



▶ **Malawi** - Local community engagement of sector associations in the fight against child labour in the lower tiers of tea and coffee supply chains



Responds to the following criteria

- ▶ Responsiveness
- ▶ Relevance
- ▶ Replicability
- ▶ Sustainability
- ▶ Innovation
- ▶ Effectiveness



Main stakeholders

Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Education; Tea Association of Malawi Limited (TAML); Teachers Union of Malawi; Ministry of Labour; small tea growers associations; Employer Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM) in coordination with Rainforest Alliance.

▶ **Description**

Sector associations in Malawi have played a significant role in the fight against child labour and at different levels. A good example under the ACCEL Africa project is the Tea Association of Malawi (TAML), which operates under the umbrella of the Employers Consultative Association (ECAM), engaging specifically with all industrial sectors.

TAML has links to both ends of the supply chain: from small householder tea farmers to large tea companies. The tea companies which form part of TAML are main exporters of tea in the country and therefore have an interest in maintaining the Malawian tea international trade standards and reputation. This means that they try to ensure compliance with international labour standards including the absence of child labour within their supply chains. Because of that, with ACCEL Africa's support TAML has taken steps towards the elimination of child labour at several levels.

Small household tea farmers

- ▶ Supporting farmers to organize themselves into farmers' groups, currently representing close to 22,000 smallholder farmers.
- ▶ Advocating for and capacitating farmers' groups on the risks of child labour.
- ▶ Coordinating with ECAM and its collaboration with Rainforest Alliance. This last has a certification process for farmers, which entails the need to comply with decent working conditions, and specifically human rights aspects in this case (such as child labour, forced labour, discrimination, and workplace violence and harassment).¹ This certification process helps farmers acquire better opportunities and higher prices for their commodities. Certified farmers are in a better bargaining situation than those who are not certified.

¹ Rainforest Alliance: [What's in our 2020 Certification Program? Assess-and-Address](#), 23 July 2020.

Community and tea industry

- Supporting the establishment of local community-level child labour monitoring committees (LCCLMCs) in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, line ministries and social partners.² These committees aim to identify at risk and working children and refer them to appropriate social, educational and economic services. Their main aim is to prevent children from the worst forms of child labour and to support those already in child labour, enabling their reinsertion into education or training. The LCCLMCs attend to children who are at risk or engaged in any form of child labour. TAML supported these kinds of committees that exist in tea estates
- Supporting the establishment of local tea industry-specific task forces in coordination with the Ministry of Labour. These aim at tracing child labour at all levels of the tea supply chains, especially in selected districts of the ACCEL Africa project. Once identified, children are referred to the LCCLMC for addressing their socio-economic and educational needs and ensuring that they do not return to any level of the supply chain. The task force itself does not provide services but only ensures compliance.

Tea estates and companies

- Developing public/private partnerships (PPPs) with large tea companies to support in improving schools and their services in TAML's tea estate supply chain districts (see figures 1 and 2).

TAML and its umbrella organization ECAM have also worked on the identification and assessment of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities over the past five years (2018–22) in order to see what both organizations and their members have invested in initiatives that are aimed at reducing/mitigating the risk of child labour, and how these can be scaled up into viable and sustainable revenue-generating services. Table 1 shows some examples of CSR activities that TAML members have carried out over the past five years with the purpose of preventing child labour. These results are from a comprehensive report developed by TAML after completing their CSR assessment; they will disseminate the report in the coming few months to their members so that they can learn from previous concrete CSR examples and related processes.

Moreover, ECAM also developed a code of conduct prohibiting child labour in its member companies and a guide for employers to increase their knowledge on child labour and how to ensure their compliance with the code of conduct, thus preventing and stopping child labour within their companies' supply chains.

Therefore, quite a comprehensive approach was established by the two umbrella organizations. This included local-level child labour traceability task forces assessing the presence of child labour, child labour monitoring committees to address the needs of identified children, and additional educational services through TAML's as well as ECAM's members and budgets.



² For example, Ministry of Education and Social Affairs, employers' and workers' organizations, relevant local NGOs, among others.

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► **Table 1. Specific contributions of TAML to targeted local districts**

Investment area	Specific activities
Education	Provision of bursaries to secondary school and university students.
	Supporting schools through school feeding programme, staff housing and other infrastructure, staff salaries, learning materials, etc.
	11 primary schools built by the tea estates in the tea-growing districts.
Health	Under-five clinic shelters in surrounding communities.
	29 dispensaries/clinics across the tea industry where workers and surrounding community access ART, outpatient department, health education and ante-natal clinic.
	30 ambulance vehicles across the tea industry.
Environment	Provision of different sources of energy to communities.
	Building the capacity of communities on clean energy and provision of materials for the manufacturing of clean cooking stoves.
Water and sanitation	Provision of potable water to schools and communities and sanitary facilities in schools.

► **Figure 1. Big billboards established by TAML in selected tea estate districts**



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►Figure 2. Examples of projects accomplished by TAML and its member tea estates



Old Makwasa Junior Primary School (standards 1 to 5).



The same school constructed and run by Makwasa Tea Estates, which now has four teachers and 412 pupils.

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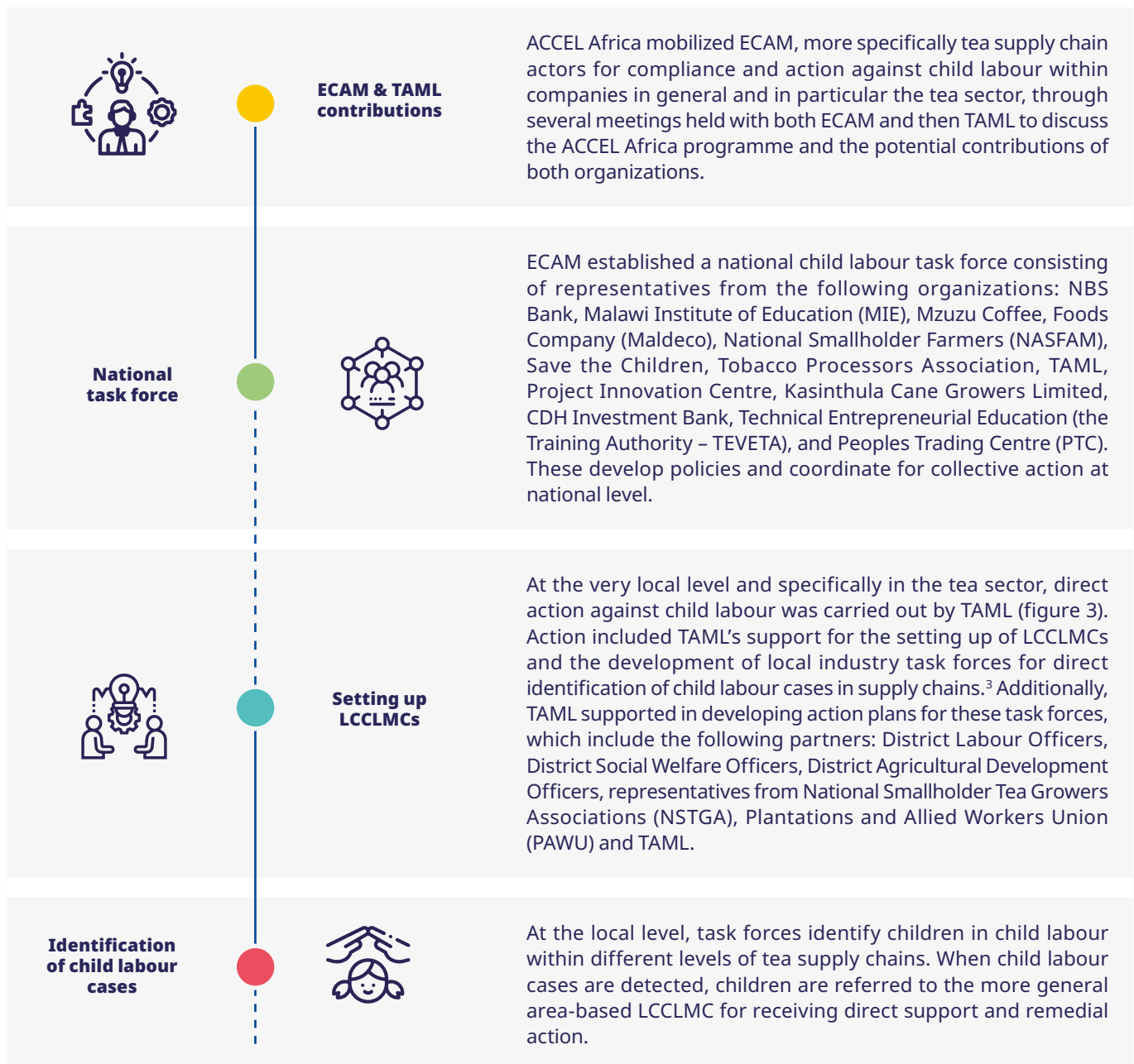


A victim support unit under construction, supported by a tea estate at Thyolo Police Station in Thyolo District.



Tayali community shelter and clinic for children under five years old.

► Process

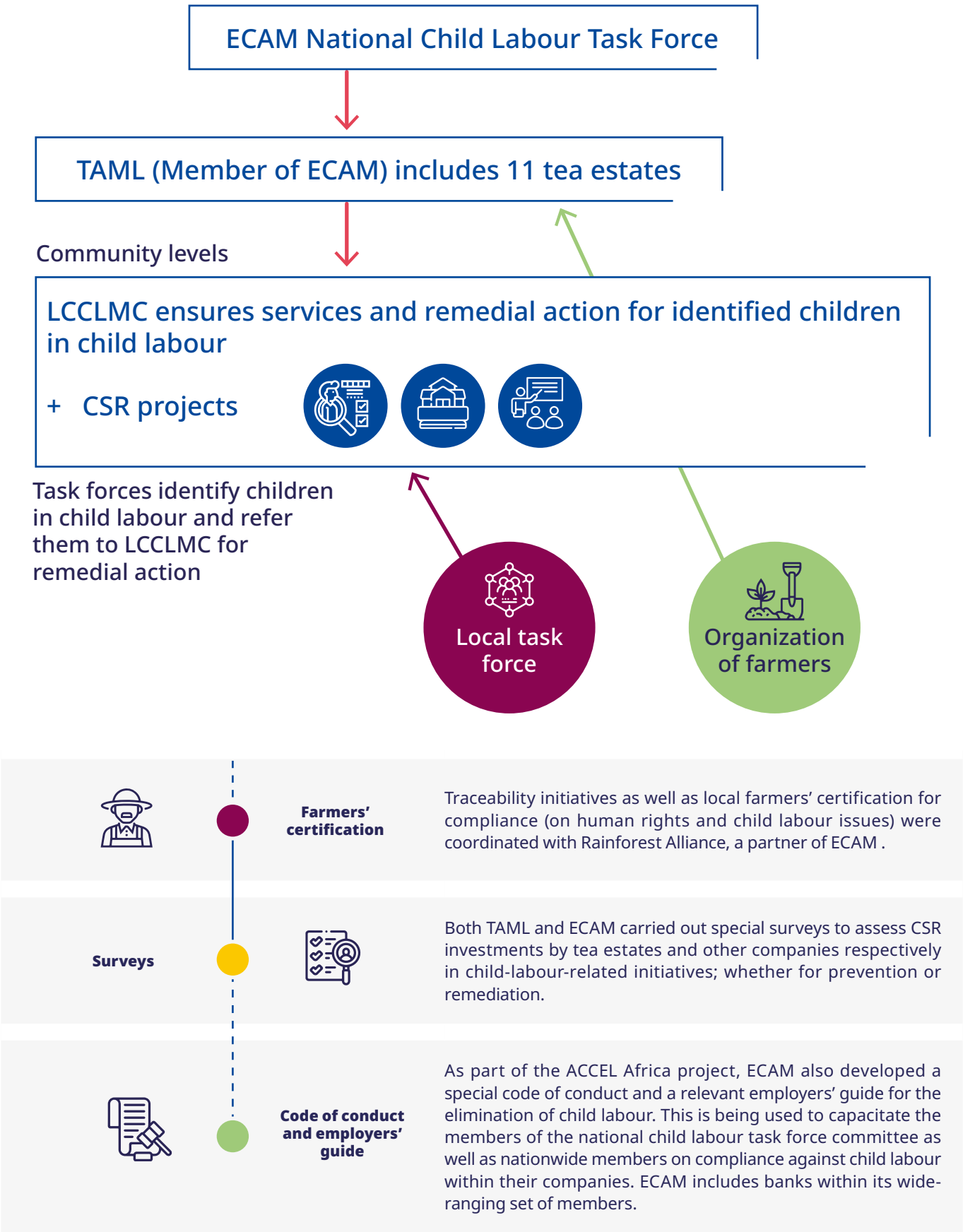


³ Supply chain traceability is the ability to identify, trace and track products and their inputs, as well as processes or activities from either their origin or to their destination. Every consumer wants to know how the product to be purchased or consumed is being produced. The main reason for traceability is to provide an assurance that a food or product has undergone a safe production process and is produced in a way that does not include exploitation, especially of children. It is a transparent process that helps in identification of child labour in supply chains as well as any other violations of the ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Traceability ensures accountability, transparency and sustainability.

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► **Figure 3. An illustration of the different roles of TAML**



► Enabling factors

- 1 The code of conduct prohibiting the use of child labour and the guide for employers developed by ECAM to disseminate knowledge on child labour and take action against it, promoting CSR child-labour-related activities.
- 2 TAML's large tea industry network.
- 3 TAML's [pledge](#) to establish child labour monitoring mechanisms against child labour.
- 4 Knowledge and experience was strengthened by the presence of child labour monitoring mechanisms from previous ILO projects. This encouraged the establishment of new ones within the framework of this project (such as LCCLMCs, Rainforest Alliance task forces).
- 5 Community ownership, demonstrated by the responsibility taken by community members towards programmes or activities through their volunteerism and sensitization campaigns that were conducted. This has encouraged renewed commitments in the fight against child labour.

In brief

This good practice reflects on how child labour can be tackled by leveraging the network of sector associations such as the Tea Association of Malawi Limited (TAML).

TAML acted directly on issues related to compliance and due diligence through task forces in the tea supply chains. It supported children in targeted communities through local CSR projects. It built, equipped and helped community school operations, ensured shelters for child victims of child labour, and ensured clean and drinkable water, among others.

Last but not least, the main employers' organization in Malawi, the Employers Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM) translated its political will of preventing and withdrawing child labour from all its member companies into action, through the official adoption of a newly developed code of conduct and a relevant guide, now binding on its members.