

Fact Sheet 7**Profile of Fiam, Age 9**

Fiam lives in Ghana, a country in Africa, across the Atlantic Ocean from North America. She has a brother who is eleven. She is nine years old, and last year she attended school outside, under a tree. Even though she is nine, she cannot read, because when she attended school, she did not have any books to read or write in. Even so, she misses school. She misses the chance to learn things and to visit and play with friends her own age. She does not get the chance to do that any more, because now, she is working on a cocoa plantation.

<u>Vocabulary words:</u>	<u>Definitions:</u>
Cocoa plantation	A cocoa plantation is a farm or field where cocoa beans are grown.
Cocoa	Cocoa is a bean that comes from the cacao tree that is used to make chocolate.
Pesticides	Pesticides are poisons that are used to kill bugs that eat plants grown on farms.
Slave	A Slave is a person who is owned by his or her boss and does not get paid for the work that he or she does.

Fiam's family is very poor, and she is lucky to eat one meal each day. Since only 64% of people in Ghana have access to clean drinking water (that's 64 out of every 100 people), Fiam doesn't always have clean water to drink either; often she has to drink dirty water from the stream by the hut that her family lives in. She spends much of the day being hungry and thirsty. Because her family is so poor, her parents needed to get jobs for the whole family working on a **cocoa plantation**.

Fiam and her family work on the **cocoa plantation** using sharp knives and **pesticides** that are dangerous. Some other workers on the plantation have been injured or have gotten sick from the poison. They have to work very hard, and they work long hours. They have to pick cocoa pods, slice them open, and scoop out the cocoa beans that are used to make chocolate. They start work at 6:00 a.m. (in the morning) and work until 6:30 p.m. (in the evening), a total of 12 ½ hours. Sometimes, Fiam or her family members are beaten by the owners of the plantation. Even though Fiam works hard every day, she only makes \$30 for a whole year's worth of work. Compare that to the \$220 that the average North American 10-year-old gets every year for *allowance*.

Compared with some children in West Africa, Fiam is lucky to get paid at all. In the Ivory Coast, a country just west of Ghana, many children are **slaves** on cocoa plantations and don't get paid anything. Some of the chocolate that we eat comes from cocoa plantations like the one that Fiam works on, and some chocolate comes from plantations where children work as **slaves**.

Source: <http://www.bctf.bc.ca/social/GlobalEd/GlobalClassroom/McLeodWalls.htm>