



Child Labour in the Coffee Industry in Eastern Uganda

Final Report

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**Terre des
Hommes
Netherlands**



Child Labour in the Coffee Industry in Eastern Uganda

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The views in this paper are solely those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS).

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List of Acronyms

DLGs	District Local Governments
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development
NaCORI	National Coffee Research Institute
NaCRRRI	National Crops Resources Research Institute
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organisation
NLFS	National Labour Force Survey
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCDA	Uganda Coffee Development Authority
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a scoping study on Child Labour in the Coffee Industry in Eastern Uganda, commissioned by the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS). This study sought to identify drivers of child labour in the coffee sector in Eastern Uganda; landscape the existing regulatory framework for protecting workers in the coffee industry; map stakeholders engaged in the supply chain; and identify key service providers and promising prevention and prosecution interventions that address forced or child labour in the coffee supply chain.

METHODS

The study employed a mixed-methods approach. Primary data collection was collected in four districts in the Bugisu/Elgon sub-region (Mbale, Kapchorwa, Sironko, and Bududa) by a team of trained researchers between July and August 2022. For the child labour survey, a representative sample of 771 households containing children aged 5-17 years were selected in the four districts, using a multi-stage stratified cluster sampling technique. For each household, a household roster was completed, and interviews were conducted with the household head or primary care giver and children aged 5-17 years. 83 per cent of households were male-headed, and the median age of the household heads was 48. 1871 children aged 5–17 years old were selected to participate in the survey. The median age of child respondents was 11 years, with an almost equal proportion of male and female child respondents.

Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions (n=32), key informant interviews (n=33), in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of children with lived experiences of child labour (n=16), and participatory workshops (n=8) with different stakeholders in the coffee supply chain.

As part of the study, a survivor-led advisory board (SAB) was established in each district, comprising children and adolescents with lived experiences related to working in the coffee sector, including forced labour (as defined within the ILO convention 29). Each SAB comprised 8-12 children and adolescents, aged 10 -17 years; drawn from at least two coffee-growing sub-counties in the district. Members of the advisory boards were invited to a) review the study instruments to ensure questions are relevant, logical, and coherent, and to identify the appropriate study participants; and b) review and provide feedback on the study findings to ensure they accurately reflect children's lived experiences and priorities.



Key Results

Child labour in coffee production in selected districts of eastern Uganda is widespread.

The overall prevalence of child labour in the coffee supply chain (CSC) was 48 per cent: 51 per cent among boys and 42 per cent among girls. Child labour in the CSC is more prevalent in Kapchorwa (65%) and Bududa (50%) than in Sironko (35%) and Mbale (30%). Most of the children (61%) working in the coffee supply chain did so on the instruction of one or both parents. Four in 10 children (43%) aged 5-17 were engaged in hazardous work, including the use of sharp tools, working long hours, exposure to agro-chemicals and carrying heavy loads. For example, 13 per cent of children (aged 5-17 years) in coffee production, reported working more than the allowable number of hours for their age group.

Children take on a variety of tasks including picking and sorting berries, pruning trees, weeding, fertilizing, and transporting beans and other supplies. Almost all child labour in the CSC happens close to production, either on or near the small family-run farms. The nature (activities) and extent (i.e., regularity of participation) vary depending on the stage in the supply chain and season. Boys more than girls participated in more physically demanding activities such as spraying, pruning, carrying, loading and offloading coffee.

The prevalence of child labour in the coffee supply chain reported in this study is comparably higher than reported in a previous study conducted in two districts (Kasese and Bunyangabu Districts) in the Rwenzori Region (48% vs. 30%), which computed child labour based solely on age-specific hourly thresholds (Terre des Hommes Netherlands, 2021). It is also almost three times the national child labour prevalence rate (UBOS, 2021).

Financial and material poverty and difficulties in accessing education were identified as the key drivers of child labour.

The risk is further exacerbated by systemic poverty: familial livelihoods depend largely upon the contributions of their children. **The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated child labour** due to pandemic-induced poverty, the rising cost of living, and prolonged school closures, which caused many children to drop out of school.

Working in the coffee supply chain hinders children's education.

Children's work in the CSC comes at the cost of time spent in school. School-going children might be forced to miss school to work, especially during harvest season, sustain injuries that have negative health consequences and prevent attendance, or be too tired from coffee production activities to engage in school-related activities.

Children's work in the CSC also poses enormous risks to the safety and well-being of children:

- 38 per cent reported being punished when they make mistakes or fail to fulfil the required tasks. The type of punishment, among those reporting punishment, ranged from being shouted at (68%) or insulted (34%) to physical assault (47%).
- 54 per cent reported suffering/ experiencing at least one work-related injury or illness over the last 12 months. Children engaged in hazardous work are more vulnerable to injuries compared to other working children who are not exposed to hazardous work: they were 36 times more likely to get injured than those not exposed to any hazard. Among children who reported work-related injuries, 38 per cent stopped working temporarily and 1 per cent stopped completely. 16 per cent temporarily stopped going to school.
- Long hours of work, lack of protective gear, and lack of training in the handling of tools were all reported to increase the risk of injuries.
- Only 25 per cent of children in hazardous child labour reported using any personal protective equipment (PPE). The most widely used PPE were gloves (91%) followed by safety boots (4%) and face masks (3%).
- Hazards associated with child labour can cause a series of long-term psychological and physical effects (including disabilities) that further impact children's development and future.

Government regulations contain gaps and enforcement efforts are weak.

While the government of Uganda has enacted laws and regulations to combat child labour, this legislation contains inconsistencies. For example, the minimum working age is lower than the required age for compulsory education. Other workplace regulations do not include provisions on decent working conditions for workers, child labour, or forced labour. The country's occupational safety and health (OSH) regulatory framework¹ is not fully applicable to the agriculture sector and therefore does not provide adequate safeguards to protect workers in the coffee sector, including children.

Institutional mechanisms for enforcing child labour laws and regulations exist, but weak government oversight at all levels of the coffee supply chain hinders adequate enforcement.

- The Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA)² is understaffed and underfunded the research suggests that there are currently four UCDA staff working in the entire eastern sub-region, which covers eight districts.

¹ Relevant provisions can be found in the Occupational Safety and Health Act, No. 9, 2006, the Employment Act, 2006 Employment Regulations, 2011, and National Employment Policy for Uganda 2011.

² UCDA is mandated to regulate, promote, and oversee the coffee sector under the National Coffee Act 2021.

- Government oversight tends to focus more on the midstream (e.g., aggregation and processing) and downstream (e.g., buyers and exporters) levels, despite findings that work in the upstream supply chain (e.g., coffee planting, harvesting) poses higher risks.
- The lack of government-backed multi-stakeholder initiatives also hampers meaningful efforts to address child labour in the CSC. Such initiatives would provide a platform for collaboration between government agencies, businesses, trade unions, and civil society organizations to share best practices and implement shared action to address child labour.

Results also indicate that while the nature of work in the upstream supply chain (e.g., coffee planting, harvesting) can present even greater risks to the well-being and safety of working children, government oversight in the CSC tends to focus more on the midstream level (aggregation and processing) and downstream level (e.g., ensuring the quality and competitiveness of coffee exports).

The complexity and opacity of the coffee supply chain hamper private regulatory efforts.

Private regulatory efforts that seek to enhance environmental and social sustainability (such as Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance) have gained traction in the coffee sector in eastern Uganda. However, these initiatives are vulnerable to market pressures and competition from producers with lower standards. In addition, audits and checks are frequently conducted with enough advance notification that suppliers can hide workforce violations.

Participants reported critical barriers to leveraging regulatory efforts to uphold supply chain integrity in the coffee industry:

- **Liberalisation of the coffee industry.** Thus, striking an “optimum” balance between production and commitment to social compliance and environmental responsibilities remains a challenge, especially in a context where government oversight and supervision at all levels of the supply chain is limited.

- Not all supply coffee-buying companies and cooperatives have embraced certification in Eastern Uganda, and considerable confusion remains regarding the certification processes.
- **Complexity and nature of business relationships in the coffee supply chain.** Findings also indicate that some coffee sourcing and buying companies are not always aware of where child labour exists along their supply chains, and how to address these complex issues with suppliers with whom they may not hold direct buying relationships.
- **Difficulty enforcing labour standards with smallholder farmers, who depend on household members, including children, for labour.** Labour legislation does not extend to work on family farms, and the difference between child work and child labour is often hard to distinguish.

Civil Society efforts to address child labour are limited in scope.

There is still a dearth of interventions focused on strengthening the enforcement of child labour laws and regulations, withdrawal and rehabilitation of victims, and prosecution of child labour offenders.

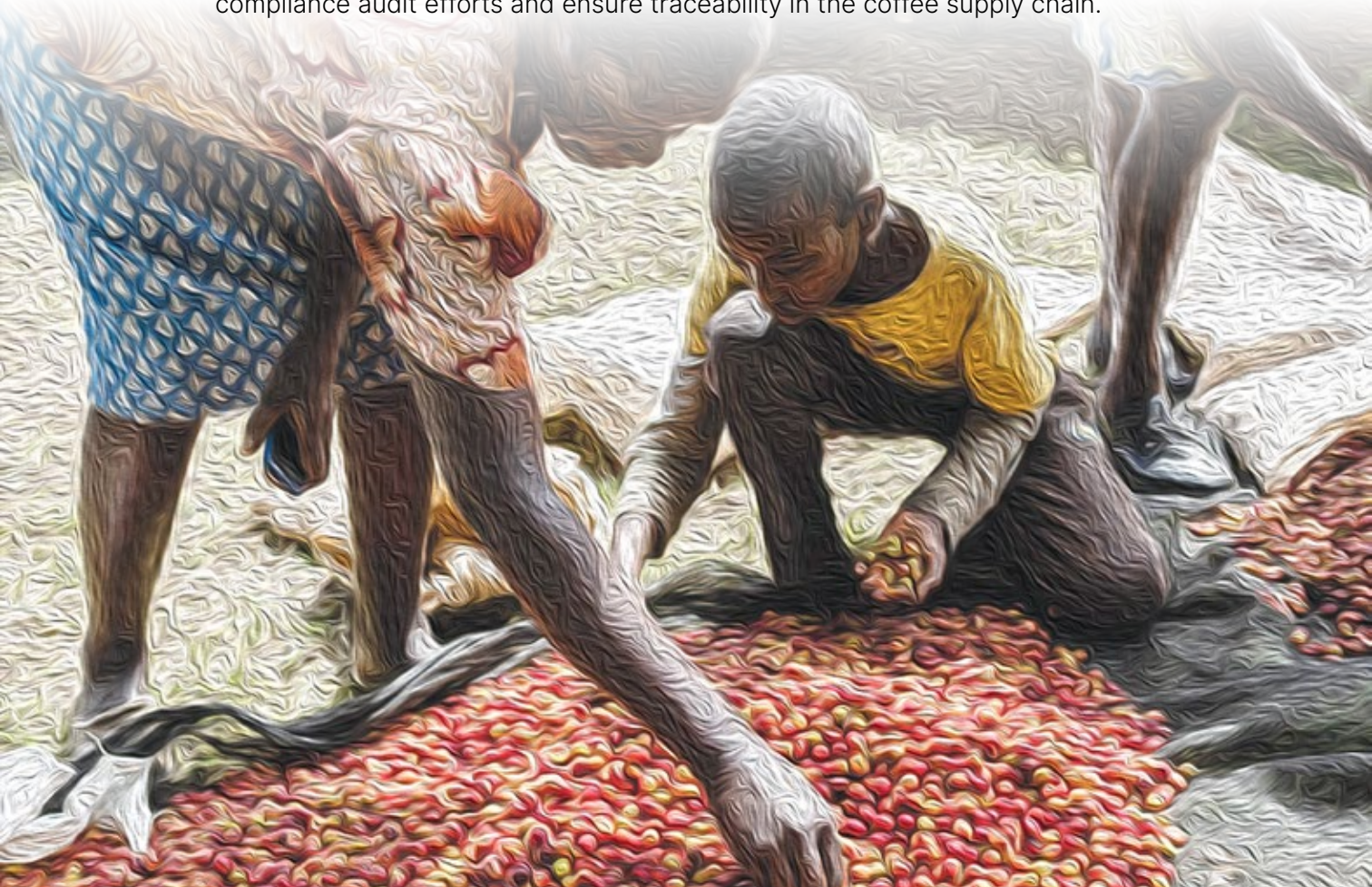
Policy and Programmatic Recommendations

- 1. Address socio-economic vulnerability and support access to education.** To develop resilient and consistent interventions to meet the entrenched vulnerabilities that drive child labour in the CSC, funding should be guaranteed, long-term, and coordinated. An integrated, systems approach to addressing household vulnerabilities and child labour may include:
 - **Strengthening social protection systems.** Stronger and child-sensitive social protection systems can offset the vulnerabilities that lead families to send their children to work.
 - **Promoting and enabling access to education.** Interventions could include working with civil society and the government to access birth certificates, covering school costs related to supplies and uniforms, and helping children who have missed significant amounts of schooling to catch up.
 - Support vocational skills training for out-of-school youths and adolescents withdrawn from child labour.
- 2. Strengthen multi-sectoral child labour monitoring mechanisms.** Local actors should be mobilized and trained to identify children in or at risk of child labour, obtain information, and follow up on identified instances in family-based and other economy workplaces. Measures should be taken (by CSOs, for example) to raise community awareness about the costly effects of child labour on children's health and well-being. This approach requires the involvement of the entire community: parents, village leaders, local authorities, teachers, employers, and children. Messaging should focus on forced labour conditions, the long-term consequences to children's physical and mental health, and employers' tactics in targeting children to do dangerous work.
- 3. Address enforcement gaps.** Robust government enforcement of relevant national laws and regulations is needed. Child labour concerns should be integrated within wider national policies and instruments, such as the Education and Agriculture Policy. Improved coordination among relevant government agencies and bodies in both agenda-setting and enforcement activities is essential.
- 4. Identify and address gaps in legal and policy frameworks for child labour.** Study results show that the existing OSH legislation and policies do not adequately protect workers, including children. A gap analysis of existing Ugandan laws and regulations would identify improvements needed to bring them in line with international legal standards.

5. Train and empower local labour inspectors. The low number of prosecutions and convictions relative to the estimated number of child labour victims suggests that law enforcement capacity is weak. Strategic investments are required to train different enforcement actors and ensure they have adequate resources to fulfil their mandates.

6. Promote ethical sourcing and social compliance in the coffee supply chain. The government must ensure that companies address labour rights violations across their operations. Several options exist for government to support the coffee sector's due diligence and compliance efforts:

- a) Develop a comprehensive social compliance system that compels key coffee buyers and exporters to monitor their supplier's operations.
- b) Endorse third-party certification processes.
- c) Raise awareness about companies' responsibilities to assist child labour victims, including in partnership with civil society.
- d) Monitor and independently verify companies' social compliance practices.
- e) Promote appropriate technologies and digital tools to support companies' social compliance audit efforts and ensure traceability in the coffee supply chain.



1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a scoping study on Child Labour in the Coffee Industry in Eastern Uganda, commissioned by the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The study sought to:

1. Scope the prevalence and nature of child labour in the coffee industry across the four districts in the Bugisu/Elgon sub-region (Mbale, Kapchorwa, Sironko, and Bududa); including vulnerability factors and existing interventions and mitigation strategies.
2. Analyse Uganda's coffee production supply chains to identify private sector practices or points on the supply chain at the highest risk of child labour and forced labour; areas with weak government oversight; and key buyers and their sourcing/social compliance policies.
3. Landscape the policy and regulatory framework for protecting workers in the coffee industry, and map stakeholders engaged in the supply chain and service providers addressing forced or child labour in the coffee industry.
4. Identify promising prevention, protection, and prosecution activities, existing or proposed, to reduce child labour in these four districts.

The report seeks to inform public and business policies and practices to prevent child labour in the coffee supply chain (CSC) and ensure adequate protection for children.

Specifically, findings are expected to contribute to the field's understanding of this high-risk environment, potentially seeding future interventions.

1.1. The Coffee Sector in Uganda

Uganda is one of the major coffee producers, accounting for approximately 5 per cent of global coffee production (Uganda Coffee Development Authority [UCDA], 2020). Coffee is a major cash export crop and a key source of foreign exchange and employment. Coffee exports, on average, account for about 15 per cent of the country's total export earnings annually.³ In the financial year (FY) 2020/21, coffee exports fetched nearly USD 559 million from the exports of 5.3 million (60-kilogram) bags of Robusta (worth USD 449 million) and 739,999 bags of Arabica (worth USD 110 million) (UCDA, 2020).

It is estimated that over 1.7 million primarily smallholder households are engaged in coffee production (UCDA, 2019; Bakema and Schluter, 2019), which implies that more than 25 per cent of Uganda's population depends directly or indirectly on coffee for their livelihood. Uganda produces two types of coffee – Robusta and Arabica – at a ratio of 4:1, which are grown in different parts of the country (UCDA, 2019; ICO, 2019).

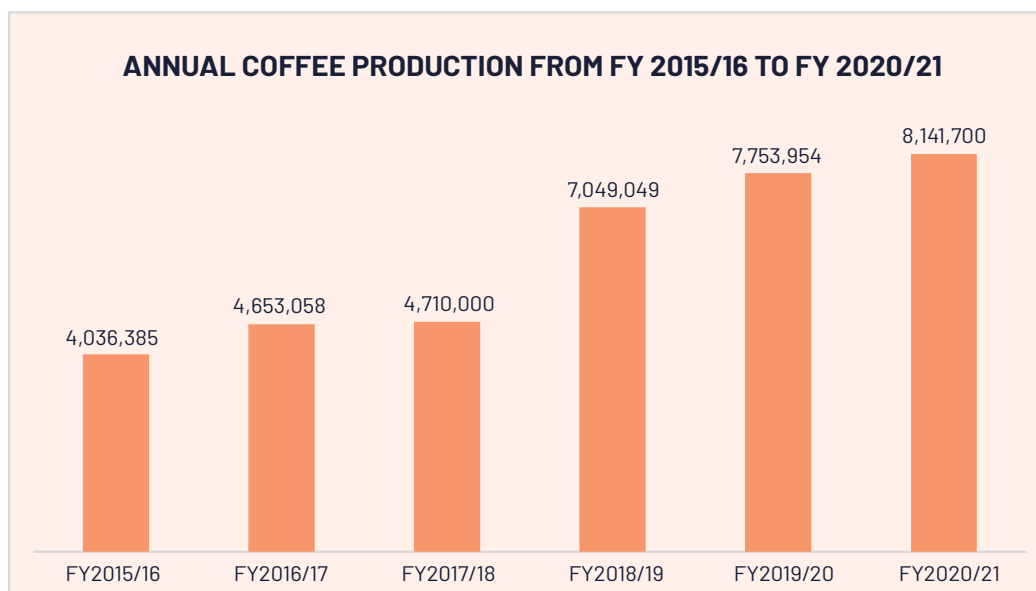
³ The country exports its coffee all over the world in the form of green beans, primarily to traditional markets in Europe (especially Italy and Germany) and the United States of America

Arabica coffee⁴ mainly grows around the slopes of Mount Elgon in the Eastern region of the country and on the slopes of Mount Rwenzori. Some Arabica coffee is also grown in the West Nile region in North-western Uganda.⁵ Robusta coffee is grown in low-altitude areas of mainly the central region (Mwesigye & Nguyen 2020; UCDA, 2019; UCDA, 2015).

The bulk of the country's coffee (85 per cent) is produced by smallholders with farms of 0.5-3 hectares⁶ (UCDA, 2015; UCDA, 2019). Coffee farmers in Uganda use mainly the low input system and households strongly rely on family labour for production, although hired labour is occasionally used for activities such as harvesting (Mugoya, 2018). Coffee is traditionally intercropped with staple food crops: bananas, beans, ground nuts, and shade trees (UCDA, 2020; Mwesigye & Nguyen 2020).

Figure 1 below shows the annual coffee production for FY 2015/2016 to FY 2020/21. Overall, the volume of coffee produced in Uganda increased by 78 per cent from 4.5 million (60 kg) bags in FY 2015/16 to 8.1m (60 kg) bags in FY 2020/21. Coffee Production and exports are anticipated to increase in the coming years (UCDA, 2020). The target of Uganda's Coffee Roadmap, developed in 2017, is to quadruple coffee production by 2030.⁷ The roadmap consists of nine initiatives clustered into three groups: demand and value addition, production, and enablers (see Table 1).

Figure 1: Annual coffee production from FY 2015/16 to FY 2020/21



Source: Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) Statistics 1964/65-2016/17.

4 Arabica is grown at altitudes ranging between 1,300-2,300m above sea level; while Robusta is grown at altitudes ranging from 900-1,500m above sea level.

5 Coffee value chain analysis Opportunities for youth employment in Uganda

6 There are only a few estate farms such as Kaweri Coffee Plantation in Mubende District, which has an area of 2,500ha under Robusta coffee. Others include Dr Ian Clark's farm in Kabarole District, with 320 acres of Robusta. Estate farms are estimated to account for about 5% of the total area under coffee (UCDA, 2019)

7 The Coffee Roadmap was launched in April 2017 after a directive given by President Museveni to increase the coffee production from 3.5 million bags to 20 million bags by 2030.

Table 1: Coffee Roadmap: Nine key initiatives to catalyze transformation.

Domain/Groups	Initiative
Demand and Value addition	Build structured demand through country-to-country deals, especially with children
	Brand Uganda coffee to drive demand and improve value by 15 per cent
	Support local coffee Businesses for value addition, including primary process and soluble coffee plant
Production	Strengthen farmer organisations and producer cooperatives to enhance commercialisation for smallholder farmers and ensure broad access to extension, input, finance, and aggregation
	Support joint ventures between middle-class owners of underutilised land and investors to develop coffee production
	Provide and promote concessions for coffee production on large, underutilised tracts of land
Enablers	Improve the quality of planting material (seed and seedlings) through strengthened research and multiplication of improved varieties.
	Improve access to quality inputs by reducing counterfeiting (fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides)
	Develop a coffee finance programme with Central Bank and Treasury to provide financing to farmer organisations (including on-lending to smallholders), coffee businesses, and investors

Source: Uganda Coffee Lab. Available at: Coffee Roadmap | Uganda Coffee Development Authority

The Coffee Supply Chain (CSC)

The coffee supply chain (CSC) consists of mainly four stages: input provision, production (cultivation and harvesting), aggregation and processing (primary, secondary, and tertiary), and trading and retailing. The main actors in the coffee value chain are agro-input suppliers/dealers (including nursery operators), coffee producers (mainly smallholder farmers), rural traders/brokers or company agents, coffee processors and traders (bulk buyers, wholesalers, retailers), and exporters (UCDA, 2015; UCDA, 2019). The different stages of the supply chain and the main actors at each stage are outlined in Table 2. The description of the function at each stage, the agents playing the different roles and the outputs at the different stages of the chain is annexed (see Appendix B).

To promote the collective interest of actors in the coffee value chain, several associations have been formed in recent years. These include farmers' associations/cooperatives or organisations⁸, processor & traders associations⁹, and export associations¹⁰. For example, the number of coffee associations/cooperatives and community-based organizations is estimated at 1,600, according to the Uganda Coffee Alliance (UCDA, 2019). However, not all farmers are represented or participate in these associations/cooperatives.

⁸ Major ones are NUCAFE (National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises) and UCFA (Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance)

⁹ Uganda Quality Coffee Processors and Traders Association (UQCPTA), Uganda Coffee Farmers Association (UCFA)

¹⁰ Uganda Coffee Federation (UCF) whose membership also includes banks, insurance companies, forwarders, and shippers.

Table 2: Coffee value chain actors and functions

Phase/stage	Main actors	Main Activities
Input provision	Coffee nursery operators, agro-input dealers/suppliers, Government and NGO programs, Uganda Coffee Development authority	Supply farm implements and coffee seedlings. Extension and advisory services to coffee farmers
Production (cultivation and harvesting)	Farmers/producers (individual or groups)	Land preparation, seed sourcing nursery management, planting, weed and pest management, fertiliser application and pruning, spraying, picking/harvesting of red cherry
Bulking and processing (primary, secondary, and tertiary)	Farmers/producers (individual or groups)	Wet processing, sorting, drying, packaging into sacks
	Farmer organisations/ cooperatives, Village collectors/ brokers and company agents	Bulking, transporting, marketing on behalf of producers, processing and/ or outsourcing process services on behalf of farmers
	Wet processors and hullers, export grading factories	Wet processing, washing, drying, sorting, checking for dryness, hulling, quality control and size grading, gravimetric sorting, de-stoning, packing into the sack
	Domestic coffee rosters	Roasting, grinding, blending and packing/package
Trading and retailing	Exporters (small and large), Cooperative exporters	Weighing and packing, sorting, transporting, and shipping coffee
	Retailers of instant/brewed coffee	Retailing of instant coffee and brewed coffee

1.2 Child Labour in Uganda

Child labour is defined in the Uganda National Child Labour Policy (2006) as work that is hazardous or exploitative and threatens the health, safety, physical growth and mental development of children. It also includes work or activities that interfere with children’s school attendance. For statistical measurement, children are child labourers if they are:

- a) Aged 5-11 years and they are at work in economic activity since they are not expected to work.
- b) Aged 12-13 years doing work in economic activity other than “light work”¹¹ or do work beyond 14 hours a week.
- c) Aged 14-17 years involved in hazardous forms of work or working for an equivalent of 43 hours in a week or beyond.

According to the Employment Act No. 6, 2006, hazardous work by children **includes:**

- a) Children working in industries gazetted as hazardous.
- b) Children working in occupations gazetted as hazardous.

¹¹ Light work is defined by ILO Convention No.138 in Article 7 as work that should, (a) not be harmful to a child’s health and development and, (b) not prejudice attendance at school and participation in vocational training or “the capacity to benefit from the instruction received”.

- c) Children aged 14-17 working for long hours i.e., more than 43 hours a week in non-hazardous work.
- d) Children aged 12-13 working for more than 14 hours a week in non-hazardous work.
- e) Working conditions e.g., working at night, carrying heavy loads

Therefore, estimates of child labour include (a) children working below the minimum age (if they are under 12), (b) children exceeding the number of working hours allowable for their age group based on the ILO framework (if they are between 12 and 17 years), and (c) children in hazardous work (UBOS, 2021; UBOS 2018).

Nature and extent of child labour

Overall, child labour is a widespread problem in Uganda. According to the 2021 National Labour Force Survey, an estimated 6.2 million (almost 40%) of children aged 5-17 years were involved in child Labour. Child labour is more prevalent among boys than girls (41% vs. 38%) (UBOS, 2021a). The prevalence of child labour in the Elgon sub-region, which districts where the study was conducted, stands at 47 per cent (UBOS, 2021a). In comparison, the 2019/2020 Uganda Nation Household Survey (UNHS) found that 18 per cent of children aged 5-17 years were involved in child labour (UBOS, 2021b)

The significant increase in the prevalence of child labour could be attributed to the unprecedented economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, pandemic-induced school closures (Human Rights Watch & ISER, 2021).

According to the latest Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS), although overall poverty in 2019/20 was slightly lower than in 2016/17—20.3 versus 21.4 per cent—poverty in the COVID-19 period was significantly higher than in the pre-COVID-19¹² period. It increased from 18.7 to 21.9 per cent during the first COVID-19 wave in Uganda. It is estimated that a 1 percentage point rise in poverty leads to at least a 0.7 percentage point increase in child labour (ILO & UNICEF, 2020).

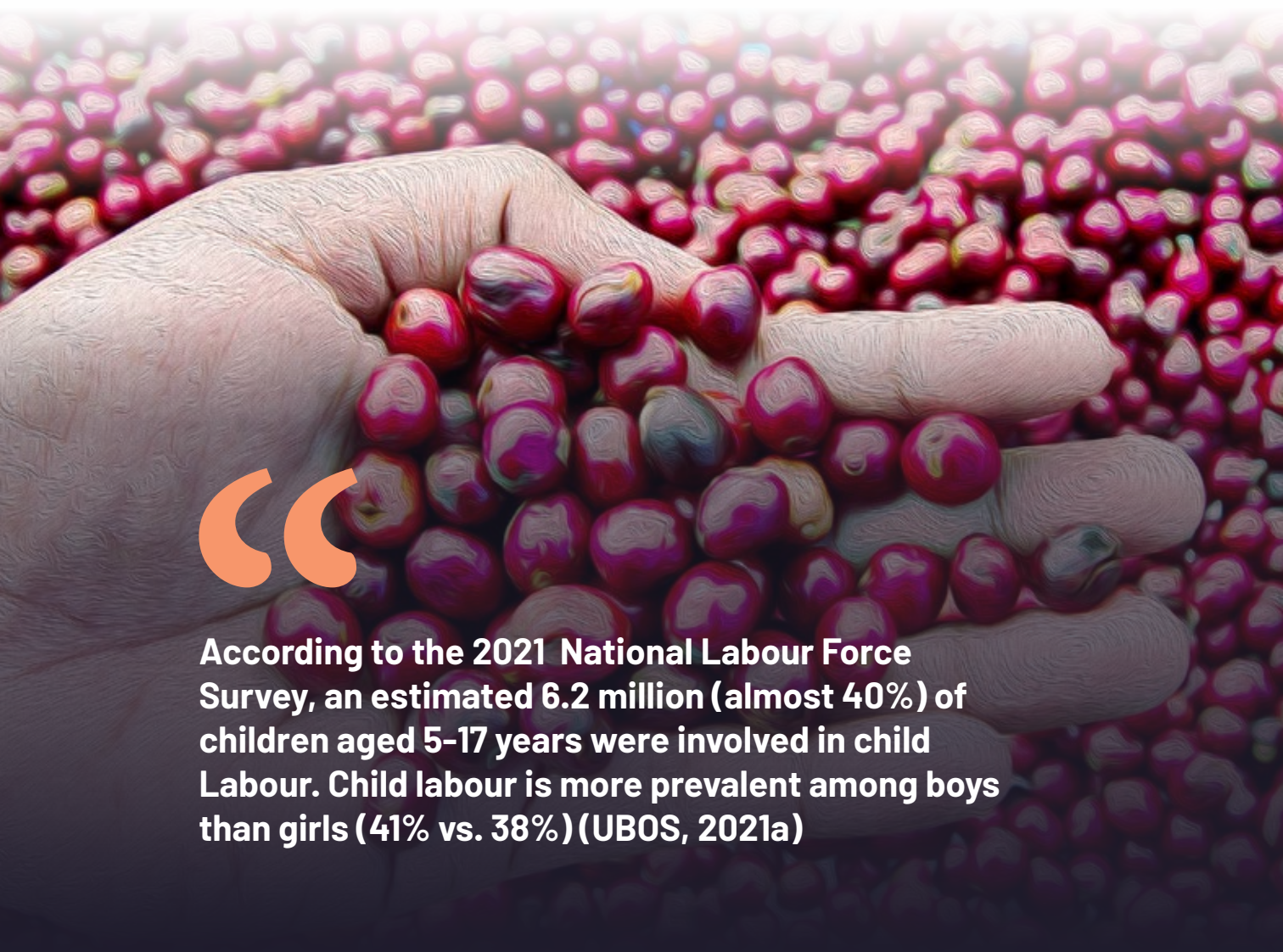
Child Labour in the Coffee sector

Most of the child labourers in Uganda work in the agriculture sector¹³. For example, child labour remains rife in the coffee value chain. Coffee cultivation is a child labour-intensive crop due to the characteristics of the tasks associated with the pre-harvesting and harvesting production process (Kruger 2007). For example, in a recent study, covering two districts in western Uganda (Kasese and Bunyangabu), 30 per cent of the children were engaged in child labour in the coffee value chain; mostly as unpaid workers on family farms (Terre des Hommes Netherlands, 2021).

¹² The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) has recently announced poverty rates based on the UNHS 2019/20. The data for this survey was collected in two periods with a break during the strictest lockdown period between March–June 2020. The first data collection period started in September 2019 and ended in February 2020, then it resumed in July 2020 and ended in November 2020.

¹³ The International Labour Organisation (ILO) classifies the agricultural sector as one of the most hazardous working environments, especially for children. It is one of the three most dangerous sectors for children to work in at any age (2015). Notably, the ILO Convention 184 on Safety and Health in Agriculture considers any work in agriculture harmful to the health and safety of young people.

Children engage in different aspects of coffee production, including pruning, weeding, fertilizing, harvesting and drying of coffee beans (Terre des Hommes Netherlands, 2021). There are also some reports of children working at village coffee processing plants (Taremwa-Karakire, 2021). The work in coffee production leaves children vulnerable to injuries from tools and equipment, hearing loss due to machinery, musculoskeletal injuries, respiratory illness, pesticide exposure, sun and heat exposure, snake and insect bites, long working hours, and withdrawal from school. For example, some of the work children undertake includes working night shifts at processing plants, using machetes to prune coffee trees and picking coffee berries during harvests (Taremwa-Karakire, 2021). One study found that the average age at which children begin working in coffee in Uganda is eleven and that 48 per cent of children working in the sector reported physical injuries (Obua, 2004).



According to the 2021 National Labour Force Survey, an estimated 6.2 million (almost 40%) of children aged 5-17 years were involved in child Labour. Child labour is more prevalent among boys than girls (41% vs. 38%) (UBOS, 2021a)

2. Research Methods and Procedures

2.1 Design

The study followed a mixed design and included qualitative and quantitative components. The study was jointly implemented by the Centre for the study of the African child (AfriChild Centre) and Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL).

As part of the study, a survivor-led advisory board (SAB) was established in each district, comprising children and adolescents with lived experiences related to working in the coffee sector, including forced labour (as defined within the ILO convention. Each board comprised 8-12 children and adolescents, aged 10 -17 years; drawn from at least two coffee-growing sub-counties in the district.¹⁴ These were identified with the help of local council members and selected NGOs providing service to survivors of child labour. During the recruitment process, all members of the survivor-led boards (SAB) were informed of the purpose, objectives of scoping a study, and elements of the study (including their roles and eligibility criteria for membership). Members of the advisory boards were invited to a) review the study instruments to ensure questions are relevant, logical, and coherent, and to identify the appropriate study participants; and b) review and provide feedback on the study findings to ensure that these are grounded in or reflect children's lived experiences and priorities.

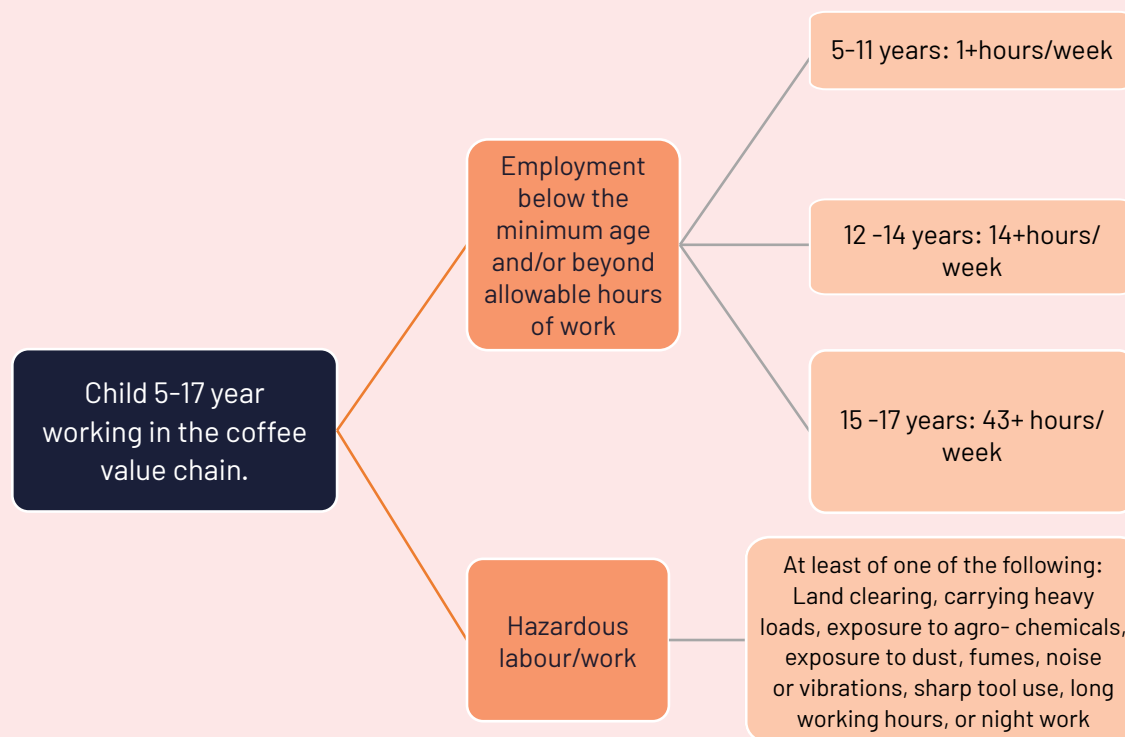
2.2 Measuring Child Labour and Hazardous Work

For statistical measurement, any child 5-17 years working in the coffee sector was considered as engaged in child labour if they were: (a) working below minimum age (if they are under 12), (b) exceeded the number of working hours allowable for their age group based on the ILO framework (if they are between 12 and 17 years), or c) engaged in hazardous work. Children 5-17 years working in the coffee sector reporting exposure in the last 12 months to any one of the following variables were considered to be involved in hazardous work:

1. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector involved in land clearing (v1)
2. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector carrying heavy loads (v2)
3. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector exposed to agro chemicals (v3)
4. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector using sharp tools (v4)
5. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector exposed to long working hours (v5)
6. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector exposed to night work (i.e., work between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.) (V6)
7. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector exposed to dust, fumes, noise and vibration (v7)
8. Children (5-17 years) working in the coffee sector working at dangerous heights (v8)

¹⁴ For inclusion purposes, gender and disability were considered during mobilization and as thus equal gender representation was achieved in all the districts and in Kapchorwa there was one member with a disability. Children were also a mix of both in school and out of school children. Each SAB elected a chairperson, a general secretary, and a publicity secretary.

Figure 2: Child Labour in the coffee sector



2.3 Study sites and Participants

The study was conducted in four districts in the Bugisu/Elgon sub-region: Mbale, Kapchorwa, Sironko, and Bududa. These districts surround Mount Elgon, an area well-known for the growing Arabica Coffee. Most of the community members work in the agriculture sector. These districts have several vulnerability factors, including among others: a high number of households living below the poverty line, poor education infrastructure, and high illiteracy levels.

2.4 Data Collection

Before field data collection, the study team identified and reviewed relevant literature on child labour and the coffee sector to answer some policy and supply chain-related questions and inform the study design methodology. Primary data collection was collected in the four districts by a team of trained researchers between July and August 2022. Study instruments included question guides for the FGDs and semi-structured interview guides and a questionnaire for the child labours survey. The questionnaire¹⁵ was adapted from the child labour stand-alone surveys: model questionnaire (International Labour Organization, 2022). All study instruments were reviewed during

¹⁵ The questionnaire comprised three main modules: the adult questionnaire, the household characteristics questionnaire, and the child questionnaire. The adult questionnaire was completed by the most knowledgeable individual in the household to get information about demographic characteristics of all household members above 5 years old. The household characteristics questionnaire was mainly used to assess the household socio-economic characteristics (e.g., housing characteristics, landownership). The child questionnaire was administered to children 5–17 years old and comprised questions about their schooling, work in the coffee supply chain, and the health and safety conditions of their work.

a stakeholder workshop, which included representatives from the survivor advisor boards and other supply chain actors. The research team revised the study instruments to include questions about children’s agency and involvement in decision-making regarding whether they work in the coffee supply chain or not. In addition, they were back-translated and pre-tested during the training of data collectors.

Child Labour Survey

A total of 771 households¹⁶ were sampled for the child labour survey in the four districts, using a multi-stage stratified cluster sampling technique.¹⁷ In each of the selected households, a household roster was completed, and interviews were conducted with the household head and children aged 5-17 years. Data relating to the involvement of children 5-11 years in the coffee supply chain was generated via proxy reporting (i.e., in selected households, an adult deemed most knowledgeable about a child aged 5-11 years was requested to respond on his/her behalf). **Household and respondent characteristics are presented in section 3.**

Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, life stories and participatory workshops.

1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). 33 KIIs were conducted with different stakeholders using a semi-structured interview guide (See Table 3). The key informants were purposively selected. This includes representatives from Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), including the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), and Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA); district local governments (e.g., agricultural production officers, etc., labour officers, agricultural extension agents); coffee farmers’ associations/cooperatives/organisation; private sector actors and business owners in the coffee production supply chain (e.g., coffee buyers, processors, roasters); and NGO/CSOs tackling the drivers of child labour, and those that seek to eliminate child labour in the coffee sector.

KIIs took approximately one hour. They were conducted at venues convenient to participants, where discussions could be conducted confidentially. All IDIs were conducted in the language of preference of the participant and were digitally recorded.

¹⁶ A household was defined as “a person or group of persons who live together in the same house or compound, share the same housekeeping arrangements, and are catered for as one unit. Members of a household are not necessarily related (by blood or marriage) and not all those related in the same house or compound are necessarily of the same household” (ILO definition).

¹⁷ Before sampling, a preliminary field visit to the four selected districts was conducted. In each district, all the coffee growing sub-counties were listed and ranked in terms of coffee volumes. The sub-counties in each district were clustered into high, medium, and low coffee production strata. One sub-county was selected from each of the strata, and a list of parishes and villages generated. From each of the selected sub-counties across the four districts, 5 villages were randomly selected. A proportionate sample of per village was determined based on data from UBOS and a list of households in each of the selected villages based on area local council (LC) records. From each village, a random sample of households with at least one eligible child aged 5-17 was selected for the child labour survey.

2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). 32 FGDs were conducted, distributed between the four study sites, with a) children working in the coffee sub-sector, aged 12-17 years; b) local/community leaders; c) schoolteachers in the community; and d) parents/primary caregivers from coffee-growing households (see Table 3). FGDs took approximately two hours. All were conducted in the language of preference of participants, guided by a facilitator and supported by a note-taker. Discussions were digitally recorded.

3. Life stories of children engaged in child labour. 16 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with a sub-sample of children with lived experience of child labour in the coffee sector in the four districts, in accordance with GFEMs Ethical Storytelling Guidelines. These were purposively selected and supported to analyse their life stories to identify critical causal factors, risks and vulnerabilities, and drivers of vulnerability among others.

All IDIs took approximately one hour. They were conducted at venues convenient to participants, where discussions could be conducted confidentially. All IDIs were conducted in the language of preference of the participant and were digitally recorded.

4. Participatory Workshops (n=8). Participatory action research (PAR) groups were formed to engage survivors and working children in dialogue, and action research processes, to generate solutions. The 'issues' identified by working children as part of the life stories were used as themes for PAR groups, and children were supported collectively to analyse and identify actions children in the system can take to respond. An additional four action research groups were formed, comprising actors in the coffee supply chain in different districts. These groups were invited to explore supply chain and policy-related questions and engaged in a mapping exercise to identify key actors in the coffee supply chain.

5. Transect Walk. Transect walks were conducted by a team of trained qualitative research assistants (QRAs) in the four districts to observe and document the type of activities done by children in the coffee sector and the conditions under which they work.

2.5 Data Management and Analysis

Survey data were collected using handheld digital devices (i.e., android tablets). Interviewers recorded responses on tablets using the ODK platform. Data was aggregated on a web server and exported to STATA (version 15.0) for analysis. Recordings of all FGDs and IDIs were translated and transcribed. Transcription of FGDs was aided by notes taken during discussions. Transcripts were checked for accuracy and then imported into NVivo 1.7, a qualitative analysis software. We used NVivo 1.7 to code the data and to create typologies. This enabled us to interpret texts and elaborate on categories and subcategories (coding system) to analyse the data.

Table 3: Main research methods and sample size

Method	Participant Type	Category	Number					
			Total	National	Mbale	Kapchor-wa	Sironko	Budu-da
Household-based survey	Children and parents/ caregivers in selected HH	Household heads	771		161	106	264	240
		Children (5-17 years)	1871		376	321	656	518
Semi-structured interviews	Key informants	National-level staff from selected government MDAs	2	2				
		District Local Government (DLG) staff	12		3	3	3	3
		Private sector actors	8		2	2	2	2
		Association's representatives	4		1	1	1	1
		Staff from UN agencies and NGOs/CSOs	7		2	2	2	1
FGDs	Children working in the coffee value chain	Girls, 12-17 years	8		2	2	2	2
		Boys, 12-17 Years	8		2	2	2	2
	Adults 18-	Parents/Guardian	8		2	2	2	2
		Community/local leaders	4		1	1	1	1
		School teachers	4		1	1	1	1
In-depth interviews/ life stories	Children and adolescents with lived experience of child labour in the coffee sector	Girls/young women	8		2	2	2	2
		Boys/young men	8		2	2	2	2
Participatory workshops (max 15 participants per workshop)		Survivors and working children	4		1	1	1	1
		Actors in the coffee supply chain	4		1	1	1	1
Transect walks	Observation	1 transect walk in at least 2 coffee-growing sub-counties in each district.	8		2	2	2	2

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The protocol was reviewed and approved by the Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee (MUREC). Research clearance was obtained from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

Written, informed consent was obtained from all study participants in their preferred local language. During the informed consent process, the potential benefits of their contribution to the research were discussed, as well as the potential benefits and risks for the participant. With due consideration for privacy and confidentiality, measures were taken to ensure that FGDs, KIIs and IDIs were conducted privately. Data were collected anonymously, and no responses were linked to a person's name. Team leaders and supervisors-maintained control over all digital files, and written notes. Data files were kept securely.

All members of the study team were required to complete and obtain certification via an online ethics course on the protection of human subjects by the U.S. National Institutes of Health. In addition, the training for the field data collection team covered a range of ethical issues and trauma-informed interviewing techniques.

Consent was also sought from members of the SABs to participate in the research process. Members were informed that no one outside the study team would have access to their personal information, and what the research team would do with their information. In addition, before engaging members of survivors-led boards, the field research team was trained and instructed to:

- Remain objective and mind their body language and non-verbal

communication.

- Check-in with the survivors about their boundaries and needs (e.g. whether they want to tell their story)
- Provide a stipend.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Be mindful of the diversity of experiences.

Lastly, the study teams identified statutory structures and support systems in the community in which participants requiring assistance could be referred for services during the study.

2.7 Limitations of the Study

Data relating to the involvement of children 5-11 years in coffee production was generated by proxy reporting. Proxy reporting, as opposed to self-reporting, could lead to attenuation bias in child labour statistics due to social and cultural values or asymmetries of information. For example, some studies have shown substantive and statistically significant underreporting of child labour by proxy respondents compared to the data reported by children themselves (Galdo, Dammert & Abebaw, 2018). Some studies have also reported seasonal variations in demand for child labour in agricultural settings (Beegle et al. 2017). The timing of the field survey therefore could have influenced the child labour prevalence rates reported in this study. During qualitative interviews and FGD participants observed that children working the coffee are especially busy during harvest times. There are two main harvest seasons in Uganda for both Arabica and Robusta coffee are between March-June and September-November). As earlier indicated, data for this study was collected between July and August 2022.

3. Households and Respondent Characteristics

3.1 Household Characteristics and Social-Economic Status

A total of 771 households were surveyed, with an estimated 3,749 members. The average household size was 5 persons, with slight variations by district. 51 per cent of the household members were female. 83 percent of households were male-headed while 17 percent were female-headed. Disaggregation by district shows that generally male-headed households were the majority across all four districts. The median age of the household heads was 48. The highest percentage of household heads were in the age groups 40 – 49 years and 60+ years (25% each). 6 per cent of household heads were in the age group 20- 29 years (see Appendix C).

Children (<18 years) constitute 58 per cent of the surveyed household population, while the age-group 14 – 64 years (working age) accounts for 43 per cent.

Table 4: Household composition

		All districts (n=771)	Bududa (N=240)	Kapchorwa (N=106)	Mbale (N=161)	Sironko (N=264)
Sex Household head						
Female		16.6	14.2	10.4	19.3	19.7
Male		83.4	85.8	89.6	80.8	80.3
Household Head's Median Age (in years)		48	48	41	52	50
Average Household Size (SD)		4.9 (1.7)	4.9 (1.7)	5.4 (1.3)	4.7 (1.6)	4.7 (1.8)
Household members						
Total number of people in selected HH		3,749	1,174	571	756	1,248
Sex of HH members	Male	49.2	47.8	53.1	50.7	48.0
	Female	50.8	52.2	46.9	49.3	52.0
Age groups HH members (%)	Median age (Years)	15	15	16	15.5	14
	Children (<18 years)	57.6	56.9	56.9	55.7	59.8
	Youths (18 - 30 years)	7.7	12.8	0.7	6.0	7.2
	Adolescents (10 - 19 years)	27.7	24.6	31.2	26.7	29.5
	Adults (18+ years)	13.2	11.6	10.9	14.2	15.3
	Elderly (60+ years)	9.0	7.9	14.2	8.9	7.8
National IDs/Birth registration	Working age group (14 - 64 years)	42.4	43.1	43.1	44.3	40.2
	Had birth registration/ national IDs	46.6	54.6	62.5	30.7	41.4
Birth registration for children	*Observed birth/nation ID	21.8	25.6	45.2	6.5	16.8
	0 to 4 years	38.4	52.7	-	0.0	32.2
	5 to 11 years	18.1	19.4	46.1	3.5	11.7
	12 to 14 years	11.7	11.0	27.4	0.9	11.5
	15 to 17 years	17.2	8.6	48.1	0.0	11.3

Education attainment and school attendance

According to the education system in Uganda, a child is expected to enrol for primary education at the age of six years and would then be able to complete it at 12 years. Secondary level is expected to be covered in the age bracket of 13 years to 18 years and post-secondary education in the age group of 19 years to 24 years. Table 5 shows that more than 9 in every 10 persons aged 6-12 years (95%), about nine in every ten persons aged 13-18 years (94%) and nearly four in every 10 persons aged 19-24 years (41%) were currently attending school.

Table 5: School age population by schooling status

School-age population by schooling Status		All districts	Bududa	Kapchorwa	Mbale	Sironko
Post - Secondary School Age (19 - 24 Years)	N	191	67	36	31	57
	Never attended school (%)	0.5	0	0	0	1.8
	Attend in the past (%)	58.6	73.1	41.7	54.8	54.4
	Currently attending (%)	40.8	26.9	58.3	45.2	43.9
Secondary School Age (13 - 18 Years)	N	692	182	130	144	236
	Never attended school (%)	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.4
	Attend in the past (%)	5.3	8.8	6.2	3.5	3.4
	Currently attending (%)	94.4	91.2	93.8	95.8	96.2
Primary School Age (6 - 12 Years)	N	1,070	312	168	204	386
	Never attended school (%)	3.7	3.2	2.4	4.9	4.2
	Attend in the past (%)	1.1	1.3	3.0	1.5	0.0
	Currently attending (%)	95.1	95.5	94.6	93.6	95.9

Three per cent of persons aged 6 years to 12 years, less than one per cent of those 13 years to 18 years and about one per cent of those 19 years to 24 years had never attended school in the survey year. Overall, there were no gender disparities in school attendance for primary and secondary school-going ages, among post-secondary ages females were significantly less likely to be attending school.

Information at the household level was collected about persons aged 6 – 24 years who reported having ever attended school and the findings were as follows. The family ‘inability to afford basic school needs’ was the main reason for leaving school for both boys and girls (40%), followed by a lack of interest in studying reported by 24 per cent for boys and 22 per cent for girls that had left school. Therefore, costs associated with education accounted for about 4 in every ten persons that had left school. Others reported a lack of family support (9%), disability (6%), and ‘no school/school too far’ (6%) as reasons for leaving school.

Household income and source

The median monthly household income across the four districts was UGX 505,146, which is somewhat higher than the national average (UGX 190,000) (UBOS, 2021). Households in Sironko and Mbale districts had a higher median monthly household income of UGX 684,471 and UGX 606,634, respectively. This was more than double the median monthly household income in Bududa.

Table 6 shows the main sources of income across the four districts in the last 12 months preceding the survey. Overall, most of the households (90%) reported agriculture as their main source of income. Wage contributed accounted for 4.1 per cent of households' income.

Table 6: Household income and source

		All districts (N=664)	Bududa (N=221)	Kapchorwa (N=86)	Mbale (n=153)	Sironko (n=204)
Median Monthly Household income (UGX)		505,146	301,652	422,152	606,634	684,471
Source of household income	Agriculture	89.8	93.7	98.8	86.3	84.3
	Wage employment	4.1	5.0	1.6	3.3	4.9
	Rent/property	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.0
	Social transfers (pension, social security benefits)	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
	Private transfers/remittances	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.5
	Others	4.7	0.9	0.0	9.2	7.4

Land owned, under cultivation and coffee cultivation.

The average size of land under cultivation in the survey households was 2 acres; half of which was used for coffee cultivation. The households produce, on average, 2.4 (60-kg) bags of coffee per season; with variation across the districts: Kapchorwa (5.2 bags), Bududa (2.6 bags), Mbale (1.6 bags) and Sironko (1.5 bags). The price is UGX 5646 per kilogram (Kg).

Table 7: Land Owned, Under Cultivation and Coffee Cultivation

		All districts	Bududa	Kapchorwa	Mbale	Sironko
Land owned by households involved in agriculture (in acres)	Total	1,039.8	388.0	137.5	186.3	328.0
	Average	1.9	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.8
Land under cultivation by households involved in agriculture (in acres)	Total	1,009.2	356.7	112.5	175.4	364.6
	Average	1.8	2.0	1.5	1.8	1.7
Land under coffee cultivation (in acres)	Total	531.1	217.9	70.3	83.1	159.9
	Average	0.9	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7

3.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Children, 5-17 years

Table 8 highlights the social demographic characteristics of children (5-17 years) interviewed in the study. The median age of child respondents was 11 years, with the majority (55%) falling within the age range of 5 to 11 years. There was an almost equal proportion of male and female child respondents. 8 per cent of the children involved in the study had lost one or both parents. Two-thirds of the children were living with both parents, and 18 per cent lived with neither parent.

Table 8: Respondent Characteristics: Children, 5-17 Years

		All Districts (N=1871)	Bududa (N=518)	Kapchorwa (N=321)	Mbale (N=376)	Sironko (N=656)
Median age (years)		11	11	11	11	10
Age group	5-11 years	55.4	55.8	55.5	53.7	56.1
	12-14 years	26.5	26.3	19.3	28.5	29.1
	15-17 years	18.1	17.9	25.2	17.8	14.8
Sex	Male	49.8	45.6	55.1	51.6	49.5
	Female	50.2	54.4	44.9	48.4	50.5
Parental survival status	Both parents alive	91.1	93.8	89.1	87.2	92.1
	Both dead	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
	One dead	8.1	5.0	10.6	11.7	7.3
Living arrangements	Living with both parents	64.4	69.0	48.0	75.1	62.8
	Living with single parent	18.1	8.9	46.1	9.2	16.3
	Not living with parent	17.4	22.1	5.9	14.7	20.9
Relationship to the household head	Son/Daughter	75.5	74.1	85.7	72.9	73.0
	Grand child	21.2	21.8	11.8	23.1	24.2
	Niece/Nephew	2.3	2.3	0.9	3.2	2.4
	Other relations	1.0	1.7	1.6	0.8	0.3

The study also collected information on disability for children 5-17 years; based on whether an individual had some form of difficulty to prevent him/her from doing any form of activity in the six domains of seeing, hearing, communicating, remembering/ concentrating, walking/climbing and self-care. As per the Washington Group standards of classifying disability, children who answered in each of the six domains as having “a lot a difficulty and cannot do at all” were considered to have ‘non-functional disability’ while children who answered that they had “some difficulty” were considered to have ‘functional disability’.

As shown in Table 9, generally the proportion of children living with any form of disability aged 5-17 years in the six domains stood at 18 per cent. Sironko district was significantly more likely to have CWDs (26 %). There were no significant variations by gender and age-group.

Table 9: Prevalence of disability among children 5-17 years.

Disability Type	Disability status(N=1,871)		
	Non-functional disability	Functional disability	Any disability
Vision	2.6	0.3	2.9
Hearing	3.2	0.3	3.5
Mobility	3.3	0.4	3.7
Cognition	5.2	0.6	5.9
Self-care	6.8	0.4	7.2
Communicating	3.9	0.3	4.2
Any form of disability	15.9	1.7	17.6

4. Nature and Extent of Children’s Engagement in the Coffee Supply Chain

4.1 Children Working in Agriculture and Coffee Supply Chain

Table 10 present children’s usual engagement (in the last 12 months) and current engagement (in the last 7 days) in agriculture and coffee production. The proportion of children working in agriculture (both coffee and non-coffee agriculture) in the last twelve months was 64 per cent, while the proportion of children working in agriculture in the last seven days was 56 per cent. More than half (55 per cent) of children reported that they had worked in coffee production in the last 12 months and 39 per cent in the last 7 days. A higher proportion of boys reported working coffee production in the last seven days compared to girls (40% vs 36%). Participation rates of children in the coffee supply chain (CSC) were higher in Kapchorwa and Bududa than in Mbale and Sironko.

Table 10:Table: children in coffee production in the last 12 months and the last 7 days.

		No. of children (5-17 years)	Children working in agriculture		Children working in coffee production	
			Last 12 months	Last 7 days	Last 12 months	Last 7 days
Children 5-17 years		1,871	63.8	56.0	55.2	38.7
Sex	Male	929	66.6	58.4	58.3	40.8
	Female	942	60.9	53.5	52.1	35.7
Age group	5-11 years	1,037	41.0	33.6	30.7	19.4
	12-14 years	496	90.7	81.3	80.9	54.2
	15-17 years	338	94.1	87.6	92.9	72.5
District	Bududa	518	70.1	61.8	61.0	37.6
	Kapchorwa	321	67.9	51.4	65.4	46.4
	Mbale	376	62.2	58.2	54.0	44.4
	Sironko	656	57.6	52.3	46.3	31.1

Table 11 provides a summary of the activities performed by children in coffee production. This includes pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest activities that are broadly classified into five categories: land preparation (land clearing); planting (preparing seedlings, planting seedlings etc); farm maintenance (weeding, pruning, fertilizer application and spraying or carrying water for spraying); harvest activities (plucking red cherry, gathering), and post-harvest activities (sorting, drying, packaging into sacks, roasting, grinding, etc.).

Overall, results indicate greater involvement of children in farm maintenance and coffee harvesting activities (82 % and 89%, respectively). Four in ten children reported participation in post-harvest activities. Female children were less likely to be involved in land preparations and post-harvest activities. Children aged between 5 to 11 years were more likely to be engaged in farm maintenance and harvesting activities. All other activities were more likely to be done by the older children.

Table 11: Activities performed by Children in Coffee production.

Percentage of children	All districts (N=1,033)	Bududa (N=316)	Kapchorwa (N=210)	Mbale (N=203)	Sironko (N=304)
Land preparation activities	23.6	11.4	55.7	22.2	15.1
Planting activities	26.1	24.4	35.7	16.3	28.0
Farm maintenance activities	82.1	85.8	89.1	79.8	75.0
Harvest activities	89.2	93.7	74.6	94.6	91.1
Post-harvest activities	40.5	33.5	35.2	47.3	46.7

In qualitative interviews and FGDs participants reported that children work at all stages of the CSC and are especially busy during harvest times. The average age of the children when they first started working on the farm is between 8 and 10 years. The nature (activities) and extent (i.e., regularity of participation) vary depending on the stage in the supply chain and season.

At the land preparation and planting stage, children are especially involved in the preparation of gardens for coffee planting (involving bush clearing/slashing or spraying), preparation of nursery beds, and potting and transporting seedlings for planting, among others. In addition, children often prune coffee trees and are involved in weeding, fertilizer application spraying in the coffee trees, and harvesting coffee berries. There are two main harvest seasons in Uganda for both Arabica and Robusta coffee (March-June and September-November).

Me I am now used, I can do weeding, apply fertilizer and spray the coffee trees, pick the coffee berries and also in pulping activities.” (In-depth Interview (IDI) with a boy, Kapchorwa)

Me and other children we do work like weeding, watering coffee, Putting manure or fertilizers in the coffee plantations” (FGD with boys, Mbale)

“I prepare the nursery bed, put soil in the seedling pots, I also weed, apply fertilizer and spray the coffee trees and participate in sorting and cleaning, among others.” (IDI with Boy, Kapchorwa)

Results also show that some children carry harvested coffee berries to the bulking sites and also participate in sorting and washing, drying coffee beans, and transporting (especially carrying on heads) to collection/loading centres for eventual transportation to the coffee processing sites.

They do carry coffee from the gardens to their homes or the pulping (FGD Teachers, Kapchorwa).

You find children, some as young as 10 years, carrying loads of coffee on their heads along village paths along the highlands to deliver freshly harvested coffee beans to the processing plant. (FGD with boys, Mbale)

Overall, children performed more or less the same tasks as adults in coffee supply chains. However, participants reported that, on average, adults spend more time per

day working than children. Results also indicate that boys participated in more physically demanding activities such as spraying, pruning, carrying, loading and offloading coffee. Among older children (13 and up), there was more reported use of fertilizers and spraying machines.

It is by nature that boys do heavier work than girls because they are stronger than us. Sometimes I may push a wheelbarrow but not always because the boys do so” [In-depth Interview [IDI] with a Girl, Kapchorwa)

Boys know how to use hoes very well even spraying coffee trees with pesticides and pruning we find boys more engaged there than girls. (FGD with caregivers, Bududa)

4.2 Working Hours and Minimum Age

Table 12 presents the data on average hours worked by children working in coffee production by age-group. Overall, 13 per cent of children (aged 5-17 years) in coffee production reported working more than the allowable number of hours. The average hours worked in the reference week by children (age 5-17) working in coffee production was 3.5 hours; with some variations across the four districts. Slightly more boys than girls reported working more than the allowable number of hours (13 % vs. 12 %).

Table 12: Working Hours and Minimum Age

		All districts	Districts			
			Bududa	Kapchorwa	Mbale	Sironko
Children, 5-17 years	% Working more than allowable hours per week	12.7	15.1	13.1	17.0	8.1
	Average # of hours worked	3.5	3.6	3.2	5.0	2.7
5-11 years	% Working 1+ hour per week	18.3	22.5	21.9	23.3	10.6
	Average # of hours worked	1.5	1.9	1.2	2.2	1.0
12-14 years	% Working 14+ hours per week	9.3	9.6	4.8	15.0	7.3
	Average # of hours worked	4.9	4.9	4.6	6.6	4.0
15-17 years	% Working 43+ hours per wee	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0
	Average # of hours worked	7.4	7.1	6.7	10.5	6.1
By sex	% Working more than allowable hours per week (Male)	13.2	15.6	11.1	18.6	9.5
	% Working more than allowable hours per week (Female)	12.1	14.6	15.4	15.4	6.7
	Average # of hours worked (Male)	3.8	4.0	3.5	5.4	3.0
	Average # of hours worked (Female)	3.2	3.4	3.0	4.4	2.3

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines¹⁸ classify children under the minimum age for light work (in this case, children 5-11) undertaking any type of work for at least one hour per week as engaged in child labour. The proportion of children in coffee production in the 5-11 age group who undertook at least one hour of work per week was 18 per cent. The average number of hours worked by children in the 5-11 age

¹⁸ International Labour Organization (ILO), Convention 138 Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, (26 June 1973).

group who worked in coffee production in the reference week before the survey was 1.5 hours.

The proportion of children engaged in coffee production in the 12-14 age group working more than ILO recommended hours (14 or more hours per week) was 9 per cent. The average number of hours worked for children in the age group in the reference week before the survey was 5 hours. The proportion of children in the 15-17 age group in coffee production working more than the ILO recommended hours (42 hours per week) across the four districts was less than one per cent, and the average number of hours worked in the reference week before the survey was 7.4 hours. Depending on the season, sometimes children work the whole day for six or even seven days a week.

4.3 Children’s Exposure to Hazardous Activities

Table 13 presents the data on exposure to each of the 8 different types of hazards related to coffee production among all children in agricultural households in the four districts. The use of sharp tools (32 %), working long hours (27 %), exposure to agrochemicals (16 %), and carrying heavy loads (12 %) were the most identified hazards. One-third of the children (34%) working in coffee production were exposed to multiple types of hazardous activities.

Only 25 per cent of children in hazardous child labour reported using any personal protective equipment (PPE). The most widely used PPE were gloves (91%) followed by safety boots (4%) and face masks (3%).

Table 13: Types of Hazardous Work

Percentage of children in surveyed households:	All districts (N=1871)	Districts			
		Bududa (N=518)	Kapchorwa (N=321)	Mbale (N=376)	Sironko (N=656)
V1: Land clearing	26.5	33.8	51.4	14.1	15.7
V2: Heavy loads	11.9	4.3	34.6	14.9	5.0
V3: Agro chemicals	15.8	17.0	35.2	12.5	7.2
V4: Sharp tools	32.2	45.0	51.7	19.4	20.0
V5: Long working hours	27.4	18.2	48.9	25.2	25.5
V6: Night work	2.7	1.2	4.1	3.5	2.7
V7: Exposure to dust, fumes, noise and vibration	0.9	0.8	1.3	2.1	0.0
V8: Working at dangerous heights	8.6	4.3	17.8	9.6	7.0
Exposed to multiple hazards	34.0	37.6	58.6	23.7	25.0
Average number of hazards	1.3	1.2	2.4	1.0	0.8
Not exposed to any hazard	56.6	49.6	35.5	69.7	64.9

4.4 Estimate of Child Labour and Hazardous Child Labour

Using the estimates of working hours and responses of children relating to their exposure to activities considered hazardous; we generated estimates of children’s engagement in child labour in agriculture. Children (age 5-17 years) who exceeded the maximum allowable working hours, specific to each age group (see Table 12), and/or who are exposed to any of the 8 different types of hazardous activities in coffee production (see Table 13) were considered as child labour in the coffee sector.

Table 14 shows prevalence rates of child labour and exposure to hazardous work disaggregated by sex and age group and district. The prevalence rate of child labour across the four districts was 47 per cent: 51 per cent among boys and 42 per cent among girls. Most of the child labourers (81%) fell within the age bracket 15-27 years, while slightly more than a quarter (26 per cent) fell within 5-11 years. Results also indicate substantial variation in the prevalence of child labour by districts; with higher rates in Kapchorwa (65%) and Bududa (50%) compared to Sironko (35%) and Mbale (30%).

Four in ten children (43 per cent) in the surveyed households ages 5-17 were engaged in hazardous work in coffee production. More boys reported exposure to hazardous work compared to girls (48% vs 39%). The proportion of children engaged in child labour and hazardous work was 81 per cent in the 15-17 age group.

Table 14: Prevalence rates of child labour and exposure to hazardous work

Number		All Children (5-17 years)	Children working in coffee production	Children engaged in child labour	Children engaged in hazardous work
		%	%	%	
Children 5-17 years		1,871	55.2	46.6	43.4
Sex	Male	929	58.3	50.8	47.9
	Female	942	52.1	42.4	39.0
Age group	5-11 years	1,037	30.7	26.6	21.2
	12-14 years	496	80.9	64.5	63.9
	15-17 years	338	92.9	81.4	81.4
District	Bududa	518	61.0	54.4	50.4
	Kapchorwa	321	65.4	65.1	64.5
	Mbale	376	54.0	36.7	30.3
	Sironko	656	46.3	36.9	35.1

Appendix D provides a detailed analysis of estimates of child labour by district, including differences by sex and age-group within each district.

4.5 Causes and Determinants of Children’s Work in the CSC.

Table 15 shows the reasons why children work based on an analysis of survey data. The key reasons mentioned by children (aged 5-17 years) were to help in the household enterprise (46%), gain important skills (27%) and supplement family income (23%). In qualitative interviews and FGDs, participants observed that the contribution of household

members to the family economy is a crucial strategy for survival. For example, it reduces or cancels out the monetary costs of hiring labour, thus allowing for the financing of food and other household expenses. In this context, children become “naturally” involved in the family’s economic dynamics and the work performed by their parents.

Table 15: Reasons Children are working.

		Reasons children were working				
		Supplement family income	Help pay family debt	Help in household enterprise	Learn skills	Other reasons
All children (n=1033)		22.7	4.0	45.6	26.5	1.3
By district	Bududa (N=316)	12.3	0.3	48.1	38.3	1.0
	Kapchorwa (N=210)	29.1	19.1	41.0	11.0	0.0
	Mbale (N=303)	14.3	0.0	41.9	41.9	2.0
	Sironko (N=304)	34.5	0.0	48.7	14.9	2.0
By age-group	5 to 11 years (N=318)	12.0	3.8	50.6	32.4	1.3
	12 to 14 years (N=401)	23.4	2.2	45.9	27.9	0.5
	15 to 17 years (N=314)	32.5	6.4	40.1	18.8	2.2
By sex	Male (N=542)	24.7	3.9	45.0	24.9	1.5
	Female (N=491)	20.4	4.1	46.2	28.3	1.0

Several other underlying factors that render children vulnerable or drive children to work in the coffee supply chain were extensively discussed in qualitative interviews and FGDs:

Multidimensional poverty

Most participants described financial and material poverty as the driving force behind child labour or children working in the coffee supply chain. Notably, socio-economic pressures make families less able to avoid reliance on their children’s labour and/or compel children to work to contribute to the survival of their respective families. For example, most children cited the need to meet their household or own basic needs as having influenced labour participation.

It is mostly poverty that makes us work in the coffee sector.... I work because there is not enough food at home; after being paid I buy food (IDI with a boy, Sironko)

With what I earn, I can help my parents buy food and other necessities. (IDI with a girl, Kapchorwa)

We must wake up very early in the morning before sunset. When the sun is hot, it's harder to move across the hills, but this is the only way I can earn something to support my mother at home (IDI with a boy, Sironko)

When sometimes we are chased from school because of school fees, our parents make us work in the coffee sector, especially when harvesting coffee red cherries, which they sell to get money and pay our fees (FGD with boys, Kapchorwa)

Family situations, such as the parent's inability to work due to illness or disability or having many siblings, were mentioned by some children as situations that worsened the effects of poverty and pushed them to work full time to support themselves and often their families. For example, some children were working to support their education or their siblings. Working children whose income often supported siblings' education expressed their keenness to see siblings reach the education level they could not.

Difficulties in accessing education.

Difficulties in accessing education also emerged as a key theme in discussions regarding children's work in the coffee supply chain. Some participants reported that the inaccessibility of schools (long distances, no school at all) sometimes prevent children from attending school altogether or leads to them dropping out of school to work. For example, some children reported having to travel five or more kilometres to the nearest school. Findings also show that the need to cover costs associated with education, such as transport, uniform, or school materials, triggered some children from families with insufficient resources to begin working, at least part-time. In such cases, parents and children considered studying and participating in the work in the CSC as not mutually exclusive, but complementary activities.

When sometimes we are chased from school because of school fees, our parents make us work in the coffee sector especially when it is harvesting coffee red cherries, which they sell to get money and pay our fees (FGD with boys, Kapchorwa)

Some are paid money, especially those that skip school for a year so that they can accumulate enough money to return to school. So, they can work this season of coffee then once the season is done, they save that money that they use to go back to school (FGD with Caregivers, Mbale)

In addition, some children's decision to work was influenced by the perceived lack of support or interest in education from their families.

The COVID-19 factor.

The COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned as a factor in exacerbating the problem of child labour. This was linked to pandemic-induced poverty, rising cost of living and prolonged school closures, which resulted in many children dropping out of school.

As you know COVID brought so many negative implications and children are now working to make sure they earn a living (Key informant, Sironko)

The outbreak of the coronavirus. Many children end up refusing school because they looked very old for their classes and some feared repeating their previous classes, so they resorted to working (FGD with girls, Kapchorwa)

Due to Covid19, so many children are being forced out of school, so they must look for cheap labour. They found themselves working in coffee plantations (FGD with teachers, Mbale)

Family structure and circumstances

Results also indicate that specific changes in the structure and course of family life can lead children and adolescents to become involved in coffee farming activities, in pursuit of additional income sources. Such changes include the separation of parents, the death of one parent, the temporary absence of one of the parents or the advanced age of one of the parents.

Some of the children are orphaned and this forces them to go to work as they stay with only their grandparents who are also needy and cannot satisfy their needs, so they must go work and sustain the household as them (FGD with caregivers, Sironko).

The children working in the coffee sector can be orphans who have no one to provide for them. Where I work, we have 3 children from the same family who are orphans. I interacted with one of them and she told me she wants to work till she saves enough money that can build them a better house and start up a small business (Participatory workshop with Survivors, Kapchorwa)

However, analysis of survey data showed low orphanhood prevalence rates that did not allow for further disaggregation of data. We also found no association between child labour and the gender, age and marital status of the household head. A slightly higher rate of child labour was observed among children living with a single parent compared to those living with both parents (51 % vs 47%) or unrelated guardians (51% vs 41%).

Attitudes and norms around children's work

Some participants also linked child labour to deep-rooted societal norms that consider it normal (or socialising/nurturing) for children to work [on coffee farms]. In a participatory workshop of survivors and working children, it was noted that farmers, including biological parents of children, regard it normal for children to work, considering it part of the family chores or skills training. However, the danger is that farmers tend to overwork children, denying them the liberty to disengage from work.

Some children work because it is a directive from their parents. Many homes take their children to do coffee picking, pulping, washing and even packaging for sell with a reason of training them to be hardworking and responsible in the future (FGD with Teachers Sironko)

In some communities, children's labour participation was perceived to be a normal livelihood strategy to meet the daily needs of the family. Working on

the family farm is the responsibility of everyone including children; everyone in the household must “ pull his/her weight” and assist the family to survive (Key informant, Mbale district)

Demand for cheap labour

The demand for labour was also reported to fuel child labour in the coffee supply chain. Employers and other unscrupulous people tend to pull children because they are very cheap and can be easily exploited, as reflected in the excerpts below:

It's not easy to get adult workers and many children are now out of school and available...With children, I pay them around UGX 5000 (\$1.3) every day, which is not very expensive for me. We are prohibited from employing children but with many of them idle in the villages, these children keep going around looking for work (Farmer, Mbale)

The tasks children are involved in are at that node of stores. The owners of those stores are taking advantage of them as cheap labour, that is where they are participating. [Participatory workshop for survivors, Kapchorwa]

Children do not complain a lot about poor working conditions. They are easier to exploit than adults and readily available, a condition that makes them vulnerable to exploitation by rich merchants. Some children have fewer demands...they just want to get some money for eating snacks like chapatti, soda and mandazi sold in our trading centres (Key informant, Kapchorwa)

To some people, it makes business sense to hire children because they are usually cheaper during peak periods like harvesting, but our members are aware of the consequences of employing children. (Representative, Cooperative union, Bududa)

It is at bulking and agro-processing that they have seen the tendency by such operators who are adopting to use of street children to participate in coffee sorting, off-loading and loading (FGD parents Bududa)

For children working outside family farms, employers get away with it because supply chains are incredibly complex, and it is hard for companies to control every stage of production.

Gaps in the enforcement of laws and policies on education and child labour.

Some participants cited the lack of enforcement of child labour and education laws as drivers of child labour. As one participant noted:

[...]If for instance, all school-going age children were compelled to be in school, or all parents forced to take their children to school, the problem of child labour would be no more. It would only be adults to work in coffee factories (FGD with Teachers, Mbale).

4.6 The Decision to Work: Own Choice or Imposed?

Most of the children said that the decision for them to start working was taken by their parents (61%) or by relatives (20%). 19 per cent reported that the decision to start working was a choice they made themselves. At the risk of negating the children's agency, the decision to work is often driven by several push factors, which leave limited room for genuine free choice. As explained by one key informant: "there are no children that [work] because they want to. They work because of the pressure from their families or because of the difficult situations that they face."

As I told you that we have these children coming from child-headed families so there is no person, and they are the ones that are making decisions to go and work or not and look for survival (KII District Production Officer-Mbale)

4.7 Earnings

More than half of the children (55.2%) were working as unpaid family workers. Children working on family farms were not seen as labourers but as supporting the general upkeep of the family. Only 18 per cent of children reported being paid in cash. Children were paid either daily or based on a piece rate. In most cases, boys and girls are paid the same. Rather, payment varies according to age, experience, and type of tasks. Most children received the payment themselves and had a voice in how the money was spent.

Further, among those who are paid, some of the children (46.3%) said when they earn income, they remit it to their parents while 53.7% said they do not. Nearly all children reported the payment was not always commensurate with the work done, with many paid, on average, UGX 2000 per day.

We are happy you have come to talk about this issue of child labour. It is like a disease here! Children work the whole day because people have coffee, and the children much come into sort grade, load... find children there throughout the coffee season. Yet, they are paid very little money, maybe to afford to buy food at home (KII District Production Officer-Mbale).

4.8 Education and Child Work

Quantitative analysis revealed no significant differences in school enrolment rates between children engaged in child labour in comparison to non-working children. School attendance in the reference week before the survey could not be established due to the timing of the survey (i.e., children were on school holidays). Nonetheless, during qualitative discussions, participants underlined several ways in which working, or child labour interferes or undermines children's education. For example, they described how working in coffee production is an obstacle to school attendance and children's ability to learn. Children engaged in this work might be forced to drop out of school during harvest season, sustain injuries that have negative health consequences that prevent them from attending school or might be too tired to engage in school-related activities due to fatigue from coffee production activities.

Because when I go to work in coffee I come back tired and I don't revise my books, then I fail in class. When I'm working in the coffee sector I don't perform well (In-depth interview with Girl, Mbale)

Most school-going children interviewed said they are farming during the weekends and school holidays. However, some children said they occasionally miss school to help their parents, particularly during the coffee harvest season. In some instances, these absences were anticipated, and, in other cases, children explained that after going to the farm in the morning, they would return home too late to be able to get to school on time. As a result, they stayed home to avoid punishment from their teachers.

The children working on coffee farms are usually above the age of seven; those working on their parents' farms do simple tasks like weeding, pruning, and carrying after harvesting, but those on other farms look physiologically tortured as most of them are forced to stay and work instead of going to school (FGD Community leaders – Sironko)

It interferes. When the coffee cherries ripen during school days, my parents ask me to stay and help with the work. If I don't have books, they ask me to help with work so that my parents get money to buy them for me (FGD with Girls, Kapchorwa)

Another concern expressed by parents of working children who were also schooling is that once the children got used to earning money, they might lose interest in school.

They drop out of school for instance when children in our community start working in the coffee farms tend to forget about school because of the money they make ending up not attending school then become very stubborn and don't want to listen to parents (FGD with Caregivers, Mbale)

This child is not supposed to get money from coffee because they get addicted to the money and forget the future...they are bound by money... they can keep somewhere books and go to casual work and lie to you that they are coming from school and when you do follow up you find out that they don't go to school. They just go do casual work picking coffee to either buy Mandazi or doing what they want and those have stopped them from going to school.

4.9 Health and Safety Risks

Participants interviewed in this study reported a wide variety of working conditions, which pose enormous risks to the safety and well-being of children. These are discussed below.

Exposure to verbal, physical and sexual abuse

Nearly two out of every ten children working the coffee supply chain reported not feeling safe, ostensibly due to the risk of harm or injury (61%), verbal abuse (27%), and sexual harassment (2%). Boys more than girls reported not feeling safe at work (20 % vs 17 %). Further, 38 per cent reported being punished when they make mistakes or fail

to fulfil the required tasks. No significant gender difference was observed. The type of punishment ranged from being shouted at (68%) or insulted (34%) to physical assault (47%).

Similar issues were raised during qualitative interviews and FGDs, especially in Kapchorwa and Sironko:

Girls who work in most of these coffee farms are sexually harassed by their bosses or fellow male workmates, many face challenges of rape and defilement and at the end of it all, they get unwanted pregnancies leading to early marriages. I know of a girl who was raped on her way back home due to working till late and now she is pregnant with an unknown man (FGD with Teachers, Kapchorwa)

When we look at girls, they are vulnerable to defilement by the wrong people. We have had several cases related to this where girls are impregnated by the coffee company staff who take advantage of the girls' situations and use them (FGD with local leaders, Kapchorwa).

Injuries suffered and other consequences of exposure to hazardous work.

Working children were asked to self-report whether they suffered injuries while working in the CSC and whether they suffered specific types of injuries in the past 12 months. Table 17 presents the type of injuries reported. Among working children, 54 per cent declared suffering/experiencing at least one work-related injury or illness. The most common injuries were wounds/cuts, skin itchininess or scratches, and muscle/back/other pains. Among these injuries, wounds and cuts were most common in general; around 26 per cent of the children working in coffee production sustained wounds/cuts.

Table 17: Injuries Suffered while Working in coffee production in the past 12 months.

Percentage of children working in coffee:	All districts (N=1,033)	Bududa (N=316)	Kapchorwa (N=210)	Mbale (N=203)	Sironko (N=304)
Experienced any injuries	53.8	67.1	46.7	23.2	65.5
Wounds/cuts	26.4	38.9	29.5	15.3	18.8
Bruises or swelling	15.4	13.0	6.7	5.4	30.6
Skin Itches and scratches	20.3	37.7	2.4	2.5	26.6
Muscle pain	20.7	14.6	5.7	10.3	44.4
Broken Bones	0.7	0.6	1.9	0.5	0.0
Animal or snake bite	2.9	4.4	5.2	0.5	1.3
Hit/crushed by heavy machines	2.1	1.0	4.8	0.5	2.6
Head, back or neck injuries	13.2	7.0	6.7	1.5	31.9
Eye or ear injury/damage	5.3	2.5	1.0	0.0	14.8
Other injuries from falls	17.3	28.2	26.7	4.9	7.9
Others	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.3
Experienced multiple injuries (more than 2)	33.8	44.3	24.8	11.8	43.8

Most of the injuries reported by children are a culmination of exposure to hazardous work reported in Table 13. In qualitative interviews and FGD, participants emphasised that children working in coffee production are prone to injuries from tools and equipment, hearing loss due to heavy machinery, respiratory complications related to exposure to pesticides, exposure to rain and heat, and snake and insect bites. Long hours of work, lack of protective gear, and lack of training in the handling of tools were all reported to increase the risk of injuries.

[...] I also think children face a problem of being injured by the tools used to do work for example I was spraying and instead I sprayed myself because I did not know how to use the spraying machine (FGD with community members, Bududa)

[...] I have never used any protective clothing (IDI Boy Mbale)

It is possible to be bitten by a snake while harvesting or spraying, most especially, the green snakes hide in these plantations (IDI with a boy, Sironko)

Children work using sharp tools such as pangas, hoes, slashers, and pruning saws which put them at risk of injuring themselves and they get wounds in most cases, it happens to the young ones who are below 10 years because they don't know how to handle dangerous tools (FGD with boys, Kapchorwa)

Overall, children engaged in hazardous work are more vulnerable to injuries compared to other working children who are not exposed to hazardous work: they were 36 times more likely to get injured than those not exposed to any hazard. In addition, children carrying out work classified as child labour are more likely to suffer an injury or illness due to work; with 54 percent of child labourers suffering an illness or injury due to work vs. 13 percent of children working but not classified as child labourers. Sex disaggregation indicates only marginal differences.

Children were asked to report what consequences of the most recent injury or illness they had experienced while working in the coffee supply chain. More than half reported that they were able to continue working despite their injuries or illnesses. 38 per cent stopped working temporarily, and 25 per cent had to receive treatment at a health centre for the injuries. Further, sustaining injuries while working led to 16 per cent of children not being able to go to school and 13 per cent did not feel well for a long time. 1 per cent of the children had stopped working permanently due to work-related injuries and/or illnesses.

Table 18: Consequences from Injuries experienced.

Percentage of children who were injured and effects of injuries	Overall (N=556)	Bududa (N=212)	Kapchorwa (N=98)	Mbale (N=47)	Sironko (N=199)
Continued to work	50.7	46.7	58.2	57.5	49.8
Absent from work for a few days	38.3	39.2	17.4	27.7	50.3
Absent in the work forever	0.9	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.5
Did not feel well for a long time	13.1	14.2	35.7	6.4	2.5
Had to receive treatment at a health centre	25.4	32.1	44.9	25.5	8.5
Could not go to school	16.0	21.2	35.7	8.5	2.5
Others	0.5	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

In qualitative interviews and FGDs participants also discussed the long-term consequences associated with exposure to hazardous work. Notably, the hazards associated with child labour mentioned above can cause a series of long-term psychological and physical effects (including disabilities) that further impact children's development and future. For example, continuous degrading remarks from employers can undermine children's self-image and self-esteem.

Both children and key informants mentioned long-term health problems caused by excessive workload or other adverse working conditions, compounded by children not seeking or not being able to access professional treatment when needed. For example, one survivor reported:

I was working as a daily labourer, and I had developed kidney problems because I carry things. And then when I stopped that work, I now feel somewhat better (FGD with boys, Mbale)

Exposure to illicit activities

Some participants also reported that some children working in the coffee sector were prone to engaging in illegal trading activities. For example, some children are used by unscrupulous individuals to smuggle coffee across the Uganda-Kenya border. Additional research is however required to understand the nuances of these practices.

"...Some coffee is smuggled across the border, and when it moves with the children, people do not easily become suspicious as they would do with adults.... So, it is easier for children to move it across than adults." (FGD teachers, Mbale)



5. The Coffee Supply Chain in Eastern Uganda

This section provides an analysis of the coffee supply chain based on data collected in the four districts. The supply chain includes farmers, cooperatives, intermediaries, importers/exporters, and international buyers among others. The actors across the supply chain are linked to each other in complex ways. There are horizontal linkages between actors at particular stages in the chain, for example, farmers organizing themselves into cooperatives; and vertical linkages within the overall chains, for example, farmers selling their coffee to agents of the large secondary processing plants.

5.1 Key Actors in the Coffee Supply Chain

Table 19 provides a summary of key actors in the coffee supply chain in Eastern Uganda. The actors at the different stages in the supply chain include:

- **Input providers/dealers.** Coffee farmers in Eastern Uganda receive inputs from government agencies such as the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and District Production and Marketing Departments (through programs such as Operation Wealth Creation). For example, UCDA in turn multiplies coffee seedlings and supplies them to private agro-input dealers, local coffee nurseries, and District Farmers' Organizations (UCDA, 2019). Other actors or service providers include private agro-input dealers and seedling multipliers, farmers' cooperatives and associations, NGOs, and formal and informal financial institutions. For example, participants reported that some farmer's groups or associations such as Bugisu cooperative union (BCU) provide extension services and finances to members, such as soft loans, supply seedlings and other inputs, and find markets for coffee both locally and internationally.
- **Farmers.** Coffee in the four districts is mainly grown by small-scale farmers. These rely on family labour, although hired labour is occasionally used for activities such as harvesting.¹⁹ In all districts, several **farmer cooperatives/associations** have formed in bringing together smallholder farmers who have agreed to work together for the sole purpose of reaching better markets by gaining relevance through the aggregation of larger volumes of coffee and sharing the costs (see Table 19). Cooperatives and farmer associations represent small producers and assist them with various aspects of production, processing, buyer contract negotiations, and trading.
- **Coffee aggregation.** Aggregators link coffee producers to both primary and secondary processors. Coffee aggregation takes different forms, and the players are at different levels of sophistication. There are many players, including agents of the large secondary processing plants, transporters, traders – who buy red cherries and sometimes dried beans and sell to processors – and some representatives

¹⁹ In addition to growing, these farmers harvest and do some preliminary processing where they dry or hull the beans as appropriate for that grower's method.

of organised farmers' groups who aggregate and find markets on behalf of other farmers. Many aggregators are small business owners employing between 5–8 people, while some are large traders procuring from both farmers and smaller agents. Others simply buy and transport coffee on behalf of trading businesses and processing companies and make a commission in between. There are several arrangements under which aggregators buy coffee from farmers. Some aggregators buy coffee in advance when coffee trees are at the flowering stage. This practice is common among the agents of big processors who do this to ensure coffee quality. Other aggregators buy red cherries either in the garden, or after harvest, but before drying. The last category of aggregators buy Fair Average Quality (FAQ) coffee from farmers. Under this arrangement, farmers harvest and pay for primary processing services, such as pulping. Of all these arrangements, aggregation of red cherries is the most common across the four districts.



Table 19: Key actors in the coffee supply chain in Eastern Uganda

District	Supply Chain Actors			
	Input provision	Production	Aggregation and processing	Coffee buyers and Exporters
Bududa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Production & Marketing Department ▪ Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) ▪ Bugisu cooperative union (BCU) ▪ Olam Uganda Limited ▪ District Commercial Office 	Individual farmers and cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Olam Uganda Limited ▪ BCU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited ▪ Olam Uganda Limited ▪ Great Lakes Coffee Company ▪ Kawacom Uganda Limited ▪ Gumutido Cooperative ▪ BCU ▪ MEACCEE
Kapchorwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Production & Marketing Department ▪ UCDA ▪ Chesiyo coffee cooperatives ▪ District Commercial Office ▪ Sebei Elgon Cooperative Union 	Individual farmers and cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited ▪ Kawacom ▪ Pro Coffee ▪ Chesiyo coffee cooperatives ▪ Masha Quality Holdings Coffee limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited ▪ Kawacom Uganda Limited ▪ Great Lakes Coffee Company ▪ Chesiyo coffee cooperatives ▪ Olam Uganda Limited ▪ Kyanzo Coffee ▪ Pros Coffee ▪ Kabeyiwa United Coffee Farmers ▪ Sebei Coffee Limited
Mbale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Production & Marketing Department ▪ UCDA ▪ BCU ▪ Bufumbo Farmers' Association (BUFA) ▪ Mount Elgon organic Farmers Ltd ▪ District Commercial Office 	Individual farmers and cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mount Elgon Organic Farmers Limited ▪ BCU ▪ Bufumbo Farmers' Association (BUFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited ▪ Great Lakes Coffee Company ▪ Kawacom Uganda Limited ▪ Mount Elgon organic Farmers Ltd ▪ Mbale Importers and Exporters Company Limited ▪ Bugisu Cooperative Union
Sironko	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Production & Marketing Department ▪ UCDA ▪ Busamaga Cooperative ▪ Gumutindo Cooperative ▪ District Commercial Office 	Individual farmers and cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited ▪ Busamaga ▪ Gumutindo Cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Olam Uganda Limited ▪ BCU ▪ Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited

- **Processors.** Arabica coffee from these districts is sold as Bugisu Arabica and Washed Uganda Arabica (other than Bugisus) (WUGAR) respectively. Wet processing is the most common processing method in the four districts. Wet processing involves three stages: a) removal of pulp and mucilage followed by washing to obtain clean wet parchment, b) drying of the parchment coffee, c) removal of the parchment

and film through hulling followed by grading to obtain the desired grades (sizes) of the clean coffee. The wet processing capacities of coffee are still monopolized by a few rich people who can own processing facilities and cooperatives such as Gumutindo Cooperative Limited and Bugisu Cooperative Union. The processed coffee is then transported to exporters or export grading factories for secondary processing²⁰ which transforms the clean coffee into the various coffee grades that meet international standards. Currently, there are about 19 active export grading factories, four of which are in the Bugisu region.²¹

- **Coffee buyers and exporters.** Most Ugandan coffee is exported in the form of green beans, and only a small amount (around 5 %) is retained for tertiary processing (roasting) and final consumption in the country. Qualified coffee buyers and exporters in Eastern Uganda include Kyagalanyi Coffee Ltd (a subsidiary of the Volcafe Group), Olam Uganda Ltd, Great Lakes Coffee, Mbale Imports and Exporters Ltd, and Kawacom (U) Ltd. Other key buyers of coffee in eastern Uganda are cooperative societies such as Bugisu cooperative union (BCU), Mount Elgon Agroforestry Communities Cooperative Enterprise (MEACCE) Limited, Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative, Buluguyi Farmers' Cooperative Society (BUFACOS), Budaya Farmers' Savings and Cooperative Association (BUFAMA), Bufumbo Organic Farmers' Association (BOFA).

5.2 Government Oversight and Regulation

The coffee sector in Uganda is regulated by Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA).²² According to the National Coffee Act, 2021, UCDA is mandated to regulate, promote, and oversee the coffee sub-sector. The authority works under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and has a Board of Directors representing all coffee sector participants at the different levels of the coffee value chain as well as the government (private-public-partnership-PPP).

All coffee production, processing and marketing regulations and policies are implemented by UCDA (See Box 1). For example, UCDA is primarily responsible for quality control and inspection of coffee destined for export, certifying and licensing coffee processing factories, as well as service providers such as nurseries and input dealers. While UCDA has traditionally been tasked with supporting the downstream value chain functions (e.g., ensuring quality and competitiveness of coffee exports), recently it has been increasingly involved in upstream functions (e.g., supply of seedlings, farmer training).

In addition, key informants interviewed observed that UCDA is woefully understaffed and operates under severe budgetary restrictions.

²⁰ Over 95 % of the total annual coffee production is exported as green beans. Secondary processing also known as export grading transforms the clean coffee (FAQ) into the various coffee grades that meet the international standards. The process involves cleaning the FAQ, drying the coffee if wet (M.C over 13 %) followed by size grading using perforated screens of the desired size. The sorted beans are the gravimetrically sorted to have uniform specific density before bagging off and loaded into containers for transportation to the ports.

²¹ Uganda Coffee Development Authority (undated). Available at: Secondary Processing | Uganda Coffee Development Authority

²² The Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) is a government agency that was established by an Act of Parliament 1991, amended in 1994, Cap. 325 and the Coffee Regulations of 1994. The National Coffee Act, 2021 repealed and replaced UCDA Cap. 325.

UCDA has limited staff. For example, there are only 4 active staff deployed to work in the entire eastern region subregion with over 8 districts and it is hard for the staff to traverse the whole region (Key Informant, Sironko).

Yeah, I think they are also limited by human resources like in the whole of the eastern region we have only one regional office so reaching them and also them reaching farmers there is a challenge. So, they should have zone offices in districts as well (FGD community leaders, Sironko)

The budget delay to come in... so maybe they delay the activities of UCDA... and enforcement, when it comes to staff, I think they have a few staff, and they cannot manage the whole Mount Elgon region and address the issues that are affecting us within the region (Key Informant, Mbale).

Box 1: Coffee legislation and policies

1. The National Coffee Act, 2021. The National Coffee Act, 2021 provides for the Uganda Coffee Development Authority to regulate, promote and oversee the coffee subsector. It requires the registration of all coffee farmers and other value chain players.
2. The National Coffee Policy of 2013. The National Coffee Policy was developed to streamline and ensure coordinated action to enhance the production and growth of the coffee sector. The key pillars of the policy are increased productivity; expansion of the coffee planting area; and the improvement of the coffee business environment. The policy also aims at diversification of markets, promotion of sustainable production systems, value addition, increasing domestic consumption, and improvement of research capacity.
3. The Uganda National Coffee Strategy 2040 Plan for 2015/16 - 2019/20. The strategy seeks to operationalise the National Coffee Policy. The strategy outlines several intervention areas focused on creating an enabling environment and responsive institutions in the coffee value chain; efficient and inclusive markets and value addition in the coffee value chain (including traceability, certification, promotion of domestic consumption, marketing & branding and communication; sustainable, resilient production and productivity in coffee (improved agronomical practices, extension services and agricultural inputs); research, innovation, and empowerment in the coffee value chain (varieties, services, fertiliser application).

In addition, existing coffee regulations and policies pay limited attention to the issue of decent working conditions for workers in the coffee supply chain. For example, they do not reference or explicitly address the problem of child labour and forced labour in the coffee sector. This was confirmed during the study results validation meeting with stakeholders held in Mbale and attended by key sector stakeholder participants from the five study districts:

I want to admit that actually, UCDA has not paid attention to child labour ...our policies don't mention child labour anywhere and it's from this workshop that I'm thinking we need to do something. As a government regulator, I think we need to incorporate child labour in our documentation and policy framework because even the coffee act of 2021 doesn't mention child labour anywhere (Key Informant, Mbale)

Some relevant provisions regarding the occupational safety and health (OSH) of workers in the agriculture sectors can be found in the Occupational Safety and Health Act, No. 9, 2006, the Employment Act, 2006 Employment Regulations, 2011, and National Employment Policy for Uganda 2011. However, enforcement of OSH-related laws and standards is often weak. In addition, the OSH regulatory framework is not fully applicable to the agriculture sector and does not provide adequate safeguards to protect workers in the coffee sector from occupational safety and health (OSH) hazards and risks. The ILO recognises the particularly hazardous nature of agricultural work in its Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention (No. 184), adopted in 2001. However, existing OSH legalisation and policies do not explicitly include restrictions on work done by children in the agricultural sectors, including minimum allowable hours.

5.3 Ethical Sourcing and Social Compliance Policies²³ by Key Coffee Buyers

Our findings indicate that most of the qualified coffee buyers and farmer cooperatives/associations in eastern Uganda have embraced or opted for certification schemes, such as Fairtrade International, Rainforest Alliance and UTZ certified, which require adherence to certain ethical sourcing and sustainability standards, verified by third-party experts. Compliance with minimum-wage requirements and prohibition of child and forced labour is mandatory. For example, companies such as Kawacom Uganda Limited, Great Coffee Company, Olam Uganda Limited, Touton Uganda Limited, Mountain Harvest and Kyagalanyi Coffee have all been certified under **the Rainforest Alliance Certification Program**.

Under the program, Rainforest Alliance seeks to drive more sustainable agricultural production and responsible supply chains. Rainforest Alliance's new and enhanced 2020 Certification Program promotes an assess-and-address approach to tackling these issues such as child labour, forced labour, discrimination, and workplace violence and harassment. The assess-and-address approach requires certificate holders to set up an internal committee responsible for assessing and mitigating risks of child labour, forced labour, discrimination, and workplace violence and harassment. The committee is mandated to monitor the farm, farm group or processing site for signs of these violations and have access to training in how to remediate cases if identified.²⁴

Beyond certification, the Rainforest Alliance also promotes human rights through other strategic interventions. For example, supply chain, landscape, and community programs to tackle child labour. Rainforest-supported programs involve setting up community and district committees that support farming communities with access to education and village saving and loan schemes. The committees also raise awareness about child labour and motivate communities to send their children to school.²⁵

²³ A social compliance system is an integrated set of policies and practices that a company uses to maximize compliance with a code of conduct that covers social and labour issues. It helps to monitor, prevent, and remediate potential labour abuses in coffee, including forced labour. An integrated social compliance system includes engaging stakeholders and partners, assessing risks and impacts, developing a code of conduct, communicating and training across the supply chain, monitoring compliance, remediating violations, independent reviews, and reporting performance.

²⁴ 2020-program-assess-address.pdf (rainforest-alliance.org)

²⁵ 2020-program-assess-address.pdf (rainforest-alliance.org)

Further, some socially aware businesses have committed to a **fair-trade approach** that promotes better profits for farmers and more sustainability in farming practices.²⁶ Fairtrade labelling is a voluntary certification scheme that aims to respond to price uncertainty in agricultural markets and to improve the living conditions of smallholder farmers in developing countries (Dragusanu et al., 2015). Certification is issued on behalf of cooperatives of smallholder producers after specific environmental, labour²⁷, and producer organization standards are met.²⁸ There are 5 fair-trade certified cooperatives and companies in Eastern Uganda, including Mount Elgon Agroforestry Communities Cooperative Enterprise (MEACCE) Limited, Kawacom, Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited (KCL)²⁹, Bugisu Cooperative Union (BCU) and Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative, a Cooperative of 10,044 smallholder expert coffee farmers in Mbale and Bududadistrict. Among other objectives, Fairtrade works to give farmers a higher price for their coffee under conditions that strictly prohibit the use of exploitative practices. For example, Fairtrade prohibits child labour as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) minimum age and the worst forms of child labour conventions.

For example, Fairtrade standards encourage cooperatives to include a mitigation and elimination plan to prevent children from being employed whenever child work is identified as a risky activity (Fairtrade International, 2015). Fairtrade standards also require that:

- Children under the age of 15 are not to be employed by Fairtrade organizations.
- Children under the age of 18 cannot undertake work that jeopardises their schooling or their development.
- Children are only allowed to help on family farms under strict conditions. The work must be age appropriate and be done outside of school hours, or during holidays.
- If an organization has identified child labour as a risk, the organization must implement policies and procedures to prevent children from being employed.

²⁶ Farmers associated with the Fairtrade cooperative benefit from two price mechanisms: a guaranteed Fairtrade minimum price and a price premium for their certified crop, both set by the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO). Whenever the international market price of a commodity is below the Fairtrade minimum price, farmers receive the Fairtrade minimum price, which covers the average cost of sustainable production. In addition, Fairtrade farmers benefit from a price premium, which is directly paid to Fairtrade cooperatives to be invested in community development in health, education, and the environment. At least 25 percent of the Fairtrade premium must be invested in the improvement of productivity and quality of the Fairtrade coffee (Fairtrade International, 2015).

²⁷ Fairtrade Standard for labour focus largely on decent working conditions. Assessment areas include a) non-discrimination; b) freedom from forced and compulsory labour, including trafficking and sexual exploitation in line with ILO Conventions C29 (Forced Labour Convention) and C105 (Abolition of Forced Labour Convention) and Protocol 029 (Trafficking in persons) c) Child Labour and Child protection in line with on ILO Convention C182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention) and on ILO Convention C138 (Minimum Age Convention). d) Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining; e) practices regarding the payment of workers and their conditions of employment in line with ILO Conventions C95 (Protection of Wages Convention), C100 (Equal Remuneration Convention), and C110 (Conditions of Employment of Plantation Workers Convention); f) occupational Health and Safety in line with ILO Conventions C155 (Occupational Safety and Health Convention) and C184 (Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention) and ILO Recommendation R164 (Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation). See link: HL_EN.pdf (fairtrade.net)

²⁸ The Fairtrade Labelling Organization sets products and small producer organization standards based on environmental agricultural practices, labour regulations, the empowerment of women, and democratic management and participation of cooperatives and their associates. Monitoring of standards is implemented as a three-stage process: self-assessment of producers against Fairtrade standards, peer reviews from trading partners, and random external inspections.

²⁹ Kyagalanyi and Kawacom have certification for both Fair Trade and Rain Forest Alliance

In qualitative interviews and FGDs, some of the representatives from ethically certified coffee buyers highlighted several measures, evaluated by third-party verified to help address child labour and other exploitative practices in the coffee supply chain. These include developing and implementing safeguarding policies and procedures, training farmers and other supply chain actors on child labour prevention, monitoring and remediation, and working closely with local authorities and civil society to link their remediation systems to community-based systems (see Box 2).

Regarding MEACCE...we call our company MEACCE is a cooperative union, we are dealing in coffee and our coffee is certified [by] fair-trade and organic... so under the fair-trade certification, it's standard for all organizations to [address] child labour. We don't allow children under the age of 18 to work and to be involved with heavy duties. What we are basically doing in that area is we train farmers, our farmers to understand the standard and its requirements that children can only support with less work when they are off school and also in holidays but we encourage them not to overwork the children during that time and also it's a standard for us to...when you go to our buying centre we have notices pinned up to indicate that children below the age of 18 are not allowed to work in this area of operation especially to be employed (Key informant interview with an association representative, Mbale).

I think at the start I said we are fair trade and organic certified so during sourcing we are bound to follow the standards under the certification that we subscribe to. And then I also added that we have a bigger policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)...it's called GESI. But we had an independent one called safeguarding policy and this one really spells out the human rights. The child labour in it and child abuse so what we are doing is basically training farmers to understand the role they play when it comes to child labour then also putting up notices at every buying centre to indicate that we do not employ children below the age of 18 (Key informant interview with an association representative, Mbale).

We promote gender equity and zero tolerance for forced labour including child labour," We observe environmental sustainability and management, so we have control over those we are working with directly (Key informant, Sironko).

Further, a few companies and cooperatives (such as Kyagalanyi Coffee Limited (KCL) and BCU) have initiated programs to raise awareness and sensitize communities about the consequences of child labour and monitor children in or at risk of child labour in coffee supply chains. Efforts have also been made by cooperatives to improve access to education for vulnerable children. For example, Kikobero Coffee Company has established schools for community education and sponsored over 1,000 children to access educational services through Wakeup schools and other higher-level institutions of learning.

There's another one in Bufumbo called BOFA. It helps children who are orphans to get an education and school fees (FGD with Local Leaders, Mbale)

Overall, participants reported that these certification initiatives, along with NGOs, do valiant work in the field to attempt to verify compliance with rigid standards that most definitely do not allow child labour in its worst form. However, these checks are often done with enough advance notification that problems can be hidden. While there is value in field surveys/audits and participants believed that they should be done in even greater frequency, there is still a need for greater involvement of farmers and community members in the processes. This may include providing digital tools to enable them to report violations that are witnessed any day of the year. This would ensure a certain level of self-policing that if done properly could provide even stronger protective support.

Box 2: Mt. Elgon Coffee and Honey Cooperative

A producer and exporter cooperative of 700 smallholder members working in groups of 25-50 members on spectacular landscapes of Mt Elgon region covering Mbale, Bulambuli, Spii-Kapchorwa, Bududa, Manafwa, Namisindwa and Sironko areas, this cooperative is doing everything right to prevent and address child labour in its coffee supply chain. Besides working with smallholder coffee farmers, they also engage women in beekeeping for diversifying and strengthening household income in the region. In 2017, the cooperative set up a grievance mechanism in place with the farmers and women groups to receive complaints about child labour and other human and labour rights violations. Since the year 2021, the cooperative, as a part of Global March's intervention for addressing child labour in the coffee supply chain in Uganda has further improved its grievance mechanism by introducing referrals to access remedy.

Using a Child Labour Monitoring System/CLMS, not only does the cooperative monitor and refer the cases of child labour to relevant child rights organisations active in the area but has also identified the root causes of child labour along with other risks and community-based issues and conflicts in the area. For instance, through the grievances received, the company was exposed to the information of how the additional income earned by the coffee farmers and farm workers was not being sustainably invested and utilised which is now being addressed by linking them with savings programmes and encouraging them to invest in their children's education and their skills. Additionally, with the technical support of Global March's partner ANPPCAN Uganda, the cooperative has been able to address the issue of child labour vs. child work in the community, leading to increased awareness about hazardous work in child labour amongst the communities.

According to the Cooperatives General Manager, Rogers Wasabi, "Despite the lack of interest by the EU and other global north markets in Ugandan coffee, cooperatives and companies like theirs integrated child labour identification, referrals, monitoring and remediation as a normal practice with a lot more confidence about the transparency of their product." Business models like those of Mt. Elgon show that it is not impossible or complicated to ensure transparency, address child labour and maintain a high quality of the product along with community welfare and interest at the same time.

5.4 Barriers to Upholding Supply Chain Integrity in the Coffee Industry

Participants reported four main barriers to upholding supply chain integrity in the coffee industry:

- **Liberalisation of the coffee industry.** The coffee industry in Uganda is fully liberalised, placing all areas of production, processing, and marketing in the control of the private sector. Consequently, striking an “optimum” balance between production and commitment to social compliance and environmental responsibilities remains a challengee, especially in a context where government oversight and supervision at all levels of the supply chain is limited.
- **Low coverage of certification initiatives** (such as Fairtrade, and the Rainforest Alliance certification). Not all supply coffee-buying companies and cooperatives have embraced certification in Eastern Uganda, and considerable confusion remains regarding the certification processes. Across the country, only 20 per cent of the coffee produced is certified according to sustainability standards, and only 3 per cent of coffee is exported as certified coffee.³⁰
- **Complexity and nature of business relationships in the coffee supply chain.** The great variety of players present in the value chain was also identified as a barrier to upholding supply chain integrity. With the supply chain, organized producers such as the cooperatives, who are already in contact with international markets and have developed a culture of compliance, might be easily on board. However, the chain is composed of other types of actors who are potentially not so prone to the underlying philosophy of Social Compliance. Findings also indicate that some coffee sourcing and buying companies are not always aware of where child labour exists along their supply chains, and perhaps more importantly, how to address these complex issues with suppliers with whom they may not hold direct buying relationships. Within this context, awareness raising and capacity building on how to recognize and address child labour, forced labour and human trafficking are critical for all companies along the supply chain.
- **The bulk of coffee is produced by smallholder farmers, who depend on their household members, including children, for labour.** This makes enforcement of social and labour standards difficult. For example, labour legislation does not extend to work on family farms, and the difference between child work and child labour is often hard to distinguish. Participants reported that the nature of work in the upstream supply chain (e.g., coffee planting, harvesting) can present even greater risks to the well-being and safety of working children. However, government oversight in the CSC tends to focus more on the midstream level (aggregation and processing) and downstream level (e.g., buyers and exporters). In recent years, traceability efforts have helped to define a visual path into the upstream supply chain, but these efforts are sometimes constrained by market realities, such as traders’ and brokers’ unwillingness to disclose their sources for fear of getting cut out of the value chain.

³⁰ Coffee Production in The Face of Climate Change: Uganda. Available at: Uganda_CountryProfile_Climate_Coffee_6-12.pdf (sustaincoffee.org)

“Before coffee reaches the factory no one minds or cares at all; but when it is ready for big markets, then government officials come out to enforce relevant policies.” (Key informant interview, Kapchorwa).

5.5 Policies and Programs that could Improve Supply Chain Integrity

Participants described a range of policies and programs that are required to improve supply chain integrity. These include the need:

- Promoting a holistic approach that combines the ‘whole of supply chain’ action with community participation. This may entail training all supply chain actors on child labour prevention, monitoring and remediation, and working closely with local authorities and civil society to link their remediation systems to community-based child protection systems. For example, local authorities need training on identifying risk factors and support to ensure stronger enforcement of social and labour standards.
- Promote the use of appropriate technologies and digital tools to support private companies and cooperatives carry out social compliance audits and ensure ‘coffee traceability’.
- Improve the adoption and successful implementation of ethical and sustainable sourcing practices in coffee supply chains. This may include training of supply chain actors on international standards and trends related to child labour, forced labour, recruitment, and gender issues, along with good practices in the identification, remediation, and prevention of labour risks, including through data collection at the farm-level, management systems, and due diligence approaches.
- Facilitate a sustained, sector-wide change in labour practices through an integrated strategy, which involves assembling a coalition of coffee stakeholders including Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MGLSD, UCDA), cooperatives and international buyers. The aim of this collective effort should be to exert leverage over suppliers, communicate common expectations and provide suppliers with the resources, frameworks, guidance, tools, and training needed to eradicate child labour and other safety and labour violations in the coffee supply chain.

6. Addressing Child Labour in the Coffee Supply Chain

6.1 Laws and Regulations on Child Labour

The Government of Uganda has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labour including the ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment³¹, Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, The Forced Labour Convention, No. 29 (1931), ILO Convention 81 and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

Domestically, the Government has enacted several laws and regulations to combat child labour (Table 20). Notably, Article 25 of the **Constitution of the Republic of Uganda** prohibits slavery and forced labour, and Article 34 protects children from performing work that is likely to be hazardous or to cause injury to their development. In addition, the **Employment Act No. 6, 2006** stipulates that the minimum age for admission to work is 14 years old. Children between 12 and 14 years old may engage in light work that does not hinder their education and is supervised by an adult of at least 18 years of age. Children under 12 years of age are prohibited from working in any business or workplace. The law states that no child under 18 years of age may be employed in hazardous work or be employed to work between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.³²

According to the 2008 International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) Resolution, “hazardous occupations for children shall be designated based on national laws or regulations, where they exist.” (ILO, 2008). Accordingly, in 2010, the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) published a list of occupations considered hazardous for children and prohibits the employment of children under 18 in such occupations (MGLSD, 2010).

Table 20: Laws and Regulations on Child Labour

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	16	Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act, 2016.
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No	18	Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act, 2016; Section 32 of the Employment Act, 2006; Regulations 5 and 8 of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2011.

³¹ The ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment defines child labour of children working below minimum age. The definition distinguishes between (1) the general minimum working age, (2) the minimum age for light work, and (3) the minimum age for hazardous work, while allowing some variations in general and light work minimum working ages for developing countries.

³² Government of Uganda. (2006). Uganda Employment Act. Part I (2), 32(1-5).

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Regulation 6 and the First Schedule of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2011. Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act, 2016
Prohibition of Forced Labour	Yes		Sections 2 and 5 of the Employment Act, 2006; Sections 3–5 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009
Occupational Safety and Health			Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2006
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Section 8 of the Children (Amendment) Act, 2006; Sections 2–5 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009
Compulsory Education Age	No	13	Section 2 and 10(3)(a) of the Education Act
Free Public Education	No		Section 10(3)(a) of the Education Act

Nonetheless, gaps in statutory legislation and enforcement remain an issue. For example:

- The Children (Amendment) Act, 2016 establishes age 16 as the minimum age for work, and the Employment Act, 2006 enables children as young as age 12 to work. The Employment Act, 2006 minimum age protections do not apply to children working without a formal employment relationship, which does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected by the minimum age to work.
- Although Uganda has a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children under age 18, Section 8 of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2011 permits a commissioner to allow children aged 12 and older enrolled in an educational training or apprenticeship program to engage in hazardous work, in violation of international standards.³³ In 2018, the government began a process to harmonize the country's legal provisions and bring the allowable minimum age for work in line with international standards. This process has not been completed.
- Education is compulsory for children only up to age 13.³⁴ This standard makes children ages 13 to 15 vulnerable to child labour because they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work.

In addition, institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labour remain weak. Gaps exist within several agencies responsible for child labour law enforcement (see Table 21). For example, the Employment Act, of 2006 requires districts to appoint Labour Officers, whose function and role include child labour inspection and monitoring.³⁵ Currently, Uganda has 168 Labour Officers to cover

³³ The Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2012.

³⁴ The Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary) Act, 2008. Act 13.

³⁵ Labour officers in Uganda are legally empowered to engage in labour inspection activities including securing the enforcement of legal provisions relating to conditions of work, supplying technical information and advice to employers and employees, and bringing to the notice of the Minister defects or abuses not specifically covered by existing legal provisions.

135 districts (US. Department of Labour, 2020). Local government authorities have the discretion to establish or maintain inspection services according to their policy and budget priorities. However, due to budgetary limitations and a lack of labour inspection prioritization at the district level, these officers did not have sufficient funds to regularly carry out child labour inspections (US. Department of Labour, 2020). As a result, labour regulations and laws are not adequately enforced by labour inspectors in the agriculture sector (and the coffee sub-sector). They are inadequately resourced and trained, and rarely if ever visit rural enterprises such as farms. The number of labour inspectors per district was also considered inadequate to effectively enforce labour regulations at the community level.

“Challenges of enforcement of laws and policies in Uganda is poor monitoring, the laws are there but putting them into practice is the challenge” [KII Probation Officer Bududa]

There are also few labour staff to ensure the enforcement of policies at both the sub-county level and the district at large, we only have one labour officer in Kapchorwa who is at times overwhelmed by duties (Participatory Workshop, Kapchorwa)

Further, Uganda is a signatory to ILO Convention 81 which requires labour inspection to be placed under the supervision and control of a central authority. However, because of decentralisation, the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) faces a difficult challenge in functioning as a central authority to guide labour inspection action throughout the country. Labour officers are appointed by District Local Governments (DLGs) and the MGLSD has no supervisory powers over district labour officers. In addition, there is limited coordination between the districts and the MGLSD, particularly with respect to planning and carrying out labour inspections as well as the sharing of information concerning activities. In addition, while, under the Employment Act, labour officers are required to submit monthly reports; in practice, the MGLSD does not receive labour reports from districts (US. Department of Labour, 2020).

Furthermore, child labour cases rarely reach the Industrial Court because there is not a sufficient number of criminal law enforcement officials responsible for investigating child labour and due to the court’s limited access to communities outside urban centres, where child labour is most likely to occur. One key informant observed:

Many child labour or forced labour cases are simply never identified, and even the minority of cases brought to the attention of the system rarely culminate in conviction and the award of compensation. Many cases are not registered with the police when identified or do not reach the courts when registered and charges brought; prosecutions often fail to achieve convictions (Key informant, Kapchorwa).

This was particularly linked to the lack of effective identification and referral procedures, through which the array of first responders – labour inspectors NGO workers, and social workers – are able to identify suspected cases and refer them to the criminal justice

system. Participants also observed that while the government has established national coordination mechanisms (for example, against child labour and human trafficking), employers' and workers' organizations are rarely systematically involved, even though they could particularly contribute to addressing gaps in relation to labour market-based measures.

The enforcement of child labour laws and regulations in the coffee supply chain is also hampered in the study districts is also hampered by corruption and political interference. For example, when the district steps up activities to combat child labour, politicians interfere with their work on the pretext that they are protecting their voters.

“Politics is the biggest problem because when you try to enforce you will find politicians interfering leave my people, leave my person. So, it is political intervention or political interference that compromises enforcement of laws and policies.” [KII, District Production Officer-Mbale]

Table 21: Agencies Responsible for Child Labour Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD)	<p>The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) is the lead Ministry responsible for labour administration in the country. The MGLSD has three Directorates, namely, the Directorate of Labour, Employment and Occupational Safety and Health, the Directorate of Gender and Community Development and the Directorate of Social Protection. The Directorate of Labour, Employment and Occupational Safety and Health performs most of the labour administration functions. It is divided into three Departments, each of which is headed by a commissioner. These are the Department of Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity, the Department of Occupational Health and Safety, and the Department of Employment Services. The Department of Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity is responsible for formulating, implementing, and enforcing labour policies and laws related to working conditions. Inspection of occupational safety and health issues falls under the responsibility of the Department of Occupational Health and Safety. The MGLSD also supervises the Industrial Court and handles labour dispute cases that are referred by Labour officers.</p> <p>Within the MGLSD, the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labour Coordinates child labour issues and implements the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour. The MGLSD also operates the Uganda Child Helpline known as Sauti for reporting cases of child abuse.</p>

Ministry of Internal Affairs	The Uganda Police Force, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is mandated to investigate forced labour cases. The Special Investigations Division and the Anti-Human Trafficking Desk investigate cases related to human trafficking and the use of children in illicit activities, and the Sexual Offenses Desk investigates commercial sexual exploitation.
Ministry of Local Government	Oversees district labour officers who refer cases to the Industrial Court. Deploys community development officers at the district level when district labour officers are not available.
Directorate of Public Prosecutions	Prosecutes criminal cases related to the worst forms of child labour that are referred by the Uganda Police Force.
National Children Authority	Works to ensure integration of child labour concerns into policies and programs.

6.2 Policies addressing the child labour issue.

In addition to the ratified conventions and national legislation described above, Uganda further addresses the child labour issue in several policies, programmes, and national action plans (see Table 22). Some of these are directly related to child labour, while others are indirectly linked through, for instance, potential causes or consequences of child labour. For example, The National Child Policy, 2020, the National Child Labour Policy (2006), and the National Employment Policy, 2011 all include provisions prohibiting child labour. In addition, a National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (2017/2018 – 2021/2022) was developed, outlining key priority actions to combat child labour in Uganda. However, minimal steps have been taken to implement the plan (US. Department of Labour, 2020).

In qualitative interviews and FGD, participants reported that addressing child labour is also undermined by:

- Lack of coordination and coherent policy measures across several government ministries, including those responsible for labour, social welfare, women and children, justice, and trade; to ensure supply chain integrity.
- The absence of government-backed multi-stakeholder initiatives to provide a platform for collaboration between government agencies, businesses, trade unions and civil society organizations to share best practices and implement shared action to address child labour in the coffee supply chains.

These barriers collectively have an impact on the prevention, detection, and enforcement of child labour laws and regulations.

Table 22: Key Policies Related to Child Labour

Policy	Description
National Child Policy, 2020	Launched in 2020, the Policy seeks to coordinate the protection of child rights, focusing on abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. Includes prioritization of the elimination of child labour and was launched with an Implementation Plan (2020/21 – 2024/25)
National Child Labour Policy (2006)	The vision of the policy is a society free of exploitative child labour, a society in which all working children enjoy their right to childhood, education, dignity, and full development of their potential. The overall objective of the National Child Labour Policy is to guide and promote sustainable action aimed at the progressive elimination of child labour, starting with the worst forms
National Employment Policy, 2011	Reference child labour as a challenge to labour standards and labour administration in Uganda. The policy underscores the need for decent employment opportunities and observance of fundamental rights and labour standards including the elimination of child labour.
National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour 2017/2018–2021/2022	Aims to reduce child labour in Uganda by 4 per cent by 2022 through strengthening governmental frameworks on child labour, increasing coordination, expanding access to social services for children, enhancing research and advocacy, and improving the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the elimination of child labour.
National Social Protection Policy, 2006	Aims to reduce poverty and socioeconomic inequalities for inclusive development by targeting vulnerable people, including child labourers. The government continued implementing the plan during the reporting period but did not make any specific efforts to address children or child labour.
National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Uganda 2019–2024	Officially launched in 2020, the second NAP builds on lessons from the previous plan and focuses on developing sustainable systems and structures to prevent trafficking in persons; improving capacity for the identification, protection of and support for victims; improving investigations and prosecutions; and establishing cooperative relationships with international stakeholders. The launch of the plan included the release of the National Referral Guidelines for Management of Victims of Trafficking, which seek to improve coordination among stakeholders responsible for providing services to victims as well as those responsible for prosecuting criminals.

6.3 Programs and Initiatives by Civil Society Organisations (CSO)

The scoping study identified two main multi-stakeholder initiatives to address child labour in the coffee supply chain in the Eastern region. These include:

1. **The Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Supply Chains Program (2018–2022)**. The project is implemented by ILO in partnership with the Government of Uganda and the Federation of Ugandan Employers, with funding

from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The \$29 million project targets child labour in coffee and tea supply chains in the Mbale, Kabarole, Buikwe, Hoima, and Bushenyi districts. Implementation of the project officially began in 2020. In the first year, the project focused on conducting a baseline survey of child labour prevalence in the coffee and tea sectors, mapping child labour monitoring systems, and conducting child-labour awareness campaigns in the target districts.

2. Addressing Child Labour in Agricultural Supply Chains, Global to Local Intervention (2021- 2023). The project is implemented by ANPPCAN and NOTU, with funding from Bread for the World. Using an area-based approach, the project includes establishing a Child Labour Monitoring System in Mbale and Munafwa districts to address child labour in the coffee supply chains. Communities and schools are engaged to understand the process of CLMS and become key stakeholders in its management for sustainable monitoring of child labour, ensuring withdrawals and referrals for identified children for school enrolment. The information generated via CLMS also acts as data for companies for risk assessment and scoping access to remedy. Some of the outcomes include a joint resolution by coffee companies, UCDA (Uganda coffee development authority), district-level government bodies and CSO members to commit to good practices for child labour-free coffee supply chains, receive referrals and scaling up the inspection of the coffee farms, factories, and other suspected to ensure that children are not employed in other sectors as well.

In addition, several interventions by CSO that broadly address child labour across different study communities were identified. The interventions centre around livelihood support, education material assistance, vocational skills training for children and adolescents, awareness raising and community mobilisation (including education about child labour and the importance of balancing schooling with work). Table 23 provides a summary of the CSOs interventions across the four districts.

\$29 million project

Targets child labour in coffee and tea supply chains in the Mbale, Kabarole, Buikwe, Hoima, and Bushenyi districts. Implementation of the project officially began in 2020.

Table 23: CSO interventions to address child labour.

Agency (s)	Districts	Intervention (s)	Description
Plan International	Kapchorwa	Education Material Assistance	The material assistance provided included uniforms, school bags, and other scholastic materials such as textbooks, pens, and pencils. The expectation is that material assistance supports families that typically cannot afford those items and thus helps children avoid absenteeism and/or reduces dependence on child labour to pay for supplies.
Compassion International	Kapchorwa	Education and material support	Provide scholastic materials to children in vulnerable families, and material support (clothes
Kapchorwa Civil Society Organization Alliance (KACSOA) advocates	Kapchorwa		Employs a range of communication strategies to raise awareness and sensitise communities
Child Fund International	Sironko and Mbale	Education, Health, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Livelihood support	Provision of livelihood support to vulnerable families can help improve the economic condition, and sensitisation of communities on the dangers of child labour.
Federation of Uganda Employees (FUE)	Mbale	Employee employer relations	Promotes relationships between employers and workers
Nascent Research and Development Organisation	Mbale and Sironko	Education	Vocational training and post-training support plus transition from school to work, as well as referral of children to the formal education system.
African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPCANN)	Mbale	Child Rights and Child Protection	Implementing a project intended to reduce child labour in the Coffee industry in partnership with ILO and Young Men Christian Association (YMCA)
FIDA Uganda Association of Women Lawyers	Bududa Mbale	Legal support	Protection of young girls from exploitation Providing free legal aid to young girls and women
YMCA (Young Men Christian Association)	Mbale Kapchorwa	WASH Education	Offers vocational skills training, and educational assistance. Safe water extension to some Households

Agency (s)	Districts	Intervention (s)	Description
Baraka Child Care	Sironko	Education, Health, Child Protection	They provide educational support to children from the most vulnerable families. Also provides medical support to children
Child Restoration Organisation	Mbale	Education, Medical support	CRO supports children connected to the streets by providing them with food, and clothing and sponsoring education for a few who are willing to go to school
Hope Africa	Kapchorwa		Education support

The study, however, revealed a dearth of interventions focused on strengthening the enforcement of child labour laws and regulations, withdrawal and rehabilitation of victims, and prosecution of child labour offenders. For example, only two organisations, FIDA Uganda and Human Rights Uganda were working with the criminal justice system to ensure the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of child labour.

I know of FIDA Uganda and Human Rights Uganda (HRU) have come into communities to fight for the rights of children working in the coffee sector. In most cases, they handle reported cases. (In-depth Interview with a boy, Mbale)

Participants also outlined additional interventions that may be required to prevent or eradicate child labour, including:

- The need for more social education and public awareness campaigning against harmful child labour practices
- Improve enforcement of existing child labour laws, regulations
- Training all supply chain actors about the dangers of child labour, including their responsibility towards addressing child labour
- Livelihood support for vulnerable families
- Addressing barriers to accessing education for vulnerable children
- Vocational skills training for out-of-school adolescents. This would require ‘putting up vocational schools’ because there are very few technical and vocational training institutes across the study districts.

6.4 Promising Practices and Innovative Approaches

Respondents held a range of perspectives on the types of interventions they believed had the most promise for eradicating child labour.

1. **Using a combined community-based and value chain approach.** For example, Child Labour **Free Zone (CLFZ)** approach implemented in West Nile, with support from Rainforest Alliance, combines certification³⁶ with other complementary pathways to prevent and remediate child labour, at the government, community, and company levels. The CLZ project involved the use of a multi-pronged approach

³⁶ Certification is an important tool in the fight against child labour. Experience has shown that merely prohibiting and penalizing child labour violations is insufficient to prevent and eliminate this complex problem. In fact, a punitive approach invariably drives abuses underground, making them harder to detect, mitigate, and remediate (Deanna, Kunera & Jan 2021).

to address the root cause of child labour. This includes specific interventions to address poverty (e.g. training farmers to increase their coffee yields and generate more income, training farmers on alternative sources of income and supporting this through VSLAs), establishing Child Labour Committees (CLCs) to shift community attitudes and practices, and form an overarching structure that is necessary for coordinating and linking activities; and working with governments at the “sub-county” level to establish a “child labour steering committees. A recent evaluation found the CLFZ approach to be effective in reducing child labour but also raised concerns about its high costs (Aidenvironment, 2021; Deanna, Kunera & Jan 2021).

2. Establishing a child labour monitoring system and remediation systems (CLMRS).

‘Passing the mic to the communities’ for child labour monitoring was also identified as a good practice. CLMRS provide a mechanism for targeting prevention, mitigation and remediation assistance to children involved in or at risk of child labour, as well as to their families and communities. CLMRS are diverse in how they operate, but 4 core functions should be in place: Awareness-raising, Identification, Support, and crucially, Follow-up with children. For example, *the Addressing Child Labour in Agricultural Supply Chains, Global to Local Intervention* (2021- 2023) described above has been working to establish Child labour Monitoring Systems (CLMS) in Mbale and Munafwa districts to address child labour in the coffee supply chains. This approach involves setting up child labour monitoring committees to identify children in or at risk of child labour, keep track of children who are out of school, and irregularity in their attendance and thereby let communities act as vigilantes against child labour, rescue and refer these children to services (education, health, vocational training, etc.). Stakeholders ranging from grassroots organisations to duty bearers such as the district labour officers, community development officers or the coffee companies also jointly work to create awareness through multi-media campaigns.

3. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Initiatives. Broader multi-stakeholder collaboration between government agencies, coffee supply chain actors, and civil society to help ensure that coffee buyers and exporters’ social compliance policies are aligned or integrated into existing localized efforts by government and other groups that are seeking to combat child labour. Research highlights the importance of such multi-stakeholder collaboration, working together in concert with community-based efforts, in reducing and preventing child labour (CITE).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, results reveal a high prevalence of child labour in the coffee supply chain in Eastern Uganda. Coffee production relies largely on family-based labour. In comparison, the prevalence rate reported in this study is comparably higher than reported in a previous study conducted in two districts (Kasese and Bunyangabu Districts) in the Rwenzori Region (48% vs. 30%), which computed child labour based solely on age-specific hourly thresholds (Terre des Hommes Netherlands, 2021). It is also almost three-times the national child labour prevalence rate.

Children's work in the coffee supply chain ranges from production (e.g., picking coffee beans) and processing (washing, drying, sorting the damaged beans from the clean ones) to circulation (e.g., carrying coffee to cooperative stores). The nature (activities) and extent (i.e., regularity of participation) vary depending on the stage in the supply chain and season.

Financial and material poverty emerged as the key driver of child labour. In contexts of systemic poverty – familial livelihood strategies depend largely upon the contributions of their children. Even when working children had some choice or agency regarding their labour, they often accept what they perceive to be inevitable risks in exchange for the benefits they believe the work provides them.

Working in coffee production poses enormous risks to the safety and well-being of children. Besides being susceptible to various work-related injuries and illnesses, working in the coffee supply chain affects school attendance and children's ability to learn. For example, school-going children occasionally miss school to help their parents, particularly during the coffee harvest season. Consequently, Uganda coffee has been included in the list of goods produced with child labour issued by the United States Department of Labour (USDOL).³⁷

The coffee supply chain is complex and involves many distinct actors, including smallholder farmers, cooperatives, intermediaries, exporters, and international buyers. The UCDA is mandated to provide oversight and ensure supply chain integrity. Private regulatory efforts, such as third-party certification, have also gained traction in the coffee sector. For example, some cooperatives and companies in Eastern Uganda have opted for certification initiatives such as Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance. These third-party environmental and social certification initiatives are however vulnerable to market pressures.³⁸ For example, as the certified coffee market has grown, direct competition has risen, and higher standard certifications are facing growing pressure from lower standard initiatives. While certification depends on market success, market success reasserts conventional commercial expectations and challenges more progressive standards (Raynolds, 2004). This highlights the need for private regulation to work in tandem with public regulation in enhancing social and environmental sustainability.

³⁷ Child Labour and Forced Labour Reports: Uganda. Retrieved from: Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour - Uganda | U.S. Department of Labour (dol.gov)

³⁸ Laura Raynolds, Douglas Murray, Andrew Heller 2007 Regulating Sustainability in the Coffee Sector: A Comparative Analysis of Third-Party Environmental and Social Certification Initiatives Agriculture and Human Values 24 (2) 147-163

In addition, while institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of these laws and regulations relating to are in place, gaps exist that hinder adequate enforcement. Agencies responsible for child labour law enforcement are woefully understaffed and operate under severe budgetary restrictions. There are also inconsistencies in legislation, which poses problems. For example, the minimum working age is lower than the required age for compulsory education. Addressing child labour in the coffee sector is also hampered by the lack of government-backed multi-stakeholder initiatives to provide a platform for collaboration between government agencies, businesses, trade unions and civil society organizations to share best practices and implement shared action to address child labour in the coffee supply chains.

Tackling child labour is further complicated by the fact it is just a symptom of larger problems. In contexts of extreme poverty, there will be children willing to work cheaply and susceptible to being tricked into dangerous or badly paid work.

Recommendations

The recommendations from our research centre on a multi-stakeholder approach, where businesses, local leaders, communities, children and parents, government authorities, district local governments (DLGs), and civil society combine their efforts and resources towards the goals of improving children's lives and reducing reliance on child labour across the four districts.

Overall, results underscore the need to: address economic and social vulnerabilities that render children vulnerable or drive children to work; establish/strengthen child labour monitoring and remediation systems (CLMRS); promote ethical sourcing and social compliance in the coffee supply chain; address gaps in statutory legalisation and enforcement (i.e., strengthen labour inspection and building law enforcement capacity). Government, companies and civil society organizations should also work jointly to promote occupational safety and health of children working in the coffee supply chain. These are discussed in detail below:

- 1. Address socio-economic vulnerability.** Child labour in the coffee supply chain is driven by economic and social vulnerabilities associated with poverty and other contingencies that affect family functioning. Therefore, addressing the vulnerability of children and their families is key to the eradication of the phenomena in the supply chain. An integrated, systems approach to addressing household vulnerabilities and child labour is therefore recommended. Measures may include:
 - Identifying and providing appropriate support to families at risk or affected by child labour.
 - **Strengthening social protection systems.** Stronger and child-sensitive social protection systems are necessary to offset the vulnerabilities that oblige families to send their children to work as survival strategies.
 - **Promoting and enabling access to education is another** key area in which government and non-government actors can take action to confront child labour.

Although education is free in Uganda, several barriers impede several children in the study communities from enrolling and staying in school. Ensuring that these obstacles are eliminated or managed is an important corollary to removing children from labour and guaranteeing their path to a better future. Various interventions include working with civil society and the government to access birth certificates, covering school costs related to supplies and uniforms, or making bridge programmes or transition schooling available, to help children who have missed significant amounts of schooling to catch up.

- **Support vocational skills training for out-of-school youths, and adolescents withdrawn from child labour.**
- 2. **Strengthen child labour monitoring mechanisms.** This requires mobilization and training of local actors to identify children in or at risk of child labour, obtain information and follow up on child labour in family-based and other informal economy workplaces in the community. Alongside this, measures should be taken (by CSOs, for example) to build community capacity to tackle child labour by raising **awareness about the costly effects of child labour on children's health and wellbeing, and tackling social norms around child labour.** This requires the involvement of the entire community: parents, village leaders and local authorities, teachers, employers, and children themselves. The messaging should focus on both long hours and hazardous working conditions, and the longer-term consequences to the physical and mental health of children. Children and parents need to understand the tactics of employers and that children are targeted due to their vulnerability to do high-risk/dangerous work.
- 3. **Government, cooperatives, and companies should also work jointly to promote occupational safety and health of children working in the coffee supply chain.** This may include providing education throughout the community on the kinds of work that are inappropriate for children, such as working with dangerous chemicals and carrying heavy loads.
- 4. **Addressing legalisation and enforcement gaps.** Adequate implementation of relevant standards and Conventions and enforcement of national laws and regulations are of paramount importance in addressing the challenges of child labour. More efforts are needed by the government in this regard.
- **Address gaps in legal and policy framework for child labour.** Study results show that the existing OSH legislation and policies do not adequately protect workers in the coffee sectors and mitigate vulnerability to child labour. In addition, there are several gaps in the legal framework for child labour. We recommend, as a first step, a gap analysis of existing laws and regulations vis-à-vis international legal standards as a first step in bringing their national legal frameworks into line with these standards. In addition, relevant laws should be revised to address any identified gaps.

- **Strengthen labour inspection.** District labour inspectors are uniquely equipped to detect and act on labour rights violations. One way is to shift the model of labour inspection from the traditional one focused narrowly on enforcement to a broader one focused instead on strategic compliance. The latter should focus on training inspectors and providing them with extensive discretion to bring firms into compliance. Another strategy involves extending the effective reach of labour inspectorates by linking them with community-level child labour monitoring systems or community child protection networks. A review of lessons from these experiences underscores the importance of advance agreement on the modalities of collaboration between the labour inspectorate and child labour monitoring mechanisms, including roles and prerogatives, procedures and operational rules of engagement, child-oriented protocols for inspections and follow-up, and systems for reporting (CITE).
 - **Strengthen law enforcement capacity.** The low number of prosecutions and convictions relative to the estimated number of child labour victims suggests that much remains to be done in terms of strengthening criminal law enforcement capacity. This should be a vital part of any response to child labour in the coffee supply chain. Strategic investments are required, for example, to train different enforcement actors and ensure they have adequate resources to fulfil their mandates.
5. Child labour concerns should be mainstreamed in development strategies. This requires a harmonized, integrated, and multi-stakeholder approach. Child labour policy and programming should be integrated within wider national policies and instruments, such as Education and Agriculture Policy. This should be supported by improved coordination among relevant government agencies and bodies with a clear common goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour and improving children's prospects.
 6. **Promote ethical sourcing and social compliance in the coffee supply chain.** The Government has a major role to play in ensuring that companies act to address the risks of these labour rights violations across their operations and supply chains. The government should consider different options and alternatives to support the effort toward due diligence and compliance being carried out in the coffee sector. Some of the options envisaged include:
 - a. Developing a comprehensive social compliance system (SCS) that compels key coffee buyers and exporters to monitor their supplier's operations,
 - b. Endorsing the third-party certification processes; and
 - c. Strengthen government oversight in accordance with the National Coffee Act, 2021.
 - d. Awareness raising about the responsibilities of private companies and duty bearers vis-à-vis children's rights and assistance to child labour victims.
 - e. Monitoring of private companies' social behaviour and duty bearers' policies and actions, elaboration of codes of conduct, monitoring and independent verification of companies' behaviours and advocacy on social compliance.

- f. Promote the use of appropriate technologies and digital tools to support private companies and cooperatives carry out social compliance audits and ensure ‘coffee traceability.’
- 7. Promote multi-stakeholder collaboration and initiatives.** Eliminating child labour and improving conditions within our supply chains must be a collaborative process with all stakeholders taking on responsibility. This requires establishing multi-stakeholder collaboration and Initiatives to provide a platform for collaboration between government agencies, businesses, trade unions and civil society organizations to share best practices and implement shared action to address child labour in the coffee supply chains. Area-based approaches offer a framework for translating multi-stakeholder collaboration into practice and can be an integral part of broader company efforts to prevent or mitigate risks of child labour, in the upstream reaches of their supply chains. An area-based approach, for example, may involve companies or cooperatives, in partnership with local stakeholders and consultation with community members, supporting efforts to address the common set of root causes of child labour in a specific target area where production linked to supply chains is located.
- 8.** Development and project funding should be guaranteed, long-term, and coordinated so that efforts to tackle child labour are resilient and consistent.



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Appendix A: Research Questions

Prevalence and Nature of Child Labour in Mbale, Kapchorwa, Sironko, and Bududa Districts

1. What is the estimated prevalence of child labour in the coffee industry in the Mbale, Kapchorwa, Sironko, and Bududa districts? How prevalent is the problem, relative to other regions and districts in Uganda? Relative to other geographies with robust coffee production?
2. How does child labour manifest in the coffee production supply chain in Mbale, Kapchorwa, Sironko, and Bududa districts (e.g., what labour activities are carried out throughout the production process)?
3. Which of these districts are considered high risk for being a source of child labour?
4. What, if any, are the factors exacerbating vulnerabilities in the identified high-risk districts? Are there factors impeding children's access to education?
5. What are the existing interventions and mitigation strategies developed by civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders? Which of these strategies has proven the most effective or promising?
6. What types of prevention, protection and prosecution activities will likely succeed in the districts identified as high-risk sources of child labour?

Supply Chain Analysis (primarily Eastern Uganda)

1. Who are the key private sector stakeholders at each stage of the Ugandan coffee production cycle?
2. Which private sector practices or points on the supply chain are at the highest risk for forced labour and child labour?
3. Which tiers of producers on the supply chain have heavy government oversight and which producers typically escape or evade that oversight?
4. Which companies (domestic and international) are the key buyers of coffee from Eastern Uganda? What are their responsible sourcing and/or social compliance policies, including those that address forced labour and child labour, if applicable?
5. What are some of the business improvements that companies are interested in testing but have not yet done so? Are any of these improvements technology-based (more broadly across East Africa)?

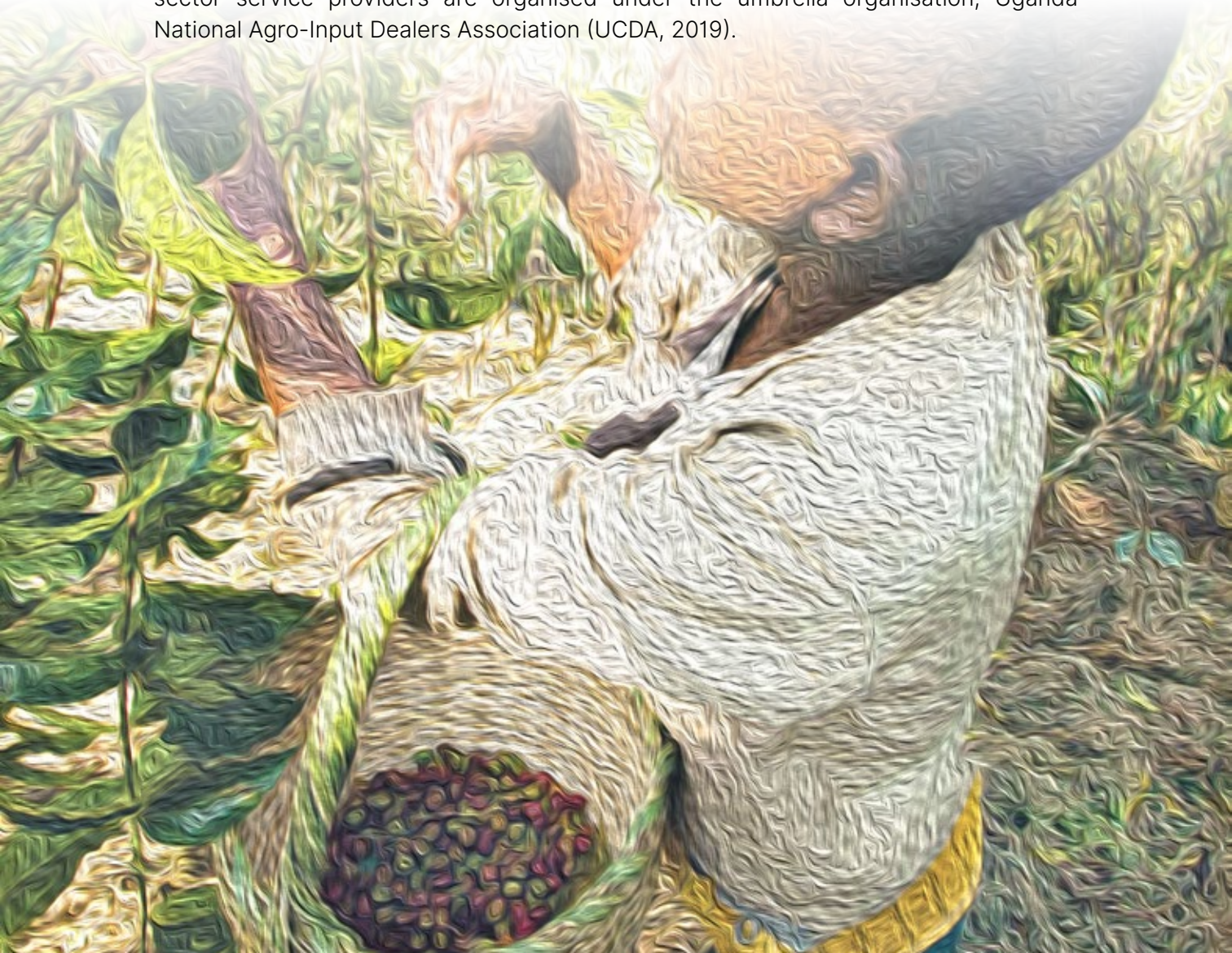
Policy (National):

1. What current policies are barriers to upholding supply chain integrity in the coffee industry in Uganda?
2. What new policies could improve supply chain integrity?
3. What are the challenges, if any, of implementing/enforcing existing policies and legal frameworks (e.g., very few labour inspectors to cover a large number of coffee plantations)? How can these be addressed (e.g., increase the budget for inspectors, additional training, develop tools to increase efficiency)?
4. Who are the key government stakeholders in implementing policies related to the coffee industry in Uganda? What is their role? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How could they be strengthened to better uphold supply chain integrity?

Appendix B: Coffee Supply Chain

The coffee production and supply chain consist of mainly four stages: input provision, production (cultivation and harvesting), aggregation and processing (primary, secondary, and tertiary), and trading and retailing. The function at each stage, the agents playing the different roles and the outputs at the different stages of the chain are summarised in Figure xx.

Input provision: Inputs used for coffee production include land, labour, seed, herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. The sources of inputs for coffee production include research institutions, such as the National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI) and National Coffee Research Institute (NaCORI) under the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), which supply seedlings to the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). UCDA in turn multiplies them and supplies them to private agro-input dealers, local coffee nurseries, and District Farmers' Organizations (UCDA, 2019). The coffee seedlings usually supplied by local nurseries are Robusta clonal cuttings and Robusta clonal elite. Other inputs are supplied either by the private sector or NGOs. Private sector service providers are organised under the umbrella organisation, Uganda National Agro-Input Dealers Association (UCDA, 2019).



Production: Most coffee is grown by smallholder farmers. The average coffee farm size is 0.44 acres (about 0.18 ha), while the plant density is 450 trees/acre for Robusta and 660 trees/acre for Arabica Coffee (UCDA, 2019). Planting is normally between March and May (first rains) and September to November (second rains). The harvesting seasons alternate as main and minor harvest depending on whether the region is in the Northern or Southern hemisphere (see Table 24). About 40% of farmers sell hulled coffee beans instead of un-hulled kiboko coffee because of the slightly higher price. Some producers, organisations or cooperative unions have their hullers and can integrate production and hulling, while most producers outsource the hulling service.

Table 24: Harvesting seasons for coffee in Uganda, by region.

Regions	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.
Central		Main crop (Robusta)						Fly crop (Robusta)				
Masaka	Fly crop (robusta)							Main crop (Robusta)				
Eastern		Main crop (Robusta)						Fly crop (Robusta)				
Bugisu/sebei		Main crop (Arabica)						Fly crop (Arabica)				
Western	Fly crop (Robusta)						Main crop (Robusta)					
	Fly crop (Arabica)						Main crop (Arabica)					
West Nile		Main crop (Arabica)					Fly crop (Arabica)					

Source: Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA), 2019.



The average coffee farm size is **0.44 acres** (about 0.18 ha)

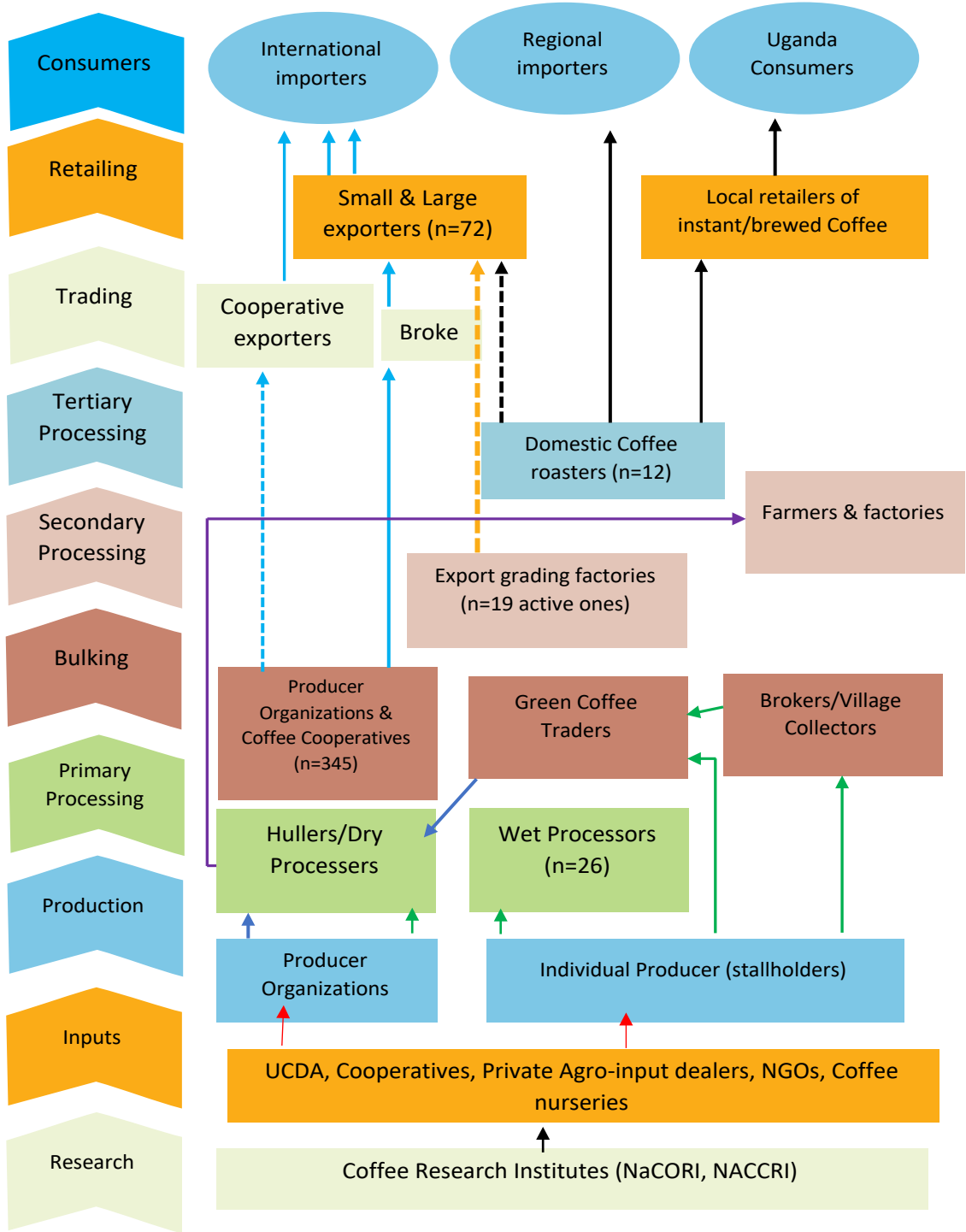


While the plant density is **450** trees/acre for Robusta and **660** trees/acre for Arabica Coffee

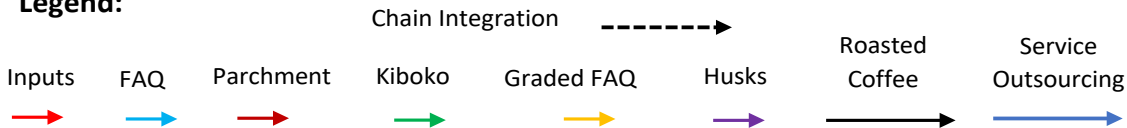


About **40%** of farmers sell hulled coffee beans instead of un-hulled kiboko coffee because of the slightly higher price.

Figure 3: Coffee value chain core processes map



Legend:



Aggregation and processing: After the harvest, the red cherry is dried using either the wet method or the dry method. Arabica Coffee is usually wet-processed, while most Robusta coffee is dry-processed.³⁹ Dry processing involves drying the cherries (usually under the sun) and removal of the dried coverings (husks) in a mechanical operation (hulling). On the other hand, wet processing involves three stages: a) removal of pulp and mucilage followed by washing to obtain clean wet parchment, b) drying of the parchment coffee, c) removal of the parchment and film through hulling followed by grading to obtain the desired grades (sizes) of the clean coffee. There are about 26 independent wet processors in Uganda.⁴⁰

About 45 per cent of dry Robusta (Kiboko) coffee is transformed into coffee husks, which are either taken back to farms for use as mulch or sold to briquette manufacturers (UCDA, 2019). The processed coffee is then transported to exporters or export grading factories for secondary processing⁴¹ which transforms the clean coffee into the various coffee grades that meet international standards.⁴² Currently, there are about 19 active export grading factories, four of these are located in the Bugisu region, one is located in Mbarara town in the Western region and the rest are in Kampala.⁴³

Trading and retailing: Nearly all the produced coffee is sold at the farm gate with key marketing outlets being cooperative unions, village collectors, brokers or company agents, exporters, and coffee processors (Mwesigye & Nguyen 2020; UCDA, 2015). Local traders (popularly known as middlemen and/or assemblers) purchase from individual farmers and farmer groups. Most of these traders sell to other big traders in major trading towns. Almost all coffee trading activities in Uganda end in Kampala. Most Ugandan coffee is exported in the form of green beans, and only a small amount (around 5 %) is retained for tertiary processing (roasting) and final consumption in the country (UCDA, 2015). There are about 72 registered coffee exporting companies. Consumption of coffee in Uganda is generally low with an estimated per capita consumption of 0.25 kg/Yr. There are currently 12 registered domestic coffee roasters (UCDA, 2020).

³⁹ Dry processing involves drying the whole cherries under the sun after which the beans are separated from the pulp. The latter requires specialized equipment and is usually done at a mill where the cherry skin is removed with a pressing machine and the bean is left to ferment in water to remove any remaining skin before the drying stage. In both methods, the dried beans, known as parchment coffee, are bagged, and transported to processors.

⁴⁰ Wet processing involves cherry separation, pulping and washing. The mucilage layer is removed by bio-chemical enzyme activity through controlled fermentation to give 'fully washed' coffee. It can also be removed mechanically using a mechanical mucilage remover. Some producers are wet processing at farm level thus, presenting an opportunity for increased vertical integration and better prices for the farmers. Dry processing involves drying and hulling which results in clean dry coffee beans referred to as FAQ (Fair Average Quality).

⁴¹ Over 95 % of the total annual coffee production is exported as green beans. Secondary processing also known as export grading transforms the clean coffee (FAQ) into the various coffee grades that meet the international standards. The process involves cleaning the FAQ, drying the coffee if wet (M.C over 13 %) followed by size grading using perforated screens of the desired size. The sorted beans are the gravimetrically sorted to have uniform specific density before bagging off and loaded into containers for transportation to the ports.

⁴² This stage involves: pre-cleaning and de-stoning, size grading, gravimetric sorting and finally for export of green coffee beans, bag-off which entails bagging coffee in jute bags of 60 Kg which are then loaded into a container for transportation to the port.

⁴³ Uganda Coffee Development Authority (undated). Available at: Secondary Processing | Uganda Coffee Development Authority

Appendix C: Household Characteristics

Table 25: Household characteristics

Household characteristic	All Districts (N=771)	Bududa (N=240)	Kapchorwa (N=106)	Mbale (N=161)	Sironko (N=264)
Sex of Household head					
Female	16.6	14.2	10.4	19.3	19.7
Male	83.4	85.8	89.6	80.8	80.3
Head's age (years)					
20 to 29	5.8	10.4	4.8	0.6	4.9
30 to 39	21.6	20.8	38.1	15.6	19.1
40 to 49	25.1	22.9	30.5	26.3	24.0
50 to 59	22.5	24.2	16.2	25.0	21.8
60+	25.1	21.7	10.5	32.5	30.2
Median age (in years)	48	48	41	52	50
Type of house					
Detached house	49.6	52.9	0.0	96.9	37.5
Semi-detached house	39.6	45.4	99.1	1.9	33.3
Apartment/flat in a block of apartments	0.1	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0
Room (s) in main house	9.9	0.0	0.0	1.2	28.0
Servants' quarters	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tenement (Muzigo)	0.7	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.8
Other	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
House ownership					
Owned by a household member	97.7	97.1	100.0	97.3	98.1
Provided free	0.9	0.4	0.0	2.5	0.8
Subsidized by employer	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rented/Tenant	1.3	2.1	0.0	1.2	1.1
Number of household members					
2	5.3	2.9	0.0	5.6	9.5
3 to 5	64.3	68.3	57.6	71.4	59.1
6 to 8	27.8	26.3	40.6	19.9	28.8
9 to 10	2.0	1.7	1.9	2.5	1.9
11+	0.7	0.8	0.0	0.6	0.8
Average household size	4.9	4.9	5.4	4.7	4.7
sd	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.8
Overcrowding*					
Yes	12.5	14.6	1.9	11.2	15.5
No	87.5	85.4	98.1	88.8	84.5
Wealth®					
Lowest	39.8	31.2	62.8	22.9	52.0
Middle	30.6	48.0	18.6	36.6	12.3
Highest	29.7	20.8	18.6	40.5	35.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*One household had data on the number of sleeping rooms missing

® About 7 households did not

Appendix D: Estimates of Child Labour by District

Table 25: Prevalence of Child labour and hazardous work in Bududa District

Bududa (N=518)		All Children (5-17 years)	Children working in coffee production	Children engaged in child labour	Children engaged in hazardous work
		Number	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Children 5-17 years		518	61.0	50.4	54.4
Sex	Male	237	63.7	54.9	58.2
	Female	281	58.7	46.6	51.3
Age group	5-11 years	289	38.4	25.6	32.5
	12-14 years	136	87.5	77.9	78.7
	15-17 years	93	92.5	87.1	87.1

Table 26: Prevalence of Child labour and hazardous work in Kapchorwa district

Kapchorwa (N=321)		All Children (5-17 years)	Children working in coffee production	Children engaged in child labour	Children engaged in hazardous work
		Number	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Children 5-17 years		321	65.4	64.5	65.1
Sex	Male	172	68.6	68.0	68.6
	Female	149	65.4	60.4	61.1
Age group	5-11 years	178	40.5	38.8	39.9
	12-14 years	62	96.8	96.8	96.8
	15-17 years	81	96.3	96.3	96.3

Table 27: Prevalence of Child labour and hazardous work in Mbale district

Mbale (N=376)		All Children (5-17 years)	Children working in coffee production	Children engaged in child labour	Children engaged in hazardous work
		Number	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Children 5-17 years		376	54.0	30.3	36.7
Sex	Male	194	56.7	33.0	40.7
	Female	182	51.1	27.5	32.4
Age group	5-11 years	202	32.2	13.9	25.3
	12-14 years	107	74.8	44.9	45.8
	15-17 years	67	86.6	56.7	56.7

Table 28: Prevalence of Child labour and hazardous work in the Sironko district

Mbale (N=376)		All Children (5-17 years)	Children working in coffee production	Children engaged in child labour	Children engaged in hazardous work
		Number	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Children 5-17 years		656	46.3	35.1	36.9
Sex	Male	326	50.0	41.1	42.0
	Female	330	42.7	29.1	31.8
Age group	5-11 years	368	19.0	13.3	16.3
	12-14 years	191	74.4	53.9	54.5
	15-17 years	97	94.9	80.4	80.4





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