

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

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11-13 Years

WIOCC Supplementary Saturday School

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Bitter Chocolate - The Bitter truth about chocolate.

Chocolate is a confectionary undeniably loved by all. A whopping three million tonnes of it is consumed each year world wide; half of which is consumed in Europe alone! That's 1.5 million tonnes of chocolate consumed by Europe each year. However, when chocolate's dark side is revealed, you realise that the route it took to get to you isn't as sweet as its taste.

So in this essay I am writing about the story behind the production of cocoa in West Africa's Ivory Coast - the heart of the cocoa production.

Numerous rumors and questions spread across the globe about the story behind chocolate and why, in this case, it's important to know where cocoa exported to the companies we know and love such as: Nestle, Mars, Gullian, come from. Why? You may ask. Well it's simple. It may well be you're jolly and elated walking and browsing round the supermarket, secretively ripping a couple of your favourite chocolates into your basket, but what you won't know is that through buying the odd chocolate now and again you could be constantly contributing to the devastatingly inhumane child labour that's

taking place ~~constantly~~ regularly in the whole of the chocolate industry. Yes that's right. Think back to when you last bought a chocolate and just consider the bitter side.

In a documentary about the production of cocoa in Ivory Coast and Mali a research team set out to find the real truth about chocolate. Negotiations and meetings with various authorities took place between the producer and them slowly unravelling the story. They ~~discovered~~ discovered many different facts from their journeys across west Africa for example: children were ~~lured~~ deceived into being able to earn some money in the Ivorian plantations, they were usually from rural areas and were brought to the border by bus and many more facts. However this exploration into the story behind cocoa production came at a heavy cost. Doing a documentary about this wasn't easy. Previously a man named Guy André Kieffer was kidnapped in a carpark in Ivory Coast whilst similarly on a mission to find the truth behind chocolate. This happened on April 16th 2004 and tragically his case has never been solved. This meant the research team would have to be cautious.

After finding that child labour occurred in Ivorian plantations the research team went to report it to other authorities. This made me wonder about some other questions such as: what affects did child labour have on the children lured into that devious trap? Are working conditions important in producing goods?

Well I went into further detail and analysed what effects were posed on the children in the plantations and here is what I thought: The children would have no education, they would ~~lose~~ lose contact and communication with family, they wouldn't earn money, they were too young to work, they were mounted with an ~~overload~~ overload of labour and finally, they worked in unfair conditions. I thought these were all very important aspects and would affect the children in later life because they wouldn't know or have the knowledge to live life and prosper properly.

Finally, the research team doing the documentary flew back to Switzerland with an improved knowledge of the real story behind the cocoa production for example: the route was - the plantation sold the dried cocoa to intermediaries at €1 a kg. They then sold it to the national exporters who washed, packed and shipped the cocoa worldwide.

The research team visited the ILO director and showed him the videos. The ILO was a part of the UN fighting against the use of child labour.

Getting back to the question 'are working conditions important to producing goods?' My opinion on this was yes because if the workers didn't have a healthy environment to work in the goods they produced wouldn't be up to standard and the ~~workers~~ workers wouldn't enjoy their job all the more.

To conclude I think action needs to be taken and so I thought of some solutions to help abolish the unjustified use of children for labour such as: Inform the government, remove the children, develop the country, reunite the children with their parents and prosecute the farmers illegally using children for labour.

I hope this has changed your mind on the dark side of chocolate and to consider what others have to experience for your enjoyment.

CHILD LABOUR NEEDS TO STOP IMMEDIATELY!