

Child Slavery

by: Toivo

Introduction

Imagine yourself kicking a soccer ball in your backyard. Have you ever wondered where that ball came from? Did you know that most soccer balls are made by kids your age and even younger in countries like Pakistan? That's called child labor and slavery. What this means is that kids are forced to work at factories for very little to no money. There are over 215 million child labourers in the world between the ages of 5 and 17. Did you know that those kids who make your soccer balls are slaves and work usually from 4 AM to 11 PM and get very limited food? These kids usually are kidnapped to slavery or their parents are tricked into sending them away. People come over and say that they are going to take the kids to school but the reality is that they are forced to work which means that they are made slaves. How does it make you feel?

Kids all over the world are in child labor or slavery. In other words it might be happening right in your neighbourhood because some people have child slaves working for them as a maid. You might not think that it affects you but it happens all over the world. Huge companies such as Hershey's, The Gap, Nestle, and other companies use child labor and slavery. Many chocolate companies buy their cocoa from cocoa farms in Africa that are worked by children. They do this because they get the best cocoa beans for little money. The farm owners provide the kids the cheapest foods available, such as corn paste and bananas. These children have horrible lives.

Explain The Issue

I feel like this issue is important because I think that kids deserve to enjoy their childhood and not be spending it working in slavery at a cocoa farm or some other factory. While you are shooting a basketball, some kids are making those balls that you play with. Don't you want to help these children and free them from child labor and slavery?

The problem is that these children don't get a chance to live a nice life and they will get used to just working and won't even want to do anything else. Before,

UNICEF interviewed some child labourers in Mongolia who work at a local mine. When UNICEF tried to interview a boy who was a worker at the mine, he refused to give an interview because he said that he couldn't stop working. He was taught to think that way. I think that this is sad and that these children deserve better.

Child slavery and labor affects people both locally and globally. Globally, the parents whose kids are slaves have horrible lives. They live in fear and sadness everyday because they don't know where their kids are and if they're ever coming back. They are always sad because they love their kids but they are gone. In the case of child labor, the parents say that they feel very guilty about sending their kids to work everyday but they say that it is their only option. Locally, here in the United States, people are affected by child slavery and labor. In America, people buy a lot of Nike products that are often made by children. Nike sells over 30 million pairs of shoes per year. Most of the shoes are made in Indonesia and Pakistan. Often in these countries, these products are made by children. We are supporting these slave owners by buying the products made by kids.

People think many different things about this issue. My classmates who took my survey were mostly correct. Many people answered that child slavery and labor happens everywhere. People believe that children belong in school, not in factories. People also want to make a change and are very sad when they hear about child labor. Companies with children working for them can make their products with much less cost when children do the work. Some families have a child slave as a maid. Often the "maids" are girls. These girls are often forced to beg for money on the streets and give it to their "parents". These children also do the laundry, clean, get the kids to school, and they only get to eat whatever is left over from the family's dinner. They eat a minimal amount of food. These children have lives that are not even worth living.

Many of the child labourers and slaves weren't born to be work. A 12- year old girl named Maya Lama in Nepal was an ordinary kid until about a year ago. She was taken away when she was 10 to work 16- hour shifts every day at a carpet factory in the capital of Nepal, Kathmandu. She was tricked by her own uncle. She was going to visit him in the city but she didn't know that her uncle was going to force her to work in the city. Not only Maya suffers, but so does her family. They lost their own daughter. It is very hard for a family to ever live normally again if one of their kids was kidnapped to work because you can't visit your child and you have no idea where

they are and if they are alive. If your child is not a slave, the salary is minimal, just enough to survive. All the work is very unsuitable for the kids. Many people get saved from child labor and slavery but the numbers of child slaves and labourers are huge. Maya Lama is just one of them.

Methods Of Change

Many people are reacting to this issue. Many people say that they want to make a change but very few actually are brave enough to try to make a change. All the people say that they want to make a change but they don't. It's not that they don't care, it's that they don't know how to and they are afraid to. It's our job to inform others about this topic.

Many organizations in the world are helping to stop child slavery and labour both locally and globally. A local organization that is located in the US is The Child Labour Coalition. They provide information to others about this topic to encourage more people to make a change. A global organization that is helping to stop child slavery and labour is the Global March Against Child Labour. They are a worldwide network of trade unions, teachers' and civil society organisations that work together to give access for kids to free public good quality education. Something that people do on their own without an organization is they protest. For example, last Wednesday on the 30th of April, people protested in front of a Hershey's store on Times Square because Hershey's gets their chocolate from cocoa farms that have children working for them.

Call For Action

What are kids my age doing to help this issue? Well, children our age can boycott buying products that are made by children. Children can also write reports like this and inform other people about this topic. For example, instead of buying a new pair of Nike shoes, you can buy a pair of Adidas sneakers or some other brand. You can also stop buying Hershey's products to make a change and also not to be fat! And instead of shopping at The Gap, you can shop at other clothing stores that do not have children working for them and making their clothes. Also parents should not buy their kids clothes from The Gap and should not buy their kid's shoes from Nike stores. It makes a difference.

If you want to take action, here are some specific organizations that help to stop child slavery and labor. If none of these interest you, you can create your own website! It would be great if you get encouraged to make a change.

| Organizations | specifics on how you can help | Contact |
|---|--|--|
| The International Labor Organization | You can visit their website and contact them | - http://www.ilo.org/global/lan--en/index.htm E-mail: ilo@ilo.org Offices are located 4 route des Morillons - CH-1211 Genève 22 -Switzerland - |
| Global March Against Child Labor | Go to their website, then click participate and donate money | - http://www.globalmarch.org/ E-mail: info@globalmarch.org Telephone Number: +91 11 4921 1111 |
| Anti-Slavery | -You can watch their videos, read their articles, and donate money | - http://www.antislavery.org/english/ email: info@antislavery.org tel: +44 (0)20 7501 8920 |
| -The child labor Coalition | - Go to their website and then go to take action | - http://stopchildlabor.org Mail : NATIONAL CONSUMERS' LEAGUE 1701 K ST. NW, SUITE 1200 WASHINGTON, DC 20006 EMAIL: REIDM@NCLNET.ORG |
| International Initiative To End Child Labor | - Go to their website, click contact us and find out how you can help. | - http://endchildlabor.org/ IECL@endchildlabor.org (Email) 1016 South Wayne Street, Suite 702 Arlington, Virginia 22204 USA |

You might want to do something. What could you do? Well, I would like to spread the word at sporting events so the fans can hear about this important issue. Especially at basketball events all over America.

You can do many other things too, but this is what I would like to do.

Conclusion

These are only a few of all the organizations that work to stop child slavery around the globe.

I hope that his report has taught and inspired you to make a change. You can start out on your own, and spread the word because together we can make a change and help the kids who are suffering.

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