



Annual Report

2023



International
Cocoa
Initiative



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Message from ICI Executive Director, Matthias Lange



In many ways, the past year has forced reflection across the sector. Towards the end of 2023, cocoa prices were already rising linked to supply shortages – a trend that has intensified significantly in the first part of 2024. While increased prices are a good thing for cocoa farmers, the bad harvests in West Africa coupled with higher costs of living and of production actually exacerbate farmer vulnerabilities in the short term, highlighting the need to redouble efforts to support cocoa farming families.

At the same time, discussions around mandatory human rights due diligence have evolved significantly in many jurisdictions, particularly the European Union, and scrutiny on agricultural supply chains has never been higher. For us, these reflections only reinforce the relevance of our three strategic objectives, responsible cocoa supply chains, a supportive enabling environment and coordinated approaches to tackle child labour and forced labour in cocoa.

Responsible supply chains

Our dedication to reach our ambitious, yet essential, goals has driven us to achieve meaningful progress.

By 2023, there's been a **significant scale up of systems** to prevent and address child labour implemented by our members across industry and civil society in **West Africa**.

This is a significant achievement, and one on which we are happy to build, as we continue to collectively strengthen the effectiveness and improve the impact of these systems and advance the way child labour and forced labour are tackled in the cocoa sector. (Find out more on [page 8](#)).

In line with the objectives in our 2021-2026 Strategy, we are increasingly supporting others to put in place such systems (rather than doing it ourselves), as we believe this will help to maximise scale-up, so more cocoa-farming households can be supported. In addition, we continue to focus on improving existing approaches and testing new ones. By supporting our members to implement these systems themselves, we foster greater sustainability and scalability.

A supportive enabling environment

We know that responsible supply chains are only part of the solution. An enabling environment of policies, standards and regulation that help tackle child labour and forced labour is an important piece of the puzzle, and in 2023 we continued our work in policy and advocacy to this end. In 2023, the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D), which requires companies to know what is happening in their supply chain and to address human rights risks, continued to progress (at the time of this report's publication in June 2024 the CS3D has been validated). This is a great step forward and underlines the importance of responsible and transparent supply chains.

We have also continued to support national authorities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana in reinforcing the policy and institutional framework that supports efforts to tackle child labour and forced labour. For example, we have been pleased to work with the relevant authorities in Ghana to support the revision of their National Action Plan to tackle child labour, in addition to supporting various ministries in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen referral pathways and the provision of social services.



Coordinated approaches

As we know, no one actor alone can solve the problem of child labour or forced labour. Collaboration is the key to our success, and through coordinated approaches based on proven interventions we will continue to expand our efforts across the cocoa sector. During the year, in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, we continued work on our Landscape and Referral approaches, which aim to improve functional collaboration between multiple different actors in the same geographical area, in addition to working closely with cocoa-producing countries to improve the way private and public child labour monitoring systems can work together.

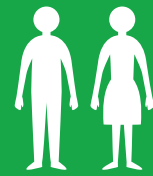
In addition, we continued to expand our network of members, proudly welcoming four new members in 2023, Ecookim, Fedco, Itochu, and Vink. Their joining signifies a strengthening of capacity and commitment to our shared goals.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with key stakeholders, including civil society, industry and our governmental partners, to protect child and human rights in West Africa.

Matthias Lange, ICI Executive Director

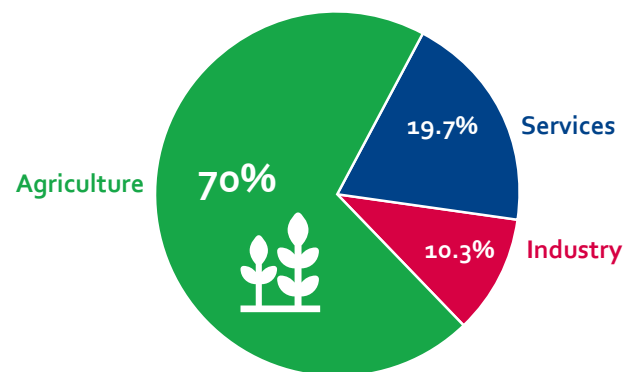
The reality of child labour in cocoa

Child labour is a complex issue, the reality is that it occurs across different sectors, industries, and geographies worldwide. Understanding child labour is essential if we are to find effective solutions to tackle it.



160 million
children were in
child labour globally

at the beginning of 2020, accounting for
almost 1 in 10 of all children worldwide¹



The agricultural sector
accounts for the largest share
of child labour worldwide²

^{1,2} Global Estimates, ILO & UNICEF, 2020



Sub-Saharan Africa
stands out as the region with the
highest prevalence and largest number
of children in child labour:

86.6 million
children



an estimated

1.56 million
children are in child labour
in cocoa in Ghana and
Côte d'Ivoire

That's 45% of children living in cocoa-growing households. Nearly all these children work on family cocoa farms, alongside their parents and other relatives.³



What is child labour?

Child labour is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development" (ILO Conventions 138 and 182 refer to child labour.) Not all work done by children is classified as child labour. For instance, children carrying out light, non-hazardous tasks on the family farm for a limited period of time, under supervision, and without compromising their schooling, is considered as acceptable child work. However, when activities are hazardous, such as carrying heavy loads or using sharp tools, working too many hours, or the work interferes with a child's schooling, this is considered child labour.

The three most common
hazardous tasks in cocoa are:⁴



Carrying
heavy loads



Using
sharp tools



Harvesting
overhead

³ NORC, 2018/9

⁴ ICI-implemented CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, 2023

What works to tackle child labour?

In order to eliminate child labour, a comprehensive and coordinated response from the entire cocoa sector is required. Industry stakeholders, government, civil society actors, international and donor organisations, cocoa cooperatives and producers all have a role to play. Here are some examples of interventions we know to be effective in addressing child labour and promoting child rights.



Providing quality education



Education is a fundamental child right.

It supports children's development, improves their overall welfare and well-being, and can open opportunities in the future. It is central to tackling child labour and increasing child protection.



Our experience has highlighted different education related strategies, such as bridging classes, improving school infrastructure or reading clubs, that can be effective in addressing child labour and increasing child protection.



"There is a lot of enthusiasm at home and there is a good improvement in children's results, reading makes it easier to learn their school lessons."

Gboka Jean-Marc, a cocoa farmer whose two daughters are regulars at the Binao reading club, tells us how the initiative piloted in Côte d'Ivoire in partnership with the association "Notre Boîte à Livre" to improve the quality of education for the children of cocoa farmers has improved his daughters' school results. Children can borrow books, attend reading workshops and write summaries on what they have read. (ICI Technical Agent, Ange N'Dri Djaha explains how this project impacted the community on [page 18](#)).



"Before I got the items I was not really interested in school because I did not have the necessary stationary to come to school to learn but after the items were brought, I have all I need to come to school to learn. My teachers also teach very well."

13-year-old **Esther** from the Ashanti region of Ghana, on how receiving a school kit comprised of a school bag and supplies kept her in school.





Advancing gender equality

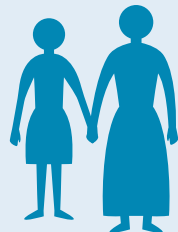
Promoting gender equality is crucial to tackling child labour and increasing child protection.



When women and men enjoy equal rights, everybody benefits. Girls and boys are more likely to attend and stay in school and less likely to be involved in child labour.



Advancing women's economic empowerment, encouraging their participation in household decision-making, and involving them in systems that aim to tackle child labour all contribute to increasing child protection and help reduce child labour rates.



"This job has allowed me to be independent. Before, it was my parents who did everything for me; I'm no longer shy as a result of doing community outreach. In town, people think I'm brave, and I'm proud that we women are doing this work too."

Diabaté Karidja, who works as a CLMRS Agent in Côte d'Ivoire, a predominantly male dominated field, speaks on how the new role has empowered her.

"Before, when I went shopping, it was the sellers themselves who did the calculations and I paid what they told me. And very often, I paid more than I had to. Today, thanks to the adult literacy classes, I can go shopping and sell without being cheated. When the seller makes his calculations, I do too."

Doumbia Kady, a cosmetics seller, elaborates on how joining the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) in her community of Beriaboukró, Côte d'Ivoire and taking part in adult literacy and numeracy classes helped her gain confidence and advance her business.





Advocating for human rights



Ensuring all players in the cocoa supply chain have a good understanding of child rights and labour rights plays an essential role in tackling child labour and forced labour.

When human rights are respected and protected throughout the supply chain, ensuring fair treatment and the wellbeing of workers, we can create a cocoa industry that is both socially responsible and environmentally sustainable, helping to prevent and address child labour and forced labour in cocoa.



Through awareness-raising sessions, adults and children can become aware of children's rights and understand the difference between permissible light work and hazardous work.



“Community Child Protection Committees (CCPC) members are within [cocoa-growing] communities, closely acquainted with farmers and regularly interact with children. This proximity makes it easier for them to identify and address the issues on the ground, ensuring that communities themselves become the guardians of the rights of others,”

explains **Stephen Etienne Mensah**, an investigator for Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, emphasising the importance of empowering CCPCs in Ghana.



CCPCs are groups composed of community members such as teachers, local government representatives, traditional leaders, women, religious leaders and farm workers which are responsible for addressing child protection issues in cocoa-growing communities. In some cases, ICI has trained them to recognise when adult labour rights have not been respected, or when forced labour risks may be present.



Improving farmer income



Poverty and lack of access to basic social services is one of the root causes of child labour.

Negative shocks to farmer income, such as those caused by crop failure, a fall in price, or severe weather can put a strain on farming families, who with limited resources or alternative sources of labour, may call on their children to fill the gap. A lack of social safety nets and access to social services makes cocoa farming families even more vulnerable.



Through initiatives such as income-generating activities (IGAs), community service groups (CSGs), Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), or cash transfers, farmers can be supported to establish alternative sources of income, which helps to improve and diversify their income, increasing resilience of farming families. (ICI CLMRS Field Assistant, Charles Ofose Ansong, explains his motivation to do this work in Ghana on [page 19](#)).



“The ICI officer advised me how to maintain the field and to grow more. When I got the money from the first crops... I employed a tutor for my son. From getting an average mark of 10 in the first term, he increased to 14 in the last term. It really gave me the courage to persevere.”

Vegetable farmer **Charles Koukougnon**, from Cote d'Ivoire, explains how he was able to grow his farm and increase his yield after being supported to develop alternate income-generating activities to cocoa. This helped him to have a more consistent income throughout the year.

“We were equipped with protective equipment such as overalls, wellington boots, hand gloves, as well as a motorised mist blower, ladder, goggles, reusable nose masks and forceps. We have also been trained in agronomic practices such as the application of insecticides, making organic fertilizers and proper way of pruning.”

Francis Frimpong, Treasurer of the Anyeme CSG in the Ashanti region of Ghana, explains the diverse ways in which his CSG has been empowered to work within the community.





Upskilling the youth



Investing in older children's education is essential to tackling child labour.

Children aged 15 to 17 in cocoa-growing communities are most at risk of hazardous child labour. They are more likely than children of other age groups to engage in work that threatens their health and safety such as applying chemicals, carrying heavy loads, cutting cocoa trees, or burning fields.



Strengthening older children's access to educational opportunities including secondary school, post-secondary school, technical and vocational education and training, and apprenticeships, is essential to reduce child labour and poverty in cocoa-growing communities, advance their life prospects, and protect their human rights.



"I'm very happy to have learned dressmaking. My aim is to learn it very well and become very good at sewing, so that I can also teach others in the future."
Amoasi Sandra, an apprentice from Adansi Ayokoah in Ghana, dreams of her future as a seamstress and how she can give back to her community.



"I'm very happy to be learning this skill, I will take it seriously so I can have a better future."
Auto mechanic apprentice, **Luwis Tofah** from Asokwa junction in Ghana, reflects on how the apprenticeship will shape his future, after financial struggles led to him not completing his education.



From the ICI team



Ange N'Dri Djaha

Technical Agent based in Gagnoa, Côte d'Ivoire

Motivated by the desire to bring joy and quality solutions to the communities in which he works, Ange takes his role as Technical Agent in the community of Gagnoa, Côte d'Ivoire seriously. Supervising various projects at the local level and acting as a coach to Operational Agents implementing the CLMRS and community development projects, and to other community structures, Ange takes satisfaction in seeing the projects that ICI implements with its members and partners take shape for the benefit of the community.

“One of the changes I've seen in the communities since the implementation of our Boite à Livres project is the children's reading level, that has gone from “mediocre” to “good”. The pupils are busy at the reading workshops, which often prevents them from going to the field. Nevertheless, some parents who know how to read have supported their children's reading by borrowing books.”

When asked about how the reading clubs have motivated the community he explained,

“During the inter-school competitions in Wanewa, the first stage, after the deliberations, a third-grader broke down in tears because she wanted to be first, given that she loves reading. The whole team came together to console her, telling her that next year will be the right one.”



Charles Oforu Ansong

CLMRS Field Assistant based in Obuase, Ashanti region of Ghana



“Victor Hugo once said, ‘he who opens a school gate closes a prison’. In my role, I ensure parents understand the concept of child labour, its effects and the need to ensure children stay in school. Supporting parents to have an increased income to ensure children continue to attain higher heights in education through livelihood support, VSLA etc. has a great impact on the future of the children, reducing anti-social behaviours and increasing community and national development. This has always been a great motivation to me,” Charles explained.

Further explaining that seeing the community become self-sufficient and farmers prioritising their children's education and health has been a driving force to keep going,

“Now farmers themselves go to their NHIA offices to register their children and renew expired ones through our constant awareness on the need to ensure the health of every child is well taken into consideration.”

Research and Innovation

In 2023, as part of our commitment to pursue learning and innovation activities in line with our Strategy, we continued to make strides to develop, test and evaluate new approaches, and to develop resources, tools and metrics to support all actors to prevent and address child labour and forced labour in cocoa.



Building national capacity to prevent forced labour

ICI signed an MoU with the Social Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in Ghana, to support and improve the use of the Helpline of Hope, a toll-free number to report human rights breaches, including forced labour. In 2023, ICI trained 20 staff from the call centre on cocoa-specific forced labour risks and on case management, and provided awareness raising material, case management tools and necessary equipment. ICI also trained 40 MoGCSP staff from these districts on forced labour and on the toll-free line.

ICI also worked jointly with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations in Ghana to digitally map out social services in Ghana where structures can provide support to victims of labour exploitation. In addition, ICI worked with the Ghana Agriculture and Rural Development Journalists Association

(GARDJA) to enhance their knowledge of cocoa-specific forced labour risks and encourage more coverage and accurate reporting on the issue.

These activities were implemented in partnership with Rainforest Alliance and Solidaridad, with NORAD funding.

As part of a project with Verité, funded by US Department of Labor, ICI also trained officers of the Ghana Police (from the Anti-Human trafficking Unit and the Criminal Investigation Department), district stakeholders in Ghana including from the department of agriculture, the immigration service COCOBOD and the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, in addition to staff from the Ghana Education Service. In Côte d'Ivoire we trained human rights councillors and staff from the CNDH (Comité National des Droits Humains).

Innovative projects

Addressing forced labour risks

ICI's work to set up Community Labour Protection Committees was appreciated by workers as a trusted source of support. These community-based grievance mechanisms have:

- helped workers sign contracts with their employers
- assisted workers with accessing unpaid wages and resolving other disputes
- connected workers and employers with mediation at district level in more complex cases

Following this success, this approach was scaled-up in collaboration with Ghana's Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice to 50 communities in 2023.

In Côte d'Ivoire, ICI also worked closely with the government resulting in the signature of an MoU with the CNLTP (Comité National de Lutte contre la Traite des Personnes) to strengthen the referral of cases to the relevant national authorities.



Community labour protection committees

Groups bringing together a diverse range of individuals from the community who are trained, supported and able to refer cases they cannot solve to a mandated higher authority.

What is forced labour in cocoa?

Forced labour is defined as work that is done involuntarily and under the threat of penalty. In practice this means that indicators of both an absence of consent and the threat of penalty are required to make it a case of forced labour.

In cocoa, common indicators for:

- **An absence of consent** include workers doing tasks that were not specified at the time of recruitment, working for longer hours than was specified, or performing tasks for other employers.
- **The menace of penalty** include withholding a salary or retaining identity documents.

All stakeholders involved need to understand what forced labour looks like in cocoa today, and the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers.

For children, forced labour is understood as working because of a penalty (or the threat of one) from someone other than the parent. This could be a threat to the child or to the parent. At times children are forced to work because their parents themselves are in forced labour.



Publications

What makes child labour harmful and what does it mean for the cocoa sector?

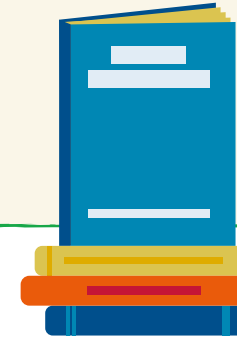
In 2023, to better understand the extent to which child labour causes harm, we did a review of child development research which drew on over 150 empirical studies. This has helped us to provide practical suggestions to improve both how we identify children at risk, as well as what we do to prevent and address child labour and support children to reach their full potential.

The study illustrates clearly that child labour does not occur in a vacuum, but interacts with other factors relating to the child. Access to a nurturing family environment and schooling are factors that help protect children, while working at a young age and for long hours increase the risk of long-term, irreversible harm.

These findings have implications both for identifying the children that most need support and for designing the most effective and cost-efficient activities for preventing and remediating harm from child labour, as well as its occurrence. [Read the full study here.](#)



Useful Tools

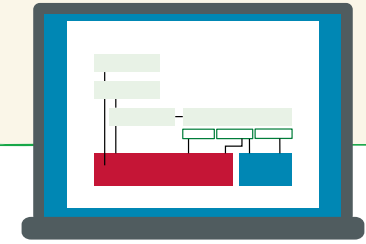


The Business Handbook on Due Diligence in the Cocoa Sector: Addressing Child Labour and Forced Labour

Together with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), we developed a handbook to help companies identify, prevent and address risks related to human rights in the cocoa sector, with a focus on child labour and forced labour.

The Handbook is based on the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the ILO Conventions on child labour and forced labour, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the OECD recommendations on risk-based due diligence detailed in the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct and the OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains. Together these instruments are the leading international, government-backed standards on responsible business conduct and corporate due diligence.

[View the full handbook on our website.](#)



Light work, child labour and hazardous child labour in Côte d'Ivoire

In order to accurately determine whether a child should be considered to be engaged in light (authorised) work, child labour or hazardous child labour, ICI developed a new tool. The flow chart can be used to support the analysis of data collected on child labour, through a [child labour prevalence survey](#) or a child labour monitoring questionnaire.

[It is available on ICI's website.](#)



Child labour legislation in Ethiopia, DRC & Nigeria

Child labour exists in every country and in many economic activities, particularly in the agriculture sector where about 70% of all children in child labour work. In 2023, ICI analysed the national legislation and policies that aim to protect children from child labour in [Ethiopia](#), [Nigeria](#) and the [Democratic Republic of Congo \(DRC\)](#). The analyses include comparisons with international norms and standards on child labour, with a focus on those most applicable to child labour in agriculture.

A spotlight on Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS)

Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems are systems designed to identify, address, and prevent child labour. When implemented well, these systems can be highly effective with 41% of supported children stopping hazardous work.

(Learn more on [page 27](#)).

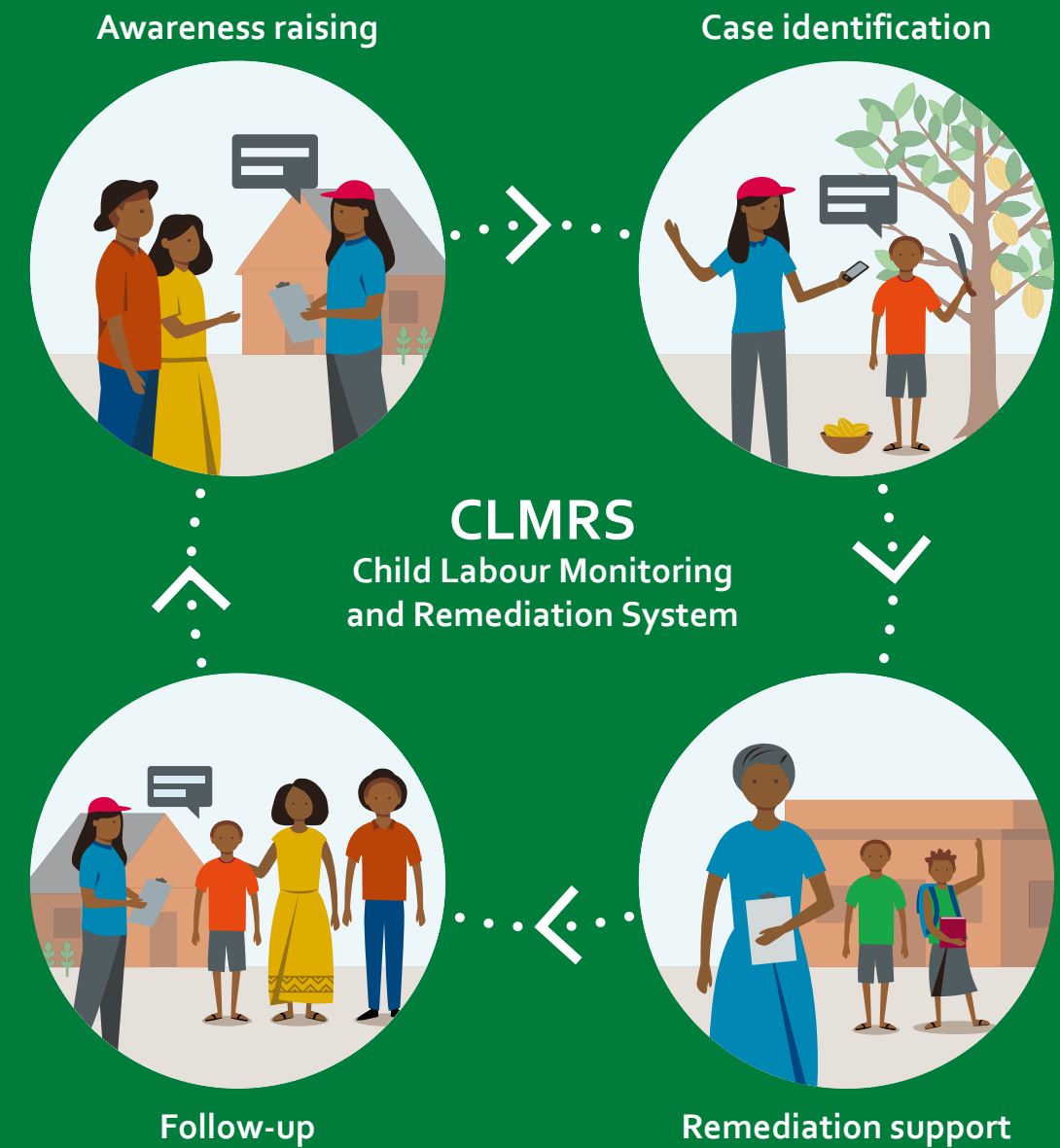
Much of our work in 2023 focused on exploring how to make these systems more effective, how to ensure they are implemented in an impactful way, and how to drive their scale up within the sector. While no single system (nor one actor alone) can end child labour, CLMRS have demonstrated their effectiveness. Along with complementary approaches, and an enabling environment, they play an important role in tackling the issue.



What is a CLMRS?

Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems are systems designed to identify, address, and prevent child labour. CLMRS Agents, linked to cooperatives and communities, visit households, raise awareness on the dangers of child labour, and identify children engaged in hazardous work. If a child is found in child labour, they are recorded in the system and support is provided to the child, their family and/or community.

Support is tailored to the situation and needs of each family and can include targeted awareness raising, school improvements, tutoring, adult education, additional income, and help to access adult labour.



In 2023,

323,096

households were covered⁵ by ICI-implemented or supported CLMRS



and

495,748

children were interviewed

In addition to implementing these systems ourselves, we are increasingly providing support to others to put them in place, as we believe this will help to maximise scale-up, so more cocoa-farming households can be supported.

“

“We are happy to see significant scale up by our members across industry and civil society in West Africa. This is a significant achievement, and one on which we are happy to build, as we continue to collectively strengthen the effectiveness and improve the impact of these systems and advance the way child labour and forced labour are tackled in the cocoa sector.”

Matthias Lange, ICI Executive Director

”

⁵ Covered means that a household is registered in a CLMRS, and a monitoring visit or household-level risk assessment has been done.



Within the systems implemented by ICI:⁶

26% of children were found in child labour

26% of children in the system were found to be engaging in child labour.

77% of children receive support

77% of children in the system received support to prevent and address child labour.

41% are out of child labour

41% of those found in child labour are no longer in child labour after two consecutive visits.

(See *How we measure when children are “out of child labour”* on [page 28](#)).



⁶ Percentages calculated on data from the launch of the CLMRS - end 2023.

How do we measure when children are “out of child labour”?

Child labour is a complex problem. Even after receiving support, it is not always easy for a child to stop working definitively, especially as the risk of child labour increases as a child grows older. This is why it is important to conduct regular follow-up visits – facilitators aim to do so every six months – to check how children are getting on and determine whether further support is required.

Data collected by the CLMRS shows us that while many children found in child labour have stopped doing hazardous work by their first follow-up visit, some may be involved in child labour again by their next visit. However, data suggests that if children have stopped doing hazardous tasks for at least two consecutive visits, they are much less likely to return to child labour again in the future. This is why we have chosen to look at **two consecutive follow up visits**, when measuring whether the child is out of child labour. A child is “out of child labour” if they are not in child labour at both the first and the second follow up visit.



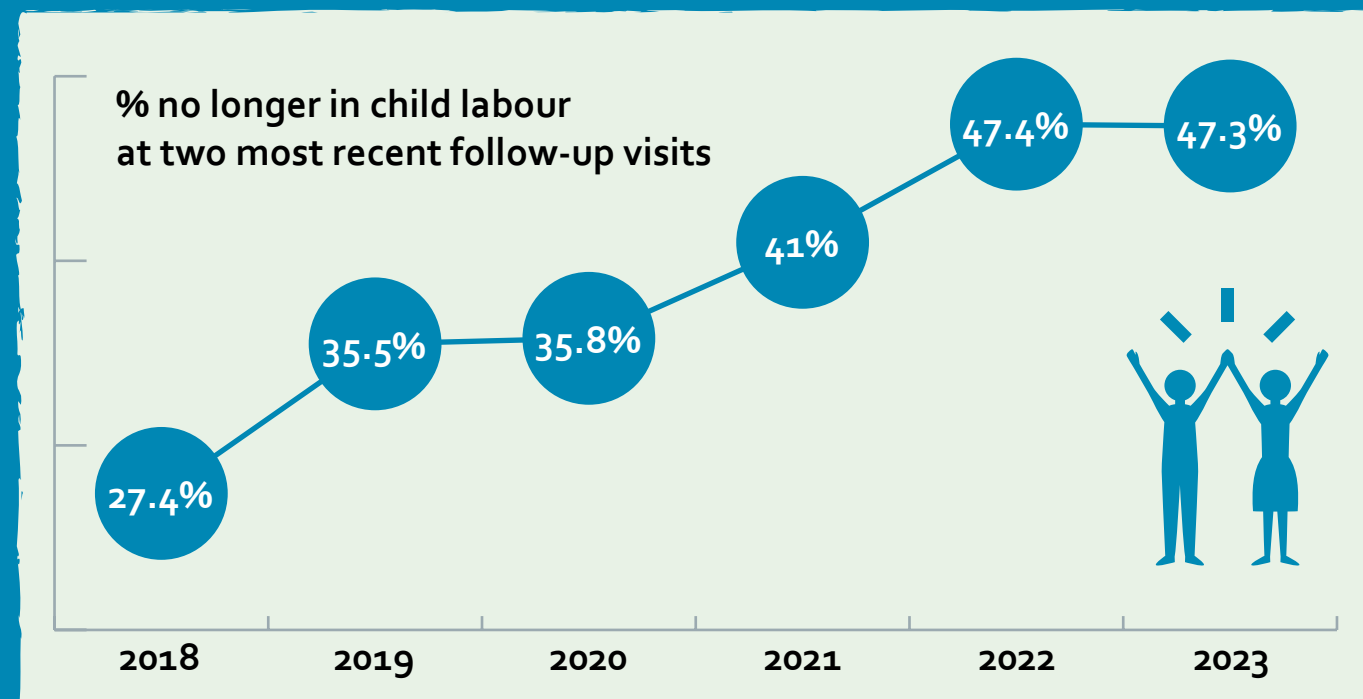
CLMRS effectiveness is increasing over time

As systems mature, as practitioners become more experienced and more knowledge is available about what works best, CLMRS are becoming more effective.

The chart below shows the steady progression year on year of children no longer in child labour after two follow-up visits within ICI-implemented CLMRS. This upward trend demonstrates the increasing effectiveness of the CLMRS to address child labour in cocoa-growing communities and create meaningful progress to improve the lives of children and adults in West Africa.

For children who received their second follow up visit in 2023, **47% were no longer in child labour.**

(For all children ever identified in child labour through an ICI-implemented CLMRS who received at least two follow up visits up to end 2023, the average figure is 41%)



The central role of CLMRS Agents

CLMRS Agents (also known as Community Facilitators or Field Officers) are the first point of contact that cocoa-producing households have with the CLMRS and are key to its success. They are responsible for explaining the CLMRS and its objectives, raising awareness on harm caused by child labour, and conducting interviews with farming families to identify children who need support. A better understanding of the job profile and what support these individuals need to do it well, will help improve the system. Two pieces of research published in 2023 explored this further.

How the CLMRS, and the agent’s experiences, are impacted by their gender

ICI’s [CLMRS Effectiveness review](#) (published in July 2021) found that even though female agents were more successful at identifying cases of child labour, women are significantly under-represented among CLMRS agents.

ICI decided to carry out a study based on qualitative data from Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire about female CLMRS agents, and to look at the results of activities tested to achieve a better gender balance amongst agents in two cooperatives in Côte d’Ivoire. It examined the qualities that women bring to the job, the benefits women get from doing the job, the reason why so few females are doing the job, and what could be done to recruit and retain more female agents.



The rate of children no longer engaged in child labour is **11 percentage points higher** when their intervention is done by a **female agent** than for male agents, at 51% compared to 39% (based on two most recent visits).

Key findings:

- Women excel in the role of CLMRS agents. They attain or exceed their objectives in terms of monthly visits; they identify on average more cases of child labour.
- Women can have special access to children, because parents sometimes prefer a woman to interview their child; and because they make children feel at ease during interviews.
- The job is a source of empowerment for women, since it offers important opportunities for women to:
 - develop professional and personal skills,
 - build social capital,
 - gain self-confidence,
 - and acquire financial independence.
- Female agents are role models for girls and women in the communities. They break with cultural norms and demonstrate that they are professionally competent, can travel and are independent.

Child labour monitoring through locally based agents

Data analysis shows that agents working outside their own community are more likely to identify children in child labour. However, employing people to work as CLMRS Agents in their own communities has some advantages too. A new study from ICI investigated perceptions, challenges and opportunities related to hiring CLMRS Agents.



Key findings:

- When an agent knows the farmer personally, interaction is usually easier; however, questions around child work can be awkward to ask.
- When an agent does not know the farmer, there is more likely to be suspicion and fear of criminal investigation, which makes it difficult to get honest answers.
- Farmers are hesitant to let agents interview children directly, when the agent is unknown to them.
- Children are more likely to open up and encouraged to speak with an agent that they're familiar with.
- Awareness raising is very effective, farmers listen with interest and attention - irrespective of personal relationship between farmer and agent.

Both reports can be viewed on our website.

[Gender dimensions in the role of CLMRS agents](#)

[Child labour monitoring through locally based agents](#)

From the ICI team



Apo Armelle Nadia Ayekoue

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, based in Côte d'Ivoire

Reflecting on her role in ICI's project encouraging the recruitment of female CLMRS Agents, Nadia affirmed,

"Women, when supported and valued, can not only improve their own lives, but also bring about significant positive change in their communities."



Nadia went on to explain how she hopes the drive toward gender equality will impact the community, especially in spaces that are traditionally male dominated,

"It will influence the perception of the gendered division of labour in communities and cooperatives. At a community level it will raise awareness among leaders, lift taboos concerning women's participation, advance women's social roles, and impact women's participation in household decision-making."



Technical advocacy

2023

In 2023, we continued to engage in various advocacy activities to achieve our strategic objectives, by engaging with key stakeholders to develop and advance effective policies and standards, facilitating multistakeholder collaboration to align approaches and responsibilities, and by promoting our evidence-based learning on child and forced labour.



Workshops and webinars

ICI regularly organises webinars and workshops to share knowledge and best practice, to support capacity building, and to learn from others. Here are some examples of activities that took place in 2023:

Webinar: EU Forced Labour Regulation and its implications for the cocoa sector

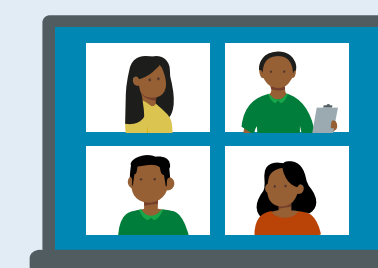
ICI, in partnership with the European Cocoa Association (ECA), the CAOBISCO, the VOICE Network and the Cocoa Coalition, along with the support of the European sustainable cocoa platforms, hosted a webinar on the EU Regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the EU market and its implications for the cocoa sector.

Workshop: Capacity building with Côte d'Ivoire's National Human Rights Council on Forced Labour

A capacity-building workshop on forced labour was held for human rights advisors and support staff at Côte d'Ivoire's National Human Rights Council (CNDH) in Bassam. Led by ICI, the workshop aimed to deepen understanding of the complex nature of forced labour and its various forms.

Training of the Ghana Agriculture and Rural Development Journalists Association

ICI organised a three-day training session with the Ghana Agriculture and Rural Development Journalists Association (GARDJA) to enhance their knowledge of child labour and forced labour risks in cocoa, to encourage more coverage and accurate reporting on these issues.



Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange

In-Country Members Platforms

ICI initiated regular meetings in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire with representatives of our members to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing. More specifically, they aim to better support members to turn the lessons drawn from ICI's research agenda and innovation projects into concrete operational solutions.

ISCO Membership and Involvement

ICI actively participated in the various national initiatives for sustainable cocoa (ISCOS) in Europe, including Beyond Chocolate in Belgium, DISCO in the Netherlands, GISCO in Germany, as well as SWISSCO in Switzerland. ICI also engaged as technical expert in working group meetings of FRISCO in France. ICI continued to co-lead with UNICEF the ISCO-wide Child Labour Working Group coordinated by SWISSCO.

ILO Child Labour Platform Engagement

As a member of the ILO Child Labour Platform, ICI continued to actively engage in activities aimed at sharing experience and public-private collaboration, fostering partnerships with other organisations, governments, and industry players.

Working group meeting of the CLCCG in Ghana

The Technical Working Group of the Child Labour in Cocoa Coordination Group (CLCCG) held a plenary meeting in Accra (Ghana) to discuss some of the main elements of a renewed collaboration and the development of a new sector-wide Framework aimed at shaping the work of all actors in tackling child labour over the coming years, building on lessons learned from the Harkin Engel Protocol and its Framework for Action.

Policy and Standards

Ghana National Action Plan (NAP) Review

ICI actively participated in reviewing Ghana's 2nd NAP, as well as supporting the development of the new Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour 2023-2027 (GAAPAC), including the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Ghana Hazardous Activities Framework (HAF) Review

ICI also helped review the HAF, which defines hazardous tasks for children in cocoa farming.

EU HRDD Legislation Advocacy

ICI, through our active participation in the Cocoa Coalition, continued to advocate for ambitious and harmonised human rights due diligence legislation within the European Union (EU).



ARSO (African Regional Standards) Involvement

ICI contributed to the development and implementation of the standards and guidelines related to cocoa production by participating in working groups and meetings, conferences, and capacity-building initiatives.

Finalisation of the Business Handbook on HRDD in the Cocoa Sector

ICI, in collaboration with the OECD and with the support of the BMZ/GIZ, completed the Business Handbook on Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) in the cocoa sector. The handbook outlines practical steps and good practices in identifying, preventing and addressing human rights risks throughout the cocoa supply chain, with a focus on child labour and forced labour.

Support to authorities at national level

At ICI we know that no one actor alone can solve child labour, and it is imperative to work with other stakeholders, including the government, to have a long lasting and sustainable change. Our country Director for Ghana and our Regional Director for West and Central Africa detail the important work we are doing to support national authorities in cocoa producing countries.



Message from ICI Country Director for Ghana, Mike Arthur

In 2023, we supported the government's review of the Ghana National Action Plan (NAP) to combat child labour, which resulted in the publication of the new Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour 2023-2027 (GAAPAC).

This ambitious plan details Ghana's efforts to tackle child labour across many sectors in the years to come, and I am really proud of the role ICI has played in supporting the government with its development.

We also worked jointly with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations to digitally map out the structures and social services in Ghana that can provide support to victims of labour exploitation. The objective is that community grievance structures and other practitioners will better understand how, and to whom, they can refer cases that require further support.

We have also been involved in advising on the development of the child labour component of the Ghana Cocoa Management System, and the operationalisation of the Ghana Child Labour Monitoring System, with the aim of ensuring all systems complement each other and are able to work together.



Message from Regional Director of West and Central Africa (and interim Country Director for Côte d'Ivoire), Euphrasie Aka

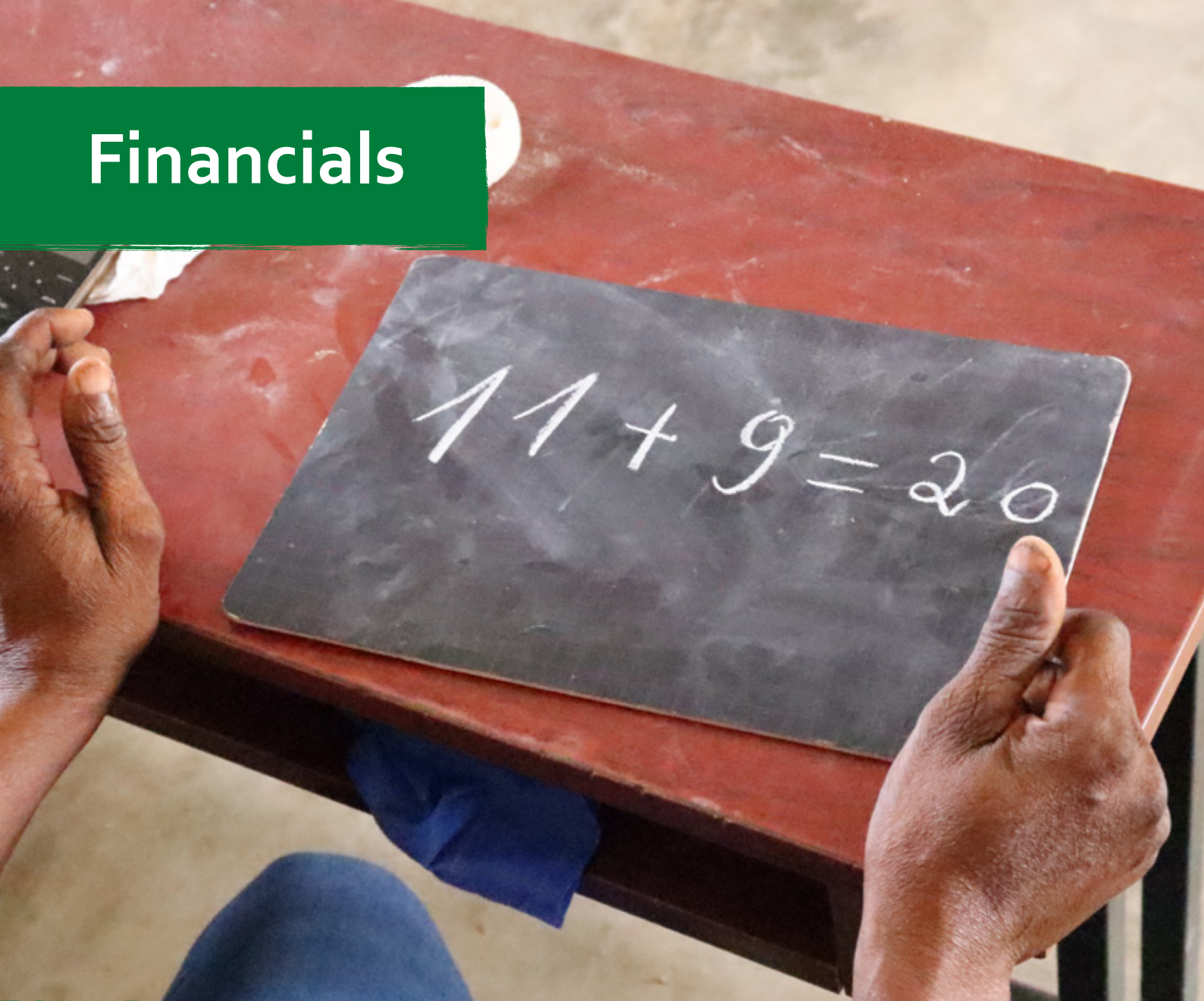
In 2023, we developed and strengthened a number of partnerships with the government of Côte d'Ivoire which will shape our collaboration in the years to come.

For example, we signed a partnership agreement with the National Committee against trafficking, the CNLTP (Comité National de Lutte contre la Traite des Personnes), which will help support efforts to tackle forced labour and trafficking. We also provided training and support to the Ministry of solidarity and the fight against poverty, to set up three regional units to tackle human trafficking. In addition, we continued to work closely with the Ministry of the family, women and children, under a Memorandum of Understanding signed with them in 2022.

We have also been involved in supporting the government of Côte d'Ivoire in the process of reviewing and developing a new national action plan (Plan Action Nationale – NAP) to tackle child which will be finalised during 2024.

We also continued discussions to expand work into new cocoa-producing countries in West and Central Africa, including for example, working with the authorities in Cameroon with a view to opening a national office in the country. We look forward to collaborating with various public and private actors in other countries in the region, further expanding the support provided to children and their families.

Financials



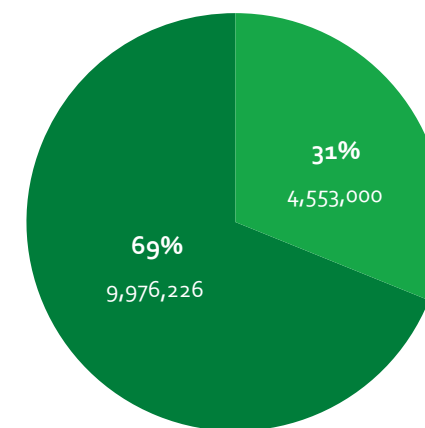
Several new members, in addition to new project contracts, contributed to a total revenue of just over CHF 14.5 m in 2023 (in comparison to just under CHF 14m in 2022). Approximately one third of this revenue is from member contributions that serve to implement the operational plan of our strategy, and two thirds represents restricted income relating to specific projects.

2023 financial statement

CHF

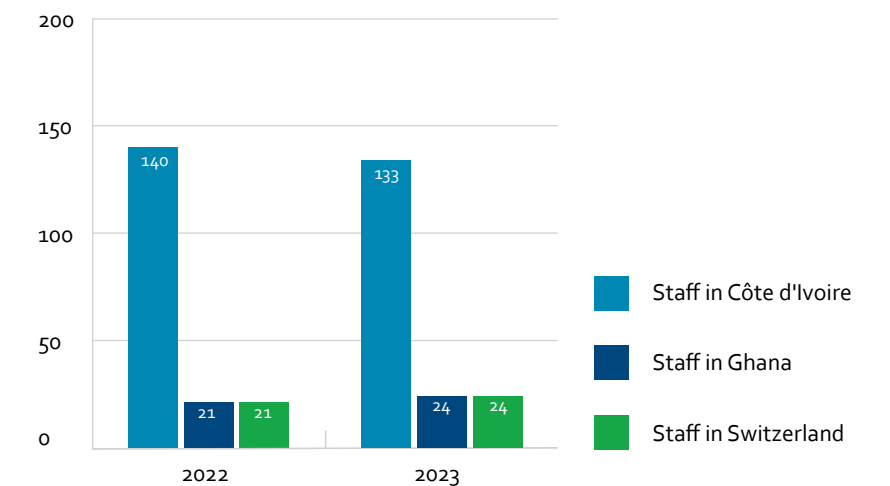
Revenue	
Member contributions (Core funds)	4,553,000
Restricted income for use on specific projects (Project funds)	9,976,226
Total Revenue	14,529,226
Expenditure	
Activities and operations supported by Core funds	4,296,063
Activities supported by Core funds	2,632,933
Operations supported by Core funds	1,663,070
Activities and operations supported by Project funds	10,032,233
Restricted programme activities	8,690,102
Indirect costs to support restricted programme activities	1,342,131
Total Expenditure	14,328,296
Results before non-operating income / Expense and use of reserves	200,930
Miscellaneous other income / (expense)	- 35,520
Net use of reserves	0
Excess of revenue over expenditure after net variation of capital	165,410

Revenue



■ Restricted income
■ Contributions and donations

Staff figures



New members

In 2023, four new members joined ICI.



"ICI welcomed four new members in 2023. Their joining signifies a strengthening of capacity and commitment to our shared goals."

ICI Executive Director, Matthias Lange

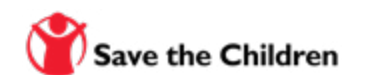


ICI board members, contributing partners and other donors end 2023

Abou Camille
Individual farmer
representative



Richard Longhurst
Independent expert



Other donors



Board advisors



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