

# 1.2 Current Problem

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## 1.2.1 “Worst form of Child Labor”

The country’s history of turmoil and poverty has caused a crisis that has been largely overlooked by the international community. This is the problem of child slavery on the many small farms that provide 40% of the world’s cocoa supply.

Children in the Ivory Coast are surrounded by poverty. Because of the horrible political and economic climate children have no other viable options but to work at an early age to support their family. While many of the children help work their family’s small cocoa it is estimated that 25-35% of children working in the cocoa farms have been lured from their families to work far away farms in hopes of providing their family with income (Payson Center, 2011).

Child labor is a rampant problem in the cocoa farms. According to a study presented by Tulane University, it is estimated that 25-50% of the children living in the agricultural cocoa producing areas in the country are working on cocoa farms. This amounts to a projected total of 819,921 children being exploited as child laborers in the Ivory Coast alone. Only 10% of the children working for these agricultural households are paid for their work. (Payson Center, 2011).

## ILO Convention No. 182

The work that these children are subjected to is considered by the International Labor Organization to be “The Worst Form of Child Labor” according to the guidelines presented in ILO Convention No. 182. The work the children do falls under this category is because “by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the children”(ILO, 1999). These criteria are expanded upon further in the convention and upon examination of first hand accounts from former workers and outside researchers, the labor environment these children are subjected to meets all of the disturbing criteria.

**“(a) Work which exposes children to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse.”**



Unfortunately physical abuse is occurring on many of the plantations. Former child slaves have reported that they were regularly beaten and whipped if they were not working hard enough. “The beatings were a part of my life,” Aly Diabate, a freed slave, told reporters. “Anytime they loaded

you with bags (of cocoa beans) and you fell while carrying them, nobody helped you. Instead they beat you and beat you until you picked it up again”(Rhaghavan & Chatterjee, 2001).

“(b) Work underground, under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces.”

The sheer nature of the work requires that children work at dangerous heights. In order to get to the cocoa bean pod children have to climb up the tree, often with no harness or safety equipment, and hack off the pod with a machete (Payson Center, 2011). In the photo we see a young boy completely outstretched attempting to hack off a bean pod.



“(c) Work with dangerous machinery, equipment or tools or which involves the handling or manual transport of heavy loads”

The annual report conducted by Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer at Tulane University found that the children are required to clear land, pluck pods, and crack the pods open. The tool of the trade for this type of work is a large machete which when not operated correctly can lead to serious injury. The study also showed that most of the children are required to move heavy loads, most often bags full of cocoa pods, which put strain on their underdeveloped muscles. The Tulane study found that close to 50% of child laborers in the cocoa industry were suffered injury on the job in the past 12 months.

**6 . Working Conditions and Hazards  
(Survey 2008/09)**

Child reporting, weighted	Cote d'Ivoire (Last 12 months)		Ghana (Last 12 months)	
	All children in agricultural HH (N=2165)	Children working in cocoa (N=658)	All children in agricultural HH (N=2074)	Children working in cocoa (N=1000)
% of children, 5-17 years, reporting injury in agriculture				
5-11 years	17.7	46.3	28.5	52.5
12-14 years	41.5	55.5	47.1	54.5
15-17 years	39.3	48.5	51.0	54.9
Total	25.6	49.4	37.4	53.7
% of children, 5-17 years, reporting heavy loads in agriculture				
5-11 years	27.2	77.6	35.0	67.5
12-14 years	53.5	81.5	61.5	70.3
15-17 years	52.8	83.5	61.3	70.0
Total	38.1	80.2	46.6	69.0

Source: Tulane child interview, weighted data, strata 1-3.

“(d) Work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations that are damaging to their health;”

In addition to operating dangerous tools and moving heavy loads. The study also found that a small percentage of the children are responsible for applying pesticides and fertilizers to the crops. This activity could potentially make the children very ill if correct safety

(Vigneault-Dubois, 2011). This is especially evident in the rural cocoa producing areas of the country where primary education enrollment is far below the national average of 58% at 49%. These percentages get even worse as schooling gets more specialized. Only 26% of the children of the Ivory Coast are enrolled in classes that provide secondary education. (Payson Center, 2011).

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	All children in agricultural HH (N=2165)	Children working in cocoa (N=656)	All children in agricultural HH (N=2074)	Children working in cocoa (N=1020)
% of children, 5-17 years, operating tools or equipment (machete, sprayer, etc.)				
5-11 years	38.8	90.7	42.3	73.4
12-14 years	74.9	96.9	84.6	93.3
15-17 years	77.5	97.3	89.0	98.3
Total	57.7	94.1	61.7	85.2
% of children, 5-17 years, spraying pesticides, insecticides				
5-11 years	0.1	0.8	0.2	0.5
12-14 years	0.5	1.4	1.7	1.7
15-17 years	1.1	2.5	2.5	3.7
Total	0.4	1.4	1.0	1.6

Source: Tulane child interview, weighted data, strata 1-3.

These poor educational statistics create an environment that makes economic production dependent on cheap and unskilled labor. Production and innovation in the economic sector cannot be achieved when only half of the nations adults are literate and 1% of children 5-17 have received any type of training connected to a particular skill.

### 1.2.2 Lack of Education

In addition to the widespread child labor the children of the Ivory Coast have very little opportunities to get a quality and complete education. A report made by the International Monetary Fund reported that only 58% of children ages 5-17 are enrolled in school. They have attributed this poor educational performance to the “supervision difficulties resulting from the weak reception capacities and the poor state of educational infrastructure unevenly distributed over the entire national territory” (IMF, 2012).

The people of the Ivory Coast have put an emphasis on production of cocoa instead of emphasizing education as a way to fight rampant poverty. Our organization will change this culture and get children out of the field and into the classroom.

The social turmoil displaced many teachers and students in the ten years following the 2001 civil war. Many teachers did not go back to work





## 4.2 Expanding Education

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Education is the base on which countries develop from third world to first world countries. A proper education system promotes economic innovation and creates a more intelligent and involved democratic society. Our organization looks to promote the education of the younger Ivorian generation in order to minimize the country's social, economic and political woes.

According to UNICEF, in Côte d'Ivoire almost one child out of two between ages 6 through 11 does not attend school. There is also a gender disparity, in that most of the children who do go to school are boys and not usually girls (59 percent against 51 percent). In addition, there is a noticeable gap between urban areas and rural areas (66 percent against 48 percent) (UNICEF, 2012). The reason that many children are not able to go to school is due to the lack of teachers and school amenities and many times the children that do attend school do not benefit due to these shortages. Included is a chart detailing the attendance rate of children in primary school in Côte d'Ivoire. Through our organization's education project, we hope to see an increase in the attendance rate of children in this area and a decrease in the number of child laborers in the cocoa farms.



Volunteer Ivorian teacher. Associated Free Press

### 4.2.1 Hiring Teachers

In the early stages our organization will pay the salaries of 1,000 teachers in order to get to the Ivory Coast to provide teachers for communities in need. Encouraging teachers to areas for a period of three months will help ease the high student to instructor ratios and allow more children the opportunity to go to school. Our organization looks forward to helping the education system get back on its feet and bring children from the farms to the classroom. Currently UNICEF is working to provide 500,000 school kits to the many children in need. These kits consist of textbooks, chalk and writing utensils (Vineault-Dubois, 2011). The children are receiving the materials they need to do their schoolwork but they need teachers to educate. We are looking to provide the teachers during this rebuilding period. We will use the funds given to our organization from chocolate companies and pay for teachers to work in the abandoned schools of the Ivory Coast. The Fair Cocoa Foundation will pay every teacher 5,000 US dollars a year for their work. While this seems like a small some to many Americans, 5,000 dollars is more than double the current salary of a teacher in the Ivory Coast and almost triple the average per capita income (IMF,

2012). We are paying teachers this amount to show the Ivorian Community the true value of a proper education. Hopefully the Ivorian Government will follow suit and provide teachers with higher salaries.

### 4.2.3 Building Classrooms

This is just the beginning of our efforts. In our first year of operation we plan on adding two classrooms to 30 schools in rural villages where many children are forced to work the fields because of their lack of educational opportunities. We have 5 international education coordinators that will work with the Ministry of Education to identify areas that would benefit the most from the expansion of a school. A U.K.-based NGO, Build Africa, has concluded that a school with: three fully stocked classrooms, an administrative block and 3 toilets costs approximately 52,000 U.S. Dollars to build (Build-Africa, 2012). Based on this number we estimated that to add two fully stocked classrooms with 2 bathrooms would cost approximately \$34,540. The construction of 30 fully stocked classrooms would total a little over 1,056,000 dollars, well within our projected budget. If our implementation is successful, our organization could potentially be responsible for 31,800 children receiving an education.



A model of a Build Africa © school.

## 4.3 Creating More Jobs

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### 4.3.1 Vocational Training

Since the many individuals from the Ivory Coast depend on the production of their cocoa farms, our organization looks to educate farmers by holding community workshops in order to teach farmers about efficient farming techniques in order to maximize their production. Learning to maximize efficiency and production will offset profit loss that will occur when they switch to legal forms of labor. This vocational training will occur in the classrooms that we have added to schools in rural areas and class will be held during the offseason for the convenience of the cocoa farmers. 50 of the 1,000 teachers will specialize in either agricultural practices or economics. Distribution of these specialized teachers will be at the discretion of the education coordinators.

## 4.5 Conclusion

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Our organization looks to pay the salaries of 1000 teachers and construct 60 classrooms using funds obtained from cocoa companies. This could potentially give 31,800 children a primary education and 1,500 farmers education in production and trading techniques that was previously unavailable