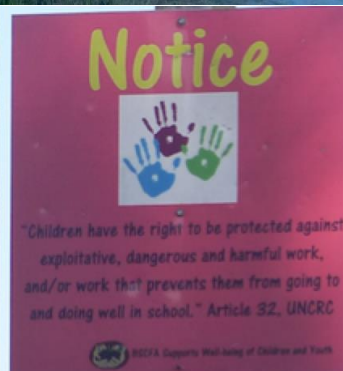
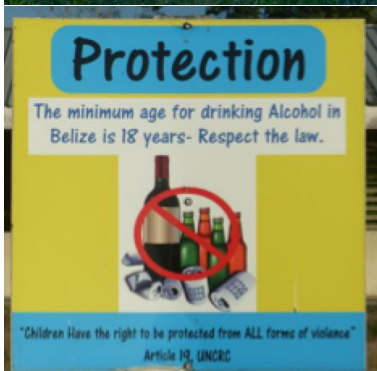


Evaluation

Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System on Child Labour (YICBMR) as implemented by Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA)



Prepared by Elke de Buhr, PhD



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Executive Summary

Research Objectives: The purpose of this study was to assess the work undertaken by the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) to establish a Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System on Child Labour (YICBMR) to identify and respond to issues concerning child and youth wellbeing, including child labour, in its sugar cane producing communities. The study was commissioned by Fairtrade International.

Research Methodology: Using a qualitative research design, interview data were collected in northern Belize between 18 and 22 February 2019. Additional interviews were completed via Skype and telephone in January and March 2019. The following stakeholder groups were included in the assessment: (1) BSCFA leadership and staff, (2) community respondents (adults and children in two sugar cane-growing communities), (3) representatives of the sugar manufacturers, (4) sugar mill representatives, (5) representatives of the government of Belize (multiple departments and administrative levels), (6) a representative of the International Labour Organisation, (7) representatives of an NGO (Child Development Fund) and an educational institution (Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College), and (8) Fairtrade representatives including representatives of Fairtrade International, Fairtrade Foundation and Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores y Trabajadores de Comercio Justo (CLAC). All interviews were carried out either in a one-on-one format or as group interviews. In total, 25 interviews were completed. More than 60 respondents participated in the research.

Research Findings: BSCFA's commitment and capacity to address child labour and other labour abuses in sugar cane production in Belize since 2014 was assessed as very high by the interviewed stakeholder groups. The decision to fund and employ Fairtrade's YICBMR system, in addition to the internal control system (ICS) required by Fairtrade, was also supported by most stakeholders, who pointed to distinct advantages associated with the two complementary approaches. The interviewed stakeholders described the YICBMR method as an approach able to generate community-wide engagement to address the problem of child labour among multiple age groups. They also perceived the comprehensiveness of the YICBMR approach with its three implementation phases and interventions targeted at the entire community and not only BSCFA member households as another strength of the system. They pointed to the capacity development associated with training young people to work as youth monitors in the sugar cane sector and their ability to connect to children and youth as additional advantages.

The interviewed stakeholder groups also agreed that while the YICBMR system was robust at identifying cases of child labour in the targeted communities, remediation has been less effective. While BSCFA has emphasized remediation, the available funding was not sufficient. At the same time, government labour law enforcement has been weak and even though multiple government entities have engaged and worked with BSCFA on addressing the problem of child labour in sugar cane production, different definitions were used to identify vulnerable cases and the response, if any, was often slow and inconsistent. The interviewed stakeholders agreed that the government lacked the staff and funding to respond effectively. They also pointed out that addressing individual and community problems required significant resources and BSCFA's efforts targeted at

providing youth withdrawn from child labour with alternative income-generating opportunities has had only limited success.

While there was disagreement among the interviewed stakeholders how the YICBMR system should be financed, they agreed that costs should be shouldered not only or primarily by BSCFA. Various stakeholders made suggestions on how the system could be scaled up and financed with larger roles to be played by the government of Belize and the sugar industry. However, neither government nor industry appeared ready yet to substantially increase their involvement and/or financial commitment.

Conclusion & Recommendations: While there is strong evidence of progress, the process of developing a YICBMR system in Belizean sugar cane has not yet been completed and its medium and longer-term sustainability remains uncertain. A scaled-up and sustainable monitoring and remediation system will require the involvement of a larger group of stakeholders. The following should be considered when negotiating the future of the YICBMR system:

- a. The YICBMR system has shown positive results in the targeted communities addressing the problem of child labour in sugar cane production. Maintaining and scaling up the system should be a priority that is in the interest not only of BSCFA and the sugar cane-farming households but also the government of Belize, the sugar industry and other stakeholders.
- b. The human resources needed to scale up the YICBMR system have to be systematically developed. While BSCFA has trained a number of youth monitors, some have graduated to other positions and all have taken on additional tasks within the organisation. Regular training of youth monitors will be necessary. The training of youth monitors should involve the relevant government stakeholders to ensure agreement on definitions and the identification of vulnerable cases and to facilitate a closer collaboration in the area of remediation. Joint capacity building exercises for BSCFA and government staff working on the identification and/or remediation of cases of child labour are also desirable including training on data collection and use.
- c. Arriving at a sustainable financing mechanism has to be another priority. The cost of a scaled-up system in terms of financial and human resources needs to be determined. Financial contribution by the sugar industry will likely depend on having a voice in the design and the implementation of a scaled-up YICBMR system. The government of Belize with its many competing priorities may not be able to financially contribute beyond fulfilling its tasks with regard to law enforcement and remediation. Reaching consensus between stakeholders requires constructive engagement and compromise. A sustainable YICBMR might have to be a system with a more limited scope in terms of population coverage, the types of problems that are being targeted and the steps involved in identifying and remediating vulnerable cases.
- d. Fairtrade International needs to continue to be part of the YICBMR process in Belizean sugar cane. This may include assistance with facilitating engagement between the different stakeholder groups, for example by providing a forum for the discussion and negotiation, which should involve all three Fairtrade sugar cane producer associations. Similarly important are Fairtrade's contributions to

- capacity building and Fairtrade financial support. Fairtrade should also support the sharing of experiences with community-based monitoring approaches between countries and supply chains.
- e. The ILO, the Child Development Fund and the Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College have participated in and/or observed the YICBMR process. The contributions of these organizations are critical including in the areas of technical expertise, training and capacity building, and they should be involved in discussions about the future of the YICBMR system.
 - f. In addition to developing the YICBMR system, BSCFA has engaged in finding safe employment for youth outside of sugar cane as well as in advocacy work towards legislative changes in the area of child rights. These efforts should continue and be supported by other stakeholders including the sugar industry. Access to schooling, especially secondary school, as a path out of child labour and out of poverty, should be another major emphasis.



Acronyms

ASR	American Sugar Refining
BSCFA	Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association
BSI	Belize Sugar Cane Industry
CLAC	Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores y Trabajadores de Comercio Justo
COO	Chief Operating Officer
EU	European Union
FI	Fairtrade International
FTF	Fairtrade Foundation
GoB	Government of Belize
ICS	Internal Control System
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PO	Producer Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USDOL	US Department of Labor
YICBMR	Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation System on Child Labour



1. Background

The Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) currently employs two systems to monitor and respond to child labour in compliance with the Fairtrade Generic Standards for Small Producer Organizations:

- a. An Internal Control System (ICS), which is member-based and a requirement of the Fairtrade Standards.
- b. A Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system, which is an optional area-based approach developed by Fairtrade International.

The YICBMR system as designed by Fairtrade International operates through three phases and was developed, in part, in response to a 2013 evaluation of Fairtrade's approach to child labour as implemented in Ghana by a small producer organization.¹ Other inputs that informed the development of the YICBMR approach are information forums held by Fairtrade International with a targeted set of producer organizations as well as focus groups with children and youth in India, Fiji, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mexico, Kenya, Tanzania and Peru.

The three phases of the YICBMR approach include at Phase 1 the establishment of the monitoring and response system, including setting up a child labour committee, the hiring of the youth monitors, which are young men and women from the target communities, the development and implementation of a child labour and child protection policy, the division of the production areas into high, medium and low risks for child labour based on known risk indicators, the selection of communities to be monitored as well as data collection, assessment and presentation. In Phase 2 of the YICBMR approach, the producer organization partners with the next in-line trader in the supply chain or a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and scales the monitoring to include additional communities. The final Phase 3 of the YICBMR approach involves having the monitoring and response system become part of the government child labour monitoring system, where information is shared by the producer group and its partners with the government and its stakeholders. Funding of Phase 1 is by the producer group and Fairtrade International, Phase 2 is funded by the producer organization and its partner(s) and Phase 3 is intended to be funded by the government and/or industry. The YICBMR is designed to be a bottom-up approach where the producer organization takes charge of the child labour problem and drives change upward.

In the Belizean sugar cane sector, BSCFA has implemented Phase 1 and is currently implementing Phase 2 of the YICBMR system. Its partner in Phase 2 is the Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College, which was funded by the Mexican government and is a tertiary level, vocational training institution in the Corozal District of Belize, where much of the country's sugar cane grows. The college offers programs of study in agriculture, among other subjects. In 2018, European Union (EU) funding was obtained by the sugar

¹ de Buhr, Elke; Bertrand, William; Quaye, Sam Atukwei (2013): External Assessment of Fairtrade International's Approach to Child Labour Elimination in West African Cocoa Farming Cooperatives in Ghana. Bonn: Fairtrade International.

industry. The objective of this time-limited project was to expand the YICBMR system to 51% of all sugar cane-producing areas through a local NGO, the Child Development Fund, overseen by the government of Belize.

2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess the work undertaken by BSCFA to establish a YICBMR system to identify and respond to concerns regarding child and youth wellbeing, including child labour, in its sugar cane producing communities. While BSCFA, along with other Fairtrade sugar cane producer organizations, played a significant role in the 2018 EU-funded study, this evaluation is exclusively targeted to BSCFA's implementation of the YICBMR system and as such all questions posed to various sector-wide participants involved BSCFA implementation of the YICBMR system on child labour.

Based on interviews with BSCFA and local partners, Fairtrade International (FI), Fairtrade Foundation (FTF), Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores y Trabajadores de Comercio Justo (CLAC), the sugar industry, the local sugar mill, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as well as government stakeholders, the assessment describes:

- a. BSCFA's commitment and capacity to address child labour and related labour abuses in sugar cane production in Belize;
- b. BSCFA's decision to fund and employ Fairtrade's YICBMR system, in addition to the Internal Control System (ICS);
- c. Advantages and disadvantages in employing a community involved, area-based YICBMR approach on wellbeing of children and youth;
- d. Lessons learnt with regard to engaging youth monitors and enabling their leadership role in operating the YICBMR system, including enabling decent youth employment and business opportunities;
- e. Perspectives on lessons learnt with regard to the challenges associated with identifying and remediating cases of vulnerable children;
- f. Knowledge of the YICBMR system as developed by Fairtrade International and adapted by BSCFA to country context;
- g. Assessment on support required and offered to the producer organizations in establishing and operating the YICBMR system; and
- h. Lessons learnt and suggestions from stakeholder on using the due diligence and response systems such as YICBMR to identify and respond to child labour and related risks in supply chains.

3. Research Methodology

Using a qualitative approach to data collection, most of the interview data summarized in this report were collected in Belize between 18 and 22 February 2019. Additional interviews were conducted via Skype or telephone in January as well as March 2019. A total number of 25 interviews were completed. More than 60 respondents participated in the research. The following respondent groups were included in the assessment:

- a. BSCFA leadership and staff (4 interviews, 7 participants).
- b. Community respondents, both adults and children in two sugar cane-growing communities (4 interviews, approximately 35 participants).
- c. Sugar mill representatives (1 interview, 3 participants).
- d. Representatives of the government of Belize (5 interviews, 5 participants).
- e. Representatives of BSCFA's local partners, an NGO (Child Development Fund) and an educational institution (Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College) (3 interviews, 4 participants).
- f. Representatives of the sugar manufacturers (2 interview, 2 participants).
- g. International Labour Organisation (ILO) representative (1 interview, 1 participant).
- h. Fairtrade International representatives (5 interview, 5 participants).

Fairtrade International representatives included representatives of FI, FTF and CLAC. All interviews were completed by the author either in a one-on-one format or as (focus) group interviews. The language of the interviews was English.

4. Data Analysis and Key Results

YICBMR System Advantages Identified by BSCFA

BSCFA's decision to fund and operate Fairtrade's YICBMR system, in addition to the ICS, has a distinct advantage in that the ICS tracks workers employed by each harvesting group leader and member of the SPO but it does not provide information on child labour or wellbeing risks of non-members living in the surrounding areas. As one BSCFA representative described: "The monitoring system is effective at identifying not only child labour in sugar cane, it identifies child labour of all kinds. If you do a household survey you pick up everything. We separate adults from the children when collecting data, which allows for more openness, from both sides.² You get a lot of information that you would not get with other methods." The YICBMR approach engages

² A rights based methodology was used, where children, youth and adults first discuss separately. In a second step, the two groups come together and discuss their perspectives.

and researches all community members and is therefore able to provide information of area based incidents and risks of children's wellbeing. As a result, as another BSCFA respondent pointed out, the system truly "helps understand the cause of child labour, it involves the entire community, involves both adults and youth." The methodology "makes it easy for the community to be involved. We were amazed about the engagement that we receive from the community. The engagement is instant, older people, young people. You do not have to explain so much, just the community mapping activities will get them engaged. You get a lot of feedback." In this sense, BSCFA's ICS and the YICBMR work in a complementary manner, the former working to identify child labour risks on the SPO members' farms and the latter working to provide snap shots of child labour risks and child insecurities in the communities where member and non-members live and work. Since the BSCFA's YICBMR method engages all age groups, adults, youth and children, who actively participate in identifying and responding to incidents of child labour and risks to children and youth wellbeing, it provides an inclusive approach to tackling these problems, strengthens community buy-in for addressing the problems and enables collective discussion and debate across the age groups on specific actions to be taken to resolve them. Overall, from BSCFA's point of view, "the method has been very effective. The community helps to identify the children."

BSCFA regards the involvement of youth monitors in the YICBMR approach as very positive. In requiring young adults to be hired, trained and enabled as equal decision makers working alongside BSCFA senior staff and executives through a child labour committee, the YICBMR approach not only generates new insights from persons most directly affected but also enables an active engagement on wellbeing, including the elimination of child labour, among this target group of children and young people. It provides opportunities for youth (18 to 24 years) to be employed at BSCFA, which had not previously been the case, as years of experience had always been a significant requirement for employment at the association: Engaging youth monitors "created employment for young people, skills development, increase of specialization in child labour awareness, which supplements the work of the government. Their role has been very important because they have been able to connect with the young people, to get them to get involved, to share, to participate."

The BSCFA respondents also noted that the YICBMR approach allowed for a more open dialogue between adults and across gender and age groups because it reduced the fear or threat of being suspended by Fairtrade or otherwise penalized. Today, child labour is actively addressed and no longer "a topic that all people shy away from" and "there is a focus on what needs to be achieved rather than deny" and on finding other options for those youth that are removed from child labour and on lobbying the government to get programs.

BSCFA respondents indicated a high level of confidence in discussing child labour policy and laws with various industry and government stakeholders, which they attribute to the YICBMR approach. They noted that since engaging in the YICBMR work for over three years, they had been an invited member of the Legislative Review Committee for the Labour Department of Belize and of the Labour Sub Council of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is an arm of the Labour Advisory Board of the Government of Belize. Furthermore, they indicated that they had voluntarily provided training to other producer organizations, NGOs and industry stakeholders on child labour and child protection.

BSCFA respondents attributed its success in mitigation of child labour to the “multiple trainings provided by Fairtrade International in support of the YICBMR implementation.” They especially valued understanding these human rights issues not only from the perspective of the Fairtrade Standard requirements but also their relevance to applicable national laws, regulations, and industry codes of conduct and sourcing principles, including campaigns targeting consumers in Europe, the USA and elsewhere. As well, BSCFA benefited from relevant international stakeholders introduced to them by Fairtrade such as UNICEF, the US Department of Labour, the regional body of the ILO, and US based NGOs and academic institutions, most of whom visited BSCFA to learn more about their work to mitigate risks to child labour and increase children’s wellbeing.

YICBMR System Disadvantages Identified by BSCFA

While BSCFA regards the YICBMR approach as empowering to producers, community members and youth, BSCFA respondents noted that “it requires significant commitment, time, resources and technical capacity” and perceives itself as being the “only player committed to investing significant funds.” However, the approach would work more effectively if there was substantial commitment and resources coming from sugar manufacturers and governments as well: “BSCFA alone cannot solve this social issue.” The YICBMR approach assumes that in the final phase the system will be factored into a national action plan for the removal of child labour but the government of Belize has not yet produced such a plan.

According to BSCFA, 30% of the Fairtrade premium was used on social compliance in 2014. In 2015, BSCFA split into three associations. As a result, in 2015 90% of premium of the remaining members was spent on social compliance. In 2018, 45% of the premium was spent on social compliance. This part of the premium has been funding YICBMR and related projects. From the perspective of BSCFA, this level of spending is not sustainable: “Currently, when we are working in certain communities, we set up a budget that includes a certain amount for remediation. [...] Other industry stakeholders together with government also need to be involved to put in place programs to prevent and remediate.” The role of government and the sugar industry should be to assist and enable programs to prevent and remediate. Specifically, the government could provide educational assistance programs as well as scholarships. The sugar industry could enable decent youth employment.

Another key issue noted with the YICBMR approach, particularly its phased development, is that benefits are not immediate and not spread equally to all BSCFA members at the same time. It therefore becomes “difficult to convince all our members to keep funding it through the Premium where benefits are obtained only by some members at a time.” BSCFA keeps working hard year upon year to convince members to keep funding the system: “As an organization we are fully committed to continue to monitor. [...] Still it is a challenge to always remind our members, what the standards are and that this is not something we are willing to bargain with.”

The remediation aspect is among the most challenging aspects of the YICBMR system as this system requires reporting to relevant government authorities and involves working with the government on remediation: “Some of the challenges would be the collaboration with the government. In some cases we would identify a protection trigger that we report to the government agency, then there is little or no response and follow-up

from the side of the government. This creates a sense of disillusion in the community, because they get the impression that nothing is done.”

While the area-based approach of the YICBMR is regarded as highly useful in identifying risks to children’s wellbeing and actual child labour cases, moving beyond BSCFA’s sugar cane farm members and cane cutters to include all others in the community means facing obstacles, delays and frustrations. It also creates an expectation in communities that BSCFA will solve all these problems: “With respect to remediation, there are limited resources. Regarding prevention programs, there is only so much we as an organization are able to do. Some suggestions from the community, for example, needing a police station, are impossible for us to achieve.”

BSCFA reports implementing alternative income-generation projects for youth withdrawn from child labour but they found that these projects have not been very effective. There continues to be a “lack of proper, decent youth employment, we need to make sure as an organization that we take the lead.” The BSCFA respondents also want existing gaps in child labour laws with regard to minimum age legislation, the development of a listing of hazardous work indicators, among others, to be addressed and child labour laws to be fully implemented in all of Belize, including the sugar cane production sectors. They believe that the YICBMR approach alone cannot solve the child labour problem but that other stakeholders need to become more involved: “The solution [to child labour in sugar cane production in Belize] requires the coordination, commitment and collaboration of both the private and public organizations, among them being the Government of Belize.” Also needed are investments from the government into initiatives for youth in the sugar cane farming communities to provide access to alternative sources of income.

Knowledge/Opinions of Stakeholders

The interviewed **community respondents** who participated in Phase 1 of YICBMR implementation indicated that they liked the approach, especially the exercises like the community mapping as they were “informative.” One adult described it this way: “You get to know what the hot spots are in the village and the different areas that need attention. Everybody was into it, from small children in school to adults. It was good.” Adults also noted that before the YICBMR work began, “parents might not have known about labour laws but now they are informed and are being more careful.” Participants could accurately recall the minimum age of employment in the sugar cane sector in Belize and emphasized the importance of education. They indicated that a vast majority of them supports the work against child labour in the community but “some want to continue in the old tradition and not change”, which they estimate is 1 % of the population. The community respondents were well aware of the school-based prevention projects, including scholarships offered by BSCFA. They also knew of the BSCFA YICBMR program, which they stated “started with Fairtrade money” and involves working with “youth monitors.” In one community, two beneficiaries of the BSCFA’s YICBMR intervention were interviewed: A single mother, who was not directly involved, noted that “BSCFA contacted me because my son was out of school and working and they wanted to withdraw him and support me with an income generation project.” Her teenage son was aware of the YICBMR pilot and he recalled that children were asked to identify safe and unsafe places for children and young people and make suggestions towards making these places safer.

While the children, most of them aged between 5 to 8 years, who participated in the focus group, could not explain the various elements of the YICBMR approach, they indicated that it was about “keeping children safe and out of child labour.” They recalled that the YICBMR approach “had a lot of drawing in it” and asked questions about where “we felt safe.” These participants also indicated that the research had to do with “why children work?” When asked why children work, these participants noted various reasons which included “helping their parents and helping them when they fall sick.” Others work because they do not like their school or their teachers and some want to work in sugar cane because they like to work there. When asked what work children do, these participants indicated that they “cut cane, plant cane, clean the cane fields and wet the cane.” While none of children aged 5 to 8 years were able to provide clear answers with regard to the minimum age of employment and work that children should not do on sugar cane farms, all of them indicated that the YICBMR project taught them that “all children need to go to school and that people who drink in our communities need to control themselves.” They also understood that “helping out a parent with house chores before or after school was alright to do as long as the work was not hard or stopped them from doing their school work.” The children mostly liked the YICBMR, but a few of them indicated that they did not like the presentations to the community because “it involved too much work.”

When asked about what they would change about the approach, the adult focus groups participants criticized the funding available to solve child labour problems. They noted: “Too much money is required to improve the problems in our community. The money that is available is very little. Thousands more are needed.” One adult remarked that “the number of people that participated in the YICBMR exercise were not enough. People are occupied doing a lot of things to survive.” Also mentioned were difficulties with the timing of some activities. When asked about recommendations they would make to solve the child labour problem in Belizean sugar cane, respondents asked for “more youth monitors.” They suggested that the “government needs to become involved with monitoring and engage the community in advocacy”, others suggested that visits should be made to schools and homes to check on whether children are attending school. They also demanded that the industry becomes more involved: “BSCFA’s work is good but the work needs to be expanded. BSCFA is doing their best but they cannot do everything.” Some proposed that vocational education be introduced at school level, which may include carpentry and embroidery: “Then, as soon as they [the youth] leave school, they can make some money in a trade that is not hazardous.” They suggested that additional funding was needed not just from within Belize, but also outside it recognizing that their sugar is sold in various countries, including the US.

The **sugar manufactures** had considerable knowledge of the YICBMR approach as implemented by BSCFA. They largely attributed this knowledge to the engagement and training provided to them by Fairtrade International, visits to communities where the YICBMR approach was implemented, participation at the stakeholder meetings hosted by BSCFA to present and discuss results, payment of the Fairtrade Premium which supports in part the YICBMR system and the partnership agreement with Fairtrade International and CLAC, the Fairtrade Producer Network operating in the region. The sugar manufacturer representatives differed in their satisfaction with the level of knowledge they had on the YICBMR system and its implementation, and there was some variation in the assessment of the long-term effectiveness of the approach. One respondent described the system as highly successful, especially the involvement of youth, and hoped that it would continue with project funds to support the work. This

respondent noted that “they [BSCFA] understand the importance of this issue”, “are pioneers” and while “we do not have a silver bullet, this is a good approach. The audits are a great approach, too. Ownership of SPOs is critical to ensure that this type of systems do not fail.” The other participant, though recognizing the expertise that BSCFA has garnered through trainings offered by Fairtrade International, attributed the progress that has been made to the child labour committee members, exclusively the youth monitors and the protection focal point, but noted that BSCFA membership was lagging behind. Dissatisfaction with the system was also attributed to perceived BSCFA political biases, independence, lack of transparent and open communications, not enough collaboration with the sugar mill in Orange Walk and competition with the other two producer organizations. This respondent also argued that the sugar mill had more political leverage with the government than BSCFA and thus could get things done more easily.

There was a view among the sugar manufacturers that BSCFA was holding information confidential citing protection issues including information that should be shared with stakeholders. Also noted was that the YICBMR approach required young people to be actively involved, which was regarded as a value added, however, “BSCFA’s democratic structure means that members, who are older male cane farmers, need to vote on activities undertaken and they are resistant to change.” The YICBMR approach “relies too much on the community and the infrastructure of BSCFA” but not enough inspections might occur among cane cutters. One sugar industry participant stated that “more private and partnership funding is needed” to finance the YICBMR and that “this is understood within the industry.” The other industry participant argued in favour of a modified strategy: “The sugar industry has set up structures to monitor for child labour, including during harvest times, and the YICBMR approach should be operated by all producer groups and the sugar mill jointly with funding from the government of Belize and other governments.”

The **sugar mill** participants regarded child and forced labour as a risk in sugar cane production in Belize. They agreed that their knowledge on these issues had been enhanced, especially in the areas of child rights and child protection, through trainings offered by Fairtrade International, the ILO and BSCFA. With regard to the YICBMR approach used by BSCFA, they indicated that they were not directly involved but did see it as an effective way to engage the community, particularly young people, in identifying and remediating child labour. As one respondent noted: “At least now people are able to define what child labour is in a meaningful way. Even though we do not have the legislation finalized, people are better able to distinguish what is appropriate. People are having these conversations more openly now. People are moving away from perceiving the issue as a ‘foreign agenda’ to more honest discourse and self-assessment.” The sugar mill respondents described the YICBMR approach as a “peer-to-peer kind of approach. Responses may be more honest, you get a different level of honesty.” Furthermore, they stated that the YICBMR approach had identified and remediated child labour cases, including those that occur outside Fairtrade farming operations. They noted that BSCFA started the YICBMR in 2014/2015 and the sugar mill supported the work through enabling Fairtrade International and BSCFA to work with another producer group and submit a proposal to the EU for funding. It is through this project that these respondents learnt about the YICBMR approach. They saw the decision to operate the YICBMR as a decision that should be made by the sugar cane producer organizations and “if the organizations do decide to implement it”, they would support it.

However, a sugar mill respondent questioned the maturity level of the youth monitors³ involved, especially in the context of signing confidentiality agreements and protecting information obtained. This respondent believed that the youth could give into pressure in communities: “If they sign confidentiality agreements, that may not completely protect the information. In our communities, everyone knows. The communities are so small.” “Who do these youth report to and what are their reporting structures? For the YICBMR system to work, information cannot be manipulated so who oversees this function?” The sugar mill respondents also stated that “a lot of good has been done but how to manage the information flows? We may harm us if we are open about child labour, if the information is not properly managed.” The methodology was very good in the view of these participants but for scaling up “youth age groups should be expanded”, perhaps from a maximum age of 24 years to 30 years. The sugar mill respondents also called for better and more open communication between BSCFA and the mill and other Fairtrade producer organizations. They called for governments to fund the approach and learn about it. As well, they suggested that the government could do more to ensure child labour laws and legislation are enforced with a focus on remediating child labour cases and ensuring youth have decent employment. Another aspect emphasised by the respondents was funding: “We would encourage scaling-up but it has to come with funding. Other Fairtrade-certified organisations are not as lucky as BSCFA that has a lot of premium. Other organizations are very small, they need to be able to tailor the program. The program should come with funding.” Lastly, they indicated that they had developed their own training manuals addressing child labour that are used in education and distributed free of charge.

The representatives of the **government of Belize** largely attributed their knowledge of child labour and the approach used by communities to identify and respond to child labour to Fairtrade International and/or BSCFA. As one official noted, “without Fairtrade International’s technical support we would not have completed the EU funded project” on child labour in sugar cane producing areas of Belize: “The funds were available but we needed the technical capacity and support from Fairtrade International to properly implement the project.” The participants indicated that they liked the YICBMR approach as it engaged children throughout the process and effectively addressed child labour resulting in “less child labour, children are attending school, they will be more educated and less crime.” One respondent explained that monitoring was “results-oriented and practical. The consultants and youth monitors were in the field and the children were interviewed. Youth did the interviews, older youth, the parents were involved, it was very community-based. It was very good. It was done the way it should be done. The positive is, there is a problem identification, you know what are the problems, and the parents have participated in identifying the intervention they want. You have the data to work. The challenge is to do something with the information.” What was important to the “method is that parents and children worked together to identify problems to children’s wellbeing and where child labour exist; they also come up with interventions needed to assist in responding to these problems.” One participant also noted that the YICBMR was a good one since youth are very involved: “They have high energy and motivation. It also allows them to gain experience in the actual sugar cane industry. What happens is that many who get an education move away from the industry. This helps them to be part of the industry and help to continue the legacy of their parents.” Another participant pointed out: “The children will more associate with the youth than with older people.

³ The youth monitors (now called extension workers) are young adults.

There also is more sustainability, the capacity will stay in the community and they will be more aware.” Another participant argued that “the sustainability is there, if you invest in youth, this already is an element of sustainability to me. [The Ministry of] Human Development and [the] Labour [Department] requested that their staff participate so that they can learn this process as well. It is important for the line ministries involved to have a long-term relation and participate in the monitoring of labour. They should have an active role.”

The government respondents did not specify any particular disadvantages associated with the YICBMR method but criticised some of its execution and wondered about the options available for children where there “are no government projects and no government support.” “Children may need to assist their parents in circumstances where no alternatives exist.” If there is a disadvantage, one participant said it was that “parents lose the income that children earn.” Another suggested that the youth monitors should work with adults to monitor. When asked about remediation and referral of child labour cases to the relevant government authorities, another participant noted that “as a child protection agency, we do our own assessment. [...] The monitoring process is working.” “If a case of alleged child labour is identified, BSCFA sends an email to our director. From there we work to solve the issue and give BSCFA an update on the particular situation.” When there is a referral “we do a proper investigation. We check if the child is exposed to abuse or if the child is exposed to child labour. As a next step we work with the parents to resolve the issue, offer them support, for example if income is needed. There is a family support unit that provides food, medical care and assistance with education. If the child is exploited, the social worker needs to determine via risk and safety assessments whether the child can remain with the family or if the child may be taken in protective custody.” The respondent continued that “so far the issues flagged have been legitimate and we have dealt with it to the best of our ability.” However, the respondent also pointed out that better training of the youth monitors may be needed “because in some cases, issues that were reported should have been taken care of locally in talking to their parents and not involve the legal system. Because of their enthusiasm they flagged issues that they judged as a child labour issue. We have a culture here in Belize. Working in sugar cane is a cultural practice. Children work on weekends and holidays.”

The government respondents also indicated that they would be interested in seeing the YICBMR system scaled up and expanded to other areas and other sectors. As one put it: “It is the best available option.” Another official illustrated this by noting that “the staff of the Labour Department and the Human Service Development should learn the YICBMR methodology and support the implementation in all communities.” This official recommended that a government program, which provides cash to families at risks, could have a role. “Eventually, all line ministries (Labour, Education, Human Services, Police and Immigration) should be involved and working together to address child labour. There are not enough labour inspectors and social workers but with collaboration with industry stakeholders including producer organizations” these participants felt that “Belize can make important progress in eliminating child labour and increasing social protection in communities.” Finally, they suggested that the sugar industry should locate additional funds, like the EU funding to support the monitoring work and create decent jobs for youth in the sugar cane production areas: “There is a larger role for industry. Families need to benefit from sugar cane production. They need ways to generate an income outside of harvest season.”

The **International Labour Organisation** respondent has not been involved in the process of implementing the YICBMR in Belize. However, in a recent visit to the country, this respondent learnt about the partner organisations, information sharing, sensitization sessions, local dialogue and programs underway at BSCFA on child labour and occupational health and safety, which he identified as main areas of Fairtrade engagement in Belize. Within the YICBMR context, this participant reported that he was informed that issues of child labour remediation are a major issue: "Alternative income opportunities have not worked well enough and the alternatives offered are not what youth are passionate about." There was often no market for the local alternative products and the linkage to the buyer was not made. For youth run enterprises to work, "youth need support to start businesses; they are not able to do this by themselves without sufficient support. Counselling is needed for the youth; career guidance, education guidance, business support and so forth, but I am not sure to what extent this support is available in Orange Walk." While indicating not having an in-depth understanding of the YICBMR approach and that most of the information he has received on YICBMR being implemented in Belize has come from Fairtrade International, this participant noted generally that "community-based monitoring systems are effective in other parts of the world and they are also cost effective. It is the best way." In comparison, "labour inspectors are more expensive, time consuming and the number of inspections are limited. Surveys are also very costly." Still, he suggested that the monitoring system on the long term might become a victim of its own success: "If there are fewer cases in Orange Walk, only sporadic cases, then the investment may be more difficult to justify." Scaling up the monitoring efforts "must be a coordinated approach towards remediation with participation of the relevant ministries of labour, education, business and so forth." Effective remediation is critical: "If a child labour case is being detected, the case needs to be referred to the right institution, to find a solution. The police have to follow the law. But afterwards? What is happening? This process has to be organized on a case-by-case basis. This is needed if a monitoring system is scaled up." While the ILO participant recognized the role the sugar industry can play in a small country like Belize in terms of lobbying the government to take a more active role in child or forced labour elimination, "it is not the role of the private sector to ensure compliance with the law."

The **NGO & educational institution** respondents' understanding and opinions of the YICBMR approach were informed by their involvement in applying the approach either through the EU-funded project, which BSCFA actively supported, or through working with BSCFA on YICBMR directly. These respondents all noted that BSCFA is highly committed and motivated to having the YICBMR work effectively and has been sharing results in public forums with all stakeholders. One respondent stated: "From what we saw, we believe that they really do have a very good handle in understanding child labour and they have a good amount of capacity." They indicated that the communities where they worked were engaged and involved in the process. They each offered particular strengths and weaknesses of the YICBMR method. On the positive side, they noted that the method was an effective way to monitor and remediate child labour. One respondent stated: "From what we have seen, it has raised the level of commitment of the organization [BSCFA] to do something that is necessary. [The YICBMR method depends] not just on good will, but it is a good strategy. [...] I do not think Belize would make changes to their legislation just with an internal control system. The YICBMR system increased visibility and put the issue of child labour on a higher platform." With regard to the involvement of youth monitors in the YICBMR system, a respondent noted that it "is the correct approach since it is targeting children and youth." Another noted

that “young people can relate to the youth.” These respondents acknowledged that the monitoring worked also because the youth monitors were trained very well. “Definitely there were some best practices that should be replicated: Involving the youth, the level of participation, have them own the research, which was very, very good.” When asked how adults responded to the youth monitors and working alongside the children and youth, one respondent indicated that adults may not feel as comfortable talking to the youth. Another noted that “more youth monitors are needed and the YICBMR approach should cover a wider area.” Another said that with regard to alternative income training the “youth I worked with, after classes, looked at it as something they could actually do in the sugar cane production areas.”

Listing disadvantages to the YICBMR approach, one respondent thought that some people in the communities might feel policed but that this was the “only way how child labour is going to end, if you are checking that they are doing what they need to do. If they are not monitored they will not change.” Another noted that good employment alternatives for young people were needed: “If people are presented with viable alternatives, some of them will actually listen and there will be a change. It may not be as fast as you might like but you have to start somewhere.” This respondent also emphasized that “children need to stay in school beyond 14 years. They need more access to education or some other type of training, this will reduce the problem. Most kids that work in cane have exited the primary school at 14. The legal age to work in Belize is 16. What do you do in these two years? It is not too strict but it takes time to acclimatize to that.”

Also noted as a criticism were the costs involved with running the YICBMR system and the lack of effective remediation. While cases of child labour were reported to the Department of Human Services for follow-up, it was not clear “whether any action had been taken as no follow up information on the reports was provided [...] as DHS was not required to provide follow up.” As a strategy a respondent suggested that “for the future, a strong commitment by the government is needed. They need to be accountable. Someone from the Labour Department or the Department of Human Services needs to be directly involved and needs to report back on actions taken.” The same respondent also noted that some of the actual YICBMR tools were “too cumbersome” and that additional indicators were needed to get a better understanding if working children understand their rights, labour laws and how to access institutions. The household surveys were perceived as being too long, twice as expensive as traditional surveys and difficult especially for children: “Maybe the survey is not the best way to collect this information. The survey needs to be more children friendly and shorter.” In addition, “more NGO community partners are needed. The POs can remove a child and sponsor a child to go to school. However, the schools are not always safe and they not always teach the children what they want to learn, so children leave to work in other sectors. Child labour is an issue for the entire community. Everyone needs to be involved, all community-based organizations, not just the sugar players. Also, children need additional support to stay in school.” This may include after school programs or remedial reading. Finally, poverty in rural communities in Belize needed to be addressed and more social protection programs that reach rural communities were needed: “There are only two social workers for 75,000 people in the sugar cane producing areas. We need more and they need to be trained. We need more schools. Secondary schools are too expensive in Belize.” Another respondent argued: “BSCFA and Fairtrade need to continue with this type of research. It is very important. But we have to make the findings

public knowledge. Because when we make it public knowledge more schools will become involved when it comes to monitoring and alleviating the problem.”

The **Fairtrade International** respondents indicated varying degrees of knowledge about the YICBMR approach as implemented by BSCFA in Belize. Those directly involved in supporting BSCFA with trainings, implementation and/or stakeholder engagement had a high understanding of BSCFA’s work and the application of the YICBMR method. In contrast, those not directly involved or only slightly involved had much more limited knowledge of the particulars. Given these varying levels of understanding, all respondents regarded the YICBMR approach as useful and positive, with some regarding it as a significant achievement made by BSCFA with Fairtrade support. One respondent noted: “BSCFA really took a leading role in addressing labour violations.” Another stated: “YICBMR goes beyond what is required [by the Fairtrade Standards] as it focuses on the entire community. BSCFA goes well beyond the minimum level of requirements, following best practise, proactively addressing child labour problems with preventive measures.” Moreover, BSCFA “has shown long-term commitment to addressing [child labour], which is reflected in the fact that they have a protection policy approved at the highest level of decision-making.” BSCFA also was committed to scaling up the YICBMR approach to include all of its production areas. They have “good human resources and a very good understanding of how to keep in mind the best interest of the child and adopting a human rights approach” and “the youth monitors are prepared and knowledgeable.” Also noted among the strengths of the YICBMR were the empowerment and awareness raising at the community level: “The YICBMR approach is less perceived as an audit. [...] It puts child labour increasingly on the table, it is discussed and addressed. It is an inclusive process, which is important to Fairtrade, and enables the participation of children and youth on matters that affect and include them in the decision making.” As a result, BSCFA was “now perceived as a leader in [the fight against] child labour, including advocacy towards governments and others.” Other Fairtrade respondents with high levels of involvement and knowledge of BSCFA’s work reflected the views of this respondent: “Young people lead the [YICBMR] process, are part of the decision making and have key roles in the decision making; they are taken seriously by BSCFA. They [...] contribute to finding solutions to problems encountered. In turn, the young people have opportunities to stay in the sector.” “The six youth monitors have secured full time jobs, paid by BSCFA. They are keen to collect data and be involved in implementing results, which shows their commitment.” The YICBMR approach did not only check for child labour, but also for violence against children and adults in the communities. It was “very effective with regard to child labour, forced labour, smuggling of contraband. Because the community is involved, the system reduces the power differentials in the community.” It was “inclusive in that not only children and young people are involved but also the elderly, adult men and women and other community members.”

In terms of disadvantages, the Fairtrade respondents familiar with the YICBMR method and BSCFA’s work employing it to identify and respond to child labour noted that the approach was reliant on Fairtrade International and BSCFA for funding. One respondent also acknowledged that the system was “complex”, that it “takes a while” and that it also was “expensive – but compared to what? It is cheaper than suspension.” Others also noted that the approach was time consuming and technical skills that were required may not always be present. They also stated that the success of the YICBMR depended on the commitment made by governments and other stakeholders to eliminate child labour from the sector. If government were “not really present and involved”, then the YICBMR

system could not scale to its third and final phase which was to be housed in a national action plan for the elimination of child labour: “Belize has only a small number of government labour inspectors and they need to have presence in the field. More sharing of burden with other players in the supply chain is necessary. Companies should be directly involved with funding the monitoring and the monitoring is just the first step. Government is also needed for all the other interventions [such as prevention and remediation].” “The producers alone should not finance the monitoring system. It should be supported by the industry and government. Trader commitment is needed. They are part of the supply chain. We have not heard a lot of their funding commitment. Farmers might view this as temporary, until funding is found elsewhere.” Producer organisations “cannot address all kinds of problems that may occur in families. Several actors, including governments, need to be involved. Governments have the main responsibility. BSCFA provides solutions and is following up, there is commitment to finding a solution, for example, income generation, even if remediation cannot always be fully provided.” Another respondent explained that “buyers usually expect a product to be free of risks but may not be aware of the major investment that needs to take place at the producer/farm level. In the last years, a large proportion of the premium income has been used to finance the program. But farmers face so many other challenges, e.g. in agriculture, very low world market prices for sugar, changing climate with draught/too high water table and floods. The government, supply chain actors should be interested in offering funding for this important and far reaching program.”

Other respondents saw a challenge in implementing Phase 2 of the YICBMR system involving household surveys. One respondent noted that “youth due to their lack of experience may not be in the best position to do this work.” Furthermore, in the method “covering an entire community, some members worry about taking on problems in their community that are not immediate problems for the BSCFA members. It is difficult to remediate situations that exist in the community and involve individuals that are not members.” Another respondent questioned the “sustainability of rolling out the YICBMR system [...] when ongoing implementation/training in Belize has relied heavily on basically one person from Fairtrade International and significant BSCFA funds.” Even though “implementation in Belize has obviously been successful”, this respondent suggested that it would not be easy “to scale up and replicate the YICBMR approach when there is a clear need for ongoing external funds from either Fairtrade International, commercial partners or the producer networks – with sugar prices so low producers cannot be expected to take on this burden themselves.” While all respondents would like to see the scaling-up of the YICBMR approach, they insist that the burden should not fall on producers alone.

Concerning possible solutions, one Fairtrade respondent noted that “increasing the price of sugar will price the sugar manufacturers out of the market. But it still may be possible. It would be worth thinking about it and having this discussion.” This respondent added that since the price for sugar was very low and the farmers likely did not want to use so much of the premium for monitoring, it would make sense to increase the price, maybe by having a minimum price: “This could be discussed with the supply chain.” Another respondent suggested that BSCFA needed to train more youth monitors, who should be trained by the first generation of youth monitors who would “become trainers of trainers.” This respondent also would “like to have [BSCFA] support the other two producer groups by training other organizations. They have and want to do this.” Finally, this respondent emphasized that the ILO-developed survey method “we are giving to producers should be redesigned. Household surveys and survey type questions are not enough – we need

to explore other methodologies and the YICBMR presents another type of methodology which contains a mix of household survey questions and focus groups with community members, farmers, etc. Using ILO type household surveys will not get at the worst forms of child labour like child trafficking. Any monitoring system needs to be mindful of the method used. We should not assume that any methodology just works. YICBMR is generating results.”

5. Lessons Learned

From the perspective of **BSCFA**, the YICBMR approach is an effective and inclusive method to engage community members of all ages and increase awareness of child labour and other risks. ICS and the YICBMR work in a complementary manner, with YICBMR identifying child labour risks and insecurities among both members and non-members. YICBMR provides opportunities to young people in the community and also enables an active engagement of young people in the community. The YICBMR system, implemented as fully owned producer organization initiative with little outside interference, also supports a more open dialogue between adults because it removes the fear or threat of being suspended. However, government remediation is a major challenge that requires capacity, funding but also realistic expectations of what can be achieved. The BSCFA respondents agree that the process of developing a YICBMR system has contributed to building BSCFA knowledge, skills and capacity to not only understand and address child labour but also to advocate on behalf of children and train others. Still, for the YICBMR to work effectively and sustainably, long-term financial commitment and resources are needed, not only from BSCFA but also from sugar manufacturers, the government of Belize and international donors. Long-term effectiveness will also depend on YICBMR to be combined with changes in labour laws, fighting poverty and other interventions such as new approaches to generating income for withdrawn youth.

The **community adults and children** see a major benefit in the YICBMR in that it teaches them new information about child labour laws, problems in the community, etc. The vast majority supports the YICBMR and activities that are being implemented but would like to see them expanded, especially in the areas of remediation and alternative income-generation for youth. They believe that the government of Belize, the sugar industry and international donors need to become more involved, actively supporting the program and providing financing.

The **sugar manufacturers** agree that BSCFA leadership is very committed to addressing the problem of child labour in sugar cane production and that the youth monitors provide an added value. There is less agreement on the long-term prospects of the YICBMR approach, its implementation and the role of the sugar industry in supporting and financing the system. While one respondent would like to see the YICBMR expanded, with financial contributions by the sugar industry, the other expressed support for a modified or alternative strategy.

The **sugar mill** representatives view the YICBMR system as an effective approach to engaging the community, particularly young people, and identifying and remediating cases of child labour. They are concerned about the flow of information and in favour of better communication and closer collaboration between BSCFA, the government, the sugar mill and other stakeholders.

The community-based approach is regarded as very beneficial by the **government of Belize** representatives, removing children from child labour but also providing the youth monitors with a meaningful experience in the sugar cane sector. They believe that better coordination is needed and perhaps additional training of youth monitors but that, in principle, the system of remediation is working. They favour scaling up the YICBMR with involvement of the line ministries (Labour, Education, Human Services, Police and Immigration) but also supported by sugar industry funding.

The **ILO** representative sees the urgent need for alternative income-generating opportunities for youth in the sugar cane growing areas. Previous attempts to create these opportunities have not worked well and the alternatives offered to youth are often not what they are passionate about and they may not be viable. Still, community-based monitoring systems are seen as the most cost effective way of removing children from exploitive labour. The sugar industry may assist with this process but is not the role of the private sector to ensure compliance with the law.

The **NGO and educational institution** representatives also strongly support scaling-up the YICBMR system since there is a documented need and a lack of alternatives. Room for improvement is seen in a number of areas including the household survey data collection, alternative income generation and financing, among others.

Among the **Fairtrade International** representatives, implementing the YICBMR is regarded as a significant achievement of BSCFA with Fairtrade support. The empowerment of producers to address child labour, the awareness raising that occurs at the community level and the ability of the YICBMR approach to serve as a positive driver of change not based on the fear of an audit are regarded as particular strengths of the approach. However, a much larger role of the government and a more significant financial contribution by the sugar industry are regarded as critical to ensuring the system's long-term success.

6. Discussion

The data collected as part of this study show both similarities and differences between the interviewed stakeholder groups concerning the work undertaken by BSCFA to establish a YICBMR system in its sugar cane producing communities:

- a. **BSCFA and Fairtrade technical respondents** responsible for designing the YICBMR method and directly supporting implementation deeply understand the objectives of the model, its phased development and targeted operations aimed at fitting in the final phase into a national monitoring system on child labour, requiring stakeholder collaboration and support. Most would like to see the system proceed as it was designed with the expectation that most of the problems and disadvantages identified in terms of shared funding, responsibility and remediation of children withdrawn from child labour could be resolved through stakeholder discussion and decisions.
- b. **Government respondents** also appeared to understand the YICBMR monitoring and response system on child labour from within a national framework. They often suggested that this method should be adopted by the relevant departments

in Belize. However, these respondents allowed more room and flexibility for the involvement of children's work in sugar cane than their BSCFA, Fairtrade International and sugar industry counterparts. The government respondents worried about household poverty, including single female-headed households. In this sense, they shared some of the primary concerns also expressed by the community member respondents.

- c. The **sugar manufacturers** and the **sugar mill**, while having knowledge on the YICBMR and understanding the need for government involvement, did not appear to regard the YICBMR approach as a bottom up one, enabling and empowering producers to drive change not just on their farms, the sugar cane sector but nationally, regionally and internationally. The need for sharing the burden on remediating child labour is understood but perhaps not as yet in a way that supports a joint and co-equal ownership of the monitoring and remediation system where sugar cane is produced, processed and exported.
- d. While **community, NGO and educational respondents** appreciated the YICBMR method as implemented by BSCFA for bringing adults, children and youth together to discuss difficult issues like children's insecurity and child labour, they focused on the practicalities of implementing the approach such as the need for more funding, larger monitoring teams, the respondent-specific design of surveys, especially for children, and wider areas of coverage. In this sense, their responses indicated both a willingness to further engage in the YICBMR methodology and at the same time a caution for ensuring effective solutions are available for withdrawn child labourers, including alternative income, and prevention. Community members (adults, children and youth) taking part in BSCFA's YICBMR work talked openly about child labour and issues involved in their communities regarding children's wellbeing. They were not hesitant or restrained in discussing these topics. In this sense, the YICBMR appears to enable a diminished "policing" from the outside and reduced focus on penalties or consequences. Children eight years and younger were reporting that they knew under-age children who work. While the community members had limited knowledge of the YICBMR method and could not name many specifics, they indicated that Fairtrade and BSCFA were concerned about children's schooling and the protection of children from abuse and child labour. They overwhelmingly shared these concerns and supported the work that had been undertaken to address child labour and other problems in their communities.
- e. The **Fairtrade International respondents** did not share a common understanding and knowledge of the YICBMR system for child labour. Those not directly involved in supporting BSCFA frequently noted that this was a best practice voluntary approach but they also stated that they had limited information and they did not know many specifics. Fairtrade's technical expert was often identified by other Fairtrade respondents but also BSCFA, government and industry as the prime source of information, trainings and guidance on YICBMR, and a major driver behind the achievements in Belize.

The different respondent groups shared similar concerns with regard to the technical demands of the YICBMR approach and its cost factor. However, the exact costs of the YICBMR in its current form as well as a potential scaled-up system are uncertain. Cost calculations require taking into account not only implementation and remediation costs

but also possible penalties or sanctions if child labour is not addressed effectively. Regardless of the total costs, the respondents agree that additional resources are needed and that BSCFA alone cannot be responsible for solving the problem of child labour in Belize's sugar cane-growing areas.

All respondent groups provided positive comments with regard to the involvement of BSCFA's youth monitors in identifying and responding to child labour in the sugar cane-growing areas, even though a few respondents issued concerns regarding the level of responsibility and decision-making held by them in the YICBMR approach. Employing young people from the targeted communities as youth monitors is a strategy that has proven to be successful and should be maintained while also ensuring proper training and supervision.

Apart from the government representatives, the different respondent groups also shared concerns about the lack of effective remediation, raising issues as to whose responsibility it is to withdraw children from exploitative labour conditions in non-Fairtrade settings. Multiple stakeholders reported that despite formal reports to the responsible authorities, remediation had not taken place in all cases. The government disagreed arguing that some cases were mistakenly reported.

Several stakeholders emphasized that the alternative income-generation projects developed for youth withdrawn from labour on sugar cane farms were not sufficient. These stakeholders called for additional efforts to create alternative income-generating opportunities. Young people in the sugar cane growing communities frequently want and/or need to work and they will continue to seek out hazardous work if alternatives are not available.

Another concern of multiple stakeholders was advocacy towards legislative changes including modifications of the minimum age to leave school, the minimum age of employment, the development of a list of hazardous work indicators, etc. These concerns were shared by the relevant government stakeholders.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

BSCFA leadership, staff and membership, with support by Fairtrade International and other partners, have shown great commitment, including financial commitment, towards addressing child labour in Belizean sugar cane-growing areas. The BSCFA youth monitors have worked on the ground and with the communities to address child labour and other problems affecting children. As a result there has been a rise in awareness, and reductions of child labour in the targeted communities have also been observed. While there is strong evidence of progress, the process of developing a YICBMR system in Belizean sugar cane has not yet been completed and its longer-term sustainability remains uncertain. A scaled-up and sustainable monitoring and remediation system might require a reduced scope, more effective remediation, better information sharing and the involvement of a larger group of stakeholders. The following might be considered when negotiating the future of the YICBMR system:

- a. The YICBMR system has shown positive results in the targeted communities addressing the problem of child labour in sugar cane production. Maintaining and scaling up the system should be a priority that is in the interest not only of BSCFA and the sugar cane-farming households but also the government of Belize, the sugar industry and other stakeholders.
- b. The human resources needed to scale up the YICBMR system have to be systematically developed. While BSCFA has trained a number of youth monitors, some have graduated to other positions and all have taken on additional tasks within the organisation. Regular training of youth monitors will be necessary. The training of youth monitors should involve the relevant government stakeholders to ensure agreement on definitions and the identification of vulnerable cases and to facilitate a closer collaboration in the area of remediation. Joint capacity building exercises for BSCFA and government staff working on the identification and/or remediation of cases of child labour are also desirable including training on data collection and use.
- c. Arriving at a sustainable financing mechanism has to be another priority. The cost of a scaled-up system in terms of financial and human resources needs to be determined. Financial contribution by the sugar industry will likely depend on having a voice in the design and the implementation of a scaled-up YICBMR system. The government of Belize with its many competing priorities may not be able to financially contribute beyond fulfilling its tasks with regard to law enforcement and remediation. Reaching consensus between stakeholders requires constructive engagement and compromise. A sustainable YICBMR might have to be a system with a more limited scope in terms of population coverage, the types of problems that are being targeted and the steps involved in identifying and remediating vulnerable cases.
- d. Fairtrade International needs to continue to be part of the YICBMR process in Belizean sugar cane. This may include assistance with facilitating engagement between the different stakeholder groups, for example by providing a forum for the discussion and negotiation, which should involve all three Fairtrade sugar cane producer associations. Similarly important are Fairtrade's contributions to capacity building and Fairtrade financial support. Fairtrade should also support the sharing of experiences with community-based monitoring approaches between countries and supply chains.
- e. The ILO, the Child Development Fund and the Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College have participated in and/or observed the YICBMR process. The contributions of these organizations are critical including in the areas of technical expertise, training and capacity building, and they should be involved in discussions about the future of the YICBMR system.
- f. In addition to developing the YICBMR system, BSCFA has engaged in finding safe employment for youth outside of sugar cane as well as in advocacy work towards legislative changes in the area of child rights. These efforts should continue and be supported by other stakeholders including the sugar industry. Access to schooling, especially secondary school, as a path out of child labour and out of poverty, should be another major emphasis.

While the YICBMR method as implemented by BSCFA in Belizean sugar cane-growing areas shows very promising results in a context in which other efforts have failed and as such should be further developed, the study summarized in this report was not designed to quantify outcomes or measure impact. Future research should be directed at tracking changes in the number of working children and their working conditions. Additional research should also be directed at assessing other child labour monitoring systems in terms of effectiveness of identification and remediation of child labour, comparative technical requirements and costs, and feasibility of scale up.

