



Learning into action:

## Strengthening adult labour groups in cocoa-growing communities

Increasing the availability of affordable adult labour in cocoa-growing communities is key for addressing child labour. One approach often adopted is the creation of Community Service Groups. This brief summarises practical action points for setting up these groups and facilitating access to their services.

### What are Community Service Groups?

Community Service Groups are labour groups made up of trained and equipped adults who provide agricultural services at an affordable rate. Many groups offer services on credit, meaning that farmers pay only after they have sold their produce. Community Service Groups are encouraged to divide the money they earn from providing services into three: one third is shared between the members of the group, one third supports activities in the community that benefit children, and one-third is spent on maintaining and buying equipment and further training, ensuring the group's sustainability.

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Before the group was established our fellow farmers could not afford to hire responsible labour and therefore resorted to using their children. But now, farmers can hire us to perform those activities.

COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP MEMBER

# Why support Community Service Groups?

Community Service Groups can benefit entire cocoa-growing communities in several ways:

- **Increase access to affordable adult labour.** Many cocoa-growing communities struggle with a shortage of adult workers. Community Service Groups provide services at an affordable rate, below market price, making them an accessible option for farmers.
- **Provide an alternative to child labour.** By making adult labour more easily accessible and performing tasks that children may otherwise have to do, Community Service Groups can reduce the need for children to do harmful work.
- **Improve productivity.** Groups are trained on good agricultural practices and equipped with specialist tools. This enables group members and farmers in the community to benefit from increased farm yields.
- **Strengthen and diversify livelihoods.** Joining a Community Service Group enables members to earn additional income, increasing their resilience.
- **Offer opportunities for the local youth.** Community Service Groups provide meaningful work opportunities to youth looking to work in cocoa farming. In turn, this can support local economies and prevent young adults from leaving cocoa-growing communities to look for work elsewhere.
- **Support community development and child protection.** Community Service Groups invest part of their profits to support projects that benefit children and the entire community, contributing to child protection and community development.

## How to set up Community Service Groups?

- ✓ **Target areas where adult labour is needed** – Selecting communities with a lack of affordable adult labour helps ensure demand for the group's services.
- ✓ **Mobilise the community** – Present the project to the community and involve them in key decisions, such as setting prices and payment methods. This contributes to community acceptance and ownership of the Community Service Group, encouraging their use in the future.
- ✓ **Recruit labourers and address barriers** – Communicate proactively about the Community Service Group and encourage women and men in the community to join. Recruiting well-respected members of the community can encourage cocoa farmers to hire Community Service Groups. If certain genders or ethnicities are under-represented among the Group, identify the reasons why and find ways to address them. Proactively reaching out to women, for example, can broaden access to employment and help improve gender equality.
- ✓ **Train and equip groups** – Provide Community Service Groups with equipment and training on good agricultural practices, as well as on how to use the new equipment. This ensures they can provide high-quality services efficiently and can also incentivise more labourers to join the groups, helping them meet demand. Training can also include topics such as child safeguarding, child protection and child labour.
- ✓ **Support group professionalisation** – Training Community Service Groups in group governance, financial management, and debt recovery contributes to the good functioning of the group.



# What works to increase access to Community Service Groups?

Once the Community Service Group has been set up, it is important to help families access their services.



**Spread the word** – Proactive communication helps ensure that potential clients know that Community Service Groups exist, how they work, what services they provide, and how much they cost. This is key to increasing take up. Once households are happy with services received, they too spread the word, encouraging others to use them too.

*“Now the children have time to study, to have fun because they no longer go to the field to work.” Community member using Community Service Group’s services, Côte d’Ivoire*



**Subsidise group services** – Coops or companies can facilitate access by subsidising the cost of Community Service Groups for farmer group members or households within their supply chains.

*“Before, the parents used the children in the plantations, now they solicit us for their work instead of the children.” Community Service Group member, Côte d’Ivoire*



**Provide cash transfers** – Encouraging the use of Community Service Groups by providing households with cash transfers and incentives to spend on adult labour has proven to be effective at increasing the use of Community Service Groups, as well as reducing families’ use of child labour.

Find out more about this innovative approach in our [learning report](#) or read our [implementation guide](#) to explore how to implement a cash transfer programme with an incentive to hire Community Service Groups.

*“The Community Service Group reduced the workload that was resting solely on our husbands’ shoulders. The group can clean more than a hectare a day. Thanks to their work, our children do little work now.” Cash recipient, Côte d’Ivoire*

An increase in demand for Community Service Groups can increase group revenue, attract new members and even lead to the spontaneous formation of new groups in response to demand. This can further help to address the shortage of affordable adult labour in cocoa-growing communities.





## Want to learn more?

Learning report: [Innovative strategies to stimulate adult labour and tackle child labour](#)

Implementation guide: [Cash transfers to promote access to adult labour in cocoa communities](#)

Video: [Meet a Community Service Group from Ghana](#)



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