



Children's Work in Côte d'Ivoire: An Overview

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As part of broader efforts toward durable solutions to child labor, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank initiated the interagency Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project in December 2000. The project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labor. Through a variety of data collection, research, and assessment activities, the UCW project is broadly directed toward improving understanding of child labor, its causes and effects, how it can be measured, and effective policies for addressing it. For further information, see the project website at www.ucw-project.org.

This paper is part of the research carried out within UCW (Understanding Children's Work), a joint ILO, World Bank and UNICEF project. The views expressed here are those of the authors' and should not be attributed to the ILO, the World Bank, UNICEF or any of these agencies' member countries.

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ABSTRACT

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that in developing countries alone there are some 250 million children between the ages of five and 14 years who work. For 120 million of them, work is a full-time activity. Although child work occurs in all parts of the world, it is in Africa where a child is most likely to be involved in work and where child work is growing most rapidly. ILO estimates that the 80 million African child workers today could surge to 100 million by 2015. This paper looks at African child work in the context of Côte d'Ivoire. It aims at providing a brief overview of the various dimensions of the child work phenomenon in the country - its extent and nature, its causes and consequences, and national legislation and policies adopted to address it.

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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Prevalence of child work	2
3.	Child work trends	6
4.	Characteristics of child work	7
5.	Impact of child work on child welfare	9
6.	Determinants of child work	10
7.	National action addressing child work	12



1. INTRODUCTION

1. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that in developing countries alone there are some 250 million children between the ages of five and 14 years who work. For 120 million of them, work is a full-time activity. Although child work occurs in all parts of the world, it is in Africa where a child is most likely to be involved in work and where child work is growing most rapidly. ILO estimates that the 80 million African child workers today could surge to 100 million by 2015.

2. This paper looks at African child work in the context of Côte d'Ivoire. It aims at providing a brief overview of the various dimensions of the child work phenomenon in the country – its extent and nature, its causes and consequences, and national legislation and policies adopted to address it.

3. Although the subject of increasing research attention, reliable data on child work in Côte d'Ivoire remain limited. Recent labour force surveys would seem the most obvious sources of information, but they typically adopt minimum cut-off ages that exclude all or part of the 7-14 age group,¹ and do not capture family agricultural work and various forms of informal work that children perform. Other studies of child work in the country involve sample sizes that are too small to draw general conclusions. They also tend to focus on child work prevalence, and offer much less information on children's workplaces and the circumstances that children face there.

4. Recent multi-purpose household surveys conducted in Côte d'Ivoire represent perhaps the best, but by no means ideal, source of information on child work. These surveys yield a wide variety of data in areas such as education, employment, health, expenditure, and consumption, that together help shed light on the child work phenomenon. This paper relies primarily on data from one such household survey, a living standards measurement survey conducted in 1995 (referred to hereafter as LSMS 1995).² The survey was based on a nationally representative sample of 1,000 households drawn from five regions. The results of two other national household surveys, a living standards measurement survey conducted in 1988 (LSMS 1988) and a multiple indicator cluster survey conducted in 2000 (MICS 2000), are also cited.

5. Before proceeding, a clarification is required concerning what precisely is meant by child work. For the purposes of this paper, child work will be defined as “any activity other than study or play, remunerated or unremunerated, carried out by a person under the age of 15.”³ This definition encompasses the entire continuum of child work – from relatively innocuous forms such as household work at one end to extremely harmful ones such as prostitution at the other – and therefore avoids the measurement and definitional problems encountered when attempting to limit the discussion to only those forms of work that are in some way injurious to child welfare.

2. PREVALENCE OF CHILD WORK

6. How many children in Côte d'Ivoire are engaged in work? The results of LSMS 1995 suggest that the phenomenon of child work is quite common in Côte d'Ivoire.

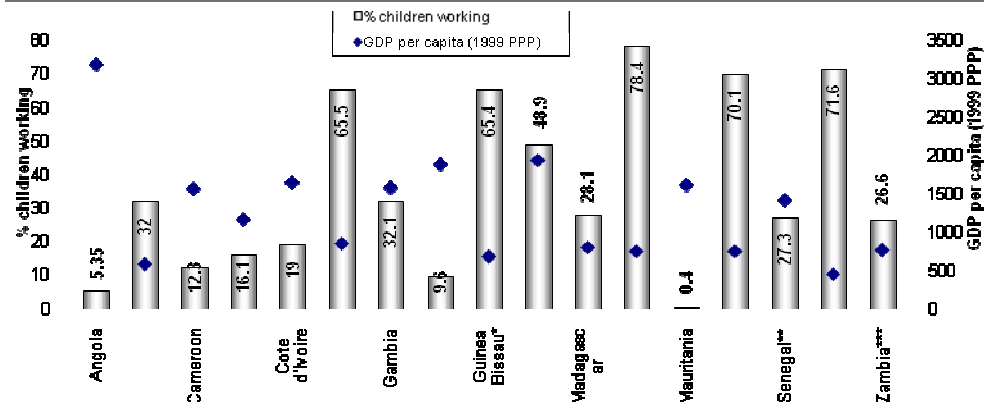
¹ Grootaert C., *Child Labor in Côte d'Ivoire, Incidence and Determinants*, Policy Research Working Paper 1905, The World Bank, Social Development Department, March 1998.

² Institut National de la Statistique, *Enquête sur le niveau de vie (ENV)*, World Bank Priority Survey, 1995.

³ Ashagrie K., 'Statistics on Child Labor', *ILO Bulletin of Statistics* 3, 1993.

According to the survey, almost one in five (19 percent) of 7-14 year-olds were engaged in work in 1995, translating in absolute terms to a total of some 467,000 working children. The survey results place Côte d'Ivoire sixth highest in terms of child work prevalence among the 11 African countries where data are available covering the same age group (Figure 1).⁴ In terms of GDP per capita,⁵ on the other hand, Côte d'Ivoire ranks fourth highest among the same group of countries. The country's relative level of child work is therefore high compared to its relative level of income..

Figure 1. - Proportion of children aged 7-14 years working only or combining school and work, selected African countries, 1992-2000



Notes: *refers to the 5-14 age group and includes domestic chores in the definition of child work; **refers to the 10-14 age group, and does not include children who combine school and work; ***refers to the 6-11 age group.

Sources: GDP per capita estimates: UNDP, Human Development Report 2001. Child work estimates: Angola, *Inquerito prioritario sobre as condicoes e vida dos domicilios* 1995; Burundi, *Enquête prioritaire: Etude nationale sur les conditions de vie des populations* 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages (ECAM)* 1996; Central African Republic, *Enquête prioritaire sur les conditions de vie des ménages* 1992; Chad, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000*; Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête sur le niveau de vie* 1995; Gambia, *SDA Priority Survey II* 1994; Ghana, *Core Welfare Indicators Survey* 1997; Guinea Bissau, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000*; Guinea, *Enquête intégrale sur les conditions de vie des ménages (avec module budget et consommation)* 1994; Madagascar, *Enquête permanente auprès des ménages* 1993; Mali, *Enquête Malienne de conjoncture économique et sociale* 1994; Mauritania, *Enquête permanente sur les conditions de vie des ménages* 1995; Niger, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000*; Senegal, *Enquête Sénégalaise auprès des ménages* 1994-1995; Sierra Leone, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000*; Zambia, *Living Conditions Monitoring Survey I* 1996.

7. Fifty-six percent of children were reported in the LSMS 1995 survey as studying only. The percentage of children reported as combining school and work was negligible, although this might be explained by the wording of the survey questionnaire.⁶ One-quarter of children were reported as neither working nor attending school, a group that research elsewhere suggests is particularly responsive to policy change.⁷ The prevalence of work was higher among boys than girls at almost every age group (Figure 2).

8. While most (74 percent) of child workers fell within the 10-14 years age group, a smaller proportion of very young children were also present among the ranks of working children. One in 22 children aged seven years, one in eight children aged eight years, and one in six children aged nine years were reported as working only. These very young working children are most vulnerable to workplace abuses, and

⁴ Countries included in Figure 1 referring to a different age group and denoted with an asterisk. Different definitions and survey methodologies mean that caution must be exercised in making inter-country comparisons of child work estimates.

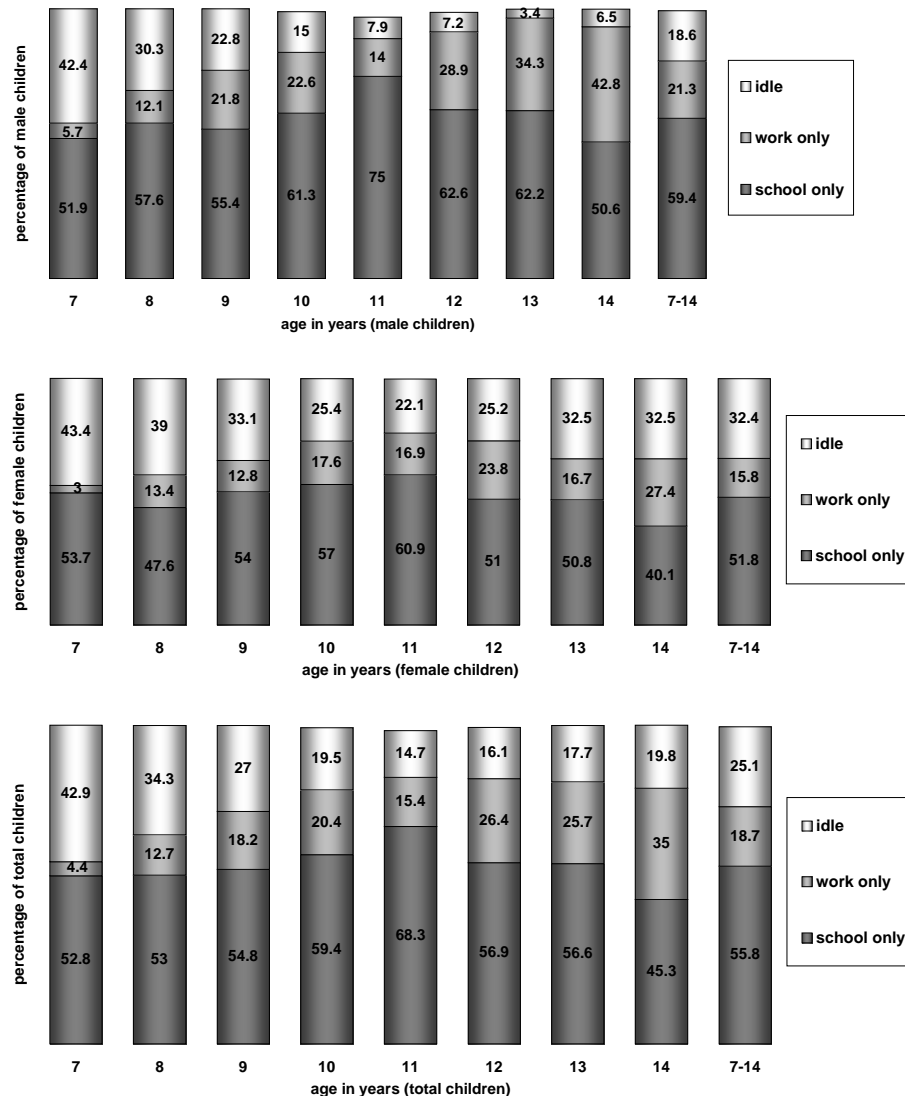
⁵ Expressed in terms of 1999 purchasing power parity.

⁶ In the 1988 LSMS survey, 32 percent of 7-14 year-olds were reported as combining school and work.

⁷ See, for example, Deb P. and Rosati F., 'Determinants of Child Labor and School Attendance: The Role of Family Unobservables', Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Project, October 2001.

most at risk of work-related ill-health or injury. They are least likely to have the opportunity to attend school. The average age of the working child was 11.1 years.

Figure 2. - Distribution of children by activity status* and sex

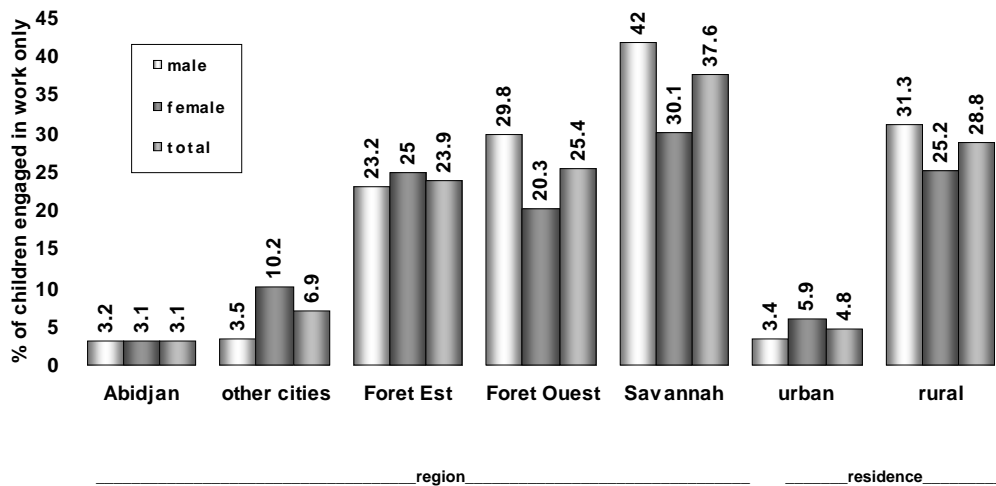


A very small percentage of children, not shown in the figure, also combine school and work.

Source: Institut National de la Statistique, *Living Standard Measurement Survey*, 1995.

9. Child work prevalence varied significantly by region (Figure 3). It was highest in the Savannah (38 percent), the country's poorest region, comprised primarily of subsistence farmers, where its main cash crops, cocoa and coffee, cannot be grown. Prevalence was lowest in Abidjan (3.1 percent), the country's largest city. As in most African countries, child work appears to be primarily a rural phenomenon in Côte d'Ivoire. LSMS 1995 reported that nearly 29 percent of rural children worked, against less the five percent of urban children (Figure 3). Girls were slightly more likely than boys to work in urban areas, but less likely than boys to work in rural areas.

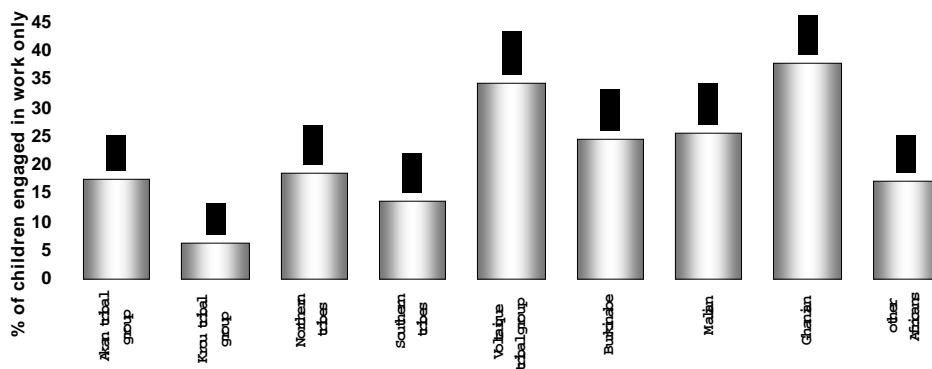
Figure 3. - Prevalence of child work by region and residence



Source: Institut National de la Statistique, *Living Standard Measurement Survey*, 1995.

10. The LSMS 1995 results also showed significant variation in child work prevalence by ethnic group and nationality (Figure 4). Child work was most prevalent among children belonging to the *Voltaïque* ethnic group (34 percent) and least prevalent among children belonging to the *Krou* ethnic group (six percent). Child work prevalence was much higher than the national average among children from Ghana (38 percent) and was also relatively high among children from Mali (26 percent) and Burkina Faso (25 percent), a reflection of the more difficult economic circumstances typically faced by foreign children and their families.

Figure 4. - Prevalence of child work by ethnic group/nationality



Source: Institut National de la Statistique, *Living Standard Measurement Survey*, 1995.

11. The LSMS 1995 figures undoubtedly constitute an underestimate of the total prevalence of child work (as defined above) in Côte d'Ivoire, for three major reasons. First, they do not include domestic chores performed by children (particularly girls), such as cleaning, cooking, childcare, and water collection, which often free other members of the household to engage in paid work. Preliminary results from MICS 2000⁸ suggest that these domestic responsibilities of children are significant – it found

⁸ République de Côte D'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples MICS2000*, rapport final, Abidjan, 15 décembre 2000.

that 11 percent of girls and nearly four percent of boys engage in household chores for an average of more than four hours per day.

12. Second, the survey results likely overstate the proportion of children reported as idle. Excluding seven and eight year-olds, who may simply have been late school entrants, some 11 percent of boys and 28 percent of girls were reported as neither attending school nor engaged in work. While some of these children may indeed have been doing nothing, given the country's prevailing poverty levels, it is likely that many were engaged in some activity contributing to household welfare. Why is idleness over-reported? Parents may falsely report their children as being idle because (at best) work by children is forbidden or (at worst) because their children are engaged in illegal or dangerous activities. Alternatively, parents may have misinterpreted the question, and reported the child as idle because he or she was not working at the time of the interview, although he or she may work during other periods.⁹

13. Third, the LSMS 1995 figures do not capture most working children living outside their households,¹⁰ including foreign working children. These children are frequently engaged in the worst forms of child work, i.e., those that are morally repugnant, dangerous to children's well-being, or even life threatening. Although small as a proportion of total child workers, the sketchy information available about children engaged in worst forms of child work suggests that their numbers are by no means insignificant. A Government newspaper, *Fraternite Matin*, for example, reported in April 2000 that there were some 200,000 street children in the country, of which 50,000 were in Abidjan.¹¹ A UNICEF study estimated that in 1999 some 15,000 Malian children between the ages of 9 and 12 were brought to work as slaves on cotton, coffee and cocoa plantations in Côte d'Ivoire.¹² A DCI/UNICEF documented 850 very young children (average age of seven years) working in exploitative conditions in small-scale gold mines in Issia (see also below).¹³

3. CHILD WORK TRENDS

14. Data limitations make it difficult to assess trends in child work in Côte d'Ivoire. Three household surveys with child work information have been conducted over the last 15 years – LSMS 1988, LSMS 1995 and MICS 2000. In the 1988 survey, 19.3 percent of children were reported as working, in the 1995 survey, 18.7 percent, and in the 2000 survey, 40 percent. But different methodologies and definitions limit the comparability of these survey results. MICS 2000, for example included household chores within the definition of child work, while the earlier two surveys employed more restrictive child work definitions. Moreover, information on the amount children work (i.e., total hours), in addition to the proportion of children working, is needed in order to assess child work trends. Of the three surveys, only the first (1988) one provides this information.

⁹ Cigno C., Rosati F.C., and Tzannatos Z., *Child Labour Handbook*. UCW Project, unpublished first draft.

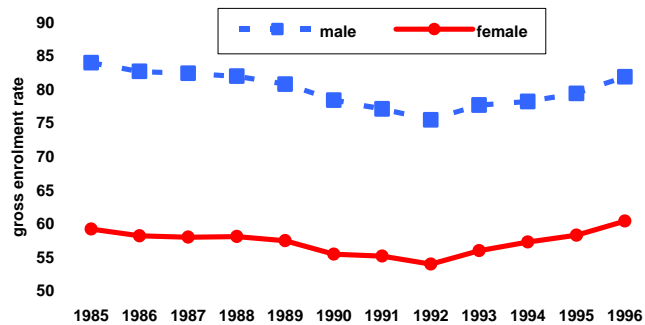
¹⁰ Some of these children may be hidden in the category of children reported as "doing nothing".

¹¹ *Fraternite Matin*, April 2000, as cited in US Department of State, *Côte d'Ivoire: Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 23 February 2000.

¹² UNICEF Mali, 1999, as cited in US Department of State, *Côte d'Ivoire: Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 23 February 2000.

¹³ Kponhassia G., *Le Travail des Enfants dans les mines de Côte d'Ivoire*, Defence for Children International (DCI) and UNICEF, September 1993, as cited in US Department of Labor, Country Profile of Côte D'Ivoire (www.dol.gov/dol/ilab/public/media/reports/iclp/sweat/cote.htm).

Figure 5. - Gross primary enrolment rate, by year and sex



Source: UNESCO, World Education Indicators, 2001

15. In the absence of direct data, other information must be relied upon to make indirect inferences concerning child work trends. School enrolment is a particularly important indicator in this context. Although school enrolment is not the “inverse” of child work,¹⁴ in the Côte d’Ivoire context, where few children appear to combine school and work, it stands to reason that major progress in increasing enrolment would also signify progress in reducing child work. UNESCO enrolment data, however, indicate that no such progress has been seen in Côte d’Ivoire. As shown in Figure 5, enrolment rates (male and female), have changed little in recent years. The gross primary enrolment rate for boys was 84 percent in 1985 and actually fell slightly to 82 percent in 1996, the most recent year for which data are available. For girls, gross primary enrolment stood at 59 percent and 61 percent in 1985 and 1996, respectively.

16. It appears safe to conclude, therefore, that there has not been any major fall in the proportion of Ivorian children working in recent years. In the absence of such a fall, and given the rapid increase of the overall child population, the absolute number of working children has undoubtedly grown.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD WORK

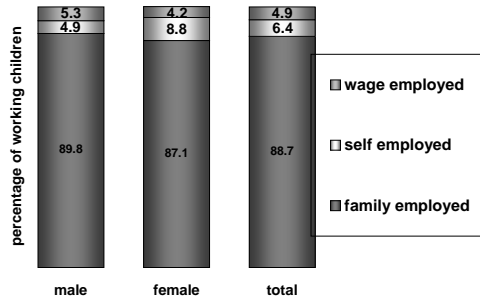
17. In what contexts, and under what conditions, do children work? The LSMS 1995 results provide at least partial answers. They indicate that most child workers are employed by their families and that relatively few working children are self-employed or work for wages (Figure 6.a). The survey results also show that almost nine out of ten working children work in the agriculture sector, with most of the remainder (seven percent) involved in trade (Figure 6.b). They show some differences by gender – a slightly higher proportion of girls than boys are self-employed and involved in trade, and a slightly lower proportion of girls compared to boys are involved in agriculture.

18. Unfortunately, however, the LSMS 1995 results do not provide other key information needed for a more complete picture of the work that children perform in Côte d’Ivoire. They do not, for example, provide information regarding children’s total labour supply (i.e., total hours worked), critical to evaluating the intensity of

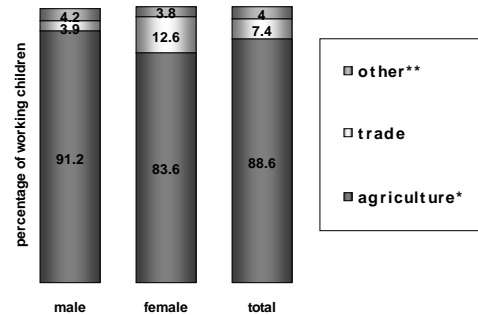
¹⁴ Children may neither attend school nor work, combine school and work, or be enrolled in school but work rather than actually attend.

work and to determining how much children's labour contributes to household income and welfare.¹⁵ They also do not look at work tasks and workplace conditions, information needed to assess the hazards and harmfulness of child work. Most

Figure 6. - (a) Distribution of working children by type of employment and sex



(b) Distribution of working children by sector of employment and sex



Notes: *Also includes fishing and animal husbandry; **Includes industry (1.2% of male working children; 0% of female working children) and transportation (0.8% of male working children; 0% of female working children).

Source: Institut National de la Statistique, LSMS 1995.

importantly, the survey results are unable to offer any useful information about the circumstances faced by children engaged in the worst forms of child work.

19. Other surveys and information sources, adopting different data collection methodologies, help fill some of these gaps. A 1988 national household survey found the average labour supply of children (excluding domestic chores) to be high – 1,598 hours per working child per year, or four hours per day, accounting for over 10 percent of the average total household labour supply. Among very poor households, working children's average annual labour supply was even higher – 1,742 hours per child, making up over one-quarter of average total household labour.¹⁶ The 1988 survey found that working children supply significant amounts of additional work performing household chores – an average of over 90 minutes per working child per day.

20. A report on children engaged in the agricultural sector, where the majority of Ivoirian working children are found, indicates that they work alongside their families in carrying out numerous tasks. On coffee plantations, tasks include stripping, collecting, sorting and grading coffee beans. On rubber plantations, children are involved in helping to dig holes, plant seeds and collect raw products. Stacking cane is a main children's task on sugar cane plantations.¹⁷ Conditions faced by children in agriculture are frequently physically strenuous, and hours are long, particularly during harvest season, leaving little time for play or study. Exposure to dangerous pesticides is common on many farms. Because they work as part of family units, children are not paid directly for their work.

21. Reports on children engaged in worst forms of child work in Côte D'Ivoire, though sketchy and often anecdotal, highlight the extreme, exploitative and abusive

¹⁵ Cigno C., Rosati F.C., and Tzannatos Z., op. cit.

¹⁶ 1988 Côte d'Ivoire Living Standards Survey (CILSS), as cited in Grootaert C., *Child Labour in Côte d'Ivoire: Incidence and Determinants*, Policy Research Working Paper, The World Bank, Social Development Department, Washington, March 1998.

¹⁷ US Dept. of Labor, *Child Labor in Commercial Agriculture*, 1995, as cited in Education to Combat Abusive Child Labour Activity, *Child Labor Country Brief: Côte d'Ivoire*.

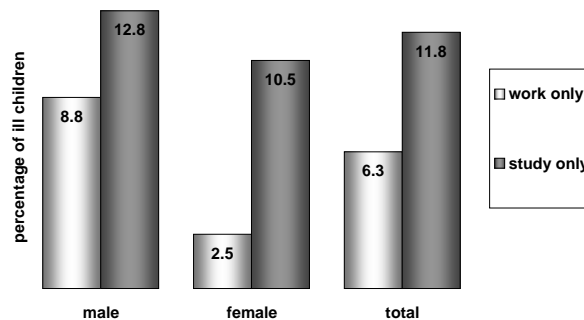
conditions these children face. Children forced to work as slaves on the cotton, coffee and cocoa plantations in the country are among the worst off. Media investigations reveal they can be subjected to subhuman treatment – beaten, kept locked up in crowded sheds at night, sometimes with their clothes confiscated, poorly fed and made to work more than 12 hours per day.¹⁸ Most are from neighbouring countries – Mali, as well as Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo – lured through intermediaries by false promises of easy and lucrative work.

22. Other groups of working children also suffer serious rights violations. Reports indicate that many children working as domestics face slave-like conditions, and are subject to sexual abuse, harassment and other forms of maltreatment from their employers.¹⁹ A study of children working in informal gold mining suggest that they also face harsh and hazardous circumstances, working long hours in uncomfortable positions, without access to regular meals and often relying on contaminated water.²⁰ There are reliable reports of children working in ‘sweatshop’ conditions in small workshops,²¹ and of an increase in children involved in prostitution.²² Other reports document the phenomenon of Ivoirian children being trafficked to African, European and Middle Eastern countries for sexual and other forms of exploitation.²³

5. IMPACT OF CHILD WORK ON CHILD WELFARE

23. The LSMS 1995 survey results do not suggest that working children are worse off health wise than children who do not work. Indeed, the survey suggests, if anything, the opposite to be true – almost twice as many non-working children compared to working children were reported as being ill in the two weeks prior to the survey (Figure 7).

Figure 7. - Reported illness among children, by sex and activity status



Source: Institut National de la Statistique, LSMS 1995.

¹⁸ See, for example, Raghavan S. and Chatterjee S., ‘A taste of slavery: How your chocolate may be tainted’, ‘A taste of slavery: Life on a slave farm’, ‘A taste of slavery: Lured by a promise of money’, and ‘A taste of slavery: Two boys, two years, no pay’, Knight Ridder Newspapers, Sunday, June 24, 2001.

¹⁹ AIDF and press reports, as cited in US Department of State, *Côte d'Ivoire: Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 23 February 2000.

²⁰ Kponhassia G., op. cit.

²¹ US Department of State, *Côte d'Ivoire: Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 23 February 2000.

²² US Dept of Labour, Prostitution of children, 1996, as cited in Global March Against Child Labour, Worst Forms of Child Labour Data: Côte D'Ivoire (www.globalmarch.org).

²³ US Dept of State, Trafficking in persons report, 12 July 2001.

24. However, caution should be exercised in reading too much into this result, particularly in the absence of corroborating data from other surveys. The relationship between child work and health is complex, and often difficult to disentangle empirically. The negative impact of child work on health, for example, may be obscured by the selection of the healthiest children for work. Health perceptions may differ across population groups, and a lower rate of reported illness among working children may reflect a lower consciousness of morbidity rather than a better state of health. Much of the relationship between child health and work is likely to be dynamic (i.e., current health is affected by past as much as present work, and current work affects future as much as present health), a fact not captured by measuring reported illness over just a two-week period.²⁴

25. The health consequences of different types of child work are also likely to be different, and these differences are obscured when looking at prevalence of reported illness averaged across all child workers. The results of LSMS 1995 underscore this point. While only around nine percent of all male working children were reported as being ill, rates of reported illness were almost 60 percent among male children working in industry and 43 percent among male children working in trade, pointing to the need for special attention to working children in these sectors. LSMS 1995 did not cover children engaged in the worst forms of child work, for whom the adverse health consequences of work are undoubtedly greatest.

26. One measure of the developmental impact of work is the degree to which it interferes with school attendance and achievement. The LSMS 1995 survey indicated that virtually no working children were able to combine schooling with their work responsibilities, and that child workers had very little formal schooling. Ninety-two percent of children reported as 'working only' had received no formal schooling, and of the remainder, none had made it past the primary stage. But working instead of attending school does not necessarily represent a total developmental loss for children. Some types of child work may be a valuable form of learning by doing, while at the same time the developmental benefit of schooling may be limited by its poor quality.

27. Beyond reported illness and school attendance, little information is available regarding the impact of child work on child welfare in the Côte d'Ivoire context. Further information is needed of child work's influence on the material aspects of child welfare, such as nutritional status, consumption (on food and clothes as well as on medical care), lifetime health prospects, and future earning capacity, as well as on the non-material aspects of child welfare, such as parental attention, freedom to play, and moral and social development. Many of these issues pose large measurement problems, and have only scarcely begun to be investigated by child labour researchers, in Côte D'Ivoire or elsewhere.

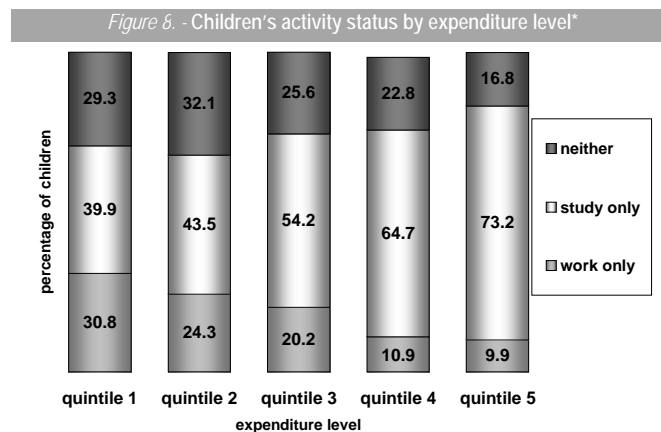
6. DETERMINANTS OF CHILD WORK

28. Why do children engage in work? As most children (excluding those that live on their own) exercise little control over their time allocations, a more relevant question is why parents choose to engage their children in work rather than sending them to school or leaving them idle.

²⁴ O'Donnell O., Rosati F.C., and van Doorslaer E., *Child Labour and Health: Evidence and Research Issues*, Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Project, 12 December 2001.

29. A simple empirical analysis²⁵ using the LSMS 1995 dataset points to some of the factors influencing parents' choices. It indicates that a higher level of household income increases the probability of children attending school and decreases their probability of working, evidence of the often-cited role of poverty in the decision to make children work. Figure 8 also illustrates this relationship between household income, school and work. The empirical analysis indicates, however, that the magnitude of the effect of income on child work is only moderate. Similarly, a multivariate analysis²⁶ using the LSMS 1988 dataset found an inverse relationship between income and child work, but that the relationship was relatively weak.²⁷ These findings argue for caution against overstating the importance of income as a determinant of child work and economic growth as a solution.

30. The empirical analysis indicated that an increase in direct school costs, another often-cited factor for parents' choice of child work instead of schooling, actually had the opposite effect, increasing the likelihood of schooling and decreasing the likelihood of work. How can this seemingly counterintuitive finding, which also arises in empirical studies in other countries,²⁸ be explained? One possibility is that higher school costs are related to higher perceived school quality, making parents more willing to invest in their children's education. A more complicated possible explanation lies in the relationship between changes in school costs and household fertility decisions. Simply put, a rise in schooling costs means that the unit cost of children also rises, leading to a decrease in parents' desired number of children. Fewer children, in turn, means less pressure on household resources, allowing parents to transform some current consumption into future consumption by taking children out of work and putting them into school instead.²⁹



*Quintile 1 represents lowest expenditure category and 'quintile 5' the highest.

Source: Institut National de la Statistique, *Living Standard Measurement Survey*, 1995.

31. The empirical analysis also pointed to other important explanatory variables. An increase in the size of a household's cultivable land decreases the probability of

²⁵ Employing a multinomial logit model.

²⁶ Also employing a multinomial logit model.

²⁷ Coulombe, 1995, as cited in Canagarajah S. and Nielsen H.S., *Child Labor and Schooling in Africa: A Comparative Study*, Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 9916, The World Bank, July 1999.

²⁸ See, for example, Rosati F.C. and Tzannatos Z., 'Child Labor in Vietnam: An Economic Analysis', World Bank Working Paper, Washington D.C., 2000.

²⁹ Cigno C., Rosati F.C., and Tzannatos Z., op. cit.

studying, presumably because more land raises the returns to child work, thereby increasing the relative cost of schooling. Children of fathers who possess a diploma are less likely to work and more likely to attend school, perhaps because educated fathers have a better knowledge of the returns to education and how these returns can be realised. Owning land increases the probability of attending school, likely the reflection of a wealth effect. Finally, the empirical analysis indicated that older children and male children are more likely to attend school than younger children and female children.

32. But child work is a complex phenomenon and the factors listed above clearly represent only a very partial list of determinants. Better data and more in-depth analysis are needed for a more complete understanding of why parents opt to involve their children in work. Demand factors, not captured by household surveys, also need to be better understood. The unique circumstances causing children's involvement in worst forms of child work, also not captured by traditional household surveys, is an area requiring particular research attention.

7. NATIONAL ACTION ADDRESSING CHILD WORK

33. Many basic legal protections for child labourers exist in Côte d'Ivoire. The law states that the minimum age for light agricultural work is 12 years, and that children aged 12-14 years must have parental consent and cannot work for more than four and a half hours per day. For other sectors, the basic minimum working age is 14 years, with the exception of domestic work (12 years), light underground work and work on scaffolding (16 years), hazardous work involving machinery in motion, glasswork or ship work (18 years), and, for girls, working in street stalls or using pedal-driven sewing machines (16 years).³⁰ The law prohibits forced and bonded child labour. Education is compulsory up to the age of 16 years.

*Table 1. - Ratification status of UN conventions relating to child labour**

Convention	Ratification Status	Ratification Date
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	Yes	02/04/1991
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999	No	--
ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age of Employment, 1973	No	--
ILO Convention No. 123 on Minimum Age (Underground Work), 1965	No	--
ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957	Yes	05/05/1961
ILO Convention No. 59 on Minimum Age (Industry) Revised, 1937	No	--
ILO Convention No. 5 on Minimum Age (Industry), 1919	Yes	11/12/1960
ILO Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour, 1932	Yes	11/21/1960

*Information is valid as of 15 March 2002. The latest information on ratification status can be found at <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/app/index.cfm?lang=EN> and at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/ratification/map/index.htm>

Source: International Labour Organisation

³⁰ US Department of Labor, Country Profile of Côte D'Ivoire (www.dol.gov/dol/ilab/public/media/reports/iclp/sweat/cote.htm).

34. Gaps, however, exist. There are no legal provisions, for example, specifically banning the trafficking of persons,³¹ or specifically covering the sexual exploitation of children for commercial purposes.³² The government has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but not other important international child labour conventions such as ILO No. 182 (Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour) and No. 138 (Minimum Age of Employment) (Table 1).

35. Structures and institutions for implementing and monitoring child labour laws are also inadequate, owing to limited material and human resources. Outside the civil service and large multinational companies, legislative protections are rarely enforced, as the evidence presented in the preceding sections makes clear. In any case, legislative measures alone, however well enforced, are insufficient to tackle child labour, in Côte d'Ivoire or elsewhere, because they fail to address the various supply and demand factors that underlie the phenomenon. Indeed, the literature points increasingly to the conclusion that legal actions alone risk to actually exacerbate, rather than ameliorate, the problem, acting to push it underground where it becomes the province of the criminal classes.³³

36. The government has introduced various programmes and measures relevant to the issue of child labour. In 1996, for example, it announced steps aimed at reducing the population of street children, including holding parents legally responsible for their runaway children and the opening of training centres where these children are able to learn a vocation. One such centre opened in Dabou in July 1999. Since 1998, the government has attempted to develop special technical and vocational training programmes for young school drop-outs. In August 2000, the government signed the Bouake agreement with Mali, committing both States to action to address the cross-border trafficking of Malian children. It has also established a national committee against the trafficking and exploitation of minors, and in January 2001 completed and validated a national emergency action plan for the fight against cross-border trafficking in children.³⁴ The government has supported the creation of NGOs such as the Abidjan Legal Centre for the Defence of Children that support children's rights.

37. Limited resources and institutional capacity, however, have made many of these efforts slow to get off the ground and difficult to fully implement. What is more, a policy framework for dealing specifically with the child work phenomenon remains lacking in the country.

The government has also begun to introduce reforms aimed at strengthening the education and health care systems, each of which exerts an important influence on child work. The challenges, however, remain immense in both these areas. School facilities, particularly in rural areas, are inadequate in number and in a deteriorating state of repair. Classrooms are overcrowded and short of learning materials. School curricula are inappropriate to learning needs.³⁵ Teachers are poorly trained and in short supply, in part because of the toll that HIV/AIDS has taken on their ranks. Health care provision is limited and unevenly distributed. Health care facilities, where available, are frequently poorly equipped and under-staffed. The turnover of health personnel is high, making it difficult to maintain adequate training levels. Addressing these and other challenges facing the education and health sectors will be critical to achieving significant progress in reducing child work.

³¹ US Department of State, *op. cit.*

³² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States parties due in 1993, Addendum, Côte d'Ivoire, CRC/C/8/Add.41, 27 April 2000.*

³³ Cigno C., Rosati F.C., and Tzannatos Z., *op. cit.*

³⁴ US Department of State, *op. cit.*

³⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *op. cit.*