced tensions or a social divide along those lines. Such cleavages may be more pronounced among other CACAO communities, but the ET did not receive information on or observe it.

From a positive standpoint, STC appears to value diversity on its own staff. In a country with a recent history of electoral violence framed in identity terms, the construction of a diverse staff can send important messages of inclusion to communities with whom STC works.

GENDER EQUITY. One interesting observation in the effort to combat child labor in the cocoa supply chain is that boys are significantly more likely to be asked to perform hazardous child labor in cocoa farming than are girls. According to data collected from FAS respondents, about 85% of male respondents reported that they had performed child labor in the cocoa fields, while only one-quarter of female respondents reported having done so. This pattern may be in keeping with gender roles that require girls to perform household related duties while boys are sent to the cocoa fields, and it has been noted elsewhere,⁹ but it nevertheless did not appear to the ET to be a prominent feature of CACAO programming around child labor in the cocoa industry. See Figure 2.

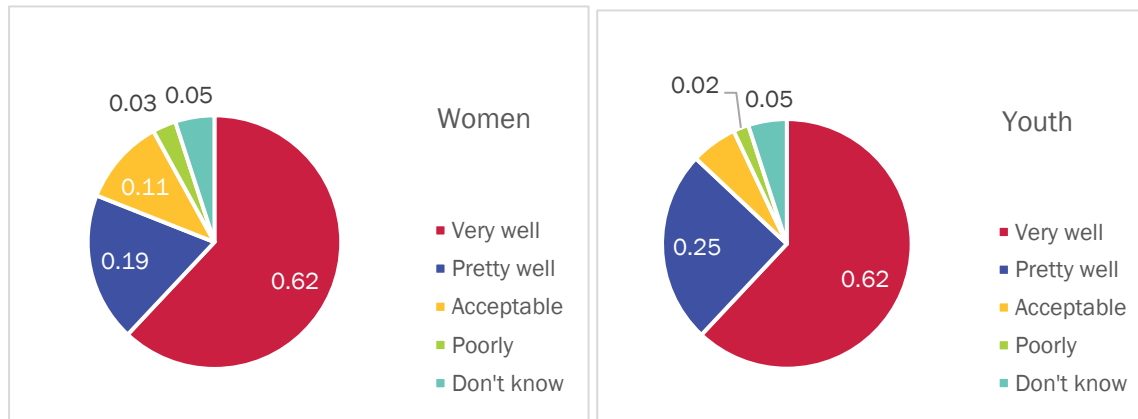
Irrespective of the gender distribution in cocoa-related child labor, CACAO programming prioritizes gender inclusion to achieve its outcomes. For example, the project conceives of women’s empowerment through financial autonomy as one path to diversified household incomes that can alleviate the pressure to exploit child labor. Further, the project views women as an important voice in directing children to school instead of the cocoa farms.

The FAS data indicates that CACAO is indeed excelling in terms of women’s inclusion. Respondents were asked how they judged the effectiveness of the CACAO project in terms of serving certain population subgroups, coded on a 4-point scale from Poorly to Very well. As Figure 3 illustrates, over 80% of respondents reported feeling that CACAO was doing well or very well at addressing in terms of help meet the needs of women. As a point of comparison, this is nearly on par with the share who reported feeling that CACAO is effectively addressing the needs of children, the very centerpiece of the CACAO project. The findings signal the strong commitment of CACAO to include women in its programming and to capitalize on women’s strengths to help advance project outcomes.



⁹ See the NORC study referenced in the Executive Summary.

Figure 3. Distribution of FAS respondents' evaluations of CACAO subgroup effectiveness.



AREAS TO IMPROVE IN THE GENDER CONTEXT. CACAO is performing admirably in terms of gender inclusion. There is one way in which the project might further encourage women’s empowerment: it could encourage better gender balance in the CPEs. These groups play important roles but also very visible roles in communities; they wear red vests, circulate to households with awareness campaigns and image books, and use megaphones to summon community members to events. In this context, seeing better gender parity could send a strong message to girls, boys, and men regarding women’s leadership. Among the communities that the ET visited, the closest to gender parity was a community with 3 women CPE members out of 11 total.

EQ 10: WHAT OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS HAVE THE GREATEST/LEAST LIKELIHOOD OF BEING SUSTAINED AFTER DONOR FUNDING ENDS?

The ET paid particular attention to the sustainable nature of CACAO outputs and outcomes, asking each KII participant and discussion group what they perceived as the interventions that would continue beyond the project and which would be likely to stop when the project ends. The ET also weighed its observations against the guidelines for sustainability published by ILAB.¹⁰ Common patterns emerged in those responses.

OUTCOME 1. Two activities stand out as particularly sustainable with respect to CACAO’s first outcome to build the capacity of cooperatives to monitor child labor. First, and most importantly, the awareness campaigns that CACAO has supported, through image books, social workers, CPEs, and more are turning the tide against the exploitation of child labor in a manner that is shifting norms for the long term. Enhanced capacity is a noted success factor for sustainability, and the capacity of numerous actors associated with CACAO is improving, which should sustain the outcome of better child labor monitoring. In addition, households and community stakeholders (such as women’s groups, CPEs, and traditional leadership) are demonstrating ownership of the issue and political will to address the challenge; their commitment to the issue suggests that the training and messaging will continue to find support even as CPE members move on and others take their place. Furthermore, institutional linkages are emerging between state agencies like SOSTECI (and the CPEs that SOSTECI implements) and communities. Finally, the awareness campaigns address a felt need; mothers, in particular, frequently mentioned that they

¹⁰ Sustainability Guide: A Practical Tool for Sustaining Development Gains. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/Sustainability_Guide_Final_Report_08-22-2018.pdf.

would rather see their children in school. All of these factors meet the criteria for sustainability. The caveat is that cooperatives themselves have not been implicated effectively in CACAO's spreading of sustainable new norms, but the effects are taking place through more direct contacts with communities. This absence of institutional linkage *that specifically involves cocoa cooperatives* represents a potential limitation to the sustainability of successful child labor monitoring.

Second, the improved management and operational capacity of cooperatives that resulted from CACAO's functional training has a strong chance of persisting beyond the period of CACAO performance. First, the ownership of the management process is apparent; for example, cooperative leaders showed the ET manuals they are using to train staff in performance management, record keeping, and other skills. In addition to this success factor for sustainability, CACAO is set up for a long disengagement process with the cooperatives, continuing training and oversight for at least two more years as cooperatives become increasingly comfortable implementing new capacities. Furthermore, the functional trainings are integrated into cooperatives' existing systems, as they have already been managing budgets, internal performance, etc. and now have improved skills to do so. Finally, the training provides tangible results for cooperatives, as they are now better positioned to negotiate with buyers and manage costs. These success factors suggest that the cooperatives have learned to do business in more efficient and effective ways, and the benefits should persist.

A challenge to the sustainability of Outcome 1 activities is the reliance on CPEs to achieve the outcome of improved child labor monitoring. They play an important role in the spread of information in local communities, and there will continue to be needs at the local level for awareness, monitoring, and guidance in the child labor space as the government adopts improved traceability standards. Without incentives to engage in the taxing work, however, CPE members made it clear to the evaluation team that they would be unlikely to continue in the roles. This suggests that key success factors for sustainability, such as replacement resources and addressing felt needs, are missing. STC has indicated that a revenue generating program for CPE members is in their upcoming plans for CACAO, and the ET findings suggests that such plans cannot come soon enough. A similar model could also help to fortify the organizational strength and the sustainability of well-functioning SHFGs.

OUTCOME 2. Regarding CACAO's second outcome, to support vulnerable households in cocoa producing communities, two activities again stand out as particularly sustainable. First, the VSLAs represent a centerpiece in the CACAO project's success; women are benefitting financially and in terms of empowerment, households are enjoying improved revenues, and communities are benefitting from VSLA contributions to local public goods. These outcomes speak to the tangible results of VSLAs that reinforce their sustainability. In addition, CACAO has established a long disengagement process, supporting VSLA facilitators with decreasing stipends over time to allow communities to gradually fulfill that role. CACAO has also developed an effective model to improve on preexisting VSLAs, and the evidence strongly suggests that the model will persist. In short, CACAO ensures that VSLA facilitators are paid enough to motivate their full commitment to the organization, management, and commitment of the associations and their members. Often VSLAs rely only on social cohesion and pressure to keep the groups organized and committed, but CACAO's clear-eyed approach sets up improved outcomes both in the short- and long-term. Finally, and relatedly, the VSLAs have a viable cost recovery model, as the associations

themselves can eventually take over the responsibility of paying for a managing facilitator; numerous VSLA members indicated to the ET that they intend to do exactly that.

Second, lessons from the farmer field schools are likely to continue informing best practices among cocoa farmers well beyond the life of the CACAO project. Especially as farmers see their yields increase, and as they recognize the environmental benefits from agroforestry and other ecofriendly farming practices that the farmer field schools are promoting, there is little reason to suspect that they will not maintain those practices beyond CACAO. An important caveat is that, while the lessons from farmer field schools are likely to continue resulting in improved agricultural practices after the completion of CACAO, it is less certain that the farmer field schools themselves will continue, so progress could slip. The key will be the continued institutional commitment from ANADER. Because the farmer field schools are producing tangible results and CACAO has helped to establish institutional links between ANADER and local community stakeholders, the ET is of the view that their continued operation is not solely a function of CACAO's presence and will likely continue. But just as CACAO confronts challenges in incentivizing lasting commitment from CPE members, it would likely face the same challenges in asking farmer field school instructors to serve communities if ANADER retreats from its commitment. CACAO is well-positioned to impress upon its GoCI counterparts the tangible benefits of the schools.

One aspect related to Outcome 2 is currently not well-suited for sustainability. Social worker outreach to communities is important, needed, valued, and effective. Yet, it is apparent to the ET that the social workers simply do not have the resources or institutional support to maintain an active presence in the CACAO communities, let alone other communities under each agent's purview. Addressing this challenge will likely require revised budgeting at the Ministry level, or perhaps creative engagement with cocoa exporters and chocolatiers to stimulate public-private partnerships aimed at bolstering social worker outreach in ways beneficial to both the GoCI and cocoa-related businesses. CACAO may be well-positioned to advocate for multi-stakeholder investment in social services through its regular steering committee meetings, provided key actors come to the table.

5. LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

The CACAO project draws on an ambitious organizational approach: it aims to tackle a challenge that principally affects individual children by working not directly with the children but rather through government agencies and multi-community cooperatives. Despite challenges with this model of this sort, the project has the profound advantage of also working at the household and community level even if top-down initiatives face constraints. Below, we detail some of the lessons learned and promising practices that can inform future projects.

5.1 LESSONS LEARNED

The ET identified several lessons that can inform both the CACAO project over the remainder of its period of performance and other similar projects in the future.

1. Civil servants who work in fields associated with a challenging issue like child labor, from social workers to law enforcement agents to labor representatives, have a thirst for advanced trainings and capacity building to improve their individual and agency-level impact. Capacity building training has been very well received, and agents show demonstrable improvement in knowledge and remediation strategies,

as evidenced by their familiarity with STC-supported guidelines for working with children, addressing GBV, and other themes critical to their work. Yet, if they are unable to effectively reach communities, their impact will face hard limits. Unfortunately, the communities most in need of social workers and other assistance from social service agencies are often the most remote and difficult to reach. Local governments have limited resources to provide adequate means of transportation and mobility, so many of the capacity building benefits remain stuck in departmental capitals while critical needs persist in target communities.

2. Community members can be deeply motivated to help resolve issues that plague their communities, particularly when they receive information and training that underscores the consequences. The ET saw evidence of this motivation among members of the Committees for Child Protection (CPEs) who are charged with monitoring and raising awareness around child labor in their communities. It is unfair, however, to rely on that motivation alone to expect community members to carry out taxing and costly work on a persistent basis. Even those with the motivation to make their communities better typically need, and deserve, incentives to carry on the effort. CPE members receive vests and materials to facilitate the awareness campaigns they lead, but they take on costs in time, effort, transportation, and other expenses. For the important work of community groups like CPEs to continue in a sustainable manner, it is important to build in mechanisms for revenue generation at the group level that can provide the incentive for ongoing commitment among their members.
3. Staff turnover at the implementing partner (IP) level can undermine all the profoundly important objectives of a project. It is therefore critical that the work conditions and demands placed on IP personnel be prioritized as a key to success in the development of activity plans. The ET noticed that the prime grantee's local IP has the skills and desire at the field level to fulfill its obligations and make a real difference in the fight against child labor. Yet, it is limited in its capacity to do so. Staff members are overstretched, which causes them to seek opportunities elsewhere, which means recruiting replacements and taking steps backward to train new agents.
4. The marketing of projects in government agencies, civil society organizations, and target communities is important in terms of helping to push ongoing commitment to the project outcomes. However, CACAO provided less marketing compared with other projects with similar outcomes which were more prominently represented with posters, signposts, and pamphlets throughout the zone of intervention.

5.2 PROMISING PRACTICES

Sometimes relatively minor tweaks to well-established intervention activities can propel the outcomes from modest to impressive. The ET saw numerous promising practices during the CACAO evaluation worth continuing and replicating in future programming.

1. VSLAs exist in rural, low-income communities all over the world where community members have difficulty accessing conventional banking institutions. They existed in CACAO communities before the project arrived, typically lasting for a brief period before disbanding. The VSLAs associated with the CACAO project operate on a different, more professional, and vastly more successful plane. The beneficial outcomes for women, households, and communities are tangible. The key to the

success of the VSLAs under CACAO, in the view of the ET, is that they provide paid facilitators who oversee and guide the functioning of the groups. They wear red vests, so they are distinguished in their roles, and they receive training and support from the prime grantee's local partner. They are paid a stipend through the project's period of performance, and the stipend will eventually to zero as the project matures.

“Our members started by contributing 300CFA per week. Before long, they decided to increase it to 500CFA. Now they're ready to go to 1,000CFA per week. Why? Because they are all seeing the benefits.”

- A Village Savings and Loan President

This commitment ensures that the VSLAs function professionally like mini banks: meetings occur with regularity, contributions are tracked carefully, and the system for identifying and rotating individual loan recipients is well-organized. The value to members is apparent, so VSLAs will likely continue to support a facilitator out of their own funds once the project ends.

2. Cultural and economic norms that perpetuate social ills, such as child labor exploitation, can change with consistent and persistent messaging. The CACAO project effectively encouraged this practice through locally embedded CPE agents, staff members, and social workers. For example, community members were able to echo with precision the messaging from the CACAO project (and others combating child labor) related to the worst forms of child labor. Although more complete adoption of new norms may take more time, such messaging helps to establish collective views encouraging a gradual shift toward a new paradigm of child protection.
3. Implementing partners do not need to have all the expertise internally or to conduct all the interventions aimed at improving capacities and behaviors themselves. Instead, relying on trained experts from civil society organizations and government agencies can be both more efficient and more effective. STC and the CACAO project understood and have implemented this approach, and it allows the project to promote numerous behavioral changes both central and complementary to the main outcomes. It is especially helpful when those experts are deeply familiar with the local context. It is also helpful when resources permit those experts to have regular contact with community participants, which has been a challenge for CACAO. Nevertheless, the practice of enlisting supporting agencies and actors, fortifying their skillsets to ensure cohesion with the project goals, and providing support for them to impact communities has been a promising practice with CACAO.



MEMBERS OF THE VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION IN KIRWAKRU. PHOTO CREDIT: ALEXIS KOFFI

4. The CACAO project uses visual tools to build awareness in communities where literacy rates are low. Trainers responsible for raising awareness carry image booklets that are attractive, colorful, and easy to follow, and the practice appears to be the singular most effective way of teaching new best practices to an audience accustomed to a different set of norms. The reliance on images for awareness raising and instruction has been applied in numerous other contexts, from combatting HIV/AIDS to raising awareness during Ebola outbreaks. Similarly, CACAO has used the strategy with much success.

6. CONCLUSION

The CACAO project, at this interim stage, is making some important inroads in the fight against child labor in the cocoa industry in target communities, and it demonstrates promise for greater impact over the remainder of the period of performance. A slow start to some interventions can and certainly will be overcome, and some important planned but not yet implemented activities will likely play a critical role in the achievement of project outcomes. Tweaks to some interventions as the project moves forward should improve impact to ensure that the desired outcomes emerge, and the child labor problem is mitigated. In addition, accounting for the implementation environment may help the CACAO project to capitalize on new opportunities for impact. Conclusions disaggregated by the principal outcomes follow.

Outcome 1.

Outcome 1 of the CACAO project aims to improve accountability of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain and to facilitate enforcement of child labor laws by the government. Clear in the outcome is the role of cocoa cooperatives as conduits to address child labor exploitation at the community level. In this respect, the CACAO project has thus far not been fully successful; it is not stimulating committed engagement for the cooperatives to monitor child labor or facilitate the enforcement of child labor laws. To be sure, the cooperatives have received valuable capacity building training from CACAO in organizational management, which is improving their operations. Furthermore, they do

some monitoring of child labor out of necessity. Their interest is their bottom line, and they are mindful that child labor exploitation could affect that bottom line if it were to bring the cooperatives into conflict with standards in the cocoa supply chain. Yet, the cooperatives participating in the CACAO project have not to this point shown a commitment to embracing CACAO interventions to further address the issue. Thus, if the objective of CACAO is to improve the functioning of cocoa cooperatives to demonstrate more accountability in monitoring child labor, more work is needed. Efforts to revive cooperative participation in the steering committees and to encourage them to play a more hands-on role in child labor monitoring, perhaps by collaborating with the CCC on new traceability standards, extending cooperatives' training on ARSO standards, or enlisting cocoa exporters and chocolatiers to encourage engagement from the cooperatives, are potential avenues to stimulate needed change.

However, given the objective of the CACAO project to increase the number of cooperatives demonstrating a reduction in child labor in the cocoa value chain, its activities at the community level are indeed proving effective in reaching the objective. Various key interventions, such as the formalization of CPEs, may not yet be employing a sustainable model, and challenges to monitoring child labor cases – both by external and internal monitors – will persist. Nevertheless, interventions that directly reach communities are working and are serving the objective. The impacts are simply coming without major input from the cooperatives.

The changing implementation environment also has implications for the current status of CACAO and its path toward successful achievement of outcomes. The increasing professionalization of cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire, poised to undergo a sharp uptick with new standardization and traceability requirements in the coming year, will likely have important downstream effects on child labor exploitation. In short, the changing environment may render projects like CACAO less critical, an outcome perhaps already foreshadowed by the scarcity of actual child labor cases cited in the intervention departments. Nevertheless, opportunities exist for CACAO to position itself as a key complement to government policies by collaborating on farmers' uptake of identity cards and other measures associated with the CCC's pending traceability requirements.

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 of the CACAO project aims to increase support for vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives and to facilitate access to social protection and child labor remediation programs. The enhancement of social protection and access to remediation programs has been effective but perhaps less pronounced than anticipated, for two reasons. First, social workers trained to support the CACAO outcomes and to provide support to households in the intervention communities are limited in their capacity to reach those communities. The capacity is there, and the demand for their services is there, but their ability to supply those services is constrained by resource, time, and mobility factors. Second, remediation efforts by social workers have proven to be less applicable in the CACAO intervention context, simply because too many of the child labor cases are reported to cooperatives but are not officially reported through social services.

Conversely, CACAO interventions to support vulnerable households, and to create alternative livelihood means that mitigate reliance on child labor on their cocoa farms, have proven to be incredibly successful. CACAO's VSLAs represent a model to be replicated in other contexts, and they should be viewed as a central and critical output in support of this project outcome. Similarly, farmer field schools supported by CACAO are giving farmers

access to new methods that are enhancing their yields, which should provide them with resources to offset their reliance on child labor. It is worth stressing that shortages in the farming labor supply are emerging as more children are encouraged to go to school and to forego significant (and taxing) work on the cocoa farms. This places importance on alternative sources of labor such as the SHFGs, and it underscores the importance of reinforcing the organizational structure of revenue raising potential of those groups, at least until the time at which cocoa farming in Côte d'Ivoire is fully professionalized.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The interim evaluation field work, discussions, and observations brought to light several areas that, if addressed, can reinforce the effectiveness of the CACAO project, and also offer useful insights for other future projects. The ET thus offers a series of recommendations that build on the project's strengths and weaknesses and the lessons learned. Recommendations, all of which are summarized in Table 2 below, are directed to both the implementing partner STC and USDOL.

Recommendations for STC

Outcome 1

1. STC should continue, expand, and diversify its capacity building training for government agencies, social workers, CPEs, and other key stakeholders. Such training provides important benefits, and the pending changes in cocoa farming standardization create a need and an opportunity for additional capacity building.
2. STC should find ways to incentivize cooperatives to engage fully in the child labor-related components of the project. Cooperatives are benefiting importantly from operational training, but they currently see little reason to invest in the child labor aspects. Tying benefits to cooperatives with the obligation to support child labor programming may help overall outcomes. One possibility is to work with local government agencies to capitalize on the pending ARSO traceability requirements that the CCC is implementing: CACAO could rejuvenate cooperatives' involvement in the steering committee meetings and stimulate greater cooperative engagement on child labor more generally, by taking on capacity building around the traceability requirements. This could also serve as a mechanism to extract greater engagement from law enforcement. CACAO might also engage cocoa exporters and chocolatiers in the effort to incentivize cooperatives.
3. SOSTECI plays a key role in invigorating cocoa cooperatives' engagement with administrative and social services, but stakeholders note that its presence is not yet strong enough where cooperatives and the child labor problem intersect in communities. STC could help promote the visibility of SOSTECI ahead of its planned expansion to local levels.
4. STC should establish plans to implement revenue generating activities for CPEs. Their work is critical, but members are unlikely to continue doing the taxing work of assisting fellow farmers without adequate compensation. Entering the used clothes market or creating a smaller version of VSLAs, suggestions the ET heard from local CPE members, are potential ideas.
5. STC should address its administrative relationship with its partner 2A. Without this, disagreement and ambiguities around support for field agents and activities will continue to hamper the monitoring of child labor. This can be partially addressed

through increased resources for 2A's field office, which can prevent turnover that undermines project outcomes.

6. If the Champions model is to be maintained, the champions should be given greater visibility – such as with vests and megaphones, which CPE members referenced as valuable to their own success – and perhaps greater responsibility to contribute to regular reporting.
7. STC can expand its marketing efforts so that representatives of government agencies, civil society organizations, and communities are familiar with the CACAO message and help propagate its mission.

Outcome 2

8. STC should expand the number of VSLAs. Communities have shown that they can support multiple groups; further expansion would allow more households to create alternative sources of revenue.
9. STC should work with government agencies to facilitate the outreach work that social workers do with households. This social work is valued at the community level, but workers are currently unable to reach communities with adequate frequency. Funding civil servants is the task of government; STC encouragement could help, perhaps by stimulating public-private partnerships with exporters and chocolatiers.
10. STC should lend organizational support to SHFGs. They represent a critical source of labor as children move away from cocoa farms and into schools, but their organizational structure and financial success varies from one group to another, and they need to see benefits to continue providing their labor. Organizational management trainings as well as a smaller version of VSLAs for SHFGs are potential ideas.

Recommendations for USDOL

1. First, the ET recommends that USDOL provide a no-cost extension to STC to have adequate time to fully implement its planned activities. Some initiatives, such as the revenue generating activities for CPEs, are much needed but not yet in place, and they could be extended to SHFGs. Other activities, such as the entrepreneurship workshops for boys and girls and the Corps of Champions, need to be invigorated with greater visibility and responsibility. The no-cost extension could also provide time for the CACAO project to rebuild the steering committee meetings around new traceability requirements, which could provide strong incentives for law enforcement as well as cooperatives' engagement.
2. More generally, projects like CACAO depend critically on training and regular outreach to communities, both of which become challenging where communities are difficult to access, training teams face frequent turnover, and social services agencies are understaffed. Many of those details are beyond the control of DOL, but one thing DOL might consider in future programming is to encourage grantees and implementing partners to adopt more robust staffing commitments – both in personnel and pay – to ensure minimal turnover and adequate capacity for outreach. Grantees may face incentives to minimize those costs in the proposal stage, so DOL might intervene in the planning stages to promote project success. The ET reiterates that this is particularly important for projects with training and outreach at their cores.

Table 3. Recommendations and Supporting Evidence

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
For STC		
Continue, diversify, and expand capacity building trainings.	Cooperatives and communities are benefitting; changing government standards will require more.	pp. 13, 17, 18, 19
Incentivize cooperatives' engagement in child labor activities by linking CACAO to the CCC traceability program and to chocolate exporters.	Cooperatives currently see little need to embrace project activities on child labor.	pp. 13, 16, 19, 20
Support the increased visibility of and leverage of SOSTECL among cooperatives.	SOSTECL is a key link in the enforcement of child labor monitoring and laws among cooperatives, but it needs a stronger presence where cooperatives and child labor intersect, in communities.	pp. 11, 16
Begin implementing revenue generating activities for CPEs.	CPEs are doing critical work but are not sustainable; agents need incentives.	pp. 18, 21, 25
Address the relationship with local partner 2A, including provision of resources.	Administrative discord persists, which is hampering collaboration. Turnover at 2A is a problem, and they lack adequate resources.	p. 10, 19
Invigorate child labor champions with greater visibility and responsibility.	They currently have little presence in communities.	pp. 18, 20
Expand the marketing of CACAO activities and messaging.	Agencies and communities are currently not widely familiar with CACAO; familiarity will support the outcomes.	p. 27
Expand number of VSLAs.	VSLAs are effective and sustainable; the demand exists.	pp. 14, 17
Work with government agencies to encourage support for social worker outreach, perhaps using public-private partnerships.	Social workers play a key role but have limited capacity to reach communities.	pp. 17, 20, 21, 28

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
Lend organizational support to SHFGs.	Alternative sources of labor are required on farms; SHFGs are effective but variably organized for sustainability.	pp. 18, 20, 25
For USDOL		
Provide a no-cost extension.	Some CACAO interventions will have an impact but need more time.	pp. 10, 14, 18, 25
Encourage more robust staffing commitments from grantees and IPs for training- and outreach-centered projects.	Staff turnover and challenges in regularly conducting outreach to communities has imposed some limits on CACAO engagement.	p. 6, 20, 28

ANNEXES

ANNEX A. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Project Documents.

- Evaluation of the Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation Systems in Côte d'Ivoire: SSRTE and SOSTECI, April 2023.
- CACAO Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, September 2022.
- Assessment of the Operational Capacities of CACAO Project Cooperative Societies to Provide Member Services, October 2022.
- "Assessment of the quality of protection services social security and gap analysis work remediation programs children in Daloa and Vavoua," July 2022.
- Baseline Report: Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes (CACAO), April 2023.
- CACAO Revised Technical Narrative Report, November 2020.
- CACAO Indicator Update Report, December 2023.

Periodic Project Reports.

- Cacao Project Technical Progress Report, April 2021
- Cacao Project Technical Progress Report, October 2021
- Cacao Project Technical Progress Report, April 2022
- Cacao Project Technical Progress Report, October 2022
- Cacao Project Technical Progress Report, April 2023
- Cacao Project Technical Progress Report, October 2023
- NGO 2A Monthly Activity Report, October 2022
- NGO 2A Monthly Activity Report, November 2023
- NGO 2A Monthly Activity Report, December 2023
- NGO 2A Monthly Activity Report, January 2024

External Documents.

- NORC Final Report: Assessing Progress in Reducing Child Labor in Cocoa Production in Cocoa Growing Areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, October 2020.
- European Union Deforestation Regulations. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/publications/unpacking-eu-deforestation-regulation-cocoa-sector_en?prefLang=sk.
- The Catalog of African Regional Standards. https://www.arso-oran.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Catalogue-of-African-Regional-Standards-ARS-June-2021_TC.pdf.
- USDOL Sustainability Guide: a practical tool for sustaining development gains. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/Sustainability_Guide_Final_Report_08-22-2018.pdf.

ANNEX B. EVALUATION ITINERARY

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ANNEX C. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP AGENDA AND PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX D. PROGRESS ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (FROM TPRS)

Ind. No.	Indicator	Target	Status	Notes
Overall Project				
POH1	Overall Project Indicators: (POH1) Percentage (%) of livelihood service participant HHs with at least one child engaged in child labor	N/A	N/A	To be updated at the midterm.
POH2	(POH2) Percentage (%) of livelihood service participant HHs with at least one child engaged in hazardous child labor	N/A	N/A	To be updated at the midterm.
POC1	(POC1) Percentage (%) of direct service participant children engaged in child labor	N/A	N/A	To be updated at the midterm.
POC2	(POC2) Percentage of direct service participant children engaged in hazardous child labor	N/A	N/A	To be updated at the midterm.
C1	(C1) Number (#) of countries with increased capacity to address child labor, forced labor, trafficking in persons, or other violations of workers' rights.	N/A	N/A	To be updated at the midterm.
Outcome 1				
OTC1	OTC 1. Percentage (%) of cocoa cooperatives beneficiaries within CACAO project having established complaint mechanisms to receive feedback and complaints related to child labor in the cocoa supply chain	100%	37% (18/49)	Established after supervision visits and training sessions.
Sub-OTC1.1	Sub-OTC 1 .1. Percentage (%) of enforcement agencies in target area monitoring and tracking child labor law violations within cooperatives	100%	78% (7/9)	
OTP1.1.1	OTP 1.1.1. (T1) Number (#) of individuals provided with training to monitor and enforce child labor laws	80	808	

Ind. No.	Indicator	Target	Status	Notes
OTP1.1.2	OTP 1.1.2 Number (#) of child labor cases discussed during protection platform meetings	25	108	106 from a UCAPS-CI cooperative listening session in March 2024.
OTP1.1.2	OTP 1.1.2 Number (#) of child labor cases with action plans implemented by social workers.	25	124	Includes the UCAPS-CI cases and other social service cases.
Sub-OTC1.2	Sub-OTC 1 .2. Percentage (%) of cocoa cooperatives that have received training on child labor monitoring(Cocoa cooperatives leaders; child labor champions within cocoa cooperatives)	100%	39% (37/96)	Child Labor champions trained using image box methodology.
Sub-OTC1.2	Sub-OTC 1 .2: Percentage (%) of child labor champions that received support (tools, guidance, etc.) to monitor child labor within cooperatives and communities	100%	77% (37/48)	Reported at 100% as of Oct 2023.
OTP1.2.1.1	OTP 1.2.1. 1. Percentage (%) of cocoa cooperatives in the project reporting child labor cases to CPCs and social workers	50%	6% (3/48)	UCAPS-CI cases, plus one case reported from a coop in Gadouan and 5 cases from a coop in Gbogou
OTP1.2.1.2	OTP 1.2.1.2. Number (#) of child labor champions trained	20	85	Child labor champions and CPC members trained by social workers; more coming in April 2024 after reporting.
OTP1.2.1	OTP 1.2.1. Percentage (%) of cooperative members demonstrating knowledge of child labor polices and protection laws	80%	96% (46/48)	Trained apr-sept 2023. Knowledge measured using pre-test/post-tests.
OTP1.2.2	OTP 1.2.2. Number (#) of child labor cases identified by the CLMRS	N/A	N/A	The CLMRS will be set up later through the traceability pilot system.
OTP1.2.2	OTP 1.2.2. Number (#) of individuals trained on the SOP and CLMRS	N/A	N/A	Waiting on the traceability pilot system.

Ind. No.	Indicator	Target	Status	Notes
OTP1.2.2	OTP 1.2.2. Percentage (%) of traceability pilot progress	N/A	N/A	To be reported annually from April 2024. A workshop has taken place.
Outcome 2				
OTC2	OTC 2. (L1)) Number (#) of households receiving livelihood services.	160	200	
Sub-OTC2.1	Sub-OTC 2.1. Percentage (%) of cocoa cooperatives conducting activities to fight against child labor	80%	31% (15/48)	Specific activities are not listed. Maximal target is 80% over full period of performance.
OTP2.1.1	OTP 2.1.1. Percentage (%) of cooperatives implementing effective approaches to deliver services to members	60%	15% (7/48)	Some provided school kits; others invested in rehabilitation of schools.
OTP2.1.2	OTP 2.1.2 Percentage (%) of vulnerable HH within cooperatives demonstrating financial knowledge	80%	35% (694/1956)	As of the 6th TPR, 1956 individuals have been enrolled into VSLA.
OTP2.1.2 (L4)	OTP 2.1.2 (L4) Number (#) of adults provided with economic strengthening services	500	1200	Including trainings from ANADER and VSLA participation, number is over 3000.
OTP2.1.2 (L6)	OTP 2.1.2 (L6) Number (#) of individuals provided livelihood services	501	564	
OTP2.1.2	OTP 2.1.2 Percentage (%) of VSLA of members who created income-generating activity.	50%	10% (188/1956)	Based on visits to 34 out of 84 VSLAs.
OTP2.1.3	OTP 2.1.3 Average cocoa yield among households enrolled in the project	320kg/hect	N/A	Awaiting data. According to ANADER estimates, the average yield is 350 kg for 1 hectare of cocoa in the Daloa area and 290 kg for 1 hectare in Vavoua.

Ind. No.	Indicator	Target	Status	Notes
OTP2.1.3	OTP 2.1.3: Percentage (%) of cocoa farming households implementing cost-effective agricultural practices	50%	43% (534/1250)	
OTP2.1.4	OTP 2.1.4 Percentage (%) of households diversifying their income	25%	73% (266/366)	Reported annually.
OTP2.1.4 (E1/E6)	OTP 2.1.4: (E1/E6): Number (#) of children engaged in child labor provided an education or training service	35%	N/A	Data collection planned for 2024.
Sub-OTC2.2	Sub-OTC 2.2. Percentage (%) of households accessing social protection and child labor remediation programs	60%	N/A	
OTP2.2.1	OTP 2.2.1. Percentage (%) of community members with demonstrated knowledge on social protection and child labor remediation program	60%	N/A	Data collection planned for after training sessions.
OTP2.2.2	OTP 2.2.2 Percentage (%) of vulnerable households accessing social protection programs through referral mechanisms	60%	N/A	

ANNEX E. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Final Draft | February 12, 2024



INTERIM EVALUATION

COOPERATIVES ADDRESSING CHILD LABOR ACCOUNTABILITY OUTCOMES (CACAO) – CÔTE D'IVOIRE

SUBMITTED TO

United States Department of Labor
Bureau of International Labor Affairs
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20210
www.dol.gov/ilab

PREPARED BY

The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG)
1816 11th St NW
Washington, DC 20001
www.the-mitchellgroup.com

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Background and Justification

The Office of Trade and Labor Affairs (OTLA) and the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) are offices within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) that provides a wide range of technical assistance around the world. ILAB's mission is to promote a fair global playing field for workers in the United States and around the world by enforcing trade commitments among trading partners, strengthening global labor standards, promoting racial and gender equity, and combating international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

OTLA provides services, information, expertise, and technical cooperation programs that support USDOL and U.S. foreign labor policy objectives. OTLA provides technical assistance to improve labor conditions and respect for workers' rights internationally. Technical assistance projects funded by OTLA address a range of labor issues that help to make sure that governments, workers, and employers have the tools and capacity to enforce and improve labor protections and comply with a trade agreement's or preference program's labor obligations.

OCFT works to combat child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking around the world through international research, policy engagement, technical cooperation, and awareness-raising. OCFT supports technical cooperation projects in more than 90 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by OCFT support sustained efforts that address child labor and forced labor's underlying causes, including poverty and lack of access to education.

This evaluation approach will be in accordance with DOL's Evaluation Policy.¹¹ ILAB is committed to using the most rigorous methods applicable for this performance evaluation and to learning from the evaluation results. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent third party and in an ethical manner and safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and privacy of participants. The evaluation criteria generally guiding evaluations of ILAB technical assistance programming are: Relevance, Coherence/Alignment (to the extent possible),

BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

Effectiveness, Efficiency/Resource Use, Impact (to the extent possible), and Sustainability.¹² A broader set of evaluative criteria or domains may also be considered depending on the learning objectives for this evaluation, including themes of design, equity, replicability, consequence, unintended effects, among others.¹³ In conducting this evaluation, the evaluator will strive to uphold the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for

¹¹ [U.S. Department of Labor Evaluation Policy](#).

¹² These criteria stem from [Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions](#) and Principles for Use by the [Organization for Economic Development's Development Assistance Committee \(OECD-DAC\)](#) Network on Development Evaluation. DOL determined these criteria are in accordance with the OMB Guidance M-20-12.

¹³ [Evaluative Criteria: An Integrated Model of Domains and Sources](#). *American Journal of Evaluation*, Rebecca M. Teasdale, 2021, Vol. 42(3) 354-376.

Evaluators.¹⁴ ILAB will make the evaluation report available and accessible on its website. ILAB has contracted with The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) under order number 1605C2-24-F-00004 to conduct performance evaluations of technical assistance projects. The present terms of reference (TOR) pertain to the interim performance evaluation of project Save the Children Federation, Inc. “Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes (CACAO)” project in Côte d’Ivoire. This document serves as the framework and guidelines for the evaluation. It is organized into the following sections:

1. Background
2. Purpose, Scope, and Audience
3. Evaluation Questions
4. Evaluation Design and Methodology
5. Evaluation Team, Management, and Support
6. Roles and Responsibilities
7. Evaluation Milestones and Timeline
8. Deliverables and Deliverable Schedule
9. Evaluation Report
10. Annexes

Project Context

Agricultural work on cocoa farms in Côte d’Ivoire is particularly hazardous for child laborers. The physical demands typically surpass the capacity of children whose bodies are still developing, and psychological and environmental health costs to child laborers are also pronounced. Yet, families face enormous pressures to enlist their children in cocoa farming. Cocoa farming represents the primary source of income for a strong majority of Ivoirian households, and the costs-to-profit ratio, in addition to the pressure to produce adequate quantities, incentivizes cocoa farmers to enlist their children in the labor.

This practice is inconsistent with the US Department of Labor’s (DOL) efforts to ensure that workers around the world are treated fairly; that labor standards are respected globally; and that child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking be eliminated. DOL has thus recognized the cocoa farming industry in Côte d’Ivoire as a critical area for intervention, funding the five-year Cooperatives Addressing Child Labor Accountability Outcomes (CACAO) project, implemented by Save the Children, Inc. (SC) and with local implementation support from non-governmental organization *Agriculteur en Action* (2A). CACAO aims to strengthen capacity, connections, and accountability across child labor enforcement and monitoring within cocoa cooperatives; build the capacity of cocoa cooperatives to provide support to vulnerable households and access to social protection; and pilot a farm-to-cooperative cocoa traceability system. Cocoa cooperatives represent a key bridge between farmers and markets and are thus well-positioned to extend support services that reduce the incentives to exploit child laborers. Yet, many of the cocoa cooperatives in Côte d’Ivoire do not function well, and only 30-40 percent of farmers participate. Implemented effectively, CACAO will improve the functioning of cocoa cooperatives and increase the number of cooperatives showing a reduction in child labor.

¹⁴ [American Evaluation Association’s Guiding Principles](#).

Project Specific Information

To ensure a high-quality, cost-effective implementation of CACAO that generates progress toward goals, DOL's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) has commissioned TMG to conduct an interim performance evaluation of CACAO, with data collection in the Departments of Daloa and Vavoua and in Abidjan. Now, three years into a project slated for completion in mid-2025, ample time has passed to allow for a fruitful interim evaluation that identifies progress toward objectives, implementation challenges, and lessons learned that can reinforce CACAO for the remainder of the project. For this evaluation, Dr. John McCauley will serve as the Lead Evaluator for TMG, with Dr. Emmanuel-David Gnahoui as a Co-Lead Evaluator.

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

The purpose of the interim performance evaluation covered under this contract includes, but may not be limited to, the following:

Assessing the relevance of the project in the cultural, economic, and political context in the country, as well as the validity of the project design and the extent to which it is suited to the priorities and policies of the host government and other stakeholders and actors;

- Determining whether the project is on track toward achieving its overall project objective and expected outcomes, identifying the challenges and opportunities encountered in doing so, and analyzing the driving factors for these challenges and opportunities;
- Assessing the effectiveness of the project's strategies and the project's strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and identifying areas in need of improvement (with particular attention to equity and inclusion, wherever relevant);
- Providing conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations; and
- Assessing the project's plans for sustainability at local and national levels and among implementing organizations and identifying steps to enhance its sustainability.

Intended Users

The evaluation will provide ILAB, the grantee, participants and other project stakeholders or actors who have a concern, interest and/or influence on the labor rights problem the project is intended to address, an assessment of the project's performance, its effects on project participants, and an understanding of the factors driving the project results. The evaluation results, conclusions and recommendations will serve to inform any project adjustments that may need to be made, and to inform stakeholders in the design and implementation of subsequent phases or future labor rights projects as appropriate. The evaluation report will be published on the USDOL website, so the report will be written as a standalone document, providing the necessary background information for readers who are unfamiliar with the details of the project.

Evaluation Questions

Below are specific focus areas that TMG will address during the evaluation process. They incorporate both the general evaluation and interim evaluation focus areas recommended by ILAB. Formulated as evaluation questions, they will provide the structure for the evaluation

and be further tailored to the specific learning priorities, objectives, expected results, activities, and project stakeholders with input from ILAB and Save the Children. We organize the 10 evaluation questions into three dimensions: Design Relevance and Validity, Effectiveness, and Stewardship and Opportunities, which will also serve as sections in the evaluation report’s findings. TMG identifies the data sources it intends to use to answer these questions in Appendix A.

As part of its effort to generate answers to the evaluation questions, TMG will **review performance monitoring data and project performance data** with the grantee Save the Children.

DIMENSION	EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Design Relevance/Validity	11) Which interventions have proven to be most/least effective at achieving desired outcomes? 12) To what extent is the theory of change valid and coherent in the implementing environment? 13) To what extent does the project strategy reflect the needs and priorities of diverse stakeholders (law enforcement, cooperatives and members, vulnerable households, purchasers, etc.)?
Effectiveness	14) To what extent does the project manage community expectations from its various engagement strategies? 15) To what extent does the process of each major intervention support project objectives (independent from strengths and weaknesses in results)? 16) What is the objective level of achievement of each major outcome (on a four-point scale), with respect to established targets and outcomes? 17) What, if any, unintended effects has the project had on its target communities and participants?
Stewardship & Opportunities	18) To what extent do implementation activities create or limit opportunities (environmental, climate friendly practices, farmer learning, etc.)? 19) What results, if any, have occurred in terms of gender equity and social inclusion, and what elements of the gender context could be better addressed? 20) Which outcomes and outputs have the greatest/least likelihood of being sustained after donor funding ends?

TMG wishes to underscore three priorities related to the Evaluation Questions (EQ). First, whenever appropriate, the answers to evaluation questions will include disaggregated

information that highlights potential differential performance by gender, age, and poverty level. Second, the EQ are intentionally broad to ensure answers that address the overall direction of CACAO. However, the evaluation team will also link questions to specific activities and will note diverging patterns among them. Third, the EQ do not include questions that explicitly inquire about lessons learned. Instead, the EQ will elicit lessons learned, and a separate section of the evaluation report will address those lessons and related recommendations. By all means, the evaluators will note any lessons that informants themselves offer, either explicitly or implicitly.

Evaluation Methodology and Timeframe

The evaluation methodology will consist of the following activities and approaches:

A. Approach

The evaluation approach will be mixed methods and participatory in nature and will use project documents including performance monitoring data to provide quantitative information. Qualitative information will be obtained through field visits, interviews and focus groups as appropriate. TMG will use a unique data collection approach to ensure that opinions coming from stakeholders and project participants improve and clarify the use of quantitative analysis. The participatory nature of the evaluation will contribute to the sense of ownership among stakeholders and project participants.

To the extent that SC is able to make the data available to TMG, quantitative data will be drawn from the project's performance data reporting and project reports and incorporated in the analysis. In particular, project monitoring data shall be triangulated with relevant quantitative or qualitative data collected during fieldwork, in order to objectively rate the level of achievement of each of the project's major outcomes on a four-point scale (low, moderate, above-moderate, and high). TMG will welcome data from SC in raw or aggregated form and will not ask SC to adjust its semi-annual data collection timeline for the sake of the evaluation. The evaluation approach will be independent in terms of the membership of the evaluation team. Project staff from Save the Children and local implementing partners will generally be present in meetings with stakeholders, communities, and project participants only to provide introductions. TMG will apply the following additional principles during the evaluation process:

1. Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives will be triangulated for as many as possible of the evaluation questions.
2. Efforts will be made to include parents' voices and children's perspectives as key project participants and community members, using child-sensitive approaches to interviewing children following the ILO-IPEC guidelines on research with children on the worst forms of child labor¹⁵ and UNICEF Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children.¹⁶ TMG will prioritize the selection of community members directly involved with child

¹⁵ [Ethical Considerations When Conducting Research on Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour \(TBP MAP Paper III-02\)](#), ISBN 92-2-115165-4. Geneva: December 1, 2003.

¹⁶ [UNICEF Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children](#).

labor for certain key informant interviews and focus group discussions (see EQ matrix below).

3. Gender and cultural sensitivity, and 'Do No Harm' approaches will be integrated in the evaluation approach. Efforts will be made to amplify the voice of workers from diverse backgrounds, including workers from underserved groups and/or historically marginalized populations and communities, while also safeguarding their identity and information, preserving their dignity and protecting them from possible retaliation or other harm.
4. Consultations will incorporate a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership among the stakeholders and project participants, allowing additional questions to be posed that are not included in the TOR, whilst ensuring that key information requirements are met.
5. As far as possible, TMG will follow a consistent approach in each project site, with adjustments made for the different actors involved, activities conducted, and the progress of implementation in each locality or institution.

B. Evaluation Team

The evaluation team will consist of experts and specialists with extensive experience conducting evaluations and working in Côte d'Ivoire.

Dr. Michael Midling will serve as the Contracts Manager. He has over 30 years of international labor and evaluation experience, including with the Department of Labor. He will have primary responsibility for ensuring that all tasks are completed on time, within budget, and of the highest quality. Dr. Midling speaks French along with multiple other languages.

Dr. John McCauley will act as the Lead Evaluator for the CACAO interim evaluation. He has over 20 years of international development and evaluation experience in West Africa, with multiple research publications and projects in Côte d'Ivoire. He has professional fluency in French.

Dr. Emmanuel-David Gnahoui will serve as the Co-Lead Evaluator. A Beninese by birth, Dr. Gnahoui has lived in Côte d'Ivoire and worked in the international development and evaluation space for multiple decades. He has extensive connections to researchers and stakeholders on the ground and is a native French speaker.

A team of 4-5 local evaluators will assist Dr. McCauley and Dr. Gnahoui in collecting evaluation data at the respective research sites. The team will be gender balanced, highly trained, university educated, and will have extensive data collection and interview experience. Dr. McCauley and Dr. Gnahoui will conduct most of the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), with contextual support on other data collection methodologies from the local evaluators. Per TMG's standard practice, all local evaluators will be cooperating country nationals (CCN) from Côte d'Ivoire.

TMG maintains an administrative team that will provide the necessary administrative, recruitment, financial management, and logistical support to the evaluation team. The

administrative team will be responsible for facilitating and arranging all international travel, advancing funds for the planned field work, reviewing, and reconciling field operating advances and expenses, processing vouchers, and providing day-to-day administrative support to the team. The TMG administrative team will liaise with Save the Children to coordinate the provision of ground transportation, meeting venues, and interpretation support to the evaluation teams in-country, for which SC will have responsibility. The TMG team will also provide the support and resources required to ensure overall quality control, to efficiently implement the evaluations, and to rapidly respond to unanticipated challenges and changes. TMG's analytics team will work in concert with Dr. McCauley following the collection of data to provide rigorous analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data. They will also develop the appropriate visualizations and infographics for evaluation briefs.

TMG headquarters staff will also provide backstopping and assist the evaluation team during mobilization. TMG's Operations, Technical Services, Finance, Contracts, and Compliance units will provide technical, administrative, and financial management to ensure full compliance with the Call Order, as well as DOL's and TMG's corporate quality control measures.

C. Data Collection Methodology

1. Document Review

TMG will draw on a wide range of documents to support its evaluation of the CACAO project. Its document review strategy will include the following:

- Pre-field visit preparation will include extensive review of relevant documents.
- During fieldwork, documentation will be verified, and additional documents may be collected.
- TMG will also review the Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA) form completed by Save the Children. TMG will assess whether results from the RDQA were used by the project to formulate and implement measures to strengthen their data management and reporting system and improve data quality. TMG's analysis will be included in the evaluation report.
- TMG will also review all CMEP indicators with Save the Children. This will include reviewing the indicator definitions in the CMEP's Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and the reported values in the Technical Progress Report (TPR) Annex A to ensure the reporting is accurate and complete.
- TMG will make use of the following documents, among others:
 - Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
 - CMEP documents and data reported in Annex A of the TPR,
 - Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA) form as appropriate
 - Baseline and endline survey reports or pre-situational analyses,
 - Project document and revisions,
 - Project budget and revisions,
 - Cooperative Agreement and project modifications,
 - Technical Progress and Status Reports,
 - Project Results Frameworks and Monitoring Plans,
 - Work plans,

- Correspondence related to Technical Progress Reports,
- Management Procedures and Guidelines,
- Research or other reports undertaken (KAP studies, etc.), and,
- Project files (including school records) as appropriate.

2. Question Matrix

Before beginning fieldwork, TMG will create a question matrix that outlines the source(s) of data from which it plans to collect information for each TOR question. This will help TMG make decisions regarding its allocation of time in the field. The question matrix will also help TMG to ensure that it is exploring all possible avenues for data triangulation and to clearly note where its evaluation results are coming from. TMG will share the question matrix with USDOL.

3. Interviews with stakeholders

A. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

The evaluation team will aim to conduct 48 KIIs over the course of approximately two weeks with project stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire, with potential follow-up phone calls as appropriate. TMG's evaluators will attempt to interview an approximately equal distribution of women and men respondents and will assess the number of women and men as the interviews are being conducted, in order to may make specific requests for more gender equality as needed. The evaluation team will aim to conduct KIIs with the ILAB Project Managers, MEL specialists (former and current), and other relevant stakeholders and representatives from following organizations; however, the number of KIIs and participants for each organization will depend on availability.

KII Data Collection Strategy

Stakeholder Type	Estimated Sample Size	Potential Respondents	Locations
US Government	2	ILAB project managers	Washington DC
Save the Children and local Implementing Partners	4	MEL specialists, project managers: SC rep in Abidjan; SC PD; PO from partner, SC MEL	1 Abidjan 3 Daloa
Host-Country Government Officials	6	Labor inspectors, local chambers: DOPA; labor inspector and agr chamber in Daloa; labor inspector in Vavoua; DLTE, CNS	3 Abidjan 2 Daloa 1 Vavoua
Community Members	7	Family members/mothers, children laborers as appropriate	4 Daloa 3 Vavoua

Stakeholder Type	Estimated Sample Size	Potential Respondents	Locations
Project Participants (Farmers)	6	Cocoa farmers, cooperative members	3 Daloa 3 Vavoua
Employers' Associations	5	Cooperative leaders	3 Daloa 2 Vavoua
Coop Leadership	2	Agr director, coop leader	1 Daloa 1 Vavoua
Gender and Youth Civil Society Organizations	4	Anti-trafficking representatives, women's leaders, youth leaders, social center reps	2 Daloa 2 Vavoua
International NGOs & other relevant local or national organizations	2	International Organization for Migration, UNICEF	1 Daloa 1 Vavoua
Private Sector and International Brand Representatives	2	Cocoa industry experts; OLAM, CARGILL, and/or Ferrero	1 Daloa 1 Abidjan
Total	40		

Stakeholders are all those who have an interest in a project, such as implementers, partners, direct and indirect participants, community leaders, donors, and government officials. The intention is that all stakeholder KIIs be conducted as semi-structured, one-on-one interviews.

B. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

TMG will aim to conduct 12 FGDs during the CACAO evaluation, each of which will include approximately 10 individuals. The FGDs will help to refine program targets and identify potential challenges that have arisen during project implementation. TMG will organize the FGD participants by gender and sector to ensure maximal comfort among participants to express themselves freely. The primary focus of the FGDs will be on participant farmers, IP staff, community members, and members of cooperatives and government.

FGD Data Collection Strategy

Stakeholder Type	Estimated Sample Size	Location
Save the Children and Implementing Partners	1	1 Daloa
Community Members: includes 2 FGDs with youth, disaggregated by gender	4	2 Daloa 2 Vavoua
Project Participants (Farmers)	4	2 Daloa 2 Vavoua
Employers' Associations	2	1 Daloa 1 Vavoua
Enforcement Agency representatives in Daloa	1	1 Daloa
Total	12	

C. Focused Assessment Surveys (FAS)

TMG will also employ FAS data collection that will be embedded in the KIIs and FGDs. Relying on a limited number of no more than 10 systematic questions that elicit a closed set of scalar responses during the course of otherwise open-ended interviews and FGDs, the FAS portion of the data collection will result in systematic responses that can be coded and analyzed using quantitative methodologies. This methodology ensures complementarity and cohesion between the quantitative and qualitative results and builds triangulation into the data collection process. The questions identified for inclusion in the FAS portion of data collection are standardized across all respondents. Analyses can be disaggregated according to both demographic factors and stakeholder type.

Dept./ Site	N
Daloa	80
Vavoua	57
Abidjan	3
Total	140

TMG proposes to conduct the FAS with approximately 140 respondents, distributed primarily across the targeted departments of Daloa and Vavoua. These target figures are approximate and represent the number of KII and FGD respondents, minus a margin of approximately 10% to account for FGD respondents who arrive late due to logistical issues and do not complete the FAS portion. The evaluation team expects to interview more respondents in the two departments than in Abidjan. This

estimated distribution will ultimately be a function of where the most suitable KII and FGD respondents are identified. TMG will ensure an ample number of respondents from each location while recognizing the importance of working efficiently alongside the SC and IP staff. Topics will address the key Evaluation Questions.

1. Field Visits

TMG will visit a selection of project sites in Daloa and Vavoua, after conducting field tests of instruments in Abidjan and revising as appropriate before the visits to Daloa and Vavoua. The final selection of specific field sites to be visited will be made by TMG following discussions with Save the Children. Every effort will be made to include sites where the project has

experienced successes and others that have encountered challenges, as well as a cross section of sites across targeted sectors. During the visits, TMG will observe the activities, outputs, and outcomes associated with the project. During the course of those visits, the evaluation team will conduct FGDs and KIIs as relevant.

5. Quantitative Analysis of Secondary Data

TMG will conduct quantitative analyses of the FAS data to complement the qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs. In addition, TMG will analyze available monitoring data, and, where relevant, available data from external sources on patterns in child labor, migration, and cocoa production.¹⁷ The evaluation team will work with ILAB to secure prompt access to secondary data from ILO, relevant government bodies, and external sources. After gaining access to the data, TMG will assess their quality and relevance in answering the research questions and develop a list of relevant indicators. The evaluation team's analysis of these data will inform the correlation and validation of findings from the fieldwork and field-based data collection.

The evaluation team will analyze project monitoring data to assess the performance of activities relative to expected results, taking into account equity considerations. TMG's analyses, which will rely on descriptive statistics such as counts, tabulated proportions, and means, will identify common trends, patterns, and any changes in stakeholders' motivations, behavior, capacity, practices, policies, programs, relationships, or resource allocation as result of project activities. TMG will use project monitoring data and quantitative data collected during evaluation fieldwork (see Appendix D for an example rapid scorecard, to be tailored to evaluation questions following discussions with ILAB and Save the Children). It will triangulate those data with relevant qualitative data collected during interviews and FGDs to develop summary achievement and sustainability ratings, and to assess equity in project access as well as outcomes for project participants, with particular attention to underserved populations or historically marginalized groups or communities. This effort will generate findings that SC and ILAB can leverage to improve project implementation.

Outcome Achievement, Equity, and Sustainability Ratings

TMG will objectively rate each of the project's outcomes according to three factors: 1) the level of achievement, 2) the level of equity with respect to access to project interventions and/or targets achieved, and 3) the potential for sustainability. The ratings will be based on a four-point scale (low, moderate, above-moderate, and high). Outcome equity ratings will be provided only for the equity-related outcomes designated by ILAB (if required). Details for the measurement of those three factors are as follows:

ACHIEVEMENT

¹⁷ Information can be provided in general statistical terms, not individual, following report models that the system can provide, especially according to the availability of the data collected and processed by each entity.

“Achievement” measures the extent to which a development intervention or project attains its objectives/outcomes, as described in its performance monitoring plan (PMP).

For assessing the achievement of program or project outcomes, TMG will consider the extent to which the objectives/outcomes were achieved and identify the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the outcomes. Given that the CACAO evaluation is an interim evaluation, TMG will also consider the likelihood of the outcomes being achieved by the end of the project if the critical assumptions hold, as well as the extent the project requires course corrections to bring it back on track.

Project achievement ratings will be determined through triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data. TMG will collect **qualitative data** from key informant interviews and focus group discussions through a structured data collection process, such as a survey or rapid scorecard. Interviews and focus groups can also provide context for the results reflected in the Data Reporting Form submitted with the Technical Progress Report (TPR). The evaluation team will complement those qualitative data with the quantitative data from its FAS data collection. TMG will also analyze **quantitative data** collected by the project on key performance indicators defined in the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and reported on in the TPR Data Reporting Form. In doing so, the evaluation team will consider the reliability and validity of the performance indicators and the completeness and accuracy of the data collected. The assessment of quantitative data should consider the extent to which the project achieved its targets and whether these targets were sufficiently ambitious and achievable within the period evaluated. TMG will assess each of the project’s outcome(s) according to the following scale:

- **High:** met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
- **Above-moderate:** met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, but with neutral or mixed feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
- **Moderate:** missed most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.
- **Low:** missed most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

EQUITY

“Equity” assesses the extent to which a development intervention or project provides for equitable access to project interventions or services, as well as the extent to which the project contributes to equitable outcomes for all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities¹⁸ that have been denied such treatment.

¹⁸ “Underserved communities” refers to populations who have been historically underserved, marginalized, or denied equitable treatment on the basis of disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, migration status, and persons or groups otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. In accordance with Executive Order 13985 of January 20, 2021, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, the term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

To assess the equity of program or project outcomes, TMG will consider who has/has not been reached, served, engaged, or affected by the project's interventions, in positive, negative, or undetermined ways. The evaluation team will review the project's overall output and outcome data and its disaggregated data for specific groups to identify trends and patterns with respect to equitable access and outcomes. For this interim evaluation, TMG will also identify specific pain points¹⁹ or barriers affecting equitable service delivery or outcomes for underserved groups, as well as the extent the project requires course corrections to ensure more equitable processes and results.

Project equity ratings will be determined through triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data, in the same manner as the achievement ratings are determined. The assessment of data will consider the extent to which the project achieved targets in an equitable manner and whether the targets for specific underserved groups were appropriate and sufficiently ambitious and achievable within the period evaluated. TMG will assess each of the project's outcome(s) according to the following scale:

- **High:** reported outcome data reflect tangible benefits for most or all underserved groups during the period evaluated, with mostly positive feedback from representatives of each of the relevant underserved groups.
- **Above-moderate:** reported outcome data reflect tangible benefits for most or some of the underserved groups during the period evaluated, but with mixed or neutral feedback from representatives of one or more of the relevant underserved groups.
- **Moderate:** reported outcome data reflect limited or no tangible benefits for underserved groups during the period evaluated, but with mostly positive feedback from representatives of those groups.
- **Low:** reported outcome data do not reflect tangible benefits for underserved groups during the period evaluated (or the project lacks disaggregated data to demonstrate), with mostly neutral or negative feedback from representatives of those groups.

SUSTAINABILITY

“**Sustainability**” is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. When evaluating the sustainability of a project, it is useful to consider the likelihood that the benefits or effects of a particular output or outcome will continue after donor funding ends. It is also important to consider the extent to which the project takes into account the actors, factors, and institutions that are likely to have the strongest influence over, capacity, and willingness to sustain the desired outcomes and impacts. Indicators of sustainability could include agreements/linkages with local partners, stakeholder engagement

¹⁹ “Pain points” are real or perceived problems, frustrations, or troublesome issues, especially ones experienced by participants, clients, consumers, customers, or employees. Four common types of pain points are financial, productivity, process, and support pain points. When countering barriers for historically underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized groups and communities, it is important to understand and address pain points that may impede diversity, equity and inclusion goals.

in project sustainability planning, and successful handover of project activities or key outputs to local partners before project end, among others.

The project's Sustainability Plan (including the associated indicators) and TPRs (including the attachments) are key (but not the only) sources for determining its rating. TMG will assess each of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s) according to the following scale:

- **High:** strong likelihood that the benefits of project activities will continue after donor funding is withdrawn and the necessary resources²⁰ are in place to ensure sustainability;
- **Above-moderate:** above average likelihood that the benefits of project activities will continue after donor funding is withdrawn and the necessary resources are identified but not yet committed;
- **Moderate:** some likelihood that the benefits of project activities will continue after donor funding is withdrawn and some of the necessary resources are identified;
- **Low:** weak likelihood that the benefits of project activities will continue after donor funding is withdrawn and the necessary resources are not identified.

In determining the rating above, TMG will also consider the extent to which sustainability risks were adequately identified and mitigated through the project's risk management and stakeholder engagement activities.

D. Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

TMG will observe utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure maximum freedom of expression of the implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, and project participants, implementing partner staff will generally not be present during interviews. However, TMG will ask implementing partner staff to make introductions whenever necessary, to facilitate the evaluation process, to make respondents feel comfortable, and to allow TMG to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

TMG will respect the rights and safety of participants in this evaluation. During this study, the evaluation team will take several precautions to ensure the protection of respondents' rights:

- No interview will begin without receipt of informed consent from each respondent.
- The evaluation team will conduct KIIs and FGDs in a confidential setting, so no one else can hear the respondent's answers (or the group's conversations in the context of FGDs).
- As appropriate, COVID-19 precautions and social distancing will be implemented during face-to-face interviews and FGDs.
- The evaluation team will be in control of its written notes at all times; no one outside of the research team will be permitted to access collected data.

²⁰ Resources can include financial resources (i.e. non-donor replacement resources), as well as organization capacity, institutional linkages, motivation and ownership, and political will, among others.

- The evaluation team will destroy all personally identifiable information within 6 months of report completion.
- The evaluation team will transmit data electronically using secure measures.
- The evaluation team will talk with respondents to assess their ability to make autonomous decisions and their understanding of informed consent. Participants will understand that they have the right to skip any question with which they are not comfortable or to stop at any time.

E. Stakeholder Meeting

Following the field visits, TMG will organize a stakeholder meeting to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including the implementing partners and other interested parties to discuss the evaluation results. The list of participants to be invited will be drafted prior to TMG's visit and confirmed in consultation with project staff during fieldwork. ILAB staff may participate in the stakeholder meeting virtually.

The meeting will be used to present the major preliminary results and emerging issues, solicit recommendations, discuss project sustainability, and obtain clarification or additional information from stakeholders, including those not interviewed earlier. The agenda of the meeting will be determined by TMG in consultation with project staff. TMG will provide some specific questions for stakeholders and a brief written feedback form to guide the discussion.

The agenda is expected to include some of the following items:

- TMG's presentation of the preliminary main results
- Feedback and questions from stakeholders on the results
- Opportunity for implementing partners not met to present their views on progress and challenges in their locality
- Discussion of recommendations to improve the implementation and ensure sustainability. Consideration will be given to the value of distributing a feedback form for participants to nominate their "action priorities" for the remainder of the project.

TMG will organize a debriefing call with USDOL after the stakeholder workshop to provide USDOL with preliminary results and solicit feedback as needed.

F. Limitations

Fieldwork for the evaluation will last approximately two weeks, meaning TMG will not have enough time to visit all project sites. As a result, TMG will not be able to take all sites into consideration when formulating its results. TMG will make every effort to visit a representative sample of sites, including some that have performed well and some that have experienced challenges.

The CACAO interim evaluation is not a formal impact assessment. Results for the evaluation will be based on information collected from background documents and in interviews with

stakeholders, project staff, and project participants. The accuracy of the evaluation results will be determined by the integrity of information that these sources provide to TMG. Furthermore, the ability of TMG to determine efficiency will be limited by the amount of financial data available. TMG will not conduct a cost-efficiency analysis because it would require impact data that is not available.

G. Roles and Responsibilities

TMG is responsible for accomplishing the following items:

- Providing all evaluation management and logistical support for evaluation deliverables within the timelines specified in the contract and TOR;
- Providing all logistical support for travel associated with the evaluation;
- Providing quality control over all deliverables submitted to ILAB;
- Ensuring the Evaluation Team conducts the evaluation according to the TOR;
- The Evaluation Team will conduct the evaluation according to the TOR. The Evaluation Team is responsible for accomplishing the following items:
- Receiving and responding to or incorporating input from the grantees and ILAB on the initial TOR draft;
- Finalizing and submitting the TOR and sharing concurrently with the grantees and ILAB;
- Reviewing project background documents;
- Reviewing the evaluation questions and refining them as necessary;
- Developing and implementing an evaluation methodology, including document review, KIIs and FGDs, and secondary data analysis, to answer the evaluation questions;
- Conducting planning meetings or calls, including developing a field itinerary, as necessary, with ILAB and grantees;
- Deciding the composition of field visit KII and FGD participants to ensure the objectivity of the evaluation;
- Developing an evaluation question matrix for ILAB;
- Presenting preliminary results verbally to project field staff and other stakeholders as determined in consultation with ILAB and grantees;
- Preparing an initial draft of the evaluation report for ILAB and grantee review;
- Incorporating comments from ILAB and the grantee/other stakeholders into the final report, as appropriate.
- Developing a comment matrix addressing the disposition of all of the comments provided;
- Preparing and submitting the final report;

ILAB is responsible for the following items:

- Launching the contract;
- Reviewing the TOR, providing input to the evaluation team as necessary, and agreeing on final draft;
- Providing project background documents to the evaluation team, in collaboration with the grantees;
- Obtaining country clearance from U.S. Embassy in fieldwork country;
- Briefing grantees on the upcoming field visit and working with them to coordinate and

prepare for the visit;

- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation report;
- Approving the final draft of the evaluation report;
- Participating in the pre- and post-trip debriefing and interviews;
- Including the ILAB evaluation contracting officer's representative on all communication with the evaluation team;

The grantee Save the Children is responsible for the following items:

- Reviewing the TOR, providing input to the evaluation team as necessary, and agreeing on the final draft;
- Providing project background materials to the evaluation team, in collaboration with ILAB;
- Sharing monitoring data in either raw or aggregated form, preferably over multiple points in time;
- Preparing a list of recommended interviewees with feedback on the draft TOR;
- Participating in planning meetings or calls, including developing a field itinerary, as necessary, with ILAB and TMG;
- Scheduling meetings during the field visit and coordinating all logistical arrangements;
- Helping the evaluation team to identify and arrange for interpreters as needed to facilitate worker interviews;
- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation reports;
- Organizing, financing, and participating in the stakeholder debriefing meeting;
- Providing in-country ground transportation to meetings and interviews;
- Including the ILAB program office on all written communication with the evaluation team.

H. Timetable

The tentative timetable is as follows. Actual dates may be adjusted as needs arise.

Task	Responsible Party	Date
Background project documents sent to Contractor	DOL/ILAB	Jan 5
TOR Template submitted to Contractor	DOL/ILAB	Jan 5
Draft TOR sent to DOL/ILAB. Upon review and approval by ILAB, TOR will be shared with Grantee.	TMG	Jan 9
Evaluation launch call	DOL/ILAB	Jan 10
TMG and Grantee work to develop draft itinerary and stakeholder list	TMG and Grantee (DOL/ILAB as needed)	Feb 2
Check-in Meetings - Discuss draft TOR, EQs, etc.	TMG and Grantee (DOL/ILAB as needed)	Jan 17, 24, Feb 2
Logistics Call – Discuss logistics and field itinerary	TMG and Grantee (DOL/ILAB as needed)	Feb 5-7
TMG sends minutes from logistics call	TMG	Feb 9
DOL/ILAB and Grantee provide comments on draft TOR	DOL/ILAB and Grantee	Jan 22, Feb 7
Fieldwork budget submitted to DOL/ILAB	TMG	Feb 12
Fieldwork budget approved by DOL/ILAB	DOL/ILAB	Feb 14
Revise and finalize field itinerary, TOR and stakeholder list based on comments	DOL/ILAB, TMG, and Grantee	Feb 14
Cable clearance information submitted to DOL/ILAB, if required	TMG	o/b Feb 12
Final TOR submitted to DOL/ILAB for approval	TMG	Feb 14
Question matrix submitted to DOL/ILAB for review - - submitted as Annex A to the TOR	TMG	Feb 7
Final approval of TOR by DOL/ILAB	DOL/ILAB	Feb 14
Submit finalized TOR to Grantee	TMG	Feb 14
Interview call with Grantee HQ staff	TMG	Feb 19
Fieldwork/Data collection	TMG	Feb 19
Stakeholder Validation Workshop in Daloa	TMG	Mar 4

Task	Responsible Party	Date
Post-fieldwork debrief call	TMG	Mar 8
Initial draft report for review submitted to ILAB and Grantee	TMG	Mar 27
1 st round of review comments due to TMG	ILAB and Grantee	Apr 10
Revised report submitted to DOL/ILAB and Grantee	TMG	Apr 22
DOL/ILAB and Grantee/key stakeholder comments due to contractor after 2 nd round of review	DOL/ILAB and Grantee	May 3
Revised report in redline submitted to DOL/ILAB and Grantee demonstrating how all comments were addressed either via a comment matrix or other format	TMG	May 15
DOL/ILAB and Grantee provide concurrence that comments were addressed	DOL/ILAB and Grantee	May 24
Final report submitted to DOL/ILAB and Grantee	TMG	Jun 10
Final approval of report by DOL/ILAB	DOL/ILAB	Jun 21
Draft infographic/brief document submitted to DOL/ILAB	TMG	Jun 14
DOL/ILAB comments on draft infographic/brief	DOL/ILAB	Jun 21
Editing and Section 508 compliance by contractor	TMG	Jun 28
Final infographic/brief submitted to DOL/ILAB (508 compliant)	TMG	Jun 28
Final approval of infographic/brief by DOL/ILAB (508 compliant)	DOL/ILAB	Jul 8
Final edited report submitted to COR (508 compliant)	TMG	Jul 10
Final edited approved report and infographic/brief shared with grantee (508 compliant)	TMG	Jul 10
Learning Event for ILAB staff, Grantees and other stakeholders as requested (usually virtual)	TMG	Jul 15

Expected Outputs/Deliverables

Four weeks after completion of data collection in the respective country, a first draft evaluation report will be submitted by the Contractor. The report should have the following

structure and content:

1. Table of Contents
2. List of Acronyms
3. Executive Summary (no more than **five pages** providing an overview of the evaluation, summary of main results/lessons learned/emerging good practices, and key recommendations)
4. Evaluation Objectives
5. Project Description
6. Listing of Evaluation Questions
7. Results
 - a. The results section includes the facts, analysis, and supporting evidence. The results section of the evaluation report should address the evaluation questions. It does not have to be in a question-response format, but should be responsive to each evaluation question.
8. Conclusions and Recommendations
 - a. Conclusions – interpretation of the facts, including criteria for judgments.
 - b. Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices²¹
 - c. Key Recommendations - critical for successfully meeting project objectives and/or judgments on what changes need to be made for sustainability or future programming.
9. Annexes –
 - a. List of documents reviewed;
 - b. Interviews (including list of stakeholder groups; without PII in web version)/meetings/site visits;
 - c. Stakeholder workshop agenda and participants;
 - d. TOR, Evaluation Methodology and Limitations;
 - e. Summary of Recommendations (citing page numbers for evidence in the body of the report, listing out the supporting evidence for each recommendation, and identifying party that the recommendation is directed toward).

The key recommendations will be **action-oriented and implementable**. The recommendations should be clearly linked to results and directed to a specific party to be implemented. It is preferable for the report to contain no more than 10 recommendations, but other suggestions may be incorporated in the report in other ways.

The total length of the report will be approximately 30 pages, excluding the executive summary and annexes.

The first draft of the report will be circulated to ILAB and the grantee individually for their review. The evaluator will demonstrate how they incorporate or address comments from ILAB and the grantee/other key stakeholders into the final reports as appropriate, and the

²¹ An emerging good practice is a process, practice, or system highlighted in the evaluation reports as having improved the performance and efficiency of the program in specific areas. They are activities or systems that are recommended to others for use in similar situations. A lesson learned documents the experience gained during a program. They may identify a process, practice, or systems to avoid in specific situations.

evaluator will show what changes have been made and provide a response as to why any comments might not have been incorporated or addressed.

While the substantive content of the results, conclusions, and recommendations of the report shall be determined by the evaluator, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB in terms of whether or not the report meets the conditions of the TOR.

The electronic submissions of any deliverables intended for publication, including the evaluation report and infographics, or other communication products will include two versions: one version, including personally identifiable information (PII) that is not Section-508 compliant, and a second version for publication that is Section-508 compliant and does not include PII such as names and/or titles of individuals interviewed.

Annex A: Evaluation Design Matrix

Evaluation Question	Method(s)	Potential Source(s) – Specific individuals TBD
EQ1: Which interventions have proven to be most/least effective at achieving desired outcomes?	KII, FGD, FAS	KIIs: SC/IPs, coop leaders, farmers FGDs: SC/IPs, farmers
EQ2: To what extent is the theory of change valid and coherent in the implementing environment?	Doc review, KII, FGD	Docs: FOA, work plan, baseline, status reports KIIs: SC, IPs FGDs: SC/IPs
EQ3: To what extent does the project strategy reflect the needs and priorities of diverse stakeholders (law enforcement, cooperatives and members, vulnerable households, purchasers, etc.)?	KII, FGD, FAS	KIIs: local govt/law enforcement, coop leaders and farmers, community members, FGDs: community members, farmers, coop leaders, workers assoc.
EQ4: To what extent does the project manage community expectations from its various engagement strategies?	KII, FGD	KIIs: community members, farmers, employers, FGDs: community members, farmers, employers, workers
EQ5: To what extent does the process of each major intervention support project objectives (independent from strengths and weaknesses in results)?	KII	KIIs: SC/IPs, ILAB, Coop leaders
EQ6: What is the objective level of achievement of each major outcome (on a four-point scale), with respect to established targets and outcomes?	KII, FAS	KIIs: SC/IPs, farmers, coop reps, workers reps, employers reps.

Evaluation Question	Method(s)	Potential Source(s) – Specific individuals TBD
EQ7: What, if any, unintended effects has the project had on its target communities and participants?	KII, FGD	KII: youth/gender rep, community members, farmers, coop leaders FGDs: farmers assoc., workers' assoc., employers' assoc.
EQ8: To what extent do implementation activities create or limit opportunities (environmental, climate friendly practices, farmer learning, etc.)?	KII, FGD	KIIs: NGO reps, farmers FGDs: farmers group, coop leaders
EQ9: What results, if any, have occurred in terms of gender equity and social inclusion, and what elements of the gender context could be better addressed?	KII, FGD	KIIs: youth/gender rep, IPs, community members FGDs: community members (women)
EQ10: Which outcomes and outputs have the greatest/least likelihood of being sustained after donor funding ends?	KII, FAS	KIIs: SC/IPs, coop leaders, govt reps FGDs: coop leaders, workers' assoc., employers' assoc.

Annex B: Informed Consent AND ASSENT Agreement – KII/FGD

CONSENT FOR 18+ - ENGLISH VERSION

Evaluators must review this form in detail with all informants before the interview and be sure that they understand it clearly before obtaining their signature. If the informant is illiterate or expresses discomfort signing the form but verbally consents to proceeding with the interview, the evaluator may sign the form to indicate that they received verbal consent.

Purpose:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called The Mitchell Group, a company that provides monitoring and evaluation services. I am here to conduct a study about the USDOL financed project CACAO implemented by Save the Children.

You (or your child) have been asked to participate today so that we can learn more about the support you (or your organization) may have received from Save the Children and CACAO. We would like your (or your child's) honest impressions, opinions and thoughts about various issues related to (the implementation of activities of) this program. I am an independent consultant and have no affiliation with those who provided you with assistance. In addition, I do not represent the government, employers, employers' organizations, or workers' organizations.

Procedures: If you agree to (have your child) participate, we ask you (or your child) to discuss your experience and opinion of the activities and services implemented under this program. The interview will take about one hour of your (or your child's) time. Although we will publish our results in a public report, all of your (or your child's) answers will be kept confidential. Nothing you (or your child) tell us will be attributed to any individual person. Rather the report will include only a composite of all of the answers received by all of the individuals we interview. Although we may use quotes, none of the individuals interviewed will be named in the report.

Risks/Benefits: There is no risk or personal gain involved in your (or your child's) participation in this interview. You will not receive any direct benefit or compensation for participating in this evaluation. Although this study will not benefit you (or your child) personally, we hope that our results will help improve support provided to reduce the incidence of the worst forms of child labor.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this interview/FGD is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree (for your child) to be in this study. You (or your child) are free to end the interview/leave the FGD at any time or to decline to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. If you decline (for your child) to participate in the interview, no one will be informed about this.

Do you have any questions at this time? [Interviewer should answer any questions]

Do I have your permission to proceed?

CONSENT FOR 18+ - FRENCH VERSION

Les évaluateurs doivent partager ce document de consentement en détail avec tous les informateurs et sujets interviewés avant l'entretien et s'assurer qu'ils le comprennent clairement avant d'obtenir leur signature. Si l'informateur est analphabète ou exprime un malaise à signer le formulaire mais consent verbalement à participer à l'entretien, l'évaluateur peut signer le formulaire pour indiquer qu'il a reçu un consentement verbal.

Objective :

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de nous assister aujourd'hui. Je m'appelle [NOM]. Je suis chercheur à l'organisation The Mitchell Group, une entreprise qui fournit des services de suivi et d'évaluation. Je suis là pour mener une étude sur le projet CACAO financé par le Département du Travail des Etats-Unis et mis en œuvre par Save the Children.

Il vous (ou votre enfant) a été demandé de participer aujourd'hui afin que nous puissions en savoir plus sur le soutien que vous (ou votre organisation) auriez pu avoir reçu de Save the Children et de CACAO. Nous aimerions entendre vos (ou de votre enfant) impressions, opinions et réflexions honnêtes sur diverses questions liées à (la mise en œuvre des activités de) ce programme. Je suis consultant indépendant et je n'ai aucune affiliation avec ceux qui vous auraient engagé à travers ce programme. De plus, je ne représente pas le gouvernement, les employeurs, les organisations d'employeurs ou les organisations de travailleurs.

Modalités : Si vous acceptez de participer (ou faire participer votre enfant), nous vous (ou votre enfant) demandons de discuter de votre expérience et de partager vos opinions sur les activités et services mis en œuvre dans le cadre de ce programme. L'entretien prendra environ une heure de votre (ou de votre enfant) temps. Même si nous publierons nos résultats dans un rapport public, toutes vos (ou de votre enfant) réponses resteront confidentielles. Rien de ce que vous (ou votre enfant) nous direz ne sera attribué à une personne individuelle. Le rapport ne comprendra plutôt qu'un composite de toutes les réponses reçues par toutes les personnes interrogées. Même si nous utilisons des citations, aucune des personnes interrogées ne sera nommée dans le rapport.

Risques/avantages : Il n'y a aucun risque ni gain personnel lié à votre (ou de votre enfant) participation à cet entretien. Vous (ou votre enfant) ne recevrez aucun avantage ou compensation direct pour votre (ou de votre enfant) participation à cette évaluation. Même si cette étude ne vous bénéficiera pas personnellement, nous espérons que nos résultats contribueront à améliorer le soutien apporté pour réduire l'incidence des pires formes de travail des enfants.

Participation volontaire : Votre participation à cet entretien est entièrement volontaire. Vous n'êtes pas obligé d'accepter de participer à cette étude (pour votre enfant). Vous (ou votre enfant) êtes libre de mettre fin à l'entretien (ou de quitter le groupe de discussion) à tout moment ou de refuser de répondre à toute question à laquelle vous ne souhaitez pas répondre. Si vous (ou votre enfant) refusez de participer à l'entretien, personne n'en sera informé.

Avez-vous des questions en ce moment ? [L'évaluateur doit répondre à toutes les questions.]

M'accordez-vous la permission de continuer ?

ASSENT FOR UNDER 18 - ENGLISH VERSION

Evaluators must review this form in detail with all informants under the age of 18 before the interview and be sure that they understand it clearly before obtaining their signature. If the informant is illiterate or expresses discomfort signing the form but verbally consents to proceeding with the interview, the evaluator may sign the form to indicate that they received verbal consent.

Purpose:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called The Mitchell Group, and we are conducting a study about a US government-funded project called CACAO, implemented by Save the Children.

You have been asked to participate today so that we can learn more about the support you (or your family) may have received from Save the Children and CACAO. We would like your honest impressions, opinions and thoughts about various issues related to (the implementation of activities of) this program. I am independent consultant and have no affiliation with those who provided you with assistance. In addition, I do not represent the government, employers, employers' organizations, or workers' organizations.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, we ask you to discuss your experience and opinion of the activities and services implemented under this program. The interview will take about one hour of your time. Although we will publish our results in a public report, all of your answers will be kept confidential. Nothing you tell us will be attributed to any individual person. Rather the report will include only a composite of all of the answers received by all of the individuals we interview. Although we may use quotes, none of the individuals interviewed will be named in the report.

Risks/Benefits: There is no risk or personal gain involved in your participation in this interview. You will not receive any direct benefit or compensation for participating in this evaluation. Although this study will not benefit you personally, we hope that our results will help improve support provided to reduce the incidence of the worst forms of child labor.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this interview/FGD is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree to be in this study, even if your guardian gives their consent. You are free to end the interview/leave the FGD at any time or to decline to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. If you decline to participate in the interview, no one will be informed about this.

Do you have any questions at this time? [Interviewer should answer any questions]

Do I have your permission to proceed?

ASSENT FOR UNDER 18 - FRENCH VERSION

Les évaluateurs doivent partager ce document d'assentiment en détail avec tous les informateurs et sujets interviewés à moins de 18 ans avant l'entretien et s'assurer qu'ils le comprennent clairement avant d'obtenir leur signature. Si l'informateur est analphabète ou exprime un malaise à signer le formulaire mais consent verbalement à participer à l'entretien, l'évaluateur peut signer le formulaire pour indiquer qu'il a reçu un consentement verbal.

Objective :

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de nous assister aujourd'hui. Je m'appelle [NOM]. Je suis chercheur à l'organisation The Mitchell Group, et nous menons une étude sur le projet CACAO financé par le gouvernement des Etats-Unis et mis en œuvre par Save the Children.

Il vous a été demandé de participer aujourd'hui afin que nous puissions en savoir plus sur le soutien que vous (ou votre organisation) auriez pu avoir reçu de Save the Children et de CACAO. Nous aimerions entendre vos impressions, opinions et réflexions honnêtes sur diverses questions liées à (la mise en œuvre des activités de) ce programme. Je suis consultant indépendant et je n'ai aucune affiliation avec ceux qui vous auraient engagé à travers ce programme. De plus, je ne représente pas le gouvernement, les employeurs, les organisations d'employeurs ou les organisations de travailleurs.

Modalités : Si vous acceptez de participer, nous vous demandons de discuter de votre expérience et de partager vos opinions sur les activités et services mis en œuvre dans le cadre de ce programme. L'entretien prendra environ une heure de votre temps. Même si nous publierons nos résultats dans un rapport public, toutes vos réponses resteront confidentielles. Rien de ce que vous nous direz ne sera attribué à une personne individuelle. Le rapport ne comprendra plutôt qu'un composite de toutes les réponses reçues par toutes les personnes interrogées. Même si nous utilisons des citations, aucune des personnes interrogées ne sera nommée dans le rapport.

Risques/avantages : Il n'y a aucun risque ni gain personnel lié à votre participation à cet entretien. Vous ne recevrez aucun avantage ou compensation direct pour votre participation à cette évaluation. Même si cette étude ne vous bénéficiera pas personnellement, nous espérons que nos résultats contribueront à améliorer le soutien apporté pour réduire l'incidence des pires formes de travail des enfants.

Participation volontaire : Votre participation à cet entretien est entièrement volontaire. Vous n'êtes pas obligé d'accepter de participer à cette étude, même si votre parent ou tuteur donne son accord. Vous êtes libre de mettre fin à l'entretien (ou de quitter le groupe de discussion) à tout moment ou de refuser de répondre à toute question à laquelle vous ne souhaitez pas répondre. Si vous refusez de participer à l'entretien, personne n'en sera informé.

Avez-vous des questions en ce moment ? [L'évaluateur doit répondre à toutes les questions.]

M'accordez-vous la permission de continuer ?

Annex C: Right to Use

ENGLISH VERSION

United States Department of Labor

Right to Use

I, _____, grant to the United States Department of Labor (including any of its officers, employees, and contractors), the right to use and publish photographic likenesses or pictures of me (or my child), as well as any attached document and any information contained within the document. I (or my child) may be included in the photographic likenesses or pictures in whole or in part, in conjunction with my own name (or my child's name), or reproductions thereof, made through any medium, including Internet, for the purpose of use, dissemination of, and related to USDOL publications.

I waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the finished product or the advertising or other copy, or the above-referenced use of the portraits or photographic likenesses of pictures of me (or my child) and attached document and any information contained within the document.

Dated _____, 20__

Signature or
Parent/guardian if under 18

Name Printed

Address and phone number

Identifier (color of shirt, etc.): _____

FRENCH VERSION

Département du Travail des États-Unis d'Amérique (USDOL)

Droit d'utilisation

Je, (soussigné), accorde au Département du Travail des États-Unis (y compris ses dirigeants, employés et consultant engagés), le droit d'utiliser et de publier des images ou représentations photographiques de moi (ou de mon enfant), ainsi que tout document associé et toute information contenue dans ledit document. J'accepte que je pourrais être inclus (ou mon enfant pourrait être inclus) dans les images ou représentations photographiques en tout ou en partie, en conjonction avec mon propre nom (ou le nom de mon enfant), ou des reproductions de celui-ci, réalisées sur tout moyen de communication, y compris l'Internet, dans le but de l'utilisation ou la diffusion liées aux publications de l'USDOL.

Je renonce à tout droit que je pourrais avoir d'inspecter ou d'approuver le produit fini ou la publicité ou autre copie, ou l'utilisation mentionnée ci-dessus des images ou représentations photographiques de moi (ou de mon enfant) et du document associé et de toute information contenue dans ledit document.

Daté _____ 20__

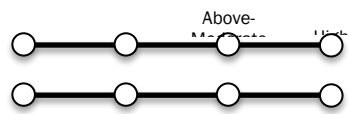
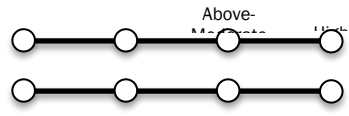
Signature ou Signature du
Parent/tuteur si moins de 18 ans



Nom imprimé

Adresse et numéro de téléphone

Identifiant (couleur de la chemise, etc.): _____


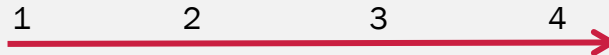
Annex D: Performance Summary and Rapid Scorecard

Performance Summary	Rating
LTO 1 Improve accountability of cooperatives to monitor child labor and facilitate enforcement of child labor laws.	
Summary of overall assessment given	<p>Achievement </p>
LTO 2 Strengthen organizational capacity to support vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives.	
Summary of overall assessment given	<p>Achievement </p>


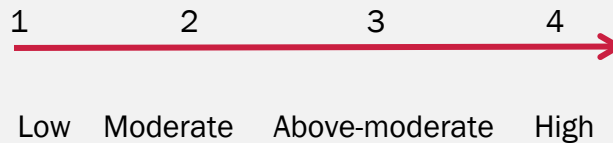

From your perspective ²² , rate how effectively (e.g., moving project toward its intended results) the project has been regarding each of its specific outcomes:	
Project Outcome (Circle one rating 1-5 for each element)	Comments
<p>Outcome 1: Improve accountability of cooperatives to monitor child labor and facilitate enforcement of child labor laws.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 </p> <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>	
<p>Outcome 2: Strengthen organizational capacity to support vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives.</p> <p>1 2 3 4 </p> <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>	

²² Based on the triangulation of information from the project database and other sources and the data collected through interviews and FGD during the evaluation process.

From your perspective²³, rate how equitable (e.g., equitable opportunity and results for all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment) the project has been in pursuing each of its specific outcomes:

Project Outcome (Circle one rating 1-5 for each element)	Comments
<p>Outcome 1: Improve accountability of cooperatives to monitor child labor and facilitate enforcement of child labor laws.</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>  <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>	
<p>Outcome 2: Strengthen organizational capacity to support vulnerable households within cocoa cooperatives.</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>  <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>	

²³ Based on the triangulation of information from the project database and other sources and the data collected through interviews and FGD during the evaluation process.

What outcomes, components or/and practices implemented by the project do you consider as being those more critical for the project to become sustainable in the long term? Currently, what is the likelihood that those outcomes/ components/ practices remain sustainable?	
Outcome/ Component/ Practice	Likelihood that it becomes sustainable
1.	<p>1. </p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>
2.	<p>2. </p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>
3.	<p>3. </p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Low Moderate Above-moderate High</p>

ANNEX E. CACAO INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Location code	Date (dd/mm/yy)	Interview number

To be completed by the interviewer

1. Introduction

This interview will help us assess the performance of the CACAO project at its midpoint and to identify potential improvements that could be made to best address project objectives. It will focus on thematic areas that are critical to the project’s success in aiding cocoa cooperatives to reduce the prevalence of child labor. That is: the design and relevance of specific project activities; the effectiveness of those activities; and the opportunities for longer-term, sustainable success that the activities generate across diverse groups and stakeholders.

READ THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM (OR ASSENT FOR INTERVIEWEES UNDER 18YO) TO INFORMANT AND ASK THEM TO SIGN IT.

NOTE: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF QUESTIONS MARKED “FAS,” WHICH WILL BE ASKED OF ALL PARTICIPANTS, NOT ALL QUESTIONS MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR ALL INFORMANTS. SELECT APPROPRIATELY.

1.1 What is your current role in your organization and/or family? (WRITE THE RESPONSE BELOW)

1.2 What is your current place of work or institution, if you have one? (WRITE THE RESPONSE BELOW)

1.3 How familiar are you with the following CACAO activities? (CHOOSE ONE OPTION FOR EACH ACTIVITY)

Not Some Very

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. (TBA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Other (SPECIFY): <input type="text"/>

1.4 What is your relationship or engagement with the CACAO project?

1.5 [FAS] May I please record your gender and age?

Gender: Age:

1.6 [FAS] If I may ask, how many times in the past month did you or your family go without enough to eat? (CHECK ONE OPTION)

Never	Very Rarely	A few times	Several times	Very frequently
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. CACAO Design and Relevance

2.1 In your opinion, what are the main reasons why child labor is a persistent issue in this area of Côte d'Ivoire? (CHECK ALL THAT RESPONDENT MENTIONS)

- 1. There are not enough other laborers to do the work.
- 2. Families need the money.
- 3. Schooling is not a viable option for children (cost, distance, etc.).
- 4. Young people like to be engaged and contribute.
- 5. Families are pressured by big farmers and cooperatives to send their children to work.
- 6. Families are not aware of the physical and psychological costs to children.
- 7. Children need to learn the trade in order to succeed as adults.
- 8. Parents look for ways to occupy their children to keep them out of trouble.

	9. There is nothing else for children to do and no organized opportunities.
	10. I don't know.
	11. Other (SPECIFY): <input style="width: 450px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>

2.2 The goal of the CACAO project is to build the capacity of cocoa cooperatives to support vulnerable households and to help enforce restrictions on child labor in the cocoa industry. In your opinion, how reasonable is it that the specific CACAO activities can serve this objective here in [Cote d'Ivoire/Daloo/Vavoua], given how the local cocoa industry and local norms operate? Do the activities make sense for this objective? (ASK ONLY ABOUT FAMILIAR ACTIVITIES; CHECK ONE OPTION FOR EACH)

V.Poor Poor Med. Well V.Well

					1. (TBA)
					2.
					3.
					4.
					5.
					6.
					7.
					8. Other (SPECIFY): <input style="width: 200px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>

Explain what you see as the biggest divergence between the goal and the activities, given the local context.

2.3 **[FAS]** In your view, how effective are the cocoa cooperatives in terms of enforcing restrictions on child labor and supporting vulnerable households? (CHECK ONE OPTION FOR EACH OBJECTIVE)

	Very Ineff.	Ineff.	Med.	Eff.	Very Eff.
Enforcing Restrictions on Child Labor					
Supporting Vulnerable Households					

Could you elaborate on why you chose your answers to this question?

2.4 **[FAS]** In your opinion, how effective have the CACAO activities that you are familiar with been in terms of addressing those objectives I described? Please be completely honest; we remind you that your responses will remain confidential.

V.Ineff Ineff Med. Eff V.Eff

V.Ineff	Ineff	Med.	Eff	V.Eff	
					1. (TBA)
					2.
					3.
					4.
					5.
					6.
					7.
					8. Other (SPECIFY):

Please explain what has made particular activities very effective or ineffective in your view.

2.5 In what ways do the CACAO activities address or fail to address your specific needs?

Do you see any groups or individuals who benefit quite a bit or who seem left out from CACAO activities? In what ways?

3. CACAO Effectiveness

3.1 When you first became familiar with the CACAO activities, what did you expect to be the outcomes for you or your organization?

Has your understanding of the CACAO activities changed? If so, in what ways?

3.2 I'd like to ask about the process behind the CACAO activities. For each activity that you're involved with, can you describe how the process has been going, from introduction to recruitment to sensibilization to everyday implementation?

Activity	Noteworthy Aspects of the Process
1. (TBA)	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8. OTHER (SPECIFY)	

Please explain any broader breakdowns across CACAO activities that Save the Children should be aware of.

3.3 Setting aside for a moment the objective of helping build the capacity of cocoa cooperatives to enforce restrictions on child labor and to support vulnerable households, have you noticed any particular changes or consequences as a result of CACAO activities? Which activity(ies) and what consequences have

you observed? They may be completely unrelated to the project objectives, that's fine.

Activity	Unexpected Consequence

In your opinion, what has been the biggest improvement to come from a CACAO activity so far, and why? What has been the biggest negative consequence, if any?

Improvement/Positive Consequence:
Negative Consequence:

4. CACAO Stewardship and Opportunity

4.1 Have you noticed any particular environmental impacts from CACAO activities, either positive or negative? It could be on the land and fields, roads, housing materials, trees and crops, or something else. (CHECK ONE ANSWER)

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. I don't know

If so, what is the CACAO activity and what has been the impact that you noticed?

Activity:	Environmental Impact:

4.2 **[FAS]** Have you noticed any particular innovations or learning in the way farmers or cocoa cooperatives operate as a result of CACAO activities? (CHECK ONE ANSWER)

- 4. Yes
- 5. No
- 6. I don't know

If so, what is the CACAO activity and what has been the learning or innovation?

Activity:	Farmer/Cooperative Innovation:

4.3 I'd like to ask you now about some different groups of people. In your opinion, how have each of them been affected by CACAO activities? Feel free to comment about specific activities or the CACAO project overall. If there are shortcomings in how they are treated, please suggest what elements could be addressed or improved.

Category	CACAO Effect (opt., by activity)	Ways to improve
Women		
Children and Youth		
Low-income HH		
Ethnic minorities		
Other (specify):		

4.4 Now I'd like to ask your view about the sustainability of CACAO's outcomes in the long-term. For the activities you are familiar with, how likely do you think

that activity is to continue after the CACAO project ends? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH APPLICABLE ACTIVITY)

Not at all Some Very

			1. (TBA)
			2.
			3.
			4.
			5.
			6.
			7.
			8. Other (SPECIFY):

What do you see as the biggest driver and/or the biggest inhibitor of sustaining these activities?

Driver of Sustainability	
Inhibitor of Sustainability	

4.5 Now, speaking more broadly about the lessons, practices, and outcomes from CACAO, how likely do you see these to continue after the CACAO project comes to an end? Why do you suppose key stakeholders will remain committed or not? (INFORMANT PROVIDES OUTCOME/LESSON/PRACTICE).

Outcome, Lesson, or Practice	Sustainability			Reason for stakeholder commitment/lack of
	No	Maybe	Yes	

4.6 **[FAS]** In your view, how effective has the CACAO project been in terms of the following? (CHECK ONE OPTION FOR EACH OUTCOME)

	Very Ineff.	Ineff.	Med.	Eff.	Very Eff.
Establishing commitments for sustainability					
Serving the needs of women					
Serving the needs of children					
Serving the needs of vulnerable HH					

4.7 We have reached the end of the interview. Is there anything else you'd like to share about CACAO, or that you'd like to suggest that would help CACAO reach its objective of helping cocoa cooperatives to enforce restrictions on child labor and support vulnerable households?

Thank you!

ANNEX E. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

METHODOLOGY. The evaluation team conducted 48 KIIs over the course of 19 days. Interviews were conducted in person and included both the Lead Evaluator and the Co-Lead Evaluator. They included a broad mix of women and men respondents, as well as representatives from government agencies, implementing partners, cocoa cooperative leadership, exporters, women's groups, youth groups, farmers, and traditional leadership. KIIs generally lasted approximately one hour.

The ET also conducted 12 FGDs during the CACAO evaluation, each of which included approximately 10 individuals. The FGDs helped to refine program targets and identify potential challenges that have arisen during project implementation. The ET separated the FGD participants by gender and sector to ensure maximal comfort among participants to express themselves freely. FGD details follow in Table 5.

Results from both the KIIs and FGDs were coded by theme, with subthemes that emerged during the course of interviews.

Table 5. Focus Group Discussion Details.

Date	Organization / Description	Location
24-Feb-24	SOKEAT Women's Group/Village Savings & Loan Assoc.	Petit-Paris
24-Feb-24	SOKEAT Committee for the Protection of Children	Petit-Paris
24-Feb-24	Petit Paris youth group	Petit-Paris
24-Feb-24	SOKEAT Cooperative planters	Petit-Paris
25-Feb-24	Espoir Cooperative Women's Group/Village Savings & Loan Assoc.	Bouamwakro
25-Feb-24	Espoir CPE	Bouamwakro
25-Feb-24	Espoir Planters	Bouamwakro
25-Feb-24	Village Elders	Bouamwakro
27-Feb-24	ECOJAD Cooperative Planters	Kirwakro
27-Feb-24	Village Elders	Kirwakro
27-Feb-24	Women's group 1	Kirwakro
27-Feb-24	Women's group 2	Kirwakro

TMG also employed a Focused Assessment Survey (FAS) with the same individuals who took part in the KIIs and FGDs. Relying on a limited number of 10 questions with scalar responses, the FAS portion of the data collection provided systematic responses for use in visualizations and quantitative analyses. This methodology ensures complementarity and cohesion between the quantitative and qualitative results and builds triangulation into the data collection process. Results were analyzed in the statistical software package R.

In addition to the KIIs, FGDs, and FAS data, the ET made use of document review (described in Annex A) and site observations that included cocoa cooperative headquarters and participating communities.

LIMITATIONS. While the ET obtained an overabundance of data to inform its analyses and overall evaluation, it nevertheless confronted some limitations in the evaluation process. Four, in particular, are worth noting:

1. First, the ET was able to access fewer youth than desired for participation in the data collection. Extensive efforts were made to engage youth respondents, but the ET recognized that without a preexisting relationship with the youth and their parents, it was difficult to conduct interviews with youth in a confidential manner, free from parental oversight. While this represented a setback in theory, the ET came to realize that more valuable information would come from the stakeholders whose choices, decisions, and behaviors *affect* youth (as potential child laborers) rather than from the youth themselves.
2. The ET visited fewer cocoa cooperative headquarters than desired. The distance between locations was a limiting factor, but the two visits that the ET was able to make to cooperative headquarters proved very valuable in understanding both the operations of cooperatives and their distance or divide from membership in the communities.
3. Relatedly, the ET was able to engage with leadership from fewer cooperatives than desired. The team met with the leadership from one cocoa cooperative at STC headquarters and from two more cooperatives at their headquarters in Vavoua. These visits provided important insight, and the ET would have appreciated the opportunity to visit more. Distance and availability were cited as reasons for the paucity of scheduled cooperative visits.
4. Finally, the data collection during the field work portion was hampered by difficult roads and distances between participant communities, STC headquarters, and stakeholder agencies. The ET thus spent long days to accomplish sometimes less than was hoped for. The experience revealed to the ET the challenges that CACAO implementers face on a regular basis.

ANNEX F. STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES

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