TAKE SLAVERY OUT OF SHOPPING

The relationship between our everyday purchases and modern day slavery seems improbable. But the connection is very real. It just remains hidden from public view.

In poor regions of the world impoverished families are targeted by traffickers with promises of a better life for their children. Unsuspecting parents give up sons and daughters who end up in forced and abusive work situations on farms, factories and brothels.

A look inside the chocolate industry illustrates the problem. Cocoa beans, from which chocolate is manufactured, are encased in heavy pods that hang from trees. Their harvest is back-breaking work for adults; brutal for children. Yet 284,000 children, 64% of whom are under 14 years, work in forced and abusive conditions on cocoa farms in West Africa. An investigative report details 13 hour work days on the plantation – filled with harsh physical labor, punctuated by beatings, and ending with a night of fitful sleep on a wooden plank in a locked room filled with other slaves. Most of the 15 billion dollars of chocolate that we consume in the United States each year is tainted with this forced and abusive child labor.

Parallel stories of both child and adult exploitation are found in the supply chains of coffee, tea, sugar, bananas, jewelry, clothing, and the list goes on.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Fair Trade, the business model that monitors and assures that small producers are treated with dignity, is changing the lives and futures of millions of small farmers, producers and their children.

Fair Trade confronts poverty and trafficking in three ways.

Prevention. Assuring decent wages for parents, along with funds set aside for community development (schools, clinics and the like), Fair Trade stands as a powerful antidote to the lure of a ‘better life elsewhere’ that is held out by traffickers.

Enforcement. Fair Trade certification is sought by businesses wanting to maintain market share. This certification is given for a product only if a business cleans up its act and enforces policies that eliminate forced or abusive labor in the supply chain.

Rehabilitation. Fair Trade Cooperatives provide safe haven and dignified work to victims rescued from brothels and other situations of exploitation.

Thanks to informed consumers, Fair Trade is the fastest growing segment of the retail economy. We have the ability to break the chains - simply by relentlessly pursuing Fair Trade at every opportunity.

ASK FOR FAIR TRADE. BUY FAIR TRADE.

YOUR GUARENTEE THAT IT’S FAIR TRADE & SLAVE FREE