



“Educating girls makes the world a better place” is the message on the girl’s sign. Girls and boys have equal rights, and the name of the project the girl is taking part in says exactly that: You Me Equal Rights (*Toi Moi Mêmes Droits*). Both boys and girls suffer violations of their rights, but the situation tends to be worse for girls. The girl with the sign wants more girls to get to go to school and for us to realise that a girl who has received an education can not only help herself, but can also help to make things better for her family and her country. And the Decade Child Rights Hero Malala says:

“There are 127 million girls who do not get to go to school. These girls have dreams, just like us!”

On pages 26–36, you can read about girls’ rights in Benin, Senegal and Burkina Faso, where 1,200 girls and boys at 300 schools have trained as Child Rights Ambassadors. Together with their teachers, who have completed the same training, they have helped 150,000 children at their schools to participate in the WCP program and to learn more about girls’ rights through *You Me Equal Rights*.



HM DROTTNING SILVIAS STIFTELSE  
CARE ABOUT THE CHILDREN

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# You Me Equal Rights – for

All girls and boys share the same rights and should have opportunities to lead a decent life. This is stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which almost every country in the world has promised to abide by. It is also stated in the UN Global Goal 5, for gender equality. But how does it work in practice where you live, in your country and the world.

The Convention includes rights that apply to you and every child. It is divided up into sections that are called 'articles'. Article 2 states that no one may be discriminated against (treated worse) just because they are a girl. Here are some examples of what the UN articles say about girls' rights where you live:

## Article 31: You have the right to play, rest and leisure time

All children have the same right to play and rest. Girls often have to do more household chores than their brothers, which means they have less spare time. While they do the cleaning, laundry, cook meals and look after younger siblings, their brothers often get time for themselves. In many countries, girls also have to walk several kilometres to fetch water from a well. It's often dark outside by the time they have finished all their chores. If there's no elec-



tricity at home, it can be difficult for them to do their homework.

## Article 19: You have the right to protection from all forms of violence

No one may hit or harm a child, yet it's still common for adults to subject children to violence. Girls and their mothers are particularly vulnerable. Girls are also subjected to violence by their male peers and men outside the home. If girls try to tell someone about it or seek protection, they are often not believed or given any help.

## Article 24: You have the right to the best possible health and to treatment if you get sick

When girls fall ill, they often get worse care than boys, particularly in poor families

where the girls also have to work harder. Sometimes, if there isn't much food, they get less to eat compared with their brothers. Boys living in poverty are vaccinated against serious illnesses more often than girls. In countries where there is a lack of gender equality, more girls die than boys before reaching the age of five. In rich countries it's the other way round, with more boys dying before the age of five. All children have the right to feel good and be happy in themselves. However, girls are often pressured more than

boys to look and behave in a particular way. It could be anything from how they dress, to their dreams for the future and their interests. Some girls aren't allowed to use a bicycle, dance or run, just because they are girls.

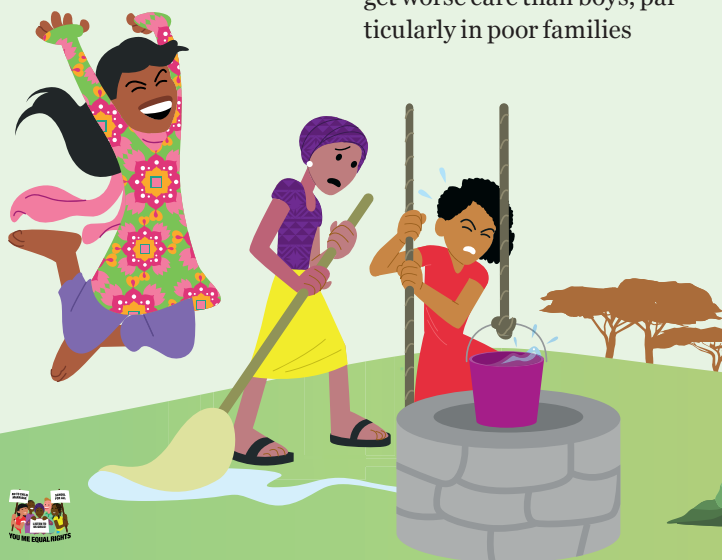
## Articles 28–29: You have the right to go to school

All children have the right to an education, but more boys than girls get to start school and many girls are forced to quit early. Sometimes it's because the parents want their daughters to help out at home. Others are worried that men will attack and hurt their daughters on their way to school. Some think that education is wasted on a daughter, because she will belong to another family when she marries. If the school has no separate toilets for girls, many stay home when they start their period. They miss lessons, and those who aren't able to catch up end up quit-



## Celebrate and stand up for girls' rights

The United Nations, UN, has established an international day for the girl child, which is celebrated on 11 October every year. You and your friends can organise a demonstration for equal rights for girls, and remind everyone in your community that girls' rights must be respected! It's important that girls do not stand alone in their fight for equal rights. Boys also need to bring about change.



# girls' rights



ting school. Other girls leave because an adult at the school is mistreating them. There are even teachers and head teachers who try to force students to have sex with them by threatening them with low grades and failing them on their exams.

Girls who get an education marry later and have fewer and healthier children. Every extra year a girl attends school increases her future income by up to a fifth! It's good for her and her family, but also good for the whole country.

## **Article 32: You have the right to protection from harmful and/or dangerous work**

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, no one should have to work before the age of 12 and you cannot work long days involving heavy or dangerous tasks under the age of 18. Yet still many children are forced to start working at an early age and carry out tasks that are

harmful. Girls often have some of the lowest paid and most dangerous jobs. They do tough labour on farms, in factories, at construction sites and as maids in private homes. Sometimes they don't even get paid, just a little food.

## **Articles 34–35: You have the right to protection from abuse and abduction and/or being sold**

You may not be married off while still a child, that is, under the age of 18. Yet girls, in particular, are still being forced into child marriage. Twelve million girls are married off every year. That's 23 a minute and almost one girl every other second. Sometimes girls are forced to marry because the family needs the money or the livestock that the husband's family give in exchange for a wife. It is usually described as trading in children.

Girls who are married off have many of their rights violated. They are often forced to quit school and are much more exposed to violence from



their husbands compared to those who marry as adult women. It can also be fatal for a girl to give birth before her body is fully grown. These days, injury during childbirth is the world's most common cause of death for girls living in poverty between the ages of 15 and 19.

## **Article 37: No one may subject you to cruel treatment**

No one has the right to hurt you, even if it is done in the name of old traditions. There are many traditions that are good for both children and adults, but also a lot that are bad. Many of the ancient traditions that harm girls are to do with marriage. For example, some believe that a girl cannot marry unless she has been 'cut'. The tradition of cutting a girl's private parts is very painful and can lead to serious infections and injuries that affect her for the rest of her life.



## **Articles 12–15: You have the right to say what you think and to be listened to**

All children have the same right to play and rest. Girls often have to do more household chores than their brothers, which means they have less spare time. While they do the cleaning, laundry, cook meals and look after younger siblings, their brothers often get time for themselves. In many countries, girls also have to walk several kilometres to fetch water from a well. It's often dark outside by the time they have finished all their chores. If there's no electricity at home, it can be difficult for them to do their homework. 🌐

## **What difference does it make?**

Equal rights and opportunities for a decent life are of course really important for every child, girls and boys alike. It is also good for entire communities for girls and women to share the same rights as boys and men. If girls get an education and gender equality improves, it reduces poverty and leads to a better life for everyone.



“I want to see changes, so that girls are no longer treated like slaves. I want us girls to have the same rights as boys, and to have the chance to study for longer before having to get married. And people need to listen to us girls, because we have ideas that can solve problems,” says Anita, 14, from the village of Nakamten-ga in Burkina Faso.

“When I was at nursery, I became ill with a condition that affected my left leg and right thigh. After a few months at home, I developed a sore in my left leg. The doctor said he would have to operate. When I started my first year at school, the



Anita helps out at home, but her brothers help just as much with the household chores.



# “Listen to us girls!”

doctor X-rayed my right thigh and said that he needed to operate on that one too. I always have problems walking, but I’m very proud of the fact that my parents supported me and didn’t reject me, even though we are poor farmers.”

**Friends’ rights violated**  
 “It’s important to be aware of children’s rights, so we can tell those who are violating them and teach others who aren’t aware of children’s rights that they exist. “Girls’ rights are not respected here.

My friend Alice was married off by her dad at the age of 14. She refused, but her dad forced her. She cried the whole time. Alice wanted to run away, but her husband made it impossible for her to. She had her first child at the age of 15.

## “Us boys should also do the dishes”

“It’s the parents’ fault that girls are always being told that they are less important than us boys. And that as boys we stay away from the household chores and leave it all to the girls. It’s not fair. Girls do the dishes, cook and wash their brothers’ clothes. They often quit school to work as maids in other people’s homes. Boys and men should also do the household chores, so things are more equal. We shouldn’t treat wives or girls as slaves in their own home.”

Abdoul Fatao, 14, Burkina Faso

## “Daughters are treated shamefully”

“I’m a boy, but I do the dishes and cleaning at home, and I’m proud that my mum has taught me these things. In families, girls don’t have the right to speak or inherit. I overheard one parent saying that enrolling a girl in school is a waste of money, because she’ll only get married and move to her husband’s home. I think it’s very shameful and wicked to think of your own daughter as though she doesn’t belong. Girls are entitled to go to school, and the ones who do well there can help their parents later on in life. Parents are failing to defend the rights of the child. That’s why the World’s Children’s Prize relies on us children when it comes to fighting to defend our rights.”

Daouda, 11, Burkina Faso

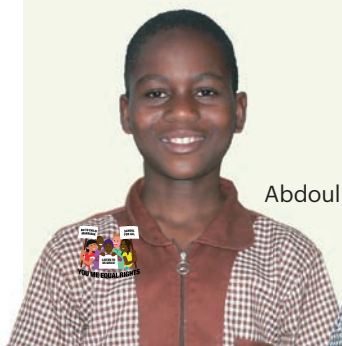
## “I’ll educate my dad”

“I know a set of twins; a boy and a girl. The dad paid for the boy’s school fees, but the girl was left at home to be a maid for another family. Her dad is violating her rights, so I’m going to educate him about how to respect girls’ rights.”

Hayfa, 10, Burkina Faso

## “Need to educate the parents”

“In almost every family, it’s the girls who do the dishes, wash the clothes and clean the yard, while the boys are allowed to study or play. Parents use girls as slaves and boys are like the rulers at home. It’s the parents’ fault, and traditions that always put daughters last.



Abdoul



Daouda



Hayfa



Aminata



“Us girls should have the chance to study for longer before getting married,” says Anita, on the right, in the computer room of Collège Yennenga Progress in the village of Nakamtenga.

“Another of my friends, Ami, had to quit school. Her parents said that girls don’t need to go to school; their role is to look after the home. Her dad stopped paying her school fees and she had to leave school in fourth grade. Ami cried and cried, and begged her parents to let her carry on at school, but they wouldn’t let her. When she was 15, her dad forced her to marry an old man.  
“I want to see changes, so that girls are

no longer treated like slaves. I want us girls to have the same rights as boys, and to have the chance to study for longer before having to get married.”

**My siblings agree**

“I speak to my siblings, parents, grandparents and friends about how important it is for everyone to know about the rights of the child, particularly girls’ rights. We shouldn’t be subjected to injustices and

we need to have an education; we shouldn’t be married off and should have the right to speak freely. We should have the same rights as boys.

“My brothers, sisters and friends say they think that goes without saying. But my older relatives, such as my grandparents, think there’s no point in educating a girl. Girls are married off at a young age, because that’s the custom here. And they say that girls don’t have the right to say what they think, and that only boys have this right. I think girls should be listened to, because sometimes we have ideas about how to solve problems.

“In my family, boys and girls share the same tasks at home, because my parents have understood that girls’ rights are important, and that all children should be treated equally. I think they’ve made a good choice, because boys and girls should have the same rights.

“It’s important to be a Child Rights Ambassador, because then you can share knowledge about the rights of the child. It feels fantastic to get together with others to talk about what changes we want to see.”

To stop this we must educate the parents, so they understand that a girl has the same rights as a boy. Most girls’ rights are violated here. I educate my parents and neighbours, so that they respect the rights of the child.”  
Aminata, 11, Burkina Faso

**“Only my brothers go to school”**

“We left our village to escape terrorist attacks. When an organization was looking for children who were refugees, to enrol them in school, my dad refused to give them my name. He only gave them my brothers’ names and they got to start school again. My mum also wanted me to stay at home and do all the household chores. Every morning I fetch water with



Salamata

a cart, two kilometres away. I fill eight 20-kilo containers. I wash my brothers’ clothes; if I refuse, I am beaten. I feel like a prisoner who’s been condemned to work all the time, without any rest. Girls are treated like machines that have to function all the time. Our country’s leaders need to put a stop to this.”  
Salamata, 12, Burkina Faso

**“My aunt tried to sell me”**

“My teacher made me pregnant when I was 16 years old. Our traditions meant that my family then threw me out and I had to live with my aunt. My siblings weren’t allowed to talk to me. I think we have to put a stop to these outdated customs that violate children’s rights. I don’t understand why it isn’t the boy who makes a girl pregnant that is disowned or punished by their family. Why is it only girls who suffer like this?  
“I can’t go to school anymore, and

my aunt is trying to force me to marry an older man. Aunt tricked me into going to his house. When she disappeared, he attacked me. I screamed. So he tied a handkerchief round my mouth and tied my hands with a rope. When my aunt returned, I cried and told her that he had raped me. Then she hit me and the man gave her money. It’s like I’m a thing to be sold. I’ll never be able to go back to school, but I’m going to make sure there’s no wedding.

“The government must work harder to stop forced marriage and rape.”  
Ornela, 17, Burkina Faso



Ornela



# “Our parents need to und

“I want our parents to understand that us girls have the right to speak and express ourselves freely about things that affect us,” says Djiba. Djiba’s birth was never registered. She has been subjected to female genital mutilation, has to work hard doing household chores and her right to be heard is not respected.

Ever since the *World’s Children’s Prize Program* came to Djiba’s village in Senegal she has been an active member of the *Child Rights Club*, and of the club’s group where children can share their experiences of violations of their rights. Djiba and her friends listen. They then tell the local leaders at school and in the village, and try to find a solution that is good for the child.

“I lost my mum when I was seven years old and I now live with my dad and his new wife. I’m treated differently to my stepmother’s children, because I’m not her daughter. I do all the household chores, grind millet, maize and peanuts. As soon as I get home from school I have to start making dinner. I have to finish the dishes and washing early to have time to gather wood in the forest and be back



home before dusk. If I don’t wash my siblings’ and parents’ clothes, I will be punished.

“I really like going to school, because I can forget about all the housework there and rest. Last year I missed the exams, but this year I’m going to do my best to succeed, because I want to be a teacher like our headteacher.”

## Dangerous journey

“We have relatives both here in Senegal and in our neighbouring country Guinea. When I was nine years old, we were planning to go to Guinea for the summer holiday as usual. I had no idea what was waiting for me that year. When we arrived at the village I met lots of girls of my age.

“The next day there was a party in the village, with tam-tam drums and danc-

## Girls for change

**Friends Aïcha, Antoinette, Rachel and Blandine are Child Rights Ambassadors. All of them are also members of a group that the village children can go to if they feel their rights have been violated. Once the friends have listened to children who have been ill-treated, they meet with village or school leaders to work together to try and find a solution that is good for the child.**

“In my village, the destiny of girls of my age is determined by traditions. You have to marry young if you don’t go to school. School isn’t the most important thing for our parents. It’s all about finding a husband for your daughter as soon as possible. I have no right to speak; they decide

what I do otherwise I’ll be beaten.

“I’d like to be a doctor so I can help children, but I also want to be a lawyer and defend the rights of girls, boys and

women, because they are rarely listened to and everyone has to do what men say.”  
Aïcha, 16, Child Rights Ambassador, Senegal



# erstand”

ing. My aunt took me into a hut where there were three women waiting. They're called 'cutters'.

“One of them held my mouth and said: ‘Don't scream otherwise the others will laugh at you because you were the only one who screamed’.

“I think it's done for the parents' honour, so they can find a husband for their daughter, and that's why we're subjected to female genital mutilation. If you haven't been cut, you can't join in preparing food at parties and ceremonies; it's like you've shamed your family and you

won't be respected. Most girls my age in our village have been cut. But I don't think it's at all normal to do this to us girls. Some girls become ill when they get home. Many find it hard to walk and sit. Sometimes girls die. We're taken to Guinea because in Senegal the parents can be arrested by the police if they find out they've subjected their daughters to female genital mutilation.”

### Right to speak freely

“I think our parents should be aware of children's rights so we can put a stop to female genital mutilation and solve other problems. For example, children have the right to say what we think and be listened to. Adults don't listen to children here,

and girls in particular have no right to speak up. I want my parents to understand that I have the right to speak freely. If the adults don't let us children say what we think, then we just do what we're told, like a flock of blind sheep.

“I want to carry on studying so I can help girls and women have better lives and be involved in making decisions. A girl shouldn't be forced to marry a man that she hasn't chosen herself.”

Djiba, 13, Child Rights Ambassador, Senegal



Djiba and her friend Diouma are at the river doing the dishes and washing clothes.



## Time for change

“The girls in our village do all the household chores. They cook, fetch wood, grind millet, maize and peanuts, wash the clothes and do the dishes in the river. They fetch water from the well and grow crops. Girls work more than boys. Things need to change. I help my sisters by washing the pots and fetching water from the well in 20-litre containers. I wouldn't want to be a girl. Many of them are taken to a village in Guinea for female genital mutilation, and they suffer a lot because of it. I support any changes that mean girls' rights are respected, and that they have the same chances at school as us boys and have more free time than they have now.”

El Hadji, 12, from the same village as Djiba, Senegal



## We discovered children have rights

“I was in fifth grade when The Globe came to our school. That was when we discovered children's rights and realised that several of our rights were being violated. The worst form of violation against girls is female genital mutilation. We put on a play in our WCP Child Rights Club that shows how bad FGM is for girls and their health. We performed the play for our parents.

“Those of us who are Child Rights Ambassadors have a group that receives warning signals from children. They can come and talk to us about their experiences of rights violations. Then we take it up with the

village leaders. Our parents' attitudes have begun to change, and we will carry on fighting until every kind of child rights violation finally stops.”

Pierre, 14, Child Rights Ambassador from the same village as Aïcha, Senegal





# School for every girl

**“I want to see change, so that every girl gets to go to school,” says Gráce. She was forced to quit school to work as a domestic slave and shop assistant for seven years.**

“I was eight years old when my dad suddenly said that I was to be sent to a woman in Cotonou. Mum wanted me to stay in the village, but she had no say in the matter. I wanted to carry on going to school, and I cried.

“Where are we going and what am I going to do there?” I asked dad on the bus. When he left me with the woman I was to work for, I cried for days and wanted to go back to my family.

“I got up at six to clean the house and do the dishes. I didn’t go to school, but instead worked for the rest of the day in the woman’s shop.”

## Shattered dreams

“A few months later, the woman took me to her sister in Ghana, where I was to look after the children and do the chores. Because I did my job so well, they wanted to let me

start school. But when my dad found out he said no, and that I had to return home. So my dream of going to school was shattered.

“My dad then sent me to another woman and I stayed with her for several years. Dad always got all my wages of 15,000 CFA each month (USD 24). He just spent the money on alcohol. When dad found out that the woman wanted to let me become an apprentice to a seamstress, he protested and brought me back to the village. Once again my dreams of getting an education were crushed. Dad refused to let me be an apprentice, because according to his agreement with the woman she wouldn’t have to send money to him if I got to go to school or become an apprentice. Dad only thought about the money.”

## Wants to see change

“Mum was pleased to see me again, but she couldn’t do anything to help me or my sister, who shares my fate. But my sister ran away from the woman she had to work for. These days I’m back in town helping a new woman with her shop.

“I’ve never had any say in my life. When I think about my brothers, who got to go to

school, it makes me sad and I cry. I can’t read or write, but I wish that one day I’ll be able to. I want everything to change and for every girl to be able to go to school.”

Gráce, 15, Benin

## Fighting for girls’ rights

“There are girls where I live who are domestic slaves who work as maids, while others are subjected to forced marriage and violence. My friend Prisca was married off against her will to a rich old man who promised her parents all kinds of lovely things. That’s why I decided to fight against these traditions, to support girls’ right to be treated the same as boys.”

Carlo, 16, Benin





# He is standing up for girls' rights

“**W**hat seriously made me want to be a Child Rights Ambassador is the numerous violations of children’s rights that I see in my neighbourhood and that I have experienced myself. I see young Marie, ten years old, working in a food shop. The woman who is responsible for Marie mistreats her and insults her all day long. Marie always looks sad and never smiles.

“Next door to this shop is a six-year-old girl working as a trainee at a hair-dresser’s. One morning when I went there to get my hair done, I saw the young girl climb up on a stool to put things on the shelves, which were much higher than she could reach. When the manager

came, he scolded the girl because she hadn’t swept up and hit her across the eye. I was very upset.”

## Influencing football team-mates

“My classmates liked when I taught them about the topic of forced child marriage and abuse against girls. They listen now when I talk about girls’ rights. When I talk to them, I use both *The Globe* and the *You Me Equal Rights* booklet.

“Outside school I have used my influence to get a bread seller to stop hitting his daughter. I also talk a lot with my friends at the football club about the program and girls’ rights. At first many of them thought I was making it up. I also make sure to teach my friends to do their homework. I am happy to be a Child Rights Ambassador.”

that had been left and leftovers in the rice seller’s pots.

“I started school very late, not until I was nine years old. My parents struggled to pay for my schooling and so I was always kicked out of my class. That made me very ashamed.

“Today I live with my uncle. We are often short of food there too. But that doesn’t stop me from studying hard and doing my best. I want to succeed in life.”

Archille, 15, Child Rights Ambassador, Ekpè School, Benin

## Francine



Archille

## I want to succeed

“My own life journey is difficult for me to talk about. In my family I did almost all the household chores with my mum and my sisters. Even though the household chores were shared, I experienced violations of my right to education and food. I often went hungry, and sometimes I was hungry from morning to evening. Sometimes at night my dad or mum would go out and look for food scraps



‘You Me Equal Rights’ is what it says on this boy’s sign in Parakou, Benin.

## The course gave me the weapons

“I knew about children’s rights and violations of girls’ rights, but I had never had the courage to say anything. I got to know about the WCP program from my headteacher. He was the person who suggested I go on the *You Me Equal Rights* course. I was really pleased, because now I have the necessary weapons to be able to defend children’s rights against any person who is violating them. I gained the courage thanks to Kim and Hassan, WCP Child Rights Ambassadors in Zimbabwe, who I saw in a film.

“This program means a lot to me. It makes it possible for me to inform my friends about girls’ rights. I use *The Globe* a lot and the *You Me Equal Rights* booklet.

“After the course I discussed gender equality with my twin sister, my grandmother, my uncle and my aunt. They want to support me in defending the rights of orphans, foster children and other children.”

Francine, 17, Child Rights Ambassador, Tohouè School, Benin



# Educating friends and parents

“I knew that girls have rights that are not respected. I had no power to do anything about it, though. But after this course I can now work for change,” says Syntiche, 16, in Zinvié, Benin. She is one of over a thousand children who have attended the two-day course and trained as Child Rights Ambassadors and experts on girls’ equal rights.

“Children here live in miserable conditions and their rights are violated. Girls, and sometimes boys, are forced to leave school, and no one protects them.

“Child apprentices in workshops are badly treated, as are foster children and orphans. Two brothers near my home are badly treated by their stepmother and can go all day

without food. Sometimes, when my mum lets me, I give them some food.”

## Young girls out at work

“Many youngsters hang around rubbish dumps. They are looking for rubbish to sell, so they can get money to buy food. One young girl, who is nine years old, works in a sewing workshop. Her parents can’t afford to let her go to school and have sent her to be an apprentice. She also works as a maid for her boss. Girls are often treated badly at apprentice workshops and are too young to be there. Most of these girls are orphans. Others have been sent out to work because their parents have no money.

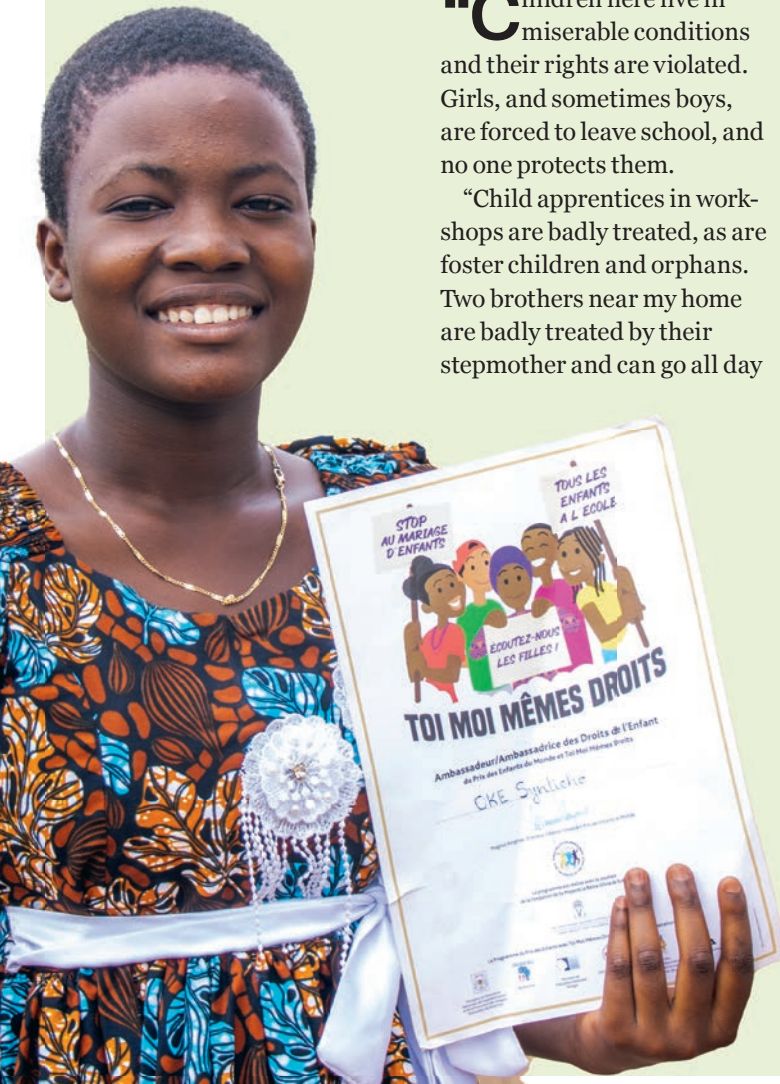
“When my friend Aminata’s dad died, she ended up in a home near me because her mum didn’t have any money.

Syntiche proudly shows off her certificate verifying that she is a trained Child Rights Ambassador.

She told me that she did all the household chores in her foster home and that she worked the rest of the day at her foster mother’s business. Aminata was always sad and didn’t enjoy her life. I comforted her that sooner or later her situation would change. However, one day her foster family left my neighbourhood and I have never seen her again.”

## Proud to go to school

“My dad died when I was twelve, so I live with my mum and my three brothers now. At



## Time to fight!

“During the two-day course I learned more about children’s rights than during my whole life. I learned how we can get others to respect girls’ and all children’s rights and how we can protect the environment. Now I know that girls should be treated in the same way as boys in all

areas and that girls should not have to suffer.

“I began going round all the classrooms, together with the other Child Rights Ambassadors, to gain support from the other students and to get them to join the program. During meetings with the leaders in all the

Ganimath talks to her schoolmates about the fact that boys and girls have the same rights.

classes we talked a lot about equality between girls and boys, the sexual harassment that girls are subjected to, early pregnancies and also climate change. We are now starting to see positive changes in the behaviour of both our friends and adults, such as less sexual harassment.

“I feel that I now have more power and courage to fight for children’s rights to be respected, especially girls’



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home I help my brothers with their homework, do household chores and help my mum to prepare food.

“It’s a long way for me to go to school. It takes 45 minutes to get there. I would like to have a bike or be able to afford to take a zem, a motorcycle taxi. I don’t always have the schoolbooks I need. Sometimes I wish that my mum had enough money to buy the books and more clothes and smart shoes, like my dad did. But I absolutely don’t want to live with anyone else. I’d rather suffer together with my mum and my brothers.

“I feel happy and proud to get to go to school. As the oldest child and the only girl, I have a duty to do my best. I want to make my parents proud, most of all my dad, even though he’s not with us any more. I teach my brothers the values that my parents taught me. I want them to be men who stand up for children’s equal rights.”

### The course gave me power

“Even before I attended the Toi Moi Mêmes Droits (You

Me Equal Rights) course I knew that Aminata had rights that were not being respected. I had no power to do anything about it, though. But after this course I can now work for change. Even though I don’t know if adults who have other children who work for them will listen to me, I tell them to treat the children in the same way as their own children. These children also have the right to go to school and not to be beaten.

“I talked about what I learned on the course to friends in my neighbourhood. We decided to educate our parents and other parents about children’s rights and about the fact that there should be equality between girls and boys.

“The four of us in my school who are trained as Child Rights Ambassadors picked out two students from all 30 classes. We educated them so that they can help us to spread the information in our school.”

rights. It’s now time to fight against the violations of girls’ rights! The changes that I demand go far beyond my school and my town. I want girls everywhere to be more respected and valued.”

Ganimath Adame, 14, Akassato School, Benin



Ganimath (on the right) with her sign on which she says ‘No to female genital mutilation’.



Syntiche has made several signs about girls’ rights that she uses for a variety of situations. Here she displays her signs saying ‘Girls and boys equal rights’ and ‘You and I equal rights’.



# “My friend’s fate made me start fighting”

“I learned that there should be equality between girls and boys and that all children have the right to an education. I am proud to be a Child Rights Ambassador. For me, it’s about being an educator who teaches those who are not aware of children’s rights. As a Child Rights Ambassador, I aim to improve the knowledge of traditional leaders about children’s

rights and about the consequences of child marriage. And to get them to understand that we must end harmful customs like female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

“The Globe, the You Me Equal Rights booklet and Hassan in the film about the World’s Children’s Prize gave me the power and courage for the mission I have been

given. It’s a noble mission.

“I want to see things change, so that girls are no longer treated as slaves. It was the fate of one of my friends that made me start to fight against violations of girls’ rights:

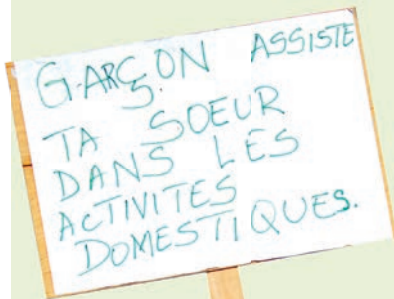
Aissa dropped out of school when she was eleven years old. Her dad had forced her to start working in other people’s homes. Her wages

were used to pay for her brother’s schooling. When she was fourteen, Aissa’s dad forced her to marry a 50-year-old man. She refused, but had no choice. When Aissa was fifteen, she got pregnant. When she was giving birth, both she and her baby died.”

Yasmina, 15, Child Rights Ambassador, Tanghin Barrage School, Burkina Faso



Yasmina, Ghislain and Guemilatou.



‘Boy help your sister with the household chores’ is what it says on this girl’s sign in Parkou, Benin.



## Essential to educate girls

“Educating a girl is educating a nation, in my opinion. As a Child Rights Ambassador, I want to change parents’ mentality by making them aware of girls’ rights. It’s our traditions and customs in particular that violate girls’ rights a lot. Parents must respect girls’ rights.

“Thanks to education I have discovered children’s rights and learned especially that girls have the right to rest and to play. Most girls here work hard and don’t have time to play or rest. Many girls drop out of school to get married or to work as a maid.

“Despite the ban on corporal punishment in school, teachers continue to hit students. Because adults do not respect our rights, we ambassadors have been selected to defend our and other children’s rights.”

Guemilatou, 14, Child Rights Ambassador, Tanghin Barrage School, Burkina Faso

## Girls must be able to inherit

“On the course I learned a lot about the fact that girls and boys have equal rights, just like *You Me Equal Rights* signifies. Girls were not created to just do household chores. At my home we take turns to do the dishes and to cook.

“Being a Child Rights Ambassador means fighting to ensure more people know about and respect children’s rights. Forced marriage and early pregnancies cause girls to drop out of school. The government of Burkina Faso must make decisions that stop this, so that girls get a good education.

“It’s unfair that a girl can be treated like an outsider in her own family and not get to inherit. She is also her father’s child, not a sheep that you raise and then sell. Girls are not animals. Some boys do not respect girls or consider them. The girls are afraid of being monitors in school for fear that the boys will hit them if they add their name to the list for being disruptive in the classroom.”

Ghislain, 13, Child Rights Ambassador, Tanghin Barrage School, Burkina Faso