

MEASURING CHILD LABOR USE : THE METHOD MATTERS



Despite ongoing public and private efforts, the cocoa sector remains under pressure from European and U.S. legislators, as well as civil society, to reduce the use of child labor on cocoa farms. Traceability standards, which aim to increase farmers' income and prevent child labor, are a key tool to address this challenge. **But what if current survey methods are unable to provide an unbiased measure of the use of child labor on cocoa farms ?**

MARINE JOUVIN
Bordeaux School of Economics (BSE)



Introduction

- In the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire, both government and traceability standards ban child labor, particularly for hazardous tasks on cocoa farms.
- When asked about sensitive topics, people are likely to exhibit social desirability bias: they are likely to lie to avoid negative economic, social, or legal consequences.
- Unlike direct questioning, indirect questioning methods help overcome this social desirability bias.
- This paper provides the first use of an indirect questioning method to measure child labor.**

Objectives

- 1 Use an indirect questioning method to measure** more accurately the proportion of certified cocoa farmers who relied on **child labor** to perform hazardous tasks on their farms, during the past 12 months.
- 2 Identify characteristics associated with high child labor use.**

Methodology

- 1** Use of the **List Experiment (LE)**, an indirect questioning method, to measure the use of child labor.
- 2** Comparing the LE estimate to that of the direct question.
- 3** Multivariate analysis to identify characteristics associated with high levels of child labor.

Data

4 458 certified Ivorian cocoa farmers surveyed in 2019-2020

Located in :

- 15** cooperatives
- 7** cocoa-growing regions

Findings



Characteristics associated with higher levels of child labor



EDUCATION

The farmer has no education or low levels of education



HIGH NEED FOR LABOR

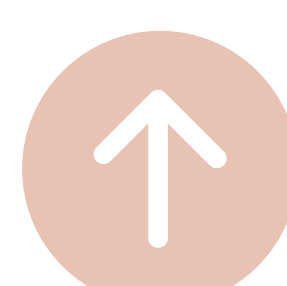
- 1** High cocoa income : with fixed prices : \nearrow cocoa income = \nearrow cocoa production \rightarrow \nearrow labor need
- 2** Low number of adults in the household



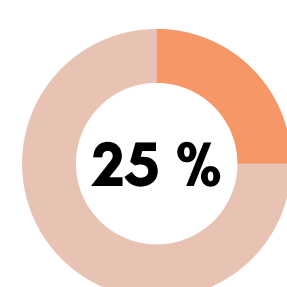
FARM REMOTENESS

- The cocoa farm is far from :
- 1** roads or school infrastructures
 - 2** protected forests, where it is more likely to be monitored

Conclusion



The prevalence of child labor use estimated using the indirect measure is twice as large as the one from direct questioning.



24% of cocoa farmers reported using children for harvesting and pod-breaking, 21% for farm preparation, and 25% employed and paid a child under 16 to perform any task on their cocoa farm.



Highest levels of child labor use are found on the most remote cocoa farms, far from roads and school facilities.



Cocoa stakeholders should use both direct and indirect questioning methods.



Certification does not address some of the important factors positively correlated with the use of child labor.

