
**THE DARK SIDE OF
Chocolate**
A FILM BY MIKI MISTRATI & U. ROBERTO ROMANO

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was your reaction to the film? What did you find interesting, disturbing or emotional? What did you learn?
2. The film repeatedly mentions the 2001 Harkin-Engel Protocol to end trafficking and the worst forms of child labor by 2005 (later extended to 2008). What do you think this documentary is saying about such voluntary and self-policing agreements to enforce minimal human rights standards in the cocoa industry?
3. Throughout the film, we see various members of the chocolate industry claim that they do not know anything about the issue of child labor or denying that it exists. The CEO of SAF Cacao says early in the film, "I can assure the whole world ... that the Ivory Coast is a country with no child slaves in the plantations." Later when confronted with the evidence, he concedes that there is child labor in the cocoa fields. How do you think the filmmakers feel about taking chocolate companies at their word when they claim to be addressing issues of child labor?
4. Fair Trade certified cocoa is grown under standards that prohibit the use of forced and child labor, and that require regular inspections by third party/independent certifiers. It also ensures that products may be traced back to the farm so that individual farmers know that they can be identified and expelled from the Fair Trade system if they violate the rules. The Fair Trade system pays farmers a higher price, so that they can afford to hire adult workers and send their children to school. Consumers can identify these products with the Fair Trade label. How might this system address some of the problems documented in the film?
5. Throughout the film, we saw various cocoa stakeholders passing responsibility to others. At the chocolate trade show, a representative of confectioner company Guylian said that it is not their responsibility and to ask a representative at cocoa supplier Barry Callebaut who pleaded ignorance. Later, the child trafficker in Mali said that is impossible to place the responsibility on any one person. What are your thoughts about who is responsible for trafficking? Do you believe that consumers bear responsibility for abusive child labor and trafficking in the cocoa industry?
6. What can we do as consumers to ensure that we take responsibility for our role? What measures can we take to put pressure on the chocolate industry to end the use of child labor and trafficking in their supply chain?

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KEY CONCEPTS FOR EDUCATORS

Even in this modern era, children around the world are forced to work in deplorable and often dangerous conditions at a time in their lives when they should be in classrooms and playgrounds. Global child labor perpetuates a cycle of poverty that prevents families and nations from reaching their full potential. - Barack Obama, June 12, 2009

CHILD LABOR AND ITS WORST FORMS

Not all economic activity performed by children is necessarily a "worst form" of child labor. The International Labor Organization (ILO), a specialized agency of the United Nations that deals with labor issues, distinguishes between acceptable forms of work by children and child labor that should be eradicated. In 1999, the ILO adopted Convention 182, The Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

It stipulates that any form of labor that endangers a child, denies a child's right to an education, or exposes a child to illicit activities is unacceptable. The unacceptable, worst forms of child labor include work such as bonded labor, prostitution and pornography, illicit activities, armed combat, and physically and mentally hazardous labor. These worst forms include: threats to a child's physical, mental, or emotional well being; intolerable abuses such as child slavery, forced labor, or hazardous working conditions; illicit activities such as drug and contraband trafficking or debt bondage; and work that prevents a child from going to school.

For more information, visit: www.ilo.org. <http://laborrights.org/child-and-forced-labor>

HARKIN-ENGEL PROTOCOL

The Harkin-Engel Protocol is an international agreement signed in 2001 that brought together the cocoa industry, West African governments, organized labor, NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and experts to address the problem of child labor and trafficking in the production of cocoa.

The Protocol stipulated that by July 2005, the chocolate industry would develop and implement standards of certification that cocoa had been grown without any of the worst forms of child labor. This deadline was not met. An extension of the Protocol was agreed upon, giving industry 3 more years to implement the Protocol. Again, after 3 more years, the key promises of the Protocol have not been met.

FAIR TRADE

“Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.” Definition from FINE, an international association of Fair Trade networks.

Fair Trade principles include:

- Fair price
- Fair labor conditions
- Direct trade
- Democratic and transparent organizations
- Community development
- Environmental sustainability

For more information, visit

www.fairtradefederation.org, www.fairtraderesourcenetwork.org

SLAVERY and HUMAN TRAFFICKING

It is estimated that there are 27 million people in slavery today - more than at any other time in human history. Slavery exists today despite the fact that it is banned in most of the countries where it is practiced. Common characteristics distinguish slavery from other human rights violations. A slave is a child, woman or man who is:

- forced to work -- through mental or physical threat
- owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical
- abuse or threatened abuse
- dehumanized, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
- physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of
- movement

Human trafficking is the illegal transportation of people without their consent. Trafficking comprises the fastest growing criminal industry in the world. It is based on the recruitment, harboring, and transportation of people solely for the purpose of exploitation.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.antislavery.org/> www.freetheslaves.net www.polarisproject.org

What is Fair Trade?

Can you live on coffee and chocolate alone? Neither can small farmers and their families.

World market prices fluctuate unpredictably and often fall below the cost of production. Middlemen, from the traders who buy cocoa and coffee to your local grocery store, each take their cut, leaving little for farmers.

Can you live without coffee and chocolate? Then you cannot live without the farmers that grow coffee and cocoa.

Forty-six percent of Americans say they cannot live without chocolate. And just as you depend on coffee and cocoa farmers, they depend on you to buy Fair Trade. Fair Trade means poverty does not have to be a fact of life for small farmers.

What does Fair Trade guarantee?

Fair Trade coffee and cocoa farmers:

- Receive a stable, minimum price so they can feed their families and their children can go to school instead of working in the fields
- Receive a community development premium for projects like new schools and scholarships, health clinics, clean drinking water and more
- Participate in democratic cooperatives with services that strengthen their farm businesses
- Comply with international and domestic labor laws, including the prohibition of child labor
- Protect the environment and maintain biodiversity Independent, third party inspection by Fair Trade institutions means that, as a
- consumer, you know that these conditions are met.

How do you know if a product is Fair Trade?

The product carries a Fair Trade certified label or the company is a member of the Fair Trade Federation.