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# Reverse-Trick-or-Treating: Trick or Treaters Give Back on Halloween to Their Neighborhoods and the World

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» <http://www.globalexchange.org/update/press/5941.html> [1]

Global Exchange

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Thousands of costumed trick-or-treaters across all fifty states in the US, as well as Canada, are turning the traditional Halloween ritual on its head; for the second year in a row, it is the trick-or-treaters who are handing out chocolate...hundreds of thousands of Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate samples to raise awareness of: the persistent problems of poverty in cocoa-growing communities; the use of exploited child labor in the cocoa fields of countries like Cote D'Ivoire, which produces 40 percent of the world's cocoa; and environmental damage from unsustainable farming practices.

Participants will reach out to nearly a quarter of a million households in the United States and Canada in a single night with their important message: Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate provides Americans, who consume nearly half the world's chocolate, with a path toward resolving these problems.

The Reverse-Trick-or-Treating program has joined nonprofit organizations, such as Global Exchange, with Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate companies, such as Equal Exchange and Alter Eco, and local schools, congregations and youth groups to raise public awareness about Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate. Fair Trade certification requires farmers to abide by international labor laws that prohibit illegal child labor while also ensuring that farmers receive a fair, stable price for their cocoa and that environmentally sustainable farming practices are applied.

"Chocolate connects the millions of Americans who eat it daily to the growers around the world who depend on cocoa for their livelihoods," says Adrienne Fitch-Frankel, Global Exchange's Fair Trade Campaign Director. "It is unthinkable that our children are eating chocolate made with illegal child labor or slave labor, especially when a viable solution, Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate, exists right now."

Millions of children between the ages of 5-17 are still toiling in cocoa production in West Africa, according

to a highly anticipated study commissioned by the US Department of Labor and released on October 7. The report contained dramatic evidence that children are still being trafficked into the cocoa fields to work, often without any remuneration, and suffer regular beating once they arrive.

The report's larger survey on the cocoa growing regions of Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana is equally disturbing. Nearly 75% of children working in cocoa in Ghana reported sustaining an injury, such as wounds and cuts or back pain, due to agricultural work. Work in cocoa is hazardous for children, who are required to carry very heavy loads and use machetes. Only 50.9% of child cocoa laborers in Cote D'Ivoire had attended school in the twelve months preceding the survey.

Last July 1, 2008, the chocolate industry yet again failed to meet a self-imposed deadline under the conditions of the 2001 Harkin-Engel Protocol, a voluntary industry initiative that calls for an end to abusive child labor in the cocoa industry. Dozens of national nonprofit organizations and chocolate companies have united to call on the cocoa industry for reform, which can be viewed at [www.reversetrickortreating.org](http://www.reversetrickortreating.org) [2].

This Halloween, the distribution of Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate along with an informational card is intended to: demonstrate that at least one reliable, transparent tool already exists for major cocoa and chocolate companies to adopt to fight poverty in cocoa growing communities; raise the profile of the chocolate made available by companies who have committed to using only Fair Trade Certified™ cocoa; and put public pressure on large chocolate companies to follow suit.

To interview a participating family or to follow children during reverse-trick-or-treating, please contact Sanaz Meshkinpour at 510-684-4781 or [sanaz@globalexchange.org](mailto:sanaz@globalexchange.org) [3].

For more information, including a statement released by 47 organizations and fair trade companies around the world: "Commitment to Ethical Cocoa Sourcing: Abolishing Unfair Labor Practices and Addressing Their Root Causes," visit [www.ReverseTrickorTreating.org](http://www.ReverseTrickorTreating.org) [4].

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*The Reverse Trick-or-Treating campaign is an initiative of the human rights advocacy group Global Exchange, which has a long track record of successfully encouraging major corporations to adopt new business practices.*

The 225,000 Fair Trade Chocolates and informational cards have been provided in the United States by Equal Exchange and Alter Eco, and in Canada by La Siembra, under the leadership of Equal Exchange. Equal Exchange is a full service provider of high quality, organic coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate and healthy snacks to grocery stores, restaurants and places of worship nationwide. 100% of Equal Exchange products are fairly traded, benefiting over 30 small farmer cooperatives in 16 countries around the world.

Other organizations with a lead role in Reverse Trick-or-Treating are Americans for Informed Democracy, Coop America, Fair Trade Federation, International Labor Rights Forum, Oasis, Slow Food, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, United Methodist Committee on Relief, and United Students for Fair Trade.

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**Source URL:** <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-labor/cocoa-campaign/news/11752>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.globalexchange.org/update/press/5941.html>

[2] <http://www.reversetrickortreating.org>

[3] <mailto:sanaz@globalexchange.org>

[4] <http://www.ReverseTrickorTreating.org>

