



## Strengthening

Agribusiness Ethics,

Quality Standards,

& ICT Usage in

Uganda's Value Chains

# AGRI-QUEST

POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## Policy Brief No. 10-2018: The Path Forward on Bridging the Gap Between Child Labour Policy & Implementation in the Ugandan Agricultural Sector

**Authors:** Shayan Ravandoust, Christopher Wickert, David Katamba, Andrew Seruma & Catherine Tindiwensi

**AGRI-QUEST Policy Brief Series** provide state-of-the-art analyses and policy recommendations on topics related to ethics, quality standards, sustainability, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in agriculture in the context of Uganda. They are part of the broader AGRI-QUEST research project funded by The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO-WOTRO).

For more AGRI-QUEST details, contact:

**David Katamba,**  
AGRI-QUEST Lead Researcher  
Website: [www.agriquestuganda.com](http://www.agriquestuganda.com)  
Email: [info@agriquestuganda.com](mailto:info@agriquestuganda.com)  
Tel: +256 774972532; +256 752794612

A project mainly financed by:

Implemented by:



## Executive Summary

This report attempts to identify and outline a path forward to bridging the gap between policy and implementation on child labour in the Ugandan agricultural sector. While Uganda is party to international regulations and standards for child labour, known instances of this phenomenon exist within the nation's agricultural sector.

Through the use of a comprehensive research methodology the factors that influence this situation have been analyzed and considered through a theoretical framework. The findings that are derived can serve to influence stakeholders in order to gain proper implementation of policies throughout this sector.

The research concludes with recommendations on the path forward towards the elimination of the gap between policy and implementation through a combination of facets: Sensitization of local populations, governmental reform, and the social and economic empowerment of Ugandan communities. Each of these initiatives is analyzed and outlined in further detail in order to establish a concrete approach towards eliminating the gap.

**Keywords:** Child Labour, Ugandan Agriculture, Sensitization, Community Empowerment

## Introduction

Across the globe and throughout history, humanity has long been engaged in a multitude of agricultural activities in order to produce food and necessary products. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that more than a quarter of the global workforce is occupied in some sort of agricultural production (ILO, 2017). While this statistic is averaged throughout the globe, studies into developing and low-income nations indicate that the majority of the workforce is engaged in agricultural activities (FAO, 2004). While these activities primarily involve adults who consciously choose to participate in them, in some cases children are utilized in the agricultural value chain as well.

While the definition of child labour can vary based on local law and cultural values, international standards have been introduced to define and limit the occurrence of this phenomenon, particularly when it is deemed to be harmful to children's health and development. Currently, the ILO's definition of child labour has been adopted by many nations across the globe as "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development" (ILO, 2018). This definition categorizes work that might be mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; this constitutes work which might interfere with the children's education by depriving them of the benefits of attending school.

Current studies from the ILO suggest that approximately 246 million children between 5-17 years are actively engaged in the global workforce, of which as many as 179 million are engaged in what the ILO constitutes as the most harmful forms of child labour. The distribution of these children is highly focused in developing nations, particularly in Africa and Asia. Within Africa, approximately 48 million children are actively working in Sub-Saharan African nations such as Uganda, where 41% of the continent's children are at work, largely

A project mainly financed by:



Implemented by:



contributing to activities within the agricultural sector.

Considering Uganda specifically in this context, it is important to note the value and significance of agricultural activities in this nation. Studies show that in Uganda as many as %80 of the population live in rural settings, where they count on agriculture to provide them with sustenance and economic benefit (Gollin & Rogerson, 2010). Due to Uganda's unique geographic positioning and their lack of access to open water and trade routes, the nation is largely responsible for producing the products necessary for domestic consumption, which are primarily agricultural products. In 2016, nearly a third of Uganda's GDP was comprised of economic activity along the agricultural value chain (World Bank, 2017).

While the mission of eliminating child labour globally has been championed by many international organizations such as the United Nations or the ILO, global initiatives must be translated and implemented on a national scale in each nation in order to address these issues. Currently, Uganda has adopted the international standards for child labour regulation and ratified these conventions into its laws in order to keep up with international policy and not be deemed as a nation which allows egregious acts against human rights and child development.

The Ugandan Government's Employment Act, Children Act, and the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act are notable examples of the government's attempts to update legislation and keep up with the pace of progress around the globe (BILA, 2016). The government has also established strict regulations on school attendance as a measure of combating child labour through the enactment of Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education programs, which aim to ensure that every child in Uganda receives and education.

Despite the Ugandan Government's inclusion in international agreements on the prohibition

of child labour and its ratification of policies into national policies and regulations based on said agreements, there is evidence that suggests that child labour continues to be a pervasive issue in this nation. A report from the Bureau of International Labor Affairs suggests that approximately %30 of Ugandan children are in some way employed, primarily along agricultural value chains (BILA, 2016). The existence of such conditions on the ground at the same time as national policies and regulations against this very act can be seen as an example of decoupling. Decoupling is commonly defined as a situation in which policies are put in place but not implemented effectively, due to a variety of factors. This phenomenon has been studied over the decades and has been built upon by scholars such as Meyer & Rowan (1977) and Bromley & Powell (2010). Despite the fact that widespread study on this phenomenon in the business and firm context exists, this study strives to contribute to the extant literature through considering decoupling on a national level of implementing policies.

This research aims to identify and outline a path forward on how to eliminate the disparity between policy and implementation in the field of child labour within the agricultural sector of Uganda. As such, the research question is: *How can the gap between policy and implementation on child labour in Uganda be bridged and what is the path forward?*

The research question is answered via a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature in order to gain a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, followed by the presentation of data collected first-hand on the ground in Uganda. Different facets of combating decoupling are analyzed and presented as policy recommendations for scholars and practitioners alike to undertake.

### Theoretical Background

As the world's population is brought closer together through the advancement of

A project mainly financed by:



Implemented by:



technology and communications, global standards on ethical and legal practices begin to converge. This can be seen particularly as a result of global bodies such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization gaining more recognition and the authority to impose and affect significant change in nations through channels such as economic sanctions. This has resulted in a trend towards total accountability and transparency in organizational governance. The relatively recent adoption of international standards with regards to child labour by the Ugandan Government in an effort to not be singled out and targeted with sanctions can be seen as an example of this phenomenon.

Considering the growing trend towards the adoption of global standards of behaviour and business policies, organizations modify their practices to keep in tune with these policies. Despite this widespread adoption of ethical and responsible policies, studies show that under circumstances where an organization adopts a policy solely to “conform to external expectations regarding formally stated goals, their behavior was not markedly changed in practice” (Scott, 2008). This phenomenon, where an organization’s actions are not reflected or directly linked with the adoption of a new policy is referred to as *decoupling*.

Decoupling was initially put forth by Meyer & Rowan (1977) and has since been built upon by multiple scholars. Meyer and Rowan posited that intentional decoupling by organizations occurs in six distinct types, each of which is driven by various internal and external factors. These categorizations include decoupling by *neglecting program implementation, actively encouraging professionalization and delegating to professionals, avoiding integration, ceremonializing inspection and evaluation, as well as leaving individuals to informally work out technical interdependencies and making goals ambiguous or vacuous and substituting categorical ends for technical ends* (Whiteman & Cooper, 2016).

In the earlier studies of organizational governance, scholars posited that organizational policies and practices are tightly integrated so that the policies “play a direct role in controlling and directing daily practices” (Weber, 1930). Through the decades, other scholars posited that despite this outlook, there are situations in which the relations between these structures were loosely coupled in an organization (Weick, 1976).

Research suggests that decoupling occurred as a result of the fact that “formal policies were an ideal theory of organizational action, whereas concrete decisions and actions depend on specific contexts and resources” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). This indicates that policies are designed in efforts to achieve organizations’ missions, but their implementation is sometimes considerably disparate due to being subject to a number of internal and external factors.

Further expanding on this notion, a study by Weick found that “intentions are a poor guide for action, intentions often follow rather than preceded action, and that intentions and actions are loosely coupled” (Weick, 1976). Weick argues that the consequences of policies enacted by the management of any organization in order so satiate specific intentions can be sometimes unforeseeable and unexpected and not directly related to the initial goal.

As the number of external influences on organizations rises as a result of increases in global concern towards issues such as transparency, accountability, safety, and the environment, organizational structures are stretched in order to satisfy multiple demands from various institutions. These demands can sometimes be contrary and competitive to the organization's primary objective and drive, such as generating profit. This can ultimately result in a separation of the policies and their implementation, or decoupling, which has been broken down into two categories by Bromley and Powell (2010). These two categories are

*policy-practice decoupling and means-ends decoupling.*

### Forms of Decoupling

Bromley & Powell suggest that decoupling generally occurs in two forms of **policy-practice** and **means-ends** in modern organizations. Their research posits that policy-practice decoupling occurs in situations where policies are adopted by organizations “purely as a ceremonial window dressing or implemented, evaluated, and monitored so weakly that they do little to alter daily work routines” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). Policy-practice decoupling is the most common known form of decoupling and is often found in cases where organizations are facing increased institutional pressure. This form of decoupling often allows organizations to “adopt multiple, even conflicting, policies in response to external pressures, without unduly disrupting the daily operations by trying to implement inconsistent strategies” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). This suggests that policy practice is more likely to occur under conditions where an organization is pressured to comply and conform to new standards and regulation.

An example of how this phenomenon can have negative consequences is put forth from Lyon and Maxwell, who highlight cases in which organizational policies are adjusted towards environmental protection and philanthropy while core operations of the organization continue to be environmentally harmful. They explain that in these types of cases, organizations divert attention away from their harmful operations by drawing interest towards policies adopted in order to invest in renewable energy and so on (Lyon & Maxwell, 2010). It is noteworthy that Bromley & Powell posited that policy-practice decoupling is more likely to occur when it benefits the interest of powerful leaders (e.g. governments), and ultimately results in a cycle in which these leaders become skilled at symbolic manipulation. Another notable driver of this type of

decoupling can be the early adoption of a policy, adoption as a means to increase legitimacy, and utilization of a weak capacity to implement said policies (Bromley & Powell, 2010).

The other type of decoupling identified by Bromley & Powell is that of *means-ends decoupling*. This type of decoupling occurs in situations wherein formal structures have real organizational consequences, work activities are altered, and policies are implemented and evaluated, but where scant evidence exists to show that these activities are linked to organizational effectiveness or outcomes” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). This can be described as a situation in which members of the organization realize the ineffectiveness of a policy’s implementation yet continue to administer and partake in the practices in an effort to satisfy overarching organization and institutional pressures.

Although decoupling has been studied for decades now, our review found that most of the previous work in this field is directed towards specific fields and is not applicable in many situations. In addition, little has been posited as far as how to eliminate the gap which decoupling creates in cases of decoupling. Through analysis and a comprehensive study of this phenomenon within the context of the agricultural sector in Uganda, this study strives to be a valuable addition to the existing literature on this issue.

### Methods

In this section, the methods applied within the research context, research design, data collection, and data analysis are elaborated upon. The research question will be answered through a qualitative research method and analysis of primary data gathered across the Uganda agribusiness value chain.

### Research Context

The research of this study was conducted on the ground in Uganda during March & April of 2018. Uganda was deemed to be a suitable candidate for this research due to the aforementioned prevalence of agriculture, its adoption of international policies towards child labour, and the known existence of child labour and as a result, decoupling. The research was conducted in collaboration with Agri-quest Uganda. Agri-quest Uganda is a project comprised of researchers and practitioners who strive towards strengthening Agribusiness Ethics, Quality Standards and Information and Communication Technologies usage in Uganda's value chains (Agriquest, 2016). Agri-quest was determined to be an effective point of entry to Uganda due to its research team's established network among stakeholders in multiple value chains, including farmers, regulators, and NGO operatives.

#### *Research Design*

The data presented in this study was collected through qualitative research methods which included a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field visits, observational notes, and photographs.

The "how" nature of the research question and the necessity of gaining a contextual view of the events surrounding the phenomenon of decoupling led to this method being utilized. As described by Myers, in order to "see and understand the context within which decisions and actions take place", qualitative research can be more fruitful than quantitative (Myers, 2013).

In order to be able to fully understand the environment and influencing factors towards this phenomenon, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection. Studies have shown that while conducting qualitative research the use of interviews allows researchers to gain insights into attitudes, experiences, processes, behaviours, or predictions (Rowley, 2012). Considering that the subject of child labour is

influenced by a multitude of factors, gathering in-depth and contextual data was seen to be necessary to achieving an understanding of the circumstances which will help lead to the elimination of the decoupling.

A set of questions was used as a grounded base for most interviews, with certain points being stressed upon in order to probe significant responses and in some cases questions being skipped due to their lack of relevance in the context of a particular interview. The use of semi-structured interviews was also meant to allow for improvisation in cases where new information was uncovered in the duration of the interview and allowed for better accommodation of the interviewee (Rowley, 2012).

In order to further the researcher's understanding of the situations and conditions on the ground field observations were incorporated into the collected data as well. These notes were used to enforce and corroborate information which was received during the interviews.

#### *Data Collection*

The data presented in this study was collected on the ground in Uganda during March and April, 2018. The research took place as part of a team of student researchers from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, and in collaboration with Agri-quest Uganda. Data was chosen to be collected on the field in order to overcome barriers to gaining access to stakeholders.

Interviews were recorded for audio, and additional notes were taken as well. In order to satisfy this research goal, various stakeholders from across the value chain were interviewed. The individuals interviewed included small to medium-sized farmers, farmers' rights collectives, vendors of agricultural products, regulatory officials tasked with the implementation of policies related to child labour, as well as employees of non-governmental organizations which oversee the

use of child labour and the effectiveness of policies. A large percentage of the interviewed farmers were involved in subsistence agriculture, while a small minority of them were engaged in the commercial distribution of their goods.

The research team was based in Kampala, Uganda. The data was collected across multiple districts in Uganda in order to gain an understanding of how agricultural practices occur through different value chains, including rice, cassava, and maize. The Agri-quest Uganda team provided the research team with access to farmers in various locations across the country. Agri-quest's social network is diversely spread across Uganda and collaboration with them allowed for gaining access to stakeholders across the value chain including farmers, vendors, regulatory officials, and NGO operators.



Figure 1. Typical Interview Setting

### Data Analysis

Following the data collection via interviews and field observations, the interviews were transcribed in collaboration with other members of the research team. The resulting interviews were analyzed and coded according to Gioia methodology in order to extract the pertinent themes and concepts.

### Coding Interviews

According to the method set forth by Gioia et al, the interviews were coded inductively in

order to generate rich theoretical insights (Gioia et al. 2013). Through analysis of the data, trends were identified through the repetition or noted significance of certain elements, themes, or terms. In order to establish a link between the informant-centric and researcher-centric themes and concepts which affect decoupling, first and second-order themes were established. The former consisted of concepts repeated by multiple interviewees and concepts which were pertinent to stakeholders on the ground, while the latter were derived from these concepts and were more grounded in theory. The use of a multi-tier process of data collection and analysis was designed to result in a comprehensive understanding of the research topic and the factors which influence it in the context of the aggregate dimension.

### Analysis of Field Observations

During the data collection, field observations were noted as they occurred in order to further increase the validity of the research. These notes were used to bolster and enforce findings identified as a result of analysis of the interviews as well as to revise them in cases of visible disparities.

### Findings

In the following section, the results of the analysis of the collected data are presented, categorized by the themes which emerged throughout the research and depicted in Figure 2. The Gioia method has been used to identify first-order concepts. These are then built upon and shaped into second-order themes, which fall under the following aggregate dimension of the path forward towards bridging the gap between policy and implementation on child labour in the Ugandan agricultural sector.

### Aggregate Dimension

Aggregate Dimension: Path forward to bridge the gap between CL and implementation

Consistent with the Gioia coding method utilized, interviewees' responses were analyzed in order to identify the themes that contribute to the aggregate dimension of the path forward towards bridging the gap between policy and implementation and eliminate harmful instances of decoupling. As a result, the themes of **Sensitization of the Population, Governmental Reform, and Community Empowerment** were identified. These themes are further expanded upon in the following segment.

#### Theme 1- Sensitization of Population

As previously noted, laws pertaining to child labour and education are well in place, but are not exactly ingrained and accepted by the population, particularly in rural areas. In order to achieve this effect and render these values as common practice, many stakeholders posited that sensitization is necessary. As Nicholas Burunde of the UNDP states, in order to achieve long-lasting results: "You must make sure that you sensitize them [the population]."

According to Joanita Asimwe Legal officer of FIDA, in rural areas effective sensitization can be conducted through the use of mass media such as the radio, which is commonly used, or through community sensitization with a local. She claims that if sensitization is localized: "It's easier to listen to advice from a person from your area, and when people have cases they can straightly report it to them".

This concept was repeated by other stakeholders across the value chain, who all seemed to understand the benefits of spreading awareness and educating farmers in order to change their behaviour to be more in line with the government's initiatives. As Community development Officer Geoffrey Ogwel elaborated on this fact: "Sensitization is conducive to helping change the mindset" when it comes to changing practices that have been handed down through culture and tradition." This is to say that simply announcing

a change in legislature and domestic policy can be wholly ineffective if the population are not sensitized as to why the change has occurred and the benefits of changing their daily activities to better suit these standards.

While there are obstacles to this method of effecting change, it can be an invaluable way of actually changing conditions on the ground. This point was further elaborated on by Ogwel: "This sensitization process takes long, you have to repeat it constantly. But at some point they accept it and it works." Considering the long history of agriculture in Uganda and the inevitable involvement of children in agricultural practices through time, this concept emerged as a prevalent method of moving forward to bridge the gap between child labour policy and implementation."

#### Theme 2- Governmental Reform

Other noted concepts which emerged when considering the path forward to bridging the gap between child labour policy and implementation were those of governmental reform, particularly through the adjustment of national policies to be more reflective of the Ugandan population's lifestyles and the allocation of additional resources to address the exacerbating issues.

The concept of *domestication of policies* was one that emerged through discussion of the gap with regulatory officials. The relatively fast rate of adoption of international policies by the Ugandan Government and its incompatibility with the lifestyle of rural Ugandans has already been highlighted and is seen as a major contributor to the gap between policy and implementation. Stakeholders believe that policies must be adjusted in accordance with local lifestyle choices. As Labor Officer Isiac Muwereeza explains: "The local policies are aligned with international standards. It is important to *domesticate the international policies into local environment*, considering people who live there. The international



policies are like parents and local policies are their children or grandchildren”.

A noteworthy example of this type of domestication of policies emerged as a concept repeated by educators and parents alike: the inclusion of vocational and hands-on training for children in schools. As aforementioned, the largely agricultural population of Uganda have been practicing the cultivation of crops and raising animals for centuries and as such, agricultural practices have been handed down from generation to generation. In order to combat the noted cultural pushback towards school attendance and its effect on a child’s development as a farmer, schools could adopt a curriculum that is more reflective of the agricultural lifestyle that the children are a part of. As Oyam County Director of the Department of Production & Marketing Cox Ogwal states:” If the parents believe that the children are picking up useful skills that will help at home they would be more open towards allowing them to receive an education. “

The second concept which emerged during analysis of the theme of governmental action was that of *allocation of additional resources* towards addressing the factors which play into the gap between policy and implementation. The following segment identifies three examples of this resources allocation that stakeholders noted as pertinent and vital to bridging the gap.

The first case of increasing the level of allocated resources resulting in a bridging of the gap can be seen within the District Labour Offices of local counties in Uganda. As previously noted, these offices are charged with the enforcement of policies pertaining to child labour and children’s safety, but often find that they’re unable to fulfill their duties with the resources at their disposal. Increasing these office’s budgets and allowing them access to funds from the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development would render them more useful organs of the government. This concept

is elaborated upon by District Labour Officer Muwereeza: “Our office would benefit from having dedicated vehicles in order to carry field visits, additional inspectors to conduct the visits, as well as more institutional support from the Ministry of Gender, Labour , and Social Development”.

Another example of how additional government resources can help alleviate the gap between policy and implementation can be seen in improving the quality of public education in order to engage and enrich the lives of the children and keep them from work. As aforementioned, there is a significant disparity between private and public schooling in Uganda, which results in children from poorer families attending school much less. By increasing the amenities and quality of education provided in government schools, the rate of retention of students can increase. and as a result, the number of children at risk of being exploited and kept from achieving an education will decrease.

The third concept which emerged as a significant force to alleviate the current situation was that of increasing governmental resources towards the monitoring and storing of the results of their operations. Often times in Uganda, provided services are not kept track of and data regarding implementation and regulatory activities can be incomplete or nonexistent. Stakeholders posited that the utilization of a national information management system which keeps track of school attendance, health considerations, familial status, and other information about children would greatly benefit in addressing the risks facing them. As community activist Harriet Kajubi put is: “The lack of proper information management systems in the government and their operations leads to major redundancies and inefficiencies in their implementation of policies”.

### Theme 3- Community Empowerment

The third and final theme contributing to the aggregate dimension of the path forward on bridging the gap between policy and implementation regarding child labour in the Ugandan agricultural sector is that of *community empowerment*. This theme emerged following multiple instances of concepts regarding the benefit and advantage of empowering community members being identified within the collected data. In the following segment two types of empowerment, *economic* and *social*, are expanded upon.

#### Economic Empowerment

Considering that the primary causes and drivers of the gap between policy and implementation in child labour have been identified as being related or resulting from poverty, it is of no surprise that the concept of economic empowerment emerged as a method to combat this phenomenon. Stakeholder across the value chain agreed that an economic need for resources or food is ultimately the primary reason that children are at risk. In order to address this issue the enactment of programs and initiatives geared towards the economic empowerment of families, particularly in rural areas, can be most effective. An example of this was set forth by a focus group interview with the Lolo Note Cooperative Youth Group in Lolo County, which claimed: “Farm equipment or training on how to increase yield would decrease the pressures that families feel, resulting in higher school attendance and less risky situations for the children and youth.”

#### Social Empowerment

The concept of *social empowerment* emerged as one of increasing awareness and give voice to populations through allowing them to address issues from within their communities, allowing for more substantial and sustainable change. When social empowerment occurs as a result of community influencers and activists,

the results tend to be seen more favorably than that of training that is conducted by the government or NGOs. Social influencers are often more effective than external organizations due to their close proximity and relations with their audience, as well as a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural factors which affect them. These individuals often also have more empathy than outsiders would, which results in more comprehensive trainings which encompass implicit social and traditional aspects as well.



Figure 3. Agnes Nangobi - Community Activist in Bugiri

Social influence and empowerment was also found to be substantially less costly and more effective when considering the output of community activists versus NGOs. Nambi Juliet, Director of Rehaboth, an independent, community-driven effort, described this concept through outlining her organization’s finances: “in my experience, community influencers are a more effective way of raising awareness and education than NGOs. The \$1000 budget that somebody like me requires to take care of 12 children for one year is also a lot less than they would need”. Nambi’s position reflects the fact that NGOs sometimes have large organizational structures and considerable overhead, whereas a community activist can make an impactful contribution with considerably fewer resources.

Shift from Charitable Donations to Investments

Throughout the data analysis it became clear that many stakeholders held the shared belief that the foreign aid currently entering Uganda via NGOs and international donations were somewhat detrimental to improving the situation on the ground. The inflow of donations and charitable contributions can often not only help alleviate a situation in a sustainable way, but even have detrimental side effects on the communities they're distributed in. As community activist Harriet Kajubi stated: "Foreign aid sounds nice but can be detrimental in many ways; these funds are sometimes restrictive and difficult to manage, as well as being unsustainable and harmful to the independence and self-governance to Ugandans." This is in tune with findings of academic studies done on the impact of charitable donations to developing nations which negated the popular opinion that foreign aid can serve as a tool to gain sustainable and positive results. Studies such as that of Wydick et al. (2016) discovered that the impact of charitable actions, such as the donation of shoes by TOMS shoes, was detrimental both to the local markets in which children were given shoes as well as to the children themselves, who grew to be reliant on foreign aid (Wydick et al., 2016).

#### Summary of Findings

The primary theme which emerged with regards to bridging the gap between policy and implementation was that of sensitization, which was repeatedly mentioned as the most effective way of bridging the gap. Additionally, governmental reform was identified as a measure to create more cohesion between policies and their implementation. This topic has been elaborated upon by considering governmental reform through a combination of domestication of policies and allocation of additional resources to regulatory officials, increasing the quality of schools, and adopting a national information centre for maintaining records of children and their educational status. The final theme which emerged in the path forward to bridging the gap is that of

community empowerment, which was elaborated upon by identifying two forms of economic and social empowerment, both of which contribute to the elimination of the existing gap.

#### Implications & Limitations

##### Practical Implications

When considering the practical implications of the study, a notable tool in the path towards bridging the gap between policy and implementation on child labour is that of *empowering community activists*. Community activists can prove to be immensely effective in raising awareness of the perils of children working among rural populations as well as to provide invaluable services to families and children in order to keep them enrolled in school and out of harm's way.

These community activists could act as intermediaries between the government and rural populations, essentially bridging the gap physically by operating on a local level with some level of support from the national government (the MGLSD). These individuals would prove to be more effective than local district governments due to their ability to sidestep obstacles such as lengthy bureaucracy and use their status within the community to effect and implement change. Community-driven efforts can prove to not only be effective, but also have economic benefit in having substantially lower overhead costs than NGOs and international aid organizations.

A second implication of the findings would be to increase governmental efforts towards the *sensitization* of the populace towards the importance of education as well as the harmful effects of child labour on children's development. An increase in school attendance as a result of increased sensitization would serve as a method of bridging the gap between the government's policies geared towards education and child labour, ultimately decreasing decoupling.

A project mainly financed by:



Implemented by:



The third and final practical implication is geared towards NGOs and charity organizations; *decrease the flow of foreign aid into Uganda*. Multiple stakeholders agreed that a reliance on foreign aid funds results in a dependence on ongoing aid and decreases incentives for self-sustainability and independence among actors in the agricultural sector. These implications serve to simultaneously empower agricultural workers, enforcement officials, as well as the Ugandan Government through sensitization, increased funding, and independence from charity organizations and foreign funds.

### Limitations

Considering the limitations that affected this study, it is important to note that due to the choice of qualitative research, the issue of subjectivity might play a role. Due to the proximity to the research subjects and the extended period of time spent on the ground gathering data, it can be expected that some level of subjectivity towards the interviewees and research topic would arise. Another limitation of note can be identified as the fact that the information gathered was done so specifically in order to address the decoupling of policies and implementation in Uganda and as such, the findings can not be considered to be universally applicable. However, the information might be useful when considering other nations and states with similar cultural background and focus on agriculture such as some of Uganda's Sub-Saharan neighbors.

### Conclusion

This policy brief aimed to provide a comprehensive outlook of the decoupling which occurs between policy and implementation, particularly with view to the Ugandan agricultural sector, in order to outline a path forward on this issue. The research found that a combination of empowerment, sensitization, and reform are necessary in order for this situation to be addressed in a meaningful and sustainable way. Through the

consideration and possible adoption of these policies, practitioners in Uganda can strive to bridge the gap and eliminate the occurrence of child labour and its negative outcomes permanently.

### References

- Agri-quest Uganda (2016). Objectives. Retrieved from <http://agriquestuganda.com/about/objectives/>
- Bromley & Powell. (2010). From Smoke and Mirrors to Walking the Talk: Decoupling in the Contemporary World . *Department of Political Science , University of Utah School of Education, Stanford University*. Published online: 08 May 2012.
- Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2016. 2016 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Retrieved from [www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/images/ilab/child-labor/Uganda2016.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/images/ilab/child-labor/Uganda2016.pdf)
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15-31.
- Gollin & Rogerson. (2010). Agriculture, Roads, and Economic Development in Uganda. National *Bureau of Economic research*, Cambridge, MA
- International Labour Organization (2017). Employment in Agriculture, ILOSTAT Database(2017). Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.E MPL.ZS>
- International Labour Organization (2018). What is child labour (IPEC). (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang--en/index.htm>
- Lyon, T., & Maxwell, J. (2011). Greenwash: Corporate environmental disclosure under

threat of audit. *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy*, 20(1), 3–41

Meyer, John W. and Rowan, B (1977). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 83, No. 2 (Sep., 1977), pp. 340-363

Myers, M. D. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Business and Management*. London: Sage

Rowley, Jennifer. (2012), "Conducting research interviews", *Management Research Review*, Vol. 35 Iss 3/4 pp. 260 - 271

Scott, W.R. (2008). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas and interests* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc

Weber, K., Davis, G., & Lounsbury, M. (2009). Policy as myth and ceremony: The global spread of stock exchanges, 1980–2005. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(6), 1319–1347.

Weick, K.E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21, 1–19

Whiteman, G & Cooper, W (2016). Decoupling Rape. *Academy of Management Discoveries* 2016, Vol. 2, No. 2, 115–154.

World Bank Agriculture, (2017) *value added (% of GDP)*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.Z>

Wydick, B., Katz, E., Calvo, F., Gutierrez, F., & Janet, B. (2016, September 20). Shoeing the children: The impact of the TOMS shoe donation program in rural El Salvador. *The World Bank Economic Review Advance Access*, 30(2). Retrieved from <http://wber.oxfordjournals.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/content/early/2016/09/20/wber.lhw042.full.pdf>

AGRI-QUEST POLICY BRIEF SERIES – No. 10-2018: Child Labour Policy & Implementation in the Ugandan Agricultural Sector

A project mainly financed by:



Implemented by:

