



INTERIM EVALUATION BRIEF | JANUARY 2024

MAKING ADVANCES TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR IN MORE AREAS WITH SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED EFFORTS (MATE MASIE)

[Photo credit: Winrock]

PROJECT OVERVIEW

MATE MASIE seeks to increase the number of cocoa cooperatives in Ghana demonstrating the capacity to reduce child labor in the cocoa supply chain. It works to strengthen cocoa cooperatives and enforcement agencies to monitor child labor and to enforce child labor laws within the cooperatives and to increase support to vulnerable cocoa cooperative member households.

The project is being implemented by Winrock International with four participating cocoa cooperatives in rural and urban settings in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Project funding totals \$4,000,000 over the period December 2020 to December 2024.

Evaluation Overview

USDOL commissioned Research Support Services Inc. (RSS) to conduct an independent interim performance evaluation of MATE MASIE to assess progress and identify areas for improvement, and define strategies for sustainability.

The evaluation included desk review of project documents and interviews with key stakeholders including cooperative leadership, committee members, community members, law enforcement, and government representatives, among others.

Full report results and learning [available here](#).

KEY RESULTS

OUTCOME 1: Improved accountability of cocoa cooperatives to monitor child labor in the cocoa supply chain

- MATE MASIE is making significant progress on Outcome 1. Project staff have engaged in collaborative work with cooperatives and law enforcement and monitoring agencies, including formation of child protection committees, effective training to increase awareness and capacity to manage child labor in the cocoa supply chain as well as case management and child tracing.
- There is a strong perception that these activities have made progress towards the goals of strengthening the cocoa cooperatives and sensitizing members to the dangers of and laws around child labor.

OUTCOME 2: Increased support to vulnerable cocoa households within cocoa cooperatives

- There has been less progress on Outcome 2 due to delays in implementation and the planned, staged rollout of activities. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have been set up and well-received. Training for cocoa cooperatives has begun but have not yet translated into service delivery for vulnerable households.
- There is strong demand from the community for services to support schooling and currently a mismatch between intended activities and community expectations of support.

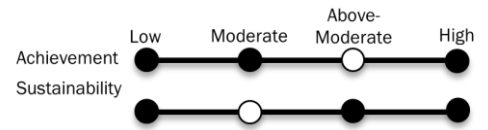
DETAILED RESULTS

OUTCOME 1



February 2023 District Stakeholder Meeting with District Child Protection Committee members and national representatives from Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. Courtesy: Winrock

The project is relevant to the implementing context and has been a strong advocate and partner to further the cause of reducing child labor in the cocoa supply chain with the government and other partner organizations.



At this interim stage, Outcome 1 activities are ongoing and are making progress towards achieving the identified targets. Many activities were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the development of the project monitoring framework, but committees have been established, training sessions with law enforcement and cooperatives are underway, and the project is engaging with government at all levels to ensure cooperation.

Stakeholders were pleased with their training, deemed it useful and wanted to share the information further. There was some debate among stakeholders as to whether cooperatives were the best entry point as it necessarily limited the reach of the program.

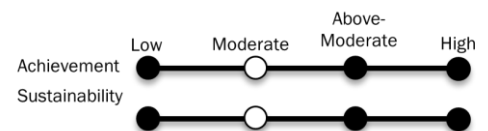
MATE MASIE has had variable success in inclusion of women and marginalized groups. There is no stated outreach strategy in the documentation and staff were unable to speak to inclusion efforts. Training programs were modified to increase uptake through pictorial teaching materials and presentation in local languages and these lessons should be continually applied. More effort is needed to effectively include women and other marginalized groups.

OUTCOME 2



Interaction between Winrock International staff and OFFCOP Manager. Outcome 2. Courtesy: Winrock

Due to the planned sequential nature of the activities, many activities associated with Outcome 2 had only just begun at the time of data collection.



Activities that had begun included meetings with cooperatives on remediation services and referrals; and initial training on direct services management, identifying vulnerable households, and other topics. The VSLAs, which had been set up in many communities, were seen as a useful and sustainable measure to provide support to vulnerable

households.

The process of capacitating cooperatives to identify and provide services, either directly or through referral, had begun, but had yet to yield results that could be evaluated for effectiveness or sustainability. A menu of services had been developed and more meetings and trainings had been set.

Despite this progress, cooperative members, parents, and community monitors felt they had been promised many remediation services and that these services had yet to arrive. The Winrock team noted that community expectations were high, and more work was needed—at the outset and on an ongoing basis—to manage these expectations and inform communities of the processes whereby they will be receiving services.

PROMISING PRACTICES

This interim performance evaluation identified the following promising practices:

1. The Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) is detailed and has been implemented with high fidelity.
2. Awareness raising through training in local languages is a promising practice, particularly with pictorial instruction.
3. The self-assessment for the cocoa cooperatives is a useful tool for cocoa cooperatives moving forward.
4. MATE MASIE has cultivated strong relationships with cooperatives, community members, and government, and successfully brokered collaboration between groups that have historically not worked closely together.
5. Trainings are popular and community monitors are using their skills to sensitize other farmers to the dangers of child labor, as well as helping to identify and refer cases of child labor.

LESSONS LEARNED

This interim performance evaluation identified the following lessons learned:

1. Forging new relationships with government representatives and cooperatives and communicating the nuances of the project is challenging and ample time should be allocated to these efforts.
2. Increasing the number of people trained should be monitored to ensure uptake and that materials are accessible.
3. While the cocoa cooperative as an entry point is seen as effective at strengthening the cooperatives and improving collaboration between actors, farmers felt that it excluded many of their neighbors and there was confusion around how the project would support vulnerable households.
4. Structural barriers such as the lack of schools and alternatives to labor for children and the persistence of poverty put the theory of change to test, and may signal the need for more comprehensive programming that will help address these systems-level challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This interim performance evaluation identified the following recommendations, organized according to the intended audience:

GRANTEE

1. Systematize outreach and strategy for inclusion of marginalized groups.
2. Collaborate with districts on medium-term development plans for sustainability.
3. Collaborate with partner organizations to improve service delivery.
4. Expand and refine training of trainer programs to be accessible.
5. Identify scalable elements of programming.
6. Consider how using volunteers affects programming and assess incentives for volunteers.
7. Work with communities to manage expectations on an ongoing basis.

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8. Collaborate with partner organizations to ensure project coherence and efficient efforts over geographies.
9. Allow time, resources and effort to plan for scaling effective strategies.

EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation was conducted using mixed methods. For qualitative data collection, the evaluator worked with the implementing partner to select respondents using a multi-stage sampling process covering two urban districts (Offinso Municipal and Adansi South) and one rural (Hiawu Bisease). Multiple stakeholders were selected—from the household up to the national government—and across partners (e.g., cocoa cooperatives, civil society, etc.). WI additionally facilitated the selection of parents and youth community members – parents and youth were interviewed individually as it was logistically challenging to bring them together at a common place at a common time for a focus group discussion. Interviews and focus groups were conducted over a period of two and a half weeks, from August 14-31, 2023. These were recorded, transcribed, translated from local languages into English where necessary, and reviewed for quality. Transcriptions were reviewed by the co-lead evaluators and research staff for evidence pertaining to each of the evaluation questions and objectives using thematic analysis.

WI provided RSS with documentation related to implementation and planning for the project including work plan documents, periodic reports, CMEP screenshots, annexes, and more through October 2023. These documents were reviewed and triangulated with the interview transcripts. Documents were reviewed and categorized by their content vis-à-vis the evaluation questions and objectives.

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