



Reasoning with Ethics

MARCH 13, 2018

A Project of The School for Ethical Education | www.ethicsed.org

“Ethics in action creates character.”

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core ethical values.
3. Recognize skills in support of SEE's Tri-Factor Model of ethical functioning.

[Visit the online Ethics Blog.](#)

Core Values in Consuming

Capitalism has raised more people out of poverty in the last two hundred years than any other economic system. With that observation, there are also great ethical challenges that capitalism can fail to address without actions from forces outside of the marketplace. CBS News brings to light one such challenge by focusing on the use of child labor in the mining of cobalt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).



The DRC is the source of almost 60% of the world's cobalt, which is widely used in the manufacture of non-corrosive metal alloys and lithium-ion batteries. Circumstances within the DRC are very complicated by deep poverty, widespread HIV/AIDS, large illiterate orphan populations and corruption.

Young school age children are compelled by their poverty to work in the collection and washing of cobalt for international firms that sell it to processors of metal alloys and batteries. These products are then sold across the world and every US consumer of a battery powered device like a cell phone or electric car benefits from this production chain.

How should consumers respond in light of the revelation of this story? One might argue these children's lives are marginally better with the small income they earn from the mining. It can also be argued that there is sufficient profit from this work that the conditions of the children could be improved.

Students are asked to identify the core ethical values that would motivate a consumer to act and resist the exploitation of third-world children. Also, what reasonable actions can a consumer take to mitigate this terrible circumstance?

Regarding the response sought in this issue, SEE welcomes students to post on our website at http://bit.ly/Ethics_Case where more information is available for *Reasoning with Ethics*. A video link for this archived case can be found at-- http://bit.ly/Child_Miners

Contact information

The School for Ethical Education is a not for profit teaching agency in Milford, CT with the mission to advance strategies of placing ethics in action to create character. As a non-sectarian 501(C)3, SEE is supported by fees for service, grants and donations. For more information visit our website at www.ethicsed.org Please reply with "unsubscribe" in the subject heading if you want to be removed from this Reasoning with Ethics Blog.