



Kuapa Kokoo farmers' response to preventing and responding to Hazardous Child Labour and the Worst Forms of Child Labour on members' cocoa farms

Update Report on Kuapa Kokoo internal systems and policy development and new proposals first initiated May 2009

Kuapa Kokoo is a cocoa farmers' cooperative in Ghana. It was formed in 1993 when the government of Ghana liberalised the cocoa industry to allow private participation in the marketing of cocoa. A group of farmers led by the late Nana Yaw Frimpong Abofren II, with the support of TWIN, UK decided to roll out an organisation which was completely owned by the members (farmers). They started with 22 village societies in the Western, Brong Ahafo and Ashanti region with almost two thousand members. Currently, Kuapa Kokoo operates in five political regions in Ghana where cocoa is grown, namely; Western, Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Eastern and Central regions. There are about 45,000 members organised into 1,200 village societies spread across these five regions. Membership is opened to any cocoa farmer who believes in the principles and values of the organisation and is willing to go through the required processes for membership.

Kuapa Kokoo's Vision: To become a leading, caring, efficient and the most globally recognized co-operative in cocoa production and marketing.

Kuapa Kokoo's Mission: To develop into a formidable farmer based organisation, able to mobilise quality cocoa and cocoa products, improve the members' livelihoods and satisfy our customers

Over the years, Kuapa Kokoo has been able to mobilise cocoa farmers and empower them within their communities to take control of their business. Through Fairtrade premiums, projects such as schools, wells and public lavatories have been provided to communities. Also, women have been organised into formidable groups with loan facilities to engage in additional income generating activities to support their families. Perhaps one of the greatest achievements of Kuapa Kokoo is the democratic culture inculcated into the farmers as a strong pillar in decision making. The biggest challenge is the increasing number of membership each year.

Kuapa Kokoo is a co-operative of small scale cocoa farmers and also a licensed cocoa buyer within the framework of Ghana's semi-liberalised cocoa industry. As such it is licensed to purchase cocoa from its members and to sell this on to Cocobod, the state marketing company which sells Ghana cocoa to the world market. Kuapa Kokoo is also one of the world's oldest certified suppliers of Fairtrade cocoa. Although all its cocoa is certified not all of it is bought for the Fairtrade market. Kuapa's cocoa is sold to both Fairtrade buyers and non-Fairtrade buyers through Cocobod.

Kuapa Kokoo is a large and complex organisation. Its ultimate decision-making body is the Annual General Meeting. On day to day affairs the co-operative is managed by an elected National Executive Committee, whose members are elected for terms of four years .

Child Labour in Ghana

It is common practice in Ghana for cocoa farmers to engage family labour (both young and old) in the production of cocoa. Adults see the involvement of children in farm work as a way of teaching them about cocoa and farm production . It is also a way of training the young ones to take over from their parents when they are old. However, what can be a good practice and discipline, is sometimes abused to the detriment of children's development. Children are, in some cases, made to engage in farming activities handling dangerous farm tools and chemicals and undertaking work which is beyond what they can manage. In some communities, some of the children engage in farm activities at the expense of their education and physical development, because there is no school or the quality of education is so poor or because parents are too poor to hire other workers. This is a serious issue to the development and rights of the child as provided in various international laws (ILO Conventions on Freedom of Labour

and Child Rights Convention) which seek to promote child development and welfare and also protect them from possible exploitation by adults.

Kuapa Kokoo, as a Fairtrade certified organization, takes a serious view of the issues of child development and protection from exploitation by adults, and has engaged farmers in various ways to educate them on these issues. In fact, one of the reasons why Kuapa Kokoo invests Fairtrade premiums in schools is to promote the development of children among its communities. Kuapa Kokoo cherishes the long standing tradition which allows children to assist their parents on farms and also learn the trade of their parents. This provides for future engagement of children into cocoa thereby providing sustainable production to the supply chain. However, Kuapa Kokoo abhors the situation where children are involved in farm activities that are hazardous to their development.

Kuapa Kokoo's Response

In May 2009 Kuapa decided to draw up a child labour policy as a blueprint towards the solution to the problem and consulted officials from the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment which has a desk dedicated to addressing the issues of child labour and worst forms of child labour in cocoa. In July 2009, Kuapa Kokoo presented its draft child labour policy for discussion and adoption by its members at the Annual General Meeting, the highest decision making body of the organisation. The members passed the policy after rounds of discussions on the document. The theme of the July 2009 AGM also dwelt on child labour.

Kuapa Kokoo Actions

Kuapa has a multi-faceted response to preventing and responding to unsafe practices generally, and to worst forms of child labour in Kuapa Kokoo societies and operational depots across five cocoa growing regions where Kuapa is active in Ghana, which includes the following ongoing programmes and practices:

Internal control system: Over the last year, the Kuapa Kokoo Internal Control System (KKICS) has been set up. It is a system designed to monitor and promote compliance with Fairtrade standards at all levels of the organisation. It involves regular internal checks on member farms to ensure compliance with Fairtrade labour and environmental standards, for example, and ongoing training of Kuapa Kokoo members to make sure they understand Fairtrade principles and are able to produce cocoa in a sustainable and responsible way. With the help of these internal checks Kuapa Kokoo is able to identify risks and problems proactively and take appropriate action, including working with communities to educate farmers and develop action plans or even suspending members, where necessary. The system therefore helps Kuapa Kokoo maintain the integrity of the cocoa it supplies.

Training: Community Action Planning: Kuapa Kokoo is in the process of training and assisting its societies to develop Community Action Plans (CAPs) to identify the needs of the communities and develop strategies and appropriate skills in addressing these needs. Central to the CAPs is the issue of child labour, child protection and child rights. Communities will set up Child Protection Committees to address child abuses and incidence of child labour within their communities.

Health and Safety for Kuapa Kokoo and Society Workers under Kuapa's Environmental Programme: Kuapa Kokoo educates its members and workers on occupational health and safety issues. Currently, the organisation has engaged the services of a consultant to develop a Health and Safety Policy for its members and workers.

Safe handling of agro-chemicals and avoiding hazardous practices for young people: All farmers use inputs to support their farms: organic and inorganic fertilizers and treatments to cope with the many diseases and pests to which cocoa trees are prone. Kuapa Kokoo is aware of the relationship between young people handling farm inputs and their physical development. To this end Kuapa is investing in a training programme for 10,000 Kuapa Kokoo farmers in ten of Kuapa's 52 districts to improve awareness and promote best practice. This is a new approach to this challenge

and Kuapa hope to find support for an evaluation exercise in 2011, to assess this impact and review the approach before rolling out similar training sessions in the remaining 32 districts from 2012 to cover a further 25,000 Kuapa farmers.

Awareness Raising and Outreach at District level: Kuapa Kokoo has developed a Child Labour Awareness Campaign Programme which will increase the level of awareness among its members and improve their knowledge on issues of child labour and worst forms of child labour.

Remediation Team and Rehabilitation Programme for Identified Victims There is a Remediation Team which responds directly to any incidence of child labour identified by the KKICS or other sources. The team provides interventions to cases identified by reporting these to appropriate authorities – worst forms of child labour are against the law in Ghana - and by engaging the farmers and communities involved in dialogue and sensitization of the issues. They also draw up remediation plans for the cases identified. A Remediation Fund exists to provide resources to act in all cases identified.

Scholarship Scheme Kuapa Kokoo has made provision for a scholarship scheme for farmers' children who are able to get admissions into tertiary institutions. This complements the government's scholarship scheme for the basic and secondary education in Ghana which Kuapa Kokoo has actively promoted among its members.

Kid's Camps: Kuapa Kokoo, with Trading Visions UK, has been working on education days with children and teachers in three schools over the last six years. The Camps programme includes a two day event bringing together children from three schools for a 'Kids Camp' to learn about health, nutrition, their role in the global chocolate industry and Fairtrade. The last Camp event included a pilot workshop on Child Labour that helped the children understand their rights and needs and the importance of not taking part in hazardous activities on their parents' farms.

All these activities are an integral and ongoing part of Kuapa Kokoo's work for and with its members. Annually Kuapa invests upwards of US\$ 1 million towards this approach. This is financed from core operational budgets, Fairtrade social premiums, Divine Chocolate contributions and direct grants. Direct grants account to date for less than 10% of this recurrent cost, showing that this response to the many aspects of the welfare of the children of Kuapa Kokoo is integral to our overall business approach and financially sustainable.

We are proud of our democratic character and how this irrevocably changes the traditional relationship between farmer and buyer in our communities and cocoa farmers' sense of their place in the national and global industry. Kuapa Kokoo farmers have experienced more than 15 years of dialogue and exchange with consumers in final markets through its involvement in Fairtrade and ownership of Divine Chocolate Ltd (UK) and Divine Chocolate Inc (USA). Kuapa is the only farmers' organisation in the world with a majority equity stake in a chocolate brand: Divine, a chocolate company operating globally, dedicated to promoting farmers' voices, their visions and their cocoa. Kuapa farmers have strong self-esteem and a capacity to work and adjust to the changing world.

Kuapa is the only effective farmer-owned and run cocoa trading operation in Ghana where farmers work together with dedicated professionals to run the 5th largest trading operation in Ghana in direct competition with multinational companies.

We believe this is a unique proposition in the global industry, offering farmers, their children, Kuapa Kokoo workers and managers, and Kuapa Kokoo's clients a fully, mutually beneficial proposition of a traceable and optimally-managed supply chain.

P C K Buah

P C K Buah
President

Appendix

Child Labour

As defined by the Ghanaian Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- interferes with their schooling by:
 - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 - obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work”.

Worst forms of Child Labour

The Government of Ghana’s document adopts Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182 in defining the worst forms of child labour. These are:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

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

Permissible child work in cocoa processing

The following activities in cocoa production are non-hazardous and permissible for children to undertake under adult supervision:

- Helping in cooking and serving food
- Assisting in taking care of babies and toddlers on the farm
- Running errands on the farm
- Filling nursery bags with black soil
- Watering seedlings at the nursery
- Assisting in planting seedlings
- Uprooting weeds around young cocoa plants
- Fetching water for spraying and leaving the farm before spraying commences
- Gathering plucked cocoa pods
- Carrying loads not exceeding 30% of the person’s body weight over a 2mile distance or less
- Breaking cocoa pods with a mallet or hitting it on the ground
- Plucking pods within the reach of the hand
- Weeding with age-appropriate cutlass
- Scooping and removal of beans from broken Pods

Key hazards in cocoa processing

The Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (HAF) prescribes the following key activities as hazardous:

- Felling trees, burning and slashing
- Carrying heavy loads, more than 30% of body weight, over a distance of more than 2 miles
- Prolonged awkward postures
- Falling from a height, slips and falls
- Use of inadequate tools and equipment, including sharp implements
- Purchase, transport, mixing, spraying, storage and disposal of chemicals
- Working long duration, i.e. more than 6 hours per day

Children should not be part of these activities.

For the full list of hazardous activities go to : www.childprotection.gov.gh/surveys