

Progress Report 2014



“No one is to be blame, but everyone is responsible”



W.E.L.L Africa

A community of students, academic, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, farmers, local leaders committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to provide a long-term solution to issue of child labor and poverty in rural African communities.

World-Our team has in its midst citizens of every continent on this planet, and we come together as one bringing expertise, time, and resources to make a change.

Education- we believe in the liberating power of education as a way to unlock doors and opportunities for people that could not see them otherwise. Educating the children, farmers, and women teaching them what they need to take responsibility for their own lives.

Legacy-Establishing new values through education and entrepreneurship, we are building the path for people who live and for generation to come, to break the cycle of poverty and change it into a cycle of prosperity and opportunity.

Liberty- we consider poverty as a form of slavery that prevent people to achieve their full potential in life. Freedom and liberty start with the ability to take care of our basic human needs and the needs of those under our care, our children in particular. Child labor is a tragedy for we should all stand because of our children and also to preserve future generation. Every child on this planet, no matter where he comes from deserves to be happy; this is the reason why we exist as an organization.



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Background

Ivory Coast, a country of about 30 million inhabitants, is the world's largest producer of cocoa, the product used to make chocolate. In the U.S. alone, more than 58 million pounds of chocolate candy are sold during Valentine's week. Statistics show an average annual production of 1.2 million tons or 40% of worldwide production. Approximately 900,000 farmers are responsible for this performance and the activity constitutes the direct livelihood of about 8 million persons. Families, and individuals generally own the cocoa farms. The average farm size is about 10 to 10 acres, and the production process is not mechanized. They are still using traditional tools such as machetes and hoes. They sometimes use modern tools such as spray or fertilizer for cocoa tree treatments against diseases. Children provide most of the labor in the cocoa plantations. According to the UN report, over 2 million of children are involved in producing cocoa in the rural West African farms (Gordon Brown UN Special Envoy of Education, P47). They are involved in various activities that are dangerous such as

- Planting the seed
- Using machetes
- Manipulating harmful chemicals,
- Carrying heavy load.
- Working without getting paid
- Not getting an education

A survey conducted by WELL Africa's team in Touih a small village in the western Ivory Coast confirmed that the problem still exists. Poverty of the farmers and their families, lack of education infrastructures, lack of law enforcement on the issue, cultural perceptions of a child, civil wars, AIDS, and human trafficking are the reasons that cause child labor. The majority of them use children because it is the only way for them to survive.

The Fair Labor Association mapping report on the Nestlé's supply chain revealed these important facts: The main problems farmers mentioned during the assessment were: low income from their work (fluctuation of the cocoa price, high cost of living, many persons dependent on one income, low productivity) and the lack of infrastructures in the village and camp (bad state of the roads, no health facilities, no schools, no electricity).

Organizational Overview



WELL Africa is a Nonprofit Organization which mission is to provide a long-term and sustainable solution to the issue of child labor and poverty in the Ivory Coast cacao supply chain by working side by side with communities, their leaders, and other key players to make a the biggest impact possible. WELL Africa empowers the children working in the coca plantations and the communities in which they live through the liberating power of education and business. This program consists of three primary areas of focus: provide educational opportunities to the children, train the farmers on good agricultural techniques, and implement a small loan program to help women create small businesses.



The Story

My name is Sery Kouma Kone. I was born and raised in Cote D'Ivoire, the world's largest cacao beans producer. I started working on cacao farms when I was six years old. A normal day for me when I was a child laborer would start at around 5:30 am and end at 6:00pm. I had to walk 30 to 35 miles to reach the farm in which I was assigned to work for the day. I would work 10 to 15 hours a day doing various activities such as clearing the weeds with a machete, planting the seeds, using harmful chemicals to treat the farm, harvesting beans, and carrying heavy loads on my head and back. During my 6 years as a child laborer, I didn't have the opportunity to attend school.

I was forced to work because it was my contribution to the survival of the family with which I was staying. It all started when I was 4 years old when my father took me away from my mother and sent me to that village in which he never came back.

Like me, there are currently an estimate 2 millions children that are working in the West African cocoa plantations according to the United Nations. I created WELL Africa to tackle the issue from the roots and provide a long-term solution to the issue and a brighter future for the children.





Projects Completed

1-Progress on the School

Started in March 2014, the WELL Africa's first school has opened its doors this month. The school has 6 classrooms, an office for the teachers, and a cafeteria where children will have lunches. From the 400 students that we expected 250 started because the others have to wait until they turn 6 before they can start school. For this year, we will use the current curriculum available in the country, but moving forward, we are working on building a new curriculum that will position the school as one of the best in the country. Our goal is to open the children to the world and transform them in a powerful force for good. We leveraged our unique partnership with the government of the Ivory Coast to get 6 certified teachers that will be paid by them in our effort to reduce our expense and build more school. . An internship opportunity will be given to all those in the US and elsewhere that would like to contribute to educate these children and make them successful.





2-Farmers Training Program

Our unique approach required partnership of all supply chain stakeholders, from children to farmers to co-ops to distributors to large buyers to end consumers of cacao products. We conducted a needs analysis to understand the controllable root causes that pressured farmers to use child labor. From 5 potential locations, we selected the village of Touih as the most appropriate place to start. 279 farmers were surveyed. We learned: **The average farm in Touih produced 40% less than a normal farm; Farmers' annual revenues averaged \$1,500; and there was a strong positive correlation between a farmer's economic performance and the use of child labor.** We reviewed the survey results with the community leaders and together agreed to design solutions that could be supported through a **50/50 partnership** model. New training was provided to 10 Coops to provide computer skills and business principles. 45 farmers were trained to keep track of data, creating a data set of **3,000** farmers and their crop yields. We analyzed the 24 farmers who had been trained using these new tracking tools. Their yield increased by 30% after our training! This increase allowed one farmer, Louis, to have enough extra profit to build a house for his family



3-Women Economic Project (WEP)



Someone said, “If you educate a woman, you educate an entire community”. At WELL Africa, we share the same belief. We believe that building strong families, communities, and countries starts with women. We understand that women could be, if given the opportunity, the positive force that would help prevent, fight, and ultimately eliminate child labor. Our goals are to:

- ✓ Organize our target groups into cooperatives, so that they could gain control on the market price of the crop they produce.
- ✓ Help them understand the basics of supply and demand, so they can make farming and/or small business decisions accordingly.
- ✓ Teach crop diversification to ensure a constant flow of revenue for individual families
- ✓ Offer micro-loans that must be reimburse at 10% interest rate.