

THE GLOBE

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VOTE! RÖSTA!
¡VOTA! WÄHLT!
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வாக்கம்! !: ووت
!: صوت! ووت!
HÃY BẦU! मत



WORLD'S CHILDREN'S
PRIZE FOR THE RIGHTS
OF THE CHILD

PRIX DES ENFANTS
DU MONDE POUR
LES DROITS DE
L'ENFANT

PREMIO DE LOS
NIÑOS DEL MUNDO
POR LOS DERECHOS
DEL NIÑO

PRÊMIO DAS CRIANÇAS
DO MUNDO PELOS
DIREITOS DA CRIANÇA

DER PREIS DER
KINDER DER WELT
FÜR DIE RECHTE
DES KINDES

बाल अधिकारों हेतु
विश्व बाल पुरस्कार

Hi!

The Globe magazine is for you and all other young people who participate in the World's Children's Prize program. Here you can meet friends from all over the world, learn about your rights, and get tips on how to make the world a better place!

World's Child for the Rights of the

Rosi Gollmann



Manuel Rodrigues



Molly Melching



The girl on the front cover of The Globe is participating in the World's Children's Prize in Ghana.

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ren's Prize Child

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What is the World's C

The WCP program is the world's largest annual educational initiative for equality, democracy and the Rights of the Child. Every year, three Child Rights Heroes are nominated for the World's Children's Prize, the only prize for children's rights that is awarded by children themselves! You and millions of other children learn about the nominees and the children they fight for. The WCP program ends with you children voting for your Child Rights Hero in the Global Vote. Up to 7.1 million children have voted in previous years.

The 2016 World's Children's Prize program runs from 16 April 2016 to 16 April 2017.



The World's Children's Prize is launched

You and your school will decide for yourselves when to begin working with the WCP program. Many schools launch it by organising a festive opening ceremony.



The big announcement!

On the same day all over the world, children reveal which of the three nominees has been chosen by millions of voting children to receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, and which two will receive the World's Children's Honorary Award. Gather your whole school to announce the results, or invite the media to a World's Children's Press Conference. Also talk about improvements in respect for the Rights of the Child that you would like to see.
(Page 113)



Follow us on social media!

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facebook.com/worldschildrensprize
twitter: @wcpfoundation
Instagram: @worldschildrensprize
www.worldschildrensprize.org

You Tube

Children's Prize?

Rights and democracy in your life



Explore how the Rights of the Child are respected where you live, in your family, at school and in your country. Study the history of democracy and discuss how things could be better for children in your country. For example, can you make your voices heard? Talk to other students, parents, teachers, politicians and the media. You can also start a WCP Child Rights Club at your school. (Pages 14–15, 18–20)

Rights and democracy in the world

The Rights of the Child apply to all children, everywhere. Learn more through meeting the Child Jury, Child Rights Ambassadors and the children they fight for. Find out what life is really like for the world's children right now. (Pages 16–17, 38–39, 42–49)

So far 38 million children all over the world have learned about the Rights of the Child and democracy through the WCP program. Over 67,000 schools in 113 countries have registered as Global Friend schools and support the World's Children's Prize.

The Global Vote



Set a date for your Global Vote, allowing plenty of time to prepare everything you need for a democratic election, from appointing vote counters to making ballot boxes and voting booths. Invite the media, parents and politicians to experience your Global Vote Day. Report the result of your school's vote via the ballot box at worldschildrensprize.org. (Pages 21–49)

Meet the Child Rights Heroes

Learn about Child Rights Heroes and the children they fight for, through their life stories. (Pages 50–112)



The grand finale!

The WCP Ceremony is led by the Child Jury at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. All Child Rights Heroes are honoured and receive prize money towards their work with children (totalling 100,000 US dollars). H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden helps the children of the jury to present the awards. Many schools organise their own closing ceremony, where they show a film from the WCP Ceremony and celebrate the Rights of the Child. (Pages 114–115)



Age limit for the World's Children's Prize

The WCP program is open to anyone from the year they turn ten until the year they turn 18 (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that you're a child until you turn 18). The lower age limit is there for several reasons. In order to be able to participate in the Global Vote, you must learn all about the work of the nominees. The children they fight for have often experienced severe violations of their rights, and their stories can be frightening for younger children. Even older children may find it hard to read about such difficult experiences. That's why it is important to have an adult to talk to afterwards.





The Child Jury together with Child Rights Heroes Javier Stauring and Phymean Noun.

Meet the Child Jury

The members of the World's Children's Prize Child Jury are experts on the rights of the child through their own life experiences. Every Jury child primarily represents all the children in the world who share the same experiences. They also represent children of their own country and continent. Whenever possible, the Jury includes children from all continents and all major religions.

- ♥ The Jury members share their life stories and the violations of the rights of the child they have experienced themselves or they fight against. In this way, they teach millions of children around the world about the rights of the child. They can be members of the Jury until the end of the year they turn 18.
- ♥ Every year, the Child Jury selects the three final candidates for the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child from all those who have been nominated.
- ♥ The Jury members are ambassadors for the World's Children's Prize in their home countries and throughout the world.

- ♥ The Child Jury leads the annual grand finale of the World's Children's Prize Program, the Award Ceremony. During that week the Jury children visit schools in Sweden and talk about their lives and about the rights of the child.

At www.worldschildrensprize.org you'll find more and longer stories about jury children.

Jury members Netta, Emma, Brianna and Emelda go on a boat trip during WCP week.





Payal



Jhonn Nara



Mae



Netta

♥ PAYAL JANGID, 14

India

Represents poor children who fight for their rights, especially against child labour and child marriage.

Payal lives in a poor village in Rajasthan, a part of India where many people live in poverty and girls are often forced into child marriage. But Payal is the leader of the Child Parliament in her village, and fights for change. Along with the adult leaders of the village, she and other children are working to make their village 'child-friendly'.

"We visit children at home and explain to their parents why school is important. We also tell fathers not to beat their children or wives. If they behave in a loving way life is better for everyone," says Payal, who dreams of becoming a teacher in her own village.

♥ JHONN NARA, 15

Brazil

Represents children who belong to indigenous groups and fights for their rights, as well as children whose rights are violated by abuse, discrimination and environmental degradation.

Jhonn Nara was born in Amazonas in Brazil. She is one of the youngest leaders of the Guarani indigenous people. They used to live deep in the rainforest, but now the rainforest has been cut down and replaced with large-scale cattle ranches and industries that pollute the environment with toxic chemicals and contaminated water.

Jhonn Nara and her people have been chased away from their villages. Now they are living in cramped roadside camps, where they can neither fish nor hunt. The frustration of poverty drives

the adults to drink alcohol, take drugs and fight. Jhonn Nara herself has been abused by a violent stepfather.

When she was 10 years old, 40 masked men came to her village and shot her grandfather, one of the leaders of her people.

"When we protest against this injustice, we are threatened, abused and killed. They want to eradicate us, but we will never give up," says Jhonn Nara.

♥ MAE SEGOVIA, 17

Philippines

Represents children who have been exploited by the child sex trade and children who fight trafficking and abuse.

When Mae was nine years old, she had to leave school and start working to help support her family. She was forced to dance and undress in front of a camera in an internet café. The images were sent all over the world via the internet. It took two years before the owner who exploited Mae was caught by the police. He is now in prison, as are many of those who viewed the images. But Mae was unable to stay with her family. There was a risk that she would suffer again as a result of poverty. Now she lives at a safe house for vulnerable girls. She goes to school and fights for the rights of other girls who have suffered abuse.

"I miss my family, but I love going to school and my life is better here," she says.

♥ NETTA ALEXANDRI, 16

Israel

Represents children in conflict areas and children who want to have a dialogue for peace.

"I remember the war that went on when I was little. My parents got really worried so they sent me and my sister to live with our aunts. I didn't get to see my parents for a long time. It was frightening, I didn't know what was going on, so I was worried and very scared. I didn't understand much of what was going on but I was thinking: I don't want to die, I don't want to leave my home!"

Netta thinks that dialogue – talking to one another – is the best way to achieve peace.

"It's important to talk to each other, because there is no other way. And it is important that we children know our rights, so that no one can take them away from us."



The Child Jury leads the annual WCP ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred. This is Mae and Kemal in 2015.





Emelda



Manchala



Noor

♥ EMELDA ZAMAMBO, 17

Mozambique

Represents orphans and children who fight for the rights of poor children.

When Emelda was six years old, her father was shot dead by thieves, and just a few months later her mother died of malaria.

“Everything fell apart. I didn’t think anything could ever be good again. I was terrified that I would be left alone and end up on the street. But in spite of all the bad things that happened, I was so lucky.”

Emelda’s grandmother and her uncle’s family welcomed her with open arms. She got a place to live, food, clothes and the chance to go to school.

“More than anything else, I got a family who love me.”

Emelda wanted to help other children, so she started her own school in the afternoons, for children who would not otherwise have the chance to get an education. She taught them to read, write and count.

♥ MANCHALA, 17

Nepal

Represents children who have been victims of trafficking and children who have been sexually abused.

Manchala grew up with no mother, but was close to her grandmother, who loved her deeply.

“My grandmother died when I was 13. Soon after that I stopped going to school and started working, first in a tea factory and then at a quarry. I was always dreaming of a better life.”

One day Manchala met two men who promised to get her a well-paid job in neighbouring India. But instead they sold her to a household as a maid. She worked hard but never got paid and was kept locked up.

The worst thing was that one of the men who had sold Manchala started to visit the house to abuse her. This happened several times, over a long period. Finally, Manchala managed to escape and the man was caught by the police. But then Manchala started getting death threats from his friends and relatives and had to seek refuge. Now she lives at a home for vulnerable girls in Nepal and goes to school again.

“I teach other children that they have rights and warn them about being tricked by traffickers.”

♥ NOOR MOUSA, 15

Palestine

Representing children in conflict zones, children who live under occupation and children who support dialogue for peace.

“My first memory of gunshots and fear is from the middle of the night when I was four. We raced down to the basement. Later when we tried to come back up, my grandmother’s room was on fire and there were bullet holes and shrapnel everywhere.

“Earlier this year, while we were sitting an exam, a tear gas grenade was suddenly fired into the classroom. My eyes felt like they were burning and it was hard to breathe. My friends and I ran home-wards, but the Israeli soldiers stopped us and forced us to turn back. I felt sad and scared, I was weak and powerless. We told them that we were just innocent children. When I eventually made it home I burst into tears. My grandmother read from the Koran to comfort me, and gave me olive oil to drink. Her advice was to carry on with my education, and I love school.

“I don’t like soldiers, but I want us to live like neighbours and friends with the Israeli people. We should respect their faith and they ours. We must respect one another!”

Slave boy’s s

Shamoon Masih, 14, began working as a debt slave at the brick kiln when he was four. He’s a new member of the WCP Jury, representing child labourers, slave children and children who ‘don’t exist’ because their births were not registered.

Shamoon’s family had been debt slaves to the owner of the brick kiln since his father was a child because of a loan for 60,000 rupees (\$600 USD).

When Shamoon was five, his father fought for better conditions for the brick kiln workers and helped start an evening school for the children. The owner and supervisors of the brick kiln didn’t like this. When Shamoon’s father helped a TV crew make a program showing how hard the brick kiln families’ lives were, all the brick kiln owners in the area started threatening him. He knew very well the cruelty of which they were capable, so under cover of darkness he and his oldest son fled.

Emma is a change-maker

On the WCP Child Jury Emma Mogus, 17, represents children who fight for equal rights for all children, especially children from indigenous groups.

“When I was twelve I was saddened to learn that Aboriginal youth were deprived of the same education rights as other children in my country, Canada. Native students living on reserves receive lower levels of funding from our Government than the provinces and territories do for non-native

chool for slave children



It's heavy work to prepare the clay...



...and then spend all day making bricks.



Shamoon runs an evening school for children and young people in the brick kiln village.

We are slaves

The very next morning the owner sent for Shamoon and his mother.

“My mother had explained that the owner would kill my father if we told him where he was. The owner insulted my mother and beat me with a stick several times that day. It was then that I realised that our whole family were slaves.”

Shamoon was forced to help his mother at the brickworks every day from sunrise to sunset. He carried on going to evening school, but he was exhausted.

After a couple of years, a group of

brick kiln workers managed to get the owner to promise not to hurt Shamoon's father if he returned to the brick kiln. The family could now make enough bricks in a day to satisfy the owner without Shamoon having to work all day. He started work at five in the morning, went to school at eight, and carried on working after school, from one o'clock until sunset.

His own evening school

Shamoon is now in Year 9.

“I can see that the students at the ordinary school don't think about poor

children. I think about them all the time, and wonder how they will get an education. In the evenings I run an evening school for the children and young people at the brick kiln, who can't attend an ordinary school. Education makes them brave and able to help their families. All children should be able to go to school. Education is the only path to freedom for us.”

Shamoon's family are no longer debt slaves, but they still work at a brick kiln. Shamoon helps them whenever he can. 🌐

students. At the age of twelve I understood that every child's right to education on an equal footing was being violated in my own country.

“In 2012 I co-founded *Books With No Bounds* alongside my sister Julia, to provide indigenous children living on remote reserves with education resources. Our mission began with only a few hundred books, and today we have provided over a hundred



thousand books, school supplies, food, clothing and computers and tablets to indigenous children.

“My mission is about equality, fairness and improving the lives of my brothers and sisters so that they are afforded the same rights and opportunities to succeed in school and in life. Education is our basic and absolute right and it is critical in the development of every child's potential. We have fought for the rights

Emma during WCP-ceremony 2015.

of our friends through annual walks and letter writing campaigns to our Government.”

Expensive water

“During a trip to an isolated fly-in only reserve in northern Ontario, I was shocked to learn they did not have access to clean water and the cost of buying water in this community was 180 per cent greater than what I would pay at my local grocery store.

“Aboriginal children in Canada have a long history of discrimination and prejudice and have the highest rates of suicide in the world.

“There is a dark chapter in the history of my country, and I fear that the conditions of Aboriginal children in Canada today will continue to fuel this legacy.

“My mission as a World's Children's Prize juror and child rights activist is about fairness, equality and improving the lives of children.” 🌐



Emma helps children who belong to the Wapekeka nation with their Global Vote.



Emma, on the right, and her sister during a demonstration about equality for all children in Canada.





Forced to be a child soldier

Dieu-Merci, 15, is a new representative of child soldiers and children in armed conflict situations on the WCP Jury.

"We were on our way home from school when armed men surrounded us, shouting:

"Sit down! Don't try to run away or we'll kill you!"

"The girls were taken in one direction. Us boys were marched into the forest. We kept begging the kidnapers to let us go so that we could return to our families. But they tore up our school books and set them on fire. I couldn't stop thinking about my family, and about death. One of the leaders said:

"Dear children, you are going to become soldiers, for your own safety, for your families and for our country! Anyone who refuses to come will be our enemy!"

"When we were sent to capture children I always secretly tried to help them get away. I managed to save 37 children from being killed.

"We hardly got anything to eat. We would share the odd small bird, and eat leaves and wild fruit. Every day they gave us a drink that was supposed to protect us from enemy bullets.

"One night as we were fighting I tried to escape. Instead I was captured by government soldiers. When they were about to shoot me I shouted that I was just a schoolchild who had been kidnapped.

"BVES helps me forget all the terrible things I've been through, and I feel empowered to take charge of my own life again."

© TEXT: CARMILLA FLOYD PHOTOS: IAN CHAN



Homeless boy helps others

Taree dreams of becoming an author.

"I like writing my own stories. It takes a long time to perfect them, but that doesn't matter because I have a lot of patience. If I make it as an author, first I'll help my family and then other homeless people."

Taree Mayfield, 13, from the USA, is a new WCP Jury member. He represents children who are homeless and children who help homeless children.

Taree is one of 2.5 million homeless children in the USA. They live in shelters, in cars, in shabby old hotels, or on the streets. The children's families have ended up there for different reasons, but they all dream of a home of their own.

"I've been homeless since I was nine," explains Taree. "For a few years we moved around a lot, but now we live at Union Rescue Mission. This place is home to thousands of homeless people who don't have anywhere else to go."

Taree, his mother and five brothers and sisters live in one room and share a toilet and shower with others.

"The worst bit is probably having to get up at five in the morning, when breakfast is served in the dining hall."

Taree's family live in downtown Los Angeles, in the homeless area. Thousands of people live on the street here. On his walk to school in the morning he has to pick his way between tents, shopping carts and sleeping people. But Taree is not afraid.

"The people who live on the streets are kind and helpful towards us children."

Helping other children

Hardly anybody at school knows where Taree lives. He has only told his very best friend, because many people are prejudiced against homeless people.

"The worst thing about being homeless is moving around and changing school so often. I worry about the future a lot, and how I'll be able to help my family survive. Sometimes it's hard to stay motivated. But my mother supports all of us. She has helped us grow strong, although things have been tough. Luckily I like school. Math makes me happy!"

Taree gets help with his homework from School on Wheels, an initiative started by child rights hero Agnes Stevens, who received the World's Children's Honorary Award in 2008.

"Without their extra tuition I wouldn't have done so well at school," says Taree. "Now I help the younger kids there with their homework!" 🌍



Taree with his siblings.

"We are three sets of twins! But my twin brother and I are total opposites and we are into very different things."

Milad fled war

Milad was twelve when he met the trafficker who would take him to Europe. Two years had passed since his family had fled their home. Milad is a new member of the WCP Child Jury, where he represents children forced to flee their homes.

The family fled from war in their home city of Aleppo in Syria to Kobane, and across the border into Turkey.

“It was hard to survive there. Thousands of new refugees were arriving every day, and there were lots of children begging on the street. I worked in a textile factory because there was no school to go to.”

When Milad had been out of school for two years, his mother said: “Your entire future is at risk. We need to get to Europe.” His big brother went first, and a few months later it was Milad’s turn. Lots of desperate refugees were crossing the Mediterranean Sea and thousands were dying when their overcrowded boats sank. Many of them were children. So the family saved up to pay a trafficker to take Milad to Sweden.

Demanded more money

“I was nervous,” recalls Milad. “Suspicious border guards stopped us at passport control and we missed the flight. It took the trafficker 48 hours to find another flight. I wanted to call my mother in case she thought I had been kidnapped or killed. But the trafficker was afraid that she would demand her money back.”



The flight didn’t land in Sweden. It landed in neighbouring Norway instead.

“We were stopped at passport control and the guards brought an interpreter. He said, in Arabic, ‘Give me money, otherwise I’ll say that your passports are false and then you’ll end up in jail.’ I was terrified, but the trafficker promised to pay.”

Finally, Milad was able to phone his family.

“I cried when I heard my brother’s voice. It took six hours for him to drive

over from Sweden. When he arrived there was an argument. The trafficker refused to let me go unless we paid more money. It occurred to me that I might never get to see my mother again. But eventually he let us go.”

Thinking of others

Now Milad goes to a Swedish school and plays in a football team. He’s happy here, but he misses his home and his best friend, who is still in Aleppo.

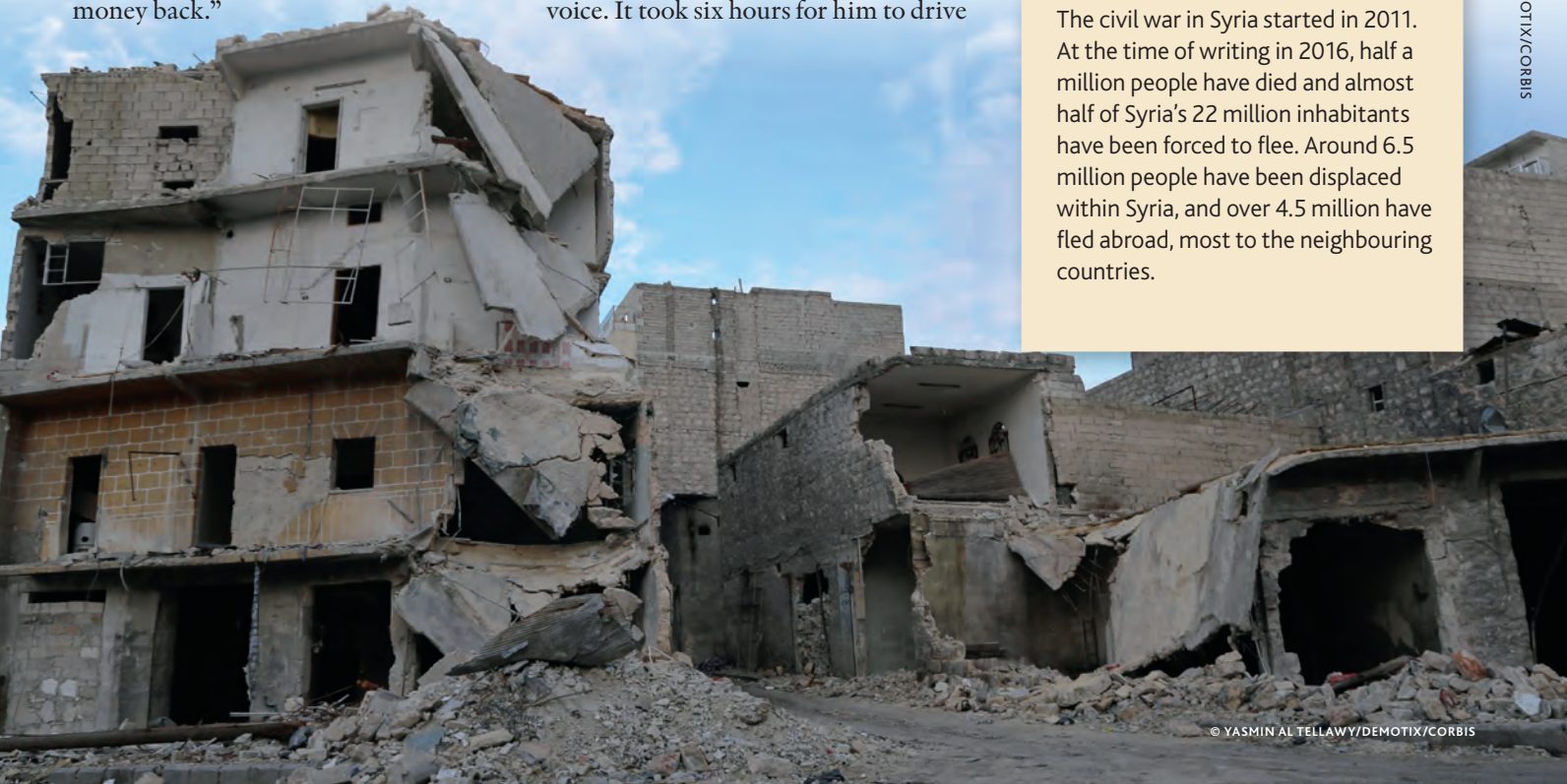
“The city has been ripped apart by bombs and there’s no food, water or electricity. My friend’s family are trying to escape but it’s hard. The city of Kobane, where we fled to first, has been destroyed by IS, Islamic State, and the border where we crossed into Turkey is now closed.”

Many people in Europe are worried that taking in refugees will cost too much money, and some people want to stop them coming by closing all the borders.

“I am grateful that I was able to come, because we would have died in Syria,” says Milad. “Now I’m worried for my friend. We have to think about others, not just ourselves.”

War in Syria

The civil war in Syria started in 2011. At the time of writing in 2016, half a million people have died and almost half of Syria’s 22 million inhabitants have been forced to flee. Around 6.5 million people have been displaced within Syria, and over 4.5 million have fled abroad, most to the neighbouring countries.



KEWAL THE SLAVE BOY'S STORY



I GREW UP IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN PAKISTAN'S THAR DESERT. WHEN I WAS TEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED.



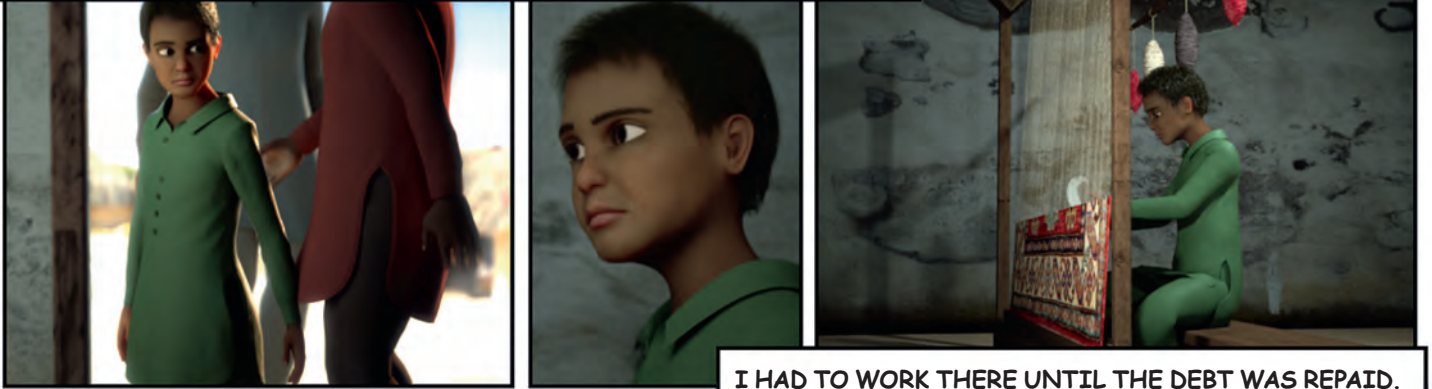
KEWAL, COME QUICKLY!

YOUR MOTHER IS VERY ILL.

TO PAY FOR HER MEDICINE, MY FATHER HAD TAKEN A LOAN.

YOU WILL HAVE TO WORK NOW!

MY FATHER TOOK ME TO THE CARPET FACTORY OWNER WHO LENT HIM THE MONEY.



I HAD TO WORK THERE UNTIL THE DEBT WAS REPAYED.

BUT I NEVER GOT ANY MONEY AND THE DEBT WAS NEVER REDUCED.



WAKE UP!

IF I FELL ASLEEP OR MADE A MISTAKE, I WAS BEATEN.

AFTER THREE YEARS, I RAN AWAY.



AT LAST I SAW MY VILLAGE.

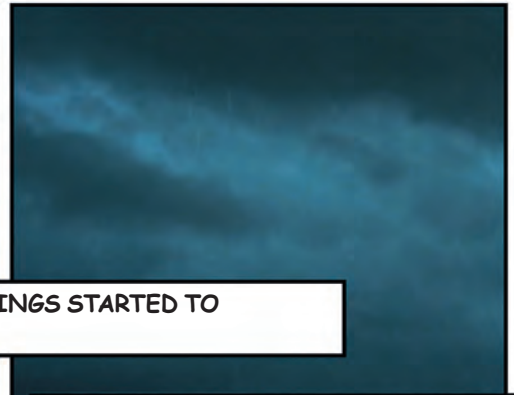


MY FATHER CONVINCED THE CARPET MAN TO LET ME GO TO SCHOOL DURING THE DAY AND WORK IN THE EVENING.

WE READ ABOUT THE WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE. I LEARNED THAT MY RIGHTS WERE BEING VIOLATED.



BUT JUST AS THINGS STARTED TO GET BETTER ...



... THE RAIN BEGAN TO POUR.



THE DESERT FLOODED.



MY VILLAGE AND OUR SCHOOL WERE DESTROYED.

BUT WE REBUILT OUR SCHOOL.



I WAS ABLE TO TAKE PART IN THE GLOBAL VOTE! AND I BECAME A MEMBER OF THE WCP CHILD JURY.



I'M NOW 18 AND HAVE LEFT THE JURY. ONE DAY I WILL BE A DOCTOR!

Celebrate the rights of the child

Fira barnets rättigheter

Célébre les droits de l'enfant

Celebre os Direitos da Criança



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to you and all other children under 18. All the countries in the world except the USA* have ratified (pledged to follow) the Convention. This means they must put children's best interests first and listen to what children have to say.

Basic principles of the Convention:

- All children are equal and have the same rights.
- Every child has the right to have his or her basic needs fulfilled.
- Every child has the right to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- Every child has the right to express his or her opinion and to be respected.

What is a convention?

A convention is an international agreement, a contract between countries. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is one of the six UN conventions on human rights.

The right to complain!

Children whose rights have been violated can submit complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, if they have not received help in their own country. This has become possible thanks to OP3, a relatively new protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children in countries that have approved the protocol therefore have better chances of making their voices heard regarding their rights. Some countries have not yet approved the protocol.

* USA has *signed* the Convention but that is not legally binding.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child brings together a long series of rights that apply to all the children in the world. We have summarised a few of them here.

Article 1

These rights apply to all children under 18 in the world.

Article 2

All children are equal.

All children have the same rights and should not be discriminated against.

Nobody should treat you badly because of your appearance, your skin colour, your gender, your language, your religion, or your opinions.

Article 3

Those who make decisions affecting children must put the interests of the children first.

Article 6

You have the right to life and the right to develop.

Article 7

You have the right to a name and a nationality.

Article 9

You have the right to live with your parents unless it's bad for you.

You have the right to be brought up by your parents, if possible.

Articles 12–15

All children have the right to say what they think. You are to be consulted and your opinions respected in all matters concerning you – at home, at school and by the authorities and the courts.

Article 18

Your parents are jointly responsible for your upbringing and development. They must always put your interests first.

Article 19

You have the right to protection from all forms of violence, neglect, abuse and mistreatment. You should not be exploited by your parents or other guardians.

Articles 20–21

You are entitled to receive care if you have lost your family.

Article 22

If you have been forced to leave your country you have the same rights as all the other children in your new country. If you are alone you have the right to special protection and help. If possible you should be reunited with your family.

Article 23

All children have the right to a good life. If you are disabled you have the right to extra support and help.

Article 24

When you are sick you have the right to receive all the help and care you need.

Articles 28–29

You have the right to go to school and to learn important things, such as respect for human rights and respect for other cultures.

Article 30

The thoughts and beliefs of every child should be respected. If you belong to a minority you have the right to your own language, your own culture and your own religion.

Article 31

You have the right to play, rest and free time, and the right to live in a healthy environment.

Article 32

You should not be forced to do hazardous work that prevents your schooling and damages your health.

Article 34

No one should subject you to abuse or force you into prostitution. If you are treated badly you are entitled to protection and help.

Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 37

No one should punish you in a cruel and harmful way.

Article 38

You never have to be a soldier or take part in armed conflict.

Article 42

All adults and children should know about this convention. You have the right to learn about your rights.

Find out more about the rights of the child, about all children's right to complain, and about the new global goals, at www.worldschildrensprize.org



New global goals

In September 2015, world leaders agreed to work towards 17 new global goals. They cover everything from health and hunger to education and the environment. The goals are to be achieved within 15 years, in order to solve three huge problems: eradicating extreme poverty, ending injustice and inequality, and tackling climate change. In all countries. For all people. You too can join the fight to achieve these goals!

Celebrate the rights of the child

20 November is a day for the children of the world to celebrate. On that day in 1989, the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

How are the world's children?

All countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have promised to respect the rights of the child. Still, violations of these rights are common in all countries. Here are a few examples – how are the children where you live?

NAME AND NATIONALITY

From the day you are born you have the right to have a name and to be registered as a citizen of your home country.

Every year, 138 million children are born. Over 48 million of these children are never registered. There is no documented proof that they exist!



SURVIVE AND GROW

Every country that has promised to respect the rights of the child must do all it can to allow children to survive and develop.

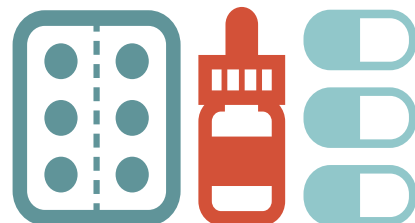
1 in 4 children under five in the world are malnourished, and this affects their development for the rest of their lives. 1 in 20 children (1 in 11 in the poorest countries) dies before reaching the age of five, usually due to causes that could have been prevented such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria.

200
000 000

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability you have the same rights as everyone else. You have the right to receive support so that you can play an active role in society. Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in the world. In many countries they are not allowed to go to school. Many are treated like inferior beings and are kept hidden away.

There are approximately 200 million children with disabilities in the world.



HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

You have the right to good health, and to help if you are sick. Lack of food, clean water and good hygiene affects many children's health.

Every day, 16,000 children under five die. Poor children rarely go to the doctor, especially if they are girls. Every year, 2 million children die of common childhood illnesses that can be prevented by vaccination, because 1 child in 6 is not vaccinated. Malaria kills 1,500 children under five every day (approx 500,000 per year). Only 3 in 10 children with malaria receive treatment, and only 4 in 10 children in the poorest malarial countries sleep under a mosquito net.



HAZARDOUS CHILD LABOUR

You have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and work that is hazardous to your health or that prevents you from going to school. All work is prohibited for children under 12.

Around 264 million children work, and for most of them, the work they do is directly harmful to their safety, health, morale and education. Some 5.5 million children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, as debt slaves, child soldiers or victims of the child sex trade. Every year, 1.2 million children are 'trafficked' in the modern day slave trade.



100 MILLION

CHILDREN WHO LIVE ON THE STREET

You have the right to live in a safe environment. All children have the right to education, medical care and a decent standard of living.

Around 100 million children live on the streets. For many, the streets are their only home. Others work and spend their days on the streets, but have families to return to at night.



MINORITY CHILDREN

Children who belong to minority groups or indigenous peoples have the right to their language, culture and religion. Examples of indigenous peoples include Native Americans, Aboriginal Australians and the Sami people of Northern Europe.

The rights of indigenous and minority children are often violated. Their languages are not respected and they are bullied or discriminated against. Many children do not have access to medical care.



A HOME, CLOTHING, FOOD AND SECURITY

You have the right to a home, food, clothing, education, health care and security.

Over 900 million people, or 1 in 7, live in extreme poverty. Almost half of these people are children.



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Children may only be imprisoned as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. No child may be subjected to torture or other cruel treatment. Children who have committed crimes should be given care and help. Children may not be sentenced to life imprisonment or receive the death penalty.

At least 1 million children in the world are being held prisoner. Imprisoned children are often treated badly.



VIOLENCE

You have the right to protection from all forms of violence, neglect, maltreatment and abuse. 1 in 3 children is subjected to bullying.

4 in 5 children in the world between the ages of 2 and 14 are subjected to some sort of physical punishment and/or violence at home. Many countries allow corporal punishment in schools. Only 48 countries have banned all forms of physical punishment of children.



WAR AND REFUGEES

You have the right to protection and care in times of war or if you are a refugee. Children affected by conflict and refugee children have the same rights as other children.

Roughly 30 million children in the world are refugees – this is over half of all the refugees in the world. Over the last 10 years at least 2 million children have been killed in war. 6 million have suffered serious physical injuries. 10 million children have suffered serious psychological harm. 1 million have lost or become separated from their parents. Around 250,000 children are being used as soldiers, carriers or mine clearers (over 1,000 children are killed or injured by mines every year).



SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

You have the right to go to school. Primary and secondary schooling should be free for everyone.

More than 9 out of 10 children in the world go to school, but there are still 58 million children who get no education whatsoever. More than half of these are girls.

YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD!

You have the right to say what you think about any issue that affects you. Adults should listen to the child's opinion before they make decisions, which must always be in the child's best interests.

Is this how things are in your country and in the world today? You and the rest of the world's children know best!



The road to democ

What is democracy?

Do you and your friends have similar opinions on some issues but completely different views on other issues? Perhaps you are able to listen to one another and discuss the issue until you reach a solution that everyone accepts. In this case, you are in agreement and have reached a *consensus*. Sometimes you have to agree to disagree. Then the majority – the biggest group – gets to decide. This is called *democracy*.

In a democracy, all people should have equal value and equal rights. Everyone should be able to express their opinions and influence decisions. The opposite of a democracy is a *dictatorship*. That's when only one or a few people decide everything and nobody is allowed to protest.

In a democracy, everyone should be able to make their voices heard. People have to compromise, and decide things by voting. There is *direct democracy* and *representative democracy*. Direct democracy is when you vote on a particular issue, for example, the Global Vote, where children decide who should receive the World's Children's Prize. Another example is when a country holds a *referendum*.

Most democratic countries are governed by *representative democracy*. This is when the citizens choose people to be their *representatives* – politicians – to govern the country according to what the people want.

Every year the World's Children's Prize Program concludes with a democratic Global Vote, organised by you! Come on a journey through time, charting the rise of democracy in our world.



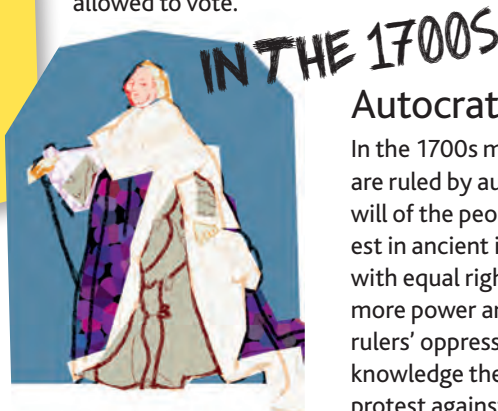
Joint decisions

Throughout the ages people have gathered to make decisions together. Decisions are made in groups, tribes or villages, perhaps about hunting or agriculture. Some groups have rituals to help them discuss what is best for the group and make shared decisions. Sometimes an object, such as a feather, is passed round, and whoever is holding the feather is allowed to speak. *Try it out with your friends!*

The birth of the word democracy

In 508 BCE the word democracy is born, from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratein* (power or rule). The citizens of Greece have to climb a stair and give their opinion on important issues. If they can't reach an agreement, the people vote on the issue by a show of hands. Only men have the right to vote at this time. Women, slaves and foreigners are not considered citizens and are not allowed to vote.

508 BCE



Autocratic rulers

In the 1700s most of the countries in Europe, for example, are ruled by autocratic kings and emperors, who ignore the will of the people. But some thinkers begin to take an interest in ancient ideas that all people are born free and equal, with equal rights. Why should some groups in society have more power and wealth than others? Others criticise the rulers' oppression and believe that if people have more knowledge they will recognise the injustice in society and protest against it.

racy



1789

Voice of the rich

1789 is also the year the French Revolution begins. The ideas and demands behind it spread across Europe and influence the development of society. Still, only men are considered citizens. What's more, often the only men who are allowed to vote and become politicians are rich ones who own land and buildings.

No women or slaves

In 1789 the first constitution of the United States of America is written. This is an important step in the history of democracy. It states that people should have power over the decisions in society, and that people should have the right to write and think whatever they want. However, the constitution does not apply to women or slaves.



First secret ballot

In 1856 the first secret ballot was held in Tasmania, Australia, using ballot papers with the candidates' names printed on them.



1856

1906
1921
1945

Women demand voting rights

In the late 1800s, more and more women begin to demand the right to vote in political elections. In 1906, Finland is the first country in Europe to give women the vote. Sweden and the UK follow suit in 1921. In most of the other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia women are not allowed to vote until after the end of the Second World War, in 1945, or even later.

1947



World's biggest democracy

In 1947 India liberates itself from the British empire and becomes the biggest democracy in the world. The fight for freedom is led by Mahatma Gandhi, who believes in resisting oppression without violence – *non-violence*.

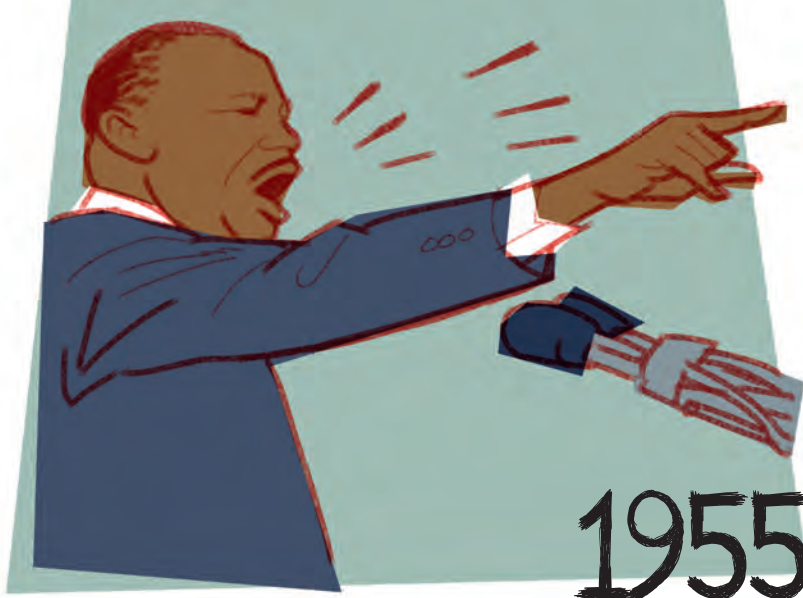
First democracy in Africa

In 1957 Ghana in West Africa becomes independent from its colonial ruler, Great Britain. Kwame Nkrumah becomes the first leader of the country.

The colonisation of Africa, Asia and Latin America began hundreds of years previously. The great powers of Europe sent out soldiers and explorers, to occupy land, steal natural resources, and turn people into slaves.

1957





Equal rights in the USA

In 1955 a woman called Rosa Parks, who is black, refuses to give up her seat on the bus for a white man. Rosa is fined, because in the American South black people do not have the same rights as white people. They are not allowed to go to the same schools as white children, and sometimes they are not allowed to vote. Civil rights champion Martin Luther King starts a boycott of the bus company. This marks the beginning of a major protest movement across the USA, against racism and for freedom and equal rights.



The Arab spring

In 2010 a poor young man in Tunisia has his vegetable cart confiscated by the police. He sets himself on fire in protest, and when news of his death spreads, hundreds of thousands of people go out on the streets to demonstrate. They manage to topple the dictator who rules the country, Ben Ali. People in neighbouring countries are inspired, and the dictatorships in Egypt and Libya are overthrown by mass protests too. The democracy movement in the Middle East is often called *the Arab Spring*.

Dictatorships remain

Today, many countries in the world are still ruled by dictators, but even in many democracies human rights continue to be violated. The rights of the child are violated in all countries. In dictatorships people are denied the right to vote and the right to express their views – freedom of opinion. The rulers decide everything, and enrich themselves and their families on the people's expense.



Voting rights for everyone in South Africa

In 1994 Nelson Mandela becomes South Africa's first democratically elected president. He has been in prison for 27 years for his fight against the country's racist apartheid system, which separated people according to skin colour. The election of Mandela is the first time that all South Africans are able to participate in an election on equal terms.

Towards democracy in Burma

In 2010 Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house arrest by the Burmese dictatorship, after having spent fifteen of the previous 23 years under house arrest because of her brave struggle for democracy in Burma. In 2011 she becomes a patron of the World's Children's Prize Foundation.

2010



2016/2017

The children's democratic Global Vote

In 2016/2017 the World's Children's Prize Program will take place for the sixteenth time. So far, over 38,4 million children have learned about their rights and democracy – knowledge needed by every new generation. It helps you and your friends to go through life making your country a better place, where democracy is strengthened and children's rights and human rights are respected.

When you have learned all about the rights of the child, and the prize candidates, you are ready for the democratic Global Vote. Your vote is your decision. No-one should tell you who to vote for. The candidate who receives the majority of the votes will receive the 2016/2017 World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child!





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Time for the Global Vote

Through the Global Vote, you help decide who will receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child.

You have the right to vote until and including the year you turn 18.

Set a date for your Global Vote Day as soon as you start this year's WCP program, so that you have plenty of time, weeks or months, to learn about the nominees and discuss the rights of the child where you live and around the world.

Nobody else should be able to influence your decision – not your friends, nor your teachers, nor your parents. Nobody should be able to find out who you voted for unless you tell them yourself. Everyone who has a right to vote should be included on the voting register, and their name should be crossed off this list when they receive their ballot paper or when they cast their vote in the ballot box.

Invite people to your day!
Invite the local media, politicians, and your parents to experience your Global Vote day!

Make imaginative ballot boxes



Vital voting booth



Make your own voting booth, or borrow one from local adult elections.



Appoint key people

- Presiding officers mark off the names on the electoral register and give out ballot papers.
- Election supervisors make sure everything is done correctly.
- Vote counters count the votes.



Paint prevents cheating

Prevent people from voting twice by marking everybody who has voted, for example, with ink on their thumb, a painted nail, or a line on the hand or face. Use ink that does not wash off easily!



Enter the voting booth one at a time, so that nobody else can see how you vote.

Count the votes, celebrate, and then report your results for all three candidates to the WCP!



You can find inspiration on pages 21–49, by visiting Global Vote days in different countries.

Earthquake couldn't stop Phulmaya's Global Vote



"Today I voted in our Global Vote and that feels important. The candidates fight for us children. By voting, I am showing that what they do is important, and that I support their work," says Phulmaya.

"I was so afraid when the earthquake started – I thought I was going to die. Our house and my school were both completely destroyed. The year before, the Child Rights Ambassadors came to our school. They gave us knowledge and courage, and taught us about girls' rights and how girls get tricked and sold. After the earthquake I was worried that we would never be able to participate in the World's Children's Prize again," says Phulmaya, 12, from the village of Gairibisauna in Nepal.

If there is one subject that Phulmaya knows she and all the other children in the village need to learn more about, it's girls' rights.

"Girls here are forced to work much more than boys. I work for several hours both before and after school. I get up at dawn and feed our animals before lighting a fire in the stove and preparing

breakfast. After school I fetch water, wash clothes, cook food and wash the dishes. If I have time left over before bed I do my homework. I never have time to play like boys do," explains Phulmaya.

"But still, I'm lucky. Many girls don't get to go to school at all, while their brothers do. The parents don't want to pay for their daughters, because





This is what Phulmaya's home looked like the day after the earthquake – just one big pile of rubble. Phulmaya is still helping to clear away stones.



the plan is for the girls to be married off young and move in with their husband's family. Some girls are even forced to get married when they are still children themselves.”

Phulmaya had always felt that it was unfair to treat girls and boys differently. But she didn't know that it was a violation of her rights. Not until the Child Rights Ambassadors brought the World's Children's Prize to the village.

Child Rights Ambassadors

“They taught me that girls and boys are equal, and that we girls have the same rights as boys. That we too have a right to a good education and should be treated well and not forced to get married against our will. That made me really happy!”

The Child Rights Ambassadors who came to Phulmaya's village live in a home run by Maiti Nepal, an organisation that fights against the child sex trade.

“The ambassadors taught us a lot about trafficking. About how traffickers come to poor villages, just like ours, and trick parents into selling

their daughters. The parents think their daughters are going to get a good job abroad or in the capital city, Kathmandu, and send money home. Instead the daughters become slaves in brothels and are forced to do awful things.”

Phulmaya and her school friends learned that around twelve thousand girls disappear from Nepal in this way every year, mostly to India. The vast majority never come home again.

“This is so terrible, it has to



be stopped! When I met the ambassadors I knew straight away that I wanted to become a Child Rights Ambassador too, travelling round to schools and fighting for girls' rights and against the slave trade in Nepal.”

The earthquake

But then something happened that put a stop to Phulmaya's plans to become an ambassador.

“It was a Saturday. I was sitting eating lunch with my mother and a friend when

suddenly everything started to shake. Glasses and plates crashed to the floor. Cupboards and shelves collapsed, the TV fell... everything smashed. I panicked and I was sure we were all going to die. My mother was shouting that we had to get out, out! And we just managed to get out before the whole house collapsed and turned into a pile of rubble. All the neighbours came running out of their houses as they collapsed too.

“It felt unreal. Everyone was crying and screaming. We hugged and tried to comfort one another. My family was lucky, because everyone made it out, but my friend's grandfather didn't manage to get out before their house fell down on top of him. He died. Many people in Nepal died in the earthquake.”

Phulmaya and her neighbours had to sleep on the street for the first few months after the earthquake.

Phulmaya is on her way to school while her mother clears up in front of the house with the tin roof that will be the family's new home.

The shutters are in place in the classrooms when the Child Rights Ambassadors teach the students, but not the stone walls. They collapsed in the earthquake.



WCP Prize Laureate Maiti

In 2002, Maiti Nepal received the World's Children's Prize for their fight against trafficking of Nepali girls, who are sold as slaves, mostly to India. Maiti prevents poor girls from being tricked and sold to brothels, by giving them information and an education. Maiti supports and cares for girls who have been slaves, and they have border guards who stop traffickers when they try to transport girls out of Nepal.



“There were fifteen of us, lying huddled on the ground. We had to share the blankets. Everyone was sad and crying. Some people said that tigers would come and find us there, unprotected. I was so afraid.”

School destroyed

Phulmaya's school was destroyed too. The walls had collapsed and the desks, books, computers and all the other resources were buried under the rubble.

“I was afraid that I would never be able to come back to school.”

At first, the people in the village struggled to find enough to eat, since everyone's food stores were buried

under rubble and the fields were swamped with mud.

“We were hungry, and we had to clear up. We built a little shack from tin and plastic, and we still live there. It's OK, but I don't really like it. It's cramped and I have to sleep on the floor. It's the rainy season at the moment and the shack leaks, so

everything gets wet. I can't wait till our new house is ready.”

World's Children's Prize

While Phulmaya's family and all the others were clearing their ruined houses, they were also trying to get the village school going again. After a month of hard work,

the students were finally able to come back.

“It felt great to see all my friends and start learning things again. Before the earthquake our school was really beautiful, but it isn't any more. The outer walls are gone, and the books, and lots of other things. But it still feels good to be back.”



Phulmaya reads *The Globe* on the floor of the small shack that is her family's temporary home.





Everyone has really been looking forward to the Global Vote, and now the day has finally come! The students take it very seriously and queue up in an orderly fashion.

Phulmaya was delighted to discover that she and all the other students at the school would be able to continue to participate in the World's Children's Prize.

"After the earthquake I was afraid that I wouldn't see the Child Rights Ambassadors again. I was also scared that

we wouldn't be able to read The Globe or take part in the WCP and learn more about our rights. But the ambassador girls came back, and we are involved again! This time was extra special for me because I got to help the ambassadors to speak about the rights of the child and

prepare my class for the Global Vote. I told them about girls' rights and about how girls are kidnapped and sold. I was nervous, but more than that I felt proud and happy. And today we have actually just voted. The earthquake couldn't stop our Global Vote!" 🌐



Fighting for girls

Phulmaya got to help the Child Rights Ambassadors to tell her class about girls' rights and trafficking – how girls are kidnapped and sold like slaves.

"Since the earthquake, girls are more at risk from the child sex trade, because families are even poorer now. Many children have lost their parents and that makes it easier for traffickers to exploit those children. That's why it seemed important to talk about this right now," explains Phulmaya.

Almost 9,000 died

The two powerful tremors on 25 April and 12 May 2015, as well as the 380 aftershocks, had terrible consequences in Nepal, which was already a poor country:

- 8,959 people died, 2,525 of whom were children.
- 1,642 children lost one or both of their parents.
- 32,000 classrooms were destroyed.
- 985,000 children couldn't return to school.
- 900,000 homes were damaged or destroyed.
- 765 hospitals or health centres were damaged or destroyed.
- 10,000 children are acutely malnourished as a result of the earthquake.
- 513 girls and women have been rescued from being trafficked at the border with India since the earthquake.



Never go with strangers!

"I was happy when the Child Rights Ambassadors came to our village and taught us important things and explained about the World's Children's Prize. But it made me sad too. Finding out that Nepali girls the same age as me get sold and end up in the sex trade as slaves is horrific. It pains me. If you end up in the sex trade then all your rights get violated. You have no education and no future. The ambassadors have told us never to talk to strangers and never to go with someone we don't know. They also warned us about eating food that a stranger offers you, because it could be drugged. Once you are under the influence of drugs you are at risk of being kidnapped and sold as a slave. This is great advice that helps us. I would like to be a Child Rights Ambassador for girls' rights and travel around the villages explaining that we are all equal. To help put an end to discrimination against girls.

"When I grow up I want to be a nurse."

Ganga, 13, Shree Tapeshwor Higher Secondary School



Treat sons and daughters the same!

"Today we had our Global Vote at my school. I was a police officer and kept the queue in order. We held a Global Vote because we work with the World's Children's Prize at my school. Through participating in the WCP I've learned that children have rights, for example, children shouldn't have to do hard labour, but should be able to go to school. I have also learned that adults are not allowed to hit children. But crimes against children are common in Nepal. Things are particularly tough for girls here. Many girls in the villages can't go to school because they are forced to work at home and in the fields instead. But their brothers go to school. When the girls are 13 or 14 years old, many are forced to marry grown men.

All of this is wrong. Of course sons and daughters should be treated equally! The same mother gave birth to them, and they have the same blood. What is the difference? There's none! Regardless of whether you are a boy or a girl you are worth the same. The Child Rights Ambassadors do an important job, travelling around the schools, teaching people about our rights. Then we go home to our families and neighbours and tell them about what we have learned. We show them The Globe magazine. Once everyone is aware, I believe that all children will gradually be treated better in Nepal. In the future, I want to be an ophthalmologist."

Jeevan, 14, Shree Tapeshwor Higher Secondary School



Ambassadors inspire

"I really like it when the Child Rights Ambassadors come here and teach us about girls' rights. I love hearing that we must be respected. Here, girls are often treated worse than boys. Many sisters go to worse schools than their brothers, if they even get to go to school at all. That makes me angry and sad. If parents are only going to care about their sons, I don't think they should be allowed to have any children at all! Maybe the boys who listen to the ambassadors will become great fathers in the future, who treat their daughters as well as their sons. I hope so! The ambassadors show that we girls can do important things if we get the chance. They are brave, talking about our rights in front of both children and adults. It's inspiring! I want to be one too! Today I am a presiding officer, and I used a



marker pen to mark one nail on each person who voted. This was so that nobody could vote more than once. It's important. After all, this is about our rights, so it's important that nobody cheats!

"When I grow up I want to be a social worker and fight for children's rights."

Pusana, 14, Shree Tapeshwor Higher Secondary School



Boys as Child Rights Ambassadors

"Today we had our Global Vote at school. It was like a big party. We celebrated our rights and we were all together. Before the Global Vote the WCP Child Rights Ambassadors came to our school and taught us about the rights of the child, trafficking and the World's Children's Prize. They also taught us that girls and boys are equal and have the same rights. That is something I completely agree with! That's why it's only fair that we boys also get to be Child Rights Ambassadors and fight for important things. If I was an ambassador I would tell people that girls and boys have the same rights and should be treated equally. In Nepal it's common for girls to work much more than us boys. That is wrong! In my family, my sisters and I share the work equally. If one of them

is cooking, I'll chop the vegetables. If my sisters are washing clothes, I'll fetch water. Sharing the work is the right thing to do. That way everyone gets a bit of time to play and do their homework properly. As a Child Rights Ambassador I would tell all boys to help their mothers and sisters at home. I would also fight against trafficking, which is also common here. Poor people are tricked into selling their children, both girls and boys. The traffickers say that the children will get an education or a well-paid job, so that they can send money home to their families. Instead the children end up as slaves, often abroad. Both boys and girls are often forced to work as domestic slaves, or carrying heavy loads like firewood, or doing hard labour in the fields. Some girls end up as slaves in

brothels in India. That is terrible! When I grow up I want to be a doctor."
Sujan, 12, Shree Tapeshwor Higher Secondary School



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BIERKE



Off to vote for children's rights.



Celebrating the Global Vote

Celebrating the Global Vote To celebrate the end of Global Vote day, everyone gets juice and sweets. The earthquake feels a long way away.



GHANA
Children from several different schools in Kasoa in Ghana came together for their Global Vote at Ebenezer Presbyterian Complex.

The Globe made me a child rights champion



Child Rights Ambassador for democracy

"The Globe has put smiles on children's faces by teaching them about their rights. Through The Globe, I've learned about my rights and now I'm stronger, braver and smarter. As a Child Rights Ambassador I have a strong belief in democracy, because just as one tree cannot make a forest, one voice cannot make a nation. I want to hear and listen to everyone's opinions. As the leader of Erica Girls' Club, I've been able to teach others about the rights of the child using all the fun ideas in the magazine. My members and I have managed to teach over 50 children about their rights. The motto of Erica Girls' Club is: 'Unite and empower young people.'"

Erica, 14, Child Rights Ambassador, Little Rock School

"I am an active member of the World's Children's Prize Child Rights Club at my school, and the encounter with The Globe magazine has made a huge difference to my life and my friends' lives. When I read The Globe I realised that it teaches us children about many rights that we are not aware of. It also shows us platforms we can use to demonstrate and demand our rights. Although our rights are now discussed in school, The Globe has not only empowered me, it has also made me an activist who stands up for my and my classmates' rights at every opportunity."

Changing boys

"Our parents and teachers have made a number of false claims about the rights of the child. Some of them still believe it's wrong for older people to apolo-

gise to a child when they have done something wrong. I'm grateful to The Globe for exposing these false claims for the children of today. For example, thanks to The Globe, the ideas that only men should speak in public, hold positions of power in society, or make family decisions, now seem to belong to the past. The Globe has even changed boys' attitudes to helping with cleaning at school, and now they help sweep the yard and the classrooms.

Now I know that not even my parents can force me to get married early. The Globe says that I have a right to defend myself from anyone who seeks to violate my rights, abuse me, or discriminate against me. I recommend The Globe to all children in my country, so that together we can fight for our rights."

Berlinda, 15, Child Rights Ambassador, Buduburam Junior High School



Erica Girls' Club holding a child rights training session.

The Globe taught me how to help

"I used to think that girls should do all the housework, until I realised that both sexes should share the work equally. Here in Ghana, many parents don't send their daughters to school. The reasoning they give is that once girls get married all they will do is take care of the housework. We mustn't believe that cooking is just for girls – boys should help out at home too. Since I started reading The Globe it has helped me realise that I should be helping with housework. So

I've started helping my mother and sisters with laundry, sweeping and fetching water. Boys have to understand this and start helping their sisters with the housework."

Ebenezer, 15, Buduburam Basic C-School



UGANDA



Enthusiastic readers of The Globe at Minaka Primary School in Uganda.

TANZANIA



PHOTO: ANNA LÖFVING

Global Vote at child rights hero's school

Laughing, Oini turns the pages of *The Globe* with his foot. He uses a wheelchair and can't use his arms. He goes to the school that Anna Mollé built using the prize money she received when she was made a Child Rights Hero in the Global Vote in 2012. Children with and without disabilities attend Anna's school.

"The World's Children's Prize is important at our school, and the Global Vote is the best day of the year," says Oini. "We can't read English yet, so someone translates the magazine into Swahili."

BENIN



Voting queue at CS L'Horizon School.

Child Rights lesson with *The Globe*.



WCP helps us to fight

"I'm sure that through the WCP program, parents and other adults will learn that we have rights that must be respected. All children should have equal value and equal rights, but boys are valued more highly here. Girls are supposed to do the housework for the whole family. Thanks to the WCP program, we can fight for equal rights for girls and boys."

Anabelle, 15, CS L'Horizon

Helping teachers to understand

"The World's Children's Prize is an extremely important program for children. Children's rights are not respected in my country. Corporal punishment is common in schools, and this WCP program makes it possible for teachers to grasp that corporal punishment is not the best way to make students understand. As leader of the WCP Child Rights Club in my school, I fight for my schoolmates to know their rights, and for adults to understand that it's important to respect the freedom of girls and boys alike, as they both have the same rights."

Calixta, 16, C.S. Les Èlus

Helps me understand rights and democracy

"Girls can do anything boys can do. Some parents think we're better suited to housework than studies. That's not fair. By participating in the 2015 WCP, I gained a better understanding of issues around rights and democracy for children. Through the Global Vote we have made our voices heard, and now we understand the different stages of the democratic process."

Seinath, 15, CEG 1 D'Akpro Missèrètè

WCP program for a more humane world

"This educational program helps me know more about my rights. Children's rights are not well respected in Benin, and it's up to us children to teach adults to respect our rights better. Through the WCP program, we children are determined to fight together with our friends and schools in all countries for a more humane world."

Nambilathou, 15, WCP Child Rights Club, CEG Bio-Guerra de Porto-Novo

WCP clubs boost the fight against corporal punishment

"I have benefitted from the creation of WCP clubs, and I have realised that they boost the fight to stop sexual exploitation of girls and corporal punishment. In my country some teachers and even some parents still use these methods. Through the WCP program, I have better knowledge of my rights since we study and discuss these subjects in class."

Mariel, 15, Complexe Scolaire St Luc

The Globe helps me to understand

"Girls' rights are not well respected in my country, but the WCP gives me a better understanding of my rights. *The Globe* magazine is really good, and we use it in subjects like geography and history to study the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Our teachers give us exercises from the magazine that help me see what daily life is like for other children."

Merveille, 16, CS St Luc



Anabelle



Calixta



Seinath



Mariel



Nambilathou



Merveille

SIERRA LEONE

Our teachers must stop beating us!

"Our teachers should be learning about the rights of the child every day, since they violate our rights on a daily basis. We want our teachers to stop beating us in school."

Bessie, 14, IMAT School

Every child needs to know their rights

"Every child needs to know their rights and responsibilities. That's why we use *The Globe* at our school club meetings, to help other children understand their rights."

Samantha, 14, IMAT School

SWEDEN

We educate adults!



"We invited all the parents to our Global Vote Day. We made an exhibition in our classroom and gave presentations about the child rights heroes and the rights of the child," explains Saga, 12, from Snättringe School in Huddinge.

"The adults learned a lot," says Felix, 12.

Fredrik, Erik, Linnéa, Ellida, Joel, Felix, Adriel and Saga all helped to organise the Global Vote Day. They did everything from ticking off names on the voting register to counting votes.





Fair election in Guinea-Bissau

Welcome to our Global Vote here at Arafam Mane Community School in Ingoré, Guinea-Bissau! First of all, we are going to check that the ballot box is completely empty before we start," says Global Vote president Wilsa, 11.

Wilsa turns the old cardboard box that has been made into a ballot box upside down and shakes it. She does this to make sure that nobody has cheated, and that the vote will be democratic and fair. This is important for the children at Wilsa's school. They live in a country which has had long periods of dictatorship, many coups d'état, and violence and unrest during elections. The children have decided that their election will be different. The voting can begin...

Vote for us!

Aisato, 9, Botche, 12, and Tchamo, 13, represent the candidates for the Global Vote.

Voting booth for secrecy.





Queue stretches round corner

The voting queue is so long that it continues round the corner at school.



The Globe in the classroom.

Lots of schools take part!

There are lots of schools in Guinea-Bissau that take part in the World's Children's Prize program. Here Equintânea, 13, is voting for the rights of the child at E.B.U. Ingoré-1 School.



Reading The Globe every day!

"I usually read The Globe every day when I come home from school, before I go out to play football with my friends. I really like the magazine, and I learn things that I didn't know before. For example, that girls and boys have the same rights. That's not how things are here. When the school day ends, the girls have to work hard cleaning, washing dishes and cooking, while we boys are free to play football and other games. It's not right. We should share the work. If a sister is cleaning, her brother could be washing clothes. Then they would both have free time, to rest and play. I only have brothers so we are the ones who do the cleaning, the dishes and the laundry at home. We help our mother. She shouldn't have to do everything.



We all help out, and that feels good.

"There are many parents here who only let their sons finish school. The daughters are forced into early marriage and have to quit school. If all boys and fathers read The Globe, then I think life would be better for girls here. Everyone would know more.

"When I grow up I want to be a computer engineer."

Saico, 13, Arafam Mane Community School



Security guards

"I maintain order in the voting queue. And I help make sure that each person goes to the right presiding officer," says Domingas, 14, who is responsible for security during the Global Vote along with Suleiman, 12.

Important for us girls!

"Today is an important day, not only for us here, but for children all over the world who are taking part in the World's Children's Prize. Before we vote, we prepare by reading *The Globe* and learning lots of important things. For example, that all children have a right to go to school. And we've learned that girls and boys have the same rights. But here girls work more than boys in the home. It's also harder for us to get to go to school. That's why I think that the WCP is important for us girls in Guinea-Bissau!"

Salemato, 12, Global Vote observer at Arafam Mane Community School



We are election observers

"Our most important task is to ensure that everything is done right and that the voting is fair. So far everything looks excellent!" says Tchernon, 16, who is an election observer along with Salemato, 12.

Presiding officers' desk

Girls pick cashews

"Before the Global Vote, we prepared with our teachers. We learned that everyone has a right to go to school, but that not everybody does. And that some children don't get any food at home unless they work hard. Things can be like here too, especially for us girls. At this time of year in Guinea-Bissau we harvest cashew nuts. Parents often take their daughters out of school to help with the harvest, while their sons are allowed to carry on going to school. That's not right! Girls and boys have the same

rights. Girls should be allowed to go to school too. I think both boys and girls should be able to go to

school in the morning. After school both sons and daughters can help their parents with the harvest.

"We learn from *The Globe* magazine that boys and girls have the same rights. That makes me happy! I think it's important that we participate in the World's Children's Prize, because then we can tell the others at home about what we have learned. We can explain to our parents that they should treat us in the same way the WCP candidates treat children. The candidates don't differentiate between boys and girls. They don't treat girls worse. If we tell others what we have learned, then life will get better for us girls in the future.

"When I grow up I want to be a doctor and help sick and injured people."
Esperia, 12, Arafam Mane Community School



On the voting register?

"I tick off the names that the election president calls out after each person has shown their voting card. Anyone whose name is not on the voting register is not allowed to vote. Luckily so far today everyone has been on the list and been able to vote," says secretary Seido, 10.

Global Vote President Wilsa reads Mamadi's voting card and secretary Seido checks that he is on the voting register.



We can teach adults!

"My task is to make sure that nobody votes more than once. So I put a cross on each person's voting card once they have voted, and I make sure that each person dips their right index finger in ink. It's important that people only vote once, otherwise we won't get a fair and correct result. One person, one vote! That's not always how it is when adults vote in presidential elections here in Guinea-Bissau. We children could teach the adults how it should be done. I

have learnt how a democratic election works through participating in the World's Children's Prize. This is the second year I have taken part. The 2014 WCP Prize Laureate, Malala from Pakistan, who is on the poster behind us, is my role model. She defends us girls and works for the rights of the child. I want to be like that too!" says presiding officer Sadjo, 14.



Children become slaves

"Guinea-Bissau has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other important laws that outlaw child labour and protect children in other ways. But life is still really tough for children here. Children are abused, many are forced to work and can't go to school, young girls are exploited sexually and forced into early marriage. Many are also victims of trafficking and become talibé slaves in the neighbouring country of Senegal. This means that the children are forced to beg on the street for the imam who leads the Koranic school that they attend. If the children don't come back with the money or rice that is expected of them, they get beaten. Sometimes so badly that they die. One of my friends was taken to Senegal as a talibé when he was ten. He managed to run away and get back home. He told stories of the ter-

rible things he went through. Many of the children who beg on the streets of Senegal's cities are from Guinea-Bissau.

"I think it's really important that we both learn about and talk about our rights. If we know our rights, then they cannot be violated as easily. That's why the World's Children's Prize is so important here. Many people, adults and children alike, have no idea that children have rights. When we read *The Globe* we learn about the lives of children around the world, and about the rights of the child.

"When I grow up I'd like to be a doctor, and treat children for free. I would also like to have a school that children can attend for free. That's my dream."
Edson, 16, Arafam Mane Community School

No cheating

Sadjo presses Mamadi's finger into the sponge in the tin, which he has dipped in ink. Now he can't vote twice!



I have voted!

Mamadi, 10, shows the voting card that you must have in order to be allowed to participate in the vote. The green cross on the card shows that he has already voted.



Sona Mane casts her vote for children's rights.



Girls married off

"It has been great to read The Globe magazine and participate in the Global Vote. I have learned that all children have the right to a home, the right to eat as much as they need, the right to have clothes and shoes, and the right to go to school. That's not how things are for all children here. Life is hardest for us girls. Here, girls who are still children can be forced to quit school and marry a grown man. If a girl refuses, she is beaten by her father or other relatives. Girls as young as fourteen can be married off. I know several. They are too young to bear children. There is a risk that both the girls and their babies could die. And the girls

have to quit school. I read in The Globe that this is wrong. Adults must not treat children like this.

"It's good that we are learning how children should be treated, because then we can tell our parents. Maybe all the bad things will stop once everybody knows that these things are not allowed. I want to become a teacher or have another good job where I earn money. Then I'll buy a house and take care of my mother, who has made sure that I can go to school."

Inacia, 10, Arafam Mane Community School



Reading The Globe for other children!

"I have learnt a lot about how life is for children around the world by participating in the World's Children's Prize. It's common for many families to take care of other children, like nieces and nephews who have lost their parents and need support and help. However, there are some adults who only treat their own biological children well. Often, children who have lost their parents are not allowed to go to school but have to work instead. That's how many of my friends are treated. Things shouldn't be this way. We should care about all children. I learned that from The Globe magazine. That's why it's

important for us to participate in the World's Children's Prize.

Those of us who go to school can take The Globe magazine home and read it for friends who don't go to school. We can also explain to their guardians that all children have a right to go to school. I believe that slowly but surely things could change and become better for all children here.

"When I grow up I want to be a teacher. And I'll use The Globe in my lessons."

Seido, 10, Global Vote secretary, Arafam Mane Community School



All empty here!

Wilsa has emptied out all the votes. Before they can be counted she shows everyone that the ballot box is completely empty.

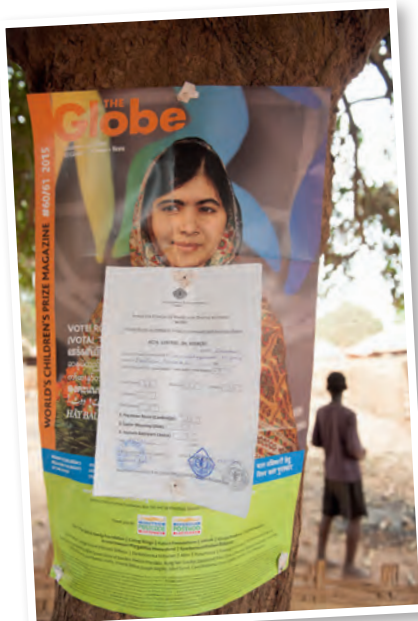


Election result

The votes have been counted and the result checked before Wilsa completes the election report. Then the results are put up on a poster of Malala, so that everyone can see how the Global Vote has gone in Ingore.

Viva Vote, Viva! Hurray for the Vote!

"In Guinea-Bissau it's common to shout special chants, like I did when we presented the result of the vote. That's what we do when we want to celebrate something. One person shouts first, and everyone else shouts in response. I shouted 'Viva Vote, Viva!' and everyone else replied 'Viva!'. I thought everything had gone so well today at our Global Vote so we should celebrate that!"



Once the voting is finished, Global Vote Day and children's rights are celebrated with joyful dancing in the schoolyard. This is Aminata, 10, (green dress) dancing with her friends.

See Seido and his schoolmates celebrating their Global Vote at www.worldschildrensprize.org

SOUTH AFRICA

We students planned the WCP Program

"Our whole LRC team attended a WCP workshop. We were so inspired by the stories in The Globe magazine that we decided to implement the WCP program at our school. We spent our break times planning how to do this and presented our plan to the principal. He and the teachers gave us the green light. We distributed The Globe to the classes to study the program. Our principal gave us time every Monday of the term at assembly where we, the LRC, presented the WCP candidates' stories to the learners."

Tawfeeq, 17, chairperson Learners Representative Council (LRC), Rylands High, Cape Town

We children must choose peace

"I learned that the WCP and The Globe magazine help children to fight for freedom, to think their own thoughts, and to make their own choices. I think we must stop waiting for the older generation to make the world a safe place. We children must choose peace. We must stop people who are hurting girls and those at school who bully other children."

Busiswa, 15, Chris Hani School, Khayelitsha



PHILIPPINES



In Ocampo in Camarines Sur, the Global Vote day kicks off with a parade for the rights of the child, with the ballot box at the head of the parade.

PAKISTAN



Children in the village of Dobar in Pakistan's Thar Desert have been participating in the WCP program for several years. In 2015, flooding destroyed their whole village.

NIGERIA



The voting queue fills the schoolyard at Olivet Baptist Academy in Oyo.

Fighting for girls with help from The Globe

"I love The Globe magazine because it teaches us children about our rights and how we can demand respect for them. As a WCP Child Rights Ambassador and newly elected chairperson of the WCP clubs in Nigeria, I will use my position to fight discrimination against girls in families, in schools and in society. I will also fight for education for girls with help from The Globe magazine."

Sarah, 15, Child Rights Ambassador, chairperson of the WCP clubs in Nigeria

WCP in flood zone

"Every year when we take part in the WCP program, we gain more knowledge of the rights of the child and the people in the world who defend those rights. But all our rights are not respected. We do not receive a proper education – no school building and no textbooks.

When the rain started we played in it, but it just didn't stop. I was terrified. Suddenly our home collapsed, but we all managed to get out. Everyone was screaming. All our food and crops were destroyed by the water, and our two goats died. We don't know what we're going to eat for the rest of the year."

Durga, 12

World's biggest school votes

Children not listened to

"In India most of the children don't know what rights they have. The status of the rights of the child in India is generally poor, but differs from child to child. Poor but intelligent children are not given the right to study in a good school because of a corrupt society. Children are considered small and their advice is not listened to. I felt very happy in taking part in the World's Children's Prize program."

Shreyansh, 12, City Montessori School, Lucknow



INDIA



Students at City Montessori School in Lucknow, the biggest school in the world with 52,000 students, vote in the Global Vote.





Football tournament for the WCP clubs in Tiko, Cameroon.



In WCP Club we help each other

"Here we live in clans, in both joy and sorrows. The clan organizes itself to respond to the clan members' needs. But with the WCP clubs there is no clan thinking. We are united and give mutual aid."

Ebude, 15, KOEL Bilingual Institute, Tiko



Long live the WCP program!

"Thank you to the WCP clubs, because before I had no voice. I could not discuss things freely with a boy. Today boys and girls speak on the same terms and even sit together in the classrooms.

The WCP is a program that listens to children in a special way and ensures children's participation. The WCP has been

designed for us to appreciate the work of great men and women who are brave enough to fight for the rights of children. It was also created to encourage others to stand up for what they believe in.

Through this program, children like me in Cameroon are able to do what we believe in, such as expressing ourselves in

public. Furthermore, I am able to arrange our Global Vote, by involving my friends, especially those friends who do not have the means to attend day school. I encourage them to go to evening schools after doing small jobs. Through this many vulnerable children are now participating in the WCP program.

This program makes children

read The Globe magazine. They study and discuss the rights of the child, which was at first a taboo. Today the WCP has opened our eyes.

Long live the WCP!"

Enanga, 16, KOEL Bilingual Institute, Tiko

BURMA/MYANMAR



Cows ate ballot box

When the time came for the Global Vote at Kwee Ta Mar School in the Karen region of Burma, several schools came together to vote. Some of the children had been walking since the day before the vote to get there in time. The children had prepared everything the night before, and had woven a ballot box from huge leaves. On the morning of the vote, a surprise was awaiting them. The cows had eaten the leaves during the night, so the children had to quickly fetch some new ones!

"This was the first time I had read The Globe in my own language, Karen, and my first time participating in the Global Vote. I learned what the rights of the child are from the magazine," says Saw Eh, 13.

TOGO

For the first time, children in Togo are participating in the WCP program and the Global Vote.



“We are flowers that are always in

“I’m so proud that my friends have elected me as the leader of our World’s Children’s Prize Child Rights Club in Massaca. We do a lot of work for girls’ rights and this is the first year that we boys have been able to join in. This is important,” says Andreque in Mozambique.



“Our goal is to ensure that everyone respects the rights of the child. So we talk to students, teachers, parents... yes, the whole village. We children are flowers that will never wither – we will always be in bloom!”

“Today we are holding our Global Vote. The whole school is participating! We have also invited our neighbouring school to join us. It is a small school, so it’s good for them to vote and celebrate with us. First we read *The Globe* and learned about the candidates, and now we’re ready to cast our votes. Every vote counts!”

Standing up for all children
“We Child Rights Ambassadors have a special job to

do, and that is to keep an extra eye on the children who don’t go to school. Down in the village, my friend Franz and I saw a boy who can’t talk or use his hands properly. We visited his house and it turned out that he lives with his grandfather. His mother is dead and his father lives in town, but he doesn’t work and can’t take care of him.

“The boy is called Roman. He is eight years old, but doesn’t go to school. When we got to his house we greeted his grandfather politely and said: “We are here to see if we can help.” After a while, Roman’s grandfather started to explain the situation.

“Roman has never been to hospital or to school. Roman’s grandfather didn’t know that there are schools



Franz and Andreque visit Roman, who is playing outside his grandfather’s house. Roman can’t talk, but he could learn a lot in a school for children with disabilities.

for children with disabilities here in Mozambique, so we told him. But he still doesn’t know how to get in touch with them.

“Roman’s grandfather was happy, and although Roman

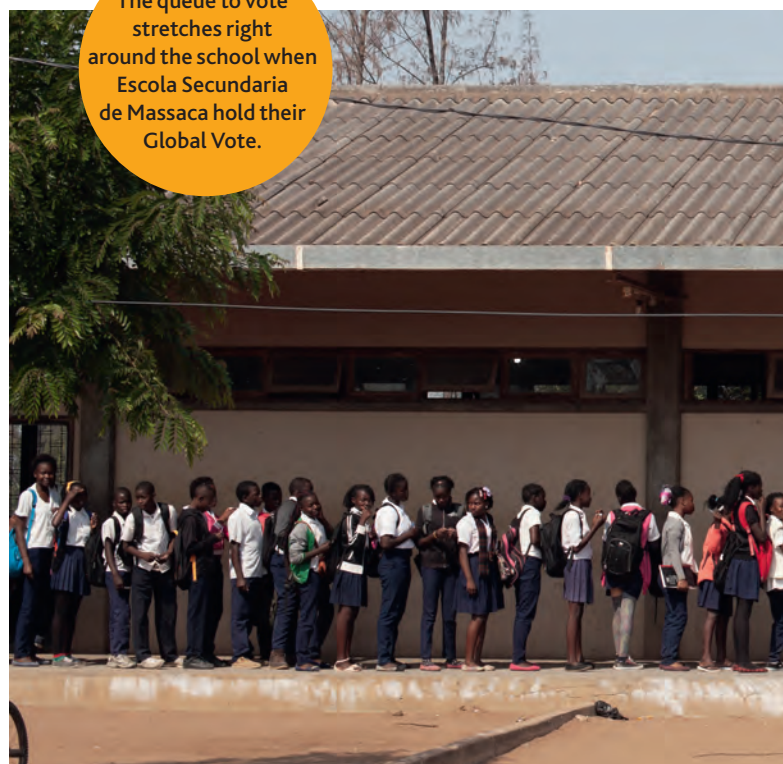
can’t talk we could see that he was happy about the conversation too. We have promised to talk to adults at our school and with the district education officers.

“They are waiting and



Franz, 15, guards the ballot box during the Global Vote

“We learned about girls’ rights from *The Globe* magazine. They have the same rights as us boys, and all adults need to understand that!” says Franz, 15.



The queue to vote stretches right across the school when Escola Secundaria de Massaca hold their Global Vote.

bloom!"

longing for our help, that's what Roman's grandfather said. He wants Roman to be able to go to school and be happy. We want that too!

"As Child Rights Ambassadors we have learned to stand up for our own and all children's rights. Seeing that we can make a difference for one child who needs help makes me feel strong and happy."

Andreque, 14, WCP Child Rights Ambassador, Escola Secundaria de Massaca, Mozambique



"As Child Rights Ambassadors we have learned about the rights of the child, and now we can teach others. We know that sometimes adults listen more to us, because we are boys, so it's important that we teach them about girls' rights. We have to teach the adults to listen to girls," says William, 13.



The Global Vote in Massaca takes place with Malala on the ballot box

"Malala is a great role model for us. It's amazing that one child can do so much," says Child Rights Ambassador Marta, 14.



Every child who has voted has to dip their index finger in ink. That way nobody can vote twice. Ana, 13, has taken a break from her job as an election supervisor so that she can vote.



Our parents need to understand!



"There are parents who force their daughters to marry grown men because the family needs things and money. The adults believe that the new husband will take care of the family. This is scary. I'm afraid that I will be a victim of this too. We Child Rights Ambassadors must fight against this. We have learned about our rights and what we can do to ensure that they are respected. We have to talk to all parents so that they understand that child marriage is a violation of our rights."

Dinercia, 14





The Globe made Joan start an organization

"I found out about the WCP and The Globe when I was 13. I was inspired to start an organization, which I call EDEN World Foundation, and I started fighting for children's rights. I arrange meetings and press conferences led by children, and I make sure that children can participate in the WCP program and read The Globe."

Joan, 18, Bukavu



Discovered children's rights through WCP

"I want to report discrimination and violence against underage girls in our country, not just in peace time but also in times of war. I like the World's Children's Prize program, which helped me discover the rights of the child, especially the fact that girls and boys have the same rights. The Globe has educated me! That's why I really want to become a Child Rights Ambassador in my country."

Cinogerwa, 15, Lycée Kazaroho, Bukavu

I want to be human rights minister

"As a Child Rights Ambassador, I would like to become minister for human rights, so that I can defend children's rights."

Ciza, 16, Complexe Scolaire Gracia, Bukavu



The Globe inspires me

"I want to point out that girls' rights are not taken seriously. Some parents don't send their girls to school, they have to stay home and do chores or work out in the fields. The Globe taught me that I have rights, and I now feel it is my responsibility to fight for girls' rights. The Globe has inspired and equipped me. I hope the WCP will continue to flourish and grow in its fight for the rights of the child!"

Kwagisha, 18, Lycée Kazaroho, Bukavu



Read The Globe over and over

"I read these great stories about girls in The Globe again and again. Through the magazine I realised that all children have the same rights, and The Globe helps me to defend girls' rights."

Marie France, 13, one of the children in Joan's EDEN group. She was in charge of the ink pad at the Global Vote.



I demand equality

"At home, I have to do all the housework, I am not valued as much as a boy, and I don't have enough time for my homework. At school, the teachers encourage gossip and injustice, and they often exploit the girls sexually. I demand equality between girls and boys, and respect for girls' rights all over the world. I love the World's Children's Prize program, because that's how I discovered my rights."

Aksanti, 15, Complexe Scolaire Amani/CEBIA, Bukavu



Do not beat children

"I fight for the rights of the child, above all children's right to education. People should not beat children, they should listen to children and talk with them. I do chores at home, like washing dishes and fetching water. Boys go for walks and play more than girls. It's not fair."

Byebi, 18, Lycée Kazaroho, Bukavu



The Globe made me stay in school

"When my father died I wanted to quit school, but when I read The Globe I realised that education is important."

Joana, 10, Notre Dame de la Paix school and Joan's EDEN group. In the picture she is acting in a play showing how important it is for girls to go to school.



They don't listen

"In our family, girls cannot express themselves freely. We can't express our opinions. I discovered that I had rights through The Globe magazine."

Baraka, 13, Complexe Scolaire Gracia, Bukavu



Thank you WCP!

"I was eleven the first time I read The Globe. I dream of changing the world and I say thank you to the WCP for opening my eyes, my ears and my thoughts. I fight alongside other girls to stand up to child marriage. Girls need to go to school and my motto is: 'Education first, wedding later!'"

Esther, 16





Nisa, 12, and her schoolmates have learned about the rights of the child and about all the candidates through reading *The Globe*.

Voting for our rights

"I'm glad I've been able to learn more about my rights. We children organised our Global Vote ourselves, and now we understand how to organize ourselves to do things in our society. I have also learned why elections are important. If we get to vote, we'll choose someone who can defend our rights, and that is important for everyone, especially children. If people are not allowed to participate in elections, our society will deteriorate and people won't be able to do anything."

Siv, 14, *Sotip Lower Secondary School, Skun*



Nelle voting in the Global Vote at Le Rosier School.



Knowledge gives protection

"It's important to vote. We have to claim that right, otherwise others will make decisions for us. All children must learn about their rights. Especially poor ones. Poor families often send their daughters to the cities to work, and they are at risk of being sold to brothels. I have learned about my rights so I can defend myself, but a girl from my village was sold. A rich-looking man came and asked for her hand in marriage. Then it turned out that he sold girls."

Chan, 14, *Sotip Lower Secondary School, Skun*

Made a sacrifice for me

"My family want me to go to school. My two brothers stopped school because we didn't have enough money to cover transport to school. They work and pay for me to be able to go to school. I am sad because they have both sacrificed themselves for me, and lost their chances in life. I have promised them that I will do well with my education. My dream is to become a teacher and share knowledge with others."

Kunthea, 14, *Sotip Lower Secondary School, Skun*



Vote for a better society

"It's important to vote. I have learned what democracy is, and it is badly needed! The way it works is that we choose a person we believe in, and that makes our society much better!"

Kimsan, 12, *Sotip Lower Secondary School, Skun*



No violence against children!

"I learned how to run campaigns for children. I think about violence in the home a lot. Not in my family, but I know of other families where that happens. We need campaigns to tell adults that they must not beat us."

Vit, 13, *Sotip Lower Secondary School, Skun*



Ballot boxes

WCP gave me courage

"I have learned my rights thanks to the WCP program, which I have been taking part in since 2012. When I read about Child Rights Ambassadors in *The Globe*, it gave me the courage to start a child rights club in my school. We inform other children who don't know their rights. When I received my WCP Child Rights Ambassador certificate, this empowered me even more to continue speaking out for girls' rights, but I also want to help street children and other children who have hard lives. I have visited schools a long way from Brazzaville who are just starting child rights clubs to give them advice. The worst thing that's happened to me was when a male cousin of mine filmed me in the shower. When I found out, I told my father that if my cousin didn't leave our home, I would. Then I went to the police to report my cousin, and he was put in prison for a week."

Nelle, 15, *Le Rosier School, Brazzaville*

Global Vote for all children

Before the vote, all the children gather in the school yard. Cleopatra, 10, tells everyone it is finally time to vote!



In Murewa in Zimbabwe, the children are voting for their child rights hero. Nbmatter, 16, is a WCP Child Rights Ambassador and is responsible for all the ambassadors in the district. Many people come to her with their problems.



The day before the Global Vote the children are preparing. Long grass is cut down for a very important purpose.

I saw so many girls who were suffering in different ways. Many couldn't afford sanitary towels so they used dried cow dung instead. This is dangerous, as bacteria can infect the body. Many people in this area also face early marriage and abuse. That's why I wanted to become a Child Rights Ambassador and help everyone I can," explains Nbmatter.

Voice for the voiceless

"My job is to be a voice for the voiceless. I do talks about how dangerous early marriage is, and about abuse, so

that adults and children know that it happens and that it's wrong."

All the school children recognise Nbmatter.

"Now people are glad that there are ambassadors for children's rights. Adults and children alike know that they can come to me and talk about their problems. We organise meetings where we gather information about the problems faced by children here. If there are problems we can't solve ourselves, we tell the teachers. But if the problem involves the teachers then we go to an adult who is



Nbmatter supports other girls who are having a hard time. Nbmatter and Create meet up every day. Nbmatter supports Create and listens when she talks about the assault she experienced.

employed by the school, called the area coordinator.

"Sometimes I feel powerless. Once a 14-year-old girl told me she was going to be married off. She was an orphan and the people who cared for her had decided that she was to be married to a much older man. We told the adults, but there was nothing we could do. The very next

n's rights

The voting queue is long – 500 children will vote here. Two students are 'police officers' making sure nobody skips the queue. Each name is crossed off on the voting register.



The children use the grass to build a voting booth, so that nobody can see who anyone else is voting for.



Everyone who has a job to do at the Global Vote day gets a name badge.

day she was gone. Still, I'm glad that she trusted us enough to tell us."

Listening and supporting

"One day a boy came and told us that his sister, Create, had been assaulted by a man who was HIV positive. I went to talk to her, and since then we've been friends.

"It happened when another

girl and I went to fetch wood at sunset,' Create told me. 'A man stepped out from a bush and threatened me with a knife. My friend ran away, but before I had a chance to think he knocked me down onto the grass. He said that he'd cut me if I screamed, so I just sobbed silently. When I got home I told my mother. She was furious, and we

rushed to a clinic. I hadn't contracted HIV, but there was clear evidence of the assault, so the man was arrested and convicted.

"I talk to Nbmatter about what happened to me, and that helps. She has taught me that I have rights and that nobody has a right to hurt me in any way." 🌐



Everyone puts a cross on their ballot paper in the voting booth. That way nobody sees how anyone else votes. The students have discussed the rights of the child and the contents of The Globe prior to the vote. It is against the rules to try to persuade anyone else to vote in a particular way.



If anyone hits you, tell someone!

The children in Murehwa celebrate the rights of the child and the Global Vote with traditional dancing. They have been practising for weeks and looking forward to the big day. Now it's finally time!

"I love all the prize candidates. Today is a happy day," says Ropapadzo, 10, who is in the dance troupe.

"I'm proud that I was one of the dancers today. It feels extra special because this was the first time we held a Global Vote at our school," says Munashe, 10.

Nbmatter has voted and had her finger dipped in ink, so that she can't vote twice.

"In my last school, my rights were violated. My teacher used to smack my hands with a cane. At first I didn't dare tell anyone. I was ashamed. One day the principal came and told me to go home because my school fees hadn't been paid. I was even more ashamed, and I ran home crying. Once my mother had managed to sort out money for the fees, I asked to change schools. Now I have read The Globe and learned that children have a right not to be beaten. I explain that to my younger brother too. I tell him that if anyone hits you, you need to tell someone."

Zvikomborero, 13, Zhombwe Primary School, Murehwa

The ballot box is a traditional clay pot that the children have decorated with colourful paper.





The votes are counted carefully. It is a bit risky to count them outdoors in the wind, but everyone must be able to see that it is being done right.

Everyone has read The Globe magazine so that they fully understand the work of the nominees, and they have talked about the rights children have. Alfred, 12, is organizing the production of placards about children's rights.



The Globe motivates me

"There's never any food in our house. My grandmother, who my sister and I live with, doesn't have enough money so we're usually hungry. Both my parents died of AIDS when I was little. I think about them every day and about how different my life would have been if they had lived. I don't have any proper

shoes and socks to go with my uniform, and I feel ashamed when I'm in school. I am rarely able to take a packed lunch to school, so my friends usually share their food with me. It breaks my heart to have to ask for food, so I wish I didn't have to. Some people look down on my sister and me and laugh at us. I try to ignore them and do my best to do well at school. I have read The Globe and talked about the rights of the child with my friends, so I know that education is a right. That's why I'm doing all I can to finish school, and right now my grades are good. That's what will help me towards a better future."

Lisa, 12, Zhombwe Primary School, Murewa

Gives me confidence

"I read The Globe and learned from the Child Rights Ambassadors that children have a right to food and education. My parents work in South Africa so I live with my grandmother and my big brother. I wish I could always go to school, but sometimes we can't afford the fees, so I have to stay home. We don't have enough food either. I read in The Globe about other children who don't have enough to eat, and it makes me sad to think that children's rights are not respected. But it's comforting to know that although things are bad, I do actually have a right to food and education. This gives me confidence. My brother beats me almost every day. Every time I think it's the last time, but it never is. It hurts and it feels unfair. My grandmother tells him off, but he threatens to

beat her too, so she can't do anything about it. That's wrong too. I know that children have a right to protection from violence."

Rachel, 12, Zhombwe Primary School, Murewa



“My rights are all I have”



13-year-old Takudzwa in Zimbabwe loves her school, Zhombwe Primary School, but soon she will have to stop attending again.

“I have nothing, but thanks to The Globe I know that I have rights,” she says.

My mother was very kind. She worked as a housekeeper and paid my school fees. But when she died we moved in with our grandparents. My grandmother was too weak to carry my little sister Blessing, who was still a baby, so I had to stay home to carry her on my back. But Blessing grew quickly, so I got to return to school.

“My grandmother does her best to take care of us, but she is very ill. Blessing is only three, so soon I will have to stop going to school again to help grandmother.

“We can hardly afford school fees and my friends share their food with me at school. Still, school is the place where I am happiest. I remember the feeling of coming back after a year off, and how overjoyed I was.”

Enjoyed WCP

“I usually sit outside reading until the sun goes down. I read my school books and The Globe, of course. I have nothing, but thanks to The Globe I know that I have rights. All

Takudzwa reading The Globe.

“I don’t think I’ll be able to finish school. But thanks to The Globe I know my rights.”



Takudzwa and many other children fetch water every day after school.

children need food, clothes and education, and my life seems a little easier when I know what we have a right to!

“I really enjoyed the World’s Children’s Prize program. My job at the Global Vote was to go to the different classrooms and tell them when it was their turn to vote. Everybody looked so pleased when I came in.”

The Globe teaches us

“I’ve been reading The Globe for a long time and I’m always learning new things about children’s rights. As a Child Rights Ambassador I read the magazine and talk to other children about what I’ve read. I have also learned how to talk in front of people and inspire others to think more



about the rights of the child.”
Rita, 16, Child Rights Ambassador, Seke

Radio interview on children’s rights

“I’ve been interviewed on the radio about our work for children’s rights. It felt important. I believe it makes a big difference to spread the word about children’s rights. I’ve moved around a lot because my father is dead and my mother can’t take care of me. So I think a lot about children who are



orphans.”
Tatenda, 18, Harare

Broke my heart

“One major problem here is that girls are forced to get married young and they don’t get the education they’re entitled to. I had to stay home from school when my parents couldn’t afford to pay the fees. That broke my heart. But now I’m back at school. I want to learn more about the rights of the child, and my dream is to become a member of the WCP Jury.”

Chenai, 12, Jonasi Primary School, Seke





Children's rights, adults' responsibilities

Tajuranushe, 15, who is a Child Rights Ambassador in Seke in Zimbabwe, has trained lots of other children. He always talks about how adults have to take responsibility for ensuring children's rights are respected. He himself knows how it feels when adults don't take that responsibility.

My parents split up when I was two and I went to live with my father. He left me home alone while he went out to bars, and he beat me if I wanted attention.

"When my mother found out, she took me to live with her and gave me everything. But when I was five, my mother remarried and decided that I should go and live with my aunt instead. They didn't give me any food and didn't let me go to school.

"When I was six I had had enough. I left the house and roamed around the streets for several days with nothing to eat. Finally my mother found me. She took me home that night, but then she decided to send me to live with a different aunt. That aunt didn't let me go to school either.

"I ran away again, but this time I just kept walking. After 20 kilometres I reached

my grandmother's house. Since then, she has been like a mother to me. She gives me food, buys my school uniform and pays my school fees."

Ban corporal punishment

"My grandmother gives me everything a child has a right to. But I know how it feels not to get those things, so in



Tajuranushe knows how it is not to have your rights respected. When he was little he was left home alone with no food, and he wasn't allowed to go to school.

"Men who beat women and children have to develop back into homo sapiens, humans. All children have a right not to be beaten at home or at school," says Tajuranushe to the listening children.

Year 5 I decided to start fighting for other children's rights. I believe that if we work together we can fight for every child's right to a good future. That's why I wanted to become a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador.

"When I train other children I talk a lot about corporal punishment. I also talk about men who beat women and children. I say that men have to develop back into homo sapiens, humans, instead of being like animals who don't respect the rights of women and children.

"As a WCP Ambassador I've learned a lot about the child sex trade. A lot of adults deceive children. I tell children not to trust strangers and I teach people that everyone has a right to go to school, to ensure they have the best possible future." 🌍

My school friend was sold

"A school friend of mine was forced into the child sex trade. When her parents died someone took her to a club and sold her. The school and the police found out. They gave her help and money for school fees. But the men who did this to her were not punished. Child Rights Clubs for girls' rights should be obligatory."

Gamuchirai, 13, Child Rights Ambassador, Harare



Cow dung sanitary towel

"We support one another in the group, and we also talk to other girls. We found out that lots of girls couldn't afford to buy sanitary towels. They use old cloth or even dried cow dung. When we found that out we started a collection at school to help these girls."

Laura, 15, Child Rights Ambassador, Harare



Helping other girls

"We started a collection for girls in another school who can't afford sanitary towels. Then we went to their school and gave them sanitary towels. It was a great experience to give them something they really needed.

We try to change adults' attitudes to children. They often think that girls should get married early instead of going to school, but that's wrong! Everyone has a right to an education!"

Kudzai, 16, Harare



“I know my rights!”

Sasha, 13, is a WCP Child Rights Ambassador. She has been a victim of abuse and neglect, but she is determined to change the situation for herself and for other girls.

“We usually talk during our lunch break and discuss what we read in *The Globe*, and what our teacher tells us about the rights of the child. A lot of children here face abuse.”

Sasha’s parents split up five years ago and decided that Sasha should go to live with an aunt.

“She forced me to do all the housework and she often beat me. Every morning I would get up before everyone else to wash the dishes. She didn’t give me any lunch to take to school, and most of the time she refused to pay my school fees, so I couldn’t even go to school.

“I didn’t know that I had a right to go to school, but I went there anyway and tried to get the teachers to teach me, although I wasn’t allowed to join in the lessons.

“I sent a message to my father and he let me move in with him and his new wife. But she was even worse than my aunt. She beat me and didn’t give me any food. The worst thing was that she took the money that my father had set aside for school fees, and spent it on other things.”

Sasha sells different produce every day after school and at the weekends. “It’s fine as long as I don’t have to do it at night or during school hours,” she says.



Help from an uncle

“When my father realised what was going on he sent me away to live with my mother. I thought she would be loving, but when I got there she said that my job was to do the gardening, and not to expect a single day at school.

“Luckily my uncle found out, and he forced my mother to let me go to school. She has stopped beating me, but I still have to sell fruit and vegetables every day.

“My grandfather says this is my last year at school. He has arranged a marriage for me, and the man will pay my family. I’m really scared, but I know I have a right to an education so I’m going to stand my ground. My uncle is on my side, and if they try to marry me off I’ll run away and stay with him.” 🌐



Rutendo, Nyasha, Sasha, Euvetly and Chiedza meet every day in the Child Rights Club. Her friendships at school and in the Child Rights Club are the best things in Sasha’s life. When everything is tough at home, she can laugh with her friends and feel empowered by knowing her rights.



The girls in the Child Rights Club have written a song with a dance called ‘Don’t touch my private parts’. It’s about how other people are not allowed to touch them.



“It’s my body!”

13-year-old Paidamayo in Zimbabwe started a Child Rights Club along with some other girls. They raise awareness of girls’ rights at school and in Epworth, where they live.

“I trained as a World’s Children’s Prize Child Rights Ambassador and I got a certificate at a ceremony.”

The girls talk a lot together about the right to your own body, and they have written a song with a dance, all about how nobody else is allowed to touch it.

“We teach people that it’s not okay to touch someone else’s body, especially the private parts. So now the girls know that if someone does that it’s an unlawful assault. We also try to make sure adults know that children have a right to protection from this.”

Violent father

The girls tell others that children should not be exposed to any kind of violence from an adult.

Paidamayo has memories of violence at home, and she often meets girls with stories similar to her own.

“My father beat my mother every day in front of us. She could have died – it was as though he didn’t care. Sometimes he beat me too. But one day, when my father had hit my mother several times as usual, something unexpected happened. Our mother said we had to escape. We just grabbed a few of our things and ran away. We are safe here at my grandmother’s house. Dad can’t come here because then he’d end up in prison.” 🌐

Paidamayo talks with children about the rights of the child, and shows them *The Globe*.

“It’s important to talk to boys about girls’ rights, so they understand that they have a responsibility to respect them,” she explains.



The Globe helps me

“Can’t you stay here?” says Evelin to her younger brother. “Please, please?” But her grandfather hears her, and shouts at her little brother to go and tend to the cows. So Evelin is alone with her grandfather again.

The first time Evelin’s grandfather abuses her, she is only four years old. Nobody notices it happening, and Evelin’s grandfather threatens to kill her if she ever tells anyone about it. One day, when Evelin and her older sister are walking to the shop, her sister suddenly starts telling her that the same thing happened to her before she moved out. So finally, Evelin can talk about what is happening to her. The sisters know that nobody would believe them without evidence, but by the time they get home from the shop they have a plan.

The truth comes out

The following evening, Evelin takes out her notebook and pen. Usually when she does her homework she sits in the middle of the room, so that everyone can see what she’s writing. But this time she is hiding the book.

“Alright then, I’ll write the letter to your boyfriend,” says Evelin loudly to her sister. She sees her grandfather staring at her, and for a few seconds she stares back.

Grandfather thinks they are planning to tell someone about him, so he flies at the girls. In a flash their older brother places himself in between. “What do you think you’re doing?” he asks. “Raising your hand at the girls just because they’re writing a letter!”

Then the sisters tell him. Their grandfather denies everything, but their brother understands that he wouldn’t have flown at the girls like that if it wasn’t true. The three siblings go to their father and tell him.

Grandfather shouts:

“If you believe a word of what they say then hit me!”

Evelin sees her father’s fist strike her grandfather’s face. “Finally, it’s over,” she thinks to herself. But one of her uncles sides with her grandfather, and her father doesn’t want to go to the police. Instead, Evelin’s maternal grandmother goes to the police, and Evelin’s grandfather is sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Started to read The Globe

“I’m safe now, living with my mother and grandmother. Around the time my grandfather was reported to the police, I went on a World’s Children’s Prize training course about my rights and I started to read The Globe. When I read it I see that I have a right to be protected, so I feel better. Knowing my rights is helping me to move on,” says Evelin, 14. 🌐

Evelin’s grandfather abused her from the age of four until she was twelve. Now she has received support, and through reading The Globe she knows her rights. This is helping her move on.



WHY HAS
ROSI BEEN
NOMINATED?

Rosi Gollmann

Rosi Gollmann has been nominated for the World's Children's Prize for her over 50-year fight for the poorest and most vulnerable children in India and Bangladesh.

Rosi grew up in Nazi Germany during the Second World War, and experienced the terror, discrimination and suspension of democracy that war brings. As an 18-year-old she decided to dedicate her life to help the poor and oppressed to help themselves. Rosi founded the organisation Andheri-Hilfe, which in the 50 years since it was established has carried out over 3,000 projects with local partners, and in doing so has helped ten million people gain a better future. With Rosi's help, 50,000 child labourers have been set free and been able to go to school. Tens of thousands of children with disabilities have also received support and training. Rosi and Andheri-Hilfe support families living with HIV/AIDS, and fight against the old tradition where girls are forced to be sex slaves in some temples. In Bangladesh, over one million people have regained their sight thanks to Rosi and the committed local staff. Through a campaign called 'No girl is unwanted', 12,000 Indian girls who would have been killed at birth have been saved. At the same time, girls' rights have been strengthened and child marriage has been stopped.



It is evening when Rosi, 17, arrives at the hospital to visit her father, who suffers from pneumonia. Many of the other patients have severe burns. The war has been going on for four years, and now the bombs fall almost every night.

Hasna (left) and Saluddin can see again, after being blind for many years. They are two of the one million people who have got operations and regained their eyesight, thanks to Rosi's long fight for the blind in Bangladesh.

Suddenly the sirens sound, and Rosi hears the rumble of bombers overhead. A terrible explosion shakes the building, and all the windows shatter. Nurses come running to help the screaming patients out of bed and down into the basement. Rosi and her father are the only ones left. As she shouts for help there is a deafening bang, as the ceiling cracks and caves in. Rosi manages to lift her father out of bed and drag him down the stairs. Through the window, she can see the bombs raining down from the sky. All the fires and explosions are lighting up the sky like daylight.

Everyone takes shelter in the basement, but soon the hospital catches fire, so they flee out into the garden. Once outside, all those who can stand up build a human chain to try to put the fire out. For hours, Rosi runs back and forth with buckets of water, and by morning the fire is out. She and her father have survived, but much of the hospital has been destroyed. Later, as Rosi walks through the city towards the small health centre where she works, fires still burn in the streets. Smoke rises from ruined houses, and the streets are littered with burnt bodies that nobody has had a chance to attend to yet.

Rosi escapes

Shortly after this, Rosi's workplace is also destroyed by a bomb. She and her father decide to flee the city along with thousands of others. It's a dangerous journey, as the bombers attack train tracks and roads too. One night, Rosi's father can no longer walk. So Rosi steals a wheelbarrow to carry her father and their bags. They manage to get to the next train station, 20 km away, and finally reach Rosi's mother, who has already fled the city to the safety of the countryside.

Just a few weeks later, in May 1945, the war comes to an end. Rosi is glad that Hitler and the Nazis are



Rosi and her two brothers grew up in Germany during World War II (1939–1945). Both had to become soldiers and the eldest was killed at the age of 21. Between 42 and 60 million people died. More civilians – ordinary people – than soldiers died.

gone, but she grieves for the many millions of innocent people who have died.

Democracy abolished

Rosi was only six years old when Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party came to power in Germany in 1933. They abolished all democratic rights and persecuted, imprisoned and killed everyone who didn't 'fit in' to their dream society. The Nazis believed that they belonged to a particular type of people, an 'Aryan race', which was superior to all other races. Some groups were seen as a threat that should be eliminated. For example, six million Jews and hundreds of thousands of Roma died in the Nazi attempt to 'exterminate' whole ethnic groups. But Nazi Germany was dangerous for anyone who didn't agree with or do exactly what the Nazis said. Rosi's parents believed that Hitler's racist

ideas went against everything in their Christian beliefs of humanity and dignity. They listened in secret to radio broadcasts from other countries, to find out the truth about what was going on. But their neighbours, who were Christians too, were committed Nazis. One of their boys used to play with Rosi's brother.

"Be careful what you say when he's here," said Rosi's parents. If the boy told his parents that Rosi's family didn't like Hitler, they could all end up in a prison camp. The Nazis banned all political parties and burned books that they didn't like. They banned all youth organisations and instead started Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth). When Rosi and her friends broke the rules and met at their local church, some boys from the Hitler Youth gathered outside, shouting slogans and attacked Rosi and

her friends when they came out. Rosi was angry and wanted to speak out against the Nazis, but a young priest talked her out of it. It was too dangerous.

A tough choice

When the war ended in 1945, Rosi and her parents returned to Bonn, where 90 percent of the buildings had been dam-

aged or destroyed. Rosi's home was still there, but three homeless families had moved into their old apartment and now they all had to share the space.

Rosi studied to become a teacher. In her spare time she worked in a slum in Bonn helping poor children, young people, and the elderly. Everything was scarce – shel-



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The Second World War was a difficult time for children. Here are some school children hiding under their desks after hearing an air raid siren.

© Bettmann/CORBIS



ter, food, clean water, clothes and school supplies. But with hard work, life slowly returned to normal. One day Rosi told her parents that she had made a tough decision.

“I’m never going to get married.”

Back then, over 70 years ago, it was almost unthinkable for a woman to have both a job and a family. Married women were expected to spend all their time taking care of their homes and families. Rosi wanted to be free to help others in need.

India calling

After a few years as a teacher, Rosi had a happy and fulfilling life where she was helping many people. Still, she sometimes wondered if this was to be her life’s work. The answer came from an unexpected source. One morning, a student showed her a newspaper article about an orphanage in Andheri in India.

“The children get less than a handful of rice to eat every day. We have to do some-

thing,” said the girl. Rosi thought that India seemed very far away, but she finally wrote to the orphanage and asked what they needed. Then her students donated 400 parcels containing basic essentials – one for every child at the orphanage. After they had been sent, other people started to donate, and soon Rosi’s small bedroom in her parent’s apartment was crammed from floor to ceiling with gifts: potties, 65 metres of fabric, a refrigerator, medicine and clothes. Rosi decided to go to India herself to hand over the donations – a journey that was to change her life.

A different kind of poverty

The poverty in India felt familiar to Rosi. During the war she had seen many people living on the streets, starving and dying. But there was a big difference. In Germany, the suffering during the war was temporary. But here, the poverty was seen as completely normal, while many other

Indians lived in luxury. Hardly anyone talked about the injustice of it.

At the orphanage, Rosi was welcomed with open arms. The children hung so many flower garlands around her neck she could hardly breathe! Now, Rosi got to know children that she had previously only seen in pictures. Sweetie, who was four, had been found on the street with her eyes burnt out. Two girls had been kidnapped from their village and sold to a brothel. Other girls had been sexually abused and become pregnant, and been thrown out of their families as a result. The nuns who ran the orphanage explained that most of the children were not really orphans, but that their families were too poor to take care of them.

Rosi couldn’t sleep at night. She often cried tears of sorrow and rage, because it was so unfair that parents had to give up their children because of poverty. “Children need love more than anything

else,” she thought to herself. “Are we doing the right thing? If children are hungry, we give them food. If children are sick, we give them medicine. But shouldn’t we be tackling the roots of these problems?”

When Rosi returned home, she promised to come back soon. Now she knew that her life’s work, the reason why she had given up the thought of having children of her own, was in India.

Women change the world

The children’s shelter in Andheri wanted to start a small farm to provide food, milk and an income for the children. Rosi raised funds to get it going, and soon there was a vegetable patch and the first few hens and goats. Rosi started her own organisation and called it Andheri-Hilfe (Help for Andheri).

She travelled many times to India, meeting and encouraging people in villages and slums to develop ideas and programmes. Local leaders

Tharani, 11, was born with HIV, but thanks to support from Rosi, Andheri-Hilfe och their Indian partners she is in good health. Every year, hundreds of poor families living with HIV and AIDS receive support to stay well and to fight for their rights.



formed their own organizations and together they started to tackle the roots of poverty, for example by offering job training to women. Once mothers had an income they could bring their children home. After some years, 40,000 children had been reunited with their families instead of growing up in orphanages.

“This is the proof that women can change the world,” says Rosi. “I learned that charity was not the answer. A human being cannot be ‘developed’ – one can only develop oneself,” says Rosi. “

Rosi soon had to give up teaching to work full time for Andheri-Hilfe. She refused to accept any salary, content to live on her small teacher’s pension. Today, Andheri-Hilfe has grown into a renowned organisation, supporting about 150 development projects by joining hands with partner organisations in India and Bangladesh.

Eradicating poverty

Rosi has never regretted the fact that she didn’t get married. Andheri-Hilfe and the people are her family. She even has an adopted daughter, Maryann, who came to Germany from the children’s home in Andheri as a helping hand. She still lives and works with Rosi.

“We will never stop fighting for the rights of people living in poverty,” Rosi says. “One tenth of the world’s population owns about 85% of the world’s resources. Half of the global population owns less than one percent. We cannot accept injustice on this scale.”

Rosi will soon be 90 years old, but says she will never stop working.

“I have had the privilege of walking alongside so many people on their way to a happier and more dignified life. No wonder I am happy too!” 🌐

How Rosi and Andheri-Hilfe work

Rosi and her organisation Andheri-Hilfe have around 150 projects ongoing, working with local organisations in India and Bangladesh. They reach over 700,000 people a year in India alone. Every year they support people including:

- Children in 20,000 villages are supported with education, for survival and to start children’s parliaments.
- 140,000 children and adults from particularly poor and vulnerable groups including people with disabilities and indigenous people groups.
- Girls at risk of being killed at birth.
- Child labourers and child slaves who are set free and given the opportunity to go to school.
- Tens of thousands of blind people in Bangladesh. More than one million eye operations have given people back their eyesight and preventative work stops more children from going blind.

The girls who disap

As the time approaches for Kodiammal to give birth, she becomes increasingly anxious. She has followed the traditional practice of offering money and food to the gods so that her second child will be a son.

Kodiammal was 16 when she got married and had her first child, a daughter. This was a disappointment, but according to village tradition, the firstborn girl is allowed to live. However, the second daughter must die, because it is believed that then the next child will automatically be a boy.

“Bringing up a daughter is like watering your neighbour’s garden,” say the old people in the village. When a village girl gets married, she moves in with her husband and his family. Her parents must pay for the wedding, and give the husband’s family gifts like money, gold, livestock, household items and fine clothing. This is called a dowry and although it is illegal, it is still a common practice. Therefore, many daughters are seen as a curse, while sons bring in money to the family.

One evening, Kodiammal finally gives birth at home, on the floor of their small house made of mud and straw. Older women from the village are there to help, but Kodiammal does not get to see her baby. Someone says: ‘It’s a girl’ and disappears out into the night with the child. The older women know it’s important that the mother doesn’t get a chance to hold her baby, not even for a few minutes, because then she might refuse to let go.

Killing a baby

Kodiammal’s daughter is buried in the yard, right beside the house. Her husband plants a jasmine bush there. Nobody asks what happened. Most of the people in the village and the neighbouring villages know that there are 14 ways to kill a baby. Like not giving her anything to eat or drink, or leaving her out at night in the cold. One of the most common methods is to squeeze a few drops of a milky liquid

out of the stalk of a particular poisonous plant. This causes the baby to die within half an hour. Every time Kodiammal walks past the jasmine bush she feels a pain in her chest and has to hold back the tears. She hates the poverty that forced her to give up her child. As a woman, she has no power and cannot protest. But this is normal in the village, she tells herself, and she can’t complain. Many women are filled with sorrow, because almost every family here has buried at least one baby girl under their floor or in their garden.

Unwanted girls

After a few months, Kodiammal is expecting another baby. This one should be a son, because the family sacrificed their second daughter. But she knows lots of women who have given up their daughters and then given birth to another girl nonetheless.

One morning, a neighbouring woman comes to visit. She is a member of the new women’s group in the village, IKKAM, which means unity.

“Not long to go now?” she says,



peared



Annandhi was allowed to live. Her name means joy.

Kodiammal went to the village temple with offerings to the gods so that she would have a son.

Infanticide through the ages

Throughout history, in nearly all countries and cultures, unwanted children have been killed at birth or been left to die, because of poverty and tradition. For example, well into the 20th century in Europe, many unwanted babies were left in children's homes run by what people called "angel-makers" because so many babies died in their care. Some were killed outright, others perished through neglect.

nodding towards Kodiammal's belly. "Do you remember what we agreed?"

Since the women's group found out that Kodiammal was pregnant again, they have visited her every week. They visit all families who already have a daughter and are expecting children, because of the high risk that their next girl will lose her life.

"We'll help you if you have another daughter," the woman reminds Kodiammal. "We'll give you two goats, and trees to plant. You and your husband

will get help with training and jobs as long as you let the baby live, even if it's a girl."

Kodiammal would love to believe IKKAM's promises. She has joined the women's group, and begun to learn about her rights. But her husband is unsure. His mother nags him every day, telling him that the family can't afford another girl. Even Kodiammal's own mother agrees.

"Just do what we've always done," they both say.

Joy is born

When the time finally comes for Kodiammal to give birth, the women from IKKAM stay with her and keep watch. They don't let the father or any of the older women in the village come anywhere near. This is just as well, because it is a tiny, wailing, baby girl who is finally laid in Kodiammal's arms.

The baby girl is named Annandhi, which means joy. 🌍



Annandhi celebrates that a girl has been born in the village.

Annandhi was allowed to live

Annandhi can't remember how old she was when one day her mother said: "We were planning to kill you, but we let you live." Around the same time Annandhi found out that she had a sister, who was buried right beside their house, under the jasmine bush.

That could have been me," thinks Annandhi. Sometimes she sits there and talks to her sister, when there's nobody around. She doesn't want to make her parents feel sad or guilty.

"Don't be angry," whispers Annandhi. "Dad wanted to kill me too. He didn't know any better."

Annandhi's birth was celebrated with a party in the village. The women's group gave her two coconut trees and two goats. The family sell the goats' milk and the money

has made a big difference, especially since Annandhi's father injured his back, making it hard for him to work.

Annandhi becomes a 'mother'

A few months ago the goats had kids. The mother goat was old and she died giving birth, so Annandhi became the kids' new 'mother'. She gave them milk, and lots of love. Now the kids don't need her any more, except one. Annandhi calls her Shri, which means 'holy'. Shri is

poorly, and isn't growing the way she should. She follows Annandhi wherever she goes, even to school.

Her mother and father don't love Shri in the way Annandhi does, but they do want her to survive. Unlike the male kids, Shri can give the family milk and new kids in the future.

"It's not logical," thinks Annandhi. "Adults only want to have sons, and they kill their daughters. But it's the other way round with animals. Female animals, like cows, are the valuable ones. The bulls are killed and eaten. Why can't people see that a girl is valuable? She can take care of her family just as well as a boy, maybe even better. I hate that attitude. I'm going to go far, to show that all girls have value and right to live."

Hard to sleep

The family's home has large holes in the wall and ceiling that they can't afford to repair. When the monsoon rains come, the house leaks. Everything gets wet and the mud walls start to split. Once when Annandhi was nine, a chunk of the wall fell on her head while she was sleeping. Since then, she has been afraid of the house collapsing.

Annandhi often lies awake, wondering how her family will survive until she and her older sister finish their education and start to work. One night, after overhearing an argument between her parents about money, she doesn't sleep a wink. Her tears fall in the darkness, but when her mother comes in she pretends to be asleep. The following morning she sits down at the



Annandhi loves her goats, who see her as an extra mother!



Annandhi with her father, mother, big sister and grandmother.

jasmine bush and whispers:

“If they had let you live and killed me instead, you would be suffering as I am. At least you’re safe now.” Then she goes to school, with Shri the goat kid pattering along behind her.

Men are the problem

There’s no school in the village. Annandhi and her friends walk a few kilometres to the school in a neighbouring village. On the way they see a group of men who shout:

“Come and dance with us!”

It is common for men to try to talk to the girls on their way to school. Sometimes they follow them and pull at their clothes. Annandhi’s mother has told her to scream and fight if she is attacked. That used to be unthinkable.

Before, a girl could never say no to a man. If a girl was attacked, it was always her own fault. That was one of the reasons why girls couldn’t go to school – their parents were too afraid to let them go.

Annandhi has a good day at school, and on the way home she is happier. She tells her father that the teacher praised her.

“You are so talented!” he says. “I can’t imagine that you would not have been here with us.”

Don’t beat me!

Every evening Annandhi goes to the local night school, which is run by the villagers. The mothers from the women’s group help out with homework and organise games, plays, singing and dancing. Both boys and girls





Annandhi is one of 12,000 girls whose lives have been saved so far in 210 villages in southern India, thanks to Rosi's and her partners' struggle.

→ learn about their rights and that sons and daughters are equal. Before, in Annandhi's village, almost all the men used to beat their wives – sometimes even to death. Nobody was ever punished for it. The boys took after their fathers and treated their sisters and other girls badly. Annandhi's father used to drink and beat her mother too, but with the help of the women's group she told him to stop. She threatened to

leave him if he didn't stop drinking and abusing her. And it worked!

Wedding can wait

Annandhi doesn't plan to get married until she is at least 25. First, she wants to finish her education and get a good job.

"They might try to marry me off earlier, but I'll fight it," she says. "My husband must be kind, and share the housework. And his family are not getting a dowry. My educa-

tion is my dowry! I'll earn my own money."

These days, the tradition of killing baby girls has been almost completely eradicated from Annandhi's village. In the area where she lives, thousands of girls' lives have been saved in hundreds of villages, ever since their parents became aware of the importance of girls' equal value, and came together to change age old traditions.

"Now they know that girls are a gift, not a punishment," says Annandhi.

Shri won't wake up

One morning, Shri the goat kid doesn't come skipping over to Annandhi when she steps out into the garden. She has died during the night, and is lying cold and still under a tree. Annandhi can't stop crying, although she knew that Shri was sick. The tears flow for two days, and she is very sad long afterwards. It feels like she has lost another sister, or a best friend. She sits down at the jasmine bush, with its strong sweet smell.



Annandhi, 13

Best thing: Playing with friends. Going to school.

Worst thing: When baby girls are killed.

Sad: When my parents fight.

Loves: Animals, especially my goats.

Wants to be: A lawyer and fight for justice.

"I never got to meet you," she says to the sister under the ground. If you had been allowed to live we could have played together and supported each other. In the future, if anybody has a daughter they don't want, I will take care of her as though she was my own child." 🌍

At evening school, the girls and boys gain life skills and learn about their rights and equality. They also get help with homework, and they play, dance and do drama.



Annandhi's wardrobe



School uniform



Ready to celebrate



"Yellow makes me happy!"



Play and housework



A play stops the killing of baby girls

Annandhi and her friends want to put a stop to child marriage and the killing of baby girls. They have rehearsed a play that they perform in different villages, about a family who are planning to kill their daughter once she is born. The firstborn girl in the family cries and says:

"If you had killed me, I wouldn't be here."

"We can't afford another girl," says her father.

"There is help available. Let her live."

Later the father says to his daughter:

"Thanks to you I know that there is help and support. I promise that we'll take care of the baby."

After the play, the girls thank the audience for the applause!

Fighting for girls

Over 25 years ago, Rosi Gollmann and her strong Indian partners started a campaign called 'No girl is unwanted'. At that time, hardly anyone – not politicians, nor the media, nor the police – talked openly about the fact that there was only one girl to every three boys in many parts of India. Girls were killed at birth or died because of mal-nourishment and neglect. Many women also had abortions if they found out that the baby they were carrying was a girl. When it came to light that some hospitals had aborted 100 male foetuses and 7,000 female foetuses, politicians banned doctors from telling families the sex of their child prior to birth. Rosi and the Indian partner organizations focused on educating and empowering girls and mothers. Great results have been achieved in 210 villages:

- The lives of over 12,000 girls have been saved.
- 98 percent of girls now go to school.
- 5,420 girls have been trained and found jobs.
- 7,500 women have started small businesses thanks to loans from the village women's self-help groups. Many mothers support their families by making and selling things like clothes and sanitary towels. At first the men got angry that the women were earning more money than them, but now that they see that everyone's lives have improved, they are happy.



Celebrate the girls!



Annandhi's aunt has had a baby girl and the whole village is organising a welcome party for her. It was the idea of the villagers and Rosi's partners to throw parties for newborn girls, to show everyone that this is something to celebrate.

Sonia, 12, is carrying one of the two coconut plants that are given to every newborn girl. After three years, they bear fruit that the families can sell, The extra income pays for the girls' schooling and later their marriages.

The women and girls of the village form a procession along the streets towards the home of the newborn girl, singing and playing music.



The baby girl receives gifts – a new dress, food, and jewellery. And black dots on the face which are meant to bring protection from evil spirits!

Every family receives two goats, that provide milk and kids.





Surya wants to be a role model

Surya, 14, has a favourite song about a mother who sings to her unborn child.

"The father wants to kill the daughter, but the mother sings, 'My beautiful child, your eyes shine like a hurricane lamp. I will fight for your life.' My mother made sure that I was allowed to live.

Surya wants to become a teacher and help girls who drop out of school to return.

"My mother was only 14 when she got married, and she never even got to start school. I look up to our headteacher. She treats everyone equally. I too want to be a role model and show that girls are valuable. Discrimination against children makes me angry. After all, we are the future of this country!"



Pavitra wants to be a police officer

"I want to become a police officer, and punish men who fight and hurt others," says Pavitra, 11, one of Annandhi's best friends in the village.

"It makes me angry and sad when I think about my two sisters who came before me. They were not allowed to live, just because they were girls. Once my parents knew more, they realised that this was wrong and I was allowed to live. Now I look up to my mother. She fights for our rights in the women's group and she's a teacher at the evening school.

Pavitra loves to dance.

"Annandhi and I and the other girls who have been saved sometimes perform, to bring joy and to raise awareness of girls' rights. I love both modern and traditional music."



Welcome and good luck!

Girls in Annandhi's village are making a rangoli. This is a symbol of welcome and good luck that is 'painted' using different colours of sand. These images are often seen during special festivals in India. Rangoli means 'row of colours'. This is how to do it:

1. Prepare sand in different colours. (If it's a windy day you can use chalk instead.)
2. Start by drawing the outlines of your rangoli in the sand with a stick, and then fill the outlines with white powder.
3. Fill in with different colours of sand. Job done!





Thanga loves playing cricket. He also loves batting for equal rights for girls!



Venketesh can't imagine life without his sister, who was going to be killed but was saved.

Batting for girls' rights

"It used to be that girls were treated almost like slaves in our village, but that is changing," says the captain of the village cricket team, Thanga, 14.

We learned about girls' rights at night school. I have two sisters who have to do everything at home. My parents treat us differently and I think that's unfair. They shout at my sisters, but to me they just say 'Go and rest or play!' This makes my sisters sad, so I help them anyway. I usually wash clothes or peel onions. That makes my eyes sting so much that it looks like I'm crying!"

When Thanga has children of his own he plans to treat his sons and daughters equally.

"They'll be able to go to school and they won't have to do hard work. I'll never let anyone give a daughter of mine poisoned milk. I'll only let my daughters drink normal milk so they grow strong."

Thanga wants to be an engineer and build better houses for poor people.

"The houses we have now are not stable, and they sometimes collapse. That's dangerous, and it makes me angry."

Sister rescued

My sister was going to be killed at birth, but she was rescued," says Thanga's friend Venketesh, 15. "Our parents have explained to us that they didn't know any better before. Now they do. I can't imagine life without my sister. She and my mother are a part of me!"



Paul wants to bring justice

"I want to be a police officer and to fight crime. Nobody should kill or hurt anybody else. It makes me sad when I think about men who have beaten their wives to death, and families who have killed baby daughters. This has to stop. At night school, we learn that everyone has a right to be treated equally, and we don't look down on girls."

Paul has three brothers, but no sisters.

"I often think about my sisters who died. I wonder what they would look like now, and what games we would have played together."

Swati ran away

Saritha is nine years old when her sister Swati is married off by her parents. She is only 15 but looks older in her new clothes and jingling gold bracelets. The man she is marrying is almost twice her age.

Swati was forced to marry a man twice her age when she was only 15. After three years she ran away from her husband. Here she is walking with her mother and two sisters. The village women's group, which is supported by Rosi and Andheri-Hilfe, has strengthened girls' and women's rights in the village.

The wedding goes on for several days, and Swati's family have to pay for everything. The husband also demands a dowry in the form of money, household items and gold. Once the wedding is over, Swati moves in with her husband's family in a different village.

Now Saritha and her other sister Narthi, often have to go hungry. Their parents had to borrow money so that they could afford to marry off their oldest daughter. Almost everything they earn now goes to pay off the loan. Swati never comes to visit, and she hasn't been to school once since the wedding, even though her husband's family promised that she would be allowed to continue her studies.

Swati comes home

Finally, Swati turns up at home. She is crying, and looks tired and thin.

"They beat me all the time," she says. "I have to work like a slave, and they won't let me go to school."

"It's my fault. I married you off too early," says her mother, who is crying too.

But the father sends Swati back to her husband.

"If you don't go back it will be a scandal!" he says worriedly.

When Swati has her first baby, it's a girl. Her husband is furious, and demands more money. "You didn't pay me enough to take this useless wife who can only give birth to girls," he says. "I want a son!"

Swati's parents have no money left and two more



daughters to marry off. Swati's mother herself has given birth to five girls, but no sons. Two of the girls were killed at birth and are buried under the family's dirt floor.

Swati runs away

After three years, Swati runs away and comes home again, and now she refuses to return.

"They torture me every day. If my next baby is a girl, they'll kill her."

Swati's mother, who in the meantime has joined the village women's group, says:

"You don't need to go back. We have learned that there is a law that prohibits child marriage and dowries. If your husband causes trouble we'll call the police."

Swati's mother and the women's group help Swati to get job training to be a seamstress.

"Don't get married too young, finish your education first," Swati says to her sisters every day. "I'm never getting married," says Narthi, 15. "I want to be a nurse, earn money, and take care of our family."

"If they try to marry me off before I'm an adult, I'll go to the police," says Saritha.

Father's change of heart

The father and other men in the village are also getting training and support to find better jobs. He asks Swati to forgive him.

"I didn't know any better,

and you suffered because of that. I won't do the same thing to my other daughters."

Their mother borrows money from the women's group savings fund to buy a cow. The milk gives the family a secure income.

"In the past, our mother would never stand up to our father," says Saritha. "Now she teaches other girls and women to stand up for their rights, and my father supports her! I want to be just like her!" 🌐



Life on the streets

Sangheeta lives with her family on the streets of the large city of Chennai. She and her family wake up, eat, work, play and fall asleep under the skies.

Sangheeta has lived on the same street corner for her whole life. Her mother was born here too, almost 40 years ago.

“I plan to be the first person in my family to get a proper education and a good job, so that we can move into a real house,” says Sangheeta. “My older siblings started working when my father disappeared, but they only earn less than 3 dollars a day altogether. That’s not even enough for food.” Life on the street is dirty and tough. Children sleep in piles of trash where rats and cockroaches look for food. But the worst thing is when the men in the neighbourhood get drunk.

“They shout, fight and wreck things. If anyone has managed to cook some food for once, they kick over the whole pot. It makes all the children sad when their parents are involved in fights.”

Sangheeta and her family get help with education and job training from Andheri-Hilfe and their Indian partners. Sangheeta has learned about everything from life skills to football.

“I want to be as good as Messi at football, and play for India. But my studies are more important. I get good grades, especially in science. But nobody at school knows that I live on the street. They would stop talking to me if they knew, because they look down on poor people.”

06.00 Wake up call

“Sometimes I’m really tired in the morning,” says Sangheeta. “The worst thing is when drunk old men come and lie down beside us at night. We shout for our parents to help us, but it’s hard to get back to sleep after that.”

Sangheeta, 15

Likes: Football and school
Hates: Living on the streets
Favourite footballer: Lionel Messi
Loves: My family
Wants to be: A social worker



06.30 Morning routine

Sonia, 10, brushes her teeth with toothpaste on her finger.



Men and boys wash at the local pump, but girls are not allowed to take their clothes off with people watching so they have to pay to use the toilets at a nearby train station.

Generations of families on the street

At least 40,000 families with 75,000 children live on the street in Chennai. Many children are injured or killed in traffic accidents. Others, especially girls, are raped. Some are kidnapped and exploited as sex slaves. Diseases like scabies, typhus, dysentery and cholera, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are common. Rosi Gollmann and Andheri-Hilfe supports street families, helping them to help themselves.

In December 2015, Chennai was hit by the worst flooding in a hundred years, and hundreds of people died. In Sangheeta’s neighbourhood, the water level rose by 1.5 metres and families had to flee for their lives.



A mother checks her daughter for lice before school.



07.30 Time for school

"I have two school uniforms, so we can wash and dry one of them every day," says Sonia. "It's hard when it rains, because if both uniforms are soaking wet I can't go to school. I never invite my classmates home with me, because they don't know where I live."



08.00 Get to work

Many of the older boys have had to quit school and work instead, doing things like delivering water to local companies and households.

15.00 Homework

Sanju, 12, helps his younger friends with their homework.

"I want to be a teacher and help all the street children to do better at school."

14.30 The street is my playground

Hopscotch is one of many popular street games. But you have to get off the road quickly when fast cars and motorbikes appear. Every year, many children are injured and some are even killed in accidents.



16.00 Hungry

Almost all the family's money is spent to buy food. "We have nowhere to store things like rice, flour or oil, because the rats eat everything. That's why we can't cook our own food," explains Sangheeta.



16.15 Protect your food!

Every time a gust of wind comes along, the children lift their plates high in the air to protect their food from dust and dirt.



16.30 Training

Sangheeta teaches the younger children on her block to play football.



Sangheeta and her friends gather for a team photo. Sangheeta's grandmother is not in the team, she's just resting!

17.30 Children's meeting

In the Children's Parliament, street children learn about their rights and fight together to defend them, with support from Andheri-Hilfe and local partners.



Valuables and school books are kept safe in padlocked boxes.

19.00 Evening chat

The leader of the street families gathers the children together. She gives them some supper and asks how they're getting on at school, and whether anything is troubling them. Then it's time to sleep.



20.30 Night-time treat

Sangheeta treats her little sister to an ice pop before bed. "Right now it's OK, but during the rainy season we have to sit up under roof canopies. It's hard to sleep sitting up, but you get used to it!"



Children like Shalina, who can't stay with their families on the streets, can live safely at Karunalaya children's centre, which has been supported by Rosi and Andheri-Hilfe for 15 years. The children receive education, life-skill training, support and love. And they get to play football!

Rescued from the street

Shalina's mother planned to sell her to a neighbour. Then the Karunalaya centre gave her a safe place to live. Now she goes to school and loves playing football!

I grew up on the street with my family. My parents worked all day long as trash pickers. My father used to promise my mother: 'I'll go and buy food'. Then he wouldn't come home for hours, and when he did appear he was drunk. All the money had gone on booze. Over and over again, my little brother and I didn't get any food, just water.

"Once my mother found lots of money when she was collecting trash. She didn't want my father to take it, so she asked a neighbour, a young man, to keep it safe. Instead, he spent all the money and said to my mother: 'Give me your daughter then maybe I'll pay.' My mother was so desperate she agreed. Then I ran away and found safety here at the children's centre. After a month, my mother found out where I was and came to visit me. She

said: 'Forgive me. Stay here and go to school.'"

Wants to be a free doctor

"I had never gone to school, so first I had to learn to read and write. Now I'm in Year 9 and doing well. I like being able to read the newspaper and find out what's happening in the world. Sometimes I get angry, especially when I read about girls being beaten and raped. One girl even got attacked by police officers, who should have been protecting her! Girls and boys should work together and help one another instead.

"My dream is to become a doctor and help poor people for free. When I lived on the street and got sick, there was never any mention of me going to the doctor, I just lay there. Lots of people die because they can't afford medicine. I plan to change that!"



Street Child World Championships

The 2014 Street Child World Cup took place in Brazil, and a team from Karunalaya went to represent India! Gopinath explains: "I got to fly for the first time. At first I was really nervous, but everybody welcomed us and saw us as human beings, not as inferior, as many do here in India. I made friends for life and we won the 'Fair Play' trophy because we played fairly and with respect."

Moses is not a punishment



A doctor said that Moses would never be able to look after himself. Now Moses is training to work in a restaurant and enjoys life.



When Moses' family discovered that he was different, they were afraid that their neighbours would look down on them. Some people believe that children who are born with a disability are a punishment from God because the parents have done something terrible in the past.

Moses was born with brain damage, which meant that he did not develop as quickly as other children. When he couldn't keep up in school, the teacher beat him. Other boys teased him and hit him. Moses became afraid and stopped going out. His mother took him to a doctor, who just said: "Your son is an idiot, he'll never be able to look after himself."

Moses gets help

One day, when Moses was twelve years old, some of Rosi's partners came to the village. They asked if there were any children in the village with disabilities.

"We don't have any crazy children here!" said the villagers, and tried to chase them away. But Moses' mother asked for support. Moses then got the chance to start attending a special school.

With the help of the teachers there, he developed in leaps and bounds. Moses' mother also got to learn how she could best support her son. The village people slowly became aware that there are no "disabled" children – only children with other abilities.

No more teasing

After two years attending the special needs school, Moses is confident enough to take the bus by himself every morning. He has completed Year 8 and is now trained to work in the restaurant sector. He already runs the café at the centre, makes tea, serves food and takes payment. The village people slowly realised that there are no "disabled" children – only children with other abilities!

"I used to be scared of everything and I hated my life," says Moses. "Now I'm calm and happy. Nobody makes fun of me any more. Lots of people look up to me now!" 🌐

The hidden children

Some parents hide their differently abled children because of prejudices. Some are even tied or chained up. India has strong laws stating that children with disabilities have the same rights as other children, and should receive the support they need. But poor families rarely know that they have the right to support. That's why Rosi and Andheri-Hilfe work with Indian organizations to support children with different abilities and to raise awareness of their rights.

Alagumani's new language

"I was born deaf," says Alagumani, 14, who lives and studies at a boarding school for children with disabilities, supported by Rosi and Andheri-Hilfe. "I couldn't go to school and I had no proper clothes. My siblings pretended I didn't exist. It felt like living in a prison. I used to get so angry because nobody cared about me that I would hit my mother. Then she'd hit me back. Finally, I got to come to the special school and learn sign language. For the first time, I can make myself understood and understand others! That made me so happy. I go to school and get good grades! And my mother has started to learn sign language so we can finally get to know each other."





Balachandran and the other children in the village attend the village night school for help with homework, time to play and life skills lessons.

When Rosi Gollmann met Balachandran she encouraged him to get an education – the key to the future.

Child labourers' children in school

When a block of stone fell on Balachandran's father, crushing his legs, the family had to borrow money for an operation. But when the father's boss found that he couldn't work as quickly as before, he was fired from the quarry where he'd worked since he was a child.

“Since then we have probably been the poorest family in the village,” says Balachandran. “We have to pay off the loan and we can't afford a proper house.”

Twenty years ago, everyone in Balachandran's village worked at the quarry, but now it has closed.

“The holes became too deep and dangerous. The company just moved out without even putting any fences up. Sometimes children fall down there and die,” says Balachandran.

Father hurts

Balachandran's father has to travel a long way to find work and he only comes home a few times a year. His mother thinks that's for the best.

“He drinks too much, to numb the pain in his leg. Then he gets drunk and beats me. If it wasn't for you chil-

dren I wouldn't want to go on living.”

Back when the quarry was in use, local politicians opened an alcohol shop in the village and earned money through the workers spending their wages there. The quarry is now shut, but the alcohol shops are still there.

“Once I got down on my knees and said ‘Please father, stop drinking,’” says Balachandran's big sister. “He cried and said sorry, but he just couldn't stop.”

No more child labour

All the parents in the village used to be child labourers, and even some of the children, but now that is over. For a while Balachandran worked in a bakery after school, but that was dangerous, with burning hot ovens and oven trays. Then Rosi and her partners helped the

children with school fees, and organised job training for Balachandran's mother. Now he and his sister are concentrating on their education so that they can get good jobs.

“I want to work as a police officer and protect poor people. I'll be a fair police officer, I won't accept bribes and I plan to make sure the alcohol shops are shut down.”



Balachandran and his mother.

From child labour to education

In the past, children in the village worked for up to 15 hours a day from the age of six. Nobody went to school. Many were badly injured by rockfalls. Some got shards of stone in their eyes and went blind. Rosi Gollmann and the Indian partner organization set the child labourers free, and supported them by providing school fees and extra lessons. Today, many of the former child workers are studying, well on their way to becoming engineers, social workers and nurses.

The children's secret

Kalieshwari, 14, shares a secret with other children from the slums of Madurai. They meet once a week to talk about what it's like to live with HIV/AIDS. Children who reveal their secret are often excluded by their friends and teachers.

"I like meeting other children whose lives are like mine," says Kalieshwari. "I never tell anyone else. They'll think: 'maybe I'll catch it from her'. Then they'll avoid me. That makes me angry."

One of Kalieshwari's friends, Tharani, 11, was infected with HIV when she was in her mother's tummy, but her younger brother was born healthy because their mother received medicine while pregnant.

"I take loads of pills," explains Tharani. "Sometimes I'm so tired I fall asleep in school. But I don't dare to tell anyone why."

Lost her job

Kalieshwari's mother got infected with HIV by her husband.

"My mother was a teacher. When she told the school about her illness they fired

her," explains Kalieshwari. "We had no money for food or medicine. When my father died I had to take care of my mother. I was so afraid that she was going to die and leave me all alone. Then we got help from Rosi Gollmann and her partners, and found new friends who accepted us fully."

Kalieshwari's mother now volunteers for Rosi's partner organisation in India, that fights for the rights of people with HIV/AIDS.

"My mother shares knowledge about HIV and AIDS, to help people who are ill and to combat prejudice. At work she met another teacher who had been fired because he had HIV. They fell in love and got married! I am proud of them because they try to help people understand that everyone should be accepted and treated equally."

Frequent moves

Kalieshwari's family have been forced to move house seven times in eight years.

"The worst part is chang-



Kalieshwari's had to move seven times in eight years because her parents are HIV-infected.

ing school. Once I tried to refuse to move. My best friend cried and begged me to stay. But it was impossible."

Kalieshwari is fighting prejudices too.

"We children put on street plays at schools and hospitals. Lots of people are scared of

us. They think that you can catch HIV by sharing a glass or a school desk! We explain that it's only transmitted through blood. Once people know the facts, they treat us like everyone else, and that's all I want." 🌐

WHAT ARE HIV AND AIDS?

HIV is a virus that breaks down the immune system. A person with HIV can live a long, healthy life, but without treatment the immune system eventually becomes so weak that the body can no longer protect itself from common, curable illnesses. This final stage, when the person often dies of something like a lung infection, is called AIDS.



A pink palace for mum

Mahalakshmi's mother had HIV when she was expecting her. Rosi and her partners encouraged her to get help from the government hospital. Thanks to a special medicine, Mahalakshmi was born healthy. She explains: "Nobody will let us rent a house because my mother has AIDS. I dream of having a house of our own, a two storey pink palace with a refrigerator, soft beds, a washing machine, a swimming pool and glass windows. I would invite everyone who's been rejected, and take care of them. And my mother could just rest, like a queen!"



Rosi and her two brothers grew up in Germany during World War II (1939–1945). Both had to become soldiers and the eldest was killed at the age of 21. Between 42 and 60 million people died. More civilians – ordinary people – than soldiers died.

TEXT: CARMILLA FLOYD PHOTOS: ANDHERI-HILFE

gone, but she grieves for the many millions of innocent people who have died.

Democracy abolished

Rosi was only six years old when Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party came to power in Germany in 1933. They abolished all democratic rights and persecuted, imprisoned and killed everyone who didn't 'fit in' to their dream society. The Nazis believed that they belonged to a particular type of people, an 'Aryan race', which was superior to all other races. Some groups were seen as a threat that should be eliminated. For example, six million Jews and hundreds of thousands of Roma died in the Nazi attempt to 'exterminate' whole ethnic groups. But Nazi Germany was dangerous for anyone who didn't agree with or do exactly what the Nazis said. Rosi's parents believed that Hitler's racist

ideas went against everything in their Christian beliefs of humanity and dignity. They listened in secret to radio broadcasts from other countries, to find out the truth about what was going on. But their neighbours, who were Christians too, were committed Nazis. One of their boys used to play with Rosi's brother.

"Be careful what you say when he's here," said Rosi's parents. If the boy told his parents that Rosi's family didn't like Hitler, they could all end up in a prison camp. The Nazis banned all political parties and burned books that they didn't like. They banned all youth organisations and instead started Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth). When Rosi and her friends broke the rules and met at their local church, some boys from the Hitler Youth gathered outside, shouting slogans and attacked Rosi and

her friends when they came out. Rosi was angry and wanted to speak out against the Nazis, but a young priest talked her out of it. It was too dangerous.

A tough choice

When the war ended in 1945, Rosi and her parents returned to Bonn, where 90 percent of the buildings had been dam-

aged or destroyed. Rosi's home was still there, but three homeless families had moved into their old apartment and now they all had to share the space.

Rosi studied to become a teacher. In her spare time she worked in a slum in Bonn helping poor children, young people, and the elderly. Everything was scarce – shel-



© Bettmann/CORBIS

The Second World War was a difficult time for children. Here are some school children hiding under their desks after hearing an air raid siren.

© Bettmann/CORBIS

WHY HAS
MANUEL BEEN
NOMINATED?

Manuel Rodrigues

Manuel Rodrigues has been nominated for the World's Children's Prize for his 20-year fight for blind children and children with other disabilities in Guinea-Bissau.

Children with disabilities in Guinea-Bissau are among the world's most disadvantaged and vulnerable children. Through Manuel and his organization AGRICE, they get to live a life with dignity. They receive medical care, food, a home, the opportunity to go to school, security and love. Manuel talks to politicians, other organizations and most of all rural communities about the rights of children with disabilities. Without Manuel, people in rural villages would not receive this information. Thanks to Manuel's work, children and adults know that children with visual impairments and other disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. Manuel's fight has saved these children from being mistreated, abandoned, or even killed. 250 blind children have lived at Manuel's centre and attended his school, which has been adapted for people with visual impairments. The aim is for these children to move back in with their families after receiving education and training from Manuel. Most of these families are poor, and the children receive support from AGRICE after moving home so that they can continue their education and have a good life in their village.



Manuel, who has been blind since the age of three, with blind children who now have a brighter future thanks to Manuel and his organisation AGRICE.

Manuel strokes the girl's head gently. Adelia, 9, leans against him on the bench where they are sitting. When she was a newborn baby, she was left to die in the forest because she is blind.

"That makes me sad and angry. Unfortunately, Adelia is not an exception. The situation in Guinea-Bissau for children who are blind or have other disabilities is terrible. Many people see these children as worthless, so they don't give them love or let them go to school. My life is all about fighting for these children," says Manuel.

Manuel knows how much a child with a disability needs care and love from the adults in their life, and not to be let down and abandoned. He knows this because he himself lost his sight at the age of three.

"I grew up in an ordinary family with lots of children. There were nine of us, and my mother Ana-Maria and my father Luis loved us all. My dad and I were best friends. We walked hand in hand to

preschool every day, and we played together a lot. We went swimming and played ball sports. Even though I was little, we usually wore matching clothes. I remember my father was always happy."

When Manuel was three, something happened that changed everything.

"My eyes, which had been brown, started to turn blue, and everything started to look blurred. I found it harder and harder to play and get around, and



Manuel with Adelia, who was left in the forest to die as a baby, but was rescued by some shepherds. Since then, Manuel and his wife have taken care of Adelia and given her a home, love, and an education.





Both blind and sighted children attend Manuel's 'White Cane' school and they play together at break times.



I had to stop going to pre-school because I couldn't see well enough. This made me really sad. But my father was even sadder. He cried almost all the time."

The long journey

Manuel's father refused to accept that his son had become blind. He decided to make sure Manuel received the best medical care he could find. But that was not in Guinea-Bissau, but in

Portugal, where his brother lived. He started to contact people who might be able to help. And he started saving as much money as he could from his army pay check. There was less food on the table for the whole family. But they persevered, and finally managed to get a flight ticket to get Manuel to his uncle in Portugal. But nobody else in the family could afford to go with him.

"It wasn't easy for me. I was

only four, and I was sad and afraid. But I was lucky. There was a nun on the flight who helped me, and at the hospital there were nurses called Judite and Lurdes who cared for me. They comforted me, read books and sang songs, just as my parents would have done."

Manuel had high hopes that the doctors in Europe would be able to help him get his sight back.

"But after a year in hospital, they told me that there was nothing they could do to fix my visual impairment, which is called glaucoma. The medical treatment had come too late."

School for the blind

Once again, it was Manuel's father who was the most upset. But he kept fighting for his son. He had found out that there were good schools for blind children in

15-year-old created braille

Braille was created in 1824 by a 15-year-old French boy called Louis Braille. Braille is a series of raised dots within small squares (cells) on sheets of paper or plastic, which people touch and read using both index fingers. Every character consists of up to 6 dots. Different letters are formed by different combinations of dots in the square. Braille can also be used to denote numbers and music notes. World Braille Day is celebrated on 4 January every year, in memory of Louis Braille's birth in 1809.

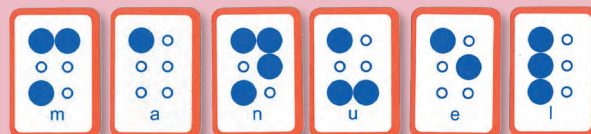


Blind children at Manuel's school learn to read and write for the first time in their lives with the help of braille.



A plastic template with squares that the paper is inserted into to write with the stylus.

A stylus, used for braille writing.



This is Manuel's name in braille.



Manuel's old school made of bamboo.



New children's centre

"Right now we're building a new centre for the children. My old house is too small and I want the children to have an environment that is more adapted for them. In addition to bedrooms, the new centre will have a playground, a sports hall, an area to grow our own vegetables and raise chickens and goats. At the centre we'll have courses such as journalism, administration, computers, sewing and cooking for the young people," says Manuel.



Isabel, 14, lost her sight as a young girl. After spending time at Manuel's centre, she has now moved back home to live with her grandmother Fatumata and attends a mainstream school. Manuel's goal is for all children to be able to return to their families.



Manuel talks as often as possible to journalists, on the radio and to politicians, about how children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children.

Portugal, but that they were expensive. There was not a single school for blind children in Guinea-Bissau, so once again Manuel's father began saving money to help him.

"The family managed to raise enough for me to go to a boarding school in Portugal. Although I missed my family, I was really happy there. I learned to count, read and write using braille. At school I also learned practical skills, like getting dressed, washing and brushing my teeth. And I made lots of new friends. My best friend was called António and in our free time we played football and went swimming."

Heartbreak

The years passed, and Manuel learned how to live as a blind person. Maybe life was going to be fine after all. But one day, after six years at the school, Manuel received another life-changing message. His father had died suddenly from a heart attack.

"I was ten years old and I lost both my father, and the chance to continue with my education, since nobody else was able to pay my school fees. I took the boat home to Africa and I was devastated the whole way."

When Manuel arrived the country was at war. Guinea-Bissau was fighting to be liberated from colonial power

Portugal, which had been in charge. The family took Manuel to safety with relatives in neighbouring Guinea. There, he was able to attend a school for children and young people with disabilities. Six years later, Guinea-Bissau became independent and Manuel returned home.

Stopped the president

Guinea-Bissau was poor and ravaged by war. Manuel's family had to survive on whatever his mother managed to sell at the market. Manuel, who was sixteen, realised that he needed to get

a job and help out. Nobody believed that a blind person could get a job, but Manuel walked to the presidential palace every day and asked to speak to the president. He believed that the president should help him and other people with disabilities to find work. Every day, he was told it was not possible to meet the president. But he kept going.

"One day I managed to stand in the way of the president's car so he had to stop! The president's guards took me to him. I explained that I needed help to get a job, since nobody employed blind people. I said that I had learned to work as a switchboard operator at school in Guinea. The president was curious, and he let me try out the switchboard in the presidential office. When I passed the test he was so impressed that he arranged a job for me at the head office of the postal service!"

"Our goal is that all children, even children who are blind or have another disability, have chances in life and hope for the future. All children should feel that they matter and they belong in society," says Manuel.

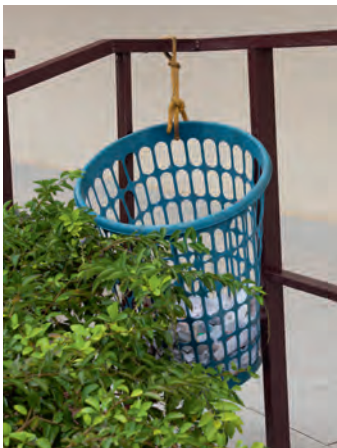




Manuel tells a story to the children. Abdulai, who is sitting on Manuel's knee, was found just a week ago, when Manuel was out on a rescue mission.

➔ Became a businessman

A year later, the president was deposed in a coup, a new telephone system was installed and Manuel lost his job. But he didn't give up. He had managed to save some money and he decided to become a businessman instead. Manuel bought school resources, toiletries and drinks in the city, which he then sold in rural areas. He used the money to buy palm oil and timber, which he then sold in the city.



"It was tough work, but I liked it. After a while it was going so well that I was able to buy an old car, employ a driver and start a taxi company too. Finally, I had managed to save so much money that I was able to build a beautiful house for my family. It felt fantastic to give that to my mother, after everything she had done for me."

AGRICE

Although Manuel was doing well, he didn't forget the blind children in the country who had not had the same opportunities that he had had. Who didn't have parents

Adapted litter bin

Lots of things at the school have been adapted to make life easier for people with visual impairments. For example, the bins are hanging up instead of being on the ground, so that nobody trips over them. And you can use the rope to feel where to throw rubbish.

who loved them. And who hadn't been able to go to school because their parents thought it was a waste of money, since blind people couldn't work anyway, or even help out at home.

"Many were kept hidden, or abandoned. Some people even thought that blind children were possessed by evil spirits, and they were left in the forrest to die. And the government still hadn't provided a single school in the entire country that was adapted for blind students," says Manuel.

So in 1996 Manuel started an organisation called AGRICE (Associação Guineense de Reabilitação e Integração de Cegos / The Guinean Association for Rehabilitation and Integration of the Blind), so that blind people could raise awareness in their society and fight for respect for their rights together.

"I wanted to show everyone that we are here, and that we have the same rights as everyone else. The right to go to school, get a job, and participate. And by being together, to make sure we don't feel alone any more."

Safe home

Through AGRICE, Manuel came into contact with many blind children whose lives were difficult. When his mother died, he decided to convert half of his house into the first safe home for blind children in Guinea-Bissau. The first people who moved in in the year 2000 were brothers Sun-car, 11 months, and Mamadi, 6.

"After their father abandoned the family, their mother was accused of being unclean, because she had given birth to blind children. She was thrown out of the village," says Manuel.

With his wife Domingas,



Home again

At Manuel's centre Isabel learned braille, and learned that she can do much more than the people around her expect. Now she lives with her family and every morning her cousin Aua helps her get to school, which was previously only for sighted children. That's how Manuel wants things to work.

Manuel took care of the two little boys. They gave them food, clothes, medical care and security. Rumours of how well the brothers were treated at Manuel's home spread, and more and more blind children started to come.

"At the same time, we started our rescue missions where we visited rural villages to look for blind children or children with other disabilities, who we knew often lived in mortal danger. We told people about the rights of the child and offered to take care of children who needed help. Soon we had over forty visually impaired children living with us!"

Manuel paid for everything for the children out of his own pocket, and it was hard to make ends meet.

White cane school

At Manuel's place, the children learned how to take care

of themselves and help their families when they returned home because Manuel's goal was for the children to return home and participate in society. They learned to wash clothes and dishes, tidy up, get dressed, cook simple meals and much more. But Manuel knew that the children needed to go to school too, just like all other children. He campaigned tirelessly for the government to start a school adapted to the needs of blind children with teachers trained in braille. He wrote letters, phoned and vis-

ited the authorities for several years. Nothing happened.

"Finally, they got tired of me. The government didn't plan to start a school, but they gave me a bit of land to build on, to shut me up I think."

Manuel and AGRICE had hardly any money, but they built a small, simple school from bamboo and palm leaves, where at first the children sat on the ground with no desks. At the same time, they trained teachers in braille.

The school was

finished in 2003 and was called 'The White Cane' (Bengala Branca), after the canes that blind people often use.

"One day the Canadian ambassador visited the school to see how we worked with our students. As we stood there in the classroom, a huge snake came slithering through the grass towards the children. The ambassador was frightened and was concerned for the children's safety. After the meeting with the snake, the embassy decided to give us money to build a safer school for the children!"



White Cane School

Manuel's school is called Bengala Branca which means White Cane. Since the 1950s, the white cane, which many blind people use to help them get around, has been the most common symbol for blind people.





On a rescue mission

Sometimes Manuel and his team have to swap their jeep for a donkey-drawn cart to get to a village where they know there are children with disabilities who are having a hard time. On arrival, Manuel is welcomed in the village. The people in the village listen as Manuel explains that children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children. He also talks about causes of blindness and how to protect your eyes from damage.

Mixed school

→ These days, none of the students sit on the floor in Manuel's school. With support from Portugal and Canada, AGRICE has built a school with six classrooms, a dining hall, a library, a music room and two craft workshops. The Department of Education in Guinea-Bissau provides teachers for Manuel. And now the school is open to all, not just students with a visual impairment. Right now there are 70 students with a visual impairment attending the school, and 177 who can see.

"It's clear to me that we should all learn together. It's a good way to prevent isolation of children with disabilities, and to help people understand that all of us have a part to play in society. We are all of equal value. At first, there were lots of families with sighted children who

thought it was strange to send their children to our school, but now we have a reputation as one of the best schools in the country and lots of people want to come," says Manuel.

Manuel's 250 children

16 years have passed since Manuel took in Suncar and Mamadi, the abandoned brothers. Since then, he has helped over 250 blind children in the same way. Today,

41 people work at AGRICE, and they give blind children a home, food, medical care, the chance to go to school, security and love. The children don't need to pay anything. Most are reunited with their families once Manuel has fully prepared their villages by telling them the best ways to care for visually impaired children. The children come from poor families and continue to receive support from

AGRICE after moving home so that they can continue their education and have a good future. Today there are 37 children living at Manuel's home, but soon there will be more, because he and AGRICE will continue their rescue missions to distant villages.

"Even though the situation for children with disabilities has become much better since we began our work, there is



I want to look good!

"When my wife Domingas isn't here to help me choose nice clothes, I use this machine which tells me the colour of each garment I place it against. So my colour combinations are not too crazy! Domingas taught me which colours go well together," says Manuel, laughing.

still much to do. We are a poor country where many people can't read because they have never been to school. That's why we need to keep spreading the word about the rights of all children out in the villages. Just a few years ago, Adelia was left to die because she was blind, and similar things still happen. That's why it's of vital importance that we are there!"

Like father like son

Sometimes Manuel feels exhausted and sad about all the terrible things that happen to children in Guinea-Bissau. But instead of giving up, he becomes even more determined to continue his work.

"At those times I think about all the chances I got in life thanks to my father. He was my best friend, and his love for me made him strive to get me the best medical care and education possible. My father is my role model. The way he treated me is the way I want to treat all the visually impaired children who need me. Like Adelia, for example. I'll keep on fighting for her rights and the rights of all other blind children for as long as I live." 🌐



Causes of blindness in Guinea-Bissau

The most common causes of blindness in Guinea-Bissau are:

River blindness (Onchocerciasis) is a parasitic infection that is spread through the bite of a black fly that lives near rivers. A parasite then produces thousands of poisonous larvae inside the body, including the eyes. It causes severe itching and damage to the eyes, which often leads to blindness. There is a vaccination against this disease.

Trachoma is an infectious disease where bacteria cause a roughening of the inner surface of the eyelids, and scar tissue grows. This infection leads, slowly and painfully, to blindness. It is

often spread by flies that have been in contact with an infected person's eyes. This is a common disease among children who live in poor, cramped conditions with a lack of clean water and covered toilets. It is preventable and treatable through better access to clean water, better hygiene, medicine and operations.

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye. It can be operated on.

Glaucoma is a disease that attacks the optic nerve and leads to increased pressure in the eye. It is not possible to operate on existing damage, but medical care can prevent further damage and protect the remaining vision.

Just one eye doctor

"It is possible to prevent and treat almost all blindness*. But Guinea-Bissau is a poor country and there is only one doctor in the whole country who is an eye specialist. Many people live over 100km from the nearest health centre or hospital. People go blind because of a lack of knowledge, lack of doctors, and because they don't get treatment in time. When we are out on rescue missions, we always inform people of the causes of blindness and how to prevent eye

damage. For example, to be watchful when swimming and washing clothes in the river. We encourage people to seek medical help, and we also give out free medicine to treat the most common eye diseases. We also raise awareness via radio," says Manuel.

**80% of blindness in the world is treatable or preventable.*



School for all

Manuel's school is now regarded as one of the best in the country. It is used as a model of how children with and without disabilities can go to school and learn together.



Adelia with a small boy who is blind. When she was born, her mother left her out in the forest.

200 million children with disabilities

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children. They have a right to extra help and support to ensure a good life. Despite this, children with disabilities are among some of the most disadvantaged children in the world. In many countries they are not allowed to attend school and they are treated as worthless and kept hidden. There are 200 million children with disabilities in the world.

1.4 million blind children

There are 19 million visually impaired children in the world. 1.4 million of these are incurably blind, and there are an additional 500,000 new cases of child blindness every year. Out of these new cases, half of the children die within one to two years.

The work of Manuel's organization

What AGRICE does:

- They go on rural rescue missions, searching for blind children and children with other disabilities, who often have extremely difficult lives. The children are offered help at Manuel's centre.
- While on rural rescue missions, they raise awareness that children with disabilities have the same rights as all other children, and provide free medicine and information on how to prevent the most common eye diseases.
- They give visually impaired children shelter, a home, food, clothes, and security at the centre. Children also learn to be bathed and dressed, to clean, wash dishes, cook simple meals, and other life skills for independent living in the future and to be able to help their families when they return home.
- They give children medical care and eye operations where possible.
- They run the first school in the country to be adapted for the visually impaired, but open to all. AGRICE helps adapt mainstream schools all over the country so that they can accept students with different disabilities, and trains teachers in braille.
- They help children move back home. They prepare the children's families, neighbours and teachers in their villages before the children return, so that they will be welcomed in a positive way. If it is not possible for a child to be reunited with their family, they help the child to find a foster family. No child leaves Manuel's centre unless he or she is moving to a safe environment.
- They support children with school fees and school uniforms long after leaving Manuel's centre, so that they can continue their education and look forward to a good future.
- They raise awareness throughout society that children with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else. Manuel speaks on the radio and AGRICE publishes a magazine. They fight for the government to ratify (sign) the UN Convention on the Rights of all People with Disabilities.

Lots of friends

"I'm in Year Four at Manuel's school. I use both braille and the standard alphabet. At my school there are both children who can see and children who are blind. Often, children who can see help those of us who can't by telling us what the teacher has written on the board. I have lots of good friends who can see," says Samuel, who sits next to Otinelo and Assanto. ▶



Helping each other ▲

"I often help Manuel with things. Sometimes he asks me to help him when he goes out. He puts his hand on my shoulder and we walk together. Being able to help him makes me feel good," says Samuel.

Love drawing ▲

"I love drawing and I do it every day. My favourite colour is white. To be able to draw I need to have the paper very close to my eye," explains Samuel. ▼



Samuel's sight restored!

"I was abandoned by my parents because I was blind. But one day Manuel came to my village to get me. He took care of me in a way that my own parents would never have done. Thanks to him, I even have sight in one eye now! I see Manuel as a father figure and I love him," says Samuel, 12, who lives at Manuel's centre and dreams of becoming a professional footballer in Portugal.

Samuel was born into a poor family made up of his mother, father, and his older brother Solomon, whose sight was poor. When his father realised that Samuel was totally blind, he abandoned the family. Like many others, he believed that blind children were worthless because they couldn't go to school or help in the fields.

"My mother worked in the fields, and as soon as she was offered work she left my brother and me with neighbours in the village.

Sometimes she was away for several weeks at a time," says Samuel.

The neighbours didn't care for the brothers well. Samuel and Solomon were hungry, naked, dirty, and were often beaten. Samuel, who was only a baby, was left lying on the ground while Solomon stumbled around the village with no one looking after him.

"I don't know why my mother didn't carry me on her back while she was working. If a mother has a baby

who can see, then she always keeps the baby with her and breastfeeds. My mother didn't do that for me, and being left alone was bad for me. I cried constantly."

Manuel's rescue mission

Manuel found out that there were two little boys who were blind and not being cared for in the village, and he went on a rescue mission in his jeep.

"He came to get Solomon and me so that we could live with him at his centre. I was only a year old so I don't remember anything about living in the village, but Manuel tells us about our background so that we understand why we live with him."

To begin with, Samuel cried a lot. But Manuel and his wife Domingas cared for him like their own son. They



My siblings

"Jamie, Djibi and I share a room. We are like brothers. I feel safe because we have each other. Every morning I help Jamie, who is completely blind, to fetch a bucket of water so that he can wash and brush his teeth," says Samuel.



back home to their families where possible. But Samuel is not convinced.

"After the operation my mother came to visit. She didn't recognise me, and I didn't recognise her. It felt strange. Manuel was the one who took care of me when I needed help. He bought me clothes and shoes, soap, shampoo, food... even biscuits and sweets sometimes! He comforted me when I was sad. He gave me love. Without him I would never have been able to go to school or get an operation so that I could see. I see Manuel as my father, and the centre as my home. And the other children as my siblings."

Professional footballer

Samuel wants to stay with Manuel for another couple of years. Then he dreams of moving far, far away...

"I love football and my greatest dream is to become a professional footballer with the Portuguese team Porto. One of the players in the team comes from Guinea-Bissau, but my favourite player is Ronaldo. If I became a famous footballer in Europe, I'd be able to play football, which I love, and earn lots of money too. I'd build a nice house and have a cool Toyota pickup. That's my dream." 🌐

Samuel, 12

Loves: Cars

Hates: Insects

Best thing that's happened: That Manuel took care of me and gave me the chance to see.

Worst thing that's happened: Being abandoned when I was little.

Looks up to: Manuel!

Wants to be: A professional footballer with Portuguese club Porto.

Dream: To own a cool Toyota pickup.

gave him food several times a day, and plenty of cuddles. One day, he stopped crying, and once he was old enough he started at Manuel's school. Manuel arranged for Samuel to have a series of eye tests, just like all the other children at the centre. The doctors discovered that he had a cataract in one eye, and wanted to operate on him.

"I was eight years old and had been blind my whole life, so I didn't know what anything looked like. All of a sudden I could see with one eye, and the first thing I saw was the ceiling fan above my hospital bed. I was terrified! But Domingas was there, she comforted me."

Able to see

When Samuel got out of bed and walked down the steps of the hospital, he was so happy that he ran round and round

the hospital garden. The nurses tried to catch him but they couldn't!

"Everything looked different from what I had imagined. For example, Manuel was much bigger than I thought! My life has become so much easier since the operation. I don't need to feel my way around all the time, or be afraid of falling and hurting myself or being knocked down by a car. I can go to the shops!"

Time to move back home?

During Samuel and Solomon's time at the centre, Manuel has worked hard to stay in touch with the boys' parents. Now that they know that Samuel can see, and they know how much Solomon has learned, the parents want the brothers to move back home. Manuel's goal is always for children to move



My brother and I

"Manuel rescued both me and my big brother Solomon. When I was little I thought Solomon could see because he was so good at walking without bumping into things. But after the operation I could see that he was blind. That made me really sad," says Samuel.

When Solomon was little he still had some sight, but he gradually became blind.

School for all children!



"Samuel and I are friends. We often play football at break time and help each other with difficult assignments in maths and science. Both blind and seeing children go to our school. I don't really think there's any difference between us. We are all the same. For me, it's obvious that blind children should be able to go to school too. Here in Guinea-Bissau, sometimes it's harder for children with a disability to go to school, because the schools have not been adapted to these children's needs. This is wrong. All schools should be suitable for all children to attend, just like our school. If you don't go to school it's hard to get a job and take care of your family. When I grow up I want to be a teacher."

Germino, 15



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: KIM NAYLOR

Come on Samuel!

There's an exciting football match underway between the boys and the girls in the yard. Manuel is the coach of the boys' team, 'Grilo', and shouts instructions to Samuel, who is the team captain. Beside Manuel is Augusto Silva the English teacher, who is coaching the girls in their team, 'N'goringor'. As usual, it's a life and death match!

"Almost all the players are blind. So we use an old soda bottle as our 'ball', because we need to be able to hear the ball to play. If we use an ordinary football then we have to put it in a plastic bag so we can hear it rustling. I prefer the ball to the bottle! We need to play here in the yard, which is surrounded by walls, so that everybody knows where the ball is," explains Samuel.

Even the two blind coaches listen out for the ball, so that they can give instructions to their players.

"Today the boys won 7-4, but next time we'll get them!" says Domingas, laughing. 🌐



Listening to football

"We follow all the European leagues carefully by listening to them on the radio. Usually we all listen together. Manuel is probably the one who listens most intently!" says Julio.

Best shaped football!



Football we can hear!



Julio, 14
Team: Grilo
Position: Winger
Favourite player: Messi
Favourite team: Barcelona



Samuel, 12
Team: Grilo
Position: Midfield & Captain
Favourite player: Messi
Favourite team: Porto



Ussai, 12
Team: N'goringor
Position: Midfield
Favourite player: Messi
Favourite team: Barcelona



Solomon, 16
Team: Grilo
Position: Goalkeeper
Favourite player: Ronaldo
Favourite team: Real Madrid & Benfica



Anna Maria, 18
Team: N'goringor
Position: Back
Favourite player: Ronaldo
Favourite team: Porto



Domingas, 14
Team: N'goringor
Position: Goalkeeper
Favourite player: Ronaldo
Favourite team: Real Madrid



Djibril, 12
Team: Grilo
Position: Forward
Favourite player: Ronaldo
Favourite team: Benficat



Manuel's rescue mis

Clouds of dust fly out behind Manuel's jeep as he drives along the bumpy roads between villages. He's on a rescue mission, defending the rights of children with disabilities. And saving their lives.

We go on a rescue mission every other month. If we could afford it, we'd do it more often because there is such great need. In many parts of our country, the lives of children with disabilities are constantly in danger. In most rural areas, these children are a long way from hospitals that know how to treat children with disabilities. Many people are poor and have never attended school, so

parents are often unable to read information about their children's conditions. Young children with disabilities are sometimes still seen as evil spirits, or snakes that should be abandoned in the forrest. That's why our rescue missions are so important. We teach villages and families about the rights of children with disabilities, and then offer the children treatment, accommodation and schooling with us," explains Manuel.



Braima – the sn

Manuel has been informed about a little boy in a distant village who needs help. When he arrives, he is met by Djenabu, a sad and worried mother who is watching her son Braima, 8, lying struggling on the ground. He is using his arms to drag his body across the yard. Although the neighbouring children are playing football just a few metres away, it's impossible for Braima to join in. His mother Djenabu explains:

"Braima has problems with his neck, and he can't stand up by himself. I don't really know what

is wrong. My husband left me when our son was a baby. He said, 'That is not my son. That is a snake slithering around.' I need someone to help me explain to my husband that he is wrong. Our son is a person, not a snake. It's hard for me to look after Braima on my own and feed us both.

I'm really worried about the future, but Manuel has promised



Not only visually impaired children

"We don't only help visually impaired children. People tell us about children with many different kinds of disabilities, both physical and mental health issues, who live in rural areas and have difficult lives. Every child has the right to a good life, and we try to always ensure each child receives the right treatment. Braima will have a full examination in hospital, and then he will have physiotherapy and training at our centre. We will also train his mother in how best to take care of Braima, and give her some goats so that she can sell their kids in order to support the family. That's not really part of what we do, but in this situation we have to help," says Manuel.

sion

16 field workers

Manuel and his organisation AGRICE have 16 field workers based all over the country. They visit towns and villages to look for blind children and children with other disabilities. Manuel works with churches, mosques, traditional leaders and local authorities. They contact AGRICE if they know of children who need help, and that's when Manuel goes on a rescue mission. Before each vis-

it, he contacts the local authorities and explains what he is going to do. AGRICE needs permission from the authorities when they take a child to Manuel's centre.

ake boy

Braima dreams of being able to play with the other children when they romp around.



to help me. Manuel says that if my son gets the right treatment, he will gradually be able to look after himself more. That he will be able to have a good life, and not have to struggle like this. I want that for him so much. Manuel even thinks Braima will

be able to go to school. He has promised to take my son for an examination and to get the help he needs. Braima will be able to live at Manuel's centre. That makes me so happy!"



Sometimes Manuel has to complete his journey on a donkey cart. When he gets to the village there will be a meeting about children with disabilities and their right to a good life.



Abdulai gets a chance

Last week, Manuel went out on a rescue mission. He visited 4-year-old Abdulai's village, and now Abdulai and his father have spent 24 hours at Manuel's centre.

"I am so grateful to Manuel for giving my son this opportunity! Abdulai will be able to learn things that would be impossible for him to learn at home in our village. Important life skills. Like how to manage everyday life when you're blind. And he'll be able to go to school! When Abdulai is finished attending Manuel's school, the plan is for him to move back home. The family and I will visit him at the centre as often as we can," explains Abdulai's father Sene, hugging his son before setting out on the long journey back to the village



Adelia was left to die



"I'll never forget the moment I held tiny newborn Adelia for the first time. She was very weak, and covered in dirt, fleas and insect bites. None of us thought she would survive. She had been left out in the forest to die just because she was blind. I was so angry I couldn't sleep for several nights. Now Adelia is nine years old and I love her," says Manuel, and tells the story of Adelia's life.

When Adelia was born and her father discovered that she was blind, he said straight away that she was not his daughter, and left the family. Adelia's young mother didn't know what to do. She left Adelia alone out in the forest, with no water or food. Adelia was naked and had no protection from snakes, dogs, rain, and the burning sun.

Some herdsmen passed the place where Adelia had been left. They saw the little body lying motionless beside the path. Adelia had shouted and struggled for as long as she could, but now she made no sound. She had nothing left to give. The herdsmen were

sure the girl was dead, when all of a sudden she made a tiny movement. They carefully picked Adelia up and ran to a nearby Catholic mission station.

Speaking out for children

The nuns contacted me and we took Adelia in. She was covered in dirt and very weak. We gave her food and drink, and took her to hospital so that she could get the right medicine. It seemed like a miracle when she came back to life.

We always speak out for the children, and try to make sure that anyone guilty of a crime against children is prosecuted. So I went to the

police and reported what had happened to Adelia, and asked them to arrest the parents. But absolutely nothing happened. At that time, the judicial system in a country ravaged by coups and civil wars was not working well. What's more, sometimes the police don't take crimes against children with disabilities seriously.

Looked everywhere

I decided to try to find the parents myself. I walked dozens of miles of paths between small villages. I was hungry, and slept where I could. After a while, everyone told me to give up, but I wanted to keep going.

I finally found Adelia's mother, who turned out to be very young. But before we got a chance to reach some sort of solution she disappeared, ashamed. Since then she has not been seen again. I have forgiven her, and I know that we can all make mistakes. But this illustrates the importance of our work raising awareness that blind children, and other children with disabilities, have the same rights as all other children.

The most important thing is that Adelia is alive, and that we can help her to have a good life. When I'm with her, I am happy. She is funny and makes great jokes. I love her!"

Manuel doesn't let anyone down

"We never send a child home unless we know he or she will be taken care of," says Manuel.

Favourite things

"My favourite things are the small pots, bowls and toy cutlery we got from Manuel for Christmas last year," says Adelia.





Two games that Adelia and the others often play together:

Correrer! = Run!
Everybody runs round and round in a circle, while the leader shouts 'Run! Run!'. Suddenly, the leader shouts a command, like: 'Sit down!' or 'Find a partner!' or 'Get in groups of four!' and so on. Each time, the children who are last are out.

Terra e Mar = Land and Sea
The children lay their shoes in a long line, which is the border between land and sea. The leader shouts 'land' or 'sea', and the students have to make sure they are on the right side of the border by jumping over the shoes or staying where they are. Whoever is last to reach the correct side, or anyone who moves to the wrong side, is out. The last one left in is the winner.

Adelia's wardrobe

"I really like clothes. Manuel gives me all my clothes. But it's my 'big sister' N'guende who looks after our clothes and our room. This is my favourite dress," laughs Adelia.



"This is how I look when I go to school..."



... and these are my favourite shoes, because they're so comfortable!"



N'guende – both teacher and student

Adelia's greatest dream is to become a teacher at Manuel's school, just like N'guende, who has lived at Manuel's centre since she was 10 ...

"My mother died when I was young, so my grandmother took care of me. I became blind at the age of three. There was no school for blind children in our area, but one day when I was ten, Manuel came and talked to my grandmother. He said that he could help me. Finally, I got to start school! Now I have lived at the centre for ten years, and I help to take care of the younger children. I remember how Manuel and his wife Domingas helped me when I was little. Now I want to give the same feeling to the children who move here. I want them to feel safe and loved. That we are like a family, and I'm like their big sister.

In the mornings I am a mentor for Adelia and the other children. I teach them to read, write and

count, using a system of raised dots called braille. In the afternoons I go to school myself. Eventually I want to train to be a real teacher. My dream for the future is to become a teacher at Manuel's school. Later in life I'd like to have a family of my own, although I'll never forget my family here at the centre. Manuel and Domingas are my parents. That's how I feel in my heart."
N'guende, 20





Adelia's day with

Right now there are 37 children living at Manuel's centre. Some of them will soon complete their education and training, and move back to their family homes. Then there are children like Adelia, for whom the centre is home. "I feel safe here, and I'm going to stay here my whole life, because this is my home," says Adelia, laughing.



05:00 Good morning!

"Every morning N'guende wakes me up. We all sleep in the same room, four children and N'guende. She's like a big sister. We are all blind. First I make my bed, then we go to the bathroom to wash and brush our teeth. Then I put on my school uniform. N'guende helps us to brush our hair," says Adelia.



06:30 Giri-Giri to Manuel's school

"N'guende makes sure we have everything we need in our schoolbags and sees us onto the school bus, which is called a 'giri-giri'. On the bus we sing together," says Adelia.



10:00 Breakfast

"I eat my breakfast, bread and juice, at school. The smell of bread is my favourite smell! At break time we play. That's the best thing about school."

Adelia's classmate, Cadi, 7, agrees: "We dance, sing and play together, the blind children and those of us who can see. It's great that we go to school together, because we are friends!"



08:00 School starts

In Adelia's class, there are blind children and children who can see.

"I love school, and I want to become a teacher at Manuel's school," says Adelia.



12:00 School finishes

"When school is finished we take the giri-giri home again," says Adelia.



Manuel



13:00 Lunch and washing up

"When we get home we change clothes and eat lunch. I wash the dishes when it's my turn on the roster."

At Manuel's centre the children learn household skills like washing dishes, cooking, cleaning and making beds, as part of their training in independent living, and so that they can help their families when they return home. Manuel's goal is for blind children to be able to live like all other children. Here Adelia, Nafi, Domingas and Djuma are washing the dishes.



13:30 Play and siesta

"After lunch I play with my friends. We are like siblings, because we live together. All my friends are beautiful and nice. I know what they look like because I have touched their faces. We play football and dance and sing. When we are finished playing, we all have a nap," explains Adelia, touching Nafi's face to find out how she looks.



17:15 Bathtime



18:00 Dinner

"We always get tasty food! My favourite food is fish with palm oil," says Adelia.



20:00 Djumbai

"Every evening we have Djumbai, and we sing and dance together. Then N'guende always tells a story, often one from the Bible," says Adelia.



21:00 Good night Adelia!

"N'guende tucks us in and says goodnight before we fall asleep. That makes us feel safe," says Adelia.

Love mango!

"Yesterday when papa Manuel came home from a trip, he brought mangoes. I love the taste of mangoes!"



Piloto is a bad dog!

"All my friends are nice, but we have a dog here too, called Piloto. He's a bad dog! He bit me once. He wanted my biscuits! That's why I think he's a bad dog. I still like stroking him though," explains Adelia.



Isabel's new life



"First I lost my parents. Then I lost the sight in both eyes. All my dreams were shattered. But Manuel gave me the chance of a better life. Now I feel like I can do whatever I want with my life!" says Isabel, 14.

She has moved from Manuel's centre to live with her aunt's family in the small town of Gabú. She became the first child with a disability to attend the mainstream school there along with all the other children in the town. That is Manuel's dream for the lives of all the children he takes care of.

"I grew up with my mother in a small village. My father died when I was a baby. My mother sold palm oil and vegetables at the market. We never had enough food, but my mother loved me so much.

My mother was ill too, and she got worse and worse. Often I did the cleaning and the laundry and went to the market to sell our produce,

because my mother wasn't well enough. Sometimes I was so afraid it made me cry. My mother was all I had.

One day when I was out playing with my friends, my worst nightmare came true. A neighbour came running to tell me that my mother was dead. I rushed home and saw that our house was full of people crying. I slipped into my mother's bed and hugged her tight. I couldn't stop crying.

Became blind

My uncles lived nearby with their families, so I was not completely alone. But they were very poor and there was never enough food for everyone. I had also fallen ill, but they didn't take care of me. I

just lay there in a corner, feeling excluded. I felt that they didn't love me.

My aunt Djenabo found out how things were, and brought me to live with her and my grandmother here in Gabú. I started school, and I had enough to eat. But I still felt poorly and I had pain all over my body. It got so bad that I couldn't walk. I was starting to get confused, so my aunt took me to hospital. One day as I was lying there, all of a sudden I couldn't see. I panicked and screamed, but there was nothing the doctors could do. I had become blind. In both eyes.

Shattered dreams

My first thought was that everything was over. There was no chance I could continue at school. I had planned to do as well as possible in school, so that I could become a doctor, teacher, or something else important. To be able to earn money and support myself and my fami-



Isabel, 14

Loves: Going to school.

Hates: Being forced to stay at home, feeling worthless.

Best thing that's happened: That Manuel helped me.

Worst thing that's happened: That I have lost so much in my life.

Looks up to: Manuel!

Wants to be: Something important.

Dream: To mean something.

ly. Now all my dreams had been shattered. How would I survive? I just cried and cried. Things had turned out every bit as bad as I had feared. I couldn't go to school. All I could do was lie at home. Even my family thought a



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: KIM NAYLOR

Going shopping

"Aua and I often go to the market together. She tells me what there is for sale, and warns me about passing cars and motorbikes. Without Aua's help I would get lost," says Isabel.

blind child was no use to anyone. For months I just lay there. Idle, alone and with no friends. My aunt and my cousin Fatinja washed me and changed my clothes. They even fed me. I felt completely worthless.

Came to Manuel

When I had been lying there like that for three months, a man came to our house and introduced himself as Manuel. He said, 'I'm blind like you. I can help you. If you come with me to Bissau you can start school again. And when you're finished your education you'll be able to apply for a good job and start working like everyone else. Look at me. I'm blind but I can do it. But you'll have to fight hard.'

I wasn't entirely convinced by what he said, but I felt I was prepared to take the chance. Manuel talked to my family too. They had never heard that blind people could go to school, read, write,

count and help out at home, and they found it hard to believe. But after meeting Manuel they realised it could be true.

First, Manuel took me to the hospital in the capital to get me the right medication,

not to be able to see but to make my body healthy. Then I moved into Manuel's centre.

Not alone

I met many more blind children at the centre. Before that I thought I was the only one

who had had a hard life. Now I was meeting lots of people with similar problems, and that helped me realise I was not alone. We played, danced and sang together. At the centre I learned to wash clothes and dishes, clean up, wash myself and take care of younger children. I learned some basic cooking skills, and how to serve others. All of a sudden, I was not this worthless person who couldn't do anything because



A new life

"The first time I met Isabel she was so depressed and felt she didn't have a life. But over time everything got much better. Now she is Isabel with a life!" laughs Manuel.

Speaking clock

"My favourite thing is this watch I got from Manuel. If you press a button, a voice tells you the time. It also tells you the time on the hour and on the half hour. I need to know the time so that I know what I should be doing, like when it's time to pray or go to school," says Isabel. Manuel also gave Isabel sunglasses and a white cane.





Isabel's name in braille.



Isabel reading the lesson in braille.

Now I've been back home for almost a year. There is a lot of love in my family and I help out with almost all the housework. I feel like a real family member, participating and doing chores. And I'm getting on well at school! I'm settled in my class and I have lots of friends. It's great to go to school with both blind children and children who can see. I think that those of us who have disabilities should be able to go to mainstream schools and live with our families. After all, we are part of society and we want to live alongside everyone else!

In the future I want to do something significant, like become a teacher. After my time with Manuel, I think I could probably achieve just about anything!" 🌐

Home again

After a couple of months, Manuel explained that his organisation AGRICE had helped to make changes to a school in my hometown, so that blind children could attend alongside all the other students. Their work included training teachers to use braille. He also told me that he had visited my family and prepared them for me to move back home. Although I was happy at Manuel's centre, I wanted to go back to my family. I missed everyone.

➔ I was blind. I became more like an ordinary person again. At the same time I started attending Manuel's school. I learned to read, write and count by learning braille. It felt fantastic, and I was so happy!



A real member of the family

"When I became blind I couldn't help with any of the housework. I felt worthless, and not like a real member of the family at all. But my time at Manuel's centre changed everything. Now I help out and participate in everything the family does!" says Isabel, laughing.

Isabel's chores

Being together

"In the afternoons and evenings we often play, or sit and chat together," says Isabel, who is playing Chinese jump rope with her cousins and neighbours in this picture



Isabel's friend at Manuel's centre

"Isabel was my best friend here at the centre. We were like sisters. Manuel has helped her to move back home to her family and she is going to school there. I was sad when she moved, and I still miss her. But soon she's coming back to visit.

I came here when I was five, because the school where I lived didn't accept blind children. I didn't want to leave home then, but now I'm really happy here. I have lots of friends and I have had the

opportunity to go to school. My dream is to become a lawyer and fight for children's rights. I know that moving back home now was the right thing for Isabel to do. I believe I'm getting the best possible education here at Manuel's centre, but I know that when I finish my education he will help me to move back home too."

Domingas, 14



Dressed for school...

...for housework...

...in my favourite clothes...



...my cool sunglasses...

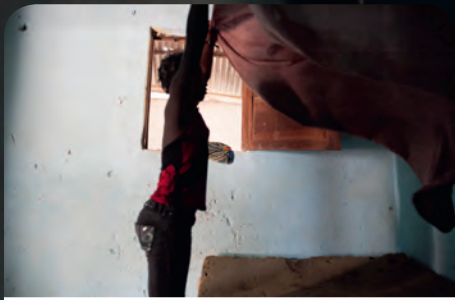
This is my wardrobe!



Likes fashion

"I kind of remember what things look like. I remember that green is the colour of the leaves on the mango tree. Green is my favourite colour, but I also like pink, yellow and orange. It's important to me to be clean and look good. To wear nice clothes and have my hair styled. Just like everyone else. I'm not going to stop making an effort just because I'm

blind. I like clothes and I like fashion. It feels great when people say I look nice. Fatinja helps me to choose matching clothes, but I know what I'm doing too. For example, I might say that I want to wear my black cut-off jeans and my black and red top with my red flip-flops. Then I just hope that the clothes I want to wear are clean and ready!"



Making the beds

"I wake up at the 5 a.m. call to prayer. Then I make the beds."



Praying with grandmother

"I put on my prayer clothes, wash, and pray with my grandmother, Fatumata. I ask God for help and support in life. After that I feel good going to school."



Cooking and serving food

"I go to school satisfied almost every day, and I am grateful for that. I often help to serve food in our family. I also help prepare the meal, for example, by pounding spices. But I don't go near the fire or the pots, because I could knock something over and scald myself," says Isabel.



I bathe my little cousins...



Cleaning the house

"We clean the house at the weekend too. I sweep and mop the floors. Fatinja cleans the yard, since I easily become disorientated and don't know exactly where I am."



Fetching water

"After school I fetch water from the well and carry the bucket back home on my head."



WHY HAS
MOLLY BEEN
NOMINATED?

Molly Melching

Molly Melching has been nominated for the World's Children's Prize for her 40-year struggle to end female genital cutting, child marriage and forced marriage.

Molly and her organization Tostan train people using local languages, in a program based on human rights. They involve whole villages, adults and children alike, in a three-year training program that covers health, education and environmental issues. Other important elements include empowering women and children, and raising awareness of female genital cutting and the rights of the child. Tostan's unique educational model is called the 'Community Empowerment Program'. The program has led to over 7,200 villages across six nations in West Africa deciding to stop practising female genital cutting, child marriage and forced marriage. Thanks to Molly and Tostan, hundreds of thousands of girls in these villages can now grow up without the risk of being harmed for life. And they and the boys in the villages will not have to get married while they are still children. Both girls and boys can now dream of a future filled with knowledge, where they make their own life decisions.



Molly Melching arrives in the village of Malicounda Bambara in Senegal on a historic day in 1996. Until this day, the girls in the village have always been subjected to female genital cutting and child marriage. Molly hardly dares to believe the message that has reached her from the village women:

'We have decided to stop cutting our girls.'

When Molly drives her jeep into the village, she is welcomed by many people. Singing and dancing, they make their way to the meeting place in the shade of a large tree.

"We greet you by your first name and your surname," says the leader of the village women. Before, even talking about female genital cutting was prohibited, so Molly is amazed. Have the women really decided to talk openly about this tradition, and to put a stop to it? Has her organization Tostan's training in health and human rights contributed to ending

a thousand-year-old tradition that has seriously harmed millions of girls in this and other villages?

Historical decision

The women under the tree begin to talk about how they made their decision.

"We have received information that we didn't have before," says Kerthio, one of the women. "We now know that most women in the world are not cut. That surprised us. We have also learned that a lot of the pain and problems we women live



Adama, 15, is talking about the Tostan program in front of the whole village. When her mother was young, girls weren't allowed to talk like this, but now the village meetings include everyone.

with are linked to the cutting carried out on us as children.”

Female genital cutting is a dangerous procedure, which leads to lifelong health problems. But it is a tradition that meant that a girl could be married and accepted by the village community.

For a long time, the village women have talked about how girls are cut and forced to marry early. For two years, trainers from Tostan have given them support and information on human rights, the body, and health.

“The most important thing we have learned,” says Kerthio, “is that there are human rights. And that we, as adults, are responsible for protecting the rights of the child. That gives us the strength to stand up for our rights.”

“We have talked with the religious leaders and found that this tradition does not come from Islam. Putting a stop to the tradition doesn’t make us bad Muslims.”

The women decide to hold a ceremony, during which both women and men explain why the decision to end female genital cutting is an important one. And how the discussions in the Tostan program helped them to make their decision.

Molly is at the ceremony. She joins in the dancing and shares the joy of everyone in the village.

First children’s centre

When Molly first came to Senegal as a 24-year-old in 1974 it was to study children’s stories in French, as part of her university studies back home in the USA. But when

Molly came to Senegal as a 24-year-old and stayed. She started a children’s centre in the capital city of Dakar.



All the children have jobs to do, like fetching water, but it’s also important that children have time to play.

she arrived in Dakar she had a feeling: ‘This is my place in the world.’

The stories she was studying were in French, but the children’s language was Wolof.

‘How are the children supposed to learn when they can’t speak or read books in their own language?’ Molly asked herself.

She learned Wolof and started a centre where children could read, experience, learn and develop in their own language. There were no

children’s books in Wolof so one night Molly wrote her first story book in Wolof, about a girl called Anniko. She ran the children’s centre for six years.

Village life

After six years at the children’s centre in the capital, Molly moved out to a village to learn about the situation for children there.

There was no school in the village. Molly lived there for three years and created an educational program in the



En route to a Tostan meeting

En route to a meeting in one of more than 7,200 villages that have said no to female genital cutting and child marriage, thanks to Tostan’s work.



local language, based on traditional songs, dances and poems. The program grew out of information on health and hygiene, and discussions and shared problem-solving with the people in the village. In 1991, working with the local people, Molly began to develop what was to become the organization Tostan. Tostan is a Wolof word for the moment when a chick breaks through the egg shell. Tostan's aim was to share knowledge with other villages in different local languages.

Once Molly and Tostan

began raising awareness of human rights, this sparked discussions about child marriage and female genital cutting.

But in 1996 when the village of Malicounda Bambara was the first village to say they had stopped cutting girls, many people were angry. Both women and men protested. They called the women in the village horrible names, and said that they would never stop cutting girls.

The cutter who quit

In another village lived a

woman called Ourèye Sall. She was a traditional cutter, the person who carries out female genital cutting on the girls in the village.

Ourèye was only fourteen when she was married off to an older man. But before this, her mother had taught her how to perform the cutting procedure. That knowledge gave her a better status in the new village, and brought in money to her family.

By the time Ourèye came into contact with Tostan's education program, she already had her own children and grandchildren. They had been cut, just like all the girls in the village.

"We were sitting in the classroom and I turned to my daughter and said: 'No. It's over now. I don't want to cut girls any more.' Peace and freedom from violence are more important than money. I realised that then," says Ourèye.

Ourèye wanted to share this new knowledge so she visited many villages. Adults listened to her because she was a cutter, and she stood to gain from the tradition continuing.

The wandering imam

Molly's good friend, an imam called Demba Diawara, was angry at first that Tostan were discussing this tradition. But after talking about cutting with doctors, religious leaders and women in the village, he came to Molly and said:

"I was wrong. I didn't know how damaging this is. Now that I know, I have to do something about it. But to be able to end this tradition we must persuade our relatives and friends. We have to talk to all the villages, and I myself will go to ten villages where my closest relatives live."

Demba walked from village



"I know that I'll have problems when I'm older and I'm giving birth," says Nuima, 14, in Senegal, who was cut as a baby. "Thanks to Tostan, nobody does it any more here, and nobody forces us to get married before we are eighteen."



Ourèye Sall was the first cutter who took a stand against female genital cutting and stopped carrying it out.

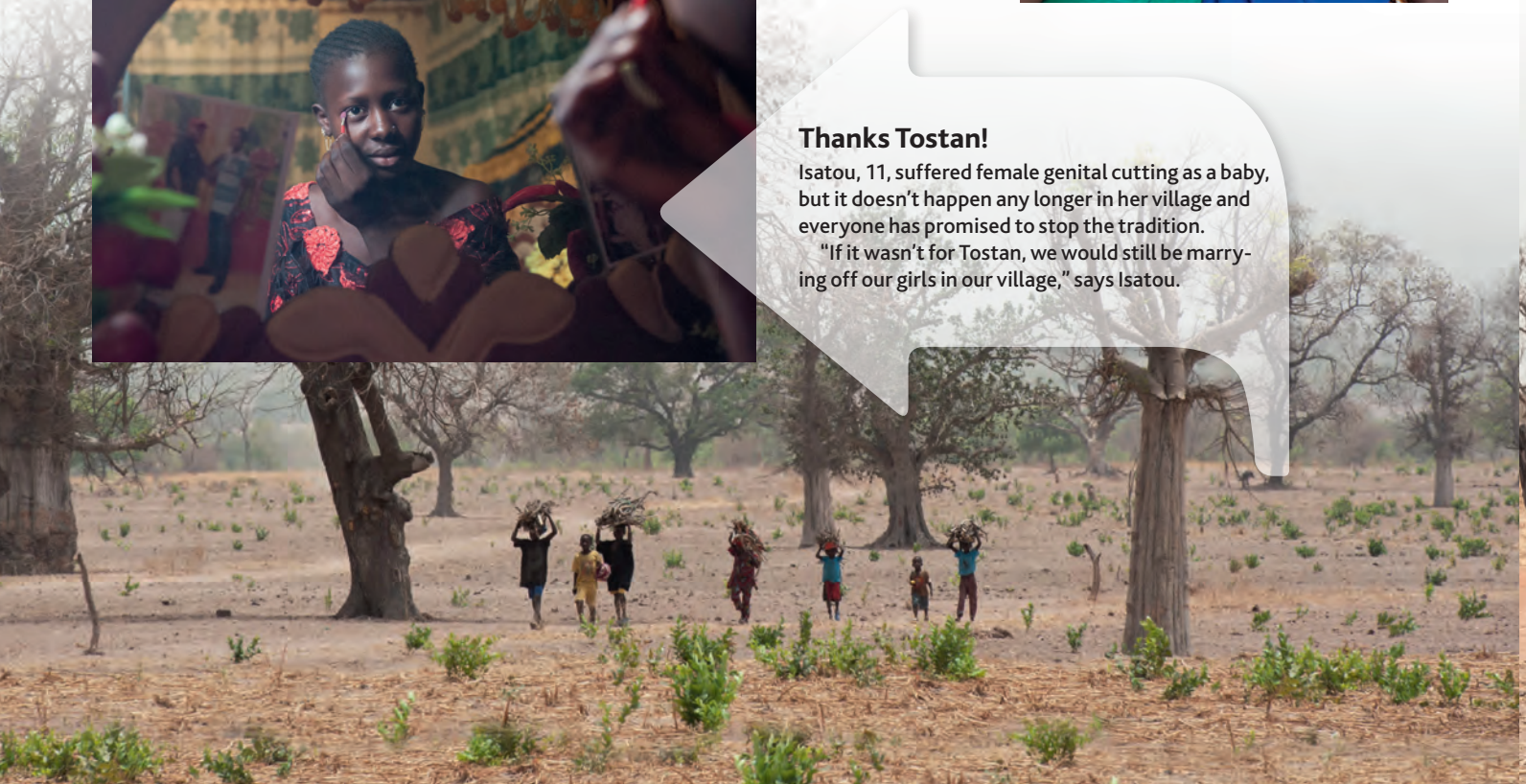
Her granddaughter Rokhaya, 17, is proud of her grandmother's important work to end the practice.



Thanks Tostan!

Isatou, 11, suffered female genital cutting as a baby, but it doesn't happen any longer in her village and everyone has promised to stop the tradition.

"If it wasn't for Tostan, we would still be marrying off our girls in our village," says Isatou.





Imam Demba Diawara has been an important figure for Molly and Tostan. Once he understood how wrong the tradition of cutting was, he realised he had to talk to relatives in all the villages to put a stop to it.

"I myself will walk to ten villages where my relatives live," he said.

to village. His message was met by anger and fear, but he was always careful to be clear and respectful. Slowly, after many months and discussions, the decision was made. Together.

Hundreds of people gathered in the village of Keur Simbara to celebrate the decision to stop female genital cutting. Now Molly, Tostan, and the people in the villages knew that to create a future where girls are free from cutting, everyone must be involved in the decision. When a decision is made together, it is strong!

Now 7,200 villages

When Molly visits Keur Simbara now, 20 years have passed since the village began working with Tostan. And no girl has been cut here for

eighteen years. Many other villages have made the same decision. Through the Tostan program, over 7,200 villages in six West African countries stopped practising female genital cutting, child marriage and forced marriage. Hundreds of thousands of girls' bodies are unharmed, and free from pain and discomfort. More girls get to go to school instead of being married off early and becoming mothers while they themselves are still children. Boys too are free from early marriage and can finish their education instead.

Changing a tradition is



Children and adults set goals together for the development of the village, based on everyone's right to live in a safe, clean environment, and everyone's responsibility to keep their surroundings clean. Twin brothers Dyouma and Bilal have gathered up all the garbage in the village of Keur Simbara and they're taking it away.

hard. Together with Tostan, these villages have done something really unusual.

"Human rights hold the key. When we talk about rights and responsibilities, everyone understands. Everyone has a right to freedom from violence, and at the same time, it's everyone's responsibility to contribute

Knowledge spreads

Tostan works in six countries in West Africa: Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Gambia. Since 1991, more than 200,000 people have taken part in Tostan's program and used Tostan's material, which is available in 22 local languages. Tostan's model means that these 200,000 children and adults have in turn spread knowledge and influenced over two million people. The program participants talk to their relatives and friends in other villages. Knowledge and change spread across entire countries, as well as to other countries.

A decision worth celebrating

When villages that are linked, through extended families or in other ways, make a joint decision to stop female genital cutting, they hold a ceremony where they talk about their decision. And a party with dancing to celebrate it!





Times have changed

For the cool young people in the village of Sare Ngai in Gambia, the times have changed. They will never subject their children to female genital cutting or child marriage.



Molly walking through Keur Simbara with the children of the village. Everybody knows about Molly and Tostan, and that they have helped make life better for the village children.

Human rights violation

Around 140 million girls and women all over the world have been subjected to female genital cutting, which affects around three million girls in Africa every year. This is a human rights violation and brings a series of health risks, both as a direct result of the procedure, and throughout each girl's life.

→ to a society that is free from violence. The Tostan program shows that although not everyone has gone to school, everyone can make wise and brave decisions,” says Molly.

The Tostan program means that village residents can continue to make good decisions

to improve their lives – about access to schools, toilets and medical care, about awareness of malaria, or about whether to build a well or a library. And about registering adults so that they can vote.

Molly listens to the village council explaining the village

goals in terms of electricity, vaccination, road improvements, and women’s participation in decisions. She is delighted to watch the young people’s play about choosing their own husband or wife, as part of the Tostan program. Then the dancing continues. 🌐

Better lives with Tostan

The focus on human rights in the Tostan program means that life in the villages gets better for children and adults in many ways:

- Over 7,200 villages have stopped female genital cutting, child marriage and forced marriage
- Respect for the rights of the child increases
- More girls go to school
- More children are vaccinated
- Literacy increases
- Maternal and child health improves
- Decisions are made democratically
- Women can be leaders too
- Positive environmental impact
- Fewer cases of malaria, HIV and AIDS, and other diseases
- Solar power brings electricity to the villages

What is a social norm?

Female genital cutting is part of a social norm on getting married. A social norm is something that many people in a society agree on. If someone chooses to do things differently, usually people have something to say about it. For example, the idea that you shouldn’t drop litter in nature is a social norm.

In many societies in West Africa, there is a social norm that a girl has to be cut in order to be able to get married. This is a thousand-year-old tradition, and nobody knows where it came from. It just is.

Tostan’s program gives participants information on human rights and on how dangerous it is for girls and women to be circumcised. They get to talk to imams, who explain that female genital cutting is a tradition and it is not mentioned in the Koran.

In order to put a stop to this tradition, many people have to decide on a new social norm, together. The new norm is that a girl should not have to be cut in order to be married.

This is how this social norm is changed in the Tostan villages:

- 1. Old social norm:** Girls are cut and married off young.
- 2. Tostan training:** Children and adults discuss and learn new things together.
- 3. Raising awareness:** Adults and children from several villages raise awareness and discuss the issue together.
- 4. Shared decision:** Stop female genital cutting and child marriage in our village!
- 5. New social norm:** Girls go to school, no cutting or child marriage in the village!



“You’re getting married tomorrow”

After months of drought, finally the rain is drumming on the roof. Mariama Bah, four years old, runs out to the other children. Mariama doesn't know that it's already been decided that she will marry one of the boys who is also jumping in the puddles.

When I was born, a friend of my parents came over and said: ‘This girl is going to be my son’s wife.’ My parents thought this was a good idea, so they discussed the wedding, and agreed that I would live with the boy’s family from when I stopped being breastfed until I was seven. So I grew up with the boy who was to become my husband. We were like brother and sister.”

Wedding day

“I went back to live with my mother and father when I turned seven. One day, when I was eleven, my friends told me: ‘You’re getting married tomorrow’. I was upset.

“I was taken to the boy who was to be my husband. I wore a white sheet tied around my hips and a veil on my head. My upper body was bare.

“After the wedding my husband and I went into the house. Two older women sat outside. Later on, we were to give the white sheet to the women. If there was blood on the sheet then the village would celebrate with music and dancing. If not, it would be a scandal.

“When we lay down on the bed my husband asked me: ‘Why are you so quiet?’ I looked up at the ceiling and didn’t know what to say. My husband started talking about all sorts of things and after a while, I started to talk too. We said that it felt strange to be

lying there as man and wife. We talked about other things too, about our friends and the village. And about our new home, where we would live together.

“The women outside were waiting for us to lie together as man and wife. At sunrise we gave them my white sheet, which now had blood on it. The women started cheering and dancing.”

School for my children

“A year later I gave birth to my first child. It was really difficult. I had to go to hospital and I was bedridden for weeks afterwards. Just over a year later my second child was born.

“We struggled to get enough food for us all, so my husband decided to travel to Europe to find work. I didn’t hear anything from him for several weeks. He’s still in Italy now, he has a job and sends money home. He calls us often, and says nice things to me and asks after the children. Now that we have lived together as man and wife, I have started to love him.

“I’ve learned so much from Tostan. One of the women there tells me everything she knows. My dream is good health for my family. I won’t let my children get married before they are eighteen years old, and I’ll make sure they can go to school.”



TEXT: JOHANNA HALLIN & EVELINA FREDRIKSSON PHOTOS: KIM NAYLOR

To be married off at age eleven

Mariama is running. Her feet strike the sandy ground hard, and she is struggling not to trip in the darkness. She wants to escape from everything. Her stepfather has decided that she should get married, although she is only eleven years old.



After running two kilometres in the dark, Mariama reaches her grandmother's home, who tries to console her, but Mariama can't stop crying. If her father had still been alive none of this would be happening, she thinks to herself.

"My father loved me and my siblings more than anything else. His death was the beginning of a new life. Dad was the one who supported us, and when he passed away everything got harder."

Dreams up in smoke

According to tradition in Mariama's village, women

who are widowed must spend four months in mourning. During this time, they may not even take an object from a man's hand. If a man needs to give her something, he has to lay it on the floor for her to pick up.

When the period of mourning is over, the woman can marry again. Mariama's mother follows tradition and marries one of Mariama's father's brothers. This is when Mariama's problems begin.

Mariama's new stepfather doesn't want her to go to school, and instead decides she should be married off. Since he is a man, he is allowed to make these decisions.

Mariama refuses to go along with her stepfather's plan. She feels heartbroken thinking about what life would be like without school. All her dreams for the future would go up in smoke.

"My father wanted me to go to school. If he was still alive then none of this would be happening," says Mariama to her stepfather.

More atrocities

There's another thing that makes Mariama even more afraid. When she was a baby, she was subjected to FGC – female genital cutting. In Mariama's village, they 'sew up' a girl's vagina. When she is going to get married, the 'cutter' has to come back to open her up with a knife.

"Most girls faint. Many get ill afterwards, and are bedridden for a long time. It can be hard to recover," says Mariama.

Mariama knows that it will be hard for her to give birth because she has had this done



to her. Especially as she is still so young. But her stepfather is determined. "You are going to marry your cousin. It's for the best for the family."

Mariama cries almost all night long at her grandmother's house. But when she wakes up the next morning, she has decided what to do. She is going to go to an organisation called Tostan for help. She doesn't feel nervous, because she is sure that they

will listen to what she has to say.

When Mariama finds the women who work with Tostan and are part of the village committee, they listen to her carefully. They say they are impressed that Mariama knows that education is so important. They think



Mariama's wardrobe

Mariama is interested in clothes and has a big wardrobe. Her favourite clothes are ones she has been given by her sisters and cousins for weddings and naming ceremonies.

Work clothes

When Mariama does housework, like sweeping or carrying water, she always wears old clothes. It's important to keep your special clothes nice!

Ceremonial clothes

For weddings and naming ceremonies, Mariama wears traditional clothes. When her older sister got married she gave Mariama this dress. All the women at the celebration wore the same clothes.

Wedding anklets

Mariama's mother makes these ankle decorations, which form part of the traditional wedding outfit. She has made matching ones for all the girls in the family.



Henna tattoo

Mariama gets help to paint a traditional henna decoration on her hands and feet. It can stay on for up to three weeks.





Favourite everyday dress

Favourite everyday dress
Mariama likes to dress up when visitors come to the village, or when she is spending time with friends.



Party dress

Mariama has embroidered 'Princess AK Jallow' on her skirt.



→ Mariama is ambitious, and she is no longer afraid.

Checked designs

Many of the fabrics in Mariama's village have checked designs, like this skirt.



The Tostan plan

The Tostan group quickly make a plan. They have to talk to Mariama's stepfather, and fast. They gather a group of 17 people, and together they go to her parents' house. They are indignant. An 11-year-old shouldn't have to get married! She should be going to school and getting an education.

Mariama stays out of sight to avoid hearing the conversation with her stepfather,

Secret party clothes

The older people in the village don't like it when the girls wear trousers and a short tunic. So when there are parties in the village, Mariama and her friends usually wear traditional clothes with trousers underneath. Once the older people have gone to bed, she takes off her skirt and continues dancing with her friends.



but even from a distance she can hear that he is furious. "Mariama has asked others for help because she has no respect for her own family," he says. Then he shouts: "She will do as I say!" and refuses to listen to the group gathered at his house.

Everyone is angry

Mariama knows that she is right. The message from

Tostan is clear: girls have a right to an education! Mariama should not have to quit school and get married. This could have serious consequences for her health, and destroy her future. But what happens if her stepfather forces her?

That night, Mariama can't sleep. Her stepfather is still angry and she feels sad that this big argument is going on





in her village. She slips out of bed and out into the night. Without even thinking, she starts to run. It's as if her feet are moving by themselves, leading her along the road to her grandmother's house.

When she arrives her grandmother takes her in, but says that she has to go home in the morning. Mariama knows what she wants and feels supported by Tostan. At the same time she is afraid, because so many people in the village are angry now. Her stepfather is angry with her and the Tostan women

are angry with him because he won't listen. Several of her relatives are upset that she is not obeying her stepfather. They do not believe that a girl should be able to make decisions for herself.

Help from the police

When she comes home from her grandmother's house, Mariama realises that her stepfather has not listened to Tostan. He is going to make sure that the wedding goes ahead, unless something drastic happens. She has to act!

Party dress

Mariama has embroidered 'Princess AK Jallow' on her skirt.



School uniform

Mariama is very careful with her school uniform, and always has a bath before she puts it on.



Mariama with the women from Tostan who helped her when her stepfather wanted to marry her off. "Lots of girls are forced to quit school, but Mariama was brave and dared to talk to us and put a stop to it. Now she can be whatever she wants to be," says Kumba Bah.



→ Mariama writes a letter to the governor, explaining her situation. Then she goes to the police. The police have seen similar cases and they understand the situation. They invite Mariama and her stepfather to a meeting.

Mariama, her parents, and two police officers attend the

meeting. The women from Tostan are there too. The police are clear: "Mariama is doing well at school and she wants to continue her education. That means that you have no right to take her out of school. If you do not allow her to go to school, we will arrest you," they say to her stepfather.

Her stepfather is afraid now, and submits to the police officers' demands. With eyes fixed on Mariama, one of the police officers says: "Remember this moment. You have gone through all of this to be able to go to school. Now promise me that you'll do well."

Mariama leaves the police

station feeling relieved, nervous and shaken all at once. She is delighted to be able to continue going to school, and that she will not have to go through the trauma of child marriage. At the same time she feels uneasy. She has put her parents at risk of being arrested.

Keeping her promise

Returning to the village is not easy. People turn away from Mariama. Her own relatives say unkind things, and the village elder is annoyed. He says that Mariama has disrespected him, and that going to the police was the wrong thing to do.

Things don't get any better when Mariama goes to school. It feels like everyone is



Weekly market

Near Mariama's village there is a weekly market. Everybody gathers there, and you can buy anything you can think of. This week Mariama has saved up to buy new eyeshadow.



“At first I didn’t want to listen to the Tostan group, but now I’m grateful that they helped me to understand how important it is to get an education,” says Mariama’s stepfather.



Mariama AK, 16

Dream: To become a nurse

Motto: Forgive your enemies and move on towards your dream

Sad: When she thinks about her dead father

Proud of: Fighting to continue her schooling

Wants to stop: Child marriage

looking at her. After school, she goes home and goes to bed. She can’t eat, and she can’t stop thinking that everybody is against her. For days she just lies there, not going out. What should have been a victory is weighing her down, and Mariama feels alone.

Then Mariama’s best friend walks in the door. She sits on the edge of Mariama’s bed and hugs her tightly.

“You have fought too hard to just give up now,” she says. Mariama’s friend tells her

about school, and says all the things that Mariama herself has been saying for the last few weeks. That schooling is a right, and education is the key to a better future. In that moment, Mariama resolves to focus fully on her studies. Nothing else will distract her. She will keep her promise to that stern police officer.

Village for girls’ rights

Time passes, and Mariama feels that people are no longer against her. Her stepfather forgives her and explains to her, and the whole village, that he was wrong.

“All girls have a right to go to school. I understand that now. I didn’t want to listen to Tostan, but now I am glad that they helped me. My advice to everyone I meet is that you should never forget the people who help you make the right decision,” says her stepfather in front of everyone in the village.

When Tostan have been working in Mariama’s village for three years, the whole village makes a declaration:

We will never again cut a girl! We will never again demand that someone under the age of 18 has to get married!

Mariama is the one who reads out the declaration for

the people who have gathered. She concludes with a speech that she wrote herself, which ends with the words:

“We are victims. But our children will not be!” 🌍

Responsibility and styles!

“Tostan taught us to talk about important things with our friends. Both about our rights, and about how we can influence our own lives, although we’re young. We used to just sit around and wait, but we have learned that we can take responsibility for ourselves. So now we do small extra jobs. I shell peanuts and sell them in little bags. My friend Kanku makes fish soup and sells it with bread. When we make a profit we like to go to the tailor and try on different styles of clothes!”

Kora, 13



Kora and Kanku, 13, like listening to pop songs from Guinea.

Best friends with different lives

At the video club in the village, two friends Saikou and Ebrima are watching football. They have a lot in common, and they both support Real Madrid. But their lives are very different. Saikou goes to school and every day, thanks to the Tostan women in the village, he takes a small step closer to his dream of becoming a doctor. Ebrima works in the fields, and can't give his wife and three children what they need.

Before school, Saikou tends the family's cows. Once he has given them what they need, he hurries to the village school. From a very young age Saikou has wanted to be a doctor. He knows all too well what it means not to have access to medical care. When his father fell ill and died, life became difficult for the whole family.

"Our father loved me and my siblings. Losing him is the worst thing that's happened to me. When he died, it became hard for us to make ends meet."

After while, Saikou's mother married again. Saikou's stepfather already had children of his own, and it's hard for him to support everyone in the family. The family continue to struggle to afford the basic essentials, like food and school resources.

You have to leave school!

When Saikou is thirteen, his mother tells him:

"Saikou, you have to leave school and start working. And we will give you a wife."

But Saikou refuses.

"School is the most important thing in my life. And I'm much too young to get married," he says to his mother and stepfather.

His stepfather won't listen. He has already planned everything and doesn't see any problem with Saikou

going to work instead of studying.

Saikou stands his ground. He explains that if they let him continue his education, he will be able to help the family much more than if he is forced to get married and start living an adult life this young. When they still won't listen, Saikou walks out the door. He knows he doesn't have to solve this problem alone. Help is available.

Help from Tostan

Just a stone's throw away, Saikou finds the Tostan representatives in the village.

"It was Tostan that taught us all about the importance of education. They also taught us that even we children have a right to make our voices heard. We should be allowed to express our opinions in important decisions. Tostan said straight away that they would help me."

The very next day, the Tostan women sit down with Saikou's parents. They talk over the situation. Tostan has a special method to resolve problems and conflicts in the villages where they work. The women are experienced and know that it's important for everyone to express their opinion and feel heard and understood. That's why Saikou's stepfather feels prepared to listen to Tostan. When they are finished, they



Ebrima and Saikou are best friends. But they have lived very different lives since Ebrima quit school.



have all agreed that the best thing for everyone is for Saikou to carry on with his schooling.

“I was so happy. Now my dream could come true!”

Talked into getting married

At the same time, a short distance away in the village, another boy’s future is being discussed. He is called Ebrima, and is in the same class as Saikou.

“If I want water, I can just tell my wife to get me some,” boasts a boy who is a couple of years older than Ebrima.

“Imagine having a home of your own,” says another.

Ebrima is listening. His mother wants him to get

married and everyone around him seems to agree. Maybe school isn’t that important after all, thinks Ebrima.

Ebrima is a few years older than his classmates. Old enough to get married, his parents think, even though he’s only 16.

What Ebrima doesn’t know is that his parents have gathered a group of boys who have left school and got married, and told them to tell Ebrima that married life is better than going to school. Ebrima is persuaded, and agrees to marry the cousin his parents have chosen. She is only thirteen and Ebrima has never talked to her before.

Never enough money

On his wedding day, Ebrima realises he has made a mistake in allowing himself to be talked into this. Nobody has actually asked him what he thinks, and he feels that he



Saikou, 16

Dreams of: Becoming a doctor.

Tip for other children: Don’t accept everything adults say. Be sure to include educated people in decision-making.

Idol: Ronaldo – he started with nothing and is now the best footballer in the world.

Believes in: Democracy.

Happy about: Tostan helping us find ways to solve our problems and work on projects together.

In technology and design lessons, Saikou has made a picture of a judge. “I am interested in the judicial system, but I made this picture entirely from my imagination. I’ve never seen a court case.”



Working

The Tostan program is based on people in villages deciding together to make life better for everyone in the village. In order for it to work, everyone needs to take part in discussing what is important. They agree that health, community, peace and respect are all needed to make life in the village as good as possible. Everyone also gets to learn to work together to solve problems. The children learn how to talk to each other in a way that builds community – and they practice it all the time as they play!



Sewing and thinking

“My mother taught me how to embroider. I usually sit and think about life here in Gambia. It’s good that we are at peace. War is most dangerous for children, because it splits families,” says Isatou, 10.



Alagie, Saikou and Gibbi go to the video club as often as they can to watch football. Saikou supports Real Madrid. “I admire Ronaldo because he comes from a poor background and has worked his way up. I wish I could play like him.”

was happy when my mother told me that I was going to get married, even though I was so young. I had no idea what I would do otherwise. But my dream for my children is for them to know that there is another kind of life. I want them to go to school and not to get married too early,” says Kaddijato.

The two friends Saikou and Ebrima both work hard for what is important to them. Saikou does his best at school and Ebrima fights to give his family what they need. They often talk about the future, and about what a big difference Tostan has made by raising awareness of the importance of education. If it hadn’t been for Tostan, Ebrima and Kaddijato might not have realised that they could give their children the chance to live a different kind of life. 🌍

Ebrima got married at sixteen and now he has three children. He and his wife Kaddijato often talk about making sure their children get the education they never got.

just went along with the whole idea because he didn’t want to disappoint his parents.

“Now I thoroughly regret it. I should have made the most of my right to express my opinion, and I shouldn’t have agreed to get married so young. When my wife and I slept together on the first night I just felt scared. It was the same for her, she was scared too.”

“I have been blessed with three children and I love my wife, but it hurts that I can never afford to give them what they need,” says Ebrima.

He has worked hard every day since leaving school, but he still can’t make ends meet.

“I’m not educated, and it

shows. When Saikou and I go to watch the football at the video club, he can read all the signs in English that I don’t understand, and he can talk about things I know nothing about.”

Children should get an education

Saikou and Ebrima often talk about what going to school and getting an education means for your future.

“I have a lot to learn from Saikou. When we talk, I realise what a difference it makes whether a person gets an education or not,” says Ebrima.

Ebrima and his wife Kaddijato agree that their children will not get married before they are 18.

“I didn’t go to school and I

Ebrima, 19

Wishes: That I could say yes the next time my children ask me for something.

Future plan: For my children to go to school.

Loves: My wife Kaddijato and our children Juldeh, Jainaba and Ismaila.

Regrets: Leaving school too early.

Would never: Sit on my big brother’s bed. It goes against our tradition!



together for the village, and for fun!



Skipping
Keeping the rhythm going is important when you're skipping together.



Tick-tock tactical training
"This is a football game. We get into teams and practice tactics. We learn other skills that are useful in real football too. We never do it alone – there are always people watching. We use a marble as the football. Right now I'm Real Madrid playing against Barcelona," says Mamadou, 10.

Music performance
When Ilo, 15, plays his ritti, everyone in the village gathers to listen. The ritti has strings, but it also amplifies his voice when he sings. He is singing about how a woman who is hungry can never be free.



Cycling to meet friends
Mamadou likes cycling too. It's handy when he needs to run errands, or do things with his friends.



Crochet hairbands
"My mother taught me to crochet, and I do it with my friends. Tostan has taught us that we have to work hard to have a good life. We can't just sit around waiting," says Fanta, 7.



25-boxes
"This is a social game. You're not allowed to touch one another, and if you do then you're out. Lots of people can play but only four people run at a time," explains Hawh, 13.



Battery game
"The aim of the game is to hit your opponent's batteries. Often lots of people want to play so we draw lots to decide who will start. Then we set up a tournament. It's important for us children to be able to play. It makes us happy and helps us to be able to think freely," says Gibbi, 12.



A better life in many ways



Solar power for all

"Tostan has organized solar power for us. We used to have oil lamps and that was dangerous. If you used them late at night for homework, you could start a fire.

"Before, neither children nor women could express their opinions and be listened to, but now everything has changed. Everyone in the village gets to say what they think."

Awa, 16, Senegal



Parents' apology

"I feel free and happy. Now we can talk to each other, even about difficult things. That has changed my life.

"My parents had me circumcised when I was a baby. They didn't know it was wrong. They were really upset when they realised the problems it causes, and they regret doing it. They asked me to forgive them and they have promised that they'll never do it to anyone else again. On the day I found out what female genital cutting was, and that it had been done to me, I was devastated. Now that we know about it and can talk about everything, it's important that we make sure no daughter ever has to go through that again! I want to fight for that."

Tombong, 13, Gambia



Less malaria

"Malaria used to be a big problem for us. Many people died. We stopped drinking milk for four years, when my stepfather died, because we thought that bad milk caused his illness. Now we know that it's mosquitos that cause malaria. That's why we clear up the village once a week and sleep under mosquito nets. Now nobody dies from malaria, because we know how to protect ourselves."

Musa, 15, Gambia



Helping with cleaning instead of child marriage

"Before Tostan started, boys used to have to get married early, like at my age. But now we know our rights and responsibilities. Nobody gets married before they turn 18. Boys help their mothers with housework, like cleaning."

Alasana, 14, Gambia

Tostan works in many different ways to make society better for children and their families. Everything is connected, and everything makes children's lives better. All the children in the Tostan villages have had the chance to share their opinions and learn all about how Tostan works.



Standing up for human rights

The children in Kere Simbra in Senegal have a poem about rights that the children in the picture are reading together. They stand up for human rights so that they never forget all that the village has learned. An important part of the Tostan program is to dream of how the future could be better. The children's parents and grandparents dreamed of a future free from violence. They stopped the practice of female genital cutting, because it stood in the way of their dreams.

"I love history and I want to be a teacher. My dream is for everyone here to be able to go to school. We need good teachers. I want to build a school that is blue and orange."
Ndyaya, 10

"I love education and I want to be a French teacher. My dreams are to build a school and to take my parents to Mecca."
Ami, 10



to improve things for them. The first thing I would do in a new village is to arrange a clearing up day. Then I'd build a school and register everyone. Tostan teaches people about hygiene and dialogue. That's what we need to live a good life, in peace. Children's rights are particularly important. Once children know that they have rights, they can also take responsibility and help to make life in the village better for everyone."
Kajatai, 13, Gambia

Children can take responsibility

"My dream is to work with Tostan and go to more villages



Back to school thanks to a cow

"Last year my parents took me out of school because it was too expensive. Then Tostan came and talked to my father about the importance of education. He understood, and he sold a cow so that I could stay in school. I was so happy I couldn't sleep. I dream of becoming a doctor and helping women. I also think about how important it is to prevent ebola and maintain good hygiene."
Mariama, 15, Gambia



Tidy village

"My village used to be dirty. It isn't any more, because we've learned how to keep it clean and tidy. All the children must have their right to go to school respected, because that's the only way to a good future and reaching your goals. It's also important that everybody knows how to avoid getting pregnant."
Fatou, 14, Gambia



Ndeye Fatou Dyouma Ndeye



We are the generation of human rights
 We accept nothing but human rights
 Let's identify them and let's ask for them
 For men
 For women
 For children
 And for those who claim human rights to apply them

Women and children involved in decisions

"Before, a man and a woman couldn't even sit next to each other and talk. The men made all the decisions. Women and children were never allowed to be involved in discussions or decisions. That has all changed now. We have talked about human rights and about lots of other important things, to make sure life is good for everyone in our village. For example, we have decided that nobody should have to get married before they turn 18, and we no longer practice female genital cutting."
Fatoumata, 15, Gambia



My sister was married off

"Thinking about Tostan, and the fact that I'm not going to be married off, makes me happy. Our stepfather forced my big sister to get married. She is unhappy and she has three children already. Life is very hard for those who marry young. They become parents while they are still children, and have lots of children of their own. But I'm not going to get married until after I turn 18. Instead I'll go to school, learn lots, and get a good job. My dream is to work with Tostan, talking to people and helping to solve difficult problems."
Anastou, 13, Gambia

n rights!

"I want to be a business-woman and work in a bank. So I need to learn French, English and Maths. I dream of having electricity in the village, not just solar cells like we have now. Round-the-clock electricity would make life better for everyone."
Ndeye Fatou, 12

"In my dreams, our village looks like the villages I see on TV. Clean, with lots of trees and beautiful flowers. A tap in every home, and electricity day and night."
Dyouma, 12

"I love playing football. I dream of having a football pitch and a team that plays in the league. If we get the chance to play and train, that will make us strong."
Bilal, 11

"I'm in Year 5. When I grow up I want to be the Minister for Education. My dream for our village is a nicer school and a bigger Koran school."
Ndeye, 13

A day without school

Tostan has changed a lot in the villages, and the adults now know how important it is for both girls and boys to be able to go to school. But there are still families who can't afford to send their children to school. Lots of progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go.

"I live with my aunt because my mother is dead and my stepmother lives in Banjul. My aunt doesn't let me go to school any more. I have to stay at home and do house-work. I think about school every day, but there is a lot of work to be done here," says Nuima, 14.

"Still, my life would have been different without Tostan here in the village. They have taught us lots about health, and now nobody forces us girls to get married before we are eighteen. So I don't have to get married until I am an adult and my body is ready to bear children."

Nuima was cut as a baby, and every month when she has her period she has to lie down for five days.

"It's incredibly painful. I know it will also cause problems when I'm a grown-up and I give birth. But thanks to Tostan, nobody here cuts girls any more."



Nuima, 14

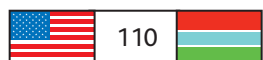
Likes: Praying

Favourite thing in the day: Cooking

Grateful: That she doesn't have to get married until she is an adult, thanks to Tostan.

Wishes: That she could go to school.

Last time she was really happy: When she got new clothes.



110



07:00

Nuima wakes up in the room she shares with her sisters.

07:15

It's important to wash before morning prayers.



Before Nuima prays she puts on her veil. Time to bring out the prayer mat. Nuima turns towards Mecca and kneels down.



07:40

"Ma an mujamdi," says Nuima to her family after praying. That means 'wake in peace'.



08:00 Fetching water from the well.



09:00

Nuima has a bath in the bathroom, behind a screen.



09:15

Before breakfast, Nuima pounds grain in a mortar. When she is finished, she sieves it to remove the husks, before using the grain to make porridge.



10:00

Finally, time for breakfast!



11:00

Washing the family's clothes.



12:00

Shelling peanuts. Peanuts are an important part of their diet, and are also sold at the market.



13:00

Nuima makes lunch in a smoky kitchen, but she enjoys cooking.



15:00

Time to sweep up.



15:30

Nuima is embroidering a piece of fabric that will hang in front of her door when she is married.



16:00

Nuima gets help to tidy up her plaits.



19:00

The family eat dinner.



20:00

Nuima watches TV with her cousins. At the same time some of the children who go to the village school during the day are in the neighbouring village, attending Koran school by the light of a large fire.



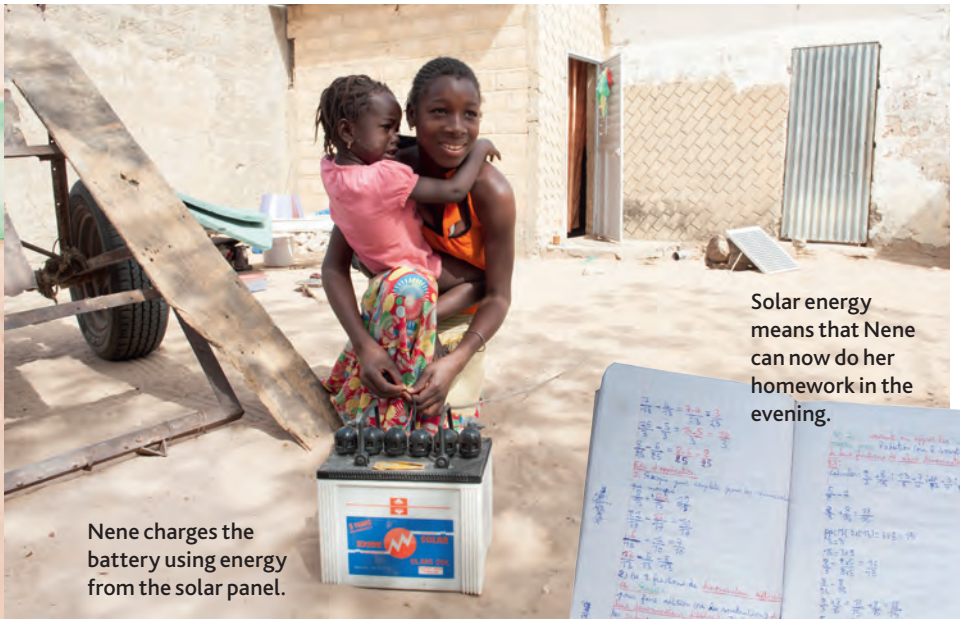
22:00

Nuima goes to bed after a long working day. As usual, before she falls asleep she thinks about what her day would have been like if she could have gone to school instead.

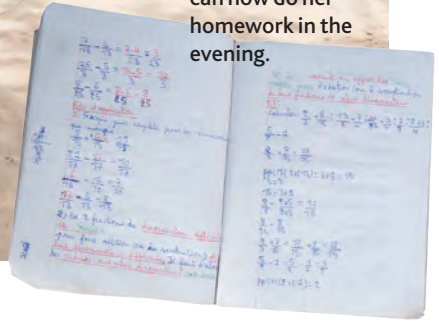




Grandma Doussou is the first solar engineer in the village.



Nene charges the battery using energy from the solar panel.



Solar energy means that Nene can now do her homework in the evening.

Grandma is a solar engineer

When Nene was little she had to light a candle to be able to do her homework in the evenings. But since her grandmother became a solar power engineer, now there's plenty of light for homework – and for playing!

Nene's grandmother Doussou was 50 years old the first time she boarded a plane. She was travelling to India, to visit the recipient of the 2001 World's Children's Honorary Awards, Barefoot College. They train women from rural areas of many different countries to become 'barefoot solar engineers'. Without needing a shared language! Using pictures, colours, and repetition, Doussou was able to learn how solar panels work.

When Doussou returned to Senegal, she was able to help the whole village – all the homes, the school and the mosque – to access solar power

and light. And even the church in the neighbouring village.

"We believe in equality and fairness, regardless of religion. So if we get electric lighting in the mosque, it's only fair that our neighbours have lighting in their church too," she says.

Sun brings radio and TV

Before the village became part of the Tostan program, a woman had never spoken in front of the whole village before. But when Nene's grandmother came home with 50 solar panels, she was at the centre of the celebrations.

"I had never dreamt of speaking in front of everybody, but it wasn't hard. Thanks to the training Tostan gave us, I felt comfortable talking and sharing the important things I had

learned," she explains.

Grandma Doussou is now teaching three younger women to be solar engineers. And she has also taught Nene.

"Whenever school is closed I'm with Grandma. I watch what she does and try to understand it. I'm proud of everything she's learned!"

At Nene's home, the solar panel is connected to the battery, harnessing the sun's powerful rays.

"The best thing about solar power is that we can listen to

the radio. It's fantastic. I like getting information and listening to popular songs, mostly djembe music," says Nene, who no longer has to do her homework by the flickering light of a candle.

"It's easier to do my homework now, and we have more time to play! And we can watch TV and charge everyone's telephones," says Nene. 🌍

Solar energy means that Nene can do her homework in the evening and get more time to play during the day.



Solar energy lights have transformed the village in the evenings. Now it's no longer pitch black. Circuit board for solar energy from the panel.

CONFERENCE DE PRESSE DES ENFANTS POUR LE PRIX MONDIAL DES DROITS DE L'ENFANT Aujourd'hui, les enfants de la R.D.C. LE HEROS MONDIAL LES DROITS DE L'ENFANT à GOMA, SUD-KIVU ET BUKAVU

Make your voices heard!



– Welcome to the World's Children's Prize Press Conference, which is being held simultaneously by children in many countries!

On the same day all over the world, children reveal which of the three nominees has been chosen by millions of voting children to receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, and which two will receive the World's Children's Honorary Award.

Gather your whole school to announce the results, or invite the media to a World's Children's Press Conference. And talk about improvements in respect for the Rights of the Child that you would like to see. Only children should speak and be interviewed by journalists at the press conferences, which are held by children all over the world at the same time. They are held at the end of the WCP program period after you have voted to decide who should receive the awards for the rights of the child.

How to do it:

1. Time and place

If possible, choose the most important building in your area for your press conference to show that the rights of the child are important! Holding it at your school is fine too. You can find out the date for 2017 on the WCP website.

2. Invite the media

Invite all newspapers, magazines and TV and radio stations in advance. Write the time and place clearly. Using email is good, but make sure you also call the journalists you think may be interested in coming! Remind them by telephone or by visiting them the day before the press conference.

At the children's press conference in Burundi, the WCP Child Rights Ambassadors reported on child rights violations that they previously hadn't dared discuss or report.



3. Prepare

Write down what you plan to say. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare what you want to say about the rights of the child in your country. Shortly before the press conference you will receive secret information about the Child Rights Heroes from the World's Children's Prize, which should be revealed at the press conference.

4. Hold the press conference

If possible, begin with music and dancing, and explain that other children all over the world are holding press conferences at the same time. Then proceed with the press conference roughly as follows:

- State facts about the World's Children's Prize and if possible show a short WCP information film.

In 2015, several children's press conferences were held in DR Congo, a country where many children face severe violations of their rights. The children chairing the press conference discussed this, and they also revealed who the voting children all over the world had selected as their prize laureate. Many radio stations, TV channels and newspapers in DR Congo published the children's news.

- Explain how children's rights are violated in your country.
- Talk about your demands for politicians and other adults to respect the rights of the child in your country.
- Reveal the 'big news' of the day, about the Child Rights Heroes.
- Conclude by giving the journalists the press release and the WCP fact sheet on your country, both of which you will receive from the World's Children's Prize.

At worldschildrensprize.org you'll find:

Child rights fact sheets for your country, advice on how to invite journalists, questions for politicians and other tips. The website also has press images which journalists can download. If there are several schools contacting the same media, why not hold a joint press conference? One representative from each school could be on stage.





Adriel, Fredrik, Linnea, Felix and Saga from Snättringe School in Huddinge, Sweden, presented Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven with a WCP crystal globe as a symbol that he is now a patron of the World's Children's Prize.

"Receiving this from you makes me extremely proud and happy," the Prime Minister told the children.

We are patrons of the World's Children's Prize

"It is with great pride that I, as Prime Minister of Sweden, accept to join the ranks of Honorary Adult Friends and patrons of the World's Children's Prize. I promise you that I will take on my mission with great enthusiasm and that I will always be with you in our fight for a world where the rights of the child are universally respected," says the Swedish Prime Minister to the millions of children in the World's Children's Prize program, and continues:

"The World's Children's Prize program is built on the Swedish traditions of equality for all, the rights of the child, democracy and peace building, values so much needed in the world today."

The WCP patrons include five Nobel Prize Laureates, and three global legends: Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma and Xanana Gusmão, East Timor. H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden was the first patron. The patrons also include members of global leadership group The Elders, Graça Machel och Desmond Tutu.



H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden



Desmond Tutu



Aung San Suu Kyi



Nelson Mandela



Graça Machel

Singers Loreen and Vusi Mahlasela, pictured here with 2014 World's Children's Prize laureate Malala, also a patron of the World's Children's Prize.



Phymean Noun from Cambodia received the 2015 World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child for her fight for children who live on garbage dumps and their right to education.



Javier Stauring from the USA received the World's Children's Honorary Award for his fight for children who are imprisoned and sometimes even given life sentences. H.M. Queen Silvia also gave a bouquet of flowers to Abraham Trejo, who was one of the children in prison. "It's the first time anyone's given me flowers!" said a delighted Abraham.



We are many!

An animation showed the more than 38 million children who have participated in the WCP program since its launch in 2000.

PHOTOS: ABRAM VIKLUND/WCPF



During the closing song, 'A world of friends', the Jury children were joined on stage by children and young people from Lilla Akademien, Stockholms Estetiska Gymnasium, and Uthando from South Africa.

We celebrate children's rights!

The annual World's Children's Prize ceremony is led by the children of the Jury at Gripsholm Castle in Sweden. All three Child Rights Heroes are honoured and receive money towards their work with children. H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden helps the children of the Jury to present the prizes. You could hold your own closing ceremony at a later date, where you show the film of the WCP ceremony and celebrate the rights of the child.



Kailash Satyarthi from India received the *World's Children's Honorary Award* for his long fight against child labour and slavery. Payal from the WCP jury is one of the children who Kailash has helped and accepted the award on his behalf. H.M. Queen Silvia presented his prize.



Queen Silvia applauds the Child Rights Ambassadors in Nepal, who were honoured during the ceremony. Manchala from the Jury is one of them.



Uthando from South Africa performed during the ceremony. Most of the band members come from Chris Hani Secondary School in Khayelitsha, a township near Cape Town that is known for poverty, violence and abuse. The WCP program is carried out annually in their school, and the band members themselves are Child Rights Ambassadors.

PHOTOS: SOFIA MARCETIC



Goal 1: No poverty



Goal 2: Zero hunger



Goal 3: Good health and well-being



Goal 4: Quality Education



Goal 5: Gender Equality



Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation



Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy



Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth



Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure



Goal 10: Reduced inequalities



Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities



Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production



Goal 13: Climate Action



Goal 14: Life below water



Goal 15: Life on land



Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions



Goal 17: Partnership for the goals

GLOBAL GOALS FOR A BETTER WORLD

The countries of the world have agreed to achieve three extraordinary things for children and adults over the next 15 years: **End extreme poverty. Fight injustice and inequality in the world. Combat climate change.** In all countries, for all people. These are called the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development. All the goals are equally important, and if we are to have a chance of achieving them, everybody must know about them. Tell everyone you know about the global goals, and join the fight for change!

www.worldschildrensprize.org

Thanks! Tack! Merci ! ¡Gracias! Danke! Obrigado! CẢM ƠN

شكرية! :ကျေးဇူး တာဘျား စပိအိန္ဒြာ! سپاس نهنئري धन्यवाद مهرباني!

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