

# IMPACT IN MALAWI

## *Policy Brief*

*Today, 2.1 million children are involved in child labour in Malawi, which represents 38% of the total children population. As the main crop accounting for 50% of the country's exports (US\$ 650 million in 2015) and 10% of its GDP according to the World Bank, tobacco remains exposed to child labour.*

## THE PROBLEM OF CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE IN MALAWI

Agriculture is the backbone of the Malawian economy, providing livelihood for 80% of Malawians – making it by far the most important economic activity in the country. The subsistence nature of agricultural production in Malawi implies that power-driven (mechanized) equipment, sustainable crop processing technologies, and the cost of finance are simply beyond the reach of most small-scale farmers.

The Consequence: In order to expand their production, small-scale farmers rely heavily on cheap forms of child labour. Often a whole family is involved in cultivation and harvesting - with approximately 72% of children (aged 5 to 17 years) found to be working in agriculture. It is common for children to work alongside their parents in tobacco growing, maize cultivation, livestock rearing, domestic work and so on.

## PARTNERSHIPS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Created in 2000 with the sole purpose to 'address and eliminate child labour in the global tobacco supply-chain', the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT) stands as a global leader in preventing child labour, and protecting and improving the lives of children in tobacco-growing areas.



In Malawi, the ECLT Foundation works in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and with the Government to bring the key stakeholders together - from across sectors and across the tobacco supply-chain; including its largest group, the growers, to leverage impact in the fight against child labour. Operating under the guidance of the national tripartite steering committee to eliminate child labour - ECLT supports the development of partnerships and the convening of 'social dialogue' as a means to bring these stakeholders together for elaborating solutions necessary for effective change in Malawi.

**Since 2002, ECLT has worked with the Government of Malawi, the trade unions, employers' organizations, private sector companies, civil society, communities, and the ILO to prevent children from falling into child labour: removing those already involved, enrolling them in schools and supporting their families for sustainable impact.**

Child Labour is a cross-cutting issue and requires cross-cutting multi-stakeholder solutions to effectively address its root-causes. Building strong commitments in the fight against child labour from various stakeholders is a major force of sustainable change in Malawi sought by the ECLT Foundation.

# BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS: THE 2012 MALAWI CHILD LABOUR CONFERENCE IN AGRICULTURE

September 2012, Lilongwe: The Malawi Government, in partnership with the ILO, and with the support of the ECLT Foundation, convened a National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture. The event was Malawi's first-ever international tripartite child labour conference. Under the theme "Our Children, Our Future," the conference brought together 320 delegates from government, international corporations and development partners, local businesses, and civil society, as well as 40 children, to focus on solutions to child labour in agriculture in Malawi and make the National Action Plan on Child Labour a reality.



*This conference demonstrates the growing national and international concern about child labour in our country and globally. [It is] proof of our common will to contribute to the long-term goal of eliminating child labour.*

**Her Excellency Joyce Banda,  
President of the Republic of Malawi.**



Her Excellency Joyce Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi, with children at the National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture.

## COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Malawi has benefited significantly as a result of the multi-stakeholder commitments made during the conference to eliminate child labour - as outlined within the Malawi National Conference on Child Labour in Agriculture: Outcome Document & Framework for Action. Stakeholder commitments included the following:

- Improve access to quality, free, and compulsory basic education;
- Strengthen the legal framework through the enactment of a Child Labour Policy, Labour Inspection Policy, and the Tenancy Labour Act;
- Establish a Child Labour Unit;
- Introduce a national child labour monitoring system;
- Promote new labour-saving farming techniques and technologies;
- Respect and promote freedom of association and collective bargaining; and
- Collect up-to-date data on the incidence of child labour.

## STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS

The conference captured the collective will of the national stakeholders to eliminate child labour in agriculture, by providing a 'living roadmap' for realizing the rights of all children in Malawi. Its impact continues to be felt as evidenced by the:

- Proliferation of Occupational Safety & Health training to thousands of farmers - creating conditions for decent youth employment for youth above legal working age (2012-now);
- Increased stakeholder initiatives to improve access to quality education (ongoing);
- Several tripartite social dialogues convened to deliberate ongoing impact of the 2012 conference and re-affirm commitments (2013-present);
- Establishment of the Child Labour Unit (current); and
- Review of the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2017).



## COLLECTIVE IMPACT: THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Leading up to and following the 2012 conference - ECLT has maximized opportunities to bolster partnership efforts, build on commitments, and facilitate actions at all levels in the fight against child labour in Malawi. In collaboration with government, trade unions, employers' organizations, companies, the Tobacco Association of Malawi [TAMA], the National Association of Smallholder Farmers of Malawi [NASFAM], and communities – ECLT has worked through both direct partnerships with civil society organizations and in public private partnership with the ILO (below) to optimize impact. Primarily focusing its efforts through implementing area-based interventions targeted in 60 villages in the tobacco-growing districts of Ntchisi (Central Malawi), Mchinji (Eastern Malawi), and Rumphi (Northern Malawi), ECLT has leveraged resources and expertise to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of the children and families within these communities.

## SINCE 2013 AND THROUGH ECLT'S WORK AND PARTNERSHIPS



**3,133 CHILDREN** were withdrawn from labour and enrolled in school



**656 TEENAGERS** benefited from vocational training



**31,600 FARMERS** gained access to safety and health training



**190,000 PEOPLE** trained and/or gained awareness on child labour issues



**15,000 HOUSEHOLDS** save money and access loans through VSLAs



**20 MILLION** have been invested by ECLT in Malawi to fight child labour since 2002

- 1. RUMPHI DISTRICT
- 2. MCHINJI DISTRICT
- 3. NTCHISI DISTRICT

# ILO PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP: DEVELOPING PRACTICAL ADVICE ABOUT THE HAZARDS OF CHILD LABOUR AND SUPPORTING SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN MALAWI



In 2015, the ILO and the ECLT Foundation signed a partnership agreement to develop practical advice about the hazards of child labour in tobacco growing, and to support stronger social dialogue in three countries: Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda.

Throughout 2016-17, the partnership advanced efforts to examine the nature and conditions of HCL in tobacco growing while simultaneously promoting actions to ensure that children do not perform this work, and to support decent youth employment opportunities. New research is being conducted and efforts are underway in Malawi to enhance the capacities of government and social partners to develop and implement policies and action plans to combat child labour in agriculture.

Under the project, key Social Dialogues have been convened amongst the Social Partners in Malawi to further deliberate the relevance of generating this type of evidence for Malawi - which can help to inform national lists of Hazardous Work for children.

A compilation of good practices is also anticipated to be developed and disseminated during the 4th Global Child Labour Conference in Argentina in 2017.

## A FORMULA FOR GREATER IMPACT IN MALAWI

### HISTORY OF PROVEN PARTNERSHIPS

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) provide a significant tool in helping to facilitate decision-making, gain commitments, and secure actions needed to eradicate child labour.

#### Since 2002, ECLT has entered into the following public private partnerships with the ILO:

**2002:** PPP to increase the knowledge base on child labour in tobacco growing in Africa, including Malawi, as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

**2012:** Tripartite-plus national conference on child labour in agriculture in Malawi.

**2013:** Conference follow-up – support of a Child Labour focal person within the Ministry of Labour & Employment

**2015:** Developing global advice on hazardous child labour (prior page).

The cumulative impact of these PPPs can be seen encapsulated within both ECLT's past and current (sidebar) impact in Malawi.



## COMMUNITY-BASED WORK

In 2011, ECLT also launched the CLEAR Child Labour project in the aforementioned districts (prior page) in partnership with Save the Children International (Malawi Country Office), Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), Total Land Care (TLC), and Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) with five strategic objectives:

1. Getting children out of child labour;
2. Opening doors through education;
3. Raising awareness;
4. Strengthening communities; and
5. Alleviating poverty.

Under this project, **3,133 children** were withdrawn from labour and enrolled in school and more than **15,000** benefited from school feeding programmes. **656 young people** also gained access to vocational training on agriculture practices and farm business management. The project constructed **18 classroom blocks** and renovated 7 others, and more than **15,000 people** were supported and trained to form Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), which gave them an opportunity to access credits and loans in areas where no financial institution is present.

ECLT continues to support collaborative policy efforts – in particular, advocating for the adoption of the Child Labour Policy – in accordance with the 2012 Malawi Conference Outcome Document, as well as for renewing the National Action Plan against child labour.

As we look ahead, ECLT will strengthen partnerships to support the work of district councils to help translate national policy into tangible benefits for children, while continuing to remove children from child labour, promoting decent work for teenagers and supporting livelihoods of their parents. To learn more about ECLT's Impact in Malawi, visit [www.eclt.org/impact/malawi](http://www.eclt.org/impact/malawi)

## IMPACT OF ECLT'S WORK IN 2017

**200 teenagers** benefited from vocational training

**994 youth** were trained in Occupational Safety and Health

**37 Community Child Labour Committees** were strengthened, and **3 District Child Labour Committees** were supported

**19 schools** were selected to launch school feeding programmes

**95 new Village Savings and Loan Association groups** were formed and trained

## DEMONSTRATING WHAT CAN BE SUCCESSFUL

ECLT and its partners have gained valuable experience and knowledge in effectively addressing child labour issues in Malawi. This resulted in the publication of a Good Practice Manual in 2016, which documented several promising and good practices in the fight against child labour in Malawi, such as identifying children in and at risk of child labour using GPS topographic maps and Community Child Labour Committees; improving access to and quality of education through reading camps aiming to boost literacy and numeracy; raising awareness through theatre plays, along with improving household livelihoods through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs).



## THE ECLT FOUNDATION

Created in 2000, the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing (ECLT) Foundation is a global leader in preventing child labour in tobacco agriculture, and improving the lives of children in tobacco-growing areas. The Foundation brings together the stakeholders of the tobacco supply chain, including its largest group, the growers, along with leaf suppliers and manufacturers, to leverage impact. With the adoption of the Pledge of Commitment and Minimum Requirements on combatting child labour by member companies in 2014, ECLT continuously promotes and advances responsible business practices that are in line with international standards.

The ECLT Foundation strengthens communities, globally advocates for improved policies, and advances research so that tobacco-growing communities can benefit from agriculture and ensure health, education and safe working environments for their children.

**WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE ARE COMMITTED  
TO PROGRESSIVELY ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR  
IN TOBACCO GROWING COMMUNITIES  
TO MAKE CHILDREN'S LIVES BETTER**

## GET IN TOUCH

### ECLT Foundation

14 rue Jacques-Dalphin  
1227 Carouge, Geneva  
Switzerland

[eclt@eclt.org](mailto:eclt@eclt.org)  
+41 (0) 22 306 1444

[www.eclt.org](http://www.eclt.org)

 [ecltfoundation](#)  
 [ecltfoundation](#)  
 [Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation](#)