



FACT: Children mine cobalt for your smartphones*

It's dangerous, children suffer and it's a Human Rights violation

Would YOU pay a little extra for your smartphone to free these children?

Yes? Join us. We're finding out which companies care enough to help us.

To the CEOs: Samsung, Boo-Keun Youn; LG Electronics, Juno Cho; Doro, Robert Puskaric; Archos, LoricPorier; Apple, Tim Cook; Acer Inc., Jason Chen; Blackberry, John S Chen; Google Pixel, Sundar Pichai; Microsoft, Satya Nadella; Lenovo, Yang Yuanqing; Nokia, Rajeev Suri; Sony, Kazuo Hirai; Vodafone, Nick Jeffery; Volkswagen, Matthias Müller, also Huayou Cobalt, Xuehua Chen, Chairman of the board and Bryce Lee, Manager of Responsible Supply Chain.

From: Flinty Maguire [hello@cobaltchildren.org]; www.cobaltchildren.org

cc Mark Dummett, Amnesty International [mark.dummett@amnesty.org];

Alex Crawford, Sky News; Sky News press release [news.plan@sky.uk]

Tyler Gillard, Legal Advisor and Project Head OECD Investment Division [tyler.gillard@oecd.org];

Graham Zebedee, British Ambassador to Democratic Republic of the Congo, [ambassade.britannique@fco.gov.uk]

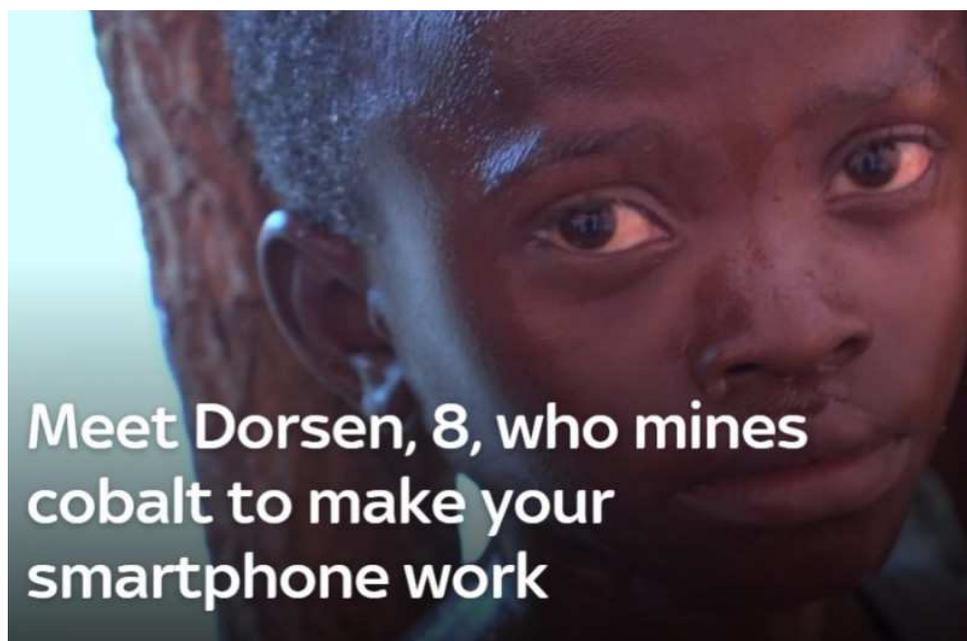
4 April 2017

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you about a boy called Dorsen. Dorsen is small for his age. He's eight, and works twelve hours a day as a labourer in a Congolese cobalt mine. He is one of many thousands of children* mining cobalt, needed in the manufacture of rechargeable batteries. You already know about such children. Such human rights abuse has been well documented over the years.

The point of this letter is to ask you, personally, to acknowledge the need to devise a plan to ensure fair and ethical trade with the people mining cobalt in DR Congo. I ask four simple questions with yes or no answers. Your positive response will change lives. Due diligence may be difficult to practice, but that is no excuse for not conducting trade on an ethical, humane basis. It is wrong to involve your customers in this chain of human rights abuse.

I will suggest a way for you, as a company, and us, as customers, to join together to address the horrific exploitation of Congolese people. But first, meet Dorsen... [Image © Sky News]



Sky News reporter, Alex Crawford, brought Dorsen and his friend, Richard, to global attention. If you haven't already watched this film, please do.

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=JcJ8me22NVs

Online report: <http://news.sky.com/story/meet-dorsen-8-who-mines-cobalt-to-make-your-smartphone-work-10784120>

Please answer these questions:

1. Do you think it's wrong for child and artisanal miners to be so vulnerable that their suffering and exploited labour can become part of a supply chain to benefit companies?

Yes / No

2. Is your company concerned and honest enough to highlight and educate its customers about conflict minerals and the human rights abuses of child and artisanal miners

Yes / No

3. Would your company participate in sustained fundraising for the welfare of child and artisanal miners in DR Congo?

Yes / No

4. Would your company consider introducing at the point of sale choices for your customers, in order to raise money for the welfare of child and artisanal miners?

Yes / No

Please read on:

No one, with a shred of decency, could fail to be horrified by Richard and Dorsen's situation. The film educated me to the fact that I own products which have a backstory of child labour and human rights abuse. In response to this, I created a website and began fundraising. Individuals, like me, can raise a little money to aid Congolese artisanal and child miners*, but it's a drop in the ocean. **Fundraising needs to be sustained on a large scale.**

Countless consumers do care, but we need organising. Your company can add value to goods by aligning them with fair trade and ethical practice, **giving consumers the choice to pay more at the point of sale in the form of a donation, or by purchasing something extra** (a lapel pin, a badge, a case marked #conflictminerals #DRCongo; there are endless possibilities), **or by purchasing goods branded for the purpose of raising funds for Congolese welfare.** Such funds could be directed to on-the-ground field workers and established projects and charities.

It's not enough that your company may already have a charitable connection with this issue. We need to do more.

Due Diligence failures have allowed companies to exploit artisanal miners and child labourers in the DR Congo. Granted, the issue is frighteningly complex; but while governments and corporates struggle to find a way to address and resolve human rights abuses in artisanal cobalt mines - years go by. This time, **moment by moment**, is occupied by **people who suffer in order to survive.** As you know, these workers damage their physical and mental health, suffer harsh, hazardous, sometimes lethal working conditions for pitiful financial reward. **We all know this is wrong.**

Consumers of the downstream products of cobalt - the lithium-ion batteries contained in smartphones, laptops, cameras, smartwatches, electric cars – **are, knowingly or not, positioned to be complicit with the human rights abuses inflicted on the Congolese miners. This is wrong.**

Our lack of practical and helpful response to this suffering is both negligent and abusive, and anyone with knowledge of this bears some responsibility. I agree with Bryce Lee, the new manager for Responsible Sourcing for Huayou Cobalt Ltd. who says: "The problem cannot be fixed by one company." However, **companies are not the only ones who can be part of the solution. This is a human problem. It requires humanity from all: companies and consumers. Together, we can be practical. Companies and consumers can help these people.**

The solution is not the simple extraction of artisanal and child miners from the supply chain. This would inflict a different type of, potentially lethal, suffering on people, by removing from them the means of earning money. **Children must be removed from mines, and also have their welfare needs met. Adult artisanal miners need investment in their work environment, safe working practice, equipment and fair pay.** We need to give these people hope by showing we care for their welfare, rights and dignity.

Is your company proactive and willing to participate? There are consumers who care: people like me, who will willingly contribute. We want and need commodities aligned with ethical practice, morality and compassion.

Please accept this challenge. **Be innovative. Be moral.** The issue of human rights abuses is overwhelming, but a proactive and practical response sets an example and goes some way to ease suffering. Dorsen is eight. **His suffering is ongoing now.** We can do something to help him and all the others like him.

Please, please support this movement. This letter is published on the website www.cobaltchildren.org and on social media and I will publish your reply.

Your positive and practical response will change lives.

Many thanks and kindest regards,

Flinty Maguire

cobaltchildren.org

Twitter: @MeetDorsen

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Dorsenandfriends/>

Email: hello@cobaltchildren.org

*There are an estimated 40k children working in Congolese cobalt mines and thousands of artisanal miners putting their lives at risk every day in dire conditions.