

**Fact Sheet 6****Fair Trade Chocolate and Cocoa:****The Sweet Solution of Abusive Child Labor and Poverty**

While chocolate is sweet for us, it is heartbreaking for cocoa producers and their families. In 2001, The US State Department and The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported child slavery on Ivory Coast cocoa farms, the origin of 43 percent of the world's cocoa. Subsequent research by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture indicated that though child slavery is thankfully very limited, other egregious forms of child labor are unfortunately widespread. Hundreds of thousands of children work in dangerous tasks on cocoa farms. At least 12,000 child cocoa workers have come to their present situation through trafficking. Most child cocoa workers in the Ivory Coast do not have the opportunity to attend school. The same investigation identified poverty as the cause - West African cocoa revenues average \$30-\$108 per year per household member. These impoverished producers have no choice but to keep their kids out of school to work in dangerous tasks on cocoa farms, or even use child slaves.

Producer poverty comes at the hands of large chocolate corporations, such as M&M/Mars and other members of the Chocolate Manufacturers Association of America, that manipulate the market to keep profits high while producer incomes stay low. The industry has developed a Protocol to end abusive child labor, but it doesn't guarantee the minimum price producers need to meet their costs and thus cease needing child labor. Without a stable and sufficient income, producers will remain trapped in poverty and forced to rely on child labor against their heartfelt wishes to do otherwise. The Protocol also unjustly lays the blame on producers and their strapped governments instead of admitting the role and responsibility of the industry in exacerbating poverty and child labor problems.

**Source:** [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)