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1st and 2nd

Fair Trade Chocolate

“They are enjoying something that I suffered to make, they are eating my flesh.” These are the words of a child cocoa worker from the Ivory Coast when asked what he thought of people around the world eating chocolate.

Chocolate is one of the most popular sweets all over the world. It's being consumed everyday. Most people do not know that the majority of chocolate sold in the world comes from kids that work in the fields. Farming and processing cacao is highly dangerous and involves child labor.

The farming and processing of cocoa is extremely dangerous work. Cocoa comes from a bean called cacao. These beans or pods are grown primarily in West Africa. In order to get the pods of the trees you have to use a machete, once these beans have been cut, you would have to put the beans in a sack, which would weigh a lot. Once they've been picked, you would have to cut the cacao bean to expose the cocoa beans. Then the seeds are placed on drying racks. This process requires the use of sharp objects, climbing high up trees, and hard labor. It is very dangerous and high risk work.

This dangerous work is mostly done by children. In Ghana and Ivory Coast, children between the ages of 12-16, or even 5, are the ones who work in the process of making chocolate. These children work with very sharp and dangerous tools. They use machetes and knives. Every time a child pry opens a cacao bean they get hurt. Pieces of their skin flake off or they can even lose fingers.

One of the main reasons kids work in the farms is because they need work or because human “traffickers” tell them that they get paid well. 40% of these kids are girls. Some children are sold to “traffickers” and the people that own the farm by their family. The kids stay working in the fields for months, years or even until they're adults. Some don't see their families for a long time.

Now that we know the problems of child labor we need to resolve them. Fair trade chocolate is an attempt to overcome some of these problems. Fair trade is when farmers get a better price for their product. This also benefits not only the person that owns the farm, but also their workers. Fair trade is also about workers' rights. We need to eliminate child labor. I think what we can do is try to not consume too much chocolate, especially in holidays because that's

when people tend to buy more chocolate. People should be aware where this chocolate is coming from.

Links

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