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Pre-Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

E-rubbish

Nowadays, every household produces electronic rubbish (or e-rubbish) – an old TV or computer printer, or an out-of-date mobile phone we no longer need. But when we throw these everyday items away, not many of us know where these objects go. The journalist and photographer, Peter Essick, decided to follow this e-rubbish to several different countries around the world.

In particular, Essick found a lot of e-rubbish goes to Ghana. There, he saw mountains of old computers in the local markets. The sellers resell some of them but not much equipment works. Instead, they recycle the broken computers by melting the parts inside. These parts contain a little metal such as copper or even gold sometimes. However, this process of recycling is dangerous for the workers because it produces a lot of toxic chemicals.

As a result of his journey, Peter Essick thinks it’s important to stop exporting e-rubbish. It’s bad for the environment and it’s bad for people’s health. Instead, he believes manufacturers need to produce more eco-friendly electronics in the future; in other words, electronic products which you can recycle cheaply, safely and in the country where they were made.

melt (v) /melt/ to heat an object until it turns to liquid

toxic(adj) /ˈtɒksɪk/ poisonous