

Striving for slavery-free snacks

I see you: the 13 year old Pakistani boy, trapped in a bonded labour contract until you're 30.



Boromo: "I had been deceived. I thought going to Cote d'Ivoire would make me really rich. The reality was something else completely. We worked like animals. We were exploited."



Ouare Fatao was taken from Burkina Faso and sold as a cocoa picker.



When Abdul's mother died, a stranger brought him across the border to the farm. Abdul says all he's given is a little food, the torn clothes on his back, and an occasional tip from the farmer.

YOUR STORY: Edgaras and Edvinas

Edgaras and Edvinas Subatkis were taken into care when they were seven and spent most of their childhoods in institutions in Lithuania. When they reached adulthood, they paid £800 for transport and employment, with the promise of a good job and housing.

On arrival, they were put to work in an egg factory, sharing a mattress on the floor with four other men, given £20 for four months work and made to live on bread, margarine, onions, ketchup and a little mince. They were still in the clothes they had arrived in when they were

rescued.

This didn't happen on the other side of the world – Edgaras and Edvinas were trafficked to the UK, to work in factories owned by UK companies. It took four months for those companies to become aware that they were employing slaves, and once they did,

they brought the matter to the police. In so many other countries, Edgaras and Edvinas would have remained in bonded labour for years, if not for the rest of their lives. A lot of companies outsource their labour, and just don't know exactly where everything in their supply chain comes from.

We all need to shop positively – supporting those companies that do search their supply chains for slavery, and display something like the Fairtrade mark.



Some more facts...

- A trafficker does not need chains to force someone to work for them: "They take a mother with two children, then lock one child away so that when the mother is out begging, the traffickers know she will return for the other," she says. "The mother had been promised a job in agriculture and was told to bring the children for kindergarten."
- So many of the ingredients in snack food have the potential to have been farmed or made by slaves – chocolate and palm oil are the infamous ones, but there are so many more; nuts, sugar, and flour all might have involved slaves.
- 1.8 million children work in the cocoa fields of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. They are exposed to chemicals, long working hours and no education. With no education they have no hope to escape, caught in a vicious cycle of poverty.



I PLEDGE TO CHANGE MY SHOPPING BECAUSE YOUR STORY MATTERS

An anonymous senior executive recently told the Guardian that shoppers 'don't care' about conditions, and research shows most 'prefer inexpensive over respect for human rights'.

FOR THINGS TO CHANGE, WE NEED TO SHOW THAT WE DO CARE.

My life...

- Look out for the Fairtrade Mark. As a scheme, it's not perfect, but it's a lot better than nothing.
- Shop in places that are ethically run, and try to source their goods ethically. On the Oxford high street, the shops that are the best to go to are: The Co-Op and M&S, both of which are making a big effort to improve their supply chains and support their workers.
- There are lots of smaller shops around Oxford that are even more ethical. Try Fairtrade at St Michael's (just behind St Michael's Church), the Oxfam shops on Broad Street, Cowley Road and Banbury Road, and the Ox Co-op (order online from <http://www.oxcoop.com/> by midnight on Sunday, and pick up your snacks from the Turl Street Kitchen on Friday from 4 to 6pm. They have a pop-up shop there at the same time).
- This website gives a list of chocolate brands that they are certain are ethical. <http://www.foodispower.org/chocolate-list/>
- **Divine chocolate** is one that is sold quite widely, and is owned by the 85,000 farmers themselves, giving them a voice in the global marketplace.
- Another way to find ethical snacks is to shop online – have a look at <http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/> www.traidcraftshop.co.uk and www.ouresme.com.

Your life...

Abdul began work on a cocoa farm aged 7. He has never tasted chocolate, and has no idea what the cocoa that he works to harvest every day is for. When his mother died, a stranger brought him across the border from Burkina Faso to work in Cote d'Ivoire. He has no education and is not given a wage, only a little food and an occasional tip from the farmer who owns him.

Yacou is another child working on the same chocolate farm. His mother brought him when his father died. His legs are covered in scars from hacking at the cocoa pods using a machete. He says 'I wish I could go to school. I want to read and write'. But he has never spent even a day in school, and has no idea how to leave the farm.

From CNN's investigation into child slavery and chocolate.

Resources

- <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2012/01/19/child-slavery-and-chocolate-all-too-easy-to-find/>
- <http://www.divinechocolate.com/us/about-us>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jan/22/lithuanian-gangmasters-jailed-in-modern-slavery-and-trafficking-case>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/feb/04/sex-lies-psychological-scars-ukraine-human-trafficking-crisis>
- http://www.antislavery.org/english/slavery_today/child_slavery/child_trafficking_in_cocoa_industry_in_west_africa/default.aspx

It's really hard to prove whether an ingredient was produced by slaves or not, but because the problem is so massive, it should be the responsibility of companies to prove that it does not occur. To encourage companies to do this, shop ethically!