



ABA (Area Based Approach) Lab

The ABA Lab is a dynamic platform uniting diverse stakeholders, pioneering ABA implementers, and experts to revolutionise our approach to combating child labour. By integrating innovative solutions and scalable best practices, the ABA Lab aims to move beyond conventional strategies and effectively address the root causes of child labour in high-risk areas. Our goal is to identify and agree upon solutions and best practices, leveraging collective intelligence to drive meaningful progress in the fight against child labour using the ABA.

Session 1:

In the inaugural session, we discussed solutions and explored innovative strategies around community-led Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) that effectively eradicate child labour and help communities transition into Child Labour Free Zones. Panellists from the coffee and cocoa sectors shared experiences and best practices, revealing valuable strategies for making CLMRS more sustainable.

CLMRS Problem Statement:

The Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS) is vital in combatting child labour. A robust CLMRS can effectively detect instances of child labour and provide essential referrals and remediation tailored to the affected children in agricultural communities. However, the challenge with their low coverage, establishing referral linkages and ensuring sustainable community ownership remain. While the CLMRS has evolved from being supply chain-based to area-based, balancing community development with supply chain responsibility remains critical. Emerging sectors like coffee can learn from existing initiatives in the cocoa sector to develop community-driven, sustainable monitoring strategies that prioritise local interests.

Speakers' bio:

1. Andrews Adoquaye Tagoe, Deputy General Secretary for the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) of the Trades Union Congress-Ghana, Regional Coordinator (Anglophone Africa) GMACL
2. Okaya John Bosco, Project Manager (CEFORD), Uganda

3. Solomon Mc Banasam, Senior Programme Officer, Fairtrade Africa, Ghana
4. Samuel Mafabi, Project Manager, Kyagalanyi Coffee Uganda
5. Minorvia Migadde, Finance and Project Director, Coffee World, Uganda

Introduction: ABA LAB (Area based Approach)

The recent webinar on *Integrated Approach Towards Establishing Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs) and Community-Led Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS)* brought together experts, trade union representatives, community leaders, and private sector stakeholders. The discussions emphasised the importance of a holistic, community-driven approach in eradicating child labour, particularly in agricultural communities. Key thematic points and recommendations were identified during the webinar, which are summarised below.

Key Thematic Points

1. Community Involvement and Ownership

- The Ghana approach, inspired by MV Foundation's CLFZs and KSCF's Child Friendly Villages (CFVs), underscores the importance of community ownership
- Trade unions like GAWU have played a crucial role in organising community members and converting projects into sustained community action
- Engaging local leaders, such as village chiefs, is vital for mobilising community efforts to eradicate child labour
- Communities must be engaged in the designing of CLMRS from the very first step
- Implementors need to move beyond the project centric approach to CLMRS and focus on its sustainability, especially with regards to resource mobilisation, community ownership and shared accountability between governments-communities-private sector

2. Integrated and Cost-Effective CLMRS

- CLMRS should be an integral part of CLFZs for resource efficiency as opposed to a standalone structure
- Engaging the community members such as teachers, youth, and women significantly reduce monitoring and remediation costs
- While communities can be capacitated to play their respective roles in implementing and sustaining the CLMRS, the monitoring costs are often high and overlooked. The extent to which community members and stakeholders need to be compensated for their time and labour is something crucial that needs to be addressed
- Digitalization can further reduce costs related to data collection and assessment

3. Role of Private Sector

- Small and large companies alike must engage with and contribute to the communities they operate in
- Coffee World exemplifies the role of small family companies within the community, like supporting education and aspirations, despite resource challenges

4. Certifications and Community Involvement

- Certifications like those from Fairtrade Africa can enhance CLMRS credibility by involving communities in risk identification and data management
- Standards like Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, or UTZ require compliance with child labour laws and proactive remediation efforts. Community-owned systems provide robust, verifiable evidence of compliance
- By integrating community ownership into the CLMS, certifications can be more effectively and sustainably achieved, as the system aligns with local needs and leverages community strengths, ensuring long-term eradication of child labour

5. Policy Influence and Government Support

- Data from the CLMRS should be used to inform government policies and address root causes of child labour
- Government support is essential for community-led CLMRS, especially in handling hazardous and worst forms of child labour

6. Gender Considerations

- Gender-based violence (GBV) and poverty are critical issues intertwined with child labour as children from families experiencing GBV and/or poverty are more vulnerable to child labour
- Gender must be a key component in designing CLMRS to address systemic issues effectively

Recommendations

Strengthen Community Structures

- Establish and support community child protection committees and local cooperatives
- Build the capacity of community members to work alongside social workers and local structures

Diversify Funding Sources

- CLMRS should be community-based, but funding should come from multiple sources, including private sector and government as implementing a CLMRS comes with a wide range of roles and responsibilities which cannot be entrusted upon one singular party

Simplify and Integrate CLMRS

- Simplify the technical aspects of CLMRS for community understanding and participation
- Integrate CLMRS within national structures and policies for more efficient use of resources and sustainability

Enhance Feedback Mechanisms

- Develop community-facing feedback and reporting mechanisms to hold companies accountable
- Ensure clear communication of remediation processes to the community for effective implementation

Promote Collaboration Across Sectors

- Foster partnerships between coffee and cocoa sectors to harmonise CLMRS approaches
- Collaborate with industry partners to create synergy and avoid reinventing the wheel

Focus on Holistic Child Protection

- Establish referral pathways linking child labour cases to responsible duty bearers
- Document and share all referral systems with community members.

Breakout Room Discussion Highlights

- **Funding CLMRS:** Should be community-based but require diversified funding sources.
- **Community Leadership:** CLMRS should be community-led but linked to national structures for sustainability.
- **Community First Approach:** Engage communities in all phases of CLMRS implementation and ensure gender considerations are integrated.

Conclusion

The session underscored the necessity of community-driven approaches in establishing CLFZs and implementing effective CLMRS. By engaging community members, diversifying funding sources, simplifying processes, and integrating gender considerations, stakeholders can work together to eradicate child labour sustainably and holistically.