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Comparative Assessment of Monitoring and Remediation Systems on Child Labour as implemented by Fairtrade Small-scale Producer Organizations

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Acronyms

CLAC	Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores y Trabajadores de Comercio Justo
CLMRS	Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System
EU	European Union
FTF	Fairtrade Foundation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ICS	Internal Control System
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
NAPP	Network of Asia and Pacific Producers
NFO	National Fairtrade Organizations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PN	Producer Network
PO	Producer Organization
PSCPA	Progressive Sugar Cane Producers' Association
ROI	Return on Investment
SPO	Small-scale Producer Organization
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
WAN	West Africa Network
YICBMR	Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System on Child Labour

Executive Summary

Background

This study sets out to assess the various approaches taken by Fairtrade certified small producer organizations to address child labour. In the desk review of relevant information provided by Fairtrade, it emerged that two major approaches were used, namely Fairtrade International's signature Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system for child labour and the Internal Control System (ICS). As such, a decision was made to evaluate these two approaches as applied by Fairtrade certified organizations in four countries (two organizations per country): the Dominican Republic (cocoa), Ghana (cocoa), Belize (sugarcane), and India (sugarcane). The data was collected through 395 remote oral interviews, including focus groups conducted remotely through WhatsApp. Participants included producers from both monitoring and response systems, adult community members, children from each of the SPO communities and engaged external stakeholders representing government, traders and NGO partners. Interview participants also included Fairtrade system representatives from producer networks, National Fairtrade Organizations and FLOCERT. The OECD evaluation criteria and a conventional comparison were used to identify participants' opinions on the advantages and challenges of the two monitoring and response systems in finding, fixing and preventing child labour. The study concludes by offering recommendations for continuous improvement in enabling actions to protect children and young people from harmful labour.

Overall Key Findings

A majority of producers, including producer organization staff and community members who participated in this study, indicated that they want to see both the ICS and the YICBMR systems maintained and improved with additional investment. The ICS and YICBMR systems had different reported benefits when it came to certain criteria and functions. These participants selected the ICS when it came to complying with the Fairtrade Standards as a whole, enabling PO ownership of the data generated, and actions to be taken when child labour is identified, including costs, resources and time taken to get things done. However, when it came to looking at complying with the Fairtrade Standards on prohibiting child labour in particular, community-based, bottom-up and inclusive approaches, including relevance, effectiveness, coherence and impact, the YICBMR was regarded as a better option. Essential for selecting the YICBMR system over the ICS was participants' understanding that it was seen by design as an area-based approach to presenting aggregate findings publicly, involving stakeholder engagement and enabling social dialogue with community residents, farmers, workers, shop owners, government officials, supply chain actors and NGOs, including children and young people as rights holders. Furthermore, because the YICBMR system is also designed as a phased approach to removing child labour, this was seen as providing the producer organizations and their partners both with opportunities and the time to forge and develop their relationships with other duty bearers and learn to trust each other in scaling up joint efforts relevant to national actions plans and government and supply chain actor initiatives. While the ICS in principle also has this capability, it was not designed to enable a scaled-up approach for monitoring and response and does not require producer organizations to share aggregate results publicly or hold stakeholder discussions. In this sense, the YICBMR system can be regarded as an iterative process, constantly factoring in inputs from other key actors involved in the eradication of child labour.

Overall, producers and the community members who participated in this study found that the YICBMR system as applied has generated change in child labour practices. While producers are proud of their development and implementation of their ICSs in monitoring for compliance with the Fairtrade Standards, they admit that there needs to be an "added chapter" on remediating child labour and expressed dissatisfaction with this function of the ICS. In comparison, the YICBMR approach was found to be more effective in enabling remedial actions when child labour is identified as it requires a community strategy and inclusive methods that engage and depend on involving others. The challenge for Fairtrade and the producer organizations with the YICBMR system will be to

back the expectations of all stakeholders, such as national governments, industry and consumers with regard to "child labour-free products" and provide the much-needed co-investments and institutionalized responses so that systemic change can be realized.

Better understanding of the YICBMR system and design is needed within Fairtrade among actors who are not directly involved in its implementation. The researchers found that participants from the National Fairtrade Organizations in particular had limited understanding of the YICBMR. This was also true of traders in the supply chains involved. Furthermore, while producers and staff within producer organizations, as well as producer network support staff, who are directly involved in the ICS and YICBMR systems have an in-depth understanding of both, others in these organizations who are not directly involved do not have a full understanding of the YICBMR system. Government officials who participated in this study had a fuller understanding of the YICBMR system. In contrast, children from the farming communities who participated in this study had no understanding of the ICS and most had not heard of it as a system to identify and respond to child labour.

Key Recommendations

While no single organization can guarantee the eradication of child labour, the study shows that there is a significant impact from the application of Fairtrade Standard requirements prohibiting child labour, including child protection policies and projects, in changing long-standing child labour practices. The entire Fairtrade system, in particular the SPOs, displays an active commitment that has been built on evidence-based learnings and that has delivered commendable results. The following recommendations focus on building on the success to date and ensuring continuous improvement. While these recommendations could apply to the whole Fairtrade system, the researchers have categorized and directed recommendations to various actors in the Fairtrade system as a way to organize possible action steps that could be generated from the study findings.

Directed to SPO management, support staff and producers

• *Enable fuller and wider understanding of the YICBMR system*

The design and operations of the YICBMR phased system in its entirety should be better understood by all, particularly the aspects of financial sustainability and joint responsibility. Cost and sustainability were the most consistent concerns raised by producers and producer staff whether they were adherents or detractors of this approach. It would therefore be useful for Fairtrade to provide targeted trainings on the YICBMR system as a whole at the outset, explaining and emphasizing how its phased model can achieve wider coverage and provide more opportunities for joint funding. The researchers, who were oriented by Fairtrade International on the YICBMR approach and model, understood that the final aim of the YICBMR system is to house and finance it within a country's national action plan for the elimination of child labour or its equivalent. Given this ultimate aim of the YICBMR model, it could be better understood and supported by all involved, and partnerships for sustainable financing and local institutionalized support could be thought through from inception by all involved, including producers, so that financing and regulator support do not present challenges to implementing this inclusive and participatory approach. Interestingly enough, producer respondents did not place the same focus on shared funding requirements for the ICS, which they understood to be cheaper, but which they regarded as their responsibility to ensure compliance to the Fairtrade Standards as a whole. Furthermore, since child protection and child labour within the YICBMR system needs to be tackled by and with governments and other stakeholders, such as NGOs and industry, it already has the right design in place to ensure sustainability. In fact, since the producer organizations during the first phase of the YICBMR system need to work with relevant government agencies or departments, including when the worst forms

of child labour have been identified, this could be an opportunity right at the outset to explore how the YICBMR system can fit with and be supported by government. Furthermore, each country has its own obligation to develop a national action plan on the eradication of child labour and periodically report to the ILO on its implementation of relevant conventions. The YICBMR system as developed already calls for implementing producer organizations to present aggregated findings through stakeholder discussions at the conclusion of phase one. This could provide an opportunity to explore how the YICBMR system could be factored into the sourcing companies' need to undertake Human Rights Due Diligence in their supply chains and explore joint funding and agreement.

• *Enhance the Role of the YICBMR Committee and Establish Links to External Bodies*

The YICBMR approach calls on the PO to set up a decision-making committee, made up of two board members, a certification officer, two youth monitors and a protection focal point. These committee members receive in-depth trainings on child rights from expert agencies or relevant government agencies. It also places emphasis on rights-based remediation of child labour. Linking this YICBMR committee to a wider system would enable a continuous stream of building or strengthening capacity through information and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this link could also ensure continuity of activities, training for successive 'generations' of youth monitors and also a safe repository for data collected so that activities and lessons learned can be built on over time. For the ICS, POs should also consider requiring links to government and NGOs that can support trainings, data generation and continuous learning, including rights-based remediation. However, the researchers found that most of the producers using either the ICS or the YICBMR system do not believe the wider government systems of child rights and child protection services are functioning optimally. To tackle this limitation, it would be practical for POs to partner with like-minded NGOs to advocate for relevant national laws and regulations and accountable government systems that enable decent youth employment in the rural sector, while generating or enforcing a child labour list for hazardous and exploitative practices. Finally, the link with other expert partners on child rights and child protection would enable producer organizations to seek support to safely withdraw child labour and prevent it and, in so doing, focus more on remedial actions. Linking the ICS and YICBMR systems to broader child rights and child protection initiatives and projects would enable these systems to not only produce conformity with the relevant Fairtrade Standards, but also enable and enhance government obligations in ratifying international conventions and the human rights obligations of traders. Furthermore, they would enable learning exchanges between producers, civil society organizations, and UN bodies, such as UNICEF, so that projects and programmes could be targeted to best effect and in areas of vulnerability where informal practices of child labour are most present.

Directed at the Fairtrade system (National Fairtrade Organizations, producer networks, Standards and certification)

• *Promote and invest in trade-specific and industry-related trainings and social impact investments targeting decent youth employment*

The Fairtrade Standards enable children and young people to support family farming under strict conditions. Producers, however, expressed concern that, in practice, many were keeping their children away from work on their farms and that, as a result, the next generation of farmers would be lost. To respond to this concern, Fairtrade should promote and invest even more in sector-relevant training for older children and young people, including enabling support for youth-led start-ups and/or micro-businesses as well as in decent child work and youth employment in the agricultural sectors as permitted by the Fairtrade Standards and national and international law. This proposition

would promote the creation of public-private partnerships for technical vocational training that is industry-specific. Furthermore, in today's financing environment, Social Impact Investment *(see Annex 1)* is an alternative well suited to Fairtrade, which already has relevant systems in place. Social Impact Investment is a model which enables social enterprises to secure private investment. This additional investment enables businesses to both improve their social impact and potentially increase their revenue generation. The social impact investor receives a return on their investment and proof of positive social impact. With minor adaptations, Fairtrade could capture and report on impact for investors. Social capital would be particularly well suited to supporting youth training and entrepreneurial initiatives.

• *Invest in remediation and learning*

Child labour remediation is challenging and further investment is needed to develop responses that go beyond the promotion of education and social protection to address the broader financial need of families, which is at the root of hazardous child labour and exploitation. There is an opportunity here to innovate and contribute to best-in-class approaches that can inform the efforts of others in the sector and across sectors. Efforts should be made to avoid putting the financial burden from this action on the vulnerable part of the supply chain, to invest in wider and more in-depth learning about both the ICS and YICBMR as applied and to continually track learnings. Since the YICBMR system is being implemented by producer organizations and has, within its phased modelling, built-in evolving and flexible structures for targeted collaboration and social dialogue with duty bearers and stakeholders, it can be easily adapted to fit into joint initiatives with traders, governments and NGOs. In fact, the study found one such case of a PO and an NGO working together in a government-funded project where the YICBMR method has been adapted and applied to identify and respond to child labour. More such projects should be sought out and implemented.

• *Decolonize the issue of child labour*

Producers spoke to the consultants about the pressure from the global market and mostly "Northern" consumers to deliver a product that is "child labour-free". The farmers believe the international market (e.g., consumers, buyers) and governments (of countries in both hemispheres) have a superficial understanding of what constitutes harmful work practices for children, particularly in agriculture. A few producers noted a distinct double standard in how smallholder farms are perceived "in the North and in the South" when it comes to child labour. While producers understood that Fairtrade Standards allow children and young people to support family farming under rigorous conditions, their comments were directed at the expectations of companies, consumers and campaigners, perhaps illustrating a need to re-train and/or clarify the differences between child labour and child work. As Fairtrade continues to monitor and respond to child labour, the researchers submit that, at the same time, they could work to de-colonize the discussion of safe and appropriate work for children. Consulting with children about their work in farming could indeed go a long way in adding research value to dominant Western-centred narratives on child labour, especially on smallholder family farms. It might also accelerate and redirect focus and resources in identifying and remediating the worst forms of child labour as a "matter of priority".

1. Study Purpose

The Comparative Assessment of Monitoring and Remediation Systems on Child Labour as implemented by Fairtrade Small Producer Organizations (SPOs) assesses the Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system in comparison to the Internal Control Systems (ICS) adopted and used by Fairtrade certified organizations. The study captures the experiences, perspectives and efforts made by SPOs. It does this by considering the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability - the OECD criteria - of the different child labour monitoring and response systems used to comply with the requirements of the Fairtrade Standards on Child Labour and Child Protection. It highlights the distinct voices of the producer, the community, and the children, as well as other engaged stakeholders, including those from within the Fairtrade system, as they reflect on the systems in use.

The assessment looks at the experiences of seven SPOs in four countries involved in the production of cocoa or sugarcane: Dominican Republic (cocoa), Ghana (cocoa), Belize (sugarcane), and India (sugarcane). The assessment proceeds to present a conventional comparison to further highlight some of the advantages and challenges of each system. This is useful because there are not many known comparative assessments of the methods used to address child labour within the same SPO, region or products from the same countries. The focus is thus on how child labour is addressed in Fairtrade certified small-scale producer organizations and not on the child labour findings of each of the systems used to prevent, monitor and remediate child labour. Finally, recommendations are made which could be a useful contribution not only for the Fairtrade producer organizations involved in the study and their staff, the producer networks and Fairtrade as a whole, but all who are interested in and committed to remediating child labour.

2. Background

Globally available data on child labour published by UNICEF's Child Labour Report indicates that there are currently 160 million children in child labour, of which 79 million conduct hazardous work. Sub-Saharan Africa stands out as the region with the highest prevalence and the largest number of children in labour at 23.9 percent. This is the only place in the world that has witnessed an increase in child labour. Africa also stands out as the geographical region with the youngest children engaged in child labour, while Latin America and the Caribbean have the oldest child labour population. In Asia and the Pacific (specifically East and South-East Asia), there are 23.3 million children engaged in some kind of labour, representing 6.2 percent of global numbers. The prevalence of child labour in rural areas worldwide is three times higher than urban settings. The largest share of child labour worldwide – 70 percent – is in the agriculture sector representing 112.1 million children around the globe between 5 – 17 years of age. Seventy-two percent of agricultural child labour happens within the context of smallholder/family farms. Over one-third of children in child labour do not attend school.[1]

Having presented the information above, the researchers acknowledge that there is a consensus when it comes to the discussion about child labour, as well as child protection, that accurate data does not exist for many, if not most countries, especially developing countries. Many factors contribute to the lack of accurate data, including low investment by governments in monitoring and remediating child labour, and the enforcement of relevant national laws or regulations. Added to this, interested parties are warning that the child labour situation is likely to have been made worse by COVID-19.

Fairtrade International is committed to supporting producer organizations and their communities by promoting child protection and human rights throughout the supply chain.[2] The producer organizations working with the Fairtrade system commit to upholding standards that prohibit child labour, which reference relevant ILO Conventions on Minimum Age (ILO 138) and Prohibition of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO 182). However, the Fairtrade Standards do allow children and young people to support family farming under strict conditions. Internationally,

1 Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward - UNICEF, International Labour Organization joint publication, 2021

2 Fairtrade International Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence commitments https://www.fairtrade.net/issue/mitigating-violations

and in the countries covered in this study, child labour is publicly recognized as a risk in (among others) the production of cocoa and sugarcane. For this reason, Fairtrade producers need to monitor and respond to the issue on a continuous basis. To this end, systems have been developed to address child labour. Fairtrade International commissioned this research with funding from the European Union to assess the ways in which POs monitor and respond to child labour.

Finally, there is often a profound disconnect between the global institutions calling for child labour eradication and the values of people in both developed and developing countries, particularly farmers, who see a benefit (beyond monetary) to the work children do. There is a distinction that is made by international bodies between work that is appropriate for children and can be beneficial, and harmful work that is hazardous or that limits access to quality education and opportunity. As noted above, the Fairtrade Standards do permit children to participate in family farming under strict conditions, while at the same time calling for the elimination of exploitative and hazardous forms of child labour.

3. Defining Terms and Describing the Systems

The Fairtrade Standards are a set of core and developmental requirements that incorporate governance, economic, social and environmental indicators and guidance meant to "support the sustainable development of small producer organizations and agricultural workers in developing countries."[3] In addition to the Fairtrade Standards, Fairtrade is developing both a Human Rights Commitment and a Human Rights and Due Diligence Framework[4] which aligns with the United Nations Guiding Principles and that bolsters policies, such as the Protection Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults (2017), which requires actions to protect impacted persons when child labour, forced adult labour and gender-based and others forms of violence and abuse are suspected or detected.

Fairtrade International has recommended and supported the implementation of an Internal Control System (ICS)[5] within producer organizations that wish to ensure certification based on the Fairtrade Standards. An Internal Control System measures an organization's improvement in performance over time with specific, individual control points. It must cover all areas of production and monitors for compliance on the SPO's member farms. For example, an ICS could include keeping a register of all farmers and workers, including information on their ages, genders, migratory status and so on. For environmental criteria, for instance, information could be collected on pesticides used. Data collected through the ICS and the results produced are discussed by the ICS team at the SPO. It decides on measures to take to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with various criteria in the Fairtrade Standards. This system is producer-centric with SPO staff and members following the Fairtrade Standards and guidelines to assure conformance. It should be noted, however, that the study does not examine the entirety of the ICS systems, e.g., the environmental standards, as well as other criteria. It only focused on the ICS as used by the SPOs involved in this study to monitor and respond to child labour on members' farms.

In 2012, Fairtrade International developed its signature Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system and began piloting it in several locations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. To date, 18 countries have piloted the YICBMR system in the cocoa, sugarcane, gold, coffee, flowers and vanilla sectors and are at various stages of completion. Since 2016, the YICBMR system has been adapted and amended to not only monitor and respond to child labour but also to forced adult labour and gender-based and other workplace violence and abuse. The Fairtrade Standards for SPOs make reference to the YICBMR system under Child Labour and Child Protection. This assessment will focus exclusively on the YICBMR

3 Fairtrade Standards https://www.fairtrade.net/standard

4 Fairtrade HRDD Framework https://files.fairtrade.net/Fairtrade-Human-Rights-Due-Diligence-Vision-September2020.pdf

5 Internal Control Systems are sometimes also called Internal Management Systems. In this report, the term Internal Control System is used.

system for child labour as implemented by the SPOs involved in this study.

It is important at the outset to briefly describe the YICBMR system. It is an area-based, phased approach, comprising three phases to eventually cover all production areas. The first phase involves the producer organization implementing the approach with Fairtrade support in two communities where the Fairtrade SPO members' farms and households are present. The selected communities are marked by the SPO as high or low risk for child labour based on indicators generated by them. From there, the second phase is scaled up to other communities and calls for joint partnerships with traders and/or NGOs. The third and final phase of the YICBMR system is to house it within a country's National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour or have it funded by government with aggregate findings being provided to the government in question so that it can factor those results into its reports to the ILO under the obligations of ILO 138 (Minimum Age of Employment Convention) and ILO 182 (Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour). The YICBMR system, at each phase, operates by applying three tools: namely the community mapping of risks to children's well-being, community risk prioritization of the most salient risks and recommendations on how to mitigate them, and the household surveys.

The requirement of the YICBMR system is to work through a child labour or child protection committee at the SPO made up of two board members, two youth monitors (aged 18 - 24), a certification manager or officer, and a protection focal point. The committee makes all decisions collectively with regard to operating the system for finding, fixing and preventing child labour. All members are required to receive trainings on child rights and child protection, including informing local government of the work being done. The youth monitors are central as they support data collection, analysis, and decisions on identification and remediation, working alongside the SPO protection focal point and certification manager or officer. Fairtrade International, through its Senior Advisor Social Compliance and Development, trains Fairtrade producer network (PN) staff to support SPOs in developing and implementing this system. It also supports the SPOs involved directly if requested and agreed to by the PNs. To begin implementing the YICBMR system, the SPO must develop a No Child Labour Policy and a Child Protection Policy or Procedure which must be signed off by the SPO board.

With the YICBMR system, all cases of the worst forms of child labour trigger the SPO's Protection Policy and must be reported to the relevant national government department or recognized rights-based NGO for follow-up and remediation. POs can also obtain additional training support from UN bodies operating in the country. Aggregate data findings must be presented at the end of each phase to stakeholders, including traders, governments, educational institutions, NGOs and other interested parties. This is done to share results and to engage stakeholders in joint funding on prevention projects and/or scaling up the monitoring and response system to the next phase. Farmers and community members involved in the YICBMR system, including children and young people, are present for these stakeholder discussions.

Although other approaches were used in trainings[6] on child labour and there are alternative monitoring and remediation systems being used by producer organizations, which were developed and implemented by other organizations, such as NGOs and/or companies, the discussions with Fairtrade stakeholders limited this assessment to the Fairtrade ICS and YICBMR systems exclusively. SPOs implementing the ICS alone, or both the ICS and YICBMR systems participated in this study. This assessment offers no comment on partner-based approaches undertaken with producers in the countries under study. However, as will be discussed below, there is an exception to this rule when assessing the systems in use in the Dominican Republic. There, agreement was sought and given to assess a PO's implementation of an ICS, YICBMR and child rights partner-based system.

6 Some POs that implement the ICS also implement other actions to address child labour (such as awareness-raising internally or with the community). Those actions are not part of the ICS but complementary to it and are outside the scope of this study.

4. Methodology and Sample

4.1 Methodology

In each country two SPOs participated: one that was implementing an Internal Control System (ICS) exclusively and another that was implementing both an ICS and a Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system on child labour. An exception was made for the Dominican Republic where the researchers only interviewed one producer organization that was implementing a YICBMR and an ICS system and was working with an international rights-based organization implementing an EU-funded approach to addressing child labour. The SPOs selected were at various phases of implementing the YICBMR system. One was implementing all phases while the others had just completed phase one of the YICBMR system and were starting to implement phase two. Since the ICS is not a phased approach but rather a system used to cover all members and their production sites, the researchers were not able to determine if the ICS systems in use were, in fact, operating as such. These variances are important to keep in mind when interpreting the data findings.

Data was collected through remote interviews (Zoom and WhatsApp) with staff from the Fairtrade system, producer networks and producer organizations, and included communities, schools, governments, NGOs and supply chains actors. Participants included a diverse array of people ranging from board members, directors, senior advisors or managers, technical or field staff, product or sourcing company managers or leads, committee members, government labour and education officers, teachers, farmers, farm workers, children, young people and women. Tools used to generate input from respondents included key informant interview questionnaires tailored according to roles within the Fairtrade system, a producer survey, a community survey, child interviews and eleven focus groups conducted remotely through WhatsApp. The languages used were English and Spanish (in Belize), Spanish (in the Dominican Republic), Kanada and English (in India) and Twi and English (in Ghana).

The team of six researchers, including two local researchers and translators in India and Ghana, were required to be trained in, sign and abide by the Fairtrade International Protection Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults (2017). Reports of data collected that triggered this policy were reported, reviewed and followed up by Fairtrade International staff overseeing the implementation of the policy. Particular care was taken when interviews were carried out with children to ensure all protection mechanisms were in place, such as the presence of a trained supporting adult from the SPO as well as parents or close relatives. These persons did not impact on answers given as they were present at a distance and not within hearing range. Informed consent forms were required and signed by all respondents. When children were involved, their parents provided signatures after the researchers explained the data collection to the children, using child rights and child-friendly ways of communicating, which the researchers are familiar with having been previously employed in child rights INGOs. Fairtrade International wanted and needed researchers to do no harm to children and their families in the data collection process.

4.2 Sample and Selection Process

The research team benefitted from the assistance of the focal point team for this study at Fairtrade International. It helped select the interviewees from National Fairtrade Organizations, producer networks, FLOCERT and Fairtrade International itself, as detailed in Table 1. The producer network focal point for each region for this study assisted with the selection of interviewees from the SPOs for both systems and selected representatives from boards, accounting staff, technical support and producers – respecting gender parity in the case of the latter. They also assisted with the selection of relevant externals for each country from government, traders and NGOs, as detailed in Tables 2 and 4. The selection of child interviewees was discussed in the focus group with producers using both systems in each of the countries. A support facilitator was chosen and they assisted in the selection of the children aged 10 - 15 years, once again respecting gender parity *(Table 4)*. Since the process was carried out remotely, sample selection in each community was achieved by sending requests to each producer organization interviewed. The SPO provided the name and WhatsApp number for a community respondent in their area, as detailed in Table 3.

Table 1

Interviews with the Fairtrade system – Total interviews: 57	
FLOCERT	5
Fairtrade International	16*
PNs	28**
NFOs	8

** 16 interviews conducted with 8 Fairtrade International respondents (Induction report (8) and per OECD Criteria (8))*

*** 28 interviews with 18 PN respondents (Induction report (10) and per OECD Criteria (18))*

Table 2

Interviews and Focus Groups with Producer Organizations – Total participants: 184*					
Country	#POs	ICS	YICBMR	Youth monitors	Participation (interviews + focus groups) **
India (sugarcane)	1 PO using ICS	19			19
	1 PO using YICBMR		19	2	21
Ghana (cocoa)	1 PO using ICS	21			21+5
	1 PO using YICBMR		21	2	23+2
Belize (sugarcane)	1 P0 using ICS	17			17+6
	1 PO using YICBMR		19	2	21+5
DR (cocoa) ***	Producers using ICS	11			11+3
	Producers using YICBMR		11	2	13+2
	Producers using INGO	11			11+4

** 11% of the community respondents were young people and 41% were women.*

*** Interviewees participated in the focus groups along with a few non-interviewees.*

**** In the Dominican Republic, there was one PO with 3 sub-groups, with one capturing the INGO approach experience.*

Table 3

Interviews in the Communities – Total participants: 122			
Country	#POs	ICS	YICBMR
India (sugarcane)	2	15	
			15
Ghana (cocoa)	2	17	
			16
Belize (sugarcane)	2	14	
			15
DR (cocoa)	3 subgroups of 1 PO	10	
			10
	*INGO	10	

** 24% of the community respondents were young people and 39.5% were women*

Table 4

Interviews Relevant Externals – Total participants: 38	
Governments	8*
Supply chain actors/traders	8*
NGOs	8*
Children	14**

** 2 per country*

*** 5 in Belize and Ghana and 4 in the Dominican Republic*

5. Study Limitations and the Impact of COVID-19

5.1 Study Limitations

Like all studies of this nature, this study has certain limitations. The researchers have identified limitations that are related to methodology, researcher-specific limitations, and those related to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the research population and the execution of the study itself. With respect to limitations in the methodology, we would like to acknowledge that the sample size was small for the purpose of statistical inference, particularly with respect to the four countries being studied. Special care was taken to select balanced and comparable representatives for each system in each of the countries, both with regard to producers and communities, as well as external stakeholders. All respondents who were not reached or were not available for interview were replaced by others who were demographically similar. This was a very time-consuming effort and the planned gender balance was lost during the data collection phase *(see Section 4.2 on sample selection for details)*.

Another limitation encountered during the data collection was the researchers' inability to secure and/or the lack of available data on return of investment (ROI). This information is particularly important in the analysis of system efficiency and future efforts should be made to do a complete costing analysis of the two systems, both a present-day glance as well as costs incurred in each system in one year, and in a longitudinal manner that includes contributions from other relevant stakeholders (government, industry and NGOs). An additional limitation was the lack of prior research on the topic in a comparable study that included various products, systems and countries. Another limitation in the study is that the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted remotely and all data collection represents self-reported data. Potential sources of bias, like selective memory, were acknowledged by the respondents. Ultimately, the researchers mention potential attribution of impact based on perceptions from producers and surrounding communities. These perceptions were, however, corroborated by external subjects like government officials, teachers, social workers and NGOs staff, but these attributions of impact are restrained because of limited quantitative data.

In the case of researcher-specific limitations, the data collection in both India and Ghana was impacted by language and cultural limitations that were controlled through the contracting of local researchers and translators who were fluent in Twi (Ghana) and Kanada (India). This made the communication indirect for the main researchers who were unable to verify the nuanced responses. The researchers would like to mention the lack of access to SPOs' internal documentation of child labour cases due to the confidential nature of the documentation process and, specifically, data protection rules. The latter require that personal information of impacted persons must be kept confidential unless there is signed agreement by the child and/or their parent/guardian and the producer organization to share such information with third parties, such as researchers. In this context, the researchers understood that when

cases of the worst forms of child labour cases are identified, the producer organizations confidentially and safely pass this information to the national protection agencies for assessment and safe withdrawal. The researchers did not approach the various national protection agencies to request information on cases reported by the producer organizations involved in the study. Throughout the entire Fairtrade system, and the applicable Fairtrade Standard requirements, prohibition of child labour is embedded within the UN Child Rights Convention protective framework. It calls for producer organizations to uphold the "do no harm" principle and to ensure prolonged safety for children withdrawn from child labour.

Within this context, it was therefore not possible for the researchers to access internal documents on child labour to compare the progression of cases of child labour identified and responded to in past years. This means that the data collection process relied on self-reported data from respondents. The study compares systems that are meant to change not only practices but also attitudes and knowledge. The timeframe of the study is a limitation as well as it represents a limited glance at the change of practice and could not effectively assess this change over time. For example, as it relates to change of practice, several countries had only implemented the first phase of the YICBMR system. The researchers would recommend a second study to compare some of the present findings and the evolution of the systems.

5.2 COVID-19 Impact

The assessment, the data collection timeline in particular, and access/direct contact with participants, were strongly affected by the pandemic. The decision to complete the assessment using only remote and virtual methods was postponed several times, only moving forward when it became clear that the pandemic would unfold unevenly across the globe, making travel and logistical preparations unadvisable. The rotating lockdowns in most countries also limited the opportunities for in-person data collection even with local researchers. The assessment design and interviews were adapted for a Zoom or WhatsApp format depending on the technological limitations of the respondents. Most significantly affected were the focus group activities, which became WhatsApp (non-synchronous) chat forums where introductory video along with drawings, voice and text prompts were posted by the researchers and facilitators. Focus group members were encouraged to respond to these posts as well as to respond to each other.

It was not simply the design of the assessment that was impacted by COVID. The people who participated in it were also affected, some individuals and communities more profoundly than others. The researchers asked most of the respondents to share how they believed COVID had impacted efforts at child labour prevention, monitoring and remediation. Most respondents focused on how COVID was affecting them and their communities. They referred to lockdowns and to reduced access to education and struggles with remote learning for both children and parents. Belize and India also discussed the hardships faced by the producers, the deaths of some PO members due to COVID, the lower price for crops, and the lack of farm labour. In India, the situation was particularly difficult. Migrant labourers were restricted from travelling, which severely affected sugar production, and the country was hit by a devastating second wave caused by the Delta variant. This was particularly true for one of the Indian SPOs that experienced great loss among its members and the community at large. The producers reported that they were receiving social protection support both from government and through the Fairtrade system.

Every child across all countries has been profoundly impacted by COVID. They spoke of crying due to lockdowns and missing their friends and school. Most children have been out of school for months and in some cases more than a year. Perhaps this description of a year of COVID from a child's perspective is a good synopsis: "I did not learn anything, I could not play, I could not go out and (for) a full year I could not go to school." A Dominican child spoke of their frustration with the challenges of remote learning and said that some teachers: "sometimes…don't like to be written to privately to ask them questions and then it's harder." Some children also mentioned the financial stress experienced by their parents and the impact of that on their family: "It continues to hurt us because my family does not go out much to work and the cutting of cane that my father does is not much, is little with little salary that he earns. It affected us economically."

6. Key Findings using OECD criteria to interpret data

6.1 Defining the use of OECD criteria

The study used a comparative approach to responses when it came to identifying the advantages and challenges of the ICS and YICBMR systems as reported by the respondents. However, to report on findings, the data is presented according to OECD evaluation criteria.[7] The researchers have chosen to use the OECD evaluation criteria as they have become a common reference point for evaluators who are assessing implementation approaches or systems. This tool, in principle, recognizes that each intervention is different and that criteria need to be flexible and adaptable. However, it provides reliable prompts for asking the right questions during the research process and because it has been widely adopted, comparative analysis can be generated in relation to other studies. The diagram below illustrates the questions posed using each of the six OECD criteria.

Applying these OECD criteria to this Fairtrade research context, the study asked the following questions and used them to develop interview questions, focus group discussions and other conversations to generate information:

a. Relevance: are the systems used by Fairtrade to address child labour prevention, monitoring and remediation doing the right things?

b. Coherence: are the systems working well with government, industry and NGO systems doing similar work?

c. Effectiveness: are the systems achieving their objectives to prevent and remediate child labour?

d. Efficiency: how well do the systems use the resources allocated for this work?

e. Impact: what difference do the systems make to the producer organizations and the communities where they operate?

f. Sustainability: will the changes in child labour practices and the improvement of systems and mechanisms to remediate the cases last and how and with whom will the POs maintain and improve these systems over time?

Diagram 1[8]

7 OECD library website https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/c249f611-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/c249f611-en

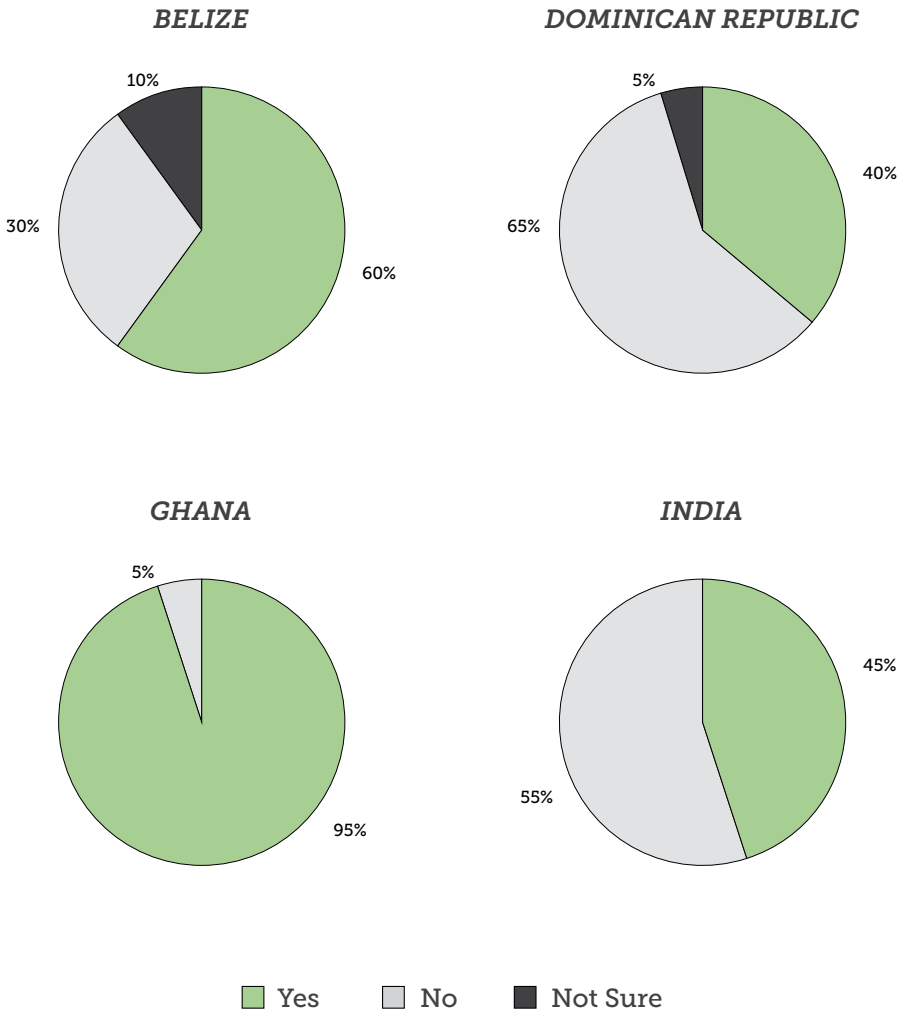
8 https://www.oecd.org/dac/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully-543e84ed-en.htm

6.2 Relevance

Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiary, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

From this study, it is clear that the producer organizations, their staff and members, as well as the community members and children who were involved, believe child labour is an on-going problem in the areas in which SPOs operate *(see Diagram 2)*. In Ghana, 95 percent, followed by Belize (60 percent), India (45 percent) and, finally, the Dominican Republic with the lowest proportion of respondents at 40 percent, said there is child labour in the areas where their SPOs operate. In the Dominican Republic, the interviewees overwhelmingly qualified their responses by saying that child labour today was seen as more of a risk than a visible reality. Furthermore, within the last five to ten years, global risk assessments and continued incidences of child labour in the countries studied have reinforced the relevance of Fairtrade's efforts to respond to child labour (whether through the ICS or the YICBMR system).

Diagram 2 - Producers' perceptions of the prevalence of child labour where SPOs operate



Producer organization representatives who took part in this study reported seeing the Internal Control System as the foundation for implementing the relevant Fairtrade Standards. According to them, the ICS focuses exclusively on farm operations, including informal and hired labour. Furthermore, they noted that many of the producers who are implementing the ICS, are trained and given tools and guidelines to find and withdraw child labour from their farms. The cooperatives/unions own the system and, through it, they hold themselves and each other accountable. There is little stakeholder engagement and no external body or person overseeing the operations. A certification

manager or an ICS team work together and report to the PO management.

In contrast, Fairtrade International developed the YICBMR system to operate through engagement, dialogue and the involvement of producer organization members and non-members, including communities, and a diverse YICBMR committee, made up of two board members, youth monitors, a certification manager or officer and a protection focal point. Decisions to withdraw child labourers are made by the committee and reports of the worst forms of child labour, including child abuse, are confidentially made to the government's national protection agency for further assessment and follow-up. Accordingly, in the YICBMR system, the problem of child labour is not considered effectively addressed if the remediation measure simply moves the child involved to another workplace. This consideration puts a protective lens on the remediation and ensures that the child who has been removed does not end up in an even worse form of child labour. Farmers who participate in the YICBMR system receive training from external experts together with stakeholder partners. Through the YICBMR, the SPO shares ownership of the problem with duty bearers and other stakeholder partners, including community members. Through the youth leadership, with support from the SPO certification officer and protection focal point, the SPO identifies child labour risks and, through the YICBMR committee, decides on remediation actions, including reporting any protection issues found to the relevant government agency.

Every respondent involved in the study from within the Fairtrade system at local, regional, or international level believed that a core part of Fairtrade's mission is to address child labour and, as such, it was integral to the brand promise that consumers rely on. Fairtrade Standards differentiate between illegal child labour and permissible child work and this was reflected in the responses from children and young people. All the children interviewed (aged 10 - 15 years) in the Dominican Republic and Belize spoke about the work that children do as light tasks (e.g., helping with cooking, cleaning) at home or on the farm (e.g., washing frets, raking). A 15-year-old girl said: "We live on the farm and sometimes our needs are met from day to day…adolescents can take on work activities and the law allows it if you are 16." Another said: "We learn on the farm how to plant our vegetables according to the moon, how to clean weeds around the cocoa plant and how to pick out the cocoa heart from the pod." When asked if they could describe hazardous or dangerous labour for children, most of the respondents from all countries could do so easily and correctly. In Ghana, the children identified the use of machinery, chemicals or cutting tools, and carrying heavy loads as dangerous work along with the risk of falling cocoa pods. They were also clear that they felt protected from these practices by their parents and other producers.

Conclusion on Relevance

Both the ICS and YICBMR systems have relevance. The YICBMR system is relevant not just to SPO farm member operations, but to a wider area and location, recognizing the importance of surrounding communities and the risk of transferring the child labour problem elsewhere. However, when it comes specifically to the risk of child labour on members' farms alone, the ICS is seen as relevant, even though it is understood that it is not as comprehensive or as effective at prevention or remediation. Furthermore, the YICBMR system, with its various tools of community risk mapping of unsafe places for children, risk prioritization and recommendations to mitigate them, is regarded as particularly relevant in addressing not just the child labour problem, but also other risks to children's security and well-being. This insight and awareness is crucially relevant when considering children as rights holders and directing attention to vulnerabilities faced on many fronts, not just on their involvement in labour. The ICS, on the other hand, puts the focus on the producer and their use of children in unacceptable labour.

Since the Fairtrade Standards on child labour and child protection refer to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and call for a protective framework to be used when dealing with remediation, the focus on children's rights is expected from both the ICS and the YICBMR system as stated in Fairtrade's Child Protection policies. From the responses provided, it was clear that the YICBMR system is designed with children's rights as its central focus, including requiring SPOs to report to the relevant government protection agency for follow-up thus triggering the government's duty of care to children's rights, especially their right to be protected.

Conclusion: Given that child labour is a risk in the communities and, considering the greater probability of it occurring in the wider community outside the PO, the YICBMR system is seen by the researchers as more relevant because the change in practice of not tolerating exploitative or hazardous child labour will be stronger if circumstances change.

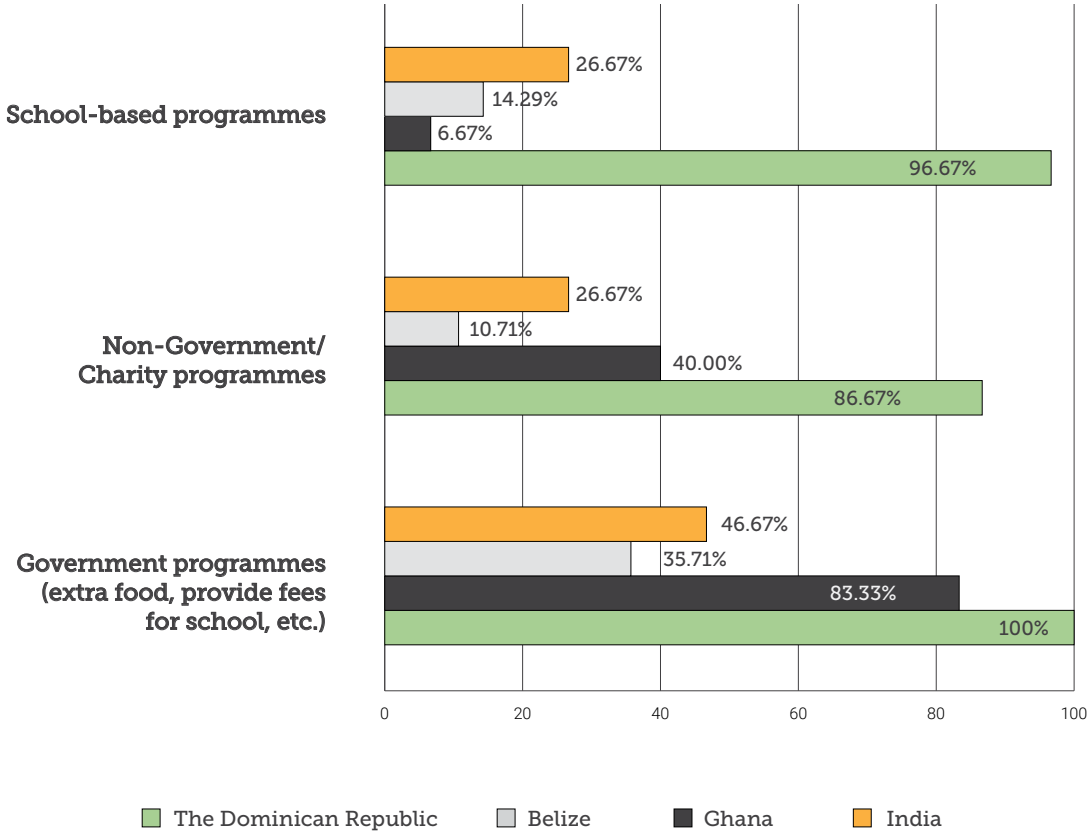
6.3 Coherence

Coherence: The compatibility of the intervention with other comparable ones in a country, sector, or institution.

Coherence requires alignment with government and other stakeholder efforts to eliminate child labour. The study explored similarities and differences when it comes to alignment. All the countries studied have enacted legal and regulatory frameworks to address child labour and child protection and to promote primary education. The consensus among the participants of the study, however, was that the government in each of these countries was falling short, either due to weak political will to strengthen and enforce those regulations, or because of insufficient investment in remediation and prevention programmes that get to the root causes of the problem.

When asked whether they knew about government or school-based initiatives to prevent child labour that could support their children in the community, most producers did know of such programmes *(see Diagram 3)*. Globally, 90 percent of SPO respondents out of a total of 184 pointed to free education provided by the government as a key means of preventing child labour. Producers in India were the most aware of the specifics of government programmes (100 percent) followed by Ghana with 83 percent, the Dominican Republic with 47 percent (several producers mentioned that government supported school-based programmes could be added to this, which would bring the total for government programmes in the Dominican Republic to 74 percent) and, lastly, Belize with 36 percent. Many producers were familiar with the names of government agencies and the services they provided, including child protection, early childcare and development, social protection and free schooling. Producers saw the government as a significant player in the effort to ensure that children go to school and do not become involved in child labour. The study did not directly ask about the PO's awareness of national action plans to eliminate child labour or of company initiatives to mitigate child labour risks. However, in each of the focus groups, some respondents showed they were particularly aware, spoke of the relevant law with respect to child labour and recognized the existence and complementarity of the country action plans in their efforts.

Diagram 3 - SPO perceptions by country on external stakeholders who deliver child labour programmes



The ICS is 'internally' coherent in that it focuses on the risks within farms. It is a system for and implemented by the producer organizations and their members and this information is particularly relevant to traders' and buyers' sourcing policies and codes of business conduct. Given this, the SPO can work with external and involved buyers and traders to undertake jointly funded monitoring and responses to child labour. However, information sharing and joint funding for monitoring and responses was not reported. When supply chain actors request this information through agreed processes, the SPO provides this data through a committee or management or equivalent. The SPO does not publicly disclose this information through a stakeholder session, nor does it share results with government or other stakeholders. Producers who favoured the YICBMR approach – particularly in Ghana and India – noted that the ICS was not linked closely enough to the government and non-government stakeholders.

The YICBMR, by design, requires the SPO to hold public stakeholder discussions on its findings at the end of each phase. As such, proponents of this approach saw coherence with government as a key feature. They pointed to the relationships enabled by the YICBMR system in all phases, particularly the close working relationships with local schools and local government, including protection agencies. Furthermore, stakeholder discussions also included traders and buyers and all SPOs interviewed, except in the case of India, had hosted these discussions. In the case of India, the YICBMR system involved the trader and local government in the YICBMR committee so there was ongoing contact with these key stakeholders throughout. In Latin America and the Caribbean, producer organizations and staff involved with this study said the system worked closely with government. It should be noted that, in the case of Belize, the SPO has reached Phase 3 of the YICBMR system and so has had a deeper advocacy engagement with national and international levels of government and supply chain actors than the other countries studied.

Conclusion on Coherence

In summation, while the ICS enables dialogue with supply chain actors and governments from time to time, it is a system that does not, by design, link into government or supply chain actor efforts. Engagement is on a private level, on an as-needed basis and/or if the producer organization is asked or invited to make a presentation in a forum or similar event. The YICBMR system, on the other hand, is built on having public engagement and dialogue on the findings after each phase, which need to be publically presented to a wide and diverse stakeholder group (government, supply chain actors, NGOs, unions, community members, including women, children and young people, etc.). Furthermore, the YICBMR system also engages more than farm members at farm level and explores children's wider vulnerabilities, including, but not limited to, child labour. The YICBMR system also links into the national and district levels of government protection agencies as all cases of the worst forms of child labour need to be confidentially and formally reported with the producer organization seeking remediation help from these agencies. Training on child rights and child protection in the YICBMR system is provided by internal and external experts, including governments or NGOs. The protection focal point in the YICBMR approach is usually selected from an external expert agency.

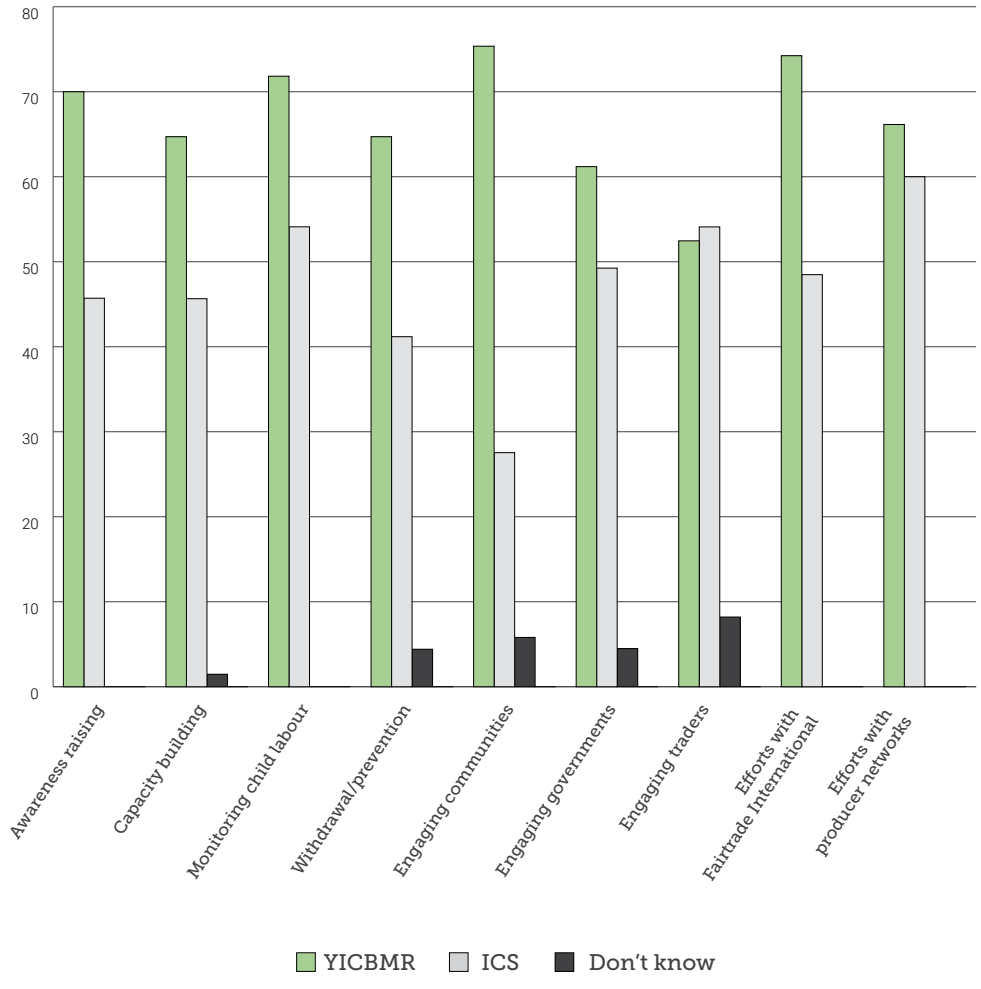
Conclusion: The researchers suggest that, with regard to external coherence, the YICBMR system is stronger than the ICS system as, by design, it engages with partner stakeholders who have the mandate to protect against child labour, whereas the ICS is mainly internally oriented.

6.4 Effectiveness

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups.

From Diagram 4 below, it is clear that the YICBMR outweighed the ICS in terms of perceived effectiveness of all activities, except with regard to the engagement in joint initiatives or projects with traders in supply chains where the ICS was regarded as slightly more effective. The YICBMR system is considered to be more effective in raising awareness of child labour laws and standards (70 percent for the YICBMR compared to 46 percent for the ICS). Similarly, in capacity building on child rights and protection, the YICBMR system outweighed the effectiveness of the ICS by 65 percent to 43 percent. In the case of identification and monitoring of child labour, the YICBMR system also was perceived to be more effective than the ICS by 72 percent to 52 percent. With regard to the follow-up of child labour cases (withdrawal/prevention and remediation), again the YICBMR was perceived to be more effective by 65 percent of respondents compared to 41 percent who believed the ICS was. The researchers acknowledge that when respondents were asked about awareness raising and capacity building (trainings) and prevention and withdrawal activities, most answered that the YICBMR system fared better. However, it should be noted that the ICS does not carry out the whole range of activities addressing child labour, including, for example, training and capacity building.

Diagram 4 - Stakeholder perceptions on effectiveness of the activities per system



Engaging with partners is key to achieving the goal of eliminating child labour. The respondents were asked to consider the two systems and the effectiveness of their engagement with both external and internal stakeholders. Effectiveness in engaging with communities was seen as a YICBMR strength (75 percent) and as a clear weakness of the ICS (28 percent). Only in the Dominican Republic did the ICS fare better than the YICBMR system for engaging governments. Overall, the YICBMR system was seen as more effective by 61 percent to 49 percent. And only with regard to the engagement of traders in the supply chain did the ICS slightly outperform the YICBMR system in the overall perception of respondents by 54 percent to 52 percent.

When comparing producer perceptions within each country, we found that the ICS was regarded as significantly more effective than the YICBMR system in the Dominican Republic and equally effective in Ghana. In Belize and India, the YICBMR system was seen by slightly more respondents to be the more effective system when it came to engaging with governments. Finally, the systems were considered with respect to the engagement of stakeholders within the Fairtrade system. Here again, the YICBMR system was seen as more effective than the ICS at engaging both regional and international levels of the Fairtrade system, except in the Dominican Republic.

The community activities that were uniquely part of the YICBMR systems were the community-based risk mapping, the diamond prioritizing methodology and community household surveys. The risk mapping process involves identifying areas of risk to children (either labour or protection related) as seen separately through the eyes of children, young people and adults. Once the list was validated collaboratively by children, young people and adults in a diamond ranking, they were asked to prioritize an action plan together to mitigate against the top three risks identified and agreed upon. It is in this activity where we see the greatest difference between the two systems with the YICBMR system eliciting a broader definition of risks that children face to their well-being, not just child labour. The YICBMR system is a whole-of-community or whole-of-area-based approach and involving stakeholders is central. The ICS, on the other hand, only focuses on child labour in members' farms with support provided by producer organization staff.

Beyond the assessments of these key activities, respondents also reflected on the effectiveness of the two systems more broadly. The YICBMR system was described (in all countries) as particularly effective when engaging with children in terms of awareness raising, but also with regard to the identification of child labour and protection issues. Local government officials, and particularly teachers, attributed this effectiveness to the youth monitors 'near-peer' status in relation to other children. On the other hand, the age and lack of experience of the youth monitors sometimes hindered their effectiveness when dealing with adults, who neither viewed them as experts nor legitimate authorities, particularly when it came to the remediation of child labour or protection cases.

The ICS was seen as better at consistent data collection. Many respondents, however, noted that the ICS deals with a broader array of compliance issues than child labour alone and is not designed to address the complexity and interconnectedness of social compliance issues. "It [ICS] is just lists" was a comment made by several respondents as they pointed out that remediation was weaker in the ICS approach.

Many community members, and even some of the producers interviewed, could not distinguish between the two systems: rather their focus was on SPO activities and whether they were beneficial to their children and the broader community. It was also noted, in the Dominican Republic in particular, that both systems along with a third NGO system positively influenced and reinforced each other. Some of the qualitative observations from the community respondents in the Dominican Republic included community members who had experienced the YICBMR system and were enthusiastic about the model. They were disappointed that the pilot had ended before it could be transferred to a local grassroots organization. In Ghana, when discussing the YICBMR system, one community member said: "I am very sure child labour has been eradicated in our area due to the programme."

While most of the children in the countries studied recognized that there were child labour prevention efforts, activities, and programmes, they did not share any detailed descriptions of activities when asked. However, the children interviewed demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the issue and the distinctions between child labour/hazardous labour and light/appropriate child work, which demonstrates the effectiveness of training and awareness raising activities. Some of the children specifically mentioned workshops that they and their parents attended. They also mentioned that workshops and meetings had stopped due to COVID-19.

Conclusion on Effectiveness

In terms of effectiveness, both the ICS and YICBMR systems were reported as being effective for their intended purpose. However, the data reveals that YICBMR is regarded as more effective in awareness raising and capacity building, prevention, monitoring, and remediation when compared to the ICS approach. Engaging with communities is a YICBMR strength and a clear weakness of the ICS system in all countries in the study. Researchers found that the YICBMR system was seen by most producer organizations as more effective than the ICS in engaging support at both regional and international levels of the Fairtrade system. The ICS is perceived by the producer organizations as slightly more effective when it comes to engaging with traders. Furthermore, the YICBMR system is particularly effective when engaging with children and young people both in terms of awareness raising and the identification of and response to child labour. It should be noted that a few respondents from POs using the ICS reported carrying out capacity building, prevention and community engagement activities that had been inspired by the YICBMR activities of other POs or by support staff. However, they did not consider them as part of the ICS when responding to this questionnaire.

Conclusion: While both the ICS and YICBMR systems are effective, the YICBMR system is more effective on awareness raising, engaging with communities, engaging support from Fairtrade and engaging children and young people.

6.5 Efficiency

Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way.

The efficiency of the monitoring and response systems for child labour is important to producer organizations and producers in the Fairtrade system. Having a socially compliant product could increase the product price, increase the volumes purchased on Fairtrade terms or help maintain current volumes purchased. The reality of a competitive global market, however, means that, even with a higher price, there is a limited financial dividend due to the cost of ensuring compliance. The study found that producer organization assessments of the efficiency of the two systems were tempered when compared to their assessment of effectiveness. The positive assessments were much stronger with regard to the effectiveness of the YICBMR system across most activities in all countries, but when considering efficiency, the ICS fares slightly better. As illustrated in Diagram 5, it is only with regard to engaging communities that the YICBMR significantly outperforms the ICS. Also, as might be expected, the “good” return on investment (ROI) is slightly higher for the YICBMR with regard to engaging Fairtrade International and the producer networks. Overall, the ICS fairs slightly better in delivering awareness raising, prevention, identifying and withdrawing child labour cases from producers’ farms, monitoring, and even in capacity building activities in terms of costs and returns on investments. According to the producer organizations, even though they think the YICBMR system is more effective on a number of criteria, they believe the ICS is effective enough given the comparative costs of both systems. As noted earlier, the researchers did not have access to information on the actual costs involved in implementing the ICS or YICBMR systems through any cycle or year of operation and relied on opinions provided by the respondents.

In all countries, most producers had confidence in the child labour monitoring and remediating systems and practices being implemented and they believed that both systems guaranteed compliance. In the Dominican Republic, producers spoke of weekly monitoring and understood the consequences of non-compliance. In Belize, some producers linked strict compliance to better prices for their crop (sugar). The Indian and Ghanaian producers spoke more about why eliminating child labour was good for children in terms of improved learning and minimizing the risks of harmful practices, both in the short and long-term. One noteworthy finding was the unintended consequence that the YICBMR system has had on the ICS. For example, some producer organizations reported that it had resulted in changes and improvements to the standard operating procedures used by the SPO for monitoring child labour using the ICS.

Another common activity across POs and countries was the investment of the Fairtrade Premium in community projects. While these projects are helpful to the communities and effectively build the social license of the POs, there are interesting distinctions between the YICBMR and the ICS systems as described by the producers across all countries. ICS Premium-funded community projects did include support for school improvements, but producers often mentioned investments in projects not related to children, including producer training in organic farming and solar energy (India), and income generation projects for women and community sanitation and home improvement projects (Belize). The YICBMR Premium-funded community projects described were more clearly linked to children. Of these, most were linked to the prevention of child labour while others could best be characterized as related to child protection. Examples of child labour prevention Premium-funded community projects in POs using the YICBMR system included improving school infrastructure and enabling access to and quality of education. An example of a school infrastructure project implemented by the YICBMR system in Ghana and India was the provision of clean water which means children no longer have to fetch water. Also mentioned were the improvement in children's learning and fewer instances of children dropping out of school.

Diagram 5 - Return on Investment (ROI)

Community members did not comment on the efficiency of either system in terms of return on investments, but they indicated that they valued SPO-funded community and education projects (e.g., streetlights, clean water projects, school infrastructure) and other supports provided to families in need (e.g., financial support, school supplies, medicine). While ICS/SPO Premium-funded community investments often benefitted children, a few community respondents said that the YICBMR/SPO community spending was more focused. They suggested focusing on child labour prevention and remediation and on child protection in direct response to the areas identified in the community risk mapping exercise.

Conclusion on Efficiency

Assessing the efficiency in terms of cost and return on investments, the ICS was regarded as more efficient. The reasons provided for the lower cost of the ICS is that it is already built into the cost structure of the producer organization, while the cost of the YICBMR system is not. Furthermore, the ICS provides perceived value and efficiency because it collects child labour data along with all the other risk data already being collected by the PO and/or farmer members. Additionally, the cost of the ICS is considered lower because it only monitors Fairtrade member farms and does not engage with the people who work on the farms (such as women, young people, children) and it does not involve the same level of remediation actions, stakeholder engagement and community participation, including trainings, staff support and materials.

The YICBMR system, on the other hand, is area-based and involves monitoring and responding to issues in and around Fairtrade members' farms (in the entire communities selected), community member engagement and input into actions taken, hiring of youth monitors, household survey data collection, reporting to and receiving support from governments or NGOs to resolve issues, as well as stakeholder engagement at each stage of its development. Moreover, while the tools involved in the YICBMR systems are the same and must be applied consistently across any operating YICBMR system, SPOs need to involve people outside the Fairtrade farms (young people, women, children, NGOs, community participants) and this is regarded as time-consuming. In addition, because they are required to have protection policies and to report any instances of the worst forms of child labour to the relevant government department/agency, some SPOs report feeling vulnerable when governments sanction them. Also, some SPOs report feeling frustrated when governments take too long to follow up on and remediate cases of children involved in child labour.

Conclusion: All in all, the ICS is considered to be more cost-efficient due to its reduced scope (i.e., covering only certified farmers and involving fewer remediation activities) compared to the YICBMR system.

6.6 Impact

Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

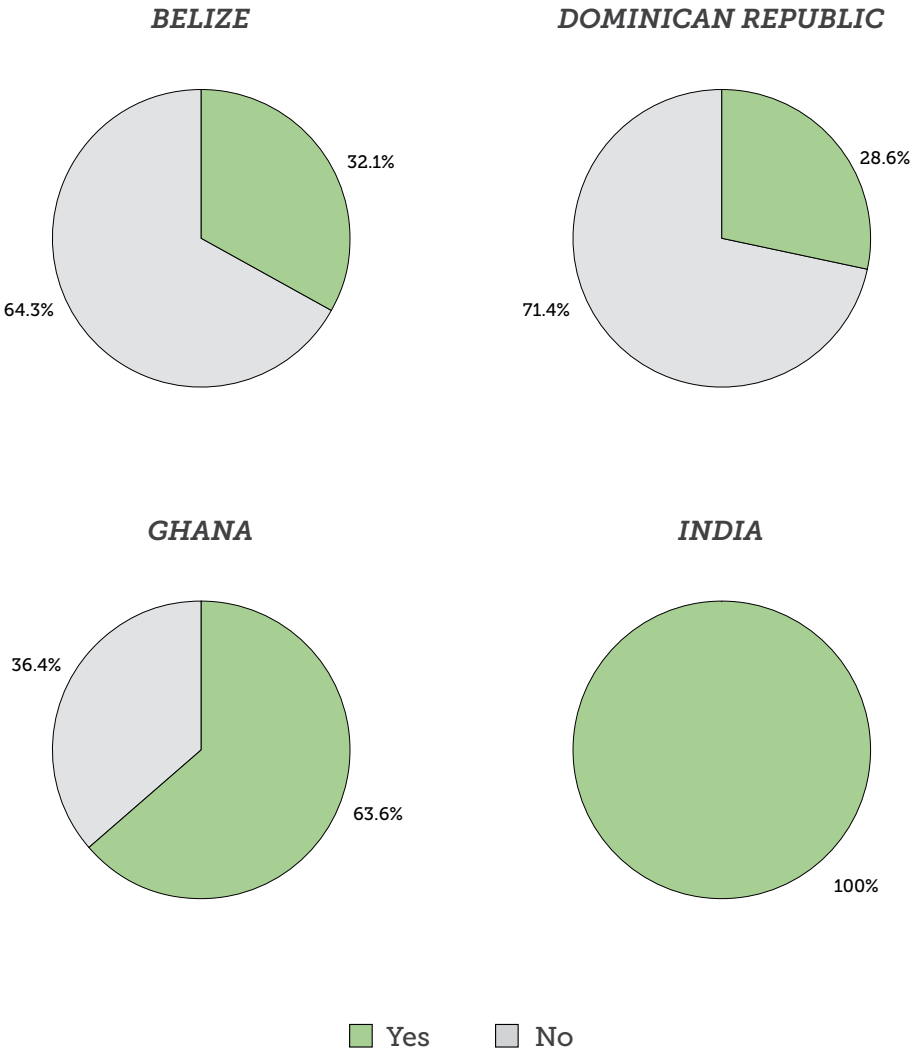
The majority of producers, staff, external stakeholders, and community members in all countries reported a perception of fewer instances of child labour after producer organizations had implemented either the ICS or the YICBMR system. Impact is challenging to define and even more so to attribute. Notwithstanding, the researchers were told that Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Standards have played a significant role in reducing the numbers of children working in sugar and cocoa production in all of the countries studied. Rarely, however, were the community members able to link this shift in norms and practice to any specific system used by the SPOs. While most producers referred first to the incentives/disincentives of certification/de-certification, some did attribute this change specifically to the YICBMR system.

When respondents were asked whether they knew a child or children who had stopped working because of the Fairtrade Standards, there were significant regional/country differences as shown in Diagram 6. Fewer respondents in the Dominican Republic and Belize knew such children personally whereas most producers and community respondents in Ghana and India did. Respondents from the Dominican Republic and Belize who did know children who had stopped working were from the YICBMR SPO/community. The producers and community members where the YICBMR system was implemented were enthusiastic about Fairtrade's "youth programmes". There was not the same level of enthusiasm for the ICS, however, particularly from community members.

In India, a teacher who has taught for 22 years, reported that efforts to eliminate child labour were predicated on government legislation, but it was only after NGOs and the Fairtrade system/producer network raised awareness among communities and farmers that there was "real behaviour change." A case of remediation through the YICBMR system was reported to the researchers where an NGO (India) was the producer organization's protection focal point. They noted that the YICBMR system had identified 15 children of migrant workers who were not attending school while their parents worked and were, therefore, at risk of exploitation and/or recruitment into labour. The YICBMR team, along with their partners, enrolled the children in a local school and assisted with the costs. In Ghana, a child welfare worker praised Fairtrade and the YICBMR approach, noting that the prevention activities with the school were strong and several child protection cases, which had been identified, were remediated. Given the confidentiality issues involved, the researchers neither requested nor received information on individual child labour cases that had been identified through the YICBMR or ICS system and remediated through the PO's Protection Policy and procedures.

Assessing the data, the researchers suggest that while the YICBMR has a consistent framework and involves a more inclusive system of engagement, implementation can be uneven because of dependence on external variables (e.g., successful partnerships with other organizations, engaged government with sufficient resources). Of course, the same could be said of the ICS implemented across the countries and included in this study as each PO develops a system that best suits their needs. As such, implementation could be uneven and, therefore, impossible to assess for comparative impact. Perhaps the YICBMR's most lasting impact, as reported by the SPOs involved in the study, was that its implementation had changed and improved the standard operating procedures used by the SPO in their implementation of the ICS (mentioned in the Dominican Republic, Belize and India). This could be an important finding as it illustrates that the SPOs had learnt from the YICBMR system how to more effectively monitor and respond to child labour on member farms and the learning from this should be transferred to standard requirements or guidelines to ensure consistent application of a monitoring and response system across the board.

Diagram 6 - Percentage of producers who know remediated cases of child labour



In addition to adults reporting a reduction in child labour, the interviews with the children are perhaps the best examples of impact. It was clear that the children knew the difference between healthy and harmful work on the farm and in the community. Knowing what is right and wrong is the first line of self-defence against exploitation. When a child knows their rights, they are less likely to be abused. Notably, several of the children interviewed were aware of the risk of decertification. Many of the children were also clear that they wanted to be able to go to the farms with their parents, they wanted to help, and they felt safe and protected. In Ghana, one child said that parents would never want children to do unsafe work because they "loved them," and they would not want to risk decertification.

Conclusion on Impact

In the case of impact, both the ICS and the YICBMR systems achieve their objectives of identifying and addressing child labour. The researchers found that the YICBMR system has had a greater impact, not only with regard to detection and remediation, but also in generating cross-fertilization of its activities into ICS practices. The impact of monitoring and activities aimed at reducing child labour were the most outstanding and explicit messages heard by the researchers in this study. The presence of these monitoring and remediation systems is changing the practice of child labour in farming in the areas where the SPOs operate.

Conclusion: On impact, the YICBMR system is stronger than the ICS system as it extends beyond the PO farms.

6.7 Sustainability

Sustainability: The extent to which the impacts of the child labour monitoring and response systems continue or are likely to continue in the long-term and who pays for this.

Among respondents across the Fairtrade system there was agreement that greater investment in monitoring and remediation systems was needed and that the cost of compliance was too high for SPOs to bear alone. Some NFO respondents said that consumers want to be assured that their purchase has been ethically produced and that importing countries want developing countries to adhere to labour and environmental standards in line with global conventions and/or new regulations. At the same time, producers in focus group discussions in the Dominican Republic said that consumers want a low price and that importing countries only want a competitive market for global corporations. These competing and conflicting goals make it a complex system to operate in and ensure that certified products are made in conformity with the Fairtrade Standards.

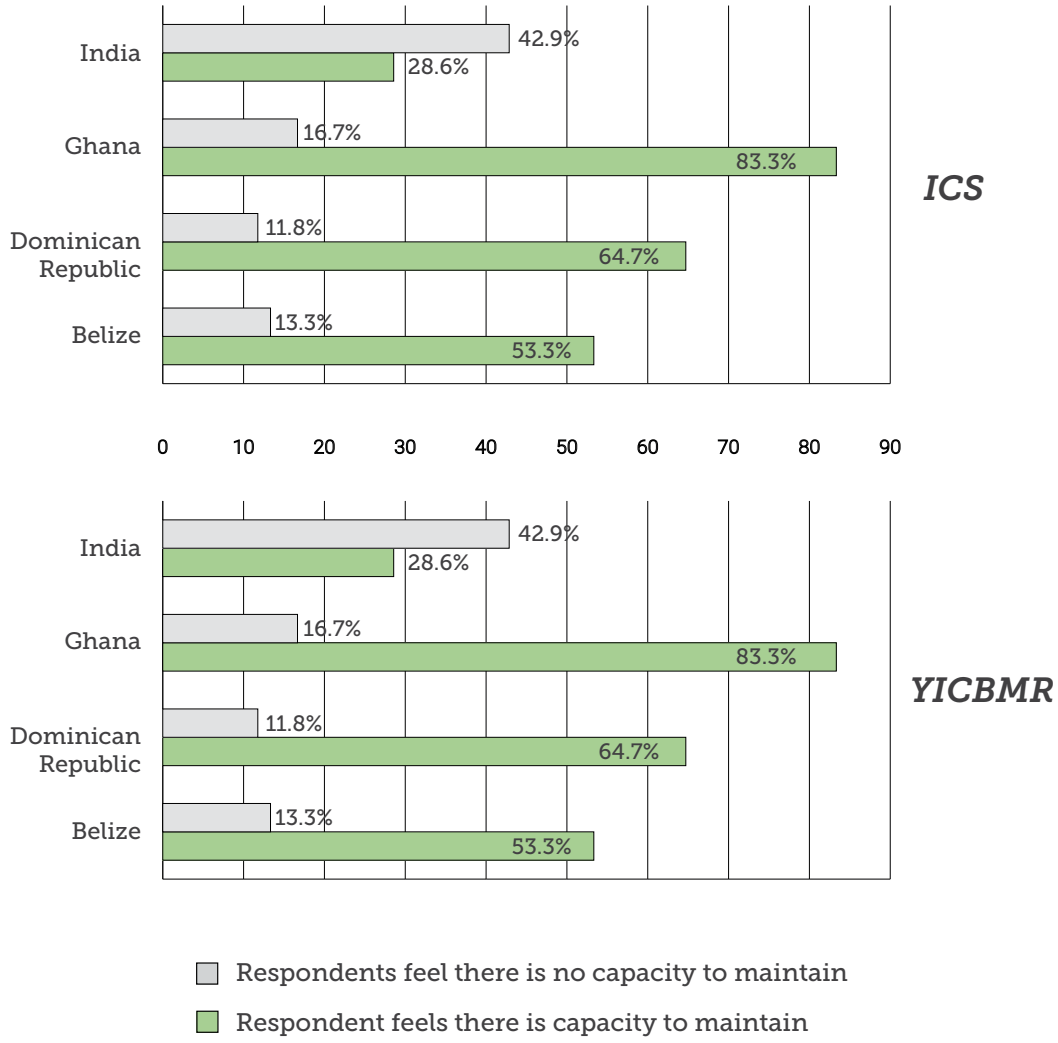
The respondents were asked to consider the sustainability of both systems from an operational perspective, and specifically whether the POs could independently sustain each system. Respondents' concerns about sustainability as it relates to financing were common across countries and systems, although there was certainly greater concern expressed about sustainable financing for the YICBMR system by proponents as well as opponents. A total of 61 percent of respondents in the Dominican Republic and 83 percent in Ghana believed SPOs would be able to maintain compliance using the ICS. Only 39 percent of Ghanaian and 46 percent of Dominican respondents believed that SPOs could independently maintain the YICBMR model. In Belize, even fewer respondents (32 percent) believed that the YICBMR system was sustainable by SPOs on their own, but they were almost equally uncertain about the abilities of SPOs to independently administer the ICS system (40 percent). The ICS was seen as inherently more sustainable because it was considered an internal fixed cost of the operating certification system and tied to the market (general price premium). Therefore in the farmers' best interest.

According to respondents, the cost of compliance for both the ICS and YICBMR systems increases as additions to the Standards are considered and this cost mostly falls on the farmers - the people in the supply chain who can least afford it. A Ghanaian producer observed that, given the expensive nature of the YICBMR system, farmers need to see actual market returns on their investment. If they do not see an improvement in price tied to social compliance, they will reject the system. Scaling up the YICBMR system would be impossible through the Fairtrade Premium alone. Additional financing would have to come from government, NGO partners and/or traders. This finding is not surprising as the YICBMR approach was designed to have supply chain actors and governments support its implementation with each progression of its phased approach.

In fact, the YICBMR is designed so that government assumes a progressively more central role in the final phase. For the YICBMR to be sustainable it is dependent on the commitment of external implementation and financing partners, and this was collectively acknowledged by Fairtrade respondents (SPOs, PNs, and international staff). In this study, only one of the four SPOs using the YICBMR system was within reach of this final phase. It would

be key for the Fairtrade system to understand how best to achieve the institutionalization of the YICBMR system within government national action plans for the elimination of child labour and/or trader human rights due diligence checks that are needed to assure sustainability of the YICBMR system. The researchers recommend a future study to investigate under what conditions this goal can be achieved and what factors can prevent this from happening. The message from the government and NGO partners who worked with the SPOs on the YICBMR approach is that it is a good system, but that Fairtrade/SPOs can do a better job at working and communicating with, and listening to, their partners and the community. Most respondents believed that the ICS was "sustainable," despite its reported limitations in addressing child labour and given that it is already built into the cost and operational structure. The FLOCERT auditors, perhaps the most knowledgeable people outside of Fairtrade about the Fairtrade Standards and ICS implementation, strongly encouraged a greater focus on the ICS. They called for more training and support from Fairtrade International and its regional producer networks to extend its implementation to smaller SPOs before further investment in alternative approaches.

Diagram 7 - Do POs have the capacity to maintain the systems?

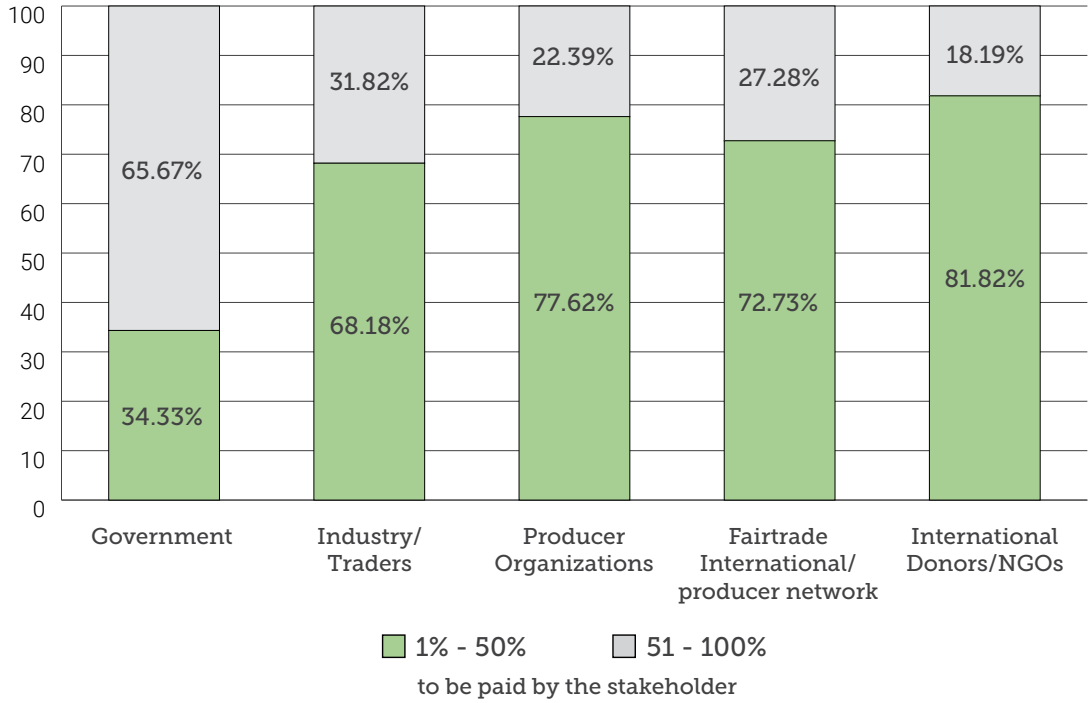


There was consensus among respondents and focus groups that all stakeholders across the supply chain – from producers to government institutions, private civil society organizations (including Fairtrade) and industry – have a responsibility together with producers to protect children from child labour. That should mean that each stakeholder pays their fair share of the costs. As can be seen in Diagram 8, 67 percent of respondents believed that government should cover 50 - 100 percent of the budget. The graph shows that respondents were clear about who should bear a larger share of the cost. This is relevant because sharing costs with other stakeholders, particularly government, in the effort to reduce child labour is implicit in the YICBMR system. Producers and the Fairtrade system respondents also pointed out that industry should pay farmers more and commit some of their profits to social compliance (32

percent of the respondents believed industry should cover 50 - 100 percent of the budget). The researchers hold that the concept of "Fair Trade" implies consumers paying more so that farmers have a living income and SPOs more money to pay for compliance. The researchers similarly contend that importing countries need to ensure that development gains reach the poorest and national governments must increase their budgets for child protection and child labour remediation, but also improve the social safety net more broadly to better support poor families. Ultimately, to protect children from child labour, all stakeholders need to protect children from poverty and poor quality education, as well as from abuse and exploitation. Simple to say, complex to do, but possible if children are a priority for communities, business and governments.

Diagram 8 - Who should pay for child labour monitoring and remediation?

Percentage of respondents that consider each stakeholder responsible for paying up to 50% and more than 50% of the costs.



Conclusion on Sustainability

Given that sustainability encompasses several elements for analysis – financial, social, environmental and economic, including interaction between these, the researchers recognize the importance of financial considerations in making decisions to monitor and ensure the quality of the monitoring system. Clearly, in terms of finance or costs only, the ICS involves a fixed, built-in cost and many POs are reportedly implementing this. However, SPOs have implemented both the ICS and YICBMR systems and feedback from them indicates that, although the YICBMR system is more effective, the ICS is cheaper and therefore more financially sustainable. For the YICBMR system to be sustainable it is dependent on the commitment of external implementing and financing partners, including governments, commercial partners and NGOs, and this has not yet been consolidated.

Conclusion: The ICS is more sustainable in the immediate or short-term (i.e., covering only certified farmers and involving fewer remediation activities) compared to the YICBMR system. In the long run, if external stakeholders take on a significant portion of the cost, the situation would be reversed and the YICBMR system could become more sustainable.

6.8 Overall assessment of OECD criteria evaluations

Overall Assessment

The ICS and YICBMR systems had clear benefits when it came to certain criteria and purposes. With regard to complying with the Fairtrade Standards and enabling producer organization ownership of the data and actions to be taken, including costs, resources and time to get things done, the ICS was viewed as the system to embrace. However, when looking at complying with the Fairtrade Standards and enabling a bottom-up inclusive approach, including relevance, effectiveness, coherence and impact, the YICBMR was regarded as a better option because it was seen, by design, to involve stakeholder engagement and social dialogue, including with rights holders and community members. The YICBMR system is also phased, which provides the producer organizations and their partners with time to develop their relationship and learn to trust each other in scaling up efforts together to national actions plans and government initiatives. While the ICS has this capability, it was not designed to be scales up. In this respect, the YICBMR system has more flexibility and constantly factors in inputs from other actors involved in the fight against child labour.

Table 5 below is a snapshot of the preferred model according to each OECD criterion and is aggregated by participant cohort. Not all participants were equally familiar with both systems so their assessment may be biased according to their role and/or the system that their SPO has implemented. The system details that were considered covered design, policy and procedures, including data assessment and management, operation frequency, costs, findings and/or other items. Some respondents had more detailed knowledge as they were directly involved in trainings or data collection and assessment through each of the systems.

Table 5

Snapshot of the system (YICBMR or ICS) that was evaluated as best per stakeholder group for each OECD criterion						
Interviewees/ participants	**Relevance**	**Coherence**	**Effectiveness**	**Efficiency**	**Impact**	**Sustainability**
Small Producer Organizations (SPOs)						
SPOs-ICS	ICS	YICBMR	YICBMR	ICS	ICS	ICS
SPOs-YICBMR/ICS	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	ICS	YICBMR	ICS
Fairtrade						
Fairtrade International	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	ICS	YICBMR	ICS
NFOs	YICBMR	YICBMR	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Producer Networks	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	ICS	ICS	ICS
FLOCERT	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	ICS	ICS	ICS
Externals						
Traders	ICS	ICS	ICS	ICS	ICS	ICS
Governments	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR
NGOs	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR
Community	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR	YICBMR
Children	YICBMR	N/A	YICBMR	N/A	YICBMR	N/A

Furthermore, respondents' answers varied within each group. Keeping these limitations in mind, the study provides a summary of the assessments using the OECD criteria per group interviewed. This information is important for the assessment as it could illustrate the operational dynamics involved in answers collated to capture the majority of responses. In this sense then, the views of those with detailed information and knowledge of the ICS and YICBMR systems might have been underrepresented as they constituted a smaller number of interviewees at all levels of the organizations involved in the interviews.

Please note that the conclusions of the comparative assessments of the ICS and YICMR systems have been drawn up using both the OECD criteria and the reported advantages and challenges, which are reported on in the next section.

7. Assessment of Advantages and Challenges of the Two Systems

Advantages

Advantages - Internal Control System

Producers and managerial/technical personnel in all countries believe the lower cost of the ICS is a clear advantage when compared to the YICBMR system. One reason for the lower cost is that the system is already built into the cost structure. The child labour components function within the broader ICS along with parallel objectives to monitor and respond to other Fairtrade Standard requirements (e.g., gender-based violence, bonded labour, protection of the environment, Premium use, etc.), which reduces compliance costs. The limited footprint (e.g., producer farms and reliance on the SPO only for remediation if the child labourer identified) also keeps the cost down.

Traceability is a key component of the ICS and a component of HRDD frameworks. The system relies on regular monitoring and simple documentation (checklists) and, because interventions are limited, the remediation follow-up is easier. The ICS uses internal inspection by SPO members or staff leading to an increased sense of farmer ownership and, in one instance in India, a supporting trader organization. This system helps the SPO conduct all forms of risk assessment on multiple control points (including for child labour) and propose possible ways of addressing those risks. The Internal Control System has reinforced for producers the crucial role they play when implementing the relevant traceability systems that are increasingly required by the global market.

The ICS places the responsibility for compliance with child labour Standards on the shoulders of producer organizations. Individual farmers have responsibility but the SPO is accountable for any breach due to the cooperative model of Fairtrade. Individual accountability, if it exists at all, is within the framework of remediation supported by the SPO. Acting as de facto compliance monitors, the SPO ICS technical support team carries out regular compliance checks on the Standards. While the ICS is not designed for community-based oversight, nothing precludes an SPO from integrating the ICS with community institutions. When this occurs, it strengthens the Standards through consistent enforcement. In some instances, for example in India, traders are part of the ICS implementation. This can create a productive working relationship on the child labour issue between producers and traders.

The ICS is the core approach that establishes and regulates the Standards within the global Fairtrade system

and is promoted by most of the Fairtrade respondents (but not all) and by FLOCERT.[9] In most cases, the adoption of the ICS is either voluntary or required as a corrective action of a FLOCERT non-conformity to Standard requirements and is voted on by producers as part of their governance process. The costs and benefits are spread equally among members and are understood across SPOs. While the YICBMR system also requires a vote from the general assembly and is promoted by Fairtrade International as best practice and included or referenced in the Fairtrade Standards, the ICS is farm member-based and operated by the PO exclusively. While the YICBMR system is also operated by the PO, it requires the engagement of rights experts and protection focal points, including all members of the community (not just farm members of the SPO).

Advantages - Youth-Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System

The YICBMR system is an area-based, phased, community intervention approach that involves engagement with multiple stakeholders and emphasizes community participation in the monitoring and response process. Its reach goes beyond the PO members' farms and is designed to detect child labour, children's insecurity in terms of violence against them, and protection issues in the community where the SPO operates, including practices at home. This broad community approach aims to eradicate child labour by tackling its drivers and ensuring that children removed from child labour are not taken away from farms and put in places where they face similar or even greater harm. Unlike a system narrowly focused on one sector or farm members' worksites, when community-based remediation is effective, it does not shift the problem to another trade or location or group of children (e.g., migrant child workers). Also, by having the communities map and rank all places where children feel unsafe or insecure, the YICBMR system can assess where children face serious harm. Respondents believed the YICBMR system was effective because of its community-based approach and that it was particularly successful at prevention through awareness raising and the identification of both child labour and child protection issues (well-being). These successes led to behavioural change and reduced tolerance for child labour and child abuse as noted by the participants.

The YICBMR system's use of community-based child protection committees and youth monitors is more independent (reduces conflict of interest) and credible when it comes to compliance than systems that rely only on producers who may have a disincentive to find incidences of child labour because of the threat of suspension or even decertification. The YICBMR system 'digs deep' to the root causes when child labour or child abuse is found.

Central to the YICBMR design is children's rights and well-being. This includes the elimination of exploitative and abusive labour, the creation of safe environments to increase protection, and the promotion of decent youth employment that targets disadvantaged households and groups. Crucially, the youth inclusive model captures children's opinions (i.e., voice), which is a key component in the Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) paradigm, and recognizes the need for meaningful consultation with or participation by those (right holders) negatively affected by business operations. The model was designed to promote the agency of children and young people and to involve them in the monitoring of and response to exploitative labour, including abuse and neglect. It was clear in the children's interviews that they knew the difference between healthy and harmful work on the farm and in the community. When a child knows their rights, they are less likely to be abused.

The YICBMR system provides leadership opportunities for young people and is a source of employment and mentorship for them. The youth monitors are 'near-peer' advocates and represent a safe avenue for children to share their experiences and concerns. They are also role models who can drive generational norm change in the community. YICBMR pilot projects have created an opportunity for the next generation of SPO members and support staff. The YICBMR system can be used in other countries to identify and respond to child labour, forced labour and gender-based violence, although in the countries assessed they were used for child labour alone.

9 FLOCERT is an independent global certifier for fair trade goods. See here for more information: https://www.flocert.net/

Challenges

Challenges - Internal Control System

Child labour is only one of the issues the ICS monitors, which means the focus on child labour is limited. According to the technical focus groups from India and Ghana, the risk mapping is done more in the context of soil and crop contamination, fertilizer and pesticide usage than for labour standards or social compliance. Many participants across all countries believed the ICS, as designed and implemented, was not sufficient to address the complexity of child labour and that it was most successful when implemented alongside other approaches like the YICBMR system (the Dominican Republic, India).

The country-level respondents (interview and focus group participants) noted that, when the focus of the eradication effort is exclusively on the farm or on the children of farmers or limited to specific moments in the production cycle, there are unintended results. Child labour can shift to other (perhaps more dangerous) locations, such as non-certified farms, or activities such as street vending or begging, or working for the local drug dealer or alcohol seller. If the focus is on a specific moment in the production cycle, like the harvest, children might become involved in dangerous work that is done to prepare the land for cultivation or post-harvest clean-up. Finally, migrant children often fall through the cracks when the focus is too fixed on ensuring that certified farmers do not engage in unsafe and inappropriate labour. Migrant worker-parents often have no choice but to bring their children with them. They are often out of school for months and, even if the children are not working, they are at risk of exploitation, neglect and abuse. These respondents believed that the ICS was too narrowly focused to address these types of risks.

The ICS is perhaps a more permanent system within the SPO compared to the YICBMR system and involves, as previously noted, screening for all compliance requirements. Its focus on SPO operations means (according to producers and technical staff) that "there is no space to challenge/engage or remediate the issues that are faced by the community – be they child labour/forced labour/gender-based violence or any human rights issues." While all producers recognized the need for a disciplinary system to correct behaviours that do not meet the child labour standards, they also recognized that remediation of identified cases was the weakest aspect of the ICS.

Challenges - Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System

The YICBMR system requires more in-depth training and human and financial resources. It is designed to address child labour wherever it is found, whether on an SPO farm or in the community, although when found on non-member farms it is simply reported to the government, which then completes the follow-up actions. It uses this approach because the design recognizes that an effective system to eliminate child labour cannot simply mitigate it in one area only to see it shift to another location or sector. As designed, the YICBMR system is meant to be sustained by the community, allied institutions, and government programmes, and not by the producer organizations alone, although it begins at phase one with the PO leading and owning the bottom-up approach. This requires SPOs to embrace, lead and own the work, including not being afraid to say that child labour is a risk in their communities. During phase one, the PO takes time to develop expertise, relevant policies and establish an operating data management system to drive efforts. The initial cost during phase one is seen as an investment that produces returns over time. While this is useful, it difficult to ask a PO to share in these initial costs with producer networks and Fairtrade International also funding. According to participants, PO budgets are tight, expenses day-to-day, and low prices and associated income make it hard to justify the future (possible) gains of the YICBMR system. While the future gains of funding and operating the ICS are also not assured and no cost comparisons have been made in this study of the two systems, the presumption is that the YICBMR system costs more. Certainly, one cost that the YICBMR system has that the ICS does not, is the cost of hiring, training and supporting the youth monitors.

The youth monitors are selected by their peers and the SPO through a hiring process, but their monitoring activities are geared at adults in the SPO and in the wider community (not just children and other young people). Their authority is weak when it comes to the implementation of prevention activities targeting adults, monitoring, and their participation in corrective actions and remediation. In some respondents' views, they are not considered experts or sufficiently experienced, especially by adults. For example, in Ghana, it was noted by adult respondents that the NGO staff and adult volunteers, who operate their own Child Labour Monitoring system (CMLS), had more authority and credibility with the community than the youth monitors who are performing similar roles. In their view, the enthusiasm of some of the youth monitors led them to perceive their role as 'detectives' seeking out child labour. According to them, when youth monitors are put in the position of quasi-child welfare agents in the context of child labour, but lack the skills and experience in remediation and child protection, this could lead to serious unintended consequences. Some NGO respondents from the child protection sector saw this as a "danger" as well and a significant flaw in the system design. They said: "This is a complicated area that requires the expertise of professionals." On the other hand, given that young people have a right to represent themselves and their peers, just as women have the right to represent themselves, and to be part of a system that monitors and remediates child labour, changes may be needed in the attitudes of people unaccustomed to young people leading the work and the fight against child labour, including their right to be involved in matters affecting them. Furthermore, youth monitors, according to the YICBMR system design, are not required to work alone, but are expected to work alongside the PO certification officer and the PO protection focal point. However, it may be the case that the POs delegate the monitoring aspect of the work to youth monitors for whatever reasons, including misunderstanding their role in the YICMR system.

The model is designed to employ youth monitors between the ages of 18 and 24. They require considerable training, particularly in household data collection. Youth monitors need to be skilled to effectively elicit relevant responses and properly record them. This need for quality training adds to the cost and often means an inconsistent implementation of the model. Over time, young people could gain this expertise with the appropriate investments, training, and work experience. The question is: will they have that time and those resources? Even if they do, will they stay with the SPOs once they are fully trained? In the case of Belize (the most advanced case), all the youth monitors (expect for one) were hired as full-time staff and did stay with the SPO. It is not uncommon, however, for young people to leave entry-level positions to seek better career opportunities or pay, taking their training with them, or because they progress to adulthood. This can be perceived as a sunk cost related to turnover at worst and promotion of youth skills and agency at best. It is, however, a challenge shared with other implementation models where staff, including certification officers, can also seek other jobs and leave the PO, taking their skills and knowledge with them. It is, therefore, important to ensure partnerships with NGOs and government providers who can ensure transference of skills should there be a need.

The YICBMR system (rightly) assigns government the role of duty bearer concerning child labour prevention/remediation and child protection. When cases of child labour or child abuse/neglect are found (particularly in the community), the YICBMR child protection committee reports them through the PO protection focal point to the relevant authorities. Unfortunately, in most countries, government support for the model and its capacity to respond to cases promptly has left implementers disappointed. Some local government entities, especially schools, have been very responsive and collaborated with the YICBMR system, promoting school attendance as a key child labour prevention mechanism. Access to education is only one part of the equation, however, and a consistent concern for parents across countries has been the poor quality of schooling available to their children.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Farming is more than simply another job; it is a vocation and a way of life. Smallholder farms around the world are essentially family operations. To ensure an end to the worst forms of child labour while maintaining a sustainable smallholder farming sector, global actors (consumers, corporations/industry, governments) need a better understanding of the child-work continuum from harmful labour to beneficial work, that prepares the next generation of farmers, farm workers and agri-businesses. Fairtrade, throughout its system, has this understanding. Nonetheless, it needs to apply it consistently through its various tools and mechanisms.

By listening to the views of the producer organizations involved in this study along with their staff and their members, including the surrounding communities, children and young people, as well as external stakeholders and staff across the Fairtrade system, the study reveals the complexity of the child labour problem and suggests some solutions to consider. While no single organization can guarantee the eradication of child labour, thanks to the insights and experiences of the respondents across the Fairtrade system and in the communities where Fairtrade operates, it is clear to the researchers that there is a deep and broad-based commitment to achieving this challenging goal. Producers and community members mentioned the significant impact that the application of the Fairtrade Standards have had on child labour elimination and that SPO child protection policies have had in changing long-standing attitudes to child rights and child labour practices in the production of cocoa and sugarcane. The entire Fairtrade system, from Fairtrade International to the SPOs that work on the ground, displays a commitment that has been built on evidence-based learning and results. No assessment would be complete without recommendations to support continuous improvement. The following recommendations support building on the success.

Directed at SPOs using the YICBMR system (management, support staff and producers)

• Enable fuller and wider understanding of the YICBMR system

The YICBMR system in its entirety needs to be better understood, particularly the aspects of financial sustainability and joint responsibility with other stakeholders. The researchers note that cost and sustainability were the most consistent concerns raised by producers whether they were adherents or detractors of the YICBMR system. What was rarely considered in assessing YICBMR system costings was that it is based on a three-part phased approach. The SPOs do not/are not supposed to bear the (full) cost of the YICBMR system throughout its phased implementation. A better understanding across the Fairtrade system of the financing and true costs of the implementation of the ICS and YICBMR or similar systems would allow for a more accurate understanding of cost-benefit comparisons of the various systems in use. It would, therefore, be useful for Fairtrade to provide targeted trainings on the YICBMR system and explain its phased model and associated opportunities for wider coverage and joint funding to producers and staff, including to the wider Fairtrade system. The researches understood that the final aim of the YICBMR system is to house and finance it within a country's national action plan for the elimination of child labour or equivalent. If this critical point and ultimate aim of the YICBMR model is better or more completely understood by all involved, and taking into account available capacity right at the start, partnerships for sustainable financing and locally institutionalized support could be thought through from inception by all involved, including producers, so that that financing and regulator support do not provide challenges to implementing this inclusive and participatory approach. Interestingly enough, producer respondents did not place the same focus on shared funding requirements for the ICS, which they understood to be cheaper and to be their responsibility to ensure compliance with the Fairtrade Standards.

Furthermore, since child protection and child labour within the YICBMR system need to be tackled by and with governments and other stakeholders, such as NGOs and industry, it already has the right design in place to ensure sustainability. In fact, since producer organizations need to work with relevant government agencies or departments during the first phase of the YICBMR system, including when the worst forms of child labour have been identified, this could be an opportunity right at the start to explore how the YICBMR system could fit in and be supported by government. The governments of the four countries in the study and in general around the globe have their own obligations to develop national action plans on the eradication of child labour and periodically report to the ILO on their implementation of relevant conventions. The YICBMR system, as developed, already calls for implementing producer organizations to share aggregated findings through stakeholder discussions at the completion of phase one. These could provide opportunities to explore how the YICBMR system could be factored into the sourcing companies' need to undertake Human Rights Due Diligence in their supply chains as well as explore joint funding agreements.

• *Enhance the Role of the YICBMR Committee and Establish Links to External Bodies*

The YICBMR approach calls for the PO to set up a decision making committee, where youth monitors are members, to, inter alia, nominate a protection focal point and receive in-depth trainings on child rights from expert agencies or relevant government agencies. It also places emphasis on rights-based remediation of identified instances of child labour. Linking this YICBMR committee to a wider system would enable continuous capacity building through information and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this link could also ensure continuity of activities, training for successive generation of youth monitors and also a safe repository for data collected so that activities and lessons learned can be built on over time. For the ICS, POs should also consider requiring links to government agencies and NGOs that can support trainings, data generation and continuous learning, including rights-based remediation. However, the researchers found that most producers (using both the ICS and YICBMR systems) viewed the wider government systems of child rights and child protection services as not functioning optimally. To counter this limitation, it would be practical for POs to partner with like-minded NGOs to advocate for relevant national laws and regulations and accountable government that would enable decent youth employment in the rural sector while generating or enforcing a child labour list for hazardous and exploitative practices. Finally, the link with other expert partners on child rights and child protection would enable producer organizations to seek support in safely withdrawing child labour and preventing it and, in so doing, focusing more on remedial actions. Linking the ICS and YICBMR systems to broader child rights and child protection initiatives and projects would enable these systems to not only conform to the relevant Fairtrade Standards, but enable and enhance government obligations in ratifying ILO conventions as well as the human rights obligations of traders. Furthermore, they would enable learning exchanges between producers and civil society organizations, as well as UN bodies, so that projects and programmes could be targeted to areas of vulnerability where informal practices of child labour are most present.

Directed at Fairtrade the system

• *Promote and invest in trade-specific and industry-related trainings and social impact investing targeting youth employment*

The Fairtrade Standards enable children and young people to support family farming under strict conditions, namely that the work is not hazardous, abusive or exploitative, and that the work does not prevent children from attending and performing well at school. Producers, however, expressed concern that, in practice, many were keeping their children away from work on their farms and that, as a result, they would lose them as the next generation of farmers. To respond to this concern, Fairtrade should promote and invest in more sector-relevant training for older children and young people, including enabling support for youth-led start-ups and/or micro-businesses and decent youth employment in the agricultural sectors as permitted by the Fairtrade Standards and national and international law. This proposition promotes the creation of public-private partnerships for industry-specific technical vocational

training. Furthermore, in today's financing environment, Social Impact Investment *(see Annex 1)* is an alternative well-suited to Fairtrade, which already has relevant systems in place. Social Impact Investment is a model which enables to secure private investment. This additional investment enables social enterprise businesses to both improve their social impact and potentially increase their revenue generation. The social impact investor receives a return on their investment and proof of positive social impact. With minor adaptations, Fairtrade could capture and report on impact for investors. Social capital would be particularly well suited to supporting youth training and entrepreneurial initiatives.

• *Invest in remediation and learning*

Child labour remediation is challenging, and further investment is needed to develop responses that go beyond the promotion of education and social protection to address the broader financial need of families, which is at the root of child labour and exploitation. There is an opportunity here to innovate and contribute to best-in-class approaches that can inform the efforts of others in the sector and across sectors. Efforts should be made to avoid putting the financial burden from this action on the vulnerable part of the supply chain. Furthermore, we recommend investing in wider and more in-depth learning about both the ICS and YICBMR systems as applied and to continually track learnings. Since the YICBMR system is being implemented by producer organizations and has built in within its phased modelling evolving and flexible structures for targeted collaboration and social dialogue with duty bearers and stakeholders, it can be easily adapted to fit into joint initiatives with traders, governments and NGOs. In fact, the study found one such case of a PO and an NGO working together in a government-funded project where the YICBMR method is adapted and applied to identify and respond to child labour. More such projects should be sought out and implemented.

• *Decolonize the issue of child labour*

Producers spoke to the consultants about the pressure from the global market and mostly "Northern" based consumers to deliver a product that is "child labour-free." The farmers believe the international market (e.g., consumers, buyers) and governments in countries in both hemispheres have a superficial understanding of what constitutes harmful work practices for children, particularly in agriculture. A few producers noted a distinct double standard in how smallholder farms are perceived "in the North and in the South" when it comes to child labour. While producers understood that the Fairtrade Standards allow children and young people to support family farming under strict conditions, their comments were directed at the expectations of companies, consumers and campaigners, perhaps illustrating a need to re-train and/or clarify the differences between child labour and child work. As Fairtrade continues to monitor and respond to child labour, the researchers submit that, at the same time, they could work to de-colonize the discussion of safe and appropriate work for children. Consulting with children on their work in farming could indeed go a long way towards adding research value to dominant Western-centered narratives on child labour, especially on smallholder family farms. It might also accelerate and redirect focus and resources towards identifying and remediating the worst forms of child labour as a "matter of priority".

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The generosity and expertise of all have improved this study and saved it from misinterpretations and errors. Those that remain are entirely our own responsibility.

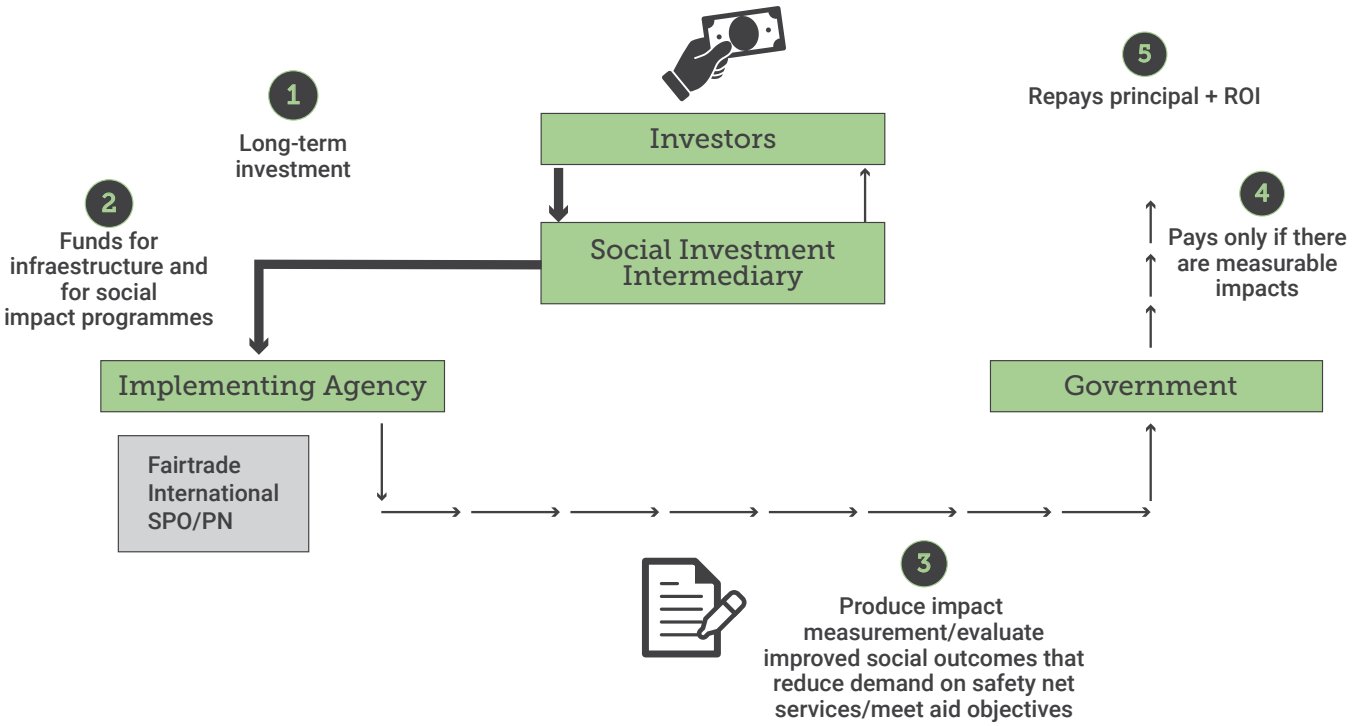
Annex 1: Social Enterprise to Social Impact Investment

Before there were certified B Corporations and Business Fights Poverty collaboration networks, before there were the Sustainable Development Goals or even the Millennium Development Goals, Fairtrade International put principles into practice. It pioneered using business to reduce poverty, support sustainable agriculture, empower farmers and workers, and transform the lives of women, children, and men in developing countries.

Social Impact Investment is a new financing approach for development that is just beginning to take shape. Governments around the world recognize that business and private investors must play a larger role in financing the social, economic and environmental change envisioned by the SDGs. There are several models of impact investing that have been launched in the last five years and the space is open to innovative approaches.

Fairtrade International through its partnerships with National Fairtrade Organizations (NFOs) and affiliated producer organizations and producer networks, implements development initiatives and programmes that are perfectly suited for the new development financing and investment models. To consumers around the world, the Fairtrade logo embodies fair trade practices, environmental stewardship, and decent work. That credibility could easily be leveraged with either institutional or individual investors.

Social Impact Bond model (SIB)



By working with already established environmental, social and governance criteria applicable to corporate social responsibility broadly, Social Impact funds, and possibly government, Fairtrade International could secure funding that would enable greater investment in skills training and technology to improve producers' environmental sustainability. Social impact programmes that focus on ensuring healthy, safe and decent work and gender equity could be expanded without having to depend only on the Fairtrade Premium.

Fairtrade International could also consider establishing its own branded Social Impact Investment Fund that could be marketed to institutional investors (e.g., unions, pension funds, large foundations). These funds could be used instead of the Fairtrade Premium to deliver remediation programmes for gender-based violence, child labour, forced labour and child protection. A specific fund could be created to raise funds to help producer organizations innovate to improve environmental sustainability.

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