

# A STUDY ON CHILD LABOUR AND IT'S GENDER DIMENSIONS IN SUGARCANE GROWING IN UGANDA



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# 1. SETTING THE CONTEXT - OUR MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Sugar is a pervasive commodity, known to be found in all households, globally. Yet, what is not so known is the exploitation of children in sugarcane growing to produce it. Also, while the presence of child labour in cocoa or the chocolate industry is now fairly known across different cohorts with multiple initiatives to address this issue, the same cannot be said for the sugarcane sector, with sugar being a key ingredient of chocolates. Among other things, there is still a need for documented evidence on nature of child labour at country level in this sub-sector, the numbers involved, the gender dimensions<sup>1</sup>, etc., followed by sustainable multi-stakeholder driven interventions targeted at addressing the root causes of it.

It is against this backdrop that Global March Against Child Labour (Global March), a southern-led civil society organisation, in its commitment to end child labour is striving to also place attention and resources on the not so “popular” agricultural supply chains sub-sectors for child labour elimination such as spices, shrimp and now sugarcane. In 2019, Global March initiated its work on child labour in sugarcane sector, by simultaneously conducting research on the issue in India and Uganda. This document pertains to the research on child labour in sugarcane growing carried out in Uganda with National Organization of Trade Union (NOTU), our member organisation. It presents the key findings of the research and recommendations. The detailed research findings can be accessed <[here](#)>.

It is also our endeavour and hope that efforts to address child labour in this neglected agricultural sector will be prioritised and with urgency as the current ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is pushing and/or keeping many children in work due school closures, increased vulnerability of families and other factors.

## 1a) Introduction

Uganda is one of the largest producers of sugar in East Africa, exporting it to many other countries in the region. Sugar and confectionery are amongst the top 10 goods exported from Uganda contributing over USD 100 million to its exports<sup>2</sup>. Yet, the story behind this sweet crop is anything but sweet with the wide presence and use of child labour in its production. Evidence of this is the mention of the same across news articles of the country, child labour/human rights reports and USDOL’s annual lists of good produced with child and/or forced labour since recent years, among other things. However, there is limited action on the same even though certain activities in sugarcane sector in Uganda have been banned for use of child labour in the national’s hazardous list of work as per legislation. There is also no upto date and detailed research or study on the nature or the magnitude of the issue in the country. This in brief sums up the need-gap and our motivation on undertaking a research in Uganda on child labour in sugarcane production.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO Report 2017

<sup>2</sup> <https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/uganda/tradestats>

## 1b) Objectives and Intended Uses of the Research

The overall objectives of this research are :

- To document the prevalence of child labour in sugarcane production in Uganda, focusing on the Busoga sub-region (Eastern region)
- To identify and analyse push and pull factors contributing to child labour in sugarcane production
- To recommend policy and practice measures to address the practice of child labour in the production of sugarcane

The specific objective of the research is to understand the issue of child labour in sugarcane production from a gender lens, i.e., understanding and analysing the gender-based challenges and differences with respect to lived realities among child labourers, ie., girls and boys engaged in this agricultural sub-sector.

The findings of this research are intended to serve as evidence that can inform and strengthen national and global efforts on eliminating child labour in sugarcane and other agricultural supply chains. In addition, this research will enable in making a case why gender approach in the discourse of child labour is important, supporting the work of the anti-child labour community.

## 2. APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Given that child labour is a complex issue caused and manifested as a result of intersection of various social, cultural and economic factors, a multi-dimensional qualitative approach was taken for this research. This involved an in-depth consultative process of engagement with stakeholders at national, district and community levels.

### **Stakeholders consulted in the Research**

Children, parents, sugarcane outgrowers, middlemen, harvesters, transporters, sugarcane industrial workers, sugarcane industrialists, teachers, police child and family protection unit, representatives from community based organisations, civil society, International Labour Organization, central and local governments, the private sector, workers' unions and employers organisations, and others.

Secondary data, viz., both qualitative and quantitative was also used and triangulated with the primary data for analysis of the findings. Literature review included policy documents such as Uganda's National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2040, National Child Labour Policy, National Employment Policy, National List of hazardous forms of child labour, National Sugar Policy 2010, Sugar Bill 2016, and various child labour studies.

In terms of selection of the geographical area this research focused on the Eastern region, i.e., the Busoga sub-region, being the major producer of sugarcane, though other regions also grow this crop. Further, the research was conducted in 4 districts selected out of the total 11 districts of the Busoga sub-region, viz., Jinja, Kaliro, Kamuli, and Mayuge, and 12 sub-counties (3 sub-county per district), chosen due to the presence of high number of children in child labour in sugarcane, as per various reports<sup>3</sup> and stakeholder consultations.

**Table 1: Selected Districts and Sub-counties for the Research**

No.	District	Selected sub-counties
1	Jinja	Buyengo, Busede and Kakira
2	Kaliro	Bumanya, Budomero and Namugongo
3	Kamuli	Magogo, Bulopa and Wankole
4	Mayuge	Baitambogwe, Wairasa and Immanyiro

The respondents were selected via purposive sampling. Following data collection tools were used:

**Table 2 : Data Collection Tools Used**

Tool used	Purpose
Key informant interviews (KIIs)	To collect opinions from policy implementers (national and district levels), UN agencies, NGOs, workers and employer organisations, sugarcane industrialists
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	To have inputs of community members - children and adults. Separate FGDs were conducted for adults and children (covering out of school and school going children), and for each of the selected sub-counties
On the spot observations	For children being employed directly on outgrowers farms, i.e., observing children in their work environment to determine the extent of dangers and risks faced by them

Reflective, qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in analysing the research findings. Further, necessary measures for quality control and ethical consideration were taken, i.e., obtaining informed consent in all data collection procedures.

The gender approach for this research was based on the Gender Roles Framework (also known as the Harvard Gender Analytical Framework) suggested by Overholt, Anderson, Cloud and Austin, (1985). This Framework was used in the research to understand the gender-based

<sup>3</sup> The community agenda, Publication May 2018

challenges and differences among child labourers, both girls and boys, in analysing three dimension: the socio-economic activity profile (who does what, when and for how long); the access and control profile (who has access to and control over resources and benefits); and the factors that influence the gender differences identified (past and present opportunities and constraints in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres). Further, activity profile and daily activity clock (24 hour schedule) were the 2 tools used for this Framework, explained below:

**Table 3: Tools used in the Gender Framework**

<b>Activity Profile</b>	Used for investigating division of labour in sugarcane production. It categorised different activities in terms of productive and reproductive activities among boys and girls, and showed who does what, when (seasonally or daily) and where (at home, on farm or at another workplace)
<b>Daily Activity Clock</b>	Used to profile and analyse the roles of boy or girl children during 24 hours of day and night time for children involved in sugarcane production. It helped to explain how boy and girl children spend a typical day from the time they wake up until they go to bed.

It may be noted that this research was mainly conducted for the Busoga sub-region (selected for reasons cited in this summary) and field work was done in select districts. Though the sample was limited, sufficient measures were taken to ensure that it is representative of the relevant population, ensuring the validity of the findings. Thus, we also recommend to use this research to guide a national and region-wide study to ascertain the magnitude of child labour in sugarcane growing in the country. Refer to the recommendation section.

## 3. Child Labour in Uganda and in Sugarcane Growing - An Overview

### 3a) Child Labour in Uganda

According to the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) 2016/17 carried out by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)<sup>4</sup>, child labour is a serious problem in Uganda with 2.048 million children engaged in some form of child labour, constituting 14% of all children nationally. Several factors contribute to the prevalence of child labour in Uganda, viz., high levels of poverty, impact of HIV/AIDS, growing levels of orphan-hood, negative cultural norms, high and prohibitive costs of education, famines, food insecurity and persisting effects of war and conflict which together make households and communities vulnerable, threatening their livelihoods and thus pushing children into work.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/03\\_20182016\\_UNHS\\_FINAL\\_REPORT.pdf](https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/03_20182016_UNHS_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)

The educational achievement of these children is at risk because they either do not attend school or their schooling suffers due to long hours dedicated to work. Child labour is found in agriculture, transport, mining and related sectors, fishing, construction, urban informal sector, domestic service and in commercial sexual exploitation. Further, while there are more boys than girls in child labour, i.e., 15.4% versus 11.9%; child labour is concentrated in rural area vis-a-vis urban areas. For this research, it is interesting to note that in terms of the regional distribution, the highest number of working children is in the Eastern Uganda while the lowest number is in Kampala region. Lastly, as per the National Labour Force Survey (UNLS) 2016/17 conducted by UBOS<sup>5</sup>, about 92% of working children are engaged in agriculture which has implications for child labour elimination efforts. Child labour in agriculture has been reported in tea, coffee, vanilla, tobacco, and ofcourse sugarcane as well.

The Government of Uganda has ratified and domesticated a number of instrumental United Nations and Conventions (including ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour) into national legislation and policies which guide the country's efforts on child labour elimination. Salient features of national legislation and policies on child labour :

- the Employment Act 2006 : **defines child labour, permissible light work and prohibited hazardous work**
- the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations 2012<sup>6</sup> : **further defines child labour, permissible light work, hazardous work, and list of hazardous occupations and activities not permitted for employment of children**
- the Children (Amendment) Act 2016 : **establishes 16 as a minimum age for work for children**
- the National Child Labour Policy 2006
- National Action Plan on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour 2017/18 – 2021/22 : **lays down the plan to eliminate child labour in this 5 year period through an itegrated and inter-sectoral approach**
- the National Constitution 1995 Article 34(4)

At the national level, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development coordinates the child labour effort, while at the local levels<sup>7</sup>, i.e., district levels, labour officer is the responsible authority for child labour elimination. Labour function in this sense is decentralised where all districts have to recruit a labour officer who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the law and providing technical advice to the relevant authorities with respect to labour rights, including child labour.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/10\\_2018Report\\_national\\_labour\\_force\\_survey\\_2016\\_17.pdf](https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/10_2018Report_national_labour_force_survey_2016_17.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/statutory-instrument/2012/17>

<sup>7</sup> At the local government level, Uganda is divided into districts that comprises sub-counties, parishes and villages and either one or more sub-counties. Local governments implement national and local policies and deliver services within their area of jurisdiction, aimed at bringing services nearer to the people and ensure people actively participate in the governance of their country.

Despite a strong legal and policy framework on child labour, challenges remain on the ground ranging from its poor enforcement of the framework at district level, to inadequate labour officers, inadequate coordination amongst Ministries/departments, and inadequate data and resources. For instance, there are just 83 labour officers<sup>8</sup> out of the required 134 responsible for managing the labour function that includes - protection and promotion of labour and employment rights and child labour. However, Uganda's participation as a Pathfinder Country of Alliance 8.7<sup>9</sup> to prioritise and accelerate efforts to end child labour as per SDG target 8.7, is a welcome and well-received step that provides an opportunity to make further progress on reduction of child labour.

### 3b) Child Labour in Sugarcane Production in Uganda

#### *Sugarcane industry and production in Uganda*

A glimpse of the sugar industry, sugarcane growing areas and the production model in Uganda will provide the relevant context to understand child labour in this sub-sector.

Uganda is the largest producer of granular brown sugar in the East Africa Community<sup>10</sup>, with sugarcane being grown in all regions by sugar producing companies. Earlier, the crop was grown in the Central, Eastern and Western Region (see Table 4 below of the key sugar manufacturers in Uganda). In recent years the Northern Region is also producing sugarcane with the establishment of Atiak Sugar Factory in 2016 in Amuru District.

While child labour instances in sugarcane sector have been found in the Central (Mukono<sup>11</sup> district) and Eastern Regions (Jinja<sup>12</sup>, Luuka<sup>13</sup>, Mayuge<sup>14</sup>) (see Table below), given the above, there is a possibility that such instances also occur in the other regions, though not documented still date.

**Table 4: Key sugar manufacturers, their output, market share, and region of operation, as of December 2014**

Rank	Name of manufacturer	Output <sup>15</sup> (metric tonnes)	Market share	Region
1	Kakira Sugar Works	180,000	41.06%	Eastern
2	Kinyara Sugar Works Limited	120,360	27.45%	Western
3	Sugar Corporation of Uganda Limited	73,500	16.77%	Central
4	Sugar & Allied Industries Limited	29,500	6.73%	Eastern
5	Others	35,000	7.98%	
	Total	438,360	100.00%	

<sup>8</sup> Key informant interview with Principal Labour Officer Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2019

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.alliance87.org>

<sup>10</sup> Philomena Matsiko, Maryanne Gicobi, Emmanuel Onyango and Johnson Kanamugire (2 May 2017) "Why price of refined sugar has surged across East Africa". The East African. Nairobi. Retrieved 10 May 2017

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.wvi.org/uganda/article/over-500-children-are-engaged-child-labour-mukono-district>

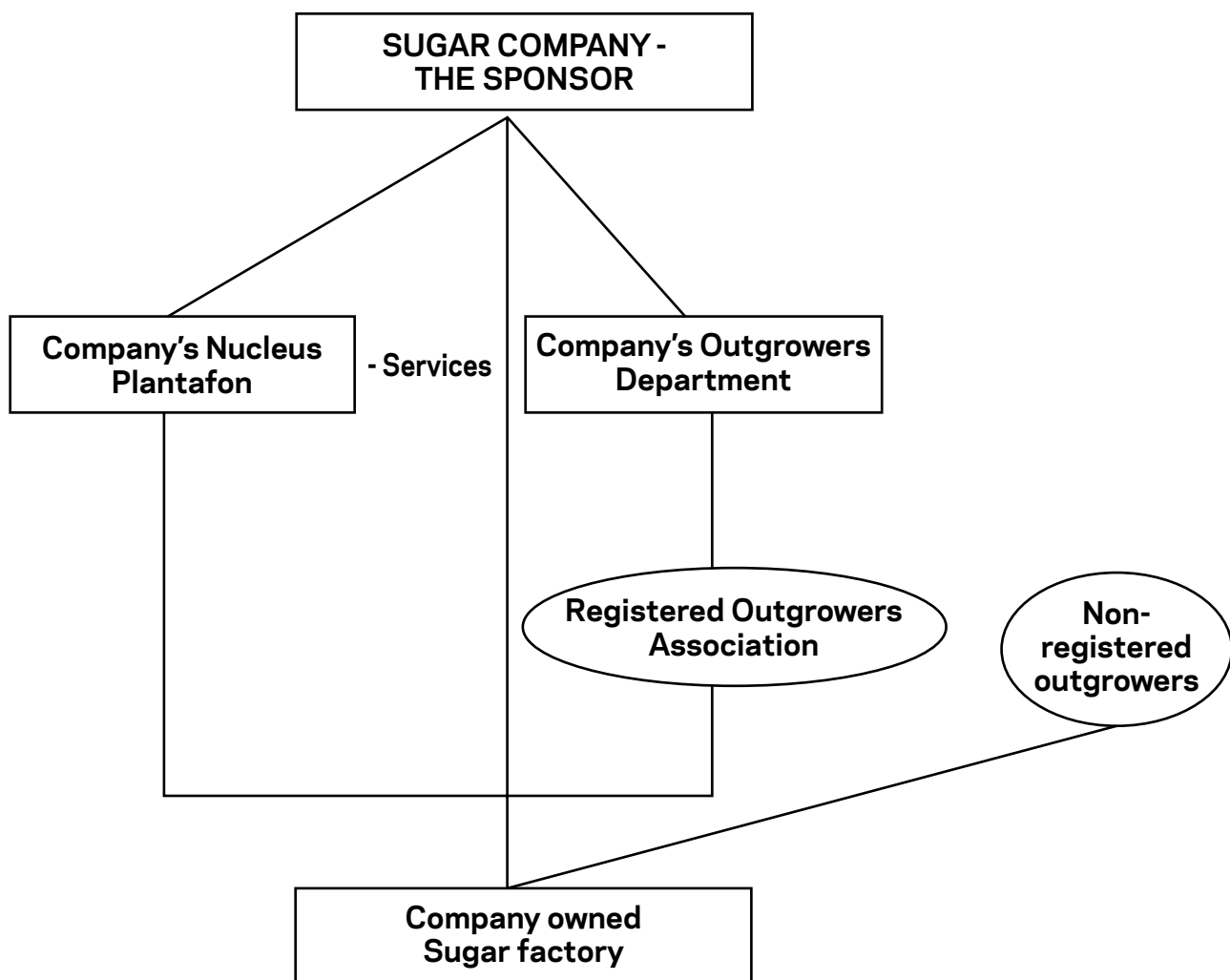
<sup>12</sup> <https://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/jinja-district-urged-to-pass-ordinance-on-child-labour>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Luuka-pupils-abandon-school-work-sugarcane-plantations/688334-3998526-icq06n/index.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.thecommunityagenda.com/index.php/youth-women/item/151-child-labour-defilement-very-high-in-mayuge-sugarcane-plantations/151-child-labour-defilement-very-high-in-mayuge-sugarcane-plantations>

<sup>15</sup> Totals have been rounded off. Source: Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives 2014

The sugar production model in Uganda is a mixed model that combines the element of central and contract production, as can be seen in the diagram below. The sugar company owns and manages a centralised estate (nucleus) plantation and the processing plant (sugar factory), where the estate is often fairly large and supplies about 50% (or more) of sugarcane to the mill (sugar factory), in order to provide some guarantee of output quantity. Additionally, the sugar company purchases the harvested sugarcane from farmers (via contract farming), processes, packages and markets it. The farmer to become an outgrower (company's contractor) has to register with the company and he/she receives a quota of expected production and quality depending on the soil productivity and other technical indicators fixed by the company. The company secures sugarcane quantity and quality from the outgrowers by the provision of standard land preparation, seedlings, agrochemicals, supervising production and technical assistance to all outgrowers; those support services costs are deducted from the total price to be paid to small farmers at the harvest time. The company can also provide "aid" to outgrowers - if it is required by the outgrower - loans in advance for upkeep and harvesting and transport services to the mills. There are also non-registered farmers (non-registered outgrowers) who supply sugarcane to companies, though these farmers do not have any market guarantee from the companies. It may be noted that many of the majority of the outgrowers are smallholder farmers, highly dependent on sugar companies for inputs as well as sale of their produce.





An overview of the production model of sugarcane in Uganda, triangulated with the literature review and the data collected via this research, reveals that child labour in this commercial/cash crop exists not in the company-owned plantations and factories which are highly formal, somewhat mechanised and regulated. Rather, it has been found at the outgrower level in the contracted farms/outgrowers, both registered and non-registered with the sugar companies. Thus, **the extent to which sugar companies rely on outgrowers for sugarcane vis-a-vis its own estate/plantation is an indicator of the presence of child labour in their supply chains.**

#### *Child labour in sugarcane production in Busoga Region*

As mentioned earlier, sugarcane production takes place across Uganda, with nearly 50% being produced in the Eastern Region (refer to Table 4 above). This explains the focus on the Eastern Region in this research, and within it, the Busoga sub-region: the 'mecca' of sugarcane production, with the presence of 6 sugar companies across 50% of its districts (refer to Table 5 below). It may be noted that to address the sugar production deficit that had hit the country, in 2011 the government of Uganda licensed a number of new sugar manufacturers with 3 in the Busoga sub-region alone (refer to Table 5 below)

**Table 5: Presence of Sugar Companies in Busoga Sub-region**

S.No	District of Busoga Sub-Region	Name of the Sugar Company
1	Bugiri	Bugiri Sugar Company - started under government license to address sugar production deficit in 2011
2	Buyende	
3	Iganga	
4	Jinja	Kakira Sugar Ltd - producing almost 50% of all the sugar and based in Busoga region
5	Kaliro	Sugar & Allied Industries Limited (also known as Kaliro Sugar Limited)
6	Kamuli	Kamuli Sugar Factory and Kenlon Sugar Factory - started under government license to address sugar production deficit in 2011
7	Luuka	
8	Mayuge	Mayuge Sugar Industries
9	Namayingo	
10	Namutumba	

### **Box 1: Unintended consequences of promoting this cash crop in Busoga sub-region**

The government has adopted an open door policy for investment in the sugar industry and therefore, many more investors have been attracted to the already specialised sugarcane production region, i.e, Busoga as can be seen above with 3 new sugar companies operating in the sub-region. Promoting sugarcane production as a cash crop has had several consequences for the sub-region that range from issues of food insecurity, land grabbing, child labour to name a few, with the inadequate regulation of the industry contributing to it. The lack of relevant laws, regulations and effective framework for controlling the sugar industry in Uganda as a whole has led to instead of producing the required sugarcane commercially, on a large scale by landowners who have hundreds of unutilised acreage of land; by very poor, small households with 0.5 – 2.0 acres of land who are heavily involved in sugarcane production at the cost of household food production hence famine, extremely poor living conditions, and occasionally death particularly of children, the elderly and pregnant women.

The National Sugar Policy in 2010, was brought out with the objective to institutionalise harmony among all sugar industry stakeholders to promote and sustain steady industrial growth and development, and transform and diversify the sugar sector to become competitive and modernised. However, till date the policy is poorly enforced, with reports of sugarcane manufacturers being licensed to operate closer together and with greater total area of sugarcane coverage than permitted. For example, this has led to the establishment of Mayuge Sugar Ltd within 10 km radius in a straight line from Kakira Sugar Works, in effect creating a situation where the Kakira Sugarcane registration and control measures lose meaning because if Kakira will not from farmers, Mayuge will, thereby discouraging Kakira Sugar from wasting resources on non-effective and unpopular policies such as ensuring community food security through discouraging micro sugarcane growing.

References-<https://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/blog/unintended-consequences-of-cash-crop-production-in-eastern-uganda-demonstrate-the-need-for-holistic-thinking-and-multi-pronged-action/>

Sugarcane Cash & Food Insecurity In Busoga Region of Uganda: Mrs Maureen Faith Kyalya Waluube Presidential Advisor & Coordinator/ Poverty Alleviation/ Busoga Region, 2013  
The National Sugar Policy 2010

Cases of use of children in child labour in sugarcane production in the sub-region have been often reported in media, by NGOs, and by other studies. A qualitative study carried out by Busoga Poverty Alleviation Programme in 2013 highlighted that out of 244 families visited in the study with each of the household visited having an average of 6 to 15 children, child labour was rampant, especially during harvesting of sugarcane<sup>16</sup>. Further, as per ANPPCAN Uganda Chapter in 2018, at least 1008 cases of child labour were recorded in Mayuge, mainly from sugarcane plantations in the last 2 years. Data from Mayuge Central Police Station indicated

<sup>16</sup> Sugarcane Cash & Food Insecurity In Busoga Region of Uganda: Mrs Maureen Faith Kyalya Waluube Presidential Advisor & Coordinator/ Poverty Alleviation/ Busoga Region, 2013

that at least 15 defilement cases of girls were reported in Mayuge sugarcane outgrowers farms, within a period of three months in 2018. As per a news report, some cases of children being trafficked from Mayuge to Kaliro district to work on sugarcane plantations have also been reported, and cases of child labour some with sexual abuses have also been reported in other districts such as Jinja<sup>17</sup>, Kaliro, Iganga and Kamuli where sugarcane growing is common<sup>18</sup>. Lastly, a recent study by Uganda Consortium for Cooperate Accountability (UCCA) on the impact of sugar production on communities in Luuka District, found child labour to be one of the dire effects of sugarcane growing. "Children—especially those working on outgrowers' farms were found to be exploited. Many children work on these farms as both planters and harvesters, a chore that affects their development and access to education. The local government and school management authorities both confirmed that there is a high school dropout and that even those that go to school often escape in afternoons to go work on sugarcane plantations"<sup>19</sup>.

The socio-economic and cultural context of Busoga sub-region also directly and indirectly add to the perpetuation of child labour :

- 1) High rate of poverty, i.e., 42% in the Busoga sub-region<sup>20</sup>, making families vulnerable to pushing children into work.
- 2) Presence of large extended families that make them rely on their children's labour for survival.
- 3) Less value attached to education as also demonstrated from the data from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) where districts in Busoga that performed poorly in the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in 2018 were Buyende (32%), Mayuge (30%), Iganga (27%) and Luuka (31%), mostly on account of frequent absenteeism of children from school.
- 4) Cultural norms and traditions in the Busoga sub-region where women and children have no place in family decision making, land or property ownership and yet by compulsion are responsible for the production of food and 86% of all agricultural output in the households.

## 4. Key Findings of the Research on Child Labour in Sugarcane Growing

### 4a) Child labour in sugarcane growing is prevalent in Busoga region, at outgrower level

Busoga sub-region is dominated by smallholder and outgrower farmers having 0.5-2.0 acres of land, being heavily involved in sugarcane production at the cost of household food production leading to famine, extreme poverty, poor educational outcomes and health, particularly among

<sup>17</sup> <https://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/jinja-district-urged-to-pass-ordinance-on-child-labour>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.thecommunityagenda.com/index.php/youth-women/item/151-child-labour-defilement-very-high-in-mayuge-sugarcane-plantations/151-child-labour-defilement-very-high-in-mayuge-sugarcane-plantations>

<sup>19</sup> The community agenda (Thursday, 24 May 2018) an online mass communication tool responding to critical information needs of the global community

<sup>20</sup> 2016/2017 National Household survey by UBOS

children, the elderly and pregnant women but also early pregnancy and child marriages<sup>21</sup>. The present research revealed that the smallholder farmers continue to struggle with increased poverty and presence of shrewd businessmen who depend mainly on human labour to conduct their farming activities in sugarcane production. This results in the use of children in sugarcane production, as they are a cheap source of labour.

Some factories like Kakira Sugar Limited have got 40% outgrowers' contribution, while Mayuge Sugar owns its estate/plantations, it also gets supply from outgrowers. It may be noted that sugar producing companies have policies that prohibit child labour - both in the context of child labour in factories, own plantations, and for output contracted to outgrowers. For example, a memorandum of agreement on terms and conditions of employment between Kakira Sugar Limited and National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers (NUPAW) in Uganda signed in 2010, discourages the use of child labour in sugarcane growing<sup>22</sup> as per Section 22 (a) and (b) of the agreement which stipulates respectively that, "No person under the age of 18 shall be employed by the company and no employee will be allowed to bring their children who are under the same age to the Estate to work their tasks. The company and the union shall encourage employees to take their children for education at the Estate schools and other schools in the surrounding".

"As part of corporate social responsibility, we established schools for our employees. That way we discourage child labour." We also sensitise our employees about the dangers of child labour so that they don't involve their children or be tempted to bring their children to the sugar plantation." As per Human Resources Manager for Kakira Sugar Limited - Respondent of the Research

All sugarcane outgrowers, whether aided<sup>23</sup> or unaided by the sugar companies, are required to not use children on the farms. The research established that some of the outgrowers, especially the unaided ones, employ children. If Kakira Sugar Limited would get to know about outgrowers using child labour, they would get blacklisted and their permit cancelled. Despite these punitive measures, many sugarcane outgrowers continue to exploit children. Further, the outgrowers use child labour provided either by their own children or mostly hire children to provide the required labour, despite the efforts of organisations like NUPAW, that engage and motivate the outgrowers to avoid child labour.

In the context of the agreement between sugar companies and the contracted outgrowers/ small-holder farmers regarding the provision of no child labour, the research found the following:

- many sugar companies had clauses in the agreements with outgrowers to not use child labour
- not all sugar companies despite being substantially dependent on outgrowers' output had the clause

<sup>21</sup> Uganda sugar industry-By Allan Katwalo Mulengani ,Dean School of Business and Applied Technology, Clarke International University

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum of agreement on terms and conditions of employment between Kakira Sugar Limited and National Union of plantation and Agricultural Workers in Uganda 2010

<sup>23</sup> The aided sugarcane outgrowers are contract farmers registered with the sugar companies and are provided with support that include tractors for ploughing, seedlings and fertilizers among other incentives.

- some companies who had the clause claimed to monitor its implementation for child labour via their field technical officers
- one company visited who had the clause in the agreement expressed that monitoring does not take place as it is simply not practical given the wide distance between the sugar factories and the location of contracted outgrowers
- one company visited who had the clause in the agreement claimed to monitor its implementation for child labour only for aided outgrowers

Majority of the respondents reported that child labour was prevalent in the area. They also noted that some children work to earn quick money and/or to buy scholastic materials which their parents cannot afford.

Leaders at Local Council Levels I and II in Jinja noted that the issues of child labour are very prevalent in Jinja, Kaliro, Kamuli and Mayuge districts. They argued that sugarcane is also affecting the food security potentials in the sugarcane growing areas.

## **4b) Child labour in present sugarcane production and its supply chain in direct and indirect ways**

Children are involved in child labour in a different stages of the sugarcane production and its supply chain. In the production stage, child labour occurs in planting sugarcane, weeding, cutting and loading, while in transportation of sugarcane, trucks are used hence children are more involved in carrying sugarcane from the farms to the truck or main road especially in the very wet seasons when trucks cannot enter the sugarcane farms.

“Some sugarcane farmers do not sell their sugarcane to factories but directly process sugarcane into other products that include jaggery. These farmers in many cases employ children in their production and supply chain. For example, in the production of alcohol, jaggery is one of the key raw materials”. As per Yusuf Mutaasa, Youth Councillor Kakira Town Council - Respondent of the Research

Some children engaged in supporting those who work in the production and supply chain of sugarcane. This includes vending food items and other necessities sold to the sugarcane workers. This is one of the indirect ways where children are engaged in child labour in the production and supply chain of sugarcane.

Respondents reported that children are involved in several activities based on the division of tasks performed by girls and boys. The girls are allocated less physically intensive work, for example fetching water, washing and cleaning the metallic containers (drums) used for brewing alcohol, while boys are compelled to do hard labour activities that include sugarcane cutting, collecting, transportation to jaggery milling site, fetching and preparing firewood required in heating or boiling the sugar concentrate.

## 4c) Child labour in other sub-sectors is also present in Busoga sub-region

Child labour was also present in other sub-sectors in the sub-region. Further, the prevalent activity involving child labour varied depending on the main livelihood and economic base of the area. For example, the research found that there is child labour on many fish landing sites located in the research area where children engage in fishing, loading and unloading, net sorting and boat cleaning. Fishing is done mainly by boys even during school time. Other examples are given below by respondents of the research.

“Besides child labour in sugarcane growing, there are many children involved in rice production, like keeping rice fields especially during times of going to school. Children also get involved in vending food items like ground nuts, boiled maize and bogoya (sweet bananas). Scrap collection (plastic and steel) is another growing activity involving child labour. This is common in Kakira Town Council, Masese and Kikaramoja village in Jinja district. The boys concentrate on scrap collection while the girls work in food and cereal market centres sorting groundnuts, maize and beans. As per Jinja District Labour Officer - Respondent of the Research

Children are also involved in coffee production, especially at the time of harvest and processing. One may find many young children at the coffee factory. Many more are engaged in informal sectors like street vending and child domestic work, with the girls working either as house, restaurants or bar maids in urban centers of Jinja municipal and 3 Town Councils of Bugembe, Kakira and Buwenge. Besides, there is increasing level of child labour involvement trends in the sand mining, gold and border trade”. As per District Probation Officer for Mayuge - Respondent of the Research

## 4d) Hazardous child labour in sugarcane production and consequences

Growing, planting, harvesting and transporting sugarcane are among the hazardous activities, recognised and reflected in the national list of the hazardous occupations and activities not permitted for employment of children in Uganda<sup>24</sup>. Further, looking at the child labour activities in sugarcane growing from ILO Convention 182's definition of hazardous work<sup>25</sup>, one can understand this even more clearly from the Table 6 below:

<sup>24</sup> The employment (employment of children) regulations 2012, the national list of hazardous work.

<sup>25</sup> work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children

**Table 6: Activities in sugarcane growing which is hazardous for children, as per ILO C 182**

Elements of definition of hazardous work as per ILO C 182	Hazards for children working in sugarcane growing
Harm the health and safety	Work without protective gear and exposed to NPK fertiliser which is dangerous for humans, especially children
	Use of sharp tools like panga and exposure to harsh weather like scorching heat for long period which leads to rough skin and multiple body injuries
	Long working hours as sugarcane harvesting is non-seasonal, which strains their bodies, leading to adverse health effects in the long-run. There are also cases of death reported due to accidents at the workplace.
	Risk of defilement for girls working in sugarcane farms
Harm the morals	Use of the panga at an early age exposes them to dangers of learning social vices
	Devalue education

The above Table shows how child labour in sugarcane is hazardous work, which also qualifies it to be prioritised in child labour elimination efforts given that it is also a worst form of child labour as per ILO Convention 182.

Also, while the above indicates the direct hazards and effects associated with child labour in sugarcane growing, there are also some indirect hazards and effects for the children at large who interact with the adults working in it. Below is one such example which puts girls in the sugar growing districts at risk of sexual abuse, child pregnancies and contracting HIV/AIDS.

“One of the sugar companies brings casual labourers who work in the plantation. They are compelled to leave their wives behind. They go for the young girls for sex. This is one of the reasons for increased sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS in this area” . As per the Gender Officer for Jinja District - Respondent of the Research

The research also found various consequences arising from child labour in sugarcane growing. Child labour affects the mentality of children with them de-valuing education. As children start earning through their work in sugarcane production, they consider education to be an opportunity cost. They juggle between combining school and work, not getting enough time to focus on their studies and also rest, resulting in most cases poor school performance. Eventually, children lose interest in education and drop-out. As children use dangerous tools



and machinery, load sugarcane, and move on top of lorries or tractors, their overall health is affected. They have been reported to suffer cuts, wounds, fractured limbs and in extreme cases even death<sup>26</sup>. Further, sometimes fights erupt among child labourers and they end up hurting each other, contributing to violence and juvenile delinquency. Innocent children interact with people who lure them into drug abuse. The research found that according to community moral standards, children interact with notorious people who corrupt them and make them use 'obscene words'. This destroys their moral fabric, creating uncertainties about their future and increased possibility of their involvement in the criminal activities in the area.

The element of trafficking of children for working in sugarcane districts also has consequences on these children. Some children are collected by powerful outgrowers and transported to far districts, such as from Jinja to Kaliro or from Luuka and Buyende to Kamuli. Not only does this subject them to health hazards, coupled with working without their needs being met, some children are misguided to take drugs to gain extra energy which is required in sugarcane farming. These children are denied their rights to education.<sup>27</sup>

There are also gender differences in terms of the consequences of child labour in sugarcane growing on boys and girls. Boys are tricked into thinking that the earnings from the sugarcane sector is sufficient to start a family and consequently marry among their peer groups, embracing the duty of fending for a family without enough resources for a decent living. Their families are very vulnerable and are at risk of breaking down, oftentimes associated with domestic violence. For the girls who marry in their peer group, viz., amongst child labourers, the result is early pregnancies and becoming child mothers, eventually leading to school drop-out. For the girls who get exposed to adult men in sugarcane sector who take advantage of them and become defiled, they too drop-out of school eventually<sup>28</sup>.

#### 4e) Limited understanding of child labour at community level

The research found that "child labour" was understood differently by its respondents. While some considered child labour to be heavy work by children under 18 years, some considered only activities such as spraying pesticides and harvesting of sugarcane as child labour. For some, social acceptance of working children or work during weekends, evenings and school holidays regardless of the effect on children's well-being and education, was not considered child labour. Ignorance of child labour and the laws around it was among parents and employer-farmers was also found.

"..we use people from the lower teen to adults... By lower teen I mean children aged 12 to 13 years. We have a resolution. We don't use children during school time...Being part of the traditional African society, children have to work, particularly those aged 8 - 11 years." - As per a Member of Busoga Sugarcane Outgrowers Association in Kakira Town Council - Respondent of the Research

<sup>26</sup> Testimony from Senior Labour Officer Jinja District

<sup>27</sup> Testimony from chairman LC III Imanyiro sub-county, Mayuge District

<sup>28</sup> Testimony from Social Worker, ANPPCAN Jinja



As per the research, lack or limited understanding of child labour amongst the community contributed to very few cases of child labour being reported to the police or brought to the NGOs working in the area. Scanty reporting was also compounded by interference from those who gain from child labour directly or indirectly and availability of limited resources with labour departments in districts. This can be seen from the remarks of the respondents below.

“..Child labour here is rarely reported. Children are abused in sugarcane production and parents decide to keep quiet about it. When you receive such a case and you want to investigate, the politicians come in. Most of the politicians here are sugarcane growers”  
- As per Mayuge District Officer in charge of Child and Family Protection Unit of Uganda Police - Respondent of the Research

“The perpetrators of child labour conceal information, while parents who are expected to report the cases are among the ‘beneficiaries’. The challenge is about reporting and since the community is not very supportive, the law enforcers encounter challenges with making arrests of the culprits. It is very hard to apprehend those children. You cannot be everywhere. In most cases, there is no money to make instant action. The labour department is both financially constrained and poorly equipped.” - As per Mayuge District Labour Officer - Respondent of the Research

Reporting of child labour also becomes challenging as it is at times disguised as acceptable work such as light work. Further, tracing child labour in case of informal home-based/informal work makes monitoring and thus reporting difficult. All this also contributes to lack of statistics on child labour and in sugarcane growing in particular, in the sample districts of this research.

#### **4f) Regulations and enforcements of existing laws on issues related to child labour**

Challenges are faced at district level in implementation and enforcement of the different laws on child labour. The major reasons cited by respondents below were corruption across the different stakeholders and political interference by community leaders.

“We can’t easily enforce these laws, because we are afraid that we may not be voted again by the people.” - As per Local Council Leader in Kisule Village, Mayuge District - Respondent of the Research

“There is too much corruption in this industry, (some) sugarcane outgrowers are rich and can easily pay police officers to release the arrested children from prison. What fails the enforcement of these laws is that if I arrest any child, the owner of the child starts conflicting with me. He can even ask you ‘are these your children?’ or ‘are you affected in any way if they don’t study?’.” - Local Council III Chairman for Magogo Sub-county in Kamuli District - Respondent of the Research

## 4g) Lack of law regulating sugar industry and the Sugar Bill 2016

As mentioned earlier in Box 1, there is no comprehensive law regulating the sugar industry, resulting in disharmony among the players, among other things. To address the same, the Sugar Bill 2016 was introduced to provide for the development, regulation and promotion of the industry. The main objective of the Bill is to ensure that there is a sustainable, diversified, harmonised, modern and competitive sugar sector that meets domestic, regional and international sugar requirements<sup>29</sup>. The Bill is yet to be finalised and approved.

The Sugar Bill does not have any provision relating to child labour, though the presence of children working in sugarcane production has been known and also established in this research. According to clause 24 (1), of the Sugar Bill, to streamline the management of the sugar industry, growers, millers, outgrowers associations and other relevant parties, shall enter into agreements referred to as a “sugar industry agreements” setting out their respective rights, duties and obligations. This can be one of the areas to amend for inclusion of a clause on child labour. The research established mixed responses regarding certain elements of the Bill and its effect on addressing child labour, directly and indirectly.

“.. The proponents of the bill ...advocate for promoting elements of economic protectionism to some of the industry key players. This will promote monopoly and exploitation of the other stakeholders.” As per Jinja District Senior Labour Officer - Respondent of the Research

“ ..I would request that the Sugar Bill is enforced with the element of zoning<sup>30</sup> and as such those factories that are near shall be merged to Kakira Sugar Limited and the pressure on communities due to high demand of sugar cane will reduce”. As per District Agricultural Officer, Mayuge - Respondent of the Research

In support of zoning, the President of Uganda returned to Parliament, the Sugar Act of 2019 citing that “failing to implement the zoning policy is already destroying the sugar industry”<sup>31</sup>.

## 4h) Push and pull factors of child labour in sugarcane growing

There are various factors contributing to child labour in sugarcane production on the supply and demand side, i.e., push and pull factors. These are summarised below, supported by the respondent's views.

<sup>29</sup> Bills Supplement ,Bill No.18, 30th December 2016

<sup>30</sup> Zoning refers to sugarcane growing areas planned within a radius of 25 kilometers from one sugar mill to another.

<sup>31</sup> Inclusion of zoning in the sugar Act 2019, Presidential Communication to Speaker of Parliament.

## Push factors

### **1. Social, cultural, economic and political context that encourage child labour**

The children are groomed at a tender age to learn, appreciate and begin to take on their family responsibilities depending on their sex.

“It is common here that a 10 year old builds a hut besides the family house. These are children that in the short run start fending for the family...I have a scenario in the Magamaga area where a 12 year old started fending for the family. The biological mother would send him into exploitative work to earn. ” As per Mayuge District Labour Officer - Respondent of the Research

### **2. Wide-spread poverty and need for additional income for survival**

People are living below the poverty line and the only way for survival is to sell labour. When the heads of the households cannot afford to provide the necessary items at home, children are pushed into work to get money for buying books, school fees, pens and food at home.

“When children engaging in child labour on sugarcane outgrowers farms complete the day's assignment, they go back home since the parents are waiting for their income earned...some supplementary money to feed the family. A child can come back home with at least UGX 3,000 (approximately USD 0.90.” As per Social Worker of ANPPCAN Jinja - Respondent of the Research

### **3. High drop-out rate due to non-affordability of education by poor households**

There is a high primary school dropout rate in the area partly because some parents cannot afford a number of school requirements, as a result many drop-out children end up being engaged in the sugarcane outgrower's farms.

“In Uganda there is Universal Primary Education (UPE), which is assumed to be ‘free’ and compulsory, but additional payments are required by schools. Schools demand a top up ranging from UGX 20,000 to UGX 100,000. Children from families that cannot afford are forced to drop-out of school, and eventually start working.” As per Kaliro District Education Officer - Respondent of the Research

## **Box 2 : Child Labour and Education - Their link and School Absenteeism and Drop-out**

Uganda is currently implementing the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) as a special focus on education for all as well as for developing the education sector, where education has been considered as a social vaccine against child labour. The research established that there is a high level of absenteeism, drop-out rates and poor performance in national examinations in the Busoga sub-region which is associated with child labour in sugarcane production. This is evident from below responses, along with reasons cited for the same.

The high level of school absenteeism has had serious negative impacts on the pupils' performance in the primary leaving examinations. Mayuge District Education Officer (DEO), attributes the decline in academic performance on school absenteeism since many children skip classes to work in sugarcane outgrowers farms. As per him, "the number of children who sit the final exams is always smaller than those who register since many do not turn up to sit for their final exams".

"The school enrollment is high because of UPE... However, many drop-out before completing primary seven because of poverty, low priority given to education by parents and caregivers. Many parents and caregivers do not strictly adhere to the education laws and policies, especially UPE. There is also an increasing level of teenage, early pregnancies and child marriages. Many children are in child labour, for instance brick laying, charcoal burning, tea growing and sugarcane cutting." - As per Dr. C. Tony Mukasa-Lusambu, Assistant Commissioner for Primary Education Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), Respondent of the Research

### ***Child labour and parental negligence - key cause for school absenteeism***

There is a high level of absenteeism although some of the schools have a policy in regard to absenteeism. When a child misses school, he or she is compelled to come with the parents or a medical report in case of sickness.

"It is mostly parents who have led to these cases of school absenteeism. While teachers stay at school as enforced by the government, some of the parents do not mind their children's school attendance. Child labour is not cited as a reason for absenteeism by children because there is some level of awareness that it is illegal". As per Deputy Head Teacher, Ihagalo Primary School, Kaliro District - Respondent of the Research

***Poor quality and additional costs of education - some key causes of school drop-out*** One respondent among teachers testified that although the education that the government has provided is free, it lacks quality.

"When it rains, some of the pupils don't come to school because it is very cold. We don't have enough classrooms. Primary 3, 4, 5 and 6 don't have classrooms, they study under those trees in the school compound. They shiver and feel very cold during rain seasons." As per Deputy Head Teacher, Ihagalo Primary School, Kaliro District - Respondents of the Research

The research further established that lack of feeding at school is a very big problem. While the government provides capitation grants, textbooks, support the construction of infrastructure, classrooms and teachers houses, the parents are supposed to provide other basic services such as school feeding. About 50% of the pupils are not eating at school and it is worse in the rural areas. In urban areas, the parents are more exposed to the high cost of education and tend to respond better to demands for acquiring quality education. It may be noted that the current capitation grants is UGX 3,000 per child/pupil, per school term which is insufficient to meet the pupil's needs.

Some girls are also discouraged from attending school because of lack of sanitary pads-materials, bath rooms, changing dress and changing rooms.

"We can't provide sanitary pads according to the way you see our setting. When these girls get such challenges (mensuration), we tell them to go back home and change their clothing". As per a Senior Woman Teacher - Respondent of the Research

#### **4. Domestic violence, polygamy and orphanhood**

There are many cases of domestic violence that cause separation of parents leaving children suffering which eventually forces them to look for means of survival. Further, in polygamous households, fathers often abandon their family when overwhelmed by domestic requirements leaving those families in a very fragile condition forcing children to work.

"The mothers from the abandoned families who have become single parents usually tell their children - 'today you can go and cut sugarcane because we don't have food, you will go to school tomorrow.'" - As per Local Council Official - Respondent of the Research

Orphanhood resulting from loss of parents has also forced children into child labour due to lack of strong social support systems that could sustain their livelihoods in the absence of the parents. The research found that some children who are orphans and staying with their extended family members or grandparents are usually responsible for looking for food as their material contribution in return for their caregivers' support.

### **Pull factors**

#### **1. High demand for labour due to the booming sugar industry**

In 2016 to 2018, when the sugar industry experienced a boom, many more poor households decided to hire out their land to sugarcane investors for a period of 4 harvest seasons (approximately 6 years of harvesting). Poor households remained with very little portion of land dedicated to food production, pushing their children into work in sugarcane growing in their own farms or in others, sometimes also for additional income for food.

“You cannot talk about rice or maize. People are cutting down their shambas (gardens) to plant sugarcane, the demand for labour especially child labour is very high. In Uganda there is high investment in the sugar manufacturing sector. Those who have resources are investing more and earning good profit margins. While the poor have remained poor after renting out their land to rich outgrowers.”As per Mayuge District Labour Officer - Respondent of the Research

“High prices of sugarcane has led many to plant sugarcane. This has resulted in a demand for labour for cutting sugarcane. Many farmers demolished their coffee and cocoa gardens and started planting sugarcane with an assumption of getting quick money yet sugarcane takes 1.5 years to grow, whereas coffee takes only 6 months to be harvested per season”. As per Mayuge District Agricultural Officer - Respondent of the Research

## **2. Children are a cheap source of labour and submissive workers**

Besides the high demand for labour as a result of a booming sugar trade industry, farmers employ children because they are a cheap source of labour. For example, for cutting 10 bundles of 12 sugarcane each, children are paid UGX 1000 only (USD 0.30), while adults are paid UGX 2000 (USD 0.60)<sup>32</sup>.

“Children do not complain a lot about poor working conditions. They are easier to exploit than adults and readily available, a condition that makes them vulnerable to exploitation by the rich merchants. Some children have fewer demands like they just want to get some money for eating snacks like chapati, and soda sold in trading centers.” - As per Kamuli District Labour Officer - Respondent of the Research

## **4i) Gender-based differences and challenges with respect to lived labour realities and its relation to child labour**

Gender dynamics seen in different aspects such as division of labour, roles and responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and their relative condition and position in society, indicate the respective roles and strategies surrounding child labour in sugarcane production and supply chain activities. Specifically, the research identified three dimensions: the socio-economic activity profile, answering the question ‘who does what, when and for how long?; the access and control profile, answering the question ‘who has access to and control over resources and benefits?; and the factors that influence the gender differences identified, addressing the opportunities and constraints in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres.

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<sup>32</sup> Focus group participant Immanyiro subcounty Mayuge district

### ***Gendered roles and division of labour***

Through a participatory process where the participants were engaged in FDGs the intensity, the roles, and the resources that exist at household levels to the outgrowers in the sugarcane production were established. The results showed that boys perform more activities than men, women and girls along the sugarcane supply chain such as land preparation (slashing, removing tree stumps, and making sugarcane planting ridges), seed cutting chopping, transporting and planting, weeding, harvesting, loading and transporting sugarcane. Men dominate with respect to the control of resources in comparison to the limited one women have. While girls participate in what respondents consider to be lighter activities or less labour intensive work along the production of sugarcane, for example, making sugarcane planting ridges, seed cutting, chopping and putting sugarcane seeds in the ridges and weeding. Women and girls are alternatively more involved in household domestic chores.

### ***Time use differences among boys and girls***

Using a participatory 24 hours' time series, boys and girls reflected in their time use and their different lived (labour) realities. The results show that not only the type of activity performed by boys, as pointed out in the previous section, but the intensity of the work they perform put them in a more vulnerable situation of exploitation. Boys in child labour work close to between seven to eight hours a day in more physical demanding conditions, this deprives them of the time for rest and has got implications for their safety and good health. On the other hand, even though the activities performed by girls might be considered less labour intensive, there is an underestimate of its extent because it's mainly domestic in nature. The research also showed that for children that combine school and work, they have less time for educational development, for girls even less considering the extra time for house chores mainly performed by them, which may end up affecting children's performance at school leading to drop-outs and risk of exploitation.

### ***Factors that determine the gender-based differences and challenges observed***

The Kisoga culture (culture of the people living in the research area) dictates that men as heads of household do activities that support the welfare of the household members. Men have power to make critical decisions with respect to management of all family activities in comparison to women who traditionally are located in the domestic sphere involving activities that include household chores as well as provide care to their families. These activities are not considered an official type of labour and not paid tasks and responsibilities for women and girls, and therefore excluded from national accounts regarding labour as well as making invisible a big part of the labour force supporting the production of sugarcane. This division of labour and resources lays the foundation for socialisation of boys to grow up knowing that they will acquire the head of family status, with power to make decisions and control resources, pushing them sometimes to start working at a earlier age, not valuing education or being attracted to generate a quick income, all related to the labour in sugarcane; while girls are prepared to take on the responsibilities of mothers or housewives, having limited access and control over resources throughout their lives, what places them at greater poverty and vulnerability in comparison with boys and men.

The access to resources also has an impact on the incidence of child labour. The research established that because many households in the research area are poor, having leased almost all their farmland to sugarcane outgrowers, families have no other option but resort to involving their children into child labour in sugarcane growing to earn some money and make a supplementary contribution to family income. Moreover, when women are pushed to take on the head of the household, their unequal access to resources exacerbates the push factors for child labour as they encounter barriers and constraints in various domains, such as the labour market, the welfare or social protection system, and the participation in decision-making on political, economic and social issues are limited.

Here, it is important to acknowledge that the gender dimensions of labour and poverty together with the patriarchal social hierarchies, affect men, women, girls and boys in different ways, influencing an economical vulnerability of women and girls in particular but also impacting the incidence of child labour in general.

## 5) Conclusion

Child labour exists in the research area especially in the production of sugarcane, mainly at outgrower level. It is either direct, where children are working on outgrowers' sugarcane farms particularly in planting, weeding, cutting and loading sugarcane or indirect, where children do ancillary work supporting those who work in the production and supply chain of sugarcane by vending necessities sold to the sugarcane workers.

Child labour in sugarcane growing is often hazardous in nature and a worst form of child labour. Further, it is more prevalent in cutting and loading sugarcane dominated by boys and minimal direct participation of girls cited in weeding and tying sugarcane bundles. Girls are also exposed to sexual abuse. The variance in the child labour activities that boys and girls do is attributed to gendered differences arising out of the deep rooted patriarchy and patrilineal traditional society of Busoga sub-region that allocates the domestic and less intensive labour activities to girls/women, while intensive activities that support the welfare of the members of the household to boys/men. Hence, the gender dimensions of labour and control of resources has a general impact on the incidence of child labour, evidencing the economical vulnerability of women and girls in their invisible labour while the provider male role pushes boys sometimes to start working at a earlier age, not valuing education or being attracted to generate a quick income.

Child labour in sugarcane growing is caused by push factors that include; patriarchy, cultural perception, high school dropout rate and poverty levels, non-affordability of education, gender based domestic violence, resource constrained single parenthood, misconception about child rights and responsibilities and lack of strong social support systems to sustain grassroot community livelihoods. While pull factors for child labour identified include; sugar industry trade boom and children being a cheaper source of labour.



## 6) Recommendations

Based on the research findings, policy and practice measures to address child labour in sugarcane growing are recommended for national, district and community levels, stakeholder-wise in the following tables.

**Table 7: National level recommendations**

Thematic Area	Recommendation	Stakeholders
Knowledge and data gaps	<b>Conducting national level study on child labour in sugarcane growing.</b> Conduct data-driven research to determine the magnitude/extent of child labour in sugarcane growing communities in Uganda. Providing quality demand driven statistics will inform, support and guide effective policy, decision making, research and development initiatives against child labour.	Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, ILO
Access to quality and uninterrupted education	<p><b>Increasing school capitation grant budget allocation.</b> Revise and increase the primary school capitation grant per term. Moreover, there is a need for increasing the teacher's remuneration package and providing subsidies on the other school costs like scholastic materials, meals and uniforms.</p> <p><b>Promoting guidelines for supplementary school requirements.</b> Ensure that existing guidelines for any other supplementary school requirements avoid exploitation of parents and caregivers.</p> <p><b>Introducing apprenticeship programmes of work in sugarcane growing.</b> Introduce apprenticeship programs of work in the sugarcane production and supply chain that can be integrated in or along the education system so that children aged 14 to 17 years can study and at the same time gain skills of work in the sugarcane farms with decent employment conditions.</p> <p><b>Improving access to free government aided vocational skills training.</b> Streamline education policies to ensure child protection from hard labour agricultural activities. Children in sugarcane growing communities who are unable to join UPE or USE need to be provided with free government aided vocational skills training.</p>	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Education, UNESCO
Law enactment and enforcement	<p><b>Enacting/revising law(s) towards corporate responsibility.</b> Put in place a law/provision that compels the sugarcane factory owners to monitor their suppliers and outgrowers operations and ensure they completely stop engaging children in the products they provide.</p> <p><b>Enforcement of child labour laws.</b> Monitor child labour in hazardous list as priority and increase financial budget/support to Labour Departments at district levels towards enforcement.</p>	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
Decent work, livelihoods and elimination of child labour	<p><b>Withdrawing children from child labour.</b> Withdraw children working in sugarcane farms and provide a rehabilitation process including psycho-social support services, and counseling.</p> <p><b>Increasing access to community livelihoods support schemes.</b> Provide livelihood support through interventions like Uganda Women Enterprises Programme (UWEP) and Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), as well as those supported by NGOs and the private sector to mitigate the impact of poverty and provide social security safety nets to the economically fragile and highly vulnerable poor households.</p>	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in partnership with child focused NGOs and private sector

**Table 8: District level recommendations**

Thematic Area	Recommendation	Stakeholders
Law enforcement and stakeholder collaboration	<p><b>Strengthening stakeholder collaboration in eliminating child labour.</b> Sugar companies need to collaborate with NUPAW, NOTU, FUE and NGOs to ensure compliance with the law and promote decent work, as well as providing education programme for the sugarcane outgrowers to sensitise individual farmers on policies and laws in relation to the elimination of child labour in the production and supply chain of sugarcane.</p>	<p>Sugar companies in collaboration with NGOs and unions</p>
	<p><b>Enforcing child labour laws.</b> Strengthen the judicial process (arrest and prosecution) of perpetrators of child labour.</p>	<p>District Labour Officer, Labour Inspectorate, Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development</p>
	<p><b>Increasing inter-departmental collaboration and support.</b> Multi-stakeholders' interventions and joint efforts to address child labour. It includes departments in charge of education, agriculture, health, trade, industry and cooperatives</p>	<p>Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development</p>
	<p><b>Enforcing existing bye laws and ordinances.</b> Enforcement of the Jinja district education ordinance which among others promotes retention of children at school through the school feeding policy and Mayuge Sugarcane ordinance alongside the national level legislations on children.</p>	<p>The sub-county and district local government authorities</p>
	<p><b>Strengthening the district anti-child trafficking task force interventions.</b> Effectively collaboration (sharing information and resources for quick and swift action) between the national anti-child trafficking task force with the district local government of Jinja, Kaliro, Kamuli and Mayuge to address the problem of child trafficking in sugarcane growing areas.</p>	<p>Ministry of Internal Affairs and district local governments</p>

## Table 9: Community level recommendations

Thematic Area	Recommendation	Stakeholders
Monitoring and prevention mechanisms	<p><b>Strengthening child labour monitoring and prevention mechanisms.</b> Continuous monitoring of school attendance to ensure school retention and minimising drop out.</p> <p>Motivate teachers to monitor the behaviour of children at school. Established child protection committees that can jointly work with local councils and the child and family protection unit of Uganda Police to monitor and stop child labour.</p>	District education department, child focused organisations, schools and teachers
Protection Systems	<p><b>Providing psycho-social support care and promoting child friendly services.</b> Activate existing or establish centres that provide child friendly services to children in sugarcane areas at risk of or in child labour, such as adequate guidance through counselling and psycho-social support, peer exchange of life skills and experiences, as well as accessing child/youth friendly reproductive healthcare services.</p>	Child focused NGOs, village health teams and community development department
Decent work and livelihoods for prevention of child labour	<p><b>Promoting Village Saving and Loans Association (VSLAs).</b> Promote VLSAs to mitigate the impact of poverty, for example by meeting some of the basic household and school demands such as scholastic materials for their children.</p>	Village members
Access to quality and uninterrupted education	<p><b>Short-term community level skills training.</b> Provide short-term training in different technical skills like carpentry, welding and metal fabrication, tailoring and hair dressing targeting children withdrawn from child labour who are not able to continue with formal primary or secondary education.</p> <p><b>Formal short-term school level support package.</b> Provide short-term start off packages to children withdrawn from child labour, including school basics (books, pens and uniforms). This should be done concurrently with facilitating the families to start income generating activities as well as joining village level community Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) to avoid the dependency syndrome and ensure that eventually the families will be able to support themselves.</p>	District Education Officer, Community Development Officer, Child focused NGOs  District Education Officer, Community Development Officers (CDOs), Child focused NGOs
Law enforcement and community sensitisation	<p><b>Strengthen capacity for village level law enforcement agents.</b> Strengthen the capacity of village Local Council officers, teachers and community policing agents from the child and family protection unit of Uganda Police by conducting refresher training on their mandate, role among others, with respect to child rights protection. This will make them more effective key ground level enforcing agents for ending child labour.</p> <p><b>Raising awareness and sensitising community members on child labour.</b> More engagement of the media in Busoga sub-region bringing them on board through training on 'media reporting on child rights protection' with special focus on child labour. This will help reaching out to the respective target groups using radio, television and print media, as well as non-broadcast media especially forum theatre, schools and community outreach film shows.</p> <p>Conduct awareness sessions for community members with particular focus on child labour, including existing laws, how and where to seek legal services with respect to child protection as well as making them more vigilant frontline advocates for stopping child labour</p>	CDOs, community based organisations, community members  CDOs, District Labour/Education Officers, community based organisations, community members in partnership with the media  Local council leadership



# GLOBAL MARCH

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Contra el Trabajo Infantil  
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## **Global March Against Child Labour**

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