

**Elevnth (11th) Annual International Essay Contest
for Children and Young People of African Descent**

20th March 2016

11-13 Years

WIOCC Supplementary Saturday School

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LAST NAME	CRICHLLOW
AGE	13
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This essay is about the chocolate industry.

It will first look at child trafficking, then how chocolate is made then why it's important to know where food comes from and finally if the manufacturing industry does anything about the working conditions.

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child trafficking for chocolate

children are smuggled from Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Benin to the Ivory Coast. They are made to work for no pay. The working conditions are terrible. They are exposed to knives and harsh chemicals. Young boys and girls are being manipulated into working far from home. Working conditions are vitally important in producing goods.

How it's made/why we need to know where food comes from

cocoa pods are harvested, dried in the sun. The beans are then bought and sold to national exporters. They are washed, packed and sold. The beans are made into chocolate and the chocolate is sold. Lots of money is made but NONE of the money is sent back to the children who worked hard all day picking the beans.

We need to know where food is coming from so can use systems like fair trade. Fair trade makes sure that the people who worked to provide the food get paid back the right amounts of money. Unlike the manufacturing industries who only care about themselves. They get paid the right amounts of money but the workers don't. These acts are against the law but are ignored most of the time.

2

More about the traffickers

A video called 'the bitter truth about chocolate' told me more about the traffickers. It showed a bus station in Mali (Africa). A large amount of men on motorbikes who convince the children that working for them will lead to a better life for them and their families as they will earn lots of money. But the bitter reality is the opposite of what they've been told. The traffickers take a back road to the Ivory Coast.

More about the children

Once the children arrive there they are put to work straight away. Some try their best and attempt to run away but they won't know their way back it's so far away. 90% of them will never see their home, family or friends ever again. People are taking advantage of vulnerable children, all for money. The plantation owners pay the traffickers to take the kids. The traffickers work in gangs on motorbikes, so anyone that did try to escape were surrounded and sent back. I imagine 50 motorbikes versus a few kids. Scary.

How the bitter truth about chocolate / the dark side of chocolate documentaries made me feel.

It made me feel sad because it is a well known thing but it's ignored. Also 3 million tons of chocolate is consumed every year (half of which in Europe). People need to wake up and realise that 100's of children are being kidnapped every day.

plantations

The chocolate industry such as companies like 'Nestle' don't accept responsibility for what's taking place even though they have been working with plantations for many years.

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The agreement

In 2001 lots of large manufacturers of chocolate agreed that after 2008 child trafficking would not exist anymore. It is now 2016 and it's still an ongoing issue.

Long term effects

The children don't get to go to school so they are under-educated. Also they are exposed to pesticides everyday which can affect their long term health. They could get sick earlier on though, and to the traffickers a sick child is no use. They can be moved from place to place and not know the language and won't have time to be taught a new language in between work. The child's normal life is taken away from them. They could be exposed to things some ~~of~~ must see like deaths or ~~for~~ harsh punishments. There being lied to and manipulated, and because there are lots of children it's hard to get the word spread across to the children not to go near the traffickers.

The bitter side of chocolate

chocolate is a sweet treat so the name "bitter" tells us that there are not so nice sides to it.

Facts

Abidjan in the Ivory Coast is the cocoa capital.

The children that are taken are ages 11-14 mostly boys.

They take children for two main reasons.

A) They can climb up the trees to fetch the cocoa pods and can ~~be~~ climb up to the thinnest lightest branches

B) children are vulnerable and the traffickers find that they are easier to manipulate.

Essay finished