

# Better together:

## An urgent call for collaborative, effective solutions to stop child labour

The discussions at the upcoming Global Meeting on Work Deficits in the Tobacco Sector have significant potential impact on children, farmers, workers, families and communities throughout Africa and in all the 120+ countries around the world where tobacco is grown.

The ILO, FAO and SDGs are clear about what works: **collaborative, multi-stakeholder area-based approaches are best practice because they produce measurable and sustainable results against child labour.**

Since 2011, collaborative work including the sector has directly supported over 220,000 children, farmers, workers and families in areas where tobacco is grown:

- getting children out of child labour and allowing them to stay in school,
- improving finances, incomes and resiliency of families,
- giving skills to young people to find decent work,
- training farmers to make farms safer for all workers.

“*Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires immediate and accelerated actions by countries along with collaborative partnerships among governments and stakeholders at all levels.*”

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

Child labour is a critical problem across agricultural sectors and stakes are high for the 108 million children doing work on farms that puts their safety, health, development and future at risk. Focusing only on the tobacco or any single supply chain increases the risk that children simply move from one field to another, which is not a solution. We cannot afford to stray from collaborative best practice and limit engagement at the risk of progress for these children.

**Stronger national action plans, capacities and policies to reduce child labour come about through social dialogue.** Since 2015, public-private partnerships against child labour have increased collaboration and tri-partite social dialogue, catalysing actions that strengthen protection and investment for all children, in areas where tobacco is grown and beyond.

**Crop diversification is an important tool for smallholder farmers and families to increase their resiliency.** It is also challenging reality for all tobacco farmers; it takes time, investment, and does not produce immediate returns. Efforts focused on crop replacement rather than sustainable development will not address the root causes of child labour or other work deficits, diverting funds from necessary, long-term solutions and putting farmers and families at risk.

**Now is the time to urgently intensify work and engage all actors, not to cut back.**

The call from the globally-accepted SDGs is clear: partnerships are the sustainable way forward. Ending child labour is an accelerated SDG target that must be met by 2025. Unfortunately, the international community is not on track to meet this goal.

On behalf of the children whose families depend on tobacco growing for their livelihoods, **we strongly advocate that all tri-partite stakeholders come together on a sustainable, collaborative way forward,** guaranteeing progress for children, farmers, workers, and families.





# Fighting Child Labour in Uganda

**For over 13 years, ECLT has strategically invested over 3 million USD to fight child labour and promote sustainable development in Uganda. Working closely with local implementing partners, UWESO, our projects have directly reached over 110,000 children, farmers and families in areas where tobacco is grown since 2013.**

Despite progress made, the USDOL estimates that 30% of children in Uganda are still in child labour, many working on farms or doing hazardous work. ECLT remains committed to supporting local communities and engaging decision makers for progress against child labour in Uganda.

Building on successes, ECLT and UWESO launched a project extension, aiming to support another 38,800 children and over 100,000 adults by 2021 in the Hoima and Kikube districts.

## Improving education

Quality education is a key part of putting children on the paths to get out of child labour and reach their potential. Over the next three years, Improving school infrastructure, facilities and materials will encourage children to join or stay in school. Teachers will be trained on identifying child labour and how to respond.

Children who were previously involved in child labour will be supported to enrol in secondary school or job skills training. In doing so, children and young people will have access to decent job markets, breaking the cycle of poverty and child labour.

## Reducing poverty

When families have stable, diversified incomes, parents are able to send their children to school, rather than to help on the family farm. The project will foster money management and business skills through local village savings and loan associations, which aim to give rural families the necessary skills to manage their finances in difficult times of the year. Poor harvests, illness or natural disasters can put a strain on farmers and families. By saving and loaning locally, parents can invest and expand their incomes to build household funds and keep their children in school all year round.

## Raising awareness

Many families in Hoima and Kikube are not fully aware of the dangers of child labour, particularly in agriculture. By working with local radio stations, newspapers, and other media sources, the project will raise awareness on how child labour can harm children and promote local solutions to help families, who feel they have no choice but to send their children to work.

## Strengthening child labour policy and joint action

To improve effectiveness and sustainability, ECLT engages many stakeholders, including governments, unions, private sector, and communities to fight child labour. Through on-going support for the development and implementation of the Hoima District Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst forms of Child Labour, many sectors have come together and coordinate against child labour.

Next steps will mobilise stakeholders to develop a new District Action Plan for Kikube and continue to support the government to build capacity for its implementation.

## 2019 - 2021 Project Highlights

Over **19,000** direct beneficiaries

**12,460** community members to learn new finance management skills

**6,000** children will be supported to stay in schools and away from child labour

**140** stakeholders at district & national levels will be trained on child labour policies