

THE Globe

GLOBEN LE GLOBE EL GLOBO O GLOBO
DER GLOBUS द ग्लोब विश्व گلوب

WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE MAGAZINE #68/69 2020/2021



WE
ARE
CHANGE
MAKERS



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

PREMIO DE LOS NIÑOS DEL MUNDO
POR LOS DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

DER PREIS DER KINDER DER WELT
FÜR DIE RECHTE DES KINDES

बाल अधिकारका लागी
विश्व बाल पुरस्कार

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

PRÊMIO DAS CRIANÇAS DO MUNDO
PELOS DIREITOS DA CRIANÇA

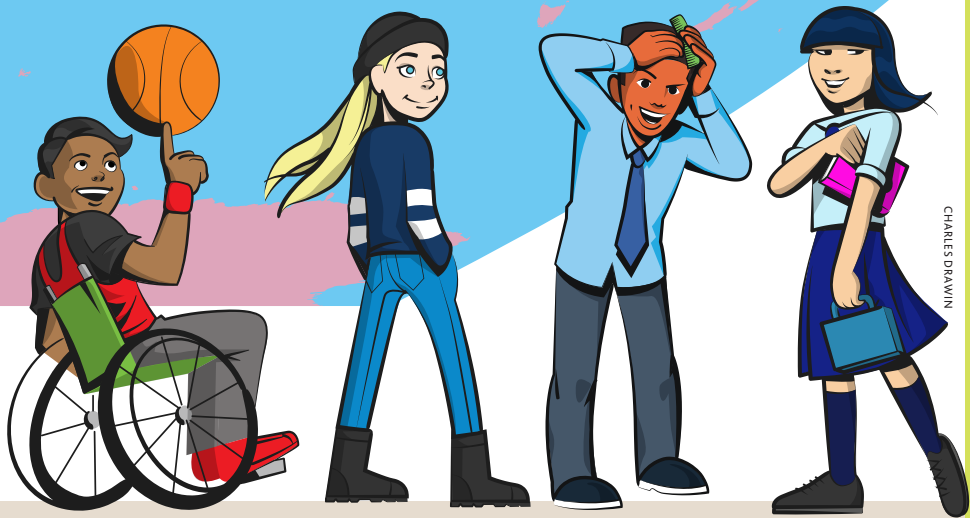
बाल अधिकारों हेतु विश्व
बाल पुरस्कार

بچوں کے حقوق کے انعام کا عالمی پروگرام

Hi!

The Globe is for you and all other young people taking part in the World's Children's Prize Program. Here you'll meet friends from all over the world, learn about your rights and get some tips on what you can do to make the world a little better!

The people in this issue of The Globe live in these countries:



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What is the World's Ch

Want to be a changemaker to make the world a better place? Let the World's Children's Prize Program (WCP) help you. Through the Child Rights Ambassadors, Child Rights Heroes and other brave children all around the world, you'll learn about:

- Compassion
- The equal worth of every individual
- The rights of the child
- Human rights
- How democracy works
- How to campaign against injustice, poverty, racism and oppression
- The UN Global Goals, which have been agreed by the countries of the world to protect the environment and make the world a fairer place by 2030

Be a changemaker!

Stand up for the equal value and equal rights of all people with WCP! Make your voice heard and influence life where you live and around the world, now and in the future. Together with millions of other children, you can be involved in building a more compassionate world, in which everyone is treated equally, where the rights of the child are respected and where people and the environment thrive.

The World's Children's Prize Program runs until 1 June 2021.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN YOUR COUNTRY & AROUND THE WORLD

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to all children everywhere. Is it observed where you live, for example, at school? Do boys and girls have equal rights? Can you make your voice heard about issues that affect you and your friends? How can things be improved for children in your country and around the world? Find out how the world's children are doing and learn about the members of the WCP Child Jury, Child Rights Ambassadors and the children they fight for.

CHECK OUT PAGES 6–20



THE ROUND THE GLOBE RUN FOR A BETTER WORLD

The *Round the Globe Run for a Better World* will be held on 26 March. You and other children can talk to the media, decision-makers and other adults about what you want to change so the world can achieve the Global Goals by the year 2030. In schools around the world, students will then form human chains, which are extended by all of you walking or running 3 km. In 2019, all these chains added up to 86 circuits of the globe. This time, we want to get enough children together to achieve more than a hundred circuits for a better world!

SEE PAGES 92–95



Important dates

- 26 March – Round the Globe Run for a Better World
- 16 April – final day for reporting the results of your vote
- 14 May – No Litter Day*

No Litter Day will be held on 14 May. You and your friends can demonstrate that you belong to the No Litter Generation by picking litter and talking to your communities about every child's right to a clean and healthy environment, and about climate change.

FIND OUT MORE ON PAGES 96–105



*No Litter Day is on 14 May, but you can choose to observe it on any day in the week beginning 11 May.

NO LITTER GENERATION



Children's Prize?

THE GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Everything you learn and do as part of the WCP Program is linked to the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development. These are 17 goals that the countries of the world have pledged to achieve by the year 2030 to reduce poverty, make the world fairer and stop climate change. Child Rights Heroes and brave children are helping to achieve the goals as changemakers, for example, by fighting for equal rights for girls.

CHECK OUT PAGES 6–11, 30–89, 90–91, 92–105 AND 108–109



On pages 108–132 you will meet Peace & Changemaker Generation children and wild animals from southern Africa, where violations of children's rights and poaching are common.

CHILD RIGHTS HEROES

Eight Child Rights Heroes have the chance to be chosen by you and millions of other children to be the Decade Child Rights Hero. All the candidates are previous recipients of the World's Children's Prize for their fantastic efforts to support children.

YOU CAN READ MORE ABOUT THEIR WORK AND THE CHILDREN THEY FIGHT FOR ON PAGES 30–89



45 million children have taken part in the annual WCP Program and learned about children's rights, democracy and the Global Goals.



THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!

Once your votes and the votes of millions of other children have been counted, an announcement is made revealing which of the nominated Child Rights Heroes has received the most votes and been chosen to be the *Decade Child Rights Hero*. In Sweden and in lots of other countries, children hold their own press conferences to reveal the results. All the Child Rights Heroes are honoured at a ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden.

PAGES 106–107



Did you know?

That the WCP Program is the world's largest annual education initiative about the equal value of all people, the rights of the child, democracy and sustainable development.

THE GLOBAL VOTE

Once you've learned everything about children's rights and the Child Rights Heroes, it's time to study democracy through history and in practice. Then you'll be ready to take part in the *Global Vote*. Prepare voting booths, ballot boxes and all the other things that go with a democratic election. Invite the media, parents and politicians to share your very own vote day!

GET SOME INSPIRATION ON PAGES 24–28

AGE LIMIT

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 are a child until you turn 18. There are several reasons for the lower age limit. In order to be able to participate in the Global Vote, you must learn all about the work of the Child Rights Heroes. The children they fight for have often had difficult experiences. Their stories can be frightening for younger children. The stories can also provoke questions and strong reactions in older children, which is why you need to have adults to talk to when you're working on the WCP program.



Kim and Hassan's story about the World's Children's Prize

Kim and Hassan, both 13, were at Hurungwe Primary School in Murehwa, Zimbabwe, when they became WCP Child Rights Ambassadors. They have taught lots of children – and adults – in Murehwa about children's rights, equal rights for girls and the Global Goals. This is their story about the WCP Program.



"I wake up at four o'clock and I fetch water before I light the fire. Then I sweep up and wash the dishes. We have porridge for breakfast and sometimes we put a little peanut butter into it.

"At five I start my walk to school. I am alone in the beginning and I am afraid when meeting strangers. Other girls have been raped on their way to school. But after a while some friends join the walk and then I feel safe.

"I arrive at school after walking for one and a half hours. Before we were punished with a whip on the inside of our hands if we were late, but now the punishment is to pick litter.

"It was not until grade 5 that I learnt that girls and boys have the same rights. I read *The Globe* and this is how I learnt it. Often we have no light at home when it gets dark, but when we have kerosene I can do my homework and read *The Globe* in the evening."

Kim



ABRAM VIKLUND/WCPF



ABRAM VIKLUND/WCPF

"I live together with my two older sisters. When I had my WCP Child Rights Ambassador training I learnt about girls' equal rights. It is a violation of a girl's rights to force her into child marriage, to make her do all the chores at home, to stop her going to school or not to listen to her opinions. Many parents value their sons more, and even when us boys are little we are allowed to tell our big sisters what to do. This is so wrong!

"Because girls' rights have always been violated and boys' rights always protected, I decided to be a Child Rights Ambassador who fights for girls' rights. I always tell other boys that they must not violate girls' rights."

Hassan



At worldschildrensprize.org/wcpstory you can view and download the film (30 minutes) about the WCP program with Kim and Hassan.





"Fifty of us at Hurungwe Primary School were trained and received the World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador diploma. We meet under a tree at school every week. We learn more together about our rights and the global goals and discuss how to reach as many children as possible."
Kim



"We read The Globe together and the stories teach us a lot."
Kim



"Our mission as Child Rights Ambassadors includes educating other children so that they learn more about their rights and the environment. We also usually tell them to teach their parents and neighbours about our rights."
Kim



"We're now going to talk about Global Goal 13, which is about climate change. Can you give me examples of what contributes to this, and its effects?"
Hassan



"Sometimes our internet works and then we can see the WCP website, but we can't work with it."
Hassan

Everyone's rights!

One of the girls that Kim has met as a WCP Child Rights Ambassador is Rutendo. Kim taught her that children's rights and equal rights for girls are for everyone. But Rutendo has had several of her rights seriously violated.

"When I was seven years old and in grade one, my father died. Our life became very difficult. We often went whole days with no food.

"Other children at school bullied me and called me poor. We could not pay my school fees and the teacher sent me home. This was repeated every year. I cried every morning when I saw my friends going to school."

We cried together

"At the age of ten I moved to my aunt's place. I had to sweep, wash, cook and fetch water and firewood. But I wasn't allowed to go to school.

"When I was twelve I came to understand that the husband of my aunt had told my mother that he wanted to marry me as his second wife and that my mother had agreed.

"When the man had gone to pay 300 Zimbabwean dollars to my mother, my aunt told me: 'From now on you have to do what your uncle tells you.'

"It was so painful. I cried every day and thought about committing suicide.

"When I asked mother why she let this happen, she also cried. She said that it was not possible for her to say no, as the uncle paid the school fees for my three younger siblings.

"My best friend Precious told me to run away and report my uncle to the police, but I did not dare."

So painful

"When I was thirteen my uncle forced himself on me, and by the time I was fifteen I was already pregnant with my second child.

"My life became very bad, and when my uncle married a third wife, my grandmother came to fetch me. I now live at her and my grandfather's place.

"It is so painful when I see my friends going to school, while I have to take care of my two sons and do piecework in other peoples' homes. I get three Zimbabwean dollars a day. This is only enough to buy a packet of salt.

"My dream is to start school again and one day become a lawyer because I want to help other children who have been subjected to violations as I have. But I would also love to become a dressmaker."

"I often meet girls who have been forced into child marriage or experienced other violations of their rights. I teach them about their rights and try to empower them. Their lives are often very sad and not easy to change."

Kim





One group makes the voting signs.



Another group makes the ballot box.



A third group prepares to set up walls made of maize stalks to make a voting booth.

"The Global Vote is us children's own vote for the rights of the child. At the same time, we learn about how democracy works. We know our rights and responsibilities when we then come to vote in other elections. Once we have learned about the Child Rights Heroes in The Globe, we organize our own Global Vote. We prepare the ballots, make the ballot booth and ballot box."

Hassan



The voting queue at Hurungwe Primary School is long.



Everyone is checked off the election register and given a ballot paper before it's time for the secret ballot in the voting booth.



Once their votes for the Child Rights Hero and children's rights have been put in the ballot box, one of their nails is coloured with a marker pen to prevent cheating.



"As Child Rights Ambassadors we should also tell the traditional leaders about our thoughts and facts about children's rights and the environment. I am always a bit nervous about doing that, as we have great respect for them. We know that with their help we can achieve much more as change-makers for girls' equal rights and the environment."

Hassan



"Kimberly and I are here to share with you our knowledge about children's rights, climate change, girls' rights and the Global Goals. Zimbabwe signed up to the Global Goals with the other countries of the world so that our country will get better. Do you know that girls and boys have equal rights? Girls should get to complete their education just as boys do. We as Child Rights Ambassadors say: Let us stop child marriage, because if you marry off a child, that is a crime!"

Hassan



"Good morning to you all. Today we welcome you to the Round the Globe Run for a Better World, where we join children from around the world. Today we will be talking about the Global Goals."
Hassan

"It was nice to know that we were joining many children in many countries, all showing our support at the same time for the Global Goals. We must all get involved in changing our countries and we must change a lot, both in Zimbabwe and around the world."
Kim



FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

PROTECT GIRLS RIGHTS

KEEP OUR SCHOOL FREE OF LITTER

TEXT & PHOTO: MAGNUS BERGMAR



Kim and Hassan weigh the litter they have collected.

"We gather here to speak of the need for a No Litter Generation. Let us begin to be changemakers by throwing litter in the bin. The No Litter Generation also teaches us about climate change and that we all have to be part of action to change this. For us in Zimbabwe, this is very important, as otherwise both drought and floods will increase here."

Hassan

“Child Rights Ambassadors from Hurungwe Primary School in Murehwa took part in the Round the Globe Run for a Better World.” That’s how the news item began that was shown eight times on ZBC News, where Kim said: “We say to adults that girls and boys should be treated the same, and we have equal rights.” In the news item it was also said that: “The Child Rights Ambassadors say climate change is the biggest threat to children’s rights in the world.”



“We got help from the police, who stopped the cars during our march.”

The WCP Ceremony in Sweden

“As you have all understood, Kim and I in many ways have the World’s Children’s Prize Program and The Globe to thank for our empowerment. We are changemakers who are not for sale – now or ever! Dear Minister Eriksson, if you want to see change, count on us! There are many more of us children in Zimbabwe who want to be part of the WCP Program!”

Hassan



CHRISTINE OLSSON/WCPF



ABRAM VIKLUND/WCPF

Before I fall asleep, I often think about my future. I would like to be a judge so that I can decide in cases where children have been abused and had their rights violated.”

Hassan

“On behalf of thousands of WCP Child Rights Ambassadors and the millions of children taking part in the WCP Program, Hassan and I, now that the World’s Children’s Prize Ceremony is coming to a close, would like to thank Princess Sofia for assisting us children today!”

Kim



CHRISTINE OLSSON/WCPF



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. Yet still, violations of these rights are common in all countries.

RIGHT TO LIFE AND TO DEVELOP

You have the right to life and the right to develop. You also 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. A million children die during the first 24 hours of life due to poor conditions when the mother is giving birth.

1 in 7 of the world's children aged under five are undernourished. This affects their development for the rest of their lives. Many children, 15,000 a day, die before they reach the age of five. In poor countries, more than half of the very youngest children die of preventable

illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, tetanus and AIDS. Only 5 in 10 children with malaria receive treatment, and only 5 in 10 children in the poorest malarial countries sleep under a mosquito net. But a lot has improved: since 1990, global infant mortality has more than halved!

NAME AND NATIONALITY

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

Around 140 million children are born in the world every year. 1 in 3 of these children will never be registered. There is no written evidence that they exist. This can make it difficult to do things like go to school or to the doctor's!

DISABILITIES

If you have a disability, you have the same rights as everyone else. If you have a hearing impairment, are deaf or have any other kind of disability, 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 society. In many countries they are not allowed to go to school. Many are treated as inferior and are kept hidden away.

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

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 twelve.

In some of the poorest countries in the world, around 1 in 4 children are forced to work. For most of them, the work they do is harmful to their safety, health, development and education. Some 5.5 million children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, as debt slaves, soldiers or victims of child sex trade. Every year, at least 1.2 million children are the victims of trafficking: some within their own country, while others are sent abroad.

EDUCATION

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

Around 9 in 10 children in the world go to school, but there are still 263 million children who do not get the education they have a right to. 63 million of them are aged 6–11 years. More children than ever before are now starting school, but many are forced to quit before they've completed their education. More than half of the children who don't go to school are girls.



DIGITALISATION

Access to technology and the internet is increasing, and it's an important factor in empowering and informing children and young people. But access to the internet and mobile phones is not equal.

3 in 10 children have no internet access. The situation is worst for children in Africa, where 6 in 10 lack internet access.

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.

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 28 million children in the world are currently refugees, many more than there were just a few years ago. The vast majority who are forced to leave their homeland live in a neighbouring country. At least 2 million children have been killed in war in the past 10 years. 6 million have suffered serious physical injuries, while 10 million children have suffered psychological harm. 1 million

have lost or become separated from their parents. Around 300,000 children are being used in wars as soldiers, carriers or mine clearers. More than 1,500 children are killed or injured by mines every year.

In 2018 more than 17 million people were forced to flee because of climate- and weather related natural disasters.

MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Children who belong to minority groups or indigenous peoples in their country have the right to their language, culture and beliefs. Examples of indigenous peoples – the very first people to live in a country – include Aboriginal Australians and the Inuit people of Greenland.

Indigenous and minority children often suffer injustices. Some are not allowed to speak their own language. Others are not allowed to practice their faith, or to love whoever they want to. Many of them are discriminated against, which means that they do not have the same opportunities as other children, for example, when it comes to education and medical care.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is causing more droughts, more floods, heatwaves and other problematic weather conditions. Children are killed and injured, but natural disasters can also make food and clean water even more scarce and can increase the spread of diarrhoea and malaria, which affect children particularly badly.

More than half a billion children live in areas that are often affected by floods, and 160 million live in areas where there is a risk of severe drought. UNHCR predicts that 250 million people, many of them children, will be forced to leave their homes in 2050 due to climate change.

VIOLENCE

You have the right to protection from all forms of violence, neglect, abuse and mistreatment.

1 in 3 children say they have been subjected to bullying and/or discriminatory treatment. 3 in 4 children aged 2–14 in the world have been subjected to some form of violence in the home. Many countries allow corporal punishment in schools. Just 56 countries in the world have banned all forms of physical punishment for children.

A GOOD LIFE

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

Over 1.3 billion people, or 1 in 7, live in extreme poverty. Almost half of these people are children. 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.

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!



CHARLES DRAWIN





The Jury on WCP Ceremony Day 2019, with Child Rights Ambassadors Kim and Hassan. In the image are jury members who have now 'retired': Jhonn Nara from Brazil and Noor from Palestine.

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. Each Jury child primarily represents all the children in the world who share their 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 that they campaign 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 World's Children's Prize Award Ceremony in Sweden. During that week the Jury members visit schools and talk about their lives and about the rights of the child.

At worldschildrensprize.org you'll find more and longer stories about the children of the Jury, and also get to meet former Jury members.

♥ We haven't included the surnames of our Jury children, to protect their identities.

♥ SESETHU, 15

SOUTH AFRICA

Represents deaf children and other differently-abled children.

Sesethu lives in a violent, poor suburb where she must always be careful.

“It’s not safe here, especially for us girls who are deaf, who can’t call for help if something happens. One day when we were sitting watching a football match on TV in our little house, a group of drunken men started arguing outside on the street. It ended with my dad getting shot and killed. When I was nine, my mum became ill and died. Since then, I live with my grandmother. Our small house is simple, without a bathroom, but still it is better than many other houses around here.

“I was bullied throughout my childhood by hearing children. They don’t respect the fact that I speak using sign language; they just make faces and mean signs. I’m deaf, but I’m not stupid or ashamed of being deaf! I’m proud of it! I hope that things will get better for us deaf children in the future, so we can socialise and communicate with hearing children. Then they’ll be able to understand us too. I want to show them and the rest of society that I am equally as important as hearing children and have the same rights as them. If we aren’t given equal opportunities, we feel powerless.”

♥ KIM, 16

ZIMBABWE

Represents children who have been empowered to stand up for children’s rights, and in particular for girls’ equal rights.

Kim is a WCP Child Rights Ambassador and has started a Child Rights Club at her school. She’s given thousands of children knowledge of their rights and encouraged them to fight for a better world for children.

“When I was little, I didn’t know that children have rights. It made me sad when I saw children who didn’t get to go to school, children who were subjected to sexual abuse and child marriage. Now I speak for other children who are suffering in silence and dare not tell, or because they don’t know they have rights. I fight in particular for girls, for example, to put an end to child marriage and for our right to separate toilets at school. Being a WCP Child Rights Ambassador feels like an honour. It means everything to me. And I

know that my generation will make sure that changes are made for the better for the world’s children.”

♥ NEETA, 16

NEPAL

Represents children who have been exploited in the child sex trade.

When Neeta was 11 years old, she was persuaded by a friend to bunk off school and go with her to the capital, Kathmandu. Instead she was drugged and subjected to terrible abuse. When she cried and begged to be allowed to go home, she was beaten and locked in a room at a bar. One day, a young man promised to help Neeta and three other girls escape. Actually he planned to sell them on, but when they arrived at the main bus station, the guards there became suspicious. They called the police. Neeta was rescued and taken to a home for girls who’ve been victims of child sex trafficking. She got help there to report the man to the police. He’s in prison now.

“I’ve been given a second chance in life. Now I’m a child rights ambassador and I fight for children’s rights,” says Neeta.

♥ MILAD, 17

SYRIA

Represents displaced children and children growing up in war zones.

Milad was forced to flee from the war in Syria when he was nine years old. His route took him from his home city of Aleppo in Syria, to Kobane, and then on to 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 factory because there was no school.”

After two years, Milad’s mum said that he had to flee to Europe so he could go to school. Lots of refugees were making the journey across the Mediterranean Sea, but thousands died when their overcrowded boats capsized. So the family saved up money and paid a trafficker. During the journey Milad disappeared for several days. The family was frightened. When the smuggler finally got in touch, he demanded more money to let Milad go.

Today, Milad lives in Sweden with the rest of his family, who eventually got to join him. He’s happy there, but he misses his best friend back in Aleppo.

“My city has been destroyed by bombing, it’s tragic. I’m glad that I was able to come because we would have died in Syria. Now I’m worried about others. We can’t just think about ourselves.”

♥ SHAMOON, 17

PAKISTAN

Represents child labourers, slave children and children who ‘don’t exist’ because their births were never registered.

Shamoon was born into a family that had been debt slaves at a brick kiln since his father was a small boy. For decades, everyone was forced to work from morning till night to pay off an old debt of

The jury children lead the WCP ceremony.





Shai, Sesethu, Jhonn Nara and Shamoon from the jury at the World's Children's Prize ceremony.

♥ DARIO, 14

ROMANIA

Represents children who grow up in children's homes and who are discriminated against because they are poor and/or because they are Roma or belong to a different minority ethnic group in their country.

Dario grew up in Ferentari, in a wooden shack that his dad built on the pavement, with no heating, toilet or running water. Dario's mum did everything she could to make sure the children had a good life, but his dad spent the family's money on alcohol.

"When I was 9 years old, me and my little sister were sent out onto the streets to beg for money for food. One day the police caught us and we had to move to a children's home. At first it was really hard. We missed our mum and cried every day, but after a while, when we made friends, things got better."

Like Dario, many of the children at the children's home come from Roma families. The Roma have been Europe's most discriminated against and poorest minority ethnic group for hundreds of years.

"If I could decide, I'd clean up all the litter and all the drugs in my area so that people would be kinder to one another. And no one would have to live at a children's home, but could be with their families."

♥ EUNILDA, 16

MOZAMBIQUE

Represents children who have been subjected to abuse by a relative and threatened to keep them silent.

Eunilda's problems started when her parents split up and her mum had to go abroad to find work. After living temporarily with different relatives, she and her siblings finally got to move in with their grandparents. At first everything was good. Eunilda got food, clothes and started school. But when she was nine, everything changed. When Eunilda was at home alone, an older relative came over and abused her. A long time passed before she dared to ask for help because the man threatened to kill her if she didn't keep quiet. It was a long time

about 600 US dollars. Shamoon's dad fought for the rights of the brick kiln workers and had opened an evening school for the working children. The brick kiln owner didn't like this, and Shamoon's dad was finally forced to go into hiding. The next morning, the owner sent for Shamoon and wanted to know where his father was.

"The owner beat me with a stick. That's when I realised that we were slaves."

It was another two years before the kiln owner agreed not to hurt Shamoon's dad, so he could come home. Shamoon's family are not debt slaves anymore, but they still work at a brick kiln. Shamoon goes to school and runs an evening school for the children and young people at the brick kiln.

"Education makes them brave and able to help their families. Education is the path to freedom!"

♥ TAREE, 16

USA

Represents children who are homeless.

When Taree was nine, he became one of 2.5 million homeless children in the USA who live in shelters, in cars, at dilapidated hotels or on the street. He and his mum and five siblings lived in a shelter in an area of Los Angeles, where thousands of homeless people live on the street.

"We had one room to ourselves, and shared a toilet and shower with others. The hardest thing about being homeless is always having to move and changing schools so often. I worried a lot about the future and how I would help my family to survive. But my mom has always helped us to believe in ourselves, and luckily I like school. Maths makes me happy!"

Taree's family now finally have their own home. Sometimes he helps children

who are still homeless with their school work. When he's older, Taree wants to be an author.

"I like writing my own stories. If I succeed in becoming a writer, I'll help my family first, then other homeless people."

♥ ANNANTHI, 16

INDIA

Represents children at risk of being forced into child marriage and girls at risk of being killed at birth.

When Annanthi was little, her mum said: "We were planning to kill you, but we let you live." In their village, many girls have been killed at birth for as long as anyone can remember because of poverty and the view that daughters are of less value than sons. But now hundreds of villages in the region have almost completely eradicated the tradition of killing baby girls. The girls have been given help to attend school and their parents have been given education and support.

"Now they know that girls are a gift, not a punishment," says Annanthi. "Why don't people understand that a girl has just as much value – that she can take care of her family just as well, if not better, than a boy? I plan to do everything I can to show everyone that all girls have the right to live."

Child marriage is common in Annanthi's village, but she doesn't plan to marry until she's at least 25. First she wants to get an education and a good job.

"If they try to marry me off earlier, I'll fight it. I want a kind husband who is ready to share the housework. My education will be my dowry (money and possessions that the woman's family must give to the man's family)."



The jury children love taking selfies during school visits and at the WCP ceremony.

before she finally dared to ask for help to stop the abuse.

Eunilda is now a proud WCP Child Rights Ambassador who fights so that other children never have to experience what she did

“Lots of girls think life will be better for them if they marry early, but child marriage will kill their dreams. Every girl needs to know this.”

♥ **ANN, 16**
PHILIPPINES

Represents children who have been exploited in the child sex trade.

Ann grew up in a poor family in Manila, capital of the Philippines, the youngest of seven siblings. She loved school, but she knew that, like her older siblings, she would soon be forced to quit because of the school fees.

When Ann was 11, she was tricked by a neighbour, a young woman who was friends with her big sister, into taking off her top and take photos. Ann didn't understand why, or why the young woman gave her money. But she was too little to dare to say no to an adult. She was also too young to understand that the woman was using her to earn money from men who wanted to buy the pictures.

One day, the woman took Ann to a hotel, where she planned to sell her to

older men. Before anything could happen, the police raided the hotel and arrested the adults. Ann now lives in a safe house for vulnerable girls.

“I now know that what happened to me was a violation of my rights, it wasn't my fault. Now I want to help protect and empower other girls.”

♥ **SHAI, 15**
ISRAEL

Represents children who grow up in conflict zones and who seek dialogue for peace.

“When I was eight, there were protests for social justice which my family was involved in. This experience changed me and made me closer to who I am today. In first and second grade I was bullied, which knocked my confidence. I felt that I would never want to see someone get hurt as I had been hurt.

“Until third grade my understanding was that “Arabs are bad and Jews are good, but when I mentioned this to my mother, she made me understand that there is no good or bad, only two opposing narratives. I try to make my friends and kids around me see that there is no real bad side and good side, just different ways of looking at the history.

“I can never forget that I live in a conflict area, where people suffer constantly,

on both sides. There is so much death and pain, and I always feel like I have to look over my shoulder. If only people could understand what I realized in third grade, we would be able to work out a solution together instead of fighting useless wars. The goal must be peace.”

♥ **OMAR, 15**
PALESTINE

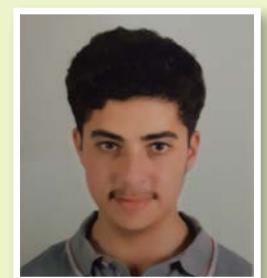
Represents children living under occupation and who want dialogue for peace.

Omar goes to school close to a roadblock with armed soldiers. There are often conflicts there, and tear gas leaks into the school. It makes your eyes sting, and Omar gets stressed.

“The thing that helps me the most is listening to music or playing the piano. That makes me happy. I have a keyboard that I'd like to take to school with me, but it's too dangerous. I'd have to carry it in a big black bag, and people might think it's a weapon. The Israeli soldiers are suspicious of such things. Mum is afraid that I might get shot. I've lived under occupation my whole life, and it affects everything. The soldiers treat me and other Palestinians as though we don't belong here. That makes me sad and angry. I feel in my heart that it's wrong. It's my country, and I should have the right to move freely. Instead it feels like we're living in a prison. It's easy to lose hope sometimes, but I try to believe in change.”



Omar



During WCP week the Child Jury have meetings where they share their experiences and discuss important issues.





Jhonmalis

♥ JHONMALIS, 13

BRAZIL

Represents children who belong to indigenous groups and fights for their rights and for children who have been the victims of violence and who have been affected by environmental degradation.

Jhonmalis lives in Amazonas in Brazil and belongs to the Guarani indigenous group. Her family has been fighting to get their land back for over 40 years, land that was stolen by forest companies and corrupt politicians. Jhonmalis' own grandfather was killed because he stood up for the rights of his people.

"He was very brave, and he's a big role model for me. The worst day of my life was when someone started shooting into our house. I thought I was going to be killed."

The Guarani people are now living in roadside camps, where they can neither fish nor hunt. The adults are depressed: they drink, take drugs and get into fights. Jhonmalis' own dad started drinking and disappeared a long time ago after attacking her mother with a knife when he was drunk. Jhonmalis and her little sister have to work in the cassava field every morning before school to help their mum with money.

Jhonmalis wants to help other Guarani girls who feel hopeless and end up drinking and taking drugs.

"Hope never dies, it just sleeps. My dream is to put a stop to the violence against children and women. I'm proud of my mum, who has fought hard for us children!"

"I prayed for the angels to release me"

Lots of children in the Democratic Republic of Congo have been kidnapped and forced to become child soldiers over the past twenty years. One of them is Aselme, 15, who is a new member of the WCP Child Jury.

"I was 12 years old when I was helping mum in the maize field early one morning in July 2016. We don't have any fields of our own, so we have to work for other people. When I left the field later on to go to school, I carried my hoe with me. In the forest I was surprised by some 30 armed people. They threw themselves on me, like a lion wanting to eat me up. Most of them were child soldiers and their leader was only 16 years old. They forced me deeper into the forest. When I shouted for help, they pushed leaves into my mouth and said that if I didn't stop crying they'd kill me and 'grill me like meat'.

"The next morning, they said I would be trained as a soldier. I trained for one week with my hoe as a weapon. Then I was moved to another forest and given a rifle instead of a hoe. My job, along with a few others, was to act as military police

responsible for looking for and arresting those who had escaped from the fighting, or who were suspected of collaborating with other armed groups, with the Congolese army or with UN soldiers in blue helmets from MONUSCO.

"I suffered so much for three years. I saw friends die, saw our soldiers torturing and executing innocent people. Every night, I prayed to God to send his angels to release me. I thought about my siblings and my mum.

"In March 2019, we got an order from our leader to steal pigs from a village during the night. The pigs were crazy and tried to bite the first soldier who got into the barn. I took the chance to escape into the village church, and I sat there with my rifle all night. The first people who arrived to pray the next morning were frightened when they saw me. But they



Aselme, 15, represents children forced to become soldiers and children living in armed conflict situations.

helped me and contacted an organization that rescues child soldiers. Now I'm free, and I live here at the centre for child soldiers.

"Every night I dream of returning to my village and being able to kiss my mum, my brothers and my friends."

The road to democracy

Every year, the World's Children's Prize Program ends with you conducting your own democratic Global Vote. Take a journey through time, charting the rise of democracy in our world.

What is democracy?

You and your friends probably 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 arrive at a solution that everyone accepts. If so, 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 individuals should have equal worth 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 everything is decided by just one person or a small group of people and nobody is allowed to protest. In a democracy, everyone should be able to make their voices heard, but compromise is necessary and decisions are made by voting.

Direct democracy is when you vote on a particular issue; for example, when children decide who should receive the World's Children's Prize. Another example is when a country holds a referendum on a certain issue. Most democratic countries are governed by a representative democracy. This is when the citizens choose individuals to act as their representatives – politicians – to govern the country according to what the citizens want.

Joint decisions

Throughout the ages people have gathered together to make decisions, in a group or village, perhaps about hunting or farming. Some groups have rituals when making joint decisions. Sometimes an object, such as a feather, is passed round, and whoever is holding the feather is allowed to speak.



The birth of the word 'democracy'

The word democracy came into being in 508 BC, derived from the Greek words demos (people) and kratos (power). The citizens of Greece had to climb a stair to give their opinion on important issues. If they couldn't reach an agreement, they would vote on the issue by a show of hands. Only men had the right to vote at this time. Women, slaves and foreigners were not considered citizens and were not allowed a say in any such decisions.

No women or slaves

In 1789, the first constitution of the United States of America was written. It stated that the people should have power over decisions in society, and that individuals should have the right to say and think whatever they want. However, the constitution did not apply to women or slaves.

508 BC

1700s

1789

Autocratic rulers of the 1700s

In the 1700s, most countries are ruled by autocratic leaders. Countries in Europe were ruled by kings and emperors, who might just ignore the will of the people. But some thinkers were interested in ancient ideas that all individuals are born free and equal, with rights. They questioned why some groups in society should have more power and wealth than others. Some criticised the oppression by the rulers and believed that if people had more knowledge they would protest against the injustice in society.

Voice of the rich

1789 was the year the French Revolution began. The people demanded freedom and equality. The ideas behind the Revolution spread across Europe and influenced the development of society. But it was still the case that only men were considered citizens. And what's more; often the only men who were allowed to vote and become politicians were rich ones who owned land and buildings.



Women demand voting rights

In the late 1800s, more and more women were demanding the right to vote in political elections. In 1906, Finland was the first country in Europe to give women the vote. Sweden and the UK followed suit in 1921. In most of the other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia, women were not allowed to vote until 1945, or even later.



Free elections

In 1957, Ghana in West Africa becomes independent from the colonial power, Great Britain, and Kwame Nkrumah becomes the country's first leader. 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.

Equal rights for all

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. The declaration states that all individuals are of equal worth, and that they share the same freedoms and rights.



MUSEUM OF LONDON

1856 1921 1947 1948 1955 1957

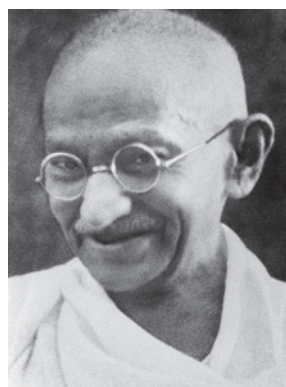
1856 First secret ballot

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



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.



1955 Equal rights in the USA

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





The children's democratic Global Vote

The World's Children's Prize Program takes place for the nineteenth time. Over 45 million children have taken part. The program helps you and your friends contribute throughout your lives towards building democratic societies, where human rights and children's rights are respected. Organize your own Global Vote day when you feel you know enough about democracy, the rights of the child and the Child Rights Heroes. Your vote is your decision. No-one else can decide how you should vote.



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It states that every child has the right to express his or her opinion and to be respected.

The Arab Spring

In 2010, a poor young man in Tunisia sets himself on fire when his vegetable cart is confiscated by the police. When news of his death spreads, hundreds of thousands of unhappy people demonstrate against the dictator who rules the country. People in neighbouring countries are inspired, and the dictatorships in Egypt and Libya are overthrown. Today, these new democracies are still very fragile. People are continuing to demonstrate in many of the countries where the Arab Spring gained a foothold.

Faster towards the Global Goals

Although more countries than ever before have introduced democracy, people are still suffering as a result of injustices and oppression. So in 2015, world leaders in the UN agreed to work towards 17 new Global Goals for a better, fairer world.



1989

1994

2010

2015

2020/2021



Voting rights for everyone in South Africa

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





Through the Global Vote, you help decide who will be the World's Children's Prize Decade Child Rights Hero.

VOTE! RÖSTA!
 ¡VOTA! WÄHLT!
 வாக்களிப்பீர்
 رای دہید
 ဆန္ဒပေးခွင့်ရှိပါသည်!
 मत
 തീരുമാനിക്കുക!
 ووٹ!
 လက်ခံအောင်!
 स्तदान
 !صوت! ووٹ!
 HÃY BẦU!

Time for the Global Vote

You have the right to vote in the Global Vote until and including the year you turn 18. Nobody else should be able to influence your decision – not your friends, teachers or parents. Nobody should be able to find out who you voted for unless you tell them yourself. Everyone at your school who has a right to vote should be included on the voting register. Every name should be crossed off this list when they receive their ballot paper or when they cast their vote in the ballot box.

Well prepared

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.

1 Invite people to your day!

Invite your family and friends, the local media and politicians to the Global Vote day!

2 Make ballot boxes

3 Appoint key people

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

4 Vital voting booth

Make your own voting booth, or borrow one from local adult elections. Enter the voting booth one at a time, so that nobody else can see how you vote.

5 Prevent 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 their hand or face. Use ink that does not wash off easily!

6 Count the votes

Celebrate, and then report your results for all the candidates to the WCP!



Visit Global Vote days in different countries on pages 24–28.





Voting secrecy safe under the lid of the ballot box.



Knock Out with The Globe

"Thank you to WCP for help in demanding birth certificates, so that we are not denied diplomas and we get to be involved in the WCP program even though we live in the mountains. The Globe helps us to get our parents to let us continue at school. When I open The Globe, my dad says: 'What have I failed to do now?' Then he gets to hear a report about a child in The Globe who is being badly treated by their parents. The Globe is my Knock Out blow!"

Irène, 16, Edalé School



Agnes, 12, Cours Didier Marie School, covered the ballot box and produced voting posters for the Global Vote.



Everyone wants to know about The Globe

"WCP helps us get to know our rights. My parents now understand that I should get to go to school even though I am a girl and that I shouldn't have to fetch water all the time or get married, which is common in our village. WCP makes it easier to get across the message, particularly when we read The Globe at home, since then everyone wants to know what it is."

Adama, 13, Edalé School



Thanks to WCP for our courage

"I want to spread knowledge about corporal punishment. Many students here drop out of school because their teacher hits them hard. Since WCP came to our village, girls are able to continue at school, including secondary school. I and my friends want to continue at school

and not have to leave to marry early. I thank WCP for giving us the courage to say this to our parents. My heart is full of joy when we work on the WCP program in our village."

Dioulde, 14, Toufndé Gandé School



WCP taught me about the rights of the child

"I know how children suffer and I support them with all of my heart. Thank you to WCP for teaching me about the rights of the child, which I wasn't aware of before."

Christina, CS Saint Romaric



We say no!

"The various elements of the WCP program have made it possible for me to understand that children live in difficult conditions. I know some who must beg to survive. Others are not listened to and live in vulnerable and lonely situations. I am happy that together with my friends we have shown our sympathy for the suffering of thousands of children and that we have said no to ill treatment of children around the world and, in particular, here in Benin."

Raissath, CS Saint Romaric





BURMA/MYANMAR

Vote registration and voting in the Global Vote at Gaw Khee School in Karen State.

GUINEA-BISSAU

Teaching about girls' rights

"Ever since I discovered The Globe I have learned a lot, especially about my rights as a girl. In my country, girls are discriminated against. Child marriage and female genital mutilation are still common here. I ask: 'When will girls from twelve years of age be free from these shameful customs and be able to study properly?' I presented the issue of gender equality in a lesson and now some of my classmates call me a girls' rights ambassador."

N'Dei, 14, Domingos Ramos School



GUINEA



My best time

"As a new Child Rights Ambassador, I am now experiencing my best time as a child thanks to WCP, and it gives me self-confidence."

Mohammed, 15, Koumandjan School. In the picture he is telling his school friends about the WCP program and the rights of the child.

NIGERIA



Global Vote at Western Hall College in Lampese.

No waste of time

"The WCP program has enlightened us and pointed out various rights that we as citizens are entitled to. When the program was introduced at our school we thought that it was a waste of time, but later we realised that it is a way to help children achieve their rights. It helps both boys and girls open their eyes and know the rights they have in their family and in society."

Michael, 16, Western Hall College

I am teaching parents

"The Globe is our guideline, as it helps us to know our rights as children and how they should be protected. We all have equal rights and should not be subject to discrimination. Children can't make their own decisions here, and girls are not viewed as having the same worth as boys. As a WCP Child Rights Ambassador, I teach parents about children's rights and, in particular, about girls' rights."

Alaatfiatayo, 15, Western Hall College

Gives us protection

"The Globe serves as protection for children. Most adults believe that children are not yet ready to make important life decisions, so they do it for them, thus violating the children's rights. They make them slaves and subject them to child marriage. However, the WCP program has taught us that we also have a say in our lives, our community, our country and the world at large."

Theodora, 15, Western Hall College

DR CONGO

Helping me to educate families

"In our village there are parents who urge their daughters to get married before the age of 18. I have already educated several families where I live by drawing inspiration from The Globe. I thank the WCP program for making it possible to change attitudes and behaviour in my village."

Nshobole, 13, BVES Centre



THE PHILIPPINES

"Knowledge is the greatest gift. We stand up for girls rights. Be encouraged!"

Shara



The Globe starts engines

"I am delighted to be a Child Rights Ambassador and will fight to ensure that the rights of the child are respected. I was pleased to take part in a democratic vote as a child. I know that democracy is a political system where the power belongs to the people. The Globe is the fuel that starts the engines, and all of my family read it."

Odilon, 10, Saint Jean Gabriel School



A meeting at a WCP Child Rights Club.



Mile after mile for children's rights

"I am a Child Rights Ambassador and have The Globe at home. My parents and brothers and sisters also read it. They think that WCP and The Globe help both children and adults to better understand the rights of the child. With knowledge about the rights of the child I am like a car filled with fuel, driving mile after mile without stopping, so that I can combat violations against children as a Child Rights Ambassador."

Ariane Wendyam, 11, Tanghin Taambila School

Not respected here

"The World's Children's Prize has helped me to know my rights. The rights of children are not respected here in my village. There are children who don't get to attend school and children who are not cared for by their parents when they are ill."

Clarisse, 10, EPP Pokoukro



The Globe taught us about our right to attend school

"My sister and I were forced to sell things to obtain money for food. We didn't attend school, instead as soon as we woke up we had to go straight to the fields to collect stuff to sell. However, one day when our parents were not at home, two children came to our house from a school in our district. They brought The Globe magazine for us. They informed us about the rights of the child and how essential it is to go to school and that education is the key to success. When our parents came home, we showed them The



Globe, which made them aware that children have the right to an education. The next day my sister and I were sent to register at the school. My first day at school I felt lonely without my sister, who was in a different classroom, but in no time I started gaining genuine friends."

Osei Yeboah, 15, Buduburam D/A Basic, Kasoa, Ghana



Maiti's school Theresa Academy in Kathmandu holds its Global Vote.

Preferential treatment for boys is absurd!

"WCP promotes equal rights for girls and boys! Here it's as if boys have an extra head on their shoulders that enables them to think better and differently to girls. Boys get preferential treatment in all situations. It's absurd! However, I am now using what WCP has taught me to change things all around me."

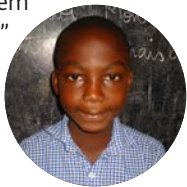
Nouryatou



Wants to see a just world

"The Globe and WCP are changing the habits of us children. We are learning a lot from WCP about our rights, democracy, voting and the Global Goals. The global goals for a better world in particular give me reason to dream. I want to grow up and get to see this world with no poverty or violence and where everyone is equal. My parents' respect for my rights has increased after having read The Globe and I love them even more for that."

Cédric



Supporting us children

"I like the fact that the Global Vote teaches us how democracy works. The articles in The Globe encourage us girls to get an education, since that is our right. This program supports us children."

Tania, 10, BRIC School, Gloria Village



Xadrique fights for girls

Xadrique, 17, and his nine friends who are also WCP Child Rights Ambassadors at Malangatana Valente Ngwenya School in Boane in Mozambique have a World's Children's Prize room at their school. They educate their schoolmates about equal rights for girls, but twice a year they also visit all Boane's eight schools to educate more than 5,000 pupils.



“I became a WCP Child Rights Ambassador when I was thirteen years old. After my training I began fighting for equal rights for boys and girls. I had to start by changing my behaviour towards my sisters. My parents had taught me that there are certain things that girls do and certain things that boys do, but I was actually violating my sisters' rights. “I feel that I have changed because I help now with all the chores at home and respect my sisters. For example, today I initially worked in the field all morning with my mother, and when I returned home, I fetched water. I want to show

all boys and men that it is possible and that that is how it should be.”

Talking with parents

“I now visit schools and communities to share my knowledge and experience with all boys and girls and fight for equal rights.

“If we come across some parents in villages and communities who aren't respecting girls' rights, two or three of us Child Rights Ambassadors usually go and visit them together. We talk to them about girls' rights and how important it is that these are put into practice in their daughters' lives.

“We usually also hold meetings in schools and communities to explain how girls' rights should be respected. We share our knowledge about children's rights and obliga-



“I had to start by changing my own behaviour and begin helping my sisters and respecting their rights. Now I want all boys to follow my example and do as I do,” says Xadrique.

tions to boys and girls. We discuss, among other things, violence against children, sexual abuse, child marriage and trafficking of children.”

Changes in behaviour needed

“We also try to get boys to help their sisters and mothers at home. According to Mozambican tradition, boys and men have specific tasks such as working in the fields, building houses and tending livestock. The rest of the household chores and looking after children are for women and girls. I go to the field (machamba), but I also prepare food for my family. I fetch water, wash the dishes and sweep the yard. I hope that all

boys around me will follow my example.

“We must get boys and men to understand that they must change their behaviour towards girls. There will be change, but we must never tire of demonstrating the benefits of change. There are currently five of us boys who are Child Rights Ambassadors. We are now working together with local decision-makers such as the district's education director and the police.

“We will never stop fighting for girls' rights, for many girls' rights are still being violated. We see how many girls stop attending school because they become pregnant or don't have enough time to do their homework at home.”

Seven of the WCP group's 10 Child Rights Ambassadors. William, Welissa, Ausenda, Igor, Yúsina, Xadrique, Dinorcia, France, Maida and Denise are all part of the group and formulate a joint plan to visit all eight schools in the district twice a year to educate them about girls' rights. They are spreading change in their school and the other schools, but also at home and among all those they meet in the community.



Candidates for Decade Child Rights Hero

In 2010, Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel were chosen by 7.1 million children in the Global Vote to be the first *World's Children's Prize Decade Child Rights Heroes*. For the 2020–2021 WCP Program, it is once again time to choose a WCP Decade Child Rights Hero. The candidates are the eight Child Rights Heroes that millions of voting children between 2011 and 2019 have chosen to be recipients of the *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*. You can find out more about the Child Rights Heroes and watch films about them at worldschildrensprize.org.



Nelson Mandela & Graça Machel
WCP Decade Child Rights Heroes 2010.

This is how they used the prize money:

Murhabazi Namegabe, DR Congo

Pages 30–37

To help liberate and rehabilitate children who have been sexually exploited and forced to become soldiers.



Phymean Noun, Cambodia

Pages 60–67

For her new school for 450 vulnerable children from rubbish tips and the surrounding community.

Anna Mollel, Tanzania

Pages 38–44

For a school for Maasai children and other vulnerable children.



Manuel Rodrigues, Guinea-Bissau

Pages 68–75

To build a preschool and rehabilitation centre for 150 blind children.

James Kofi Annan, Ghana

Pages 45–51

For a sports ground for vulnerable children and other residents of the community.



Rachel Lloyd, USA

Pages 76–82

To help more girls who have been exploited as children in the sex trade.

Malala Yousafzai, Pakistan & the UK

Pages 52–59

To rebuild destroyed schools for Palestinian children in Gaza.



Ashok Dyalchand, India

Pages 83–89

To enable girls living in poverty to continue their education.

The children are older now!

The texts are taken from when the Child Rights Hero was an award recipient. The children featured in the texts are therefore older today.



WHY HAS MURHABAZI BEEN NOMINATED?

Murhabazi Namegabe has been nominated for his struggle to help child soldiers and other vulnerable children in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

THE CHALLENGE

The war in DRC started in 1998 and is one of the most brutal in the history of the world. At its worst over 30,000 children (currently 16,000) have been forced to fight as soldiers. Tens of thousands of girls and women have been raped by those fighting. A peace agreement was reached in 2003, but the conflict continues in eastern Congo.

THE WORK

Murhabazi and his organisation BVES run 70 homes and centres where former child soldiers, girls subjected to assault and children from areas where armed groups run riot have access to food, clothing, safety, health and medical care, therapy, schooling, security and love. Murhabazi has been imprisoned, assaulted and received death threats. Eight of his colleagues have been murdered.

RESULTS & VISION

Since 1998, 481,500 children have received support from BVES to achieve a better life. Murhabazi and BVES have liberated 34,400 child soldiers and looked after 4,500 girls who have been sexually abused by armed groups and 8,500 unaccompanied refugee children. Murhabazi is also constantly urging the government, all armed groups, organisations and society as a whole to look after the country's children.



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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 1

Murhabazi Namegabe

“You’re going to die tonight. Eat your last meal!” Murhabazi read the short message that beeped on his mobile phone. He was in an important meeting with the UN, discussing children who were being forced to become soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Had someone in the room sent him the death threat? Murhabazi has made many enemies during his struggle to help the thousands of children being exploited and tortured in war-torn DR Congo.

“I’m prepared to die in the fight for children’s rights, every day,” says Murhabazi Namegabe.

Murhabazi hadn’t even been born when he received his first death threat. War was raging in Bukavu in eastern Congo in 1964, and his pregnant mother Julienne fled along the narrow lanes. A soldier pressed the barrel of his rifle against her pregnant belly, but one of the leaders shouted: “Don’t kill her! Let her go!”

Two weeks later Murhabazi was born. In Mashi his name means both ‘One who was born in war’ and ‘One who helps others’.

“My mother always says that I was predestined to devote my life to protecting vulnerable people.”

Everyone should have food!

Murhabazi grew up in one of the poorest districts of Bukavu. But since his father had a job, the family always had food and the children could go to school.

“A lot of my friends were always hungry and couldn’t afford to go to school. I thought that was unfair. Every day, hungry children gathered outside our house when we were about to eat. I thought that the children should be allowed to sit with us and eat and told my mother that I refused to eat as long as things remained as they were!”

Murhabazi talked to his

school friends and together they began to campaign on behalf of the hungry children in the district. Every afternoon they went around singing songs about how adults needed to take care of all children. The children explained that they planned to go on a hunger strike until the poorest children in the neighbourhood were welcome at their table.

“Soon there were over seventy of us demonstrating every day after school!”

In the end the hungry children got to eat dinner together with families that had enough food to share!



Protected by the UN

Murhabazi talks to a child soldier in front of a UN Jeep.

“At first we had to go on foot and I often carried out rescue missions to free child soldiers on my own. Today I have UN protection when I travel to various armed groups.”

“When we reported our results to the government, they weren’t happy at all. If anyone said anything negative about the country, like that children were suffering here, it was seen as an attack on the government. If we didn’t stop, we would end up in prison.”

Street children

Murhabazi started speaking on the radio once a week, so that everyone would hear about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and what life was like for children in DR Congo. Every time, he repeated his demand that the government sign up to the Convention.

“The streets of Bukavu were filled with children who had no one to look after them. Their parents were either poor or had died of AIDS. Many people referred to these children as ‘dogs’, but we said that they needed protection and love. In 1994 we opened our first home for street children.”

The rights of the child

The children carried on demonstrating, this time to encourage parents and teachers to stop hitting children, and for the right of every child to go to school. The older Murhabazi became, the more problems he saw for children in DR Congo. He knew that children needed adults to take up their cause, and that he himself needed more knowledge if he was to be able to help children properly. So he studied child development and health at university.

On 20 November 1989 Murhabazi listened to the news on the radio. The news-

reader announced that the UN had adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention stated that all children around the world were entitled to a good life. The newsreader also said that every country that signed up to the Convention would have to consider children’s best interests in all decisions.

“I was so happy. I organised a meeting at my house where we decided that we would do everything in our power to get the government of DR Congo to sign up to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.”

BVES

Murhabazi’s group called itself BVES (Bureau pour le Volontariat au Service de l’Enfance et de la Santé, Bureau for Volunteer Service for Children and Health). They started examining the situation faced by children in DR Congo.

“We often hiked for several days through the rainforest to reach remote villages. At night we slept in the trees to avoid leopards and other dangerous animals.” Murhabazi and BVES started to compile facts about the lives of children in the villages of DR Congo. Terrible facts.

The worst war

- The war in DR Congo is one of the most brutal in the history of the world. It has been going on since 1998.
- More than 6 million people have died in the fighting, or from hunger and diseases as a result of the war.
- At its worst there were over 30,000 child soldiers in the country; today there are 16,000.
- Over 7 million children in DR Congo do not go to school.



MURHABAZI IS CONTRIBUTING TO FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being. Goal 4: All children have the right to an education. Goal 5: Violence and sexual violence against girls must be stopped. Goal 8: A ban on using children as soldiers. Goal 16: Peaceful and inclusive societies.





Difficult to rescue children

“Negotiating with armed groups is not easy. They threaten to kill us when we ask them to release the children. Then it’s difficult to handle the children because they have been so exploited and damaged by adults. And in the end it can be difficult to get their families, neighbours, villages and schools to accept the children when it’s time for them to return to their homes,” explains Murhabazi.

Child soldiers

“We thought we’d seen the worst, but then the war started and life for all children here became pure hell,” says Murhabazi.

In 1996, Bukavu was invaded by various Congolese rebel armies with the support of Rwanda. Children were

directly targeted during the war that followed.

“The fighters destroyed our three homes for refugee children. I had managed to hide the children in time, but my first colleague and friend was killed.”

All the groups that were fighting, including DR Congo’s

army, were kidnapping boys and forcing them to become soldiers, and abducting girls to use them as sex slaves.

“Of course I had experience of looking after tough boys who had lived on the streets before, but child soldiers were a completely different matter. Young boys aged about ten who were on drugs, wearing uniforms and carrying huge weapons. They had been completely destroyed by adults. I wanted to do everything I could to save them,” explains Murhabazi.

First rescue mission

“One day I met a group of mothers in utter despair, who told me that 67 children had been abducted from their village.”

Murhabazi set off with a bag packed with a bunch of bananas and books about children’s rights. Alone.

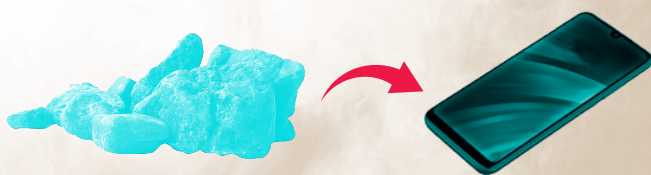
“I took a motorbike taxi without saying exactly where we were going. If I had, I would never have been given a ride!”

When Murhabazi arrived at the rebel army’s camp, he was arrested and taken to the leader, who asked what he wanted.

“I said that in our culture adults always take care of children, but that I’d heard that this army had stolen children and forced them to fight instead of going to school. I said that I was there to take the children back to their parents again. The leader was mad with rage! He ordered his soldiers to tear up my books about children’s rights. Then the beating started.”

Children released

They explained to Murhabazi that he had two choices: to be a soldier in their army, or be executed. The next morning as they were preparing to kill him, one of the leaders



Mobile phones fuel war

DR Congo has enormous riches such as gold and diamonds, but also tungsten and coltan, minerals that are used in mobile phones and computers. The fighting in DR Congo has been driven by European and Asian trade in the manufacture of mobile phones, computers and computer games. Companies from Belgium, the UK, Russia, Malaysia, China and India have been identified because they buy minerals from armed groups that brutally violate children’s rights. Companies are keeping the war going by buying the minerals.



How Murhabazi and BVES work:

- Visit armed groups and inform them about children's rights, so that all those fighting are aware of how children should be treated in war, according to both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Congolese law, for example, the fact that child soldiers are forbidden.
- Organise the release of child soldiers and girls being sexually exploited.
- Visit refugee camps and take care of refugee children and street children.
- Offer freed child soldiers, exploited girls, unaccompanied refugee children and street children protection, a home, food, clothes, healthcare, psychological help, the chance to go to a school that prepares them for returning to ordinary school again, as well as vocational training.
- Trace the children's families and help the children to return to their homes. They always prepare the children's families, as well as neighbours, politicians, religious leaders and teachers in the villages well in advance, so that the children are accepted and welcomed back properly. If it is not possible to reunite the child with his or her family, BVES helps the child to find a foster family.
- Often support the children's families financially so that they can afford to let the children go to school and have enough food.
- Often help freed children with school fees and school uniforms, sometimes up until they start university.

stopped the proceedings. He had been too drunk to recognise Murhabazi the day before. Now he said:

"He's no enemy soldier. I know that this man helps street children in Bukavu."

"The children cried and shouted out that I should help them too. I told the soldiers that they had to release the children. If their plan was to bring down the government and create a better country, then using children as soldiers was not the way to do it. The children had to go back to school! Who else would be able to build the new and better country that they wanted?"

There was a heated discussion between the leaders. Some agreed with Murhabazi. He managed to convince them in the end and the soldiers let the children leave the forest. The first 67 rescued child soldiers ran to freedom!

Prepared to die

That was 23 years ago. Murhabazi has freed 34,430

child soldiers. 2,017 of them are girls who were forced to be soldiers or sex slaves. 481,500 children who have suffered because of the war – girls who have been subjected to sexual assault, unaccompanied refugee children, child soldiers and street children – have been given a better life, thanks to Murhabazi and BVES. BVES has 70 homes, schools and centres where they give children a home, healthcare, therapy, the opportunity to go to school, security and love. Most of the children are reunited with their families.

Murhabazi has many enemies. He gets threatening telephone calls and text messages, and he rarely sleeps in the same place two nights in a row. Eight of his colleagues have been killed.

"There are a lot of soldiers, politicians and businessmen, both in DR Congo and in other countries, who are making a great deal of money out of the war. The more unrest there is

in the country, the cheaper it is for them to rob us of our natural resources, such as gold and diamonds. In the hunt for riches, all armed groups, even the armies of other countries, uses child soldiers, and all of them rape girls. When I fight against this, I make a lot of powerful enemies because I'm disrupting their business activities. They are also frightened of being reported to the UN International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

"Nothing will stop me as long as I know that there are children in an armed group. Not death threats or accidents. When it turned out that it was soldiers who had sent the death threat during the UN meeting, everyone wanted me to stop and leave the country. But how could I leave? I can't let the children down. Every day I'm prepared to die for them." 🌐



Different uniforms

Murhabazi gathers the boys together before they go down to the courtyard where the uniform-burning ceremony will take place. The boys at the home belonged to different armed groups. In the photo – for the boys’ own safety – they do not wear the uniform they used when they were soldiers, but a uniform from a different fighting group.



Good luck!

"Mutiya, you want to start school again and begin a new life. I know that you are well prepared and I wish you every happiness in the future!" says Murhabazi, and hugs Mutiya.

"Thank you, dad, thank you! I will pray for you to help you find the strength to carry on fighting," replies Mutiya.

Murhabazi's bag

Each child who has been at one of Murhabazi's homes gets a bag containing things that will make life a little easier when they go home to their families. The bag contains:



A toothbrush and toothpaste



Soap



A towel



A blanket



New clothes



Shoes



A radio



Mutiya burns his uniform

At Murhabazi's boys' home in Bukavu for former child soldiers, a group of boys is preparing to return home to their families to start a new life. But first they're going to burn their old soldier's uniforms. One of them is 15-year-old Mutiya, who was a child soldier for two years.

"We'd just finished our last lesson one Friday. My friend Mweusi and I were on our way home. Suddenly there were three soldiers standing in front of us, who said: "You can't pass here! If you try and run, we'll shoot you on the spot!". "My parents had been killed by soldiers, so I was really frightened. We started crying and my friend wet himself. We begged them to let us carry on going to school, but they just laughed and said: "We don't care, you're coming with us anyway!".

"The soldiers tore off our school uniforms and ripped them apart. They tore up our school books. After three days of being beaten at one of their prisons, we were given our soldier's uniforms. Just a few days later, I was

sent out to fight for the first time. Then I was trapped for two years. I survived, but five of my friends were killed. I saw so much death and blood.

"I had given up dreaming that I would get to swap my soldier's uniform for a school uniform when Murhabazi came to the military camp and saved my life. He said: "You shouldn't be here. You're going back to school again. Come with me."

"I've started school again here at BVES and now I'm going home to my older brother's, and I'm going back to school in the village. But before we go we're going to burn our old military uniforms. When I go back to the village, I'm going to put my school uniform on instead."

Yes to school uniform!
Before it's time to burn the uniforms, the boys make signs. Mutiya writes 'Yes to school uniform' on his.





Uniforms go up in smoke

"Look carefully at the sign now everyone. It says 'No more soldier's uniform'. You will never wear a soldier's uniform again, you will have school uniforms, don't ever forget that! Now we will burn the uniforms!" cries Murhabazi. Mutiya and the other boys start removing their military clothes with shouts of joy and applause and then burn them.

We're going home!

The big day has arrived. Murhabazi and BVES have managed to trace Mutiya's family and the families of fifteen other boys. Now, finally, they're going to return home after several years of war.



Balls instead of bombs!

"The soldiers took the boys' school uniforms and gave them soldier's uniforms instead. And weapons instead of pens. Bombs instead of balls. But we give the boys footballs to take home with them. Those who live near each other can start a football team and carry on supporting each other," says Murhabazi.

Goodbye friend!

The boys say goodbye to each other. They have become firm friends and helped each other through difficult times, so even if they're longing to get home, it's not easy to part.

**Goodbye!
We're going home now!**



Radio is important

"I am giving you a radio so that you know what is happening in our country and around the world. It's important. Listen to news that tells you about children's rights. The radio runs on solar energy so you don't have to buy batteries."



"This is a really happy moment! My only worry is that new fighting will break out in the areas that the boys are returning to, and that they will be forced to become soldiers again. It happens, and it makes me so angry. One boy was taken three times, by three different armed groups. Each time we freed him," says Murhabazi.



▶ We're going home!



Dreamed of school

"I missed school most of all. I always felt like I was in the wrong place, that I should be in school instead. Murhabazi is going to help me start school again when I get home, and it feels like a dream come true. School gives you lots of opportunities in life. I'd like to be president. The first thing I'd do would be to free all children who were forced to be soldiers. I would help them to find their families and let children start school again. My biggest fear now is that I will be taken by soldiers and forced to fight again."
Assumani, spent 2 years as a child soldier

Wants to laugh and play

"I really miss my friends at home. I hope that they aren't afraid of me now because I've been a soldier. I've really missed just being able to chat and play football and play. I'm happy to be able to go home. It doesn't matter what happens, nothing can be worse than what I experienced as a soldier. Nothing."
Aksanti, 15, 4 years as a child soldier



Misses his mother

"I'm longing to see my mum! I thought about her all the time during the war. I used to help her in the fields and fetch the water before I was forced to be a soldier. I was always worrying about how she would cope while I was away because my dad died when I was little. Now I just want to get home and be near her again. What worries me is leaving all my friends here. We've been able to talk to each other about our terrible experiences, and that's been great. The boys in the village who haven't been soldiers will never understand what I've been through."
Obedi, 15, spent 2 years as a child soldier



Dreams about good stones

"Those that took me forced me to dig for gold, diamonds and other minerals. I had to give everything I found to my leaders. I was their slave. We attacked others who worked in the mines. I don't know how many people died. We used the gold and minerals to buy weapons from rich arms dealers who came out to the forests. If we hadn't had all these minerals, there would have been peace ages ago. Now all the natural riches are bad for us. But really they should be good. If DR Congo's government could sell the minerals properly, we could build schools, roads and hospitals. I dream of such a day. I also dream of one day becoming a tailor and having a good life."
Isaya, 15, spent 4 years as a child soldier



Longing for peace

"When I was a soldier, there was war every day. Never peace. Apart from my mum and dad, it was peace that I missed most of all. I suffered all the time. It was terrible. I'm happy to finally be able to go home. I'm hoping that my life will be good now. That I'll be able to go to school again and make lots of friends. Murhabazi saved my life. I'm going to miss him."
Amani, 15, spent 2 years as a child soldier

**Military uniform
- NEVER
AGAIN!**

**School - Yes!
Military camp
- NEVER
AGAIN!**



Faida – soldier and slave

When Faida was eleven years old, she was kidnapped by one of the many armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It was the beginning of a nightmare that lasted four years, during which she was forced to be both a sex slave and a soldier.

Faida could hear the screams of her friends nearby. They were suffering the same fate at the hands of the soldiers. Faida and her friends had been working in their families' cassava field. No one noticed the soldiers until it was too late. Now two of Faida's friends were dead. When one of the soldiers raised his machete to strike Faida, the commandant shouted:

"Don't kill her! She can be my wife!"

Armed soldiers guarded Faida and her friend Aciza as

they trudged through the field, completely naked.

When they got to the soldiers' camp, it started again.

"The next day the commandant and a few soldiers went looting. "As soon as he'd gone, the soldiers that were left started abusing me."

When the commandant came back, Faida was his alone. But as soon as he was out fighting or looting, she was abused by everyone. Day after day. All day long.

Life as a soldier

"I just couldn't handle being



everyone's slave, despite the drugs they forced us to take." Some of the girls in the camp were soldiers, and Faida had noticed that they were never raped. She asked the commandant if she could be a soldier.

"He agreed, and after two months of weapons training, I was a member of his army."

Early one morning it was time for Faida to carry out her first attack.

"We were given drugs before we left the base. We children were forced to walk at the front. My friend Aciza was suddenly hit in the back. She died."

Faida was constantly thinking about escaping. But she couldn't.

"A little boy tried to escape once. He was shot immediately."

"The first time Murhabazi

Faida hugs her nephew.

"I didn't even know that children had rights until I met Murhabazi. Many girls who have been subjected to what I experienced have been infected with the disease AIDS. Murhabazi took me to hospital for a HIV test, but I hadn't been infected while I was with the soldiers."

Faida lives with her big sister Donia, and here they do laundry together.

"When I was called to BVES and told that they had rescued my Faida, I was so happy. Today she is my daughter and belongs to my family," says Donia.

came, I saw an unarmed man with his arms in the air, saying: "Amani leo!", "Peace now!". He could easily have been killed, but he wasn't afraid," Faida recalls.

Murhabazi said that he was there to take the children home and that children shouldn't be soldiers, they should be going to school.

The commandant refused to release the children, so Murhabazi had to leave empty-handed. A few years later he came back, but it ended in the same way.

Third time lucky

When Faida had been held for four years, Murhabazi came again.

"I couldn't believe it when Murhabazi hugged me and said: "This is your chance! Everything's going to be all right!"

Faida got the chance to start school again at Murhabazi's home for abused girls. 🌍



WHY HAS ANNA BEEN NOMINATED?

Anna Mollel has been nominated for her fight for Maasai children with disabilities and other children living in poverty in rural areas of northern Tanzania.

THE CHALLENGE

The Maasai are herders, but they have become increasingly poor since the start of the 20th century. Their land has been taken and sold to rich businessmen. The Maasai have been forced to move to areas with no grazing for their livestock, and no land for cultivating. Children who are differently abled are often kept hidden away, or abandoned by their parents due to poverty and prejudice.

THE WORK

Anna and her organisation Huduma ya Walemavu give children with disabilities the chance to live a dignified life. They are offered health care, operations, physiotherapy, therapy and access to wheelchairs and other mobility aids, and the opportunity to go to school and to feel safe and loved. Parents are supported and educated, so they are able, and want to look after their children at home. As a pensioner, Anna now runs her own school for vulnerable children.

RESULTS & VISION

Since 1990, around 15,000



CHILD RIGHTS HERO 2

Anna Mollel

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Anna Mollel first experienced how difficult life could be for children with disabilities in the Maasai villages of northern Tanzania when she was just six years old. Many years later, Anna arrived at what she thought was a completely empty village. But on the floor of a house, she found an abandoned eight-year-old girl, Naimyakwa, who was unable to move and who would have died had Anna not come and saved her.

Anna, who belongs to the Maasai people, was six years old and playing with her friends in the neighbouring village when she heard a noise coming from inside one of the houses.

“I asked my friend what it was. She said it was her sister, who wasn’t allowed outside. Their mum didn’t want anyone to know they had a daughter who ‘wasn’t quite right’.

“I went into the house and there was a little girl lying there. She smiled when she saw me,” recalls Anna.

Anna meets Nauri

Anna helped the girl to sit up and they started playing. The girl, Nauri, was happy to finally have some company. The next day, Anna returned when Nauri’s mum was fetching water.

“We lost track of time. Suddenly Nauri’s mum rushed in and hit me with a cane. She shouted that I was never to set foot in their home again.”

But Anna came back the next day.

“The other children were afraid, but I said that everyone needs friends and that Nauri was no exception.”

Anna managed to convince



ANNA CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 1: No poverty. Goal 4: Every child’s right to a quality education. Goal 10: Reduced inequalities. Goal 11: Differently abled people share the same rights as everyone else.



Back to the village

“Our aim is always for the children to return to their village and live their lives like the rest of the family. For them to go to school with the other children and be a part of the community,” says Anna.

the others. They took turns to keep watch while the others played, and when the lookout called that her mum was on her way, everyone rushed out. After a few days, Anna helped Nauri to stand up and they practiced walking. Soon Nauri was able to join the others and play.

A few weeks later, Nauri’s mum came round to Anna’s.

“She said that she knew what I was up to and that she

wanted me to carry on! Nauri had never felt so good and it was a miracle that she was now able to both walk and run.”

Anna asked whether Nauri could start school, but her mum would not agree to it.

“So I started going back to Nauri’s every day after school and teaching her what I’d learned that day. I became the only teacher she ever had.”

Starts fighting for children

Anna trained to be a nurse. One day, a German woman came and wanted to talk to her.

“She knew I was Maasai, and she wanted to find out more about differently abled children in our villages. I explained that it used to be common for children to be killed or abandoned after being born. People thought the disability was a punishment for something they’d done. But I went on to say that the biggest reason was that the Maasai are herders who walk long distances across the savannah in order to survive, looking for fresh grazing areas for their animals. A child who was unable to move was seen

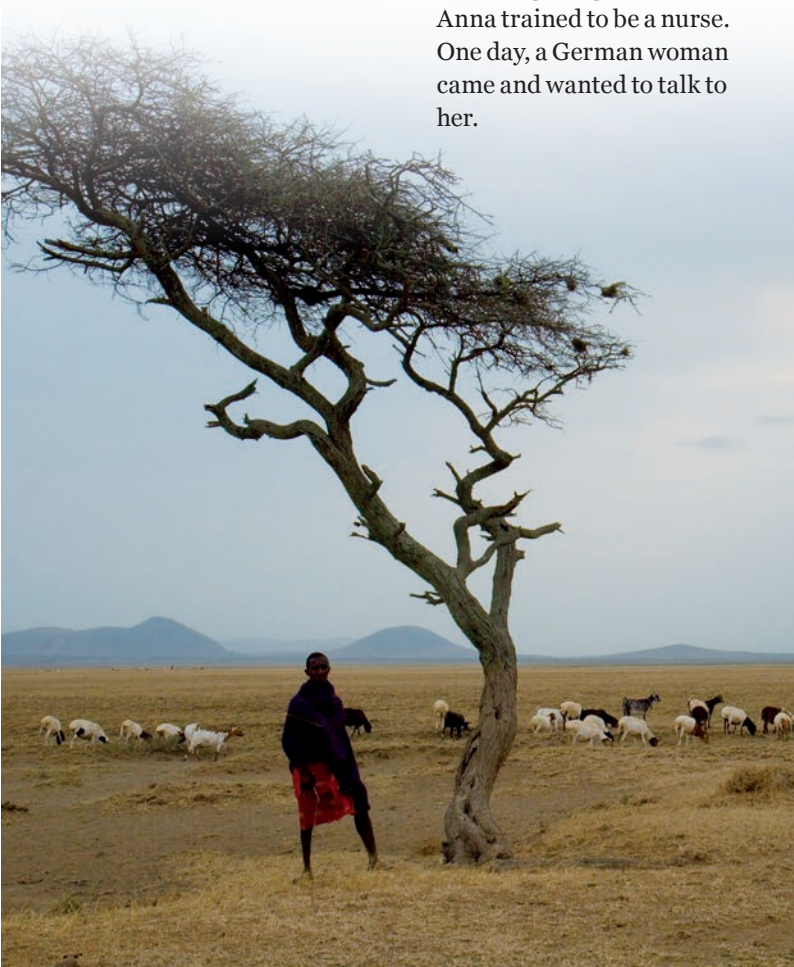
as a major hindrance for the entire group. I explained that these children were still having their rights violated. That they were hidden away, didn’t have access to the treatment they needed and weren’t allowed to go to school or play.”

The German woman asked Anna if she would be interested in helping start up a project for differently abled children out in the Maasai villages, which would be called Huduma ya Walemavu (Care for the Disabled).

“I immediately said yes. This was what I’d been waiting for! Now I could hopefully do more for differently abled children than I was able to do for Nauri when I was little.”

Refused to give up

Anna began driving round the villages in 1990, talking about the rights of differently abled children. At the same time, she looked for children who



Vulnerable Maasai

The Maasai are herders. There are around a million Maasai, half of them in Tanzania and half in Kenya. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the areas of land traditionally used by the Maasai as pasture for their livestock have shrunk. The authorities have made large areas of Maasai land available to private individuals and companies for farming, private hunting grounds and national parks for wild animals. In 2009, riot police burned down eight Maasai villages in northern Tanzania because the land was to be used by a private hunting company and tourists wanting to hunt big game there. People were driven from their homes, and over 3,000 men, women and children were made homeless. The Maasai who continued to let their livestock graze in the fertile area were put in prison.

Play is important!

"Being left alone and excluded is the worst thing a child can experience. That's why play and being with others is so important for us at the center," says Anna.

needed help. One of the first children she came across was Paulina, 15, who had lost her parents and was differently abled as a result of polio. She had to drag herself across the ground. Anna thought it would be easy to convince the village leaders that Paulina could have a good life if she could only have the right operation. But Anna was wrong.

"They didn't know that some differently abled children could have operations and get better, and they didn't believe me. Because they lived a long way from hospitals and they couldn't read or afford a radio, they had never found these things out. They thought it would be money wasted. These children would still never be able to help with the livestock or go to school.

"But my biggest problem was that I was a woman. In our society, women basically have no voice, so they didn't take me seriously."

But Anna refused to give in. Just like as a six-year-old she had challenged Nauri's mum, she now challenged the village leaders. The journey to the village took four hours, but over two weeks Anna travelled there five times! At every meeting she explained about children's rights, and that they had managed to arrange a free operation for Paulina. Finally she managed to convince the men.

Tears of happiness

After her operation, Paulina started practising sitting and standing. After a few weeks, she began learning to walk with crutches.



"She was overjoyed, and I was too! When Paulina went home three months later, and was able to walk into the village herself, people cried with happiness!" Although Anna was happy that Paulina could walk, she knew that Paulina needed an education if she was to be able to support herself in the future.

"Paulina wanted to be a seamstress, so we helped her start a course. She was really good at it!"

Rumours of Paulina spread to other villages. People started openly talking about their differently abled children, and they wanted help. Anna travelled to reach children in remote villages who needed help. On each trip she met more and more children.

"In 1998, our own center in Monduli was ready. We employed physiotherapists and nurses. But also teachers, because I knew that the children we helped almost never got to go to school. There were places for 30 children, but there were times when we had

200 children living there at the same time.

"Even if we didn't have room, we took in every child. The families were so poor that they couldn't pay for the children to be with us, but we never sent anyone away."

It's now almost 30 years since Anna helped Paulina, and since then some 15,000 children have been given a better life thanks to Anna and Huduma ya Walemavu. 🌍

Not just Maasai

"At first we were only working with Maasai children, but now we look after any child who needs our help, whatever their ethnic group or religion. We have Muslims and Christians here, and children who have fled war in our neighbouring countries. The fight for children's rights has no borders!" says Anna.

What does it mean?

Words matter. Over the years, many different words have been used about people with disabilities, words that often make people feel they are worth less than others. Today, we speak about children with disabilities, not disabled children. Sometime s we speak of children who have different abilities. Because we all have abilities, inabilities, strengths and weaknesses. Being a child with a disability means that in some way one differs from what most people in society are able to do. The most important thing is that you and your friends treat all children equally, and make sure that the rights of all children are respected. Together we can fight together to reduce the obstacles for children with disabilities throughout society.

Anna saved Naimyakwa

“When I found Naimyakwa alone in the abandoned village she was eight years old and lying on the floor in one of the houses. There was a strong smell of urine because she had been unable to go anywhere due to her disability. I didn’t think she would survive,” says Anna.

“**W**e were travelling with our mobile clinic to the area where a little orphaned girl with cerebral palsy lived, but Naimyakwa wasn’t to be found with her adult siblings as usual. When I asked if anyone knew where she was, a woman said that the family had moved on with their livestock during the drought to find new pasture.

“I knew how difficult Naimyakwa found it to move, so I wondered how they had managed to take her with them. I went to her village,

which was completely abandoned. We had started walking back towards the car when I heard a whimpering sound.”

A lion?

“I thought it was a lion at first. As we passed one of the houses, we heard the strange sound again. I was afraid, but I carefully stuck my head in and asked if there was anyone there. I heard a little whimper in response.

“Naimyakwa was lying on the earth floor, barely breathing. It smelled of faeces, as she was completely helpless



because of her cerebral palsy. There was an empty calabash next to her that had contained milk. There was a little water left in another calabash.

Naimyakwa was very weak. I was used to families leaving their differently abled children at the center, and never seeing the parents again. But to leave your child like this!”

Naimyakwa rescued

“I leaned close to Naimyakwa’s ear and asked her if she wanted me to take her with us to the center, so we could look after her. She want-

ed to come. I cried. All my colleagues from Huduma ya Walemavu cried too. While I held Naimyakwa in my arms, I thought that even if others had failed to give her the love she needed, I would be there for her and love her.

“Finding Naimyakwa was one of the absolute worst moments of my life. At the same time, it gave me new strength to keep fighting for her right and the right of other vulnerable children to have a good life. There and then I decided to carry on fighting for their rights until the day I die.” 🌍

“Naimyakwa is still here. We never send a child back home unless we’re certain they will be well looked after. Just getting about with Naimyakwa’s wheelchair in the sand at home in the village is almost impossible. Moving about from place to place with the family and their livestock is even harder,” says Anna.

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 are entitled to extra support and help to have a good life. Despite this, differently abled children are some of the most vulnerable children, not just among the Maasai and in Tanzania. There are 200 million children with disabilities in the world.



06.00 Good morning!

Naimyakwa brushes her teeth with her friends. When she first came to the center, it was impossible for her to brush her teeth, get dressed and feed herself.



10.00 Break time and play!

The children have fun and exercise their bodies by doing different movements. Naimyakwa tries to catch and throw the ball to the next person.



21.00 Good night!

"Sleep well," says house mother Halima, and strokes Naimyakwa's cheek. Halima sleeps with the children so she can hear if anyone needs help in the night.



Paralysis from brain damage

Cerebral palsy happens during pregnancy, in connection with the birth or before the child reaches the age of two. Common causes are oxygen deprivation and bleeding in the brain. Some children only have mild movement problems, while others are paralysed. Many children with CP have other disabilities besides lack of movement. You can't cure someone with CP, but their lives can be improved with physiotherapy, occupational therapy and exercise.

"CP is common here because it often happens when there are complications at birth. Many live so far from a hospital or clinic that they have neither the time nor the money to get there when it's time to give birth," says Anna Mollel.

Lomniaki

Lomniaki was born with his legs bending the wrong way. He found it difficult to sit up and wasn't able to learn to walk. His dad didn't want the others in the village to see him.

"I didn't count. It was like I wasn't a proper human being. But then Anna Mollel came and saved me. She gave me a new life, and I love her for that," says Lomniaki, 15.



When Lomniaki was little, he used to lie on his own in the dark house all day long. He could hear the other children in the village laughing and playing outside.

"I don't really know why dad didn't want the others to see me, but I think he was ashamed of me. Mum didn't think that way at all, but it was dad who made the decisions. Sometimes when dad was out with the livestock she would secretly carry me out and put me under a tree in the village for a while. Then I could watch the other children playing. But no one played or talked with me," says Lomniaki.



kept hidden

Hated dad

Lomniaki's dad said he couldn't start school.

"He didn't see the point in me going to school because I'd never be able to look after the livestock anyway or get a job and earn money and help the family when I was older. I hated dad then because he ruined my life."

In the end, his mum Paulina couldn't stand it anymore. She felt so bad at how Lomniaki was being treated that she decided to leave her husband. One day, she picked Lomniaki up on her back and they left the village for good. Paulina walked across the savannah to her parents' village, and they were welcomed there by Lomniaki's grandfather and his uncles and their families.

At first, Lomniaki thought that everything was much better. He met people who were kind to him and who talked to him. Mum or his uncles carried him out in the morning and laid him on a cow skin under the big acacia tree.

"But the other children soon got tired of being with me.

They ran off. And when they went to school, I was left under the tree.

"It felt embarrassing not to be able to cope on my own, and I became more and more depressed. I gradually realised what my life would be like. I would never get to go to school. Never get a job. I thought it was unfair, and felt like I was worth less than others.

"My name Lomniaki means 'blessing', but I thought it must have been some kind of mistake. My name was probably meant for another boy. I was no blessing. I was a curse."

Anna came to the village

"I'll never forget the day Anna Mollé came to the village for the first time. I was almost ten years old and lying under the tree. I'd never seen a car before, so I was petrified when I saw it coming closer. I screamed and cried. A woman got out and came up to me and sat down. She smiled and gently stroked my head and tried to comfort me. She said that I shouldn't be afraid and that



Jumping in the Everyday dance!

"Since having the operation, I can now dance with the others in the village. I never thought I would ever be able to dance with the others," says Lomniaki.

Here, Lomniaki is dancing Longwesi, which means Everyday. As part of the dance, the boys challenge one another to see who can jump the highest. Lomniaki is battling it out here with his friend Babu.

she had come to help me."

Anna told mum Paulina that Lomniaki could have an operation that would mean he'd be able to walk completely by himself, and that it was possible for Lomniaki to start school like all the other children.

"Mum was so happy and wanted Anna to take me straight away. But it wasn't possible because my uncles were not at home. Mum had to have her brothers' permission, and Anna had to go without me."

Anna came back to talk to

the uncles. They sat under the acacia tree, and Anna explained to the uncles and grandfather about the operation and about Lomniaki's future.

"I had never seen a woman dare to talk in that way to men before. And I'd never seen men listen like that to a woman there under the tree. Anna really was different," says Lomniaki.

Time for the operation

Lomniaki's family would contribute a little money to cover

Lomniaki the herder

"When I come home in the holidays, I can now manage to tend the family's livestock, just like all the other teenagers in the village. Livestock are very important to us Maasai," explains Lomniaki, here looking after the family's goats.





finally got to start school and learn to read and write. He also learned about children's rights at school.

"At home I'd been the only child with disabilities. I had always felt like an outsider. At the center I suddenly had loads of good friends. We could talk about everything because we understood one another so well. I wasn't lying alone like at home, there was always one of my new friends to push me round in a wheelchair so I could join in. For the first time in my life I didn't feel different, I felt like one of the gang. It was a wonderful feeling!"

Lomniaki had his operation at the hospital in the city.

"The first week I had a lot of pain in my legs and was always falling over. But it got better and better, and soon I was able to walk with crutches. After practising for a year, I plucked up the courage to give up the crutches and I was finally able to walk by myself. It was the happiest day of my life!"

Wants to be a lawyer

After another year, Lomniaki was so steady on his legs that he was able to leave the center. Anna then helped him start school. At first they thought of the school in his home village, but soon realised that he would have too far to walk.

"My legs weren't strong enough for me to cope with walking to school in the semi-desert, and I would have



Tree of Disappointment becomes Tree of Life

Anna Mollel and Lomniaki sitting underneath the acacia tree where Anna found Lomniaki, and where she convinced his uncles to let him have the operation.

"It used to be the Tree of Disappointment, where I was left lying alone while the others played or went to school. But since Anna rescued me and my new, proper life began, I see it as a good place," says Lomniaki.

no chance of getting away if I came across wild animals. So Anna helped me start at a boarding school in the city instead."

Lomniaki loves being at home in the village during school holidays, and these days he has no problem helping out with the livestock with his friends. But he still dreams of eventually going on to become a lawyer.

"I want to be like Anna and devote my whole life to fighting for the rights of vulnerable children, just like she fought

for me. If Anna hadn't made the long journey across the savannah, I would still be lying alone in a house or under the tree without being able to move. Instead she gave me a life that is worth living." 🌍

some of his food costs at the center. But when Anna returned, mum Paulina was distraught. She explained that the family had been unable to raise the money that was needed.

"Anna looked at me and said: 'Don't worry Lomniaki. Of course I'll still help you. We'll sort it out somehow!'"

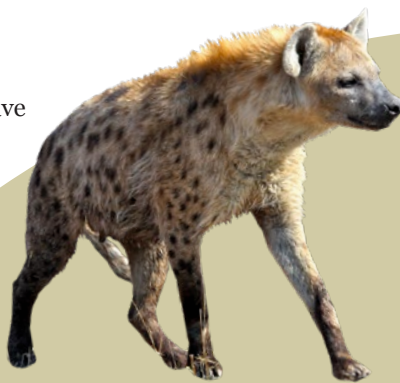
That same afternoon, Anna carried Lomniaki into the jeep. His journey to a new life had begun.

Lomniaki immediately settled in at Anna's center. Anna and the house mothers did everything they could to make sure he was happy, and he



Girls' rights

"It's hard to believe that it didn't matter that mum thought I should be able to play with the others and go to school. It was dad who made the decisions. Mum's opinions didn't matter. Anna taught me that this is completely wrong. Boys and girls have the same value and share the same right to express an opinion and be listened to," says Lomniaki. His little sister Naraka in the photo wants to work with computers.



Lions and hyenas

"Elephants and giraffes often walk right outside here, and hyenas are here every night. I love the wild animals that live here, but we've made a barrier of strong thorny bushes around the entire village to stop hungry predators from getting at the livestock. Further away towards the mountains there are lions, cheetahs and leopards," says Lomniaki.

WHY HAS JAMES BEEN NOMINATED?

James Kofi Annan has been nominated for his work to combat child slavery in the fishing industry on Lake Volta in Ghana.

THE CHALLENGE

James, who was himself trafficked as a child and worked as a slave for seven years with a fisherman, campaigns for children who are forced into slavery in the fishing industry. Parents living in poverty often borrow money from slave traders, who take their children when they can't pay the loan back. Despite child slavery being against the law in Ghana, it is thought that there are almost 250,000 trafficked children working as slaves, and 1.3 million child labourers in the country.

THE WORK

James believes that poverty, which is the basis of slavery, can only be tackled with education. Trafficked children who have been rescued come to James' organisation Challenging Heights' sheltered home first, where the children are given support to process their difficult experiences. When they feel better, they are reunited with their families. Poor mothers are given an education and loans so their children don't end up in slavery.

RESULTS & VISION

Challenging Heights has rescued over 1,000 trafficked children. They have room for 120 children in the sheltered home, and they run a school for 700 children. James and Challenging Heights have supported more than 15,000 children who have been slaves, or who are at risk of being enslaved. Through radio programs, thousands of vulnerable children get to learn about their rights.



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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 3

James Kofi Annan

James leaves home at dawn together with four other boys from the village. They have all been collected by well-dressed men. James is six years old, and he doesn't know where he's being taken or that he will be a fishing slave for the next seven years.

A few months earlier, three men had come to the village. They had a couple of boys with them. All of them were dressed in fine clothes made from splendid materials, and wore smart new shoes. The men had walked around the village and spoken to the adults.

Rumours started spreading among the children. If you were lucky and got to go with them next time they came,

you would have clothes that were just as nice for yourself. And you'd get to go to school and have plenty to eat.

James' family was poor, and his mum had 12 children to feed. Sending them to school was impossible. There was no money for exercise books, school bags or uniforms.

Boys start disappearing

After the visit from the smartly dressed men, boys

started to disappear from the village. One by one. "Maybe it'll be your turn next time," said James'



JAMES CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Goal 4: Every child's right to a quality education. Goal 8: Decent work. Goal 16: A stop to forced labour, child slavery, assaults and violence against children.

friends to him. They had seen the men sitting and talking with his dad.

And now he's on his way in a large, battered and rusty old bus. Even the aisle is packed with children.

Evening comes, and the bus jolts along the roads and red sand tracks. Now and then it stops. Every time James thinks they've arrived, but the engine always starts up again. When they need to go to the toilet, they have to have a guard with them. On the third day they arrive at the village of Yeti, at the northern end of Lake Volta. Tens of thousands of children are brought here every year to work as slaves for fishermen around the vast lake. The children are sold for USD 7–25, and they have to work hard for

at least two years. The parents who get the money have often been tricked into thinking their children will get to go to school and learn a profession.

Wants really young ones

There are canoes on the shore waiting, and the children are divided up between them. After a six-hour boat journey, James arrives at the fishing village where the slave owner, who is a fisherman, puts him straight to work. He has to bail out the canoe and prepare the nets. At night he sleeps on the floor deep inside a hut where all the other children bought by the fisherman are lying in a row.

James is woken at three in the morning by having water

thrown in his face. They make their way out in the canoes. James deals with the nets that he prepared yesterday. But it's not as easy today, and the nets get tangled up. When the fisherman notices, he lifts the heavy paddle and hits James on the head with it. From now on he should expect a beating at any time, and for the slightest thing.

The slave owner doesn't want the boys talking about their parents. If the children forget about their parents, it's much easier to get them to do what he wants. That's why he prefers to have really young children as slaves. They forget so quickly.

Dangerous diving

But James doesn't forget. Especially not his mum. And he doesn't stop missing her, even when the days turn into weeks, months and years.

The working days are long, and they always start in the middle of the night. He only gets a few hours' sleep. Of all the jobs that need to be done, the tangled nets are the worst. When they get stuck in branches on the bottom, James has to dive down in the murky water and without being able to see, try and work the net free. It's easy to get into a panic, and boys end up drowning.

One day when James has dived down to free a net that is deep under water, his legs get stuck in the net down there in the darkness. He pulls as hard as he can to free himself.



James almost died when he got stuck in the net.



Trees in the lake

Lake Volta in Ghana is the largest artificial lake in the world. It was formed more than 40 years ago when a dam was built to generate electricity. The dam flooded forests, which is why the bottom of the lake is covered with large areas of dead forest. The trees stick up above the surface, but many of the trees aren't visible.

All the branches everywhere mean that the nets often get tangled in them, and children have to dive down to work them loose. Many trafficked children drown every year, often because they get stuck in the nets and cannot free themselves.

"One in five children die out there," says James Kofi Annan.



It's almost impossible for trafficked children to escape.

Finally he manages to tear the net and get up to the surface with his last ounce of strength.

He just has to get out of here! But there are no roads. Just dense jungle with poisonous snakes, and on the other side there's the huge Lake Volta.

Escape

When James is 13, he gets his chance. A close relative has died and his mum visits the fishing village. It's the first time James has seen her in seven years. His mum eventually manages to convince the slave owner that James must go to the funeral, and it is decided that he will take the boat and then take a bus to the village where the funeral will be held.

James never gets the bus. First he gets a lift with a timber truck, which is heading in the direction of his home village. After seven years as a

fishing slave, James has learned to navigate by the stars. It helps him during the dark nights of his escape. It will be two days and two nights before he gets home. He finds wild mango and gorges himself on the juicy fruit. The sense of freedom carries him for mile after mile, and his steps are light. Soon he'll be home! But it's a bit tricky to find his way. A lot has changed in seven years, and there are new roads and houses everywhere. Will anyone recognise him?

Of course they recognise him! Look, it's Annan's boy come home! James Kofi! How he's grown! People greet him joyfully. James is free and it's the start of a new life.

Taught by little children

James wanted to learn to read and write. He was 13 years old and went round various schools to try and get a place. But they said no. In the end, one school took James in. He could start in year 6.

"But I could neither read nor write, and I didn't understand what was going on in the lessons."



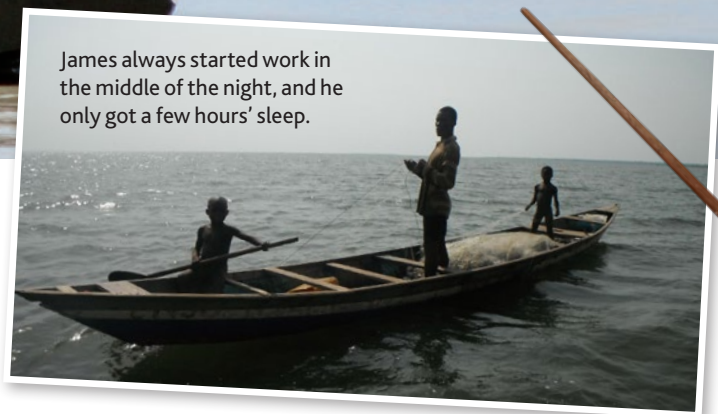
James is out on Lake Volta to rescue a boy who has been trafficked.



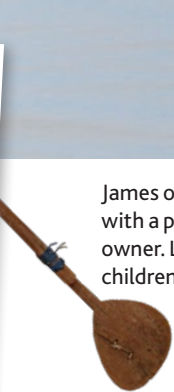
When the children arrive at James' sheltered home, they are often in a really bad way. But soon they make friends they can play with who share their terrible experiences.



James always started work in the middle of the night, and he only got a few hours' sleep.



James often got beaten with a paddle by the slave owner. Lots of trafficked children suffer this.



There was only one solution. To go down to the first years at lunch and break time and ask for help. And to use their books. "I had to swallow my pride and the youngest children became my teachers."

James soon caught up with his peers. He left school with excellent grades and went on to go to university. In the end he got a job as a manager at a major bank.

James – the saviour of trafficked children

"I was doing well, but every day I thought about the

"The boys who went to Yeti"

There are no words for people trafficking or child slavery in Ghana. Fishing slaves are called "The boys who went to Yeti". It's the name of the village where most trafficked children in the fishing industry end up. Then they are sent out to various slave owners around the lake. Child slavery

is very common in Ghana. The children are sold by their parents or relatives, often by single mothers with lots of children they cannot afford to feed. It's also common for poor people to borrow money from a slave trader for a funeral when someone dies. When they can't pay it back, the

slave trader takes their children instead. Adults receive USD 7–25, and the children then have to work for at least two years, often much longer. There is a law against child slavery, so Challenging Heights can get the police to help when they free children.





The children never got to sleep when they were slaves, but at the sheltered home they can sleep as much as they like.



Challenging Heights' boat has carried many trafficked children to freedom.

When he was working at the bank, James thought about the trafficked children. He founded the organisation Challenging Heights and built the sheltered home for rescued trafficked children.

children who were still slaves and who were suffering as I had."

James started using some of his salary each month to help pay for some children from his village to go to school. After a year he had helped 52 children through school, and his organisation Challenging Heights had been set up.

"Lots of slave traders were angry. We were convincing families to demand their children back, and we taught the children about their rights. The slave traders even threatened my family.

"I had built a fantastic career, but my job at the bank now felt meaningless."

On his birthday in 2007, James sat at his computer at work and started writing his letter of resignation. 🌐

Slave 24/7

When Mabel's mum died, she and her siblings were sent to live with relatives, where Mabel was forced to work hard. At night she was out fishing. In the morning she fetched wood and helped cook maize porridge. Then she made lunch for everyone on the boats. And after that it was time to prepare dinner.

"I hardly slept at all," says Mabel. "Every evening I hoped there would be a storm, so I wouldn't have to work on the lake."

Her relatives had their own children, who were allowed to go to school, but Mabel and her siblings couldn't go to school. One day, Steven and Linda came from Challenging Heights. They told Mabel's relatives that the law states that children have to go to school. "They refused to let us go. So Steven and Linda came back with policemen and fetched us." Mabel is happy to be in the sheltered home, and to go to school there, but she has ugly scars on her back, which she got from being beaten with a paddle.



30 trafficked ch

These 30 children at James and Challenging Heights' sheltered home for trafficked children were slaves for between one and twelve years before being rescued. They have lived as slaves for a combined total of 161 years! Now they are free, and they dream of the future. The most common dream is to be a professional football player, driver, teacher or bank manager. James was a trafficked child and became a bank manager!



Arhinful, 11
Enslaved for 2 years
Wants to be a doctor



Justice, 12
Enslaved for 1.5 years
Wants to be a carpenter



Mprem, 12
Enslaved for 3 years
Wants to be a bank manager



Bortsie, 13
Enslaved for 4 years
Wants to be a tailor



Samuel, 16
Enslaved for 10 years
Wants to be a bank manager



Kobina, 14
Enslaved for 8 years
Wants to be a football player



Kwame, 15
Enslaved for 7 years
Wants to be a professional football player



Children's dreams for the future



Nyeni, 13
Enslaved for 7 years
Wants to be a bus driver



Apreku, 14
Enslaved for 10 years
Wants to be a professional football player



Sammy, 10
Enslaved for 2 years
Wants to be a teacher



Kow, 14
Enslaved for 12 years
Wants to be a bus driver



Daniel, 10
Enslaved for 2 years
Wants to be a tailor



James, 13
Enslaved for 4 years
Wants to be a football player



Kojo, 16
Enslaved for 1 year
Wants to be a builder



Kwame, 8
Enslaved for 1 year
Wants to be a driver



Kweku, 14
Enslaved for 10 years
Wants to be a professional football player



Ekow, 10
Enslaved for 6 years
Wants to be a taxi driver



Portia, 15
Enslaved for 6 years
Wants to be a teacher



Kweku, 5
Enslaved for 1 year
Wants to buy a car



Afedzi, 15
Enslaved for 1.5 years
Wants to be a professional football player



Nkonta, 12
Enslaved for 9 years
Wants to be a taxi driver



Otoo, 13
Enslaved for 2 years
Wants to be a driver



Charles, 12
Enslaved for 6 years
Wants to be a teacher



Junior, 6
Enslaved for 2 years
Wants to be a professional football player



Mabel, 15
Enslaved for 9 years
Wants to be a nurse



Kojo Joe, 6
Enslaved for 1 year
Wants to be a pilot or carpenter



Yaw, 14
Enslaved for 10 years
Wants to be a teacher



Ariel, 14
Enslaved for 10 years
Wants to be a professional football player



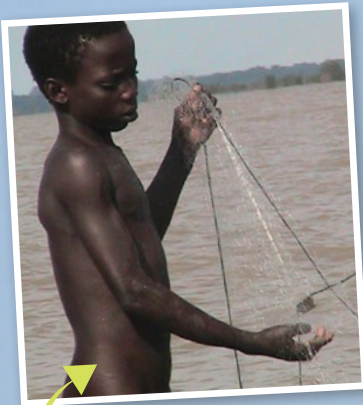
Esiama, 17
Enslaved for 10 years
Wants to be a professional football player



Martha, 14
Enslaved for "several" years
Wants to be a fashion designer



Kwesi was left to die



Challenging Heights found Kwesi when he was pulling up nets. They realised straight away that he was in a very bad way.

When Kwesi's dad died, his mum Yaba had no money for the funeral. A man she knew offered to lend her the money, and she accepted. Just after the funeral, the man asks for the money back ...

Yaba has eight children and tries to support the family by gathering sticks and wood, which she sells. She has no money. The man who lent her the money threatens to call the police and see that she ends up in prison.

Kwesi hears everything. He knows that other families in the village have got money when their boys went to Yeti to fish. He offers to go with the man and work off his mum's debt.

"You'll have to work for

three years for the money," says the man.

Whipped with a rope

The slave owner has bought lots of children who work for him. The work starts at eleven at night. That's when they throw out nets and they keep going until six in the morning, when the nets have to be pulled in again. Then they remove all the fish. That takes until the afternoon. There won't be much sleep for Kwesi.

Kwesi often has to dive down into the depths to free nets that have got tangled up in branches. It's dangerous, and one day one of his legs gets stuck in the net, but he manages to free himself. When Kwesi comes back up to the surface, the slave owner whacks him across the face with the paddle. He loses his temper with the children over the slightest mistake, and often uses the heavy paddle when he beats them.



The treetops in the middle of the lake saved Kwesi's life.



This photo was taken from Challenging Heights' boat as it was approaching Kwesi's canoe.

This is what Kwesi's hands looked like when he was rescued. Hands and nails get affected and damaged by all the water. This is what all fishing slaves' hands look like.



One evening, Kwesi is lying awake, thinking about running away. He has tried to run away before, but has always been discovered and then beaten.

Earlier in the day, the slave owner accused Kwesi and another boy of having stolen fish. The fisherman tied them each to a tree and bound their hands and feet and whipped them with thick ropes. The boys cried and screamed from the pain.

Kwesi saved by the trees

One day when Kwesi is out on the lake with the slave owner's sons, one of them pushes him into the water.

"We're going to say that you escaped and we couldn't find you," they say, disappearing with the boat.

Kwesi is alone in the water out on the vast lake, and it's several kilometres to land. Here and there are the tops of

trees sticking up out of the water. Kwesi swims towards the nearest tree he sees. He can hang in a branch and rest until he gets his energy back. By swimming from tree to tree and resting, Kwesi finally reaches land on an island and collapses on the shore.

Kwesi rescued

Kwesi has now been working as a slave for one year and eight months. He has one year and four months left.

One day, a motorboat pulls up by Kwesi's canoe. A woman and a man start talking to him. They say that their names are Linda and Steven, and they ask lots of questions. What's his name? Where does he come from? What's his mum's name? What's the slave owner that he works for called? Kwesi doesn't understand what they want, but he answers all their questions.

Linda and Steven come from James' organisation Challenging Heights, and they've rescued several trafficked children before. They start the boat again and Kwesi watches them go ashore and approach the slave owner's house.

The woman and the man come back and say that Kwesi can be free. That he can come with them to a sheltered home, where he will be taken care of and won't need to work as a slave anymore. Kwesi doesn't know what to believe. But then Steven mentions the name of a teacher that Kwesi really liked at school, before he was trafficked. He then realises that they must have met his mum, and he decides to go with them.

Finally home

Linda and Steven have collected several children and they

have a bus waiting. The sheltered house is high up on a hill, with a view across the jungle and villages, and there are masses of other children. They play volleyball and football, which Kwesi loves.

There's food several times a day. Just like all the other children here, Kwesi puts on weight. He gets to go to school and catch up on everything he's missed. And he can feel safe.

Kwesi stays at the sheltered home for almost a year, until he is well and strong. He has loads of scars on his body. But now he's home with his mum again and he's in year six at an ordinary school. 🌍



Finally home again with mum Yaba.

"I didn't know where they'd taken Kwesi or what a terrible time he was having. He could have died! I'm so happy now that he's home again and going to school."

James was a trafficked child and became a bank manager. Kwesi wants to be a bank manager too.



Three rescued brothers

Brothers Kweku, 5, Kojo, 6 and Kwame, 8, were taken by a slave owner when their mum was unable to repay the money she had borrowed for their dad's funeral. The brothers were rescued after a year and now live at Challenging Heights' sheltered home.



This is Kojo sitting with a life jacket on in Challenging Heights' boat after being rescued.



Kwesi and his friends at the sheltered home playing football with a ball made from plastic bags and string.



WHY HAS MALALA BEEN NOMINATED?

Malala has been nominated for her fight for girls' right to education and a life of freedom, in Pakistan and all over the world.

THE CHALLENGE

In many parts of the world, girls are subjected to brutal violence and cannot live freely. Over 130 million girls are not allowed the education they have a right to today; 5 million of them live in Pakistan. Their rights have been taken away from them due to poverty, war and discrimination.

THE WORK

Malala began speaking openly about girls' rights at the age of 11, when the Taliban prohibited girls from attending school in the Swat Valley in Pakistan. As a 15-year-old, she was shot in the head on her way home from school. The Taliban thought they could silence Malala by killing her. Instead, her voice became even stronger. She and her organisation Malala Fund now support local activists in Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan and other parts of the world where girls are severely affected by injustice and violence. Malala demands that the world's leaders keep their promises to vulnerable girls, and also makes sure they get to tell their stories and demand their rights themselves.

RESULTS & VISION

Malala has created a global movement for girls' right to education and a good life. Together with them, she continues to fight to ensure that every girl receives 12 years of free education in a safe environment, and where girls lead others in their efforts for a better world.



MALIN FEZEHAI/MALALA FUND

On Malala Day 2017, Malala visited refugee children from Syria in Iraq.

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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 4

Malala Yousafzai

It is 9 October 2012. "Which one of you is Malala?" asks the man dressed in white. He hides his face with a scarf. None of the girls in the back of the minibus say a word. The man raises his pistol and fires three rapid shots. The first bullet hits Malala in the head. Malala has fought for a long time against the Taliban in the Swat Valley in Pakistan, for girls' right to go to school. Now, at the age of 15, she is close to death. But by the time Malala regains consciousness, she has become a symbol for girls' right to go to school throughout the world.

In the book about her life, Malala says that she was born in the most beautiful place in the world.

"The Swat Valley is a heavenly place full of mountains, flowing waterfalls and clear lakes. The sign at the entrance to the valley reads

'Welcome to Paradise.'

In this 'paradise', Malala is set to experience earthquakes and severe flooding that kills many people. But the worst thing of all is when the Taliban come to the Swat Valley.

They threaten and kill people, forcing women to cover their



Malala has started reading, and her little brother Khushal is copying her.



MALALA CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 4: Quality education, in particular girls' right to go to school. Goal 5: Gender equality. Goal 10: Reduced inequalities. Goal 11: Sustainable communities.



Malala went to her father's school. You can't tell that it's a school from the street.

Malala starts writing a diary about life in Swat under the Taliban. When it is read out on BBC radio it is under a made-up name, Gul Makai, which means cornflower. Her school friends talk about the diary at school, but they don't know it is Malala who is writing it. She talks about how it feels to be afraid, about the ban on girls going to school, and about being forced to wear a burka and hide her face.

When she is filmed for a documentary, Malala says, "They cannot stop me... our challenge to the rest of the world is: Save our school, save our Pakistan, save our Swat." But soon the Taliban close down their school.

Protests cause the Taliban to allow girls up to the age of ten to attend school. Malala and her friends, who are too old, go to school in their normal clothes, hiding their schoolbooks under their shawls. The girls' headteacher calls it 'the secret school'.

Serious threats

In her book, Malala writes that she often thinks about what life is like for girls and women in her country: "We want to be able to make our own decisions and be free to go to school or work. Nowhere in the Koran does it

faces and girls to quit school. They will bomb more than 400 girls' schools in Swat.

Girls suffering

Malala spends a lot of time at her father's school in Swat's biggest city, Mingora. She learns early on how different boys' and girls' lives are, and how men are in charge. But Malala also learns from her father that things don't have to be like that.

When her family go to visit relatives in a mountain village, Malala notices that her cousin Shahida is missing. She is only ten years old, but her father has sold her to an older man who already has a wife. Malala complains to her father about how girls are suffering in Swat.

Arrival of the Taliban

Malala is ten years old when the Taliban come to the Swat Valley. They gather people's CDs, DVDs and televisions and burn them in huge piles on the street. The Taliban also stop young children from being vaccinated against polio. They shut down cable TV channels and ban children's board games.

Then the Taliban set their sights on girls' schools. When Malala's family return from a visit to relatives in a rural area, there is a letter pinned to the school gate. It is a warning to Malala's father not to allow the girls to continue wearing normal school uniform. Instead, they must wear burkas and cover their faces.

No girls in school

It is now 2008 and the Taliban begin blowing up schools – mostly girls' schools – almost every day. Malala is 11 and is interviewed on several TV channels. She speaks out for girls' right to go to school. In a BBC interview in Urdu, the language of Pakistan, she says:

"How dare the Taliban take away my right to education?" Things go from bad to worse. The Taliban announce that all schools for girls are to be closed. From 15 January 2009, no girl in the Swat Valley is permitted to attend school. At first Malala thinks it can't be possible. But her friends ask who can stop the Taliban?

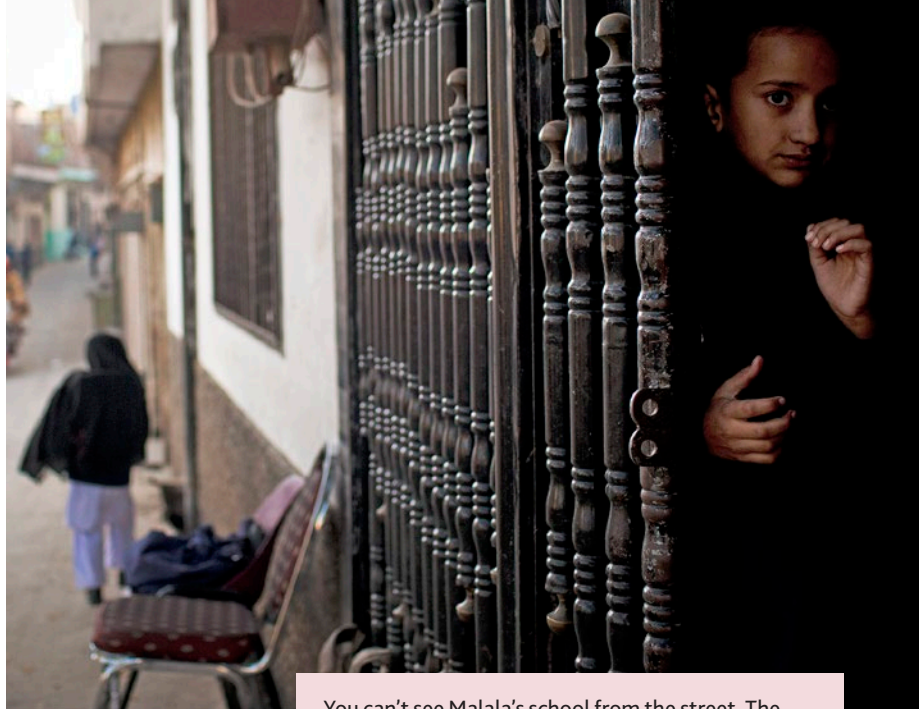
School for girls under threat

The girls in the picture are on their way home from school in Malala's hometown of Mingora. They are wearing burkas. The Taliban demand that they observe Purdah, which means that women and girls are not allowed to show their faces to men. The Taliban also want to stop girls from going to school. With 185 million inhabitants, Pakistan has the world's seventh largest population. Three out of four women can't read. In rural areas, there are places where only three in a hundred women can read. 5 million girls who should attend school get no education whatsoever.





Malala always went to school by rickshaw during the year before she was shot. Before that she used to walk to school, but her mother was worried after all the threats against the family.



You can't see Malala's school from the street. The girls go in quickly through the iron gate and usually check carefully before they go out onto the street.

say that a woman should be dependent on a man or have to listen to a man."

Malala's father sees on the internet that the Taliban are issuing threats against two women, and one of them is Malala. "These two women should be killed," he reads.

Malala's parents tell her about the threat and her father says that she should stop speaking out about girls' education and against the Taliban, just for a while.

"How could we possibly do that? I've been invited to speak at lots of events,

and I can't just pull out," says Malala.

Dangerous to walk

Malala and her father plan to travel to the villages in the Swat mountains in the next school holidays, to talk to parents and children about the importance of learning to read and write.

"We'll be like education missionaries," says Malala to her father.

Malala's mother will not allow her to walk to school any more. Instead, she always travels by rickshaw. She

travels home with 20 school friends, on the back of a truck with a canvas roof. In the back of the truck there are three long benches. The school bus stops at the steps leading up to Malala's street. These days she is always afraid of the Taliban when she walks up the steps.

Which one of you is Malala?

On the night of 8 October, Malala sits up late studying

for an exam in Pakistani history. The school bus does two runs after school every day. Malala and her friends stay behind and chat after the exam, so they take the second run, at twelve noon.

Suddenly, two young men dressed in white step out into the road, forcing the minibus to make an emergency stop. One of them, wearing a hat and a scarf covering his eyes, climbs onto the back of the bus and bends to look in, near where Malala and her best friend are sitting.



Malala is unconscious, having been shot at with three pistol bullets. One of them hit her in the head.



Malala is carried from the helicopter to a military hospital in the city of Peshawar after being shot.



Malala with her father Ziauddin and younger brothers Khushal and Atal at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham in the UK.



FAREED KHAN/PAF

On 14 October 2012, five days after Malala was shot, children demonstrated on the streets of the city of Karachi in Pakistan in protest against the Taliban's attack on her.

“Which one of you is Malala?” he asks.

Some of the girls shout for help, but the man forces them to be quiet. Malala is the only girl who doesn't have her face covered. Nobody says which one she is, but several of them

glance at her. When the man raises his black pistol, Malala squeezes her best friend's hand. The man fires three rapid shots. The first hits Malala in the head.

Awards and the UN

Malala is flown by helicopter to a military hospital, and then on to a hospital in the UK. That's where she is when she regains consciousness a week later. One half of her face is paralysed. But after an

eight-hour operation, the doctors manage to restore her facial nerves.

In newspapers, Malala is included in lists of the most influential people in the world. On 12 July 2013, Malala's 16th birthday, 100 young people from 80 countries have come to the UN to listen to Malala. The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, calls the day 'Malala Day'. In his speech to Malala, he says:

“I urge you to keep speaking out. Keep making a difference. And together let us follow the lead of this brave girl. Let us put education first. Let us make this world better for all.”

“Let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism. Let us pick up our books and pens, they are our most powerful weapons. Education is the only solution. Education first,” replies Malala.

Malala's voice

The Taliban thought they could silence Malala by killing her. Instead they gave her an even stronger voice, which can now be heard all over the world. Malala has continued fighting for girls' rights, and her Malala Fund promotes girls' right to education all over the world. In 2013, WCP's Child Jury nominated Malala as one of three Child Rights Heroes and in the Global Vote, almost two million voting children decided to award Malala the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child 2014. Later that same year, Malala also became the youngest ever person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. 🌐

On 12 July 2013, Malala's 16th birthday was celebrated at the UN, in front of one hundred young people from 80 countries. The UN Secretary General called the day 'Malala Day', and gave Malala a leatherbound edition of the UN Charter; something that is usually only given to heads of state.



ESKINDER DEBBE/UN



Malala receiving the World's Children's Prize from millions of voting children, at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden.

KIM NAYLOR/WCF

It is March 2018 when Malala looks out through the helicopter window and takes a photograph with her mobile phone. Soon the helicopter will be landing in the Swat Valley, in the same place that the helicopter took off from with the unconscious Malala six years ago. Ever since she regained consciousness, Malala has dreamed of being able to return to her homeland. Today she lives in the UK and is studying at Oxford University. But she still carries on fighting for girls' rights whenever she can.



INSIYA SYED/MALALA FUND

During her visit to Pakistan, Malala has meetings with Pakistan's prime minister, who gives his support to Malala's education project. In her speech to him, Malala says:

"Pakistan's future generations are the greatest asset we have. We must invest in children's education... so that women can be empowered, work, stand on their own two feet and support themselves."

Visits many countries

"Every day I fight for girls' right to 12 years of free and safe, high-quality education. I travel to meet girls who are fighting poverty, war, child marriage and gender discrimination to be able to go to school. We work at Malala Fund to make sure their stories, just like mine, are heard all around the world," says Malala.

"With more than 130 million girls not going to school, there's a lot to do. I hope that more will join my fight for education and gender equal-

ity. Together we can create a world where all girls can get an education and lead.

"Secondary school education for girls can transform communities, countries and our world. It's an investment in economic growth, lasting peace and the planet's future.

"I never meet a prime minister or a global figure because I want to hang out with them or have a selfie. I always talk about how they are treating people in their country, or how they are not investing in

girls' education or how they are treating refugees. I always think about representing the girls who do not have a voice," says Malala.

Malala helps girls

Malala has her own organisation, Malala Fund, which is working for a world where every girl can learn and lead. Malala's goal is to help more than a million girls. The organisation is currently working in six countries or regions. In places where most

girls don't continue to the end of secondary school, they are investing in supporting local educators who understand the girls' situation best.

Malala Fund is also advocating to hold political leaders accountable – at local, national and global levels – for resources and policy changes needed to give all girls a secondary education.

Malala Fund also helps girls to have a voice.

"We believe girls should speak for themselves and tell leaders what they need to learn and achieve their potential. We amplify girls' voices by bringing them to meet with decision-makers and sharing their stories through Assembly, our digital newsletter."



TESSTHOMAS/MALALA FUND

Malala with girls from Chibok in Nigeria who were abducted from their school by the terrorist group Boko Haram. 112 of the 276 girls who were abducted are still missing.



TOULU ONIBOKUN/MALALA FUND

Focus on girl refugees

During her travels, Malala has met many girls who are refugees, or living in another country. She has put together some of their stories in a new book.

“There are now more than 68 million refugees, the highest number since World War

II. Women and girls are the ones who are affected the most. You can see how vulnerable they are in refugee camps, and how they are subjected to sexual assault and child marriage. I’ve seen that these girls, they prioritise education. They’re fighting for it, and they know that it is

Girls’ education makes for a better world

Malala and Malala Fund believe that it is so important for all girls to have 12 years of education because:

- Secondary education for girls can transform communities, countries and our world. It is an investment in economic growth, lasting peace and the future of our planet.
- Girls’ education strengthens economies and creates jobs.
- Educated girls are healthier citizens who raise healthier families.
- Educated girls are less likely to marry young or to contract HIV, and more likely to have healthy, educated children.
- Each additional year of school a girl completes cuts both infant mortality and child marriage rates.
- Communities are more stable and can recover faster after conflict when girls are educated.
- Education is vital for security around the world because extremism grows alongside inequality.
- Investing in girls is good for our planet. Secondary schooling for girls is said to be the most cost-effective and best investment against climate change.

“I think it’s important for girls to boost their self-confidence first, and then we can work together to tackle the challenges from outside,” says Malala.

She has met Nigeria’s prime minister and explained that policies and money are needed to fund 12 years of free and safe, high-quality education for every girl.

important for them.

“When you become a refugee, you feel like a stranger to the new land, an outsider. But as soon as you feel like you belong, you are an insider, and you deserve the same rights as anyone else in that country. This becomes your home. And you can have many homes.”

Girl Power Trip

“On my Girl Power Trip in 2017, I decided to spend my birthday and Malala Day in Northern Iraq. I met 13-year-old Nayir there, who has been a refugee since ISIS occupied her home city of Mosul and abducted her father. She hadn’t been able to go to school for three years, but now her classroom was in a little tent at the refugee camp. ‘Nothing will keep me from finishing my studies,’ she told me.

“We should not ask children forced to flee their homes to also give up their education and their dreams. We cannot allow girls like Nayir to fight alone.

“Sometimes we think about refugees as victims, that they must have sad stories. And they are sad indeed, but they also show us how much courage they have and how brave they are. They have dreams for their futures,” says Malala. 🌍

Malala supports girls in six countries

- In Brazil, the Fund is improving educational opportunities for indigenous and Afro-Brazilian girls through advocacy and training for teachers and youth leaders.
- In Nigeria, the Fund is helping girls living under the threat of the terror group Boko Haram to go to school, and campaigning for new policies that support 12 years of free, safe, high-quality education for every girl.
- In India, the Fund is expanding access to free secondary school education through advocacy, mentorship programs and re-enrolment campaigns.
- In Afghanistan, the Fund is recruiting female teachers and working on eliminating gender discrimination.
- In Pakistan, the Fund is fighting for education funding, building schools for girls and training and empowering young women to speak out for their rights.
- In the Syria Region, the Fund is using technology to help refugee girls access classrooms, campaigning to ease enrolment requirements and fighting to reduce child marriage.



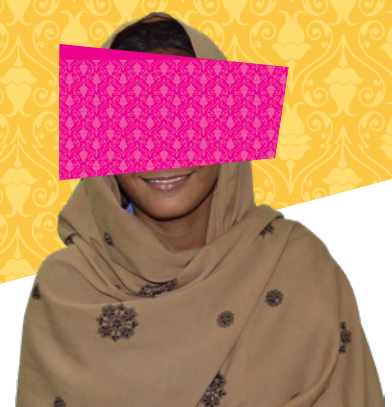
Malala’s newsletter Assembly

Malala’s digital newsletter Assembly publishes original work by girls, for girls from all over the world. Your voice can be heard too. Subscribe now at malala.org!

"There is still a great deal to do in my country Pakistan, where 24 million girls and boys cannot go to school. My dream is for all Pakistani children to receive 12 years of free and safe high-quality education, so they can build a good future for my country," says Malala.

Malala is not alone. Just like her, the girls here are fighting for girls to be able to go to school. And Malala is a role model for them all. It can be dangerous for some of them, which is why their faces are covered.

More courage



Bombs stop school



"Education is so important. It changes our lives. Everyone has the right to go to school. When I dream about the future, I dream that I am a teacher, just like the teachers I have. When there are a lot of bombs going off, I can't go to school. I'm happy when it's calm and I can go back to school. Malala is great. She's a role model for us. Everyone knows what she thinks and how she's fighting."

Mariam, 12

Developing our country

"Everyone has the right to an education, just like I've had. Only when everyone gets an education can our country develop. Not everyone knows this, so we have to tell them and remind them. I talk to others who live in our area, and many of their children have since been able to start school. It's so important to me that everyone gets an education, and I try to encourage those who've started that they must continue and work hard. Education for everyone is our goal, so even if we're scared sometimes and we know that many people are saying bad things about us, we've decided to support education and we'll continue to fight! Malala is like us, and she's a role model for us."

Rainaz, 14



Girls can do anything

"Education is everything. It affects your life, and without education I can't do very much. All the jobs in my country that boys can train for, girls can train for too. If I want, I can be a policewoman, a soldier, a pilot or something else. Boys and girls can have the same jobs.

"Politics is also important. Without politics, we cannot develop our country. Everyone has the right to get involved in politics. I want to as well, and when I am in a position of power, I will work to make sure everyone in our country has an education.

"Sometimes things are unsettled in our area, and then I have to stay home from school. I'm grateful that Malala has been so clear about all girls having the right to go to school. There are lots of parents in our area who keep girls at home. My friends and I talk to the children we meet and encourage them to start school. We talk to their parents too. Sometimes they listen to us and their children get to go to school. When I found out that Malala writes a diary, I got one too and I write in it every day."

Asma, 14

Fighting for others

"Those of us who get to go to school know that we also have a responsibility to others. There are lots of girls where I live who come from poor families, and no one has thought about sending them to school. Sometimes I just need to talk to the girls, but sometimes I have to discuss it with the parents. It's led to many of the girls now attending school. We have lots of problems in our area; the Taliban, bombing and unpleasant boys who shout stupid things at girls who go to school. I've decided that I want an education, which means I need to go to school even when it's difficult. Education is like a light; if it starts shining, it spreads. We want that light to shine throughout this whole area where I live, and across our country.

"Malala is so brave. I agree with what she thinks. I'm glad that I've been able to go to a school where I learned how to fight for others. You can't talk about Malala everywhere; lots of people are against her and the idea of girls having an education. But there are many of us who are fighting as she does."

Sofia, 15

ous girls...



Malala is very strong

"Education has helped me understand more about life. Boys and girls here have different lives. My brothers can play at home and at school. I can only play at school. Malala is very strong and didn't lose the fight. She wants all girls in Pakistan to go to school. She's right."

Amna, 12



Praying for Malala

"Education is important for girls. I have such a good teacher, and I really love my school. Malala is a really good person because she supports education for girls. I pray for her every day, to help her carry on."

Zeenat, 12



We're developing society

"Educated women have a big effect on how a society develops. It's really important. Educated women know they have rights, and they share this knowledge with others. Malala knows that all girls have the right to education."

Warda, 15

The whole country must be educated

"It's important for us girls to get an education. I'm learning to read and write, and lots of other things that I wouldn't know about otherwise."

"Malala wanted an education herself, but she also wants all girls in Pakistan to have an education, and for our whole country to be an educated country. She is very brave and an important role model for us all."

Aisha, 12



...support from boys



Voting for equal rights for girls

"Boys and girls have different lives in Pakistan. I think we should have equal rights. It's not like that at the moment, and it can be very difficult to change things. We need to talk about it and then we'll be able to vote on changing the injustices that exist today. We need to vote for good leaders who work to make sure injustices disappear from our society."

Baber, 12



Start talking about it in school

"Everyone should have the same rights; the right to go to school and the right to play. Parents aren't always that well educated and they have learned from their parents that girls mustn't go out. I think that's wrong. We must show everyone the same respect. It needs to be made an important thing that we talk about at school. They don't do that at the moment."

Nazar, 15



Parents' attitudes need to change

"Girls aren't given the same rights as boys. Parents treat boys and girls differently. Our parents have old-fashioned attitudes and we have to do as we're told. Boys can't do household chores, and girls can't go out when they want and how they want to."

Umer, 15



We need to talk to families

"Boys and girls have the same right to an education; it is their parents' responsibility. Us young people are also responsible. We need to talk to families that are not taking responsibility. We must be role models, so that those who refuse to give their girls rights, particularly the right to an education, feel ashamed. Girls can do everything that boys can."

Ubaid, 13

WHY HAS PHYMEAN BEEN NOMINATED?

Phymean has been nominated for her fight for children living on Cambodia's rubbish tips, and their right to an education.

THE CHALLENGE

In Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh, many poor children live and work on rubbish tips and in slum areas. They don't go to school, and instead risk their lives and health by collecting rubbish in order to survive. Many have been injured, and even killed, when they were run over by rubbish trucks or buried in the mountain of rubbish.

THE WORK

Phymean and her organisation, People's Improvement Organisation (PIO), make sure that vulnerable children, including children affected by HIV/AIDS, get to go to school and have their basic needs met. Over a thousand children are given an education, food, clean water and health care. They are encouraged to dream and to develop their interests.

RESULTS & VISION

Since 2002, more than 5,000 vulnerable children have been given a better life through Phymean and PIO, who see education as a way out of poverty. Today the organisation runs three of its own schools and a children's home, where orphaned and abandoned children can grow up in a safe environment.



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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 5

Phymean Noun

When Phymean was little, those who were in power in Cambodia at the time prohibited her and other children from going to school. When as an adult she meets the children who work on the capital Phnom Penh's rubbish tips, she understands just how they feel. And that they all yearn to be able to start school. So she starts up a school for them.

Phymean's story begins in April 1975, when she is four years old. Soldiers come waving weapons and saying that everyone has to leave the city. "Just for three days," they say, "then you can all go home again".

The roads are so packed with people that Phymean's family can barely get through. The soldiers urge them on,

further and further away. They can hear rifles going off in the distance. Those who try to turn back are shot.

When the family has been walking for many days, they have to stop at a large farm. They are given black clothes and shoes made from car tyres. This is the uniform that the Khmer Rouge want everyone to wear from now on. The

Khmer Rouge is the name of the military group that has taken power in Cambodia.

School banned

Many of the black-clothed soldiers with big weapons are only 10-12 years old. They like Phymean's mum, and when she asks them not to send Phymean and her big sister away to the camp where



PHYMEAN CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 1: No poverty. Goal 2: Zero hunger. Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Goal 4: Quality education. Goal 10: Reduced inequalities. Goal 11: Sustainable communities.





Cambodia's terrible history

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Some 45 years ago, the country was taken over by the Khmer Rouge. Over the subsequent four years that the Khmer Rouge were in power, over 1.8 million people died from torture, execution, illness, hunger and exhaustion.

Phymeane, who is standing next to her mum, is just two years old here in 1973, and the family has not yet been forced to leave their home.

“Yes,” says her mum. “You must get an education. Knowledge is the key to a better life. People can take money and things away from you, but no one can steal your knowledge.”

Every evening, Phymeane holds her mum in her arms. One evening her mum whispers:

“Hold on tight to your dreams, Phymeane. Everything you can learn, you can use.”

Then her mum dies.

Keeps on working

Phymeane is now alone in the world, except for her little niece Malyda. All Phymeane has left are the four walls of the house and a bicycle. Every morning before dawn she fetches water from the garden and carefully fills a water

tank. When it's full, she sells the water as drinking water.

Then Phymeane gets a job as a secretary. After work, she cycles to evening class. She has promised herself and her mum that she will go to school, and she intends to, even though she is so tired she often just wants to go to sleep.

Phymeane struggles on for several years with her education. Then she gets a UN job working on Cambodia's first free elections. She moves to the capital Phnom Penh, works in an office, buys a car and has money in the bank. Life is suddenly easy.

Fight over a chicken bone

One day, Phymeane is eating a grilled chicken for lunch. She throws her chicken bones on a

children live without their parents, they allow them to stay.

Many people are killed by the Khmer Rouge, and one day Phymeane's mum finds out that all her 11 siblings and all their families have been killed.

Phymeane turns six, but she's not allowed to start school. The Khmer Rouge don't allow any schools or books. Phymeane's job is to pump water, and it's hard work.

Two years later, soldiers arrive from neighbouring Vietnam and defeat the Khmer Rouge. The family can return home, and nine-year-old Phymeane is finally able to start school. She wants to read every book in the whole world, and quickly moves up from year 2, to 4, to 7.

Mum falls ill

When Phymeane turns 13, everything changes again when her mum becomes seriously ill.

Phymeane's dad has abandoned the family and she has to work hard to look after her mum. One by one, she sells their possessions. First the motorbike, then the sewing machine, a bicycle and furniture. Eventually there's just the little house and a bicycle left.

“You must go to school,” says her mum.

But Phymeane doesn't want to leave her, not even for school, which she loves.

Stand on your own two feet, girls!

“It's quite common in Cambodia for girls not to go to school because the families think it's unnecessary. The girls will only get married and have a husband, who will be responsible for them. The husband is automatically regarded as the leader. But I think that's wrong! Through education, more people can understand that women can also be leaders of their area or their family.

That's why I teach girls to stand on their own two feet, and to work towards their goals!”, says Phymeane.

Focus on girls

Phymeane and PIO help both boys and girls, but Phymeane knows that girls are particularly vulnerable. It is more common for them to be forced to quit school early and start working alongside their parents. That's why it's mainly girls who get extra support from school, for example, rice every month. Their parents have to sign a contract, pledging to support their daughter in her studies and that she does not have to work in the evenings or at night.



Dreams for the future at Phymean's school

5x
8



Wants to build a big yellow school

"Maths is important, particularly multiplication. When I'm an engineer, I'm going to build a big yellow school for the children."
Sokhgin, 13



Wants to talk to the whole world

"English is important, so I can talk to people all over the world. I want to be able to read English books and write to friends on the computer."
Somaly, 14



The children love going to Phymean's school every morning.



pile of rubbish, and suddenly five children appear. They fight and scratch one another to get to the remains of the chicken. Phymean is shocked. The children are fighting over the chance to eat rubbish.

The children say that they have come from the countryside, because their parents are looking for work. But the only work available is sifting through rubbish at the rubbish tip, which is also their home. They explain how they fight every day just to survive.

"How can I help you?" asks Phymean.

"I just want to go to school," says one of the boys.

When Phymean leaves the children, she can't stop thinking about them. They're struggling without any help, just like she did.

The next day, Phymean goes to Phnom Penh's biggest rubbish tip, which is as high as a mountain. She meets children and parents, sees the canvas sheets under which they sleep, the trucks that stick to their routes regardless of whether or not a child gets in the way. She sees open sores that never heal. The stink gets into everything. It's like hell, thinks Phymean.

Starts a school

Phymean resigns from her job, takes all her money out of the bank and starts work at the rubbish tip. Most of the children desperately want to go to school, but the parents

Phymean together with children in the school canteen, where everyone gets lunch.



It is 2002, and the first time Phymean visits the girls at the rubbish tip.



Clothes for collecting rubbish

Srey Nich's rubbish-collecting clothes. The children who sift through rubbish try to wear clothes that are as protective as possible. Preferably with long sleeves and boots, but these aren't always available. Children who work barefoot or in short sleeves often cut themselves.



Phymean's green school building is located at the site of the old rubbish tip, where the goats now graze.





Wants to paint PIO's history

"I like painting landscapes and animals, especially rabbits. I want to be an artist and paint PIO's history."
Pich, 13



Khmer and computer important

"Our language Khmer is important to me, as I want to work in business. Then I'll need to be good with computers."
Kakada, 11



Wants to fly to another planet

"Computers are the most important thing to learn about. I want to be a pilot and the cockpit is like a big computer, or an astronaut and fly to another planet."
Kim, 12

are hesitant. The children have to help support the family, otherwise they'll starve.

On the first day, 25 children come to Phymean's school. Then more and more start coming. Phymean also gets the first tap connected at the rubbish tip to provide clean water. The people living there also need food and teachers.

Phymean is at the rubbish tip every day. She is a teacher, leader, caretaker, social worker – she is everything to the children. Gradually the school gets bigger. More children and more teachers come, and after a couple of years, Phymean opens a second school.

Never give up!

It's now 17 years since Phymean set up her organisation. There are three schools and one children's home for orphaned or abandoned children. The organisation also helps families and whole communities around the rubbish tip.

"Never give up! That's how I think, and I tell the children at school this too. The children here have a tough life. There are gangs, drugs, and it's very unsafe. But we help them believe in their dreams and fight to achieve them," says Phymean. 🌍



Phymean and PIO want

- To help the children find their dreams. Many of the children on the rubbish tip have no faith in the future.
- To give the children hope. By seeing the children's progress and creating opportunities to reveal their talents, Phymean and the teachers show that the children's situation can change.
- To give the children love they can rely on. Phymean and PIO follow the children for many years.

PIO's work for children:

- Three schools on the old rubbish tip and in the slums of Phnom Penh.
- Education in Khmer and English, with a focus on language and computer skills.
- A children's home for orphaned and abandoned children.
- Support to families, so they can send their children, particularly daughters, to school.
- Clean water for all children at the school, and for children and adults living in the area.
- Vocational training for teenagers such as hairdressing or needlework.
- Access to a nurse, doctor and dentist.

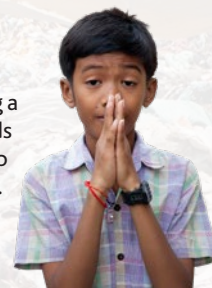


Wants to teach tourists

Hin, 13, has been going to PIO's school for three years. He lives right behind the school with his mum, dad and younger brothers. The family worked on the rubbish tip for many years, but now only the parents work.

"I want to be a guide and teach tourists about Cambodian culture and traditions. I can teach them how to do a traditional greeting."

If you're greeting a monk, your hands should be high up above your nose.



You greet your peers with your hands underneath your chin. You say "chum reap sou", instead of the more formal "sou sdei".



When greeting an adult, you keep your hands beneath your nose.



Dream of school com



Kean is standing in one of the many deep holes in the rubbish mountain. Suddenly, she hears a sound that can mean only one thing: the rubbish is toppling! Kean launches herself upwards and manages to get out of the hole before the avalanche of rubbish that has been started by the tractor fills it up right where she was standing.



Both Kean and her little sister Phally worked on the rubbish tip and dreamed of going to school.

A few years earlier, when Kean is eight years old, she and her little sister Phally leave their home village. They have to say goodbye to their parents and squeeze themselves onto a minibus together with their grandmother. Three hours later, they arrive at their destination: Stung Mean Chey rubbish tip in the capital Phnom Penh, where they will be working from morning till evening every day of the week.

Deadly work

Kean and Phally soon find out what happens to children who don't get out of the way in time when the rubbish avalanches start. The first time Kean experiences it, she's standing just a few metres away from a boy, a bit further along the edge of the rubbish mountain. The tractor driver on top of the mountain doesn't see them, and just carries on shovelling the rubbish over the boy.

Kean and all the others who see the boy disappear quickly

help dig him out. He looks petrified, but the next day he's back working at the rubbish tip as though nothing has happened. Kean knows that he has no choice if he wants to eat.

Another time it takes too long to dig a boy out, and he dies.

Just walking over the rubbish mountain is really dangerous. Several times Kean has fallen down into waist-deep puddles that form in amongst the rubbish. If anyone falls into such a hole and can't touch the bottom, they are never found again.



es true



Hand dance

Traditional Cambodian dances feature lots of hand movements, which the sisters practice.



Kean and Phally eating their lunch at school. They were often hungry when they worked at the tip.



Dance clothes

Kean and Phally love dancing both hip hop and traditional dances.

The woman with the school

Kean and her sister look through the rubbish every day. Sometimes they're so hungry that they eat food that others have thrown away. The clothes they wear also come from the tip. One day, Kean and Phally see a woman walking around the rubbish tip, handing out protective masks and talking to the people who work there.

Kean and Phally listen carefully when the woman starts talking about a school. The children are allowed to go with the woman to the school to have a look. When the woman, Phymean, explains that it's free for the children to go there, Phally feels a flicker of hope that she and her sister might be able to start school.

The sisters tell their grandmother about the school visit.

"You have to carry on collecting rubbish, otherwise we will all starve," says grandma.

Phally cries and keeps on at her grandmother:

"I don't want to work on the rubbish tip my whole life!"

In the end, grandma gives in. The sisters can start school.

Every day, after school Kean and Phally go to collect rubbish. When they get home to their little shack late at night, they do the household chores while grandma sorts the rubbish. Then they study. They're afraid they won't be able to keep up in lessons otherwise.

Hunger strike

Grandma, who has tuberculosis, is weak, and they have to go home to the village. Kean and Phally cry all the way. All they want to do is stay at school.

In their village, they plant rice from early morning until late in the evening. Kean often cries. She thinks about the school and all the lessons she's missing.

Kean and Phally's family don't listen to the girls' arguments, so they come up with a plan: to refuse to eat anything until they're allowed to return to Phnom Penh and school. The sisters' hunger strike lasts for several days, and in the end they get their way.

Wonderful shampoo

Grandma goes with them and makes sure they can move into PIO's children's home.

For the first time they get to wash their hair with shampoo.

"It's wonderful. Now I can finally feel completely clean," says Phally.

At Cambodian New Year in April, the sisters go to visit their family. During the celebrations, some children come up to Kean.

"Can you teach us English? And show us how to write the alphabet?" they ask.

Kean is very proud. She's pleased to be able to share what she's learned. Her parents watch as she shows the children how to write the letters, and they smile proudly at her.

"I'm such a lucky girl now, to have the chance to go to school. If I hadn't come to PIO, I don't know what the future would have been like," says Kean. 🌐

PIO uniform

At school, all students wear a uniform that they get from PIO. Phally wears it every morning. When they worked at the rubbish tip, the only clothes the sisters had were the ones they were wearing. Now they have several changes of clothes, and they can swap them with each other!



Loves school

Phally and her friend Pich read books from the library during the final hour of the school day. Phally loves going to school. When her grandmother took her and Kean back to the village, the sisters started a hunger strike so they could return to school.



Long day with school

Langeng, 15, lives with his sister, mum and 17 relatives in a metal shack at the old rubbish tip. His mum is very ill, but she has to work so the family can afford food. Langeng goes with her in the evenings.

It was worse when Langeng was little. He didn't go to school then, but just collected rubbish all day long.

"I was constantly hungry. I picked up bad fruit that people had thrown out, and drank the last drops left in the bottles I found."

Langeng and his sister saw other children with school uniforms and carrying school bags. They begged and nagged, and in the end, they got to start at PIO.

"Football, school and my friends make me happy. But when I think about my mum being ill, it makes me very sad. So sad that I get angry."



6:00 Time to get up

Langeng and his sister Pich sleep next to each other in the family's bed. The mosquito net protects them from the mosquitoes, who thrive in the humid conditions.

6:30 Clean and tidy

Every Wednesday, Langeng cleans the classroom before lessons begin.



9:30 TV break

At breaktime, Langeng and his friends go to the kiosk next to school to watch the news.



11:00 Fried favourites

All the children have lunch on the school roof. Without that meal, many of them would go hungry. Langeng likes it best when they have fried vegetables.



13:00 Switch on the computers

The exciting computer lesson is held in the library.

and rubbish



14:15 So tired, so tired...

Langeng has a nap almost every lunch break, but sometimes he's so tired that he even nods off in the English lesson in the afternoon. He has only had five hours' sleep because his evening job isn't finished until late at night.



Plastic and rubber shoes
0.07 USD/kg



Straws
0.1 USD/kg



Plastic bottles
0.14 USD/kg

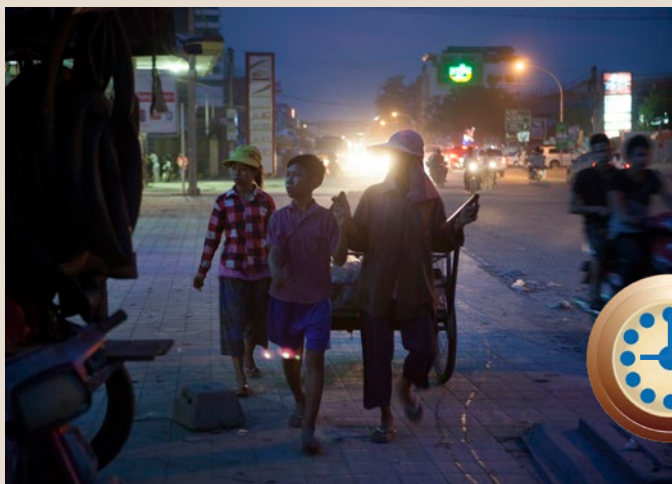


17:15 Evening shift starts

Langeng changes into his rubbish-collecting clothes. Then he heads off to the city centre to collect rubbish.



Cardboard
0.07 USD/kg



21:00 Walking in the dark

Langeng carries on working until midnight.

00:30 Night shower

When they finally get home, Langeng takes a shower. After eating some rice left over from the others' dinner, he goes to bed.



WHY HAS MANUEL BEEN NOMINATED?

Manuel Rodrigues, who sadly passed away in 2020, has been nominated for his fight for blind children and other differently abled children in Guinea-Bissau.

THE CHALLENGE

Differently abled children in Guinea-Bissau are very vulnerable. Often children who are deaf or blind don't get to go to school, and are treated as though they have less worth. Sometimes, particularly in rural areas, they are hidden away or abandoned due to poverty and prejudice.

THE WORK

Manuel and his organisation AGRICE give differently abled children the chance to live life with dignity. They get access to health care and medical treatment, food and a home, and they get to go to school and are given love and a secure environment. Manuel rescues children who have been abandoned or hidden, but also educates their families so it doesn't happen again.

RESULTS & VISION

Manuel and AGRICE have helped thousands of children to have a better life since 1996. Over 300 blind children have received help at Manuel's centre and gone to his pre-school and school specially for the visually impaired. After receiving education and training for a while, most can be reunited with their families and attend a regular school. He fights tirelessly to make sure all differently abled children are granted the same rights as other children.



PAGES
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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 6

Manuel Rodrigues

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

"Many people in Guinea-Bissau see differently abled 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, who is himself blind.

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

"There were nine of us, and my mum and dad loved us. My dad and I were best friends. We walked hand in hand to preschool every day, and we played together a lot."

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 had to stop going to preschool because

my sight was so bad. This made me sad, but my dad was even sadder."

The long journey

Manuel's dad decided to make sure Manuel received the best medical care he could find. But it wasn't in Guinea-Bissau but in Portugal. He started saving as much money as he could from his army pay check. Finally there was enough money to buy a plane ticket that would get Manuel to his uncle in Portugal. But no one else in the family could go with him.

"It wasn't easy for me. I was only four years old, and sad and frightened. But I was lucky.



Manuel with Adelia, who was left in the forest as a baby to die, but rescued by some shepherds.

There was a nun on the plane who helped me, and at the hospital there were two nurses who looked after me.

"After a couple of years at the hospital, they realised that there was nothing they could do to fix my visual impairment. The treatment had come too late."



Home again

At Manuel's centre, Isabel learned Braille and discovered that she can do much more than the people around her expect. She now lives with her family, and every morning her cousin Aua helps her get to school.

School for the blind

Manuel's dad continued to fight for his son. He knew that there were good schools for the blind in Portugal, but there wasn't a single one in Guinea-Bissau.

"My family managed to raise enough money for me to go to a boarding school in Portugal. I learned to count, read and write using Braille."

The years passed, and Manuel began to think that life probably wouldn't be so bad after all. But one day, after six years at the school, he got a life-changing message. His dad had died of a heart attack.

"I was ten years old, and I lost both my dad and the possibility of carrying on at the school because no one could pay my school fees anymore."

When Manuel arrived home, the country was at war. The family took Manuel to safety in neighbouring Guinea. There he was able to attend a school for differently abled children and young people. Six years later, he returned home.

Stopped the president

No one believed Manuel, who was blind, could get a job, but every day he went to the presi-

dential palace and asked to speak to the president. Manuel believed that the president would help him and other differently abled people find work.

"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. The president was curious, and he let me try out the switchboard in the presidential office. He was impressed

and arranged a job for me at the head office of the postal service!"

Starts AGRICE

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

"Many were kept hidden or abandoned. The government still hadn't started up a single school in the country that was adapted for blind students," says Manuel.

So in 1996, Manuel started an organisation called AGRICE (The Guinean



MANUEL CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 1: No poverty. Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Goal 4: Every child's right to a quality education. Goal 10: Reduced inequalities. Goal 11: Differently abled people share the same rights as everyone else.





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 differently abled children who are having a hard time. Manuel is welcomed, and the villagers listen as he explains that differently abled children have the same rights as all other children. He also talks about the causes of blindness and how to protect your eyes from damage. Manuel and AGRICE have 16 field workers who visit villages and communities to look for blind children and other differently abled children. Manuel works with churches, mosques, traditional leaders and local authorities, who contact AGRICE if they know of children who need help.

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 at home with us!"

families when they returned home. Manuel's goal was for the children to return home and participate in society. They learned to wash clothes and dishes, tidy up, cook and much more.

White Cane school

At Manuel's place, the children learned how to take care of themselves and help their

Manuel knew that the children also needed to go to school. He campaigned tirelessly for the government to immediately start a school



his house into the first safe home for blind children in Guinea-Bissau. The first children to move in back in 2000 were brothers Suncar, 11 months, and Mamadi, 6.

Together with his wife Domingas, Manuel took care of the two little boys. Rumours spread of how well the brothers were treated, and more and more blind children started to come.

"At the same time we started our rescue missions. We visited villages to look for blind children or other differently abled children, who we knew

Association for Rehabilitation and Integration of the Blind), so that people who were visually impaired could raise awareness in society and fight for their rights together.

Through AGRICE, Manuel came into contact with many blind children whose lives were difficult. When his mother died, he converted half of

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 that you feel and read using both index fingers. Different letters are formed by different combinations of dots in the square. Braille can also be used to form figures and musical notes. World Braille Day is celebrated on 4 January every year, in memory of Louis Braille's birth in 1809.



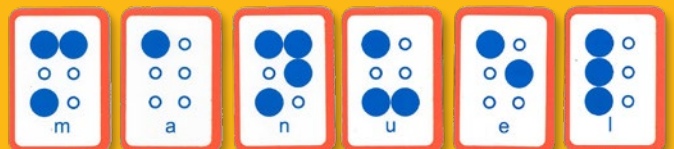
Blind children at Manuel's school learn to read and write for the first time in their lives with the help of Braille.



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.



1.4 MILLION BLIND CHILDREN
 There are 19 million visually impaired children in the world. 1.4 million of these are incurably blind.



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," explains Manuel. 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 in the eyes. 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. The infection gradually leads to blindness. It is often spread by flies that have been in contact with an infected person's eyes. It is preventable and treatable through 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. It is not possible to operate on existing damage, but medical care can prevent further damage and protect the remaining vision.

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

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

adapted to the needs of visually impaired children, with teachers trained in Braille.

"The government had no plans to start a school, but they gave me a bit of land to build on."

Manuel's first school was made from bamboo and palm leaves, and the children sat on the ground with no benches.

"One day, the Canadian ambassador came to see how we worked with our students. As we stood in the classroom, a huge snake came slithering towards the children. After the encounter with the snake, the ambassador decided to give us money so we could start building a safer school for the children!"

20 years' work

It's 20 years now since Manuel started looking after the first blind children. Today, Manuel and AGRICE have a preschool and a school, two rehabilitation centres, classrooms, a dining hall and dormitory, library, music room, gym and craft

workshop. Guinea-Bissau's Department of Education helps Manuel by providing teachers. The schools are open to all children, not just those with a visual impairment.

"It's clear to me that we should all learn together. It's a good way to prevent differently abled children from becoming isolated, and to get people to understand that we are all of equal value."

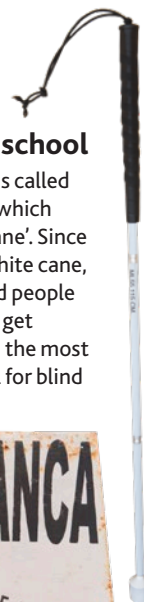
Sometimes Manuel feels exhausted and sad about all the terrible things that happen to children in Guinea-Bissau.

"But then I think about all the opportunities I got in life

thanks to my father. His love for me meant that I got the very best health care and education available. 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." 🌍

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.



Lots of friends

"I'm in year 4 at Manuel's school. I work with Braille and the regular alphabet. Both seeing children and blind children go to my school. The seeing children often help the rest of us and explain what's on the board when the teacher has written something," says Samuel.



Helping each other

"I often carry out errands for Manuel. Sometimes I help him when he goes outside the centre. Then he puts his hand on my shoulder and we walk together," says Samuel.

Noisy football!

The children play football with the ball in a plastic bag or with an old soft drinks bottle, so the blind children can hear where the ball is. Samuel's greatest wish is to become a professional football player.



Loves drawing

"I like drawing, but to be able to draw I have to have the paper very close to my eye," explains Samuel.



Samuel got his sight back!

"I was abandoned by my parents because I was blind. But Manuel came to my village and rescued me. Thanks to him I can see in one eye now!" says Samuel, 12, who lives at Manuel's centre.

Samuel was born into a poor family. His older brother, Solomon, had poor eyesight and was going blind. When his dad realised that Samuel was also going blind, he left the family.

"Mum worked in the fields and left me and my brother with neighbours in the village. Sometimes she was away for several weeks at a time," says Samuel. The neighbours didn't look after the brothers very well. "We were hungry, naked, dirty, and they beat us."

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 set off on a rescue mission to fetch them. Just like all the other children who come to the cen-

tre, Samuel had to have an eye examination. The doctors discovered that he had a cataract in one eye and wanted to operate on him.

"I was eight years old and I'd been blind my whole life, so I didn't know what anything looked like. Suddenly I could see out of one eye, and the first thing I saw was the ceiling fan above my hospital bed. I was terrified!"

Able to see

When Samuel got out of bed and walked down the hospital steps, he was so happy that he ran round and round the hospital garden.

Manuel had worked hard to stay in touch with the brothers' 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 back home to their families where possible. But Samuel isn't convinced.

"After the operation, mum came to visit and I didn't recognise her. It was Manuel who looked after me when I needed it. He comforted me when I was sad. He gave me love," says Samuel. 🌍

School for all children

"Samuel and I are friends and we help each other with difficult assignments in maths. Both blind and seeing children go to our school. I don't really think there's any difference between us. For me, it's obvious that blind children should be able to go to school too. The schools here in Guinea-Bissau are hardly ever adapted to the needs of children with disabilities. 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."

Germindo, 15



Adelia was left to die

"I'll never forget the first time I held tiny newborn Adelia in my arms. She was very weak and covered in dirt, fleas and insect bites. She had been left out in the forest to die, just because she was blind. I was so angry. Adelia is nine years old now and I love her," says Manuel, and he tells Adelia's story:

When Adelia was born and her father discovered that she was blind, he said 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. Adelia was naked and completely unprotected from snakes, the rain and the burning hot sun. "Some shepherds were passing the place where Adelia had been left, and they saw her tiny body. Adelia had shouted and struggled for so long, she had no energy left. The shepherds were convinced that the little girl was dead, when she

suddenly made a slight movement. They carefully carried Adelia to a Catholic mission station nearby."

No police help

"The nuns contacted me, and we took Adelia in. We gave her food and water and took her to hospital so that she got the right medicine. It was like a miracle when she came back to life.

"We try to make sure that those who are guilty of crimes are prosecuted. So I went to the police and reported what had happened to Adelia, and I wanted them to arrest the parents. But absolutely nothing

happened. The legal system wasn't working very well, and what's more, sometimes the police don't take crimes against differently abled children seriously."

Searched everywhere

"I tried to find the parents myself. I walked many miles along tracks between small villages and slept where I could. I finally found Adelia's mother, who turned out to be very young. But before we got the chance to reach some kind of solution, she disappeared without a trace. I have forgiven her and I know that we all make mistakes. But this

illustrates the importance of our work raising awareness that blind children, and other differently abled children, 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!" 🌍

Adelia's wardrobe

"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," says Adelia.

Manuel doesn't let anyone down

"We never send a child back home unless we know they will be well looked after," says Manuel.



Favourite things

"My favourite things are the small pots, bowls and toy cutlery we got for Christmas last year," says Adelia.



"This is how I look when I go to school..."

...and these are my favourite shoes because they're so comfy!"



Adelia's day with

Many of the children at Manuel's centre move back home when they've finished school and their training. But for some children, like Adelia, the centre is their home.

"I feel safe here because it's my home," says Adelia, laughing.



05:00 Good morning!

"Four of us sleep in the same room, and big sister N'guende. We are all blind. First, I make my bed, then I get washed and brush my teeth. I put my school uniform on and N'guende helps me brush my hair," says Adelia.



06:30 Giri-Giri to Manuel's school

"N'guende makes sure we have all our things in our school bags and sees us onto the school bus, which is called the 'giri-giri'. On the bus we sing together," says Adelia.



10:00 Break for breakfast

"I eat my breakfast; bread and juice. The smell of bread is my favourite smell!"

"At break time we play. That's the best thing about school!"

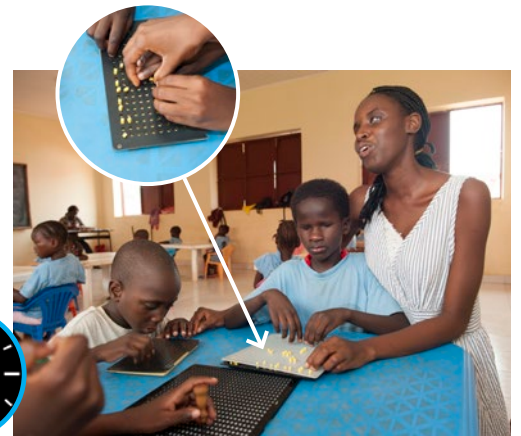
Adelia's classmate, Cadi, agrees:

"We dance, sing and play together, the blind children and those of us who can see because we are all friends!"

08:00 School starts

In Adelia's class there are both blind and seeing children.

"I love school and I want to become a teacher at Manuel's school," says Adelia.



Loves mango!

"Yesterday when papa Manuel came home from a trip he brought some mangos with him. I love the taste of mango!"



12:00 School finishes

"When school is finished, we take the giri-giri home again," says Adelia.



Manuel



This is what Manuel's organisation AGRICE does:

- They carry out rescue missions in villages, look for blind children and other differently abled children and offer them help at Manuel's centre.
- While on rescue missions, they inform the villagers that differently abled children share the same rights as all other children. They also inform people about how to prevent the most common eye diseases, and hand out free medicine.
- They offer visually impaired children protection, a home, food, clothing and security at the centre. At the centre the children also learn life skills to help them look after themselves in the future, and to help their families when they return home.
- They give children medical care and eye operations.
- They run two schools, which are the first in the country that are adapted for visually impaired children, but are open to all.
- They help children move back home again. They prepare the children's families, as well as neighbours and teachers in the villages, before the children return, so they are welcomed in a positive way. If that's not possible, they help the child find a foster family.
- They support children with school fees and school uniforms once they've left Manuel's centre.
- They raise awareness throughout society that differently abled children have the same rights as everyone else.



13:00 Lunch and washing up

"When we get home, we get changed and have lunch. I wash the dishes when it's my turn on the rota."

At Manuel's centre the children learn how to wash dishes, cook, clean and make their beds as part of their training in independent living, and so that they can help their families when they return home.

13:30 Play and siesta

"After lunch, I play with my friends. We are like sibling because we live together. I know what the others look like because I've touched their faces. We play football, dance and sing. Then we have a nap," explains Adelia, here touching Nafi's face to find out how she looks.



18:00 Dinner

"We always get tasty food! My favourite dish is fish with palm oil," says Adelia.

20:00 Evening assembly – Djumbai

"Every evening, we have Djumbai and sing and dance together. Then N'guende always tells us a story, often from the Bible," says Adelia.



17:15 Bathtime

Piloto bit me

"We have a dog here too, called Piloto. He bit me once. He wanted my biscuits! But it's nice to stroke him," explains Adelia.



21:00 Goodnight, Adelia!

"N'guende tucks us in and says goodnight before we go to sleep," says Adelia.



WHY HAS RACHEL BEEN NOMINATED?

Rachel Lloyd has been nominated for her campaign to tackle the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in the USA.

THE CHALLENGE

Every year, tens of thousands of children in the USA, including girls as young as 12, are forced to sell sex. Most of them have grown up in poverty and are non-white. Some have run away from home after being abused, or have come to the USA as refugees.

THE WORK

Rachel and GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services) support 400 girls and young women every year by providing secure accommodation, help in getting an education and a job, counselling, legal support and love. Survivors of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) are trained as leaders to help others. Some 1,500 young women are supported with preventive initiatives, and over 1,300 adults including social workers and police officers are trained about the commercial sexual exploitation of children and girls' rights.

RESULTS & VISION

Since 1998, the lives of thousands of girls have been changed through the movement started by Rachel, in which survivors lead change. Millions of Americans have been reached by campaigns to raise awareness about those affected, and to combat prejudice. Rachel has contributed to the creation of more child-friendly laws and systems, including New York's The Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act, the first law in the USA giving children who have been forced to sell sex the right to protection, instead of punishing them.



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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 7

Rachel Lloyd

Rachel's phone rings one Friday evening, just as she's about to go home. The police have picked up a young girl on the street who appears to have been forced to sell sex. She's refusing to talk to anyone. Maybe Rachel can help?

Rachel waits at the centre for young people, which is where the police take children who are in trouble. After a while, a member of staff arrives with a girl with a ponytail. The girl, Danielle, looks angry.

Rachel explains that she comes from GEMS, an organisation that helps girls in New York who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

"I'm just here to see how we

can support and help you. I'm not from the cops or child welfare. What you tell me will be confidential. I started GEMS because I used to be in the life, too, so I wanted to have a place for girls who'd been through the same thing."

'In the life'

Most girls are usually curious when Rachel tells them that she was also caught up in the sex industry, or 'in the life' as the girls call it here.

"Can I ask how old you are?"

"Eleven."

Rachel is shocked. She's met many 12, 13 and 14-year-olds who've become victims of child commercial sexual exploitation, but never anyone as young as 11.

Danielle tells her she likes Mexican food and the Harry Potter books. That she writes poems and has a boyfriend who is 29 years old. The man Danielle calls her 'boyfriend'



RACHEL CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Goal 4: Quality education. Goal 5: Gender equality. Goal 8: Decent work. Goal 16: A stop to violence and abuse, sexual exploitation of children and trafficking.

Rachel has been fighting for over 20 years for girls and young women who have been exploited by people traffickers in the USA. Today, many survivors of abuse become leaders themselves, helping other victims. The photo shows a group of survivors with Rachel and other members of the GEMS team.



DIFFERENT NAMES!

Several of the people featured in the stories on these pages about Rachel have had their names changed and their ages are not included. This is in order to protect their identities.

Most of the girls that Rachel fights to protect became victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) at the age of 13 or 14. GEMS offers girls and young women a stepping stone to a better life, providing love and practical support.



is really her pimp, who forces her to sell sex.

Rachel and GEMS have helped thousands of girls to a better life, but there are new victims all the time. Even so, a lot has changed, Rachel reminds herself. Just a few years ago, Danielle could have ended up in prison. Now she's entitled to support. GEMS can help Danielle become a survivor, who can then support others in the future.

Rachel recalls her own story.

Rachel's childhood

Rachel grew up in England. Her stepfather gets mean when he drinks. One evening he hits Rachel and drags her up a long flight of stairs by the hair. After that she keeps away from him when he's drunk. Except when he hits her mum. Then she shouts at him to stop. But no one listens. Instead mum starts drinking too.

Rachel doesn't want to stay at home any longer. She hangs around town with her friends and when she's 12, she starts drinking too.

When Robert finally leaves the family, her mum drinks day and night. She often threatens to take her own life. Rachel tries to comfort her. But in the end, she doesn't want to carry on living either. She takes one of the bottles of wine her mum has hidden under the sink and mixes it with all the tablets she can find at home.

Rachel is taken to hospital and survives. A social worker wants her to move in with a foster family, but she refuses. Mum wouldn't be able to cope on her own. In the end,

What kind of children are bought and sold?

Any child can be caught up in commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in the USA, but the majority are non-white children who have grown up in poverty, in particular:

- African-American and Latino children.
- Children who have run away from home and/or are homeless.
- Children who have been taken into care.
- Children who have been victims of abuse.
- Children who drink alcohol or use drugs.
- Children who are differently abled.
- Children from the LGBTQ community.
- Children who come to the USA as refugees or migrants and who do not speak English.



Rachel, 9, in her school uniform.



Rachel, 14, working as a model.

TEXT: CARMILLA FLOYD PHOTOS: JOSEPH RODRIGUES & GEMS



despite everything, Rachel is sent home.

Quits school

Rachel quits school and gets a job at a factory. At 14, she's too young really, but she lies about her age. In the evenings she goes out to bars, drinks and takes drugs.

Rachel dreams of something better, like becoming a lawyer or a journalist. She gets the chance to work as a model for a teen magazine. Then the modelling agent suggests that she pose for

Rachel's job as a nanny made her feel better. Today she says that "they loved me back to life."

The commercial sexual exploitation of children has changed since Rachel's arrival in the USA. Most girls are no longer sold on the street but on the internet.

'sexy' photos, even though it's illegal to take pictures like that of a 14-year-old.

When Rachel is 17, she can't take it at home anymore. She runs away to Germany, and ends up in an area where there are dodgy bars and sex clubs. A red neon sign flashes 'Girls, girls, girls'. Rachel goes down the steps to the dark room.

At the club, Rachel's job is to dance and sit on clients' laps, drunken men who pull at her clothes. In the evenings she spends a long time in the shower, scrubbing herself until it feels like she's going to lose a layer of skin.

Rachel meets a guy in Germany, JP, and she falls in love. JP is nice at first, but he takes all the money she earns to buy drugs. It's not until JP almost kills her that Rachel seeks protection at a church.

Rachel becomes a nanny with an American family in Germany. For a long time, she wakes up every night in a cold sweat, petrified. But the fam-



ily give her plenty of love and she begins to feel better.

Rachel decides to help others and gets involved in the church. One day, she is asked if she'd like to go to the USA and work there, to help women selling sex leave life on the streets. Rachel agrees straight away.

Rachel gives something back During the day she visits shelters and prisons. At night she walks the streets where women sell sex.

"Hi, I'm Rachel... Can I get you a coffee or hot chocolate?"

The girls laugh at Rachel's British accent and teach her American slang, like that the street is called 'the track', and that the girls in the sex trade are 'in the life'. The men who sell them are called 'pimps', the clients 'Johns'. Most of them have been 'in the life' since the age of 13 or 14. Almost all of them grew up poor, with no family support. Some ran away from home,



Need a safe home

In New York, at least 70,000 homeless people live on the streets and in shelters. Some 30,000 of them are children. Most of these children and their families are homeless. Many of the parents work, but they earn too little to afford the city's high rents.

Many girls are drawn into, or find it hard to leave, the life because they have nowhere to go. Girls over 16 can live at GEMS' safe house. Younger girls often live in foster homes managed by the authorities. Rachel and GEMS provide training for both the girls and the staff there, so that the staff understand what the girls need and are entitled to in order to thrive.



Beloved blanket

"I loved the blanket I got the first time I came to the safe house. Then I ran away one time, but I came back. They tried to give me a different blanket, but I wanted mine! It makes me feel safe," says Ginger.



The word 'gem' of course has another meaning in English. For Rachel, all the broken girls she meets on the street are beautiful gems. They just need a little help to shine and discover their true value.



Many stars, like Beyoncé here, support Rachel and the work of GEMS.

lived in foster homes or were kicked out of their homes. Rachel is shocked when she realises that there are girls as young as 12 on the street. She gets angry when they are arrested by the police and given prison sentences.

"You're children!" she says. "You need help, not punishment."

GEMS is born

When Rachel realises that there's no one helping the younger girls, she resigns from her job. She starts her own organisation at her kitchen table, with 30 dollars and a borrowed computer. She calls her organisation GEMS. At first, all Rachel had to offer was love and sanctuary in her

tiny flat in a deprived neighbourhood.

"The girls slept on my sofa, borrowed my clothes and cleaned out my fridge!" Sometimes a pimp came round looking for a girl who'd escaped, and tried to break down the door.

As GEMS began to grow, Rachel opened a drop-in centre with comfy sofas and cheerfully painted walls. She wanted to have a place where everyone could feel safe, with space for everything from counselling, to courses, yoga and bring-and-share parties. She opened safe housing for girls who were particularly vulnerable and had nowhere to go when they left their pimps.

Survivors become leaders

Many of the girls Rachel helped in the beginning have become survivors and leaders who inspire others. GEMS' survivors and Rachel travel around and demand change.

"We meet legislators and politicians, presidents, artists and movie stars. And it's the girls' own stories that get people listening, that make a difference," says Rachel, who herself has given speeches at both the White House and the UN. 🌐

How Rachel & GEMS work

Rachel and GEMS support girls and young women aged between 12–24, who have survived commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in the USA, through:

- Leadership training.
- Counseling, discussion groups, creative activities, sports and health activities.
- Help with and advice about education.
- Secure accommodation for vulnerable girls.
- Guidance to help them cope with independent living.
- Preventive work.
- Legal aid and alternatives to prison sentences.
- Campaigning against CSEC, for girls' rights, justice, child-friendly laws and systems.



Shaquana took control

of her life

Shaquana is 15 when she is found unconscious in a ditch. She wakes up in hospital. A nurse gives her a mirror and she looks at her broken face. The last thing she remembers is sitting in a car, travelling along a dark street.

When Shaquana is little, she doesn't understand why her mum is always angry and beats her.

No one has explained to Shaquana that her mum has a serious mental illness.

At high school, Shaquana is one of the school's top learners. She wants to be her mother's pride and joy, but her mum only seems to be able to see the bad things. When she isn't yelling and hitting her, she cries like a baby and wants comforting. Sometimes Shaquana feels like she just doesn't want to live anymore. But then who would look after mum?

Butterflies

Shaquana starts working in a shop. Instead of going straight home after school like she did before, she walks home in the evenings after work. One evening, a boy calls out to her:

"Hi cutie!"

Shaquana quickly walks past. But soon she runs into him again.

"Hey! Can't we just talk?" The boy calls to her every evening until Shaquana stops.

"You're really pretty!" he says. "How old are you? I'm 17."

"I'm 15," answers Shaquana, although she's actually only 14. They exchange phone numbers and she carries on home with butterflies in her tummy. No one has called her pretty before.

Shaquana and the boy start meeting every day.

"Can't you skip school today? I miss you too much," he says sometimes. No one has missed Shaquana before. She starts bunking off school and the teachers are concerned and disappointed.

Starts putting pressure on

One evening, the boy wants to have sex, but Shaquana says



no. He goes on about it every day and in the end, she gives in. But afterwards, the boy stops talking to her and treats her like air. Shaquana now discovers that he's lied about his age. He's not 17, he's actually 29. "I'm a pimp," he says. "If you want to be with me, you have to work for me."

Things move quickly because the pimp had a plan from the first moment he saw Shaquana. He gives her high-heeled shoes and tiny, tight clothes. He explains that the job means she has to go with other men for money.

"If you love me, you'll do anything for me," he says.

At first, the pimp arranges 'dates' with various men. But

after a while she has to stand on the street with other girls. They call it 'working on the track'. When a car stops, the man behind the wheel sometimes asks how old she is. She says what the pimp has told her to say.

"18."

"No you're not, you look 13," say some. But they still buy her.

Early release

One night, Shaquana is arrested by police. In New York, it's illegal to sell sex. It's also a crime to have sex with someone under the age of 15. It automatically counts rape. But the law doesn't apply to girls like Shaquana. She is sentenced to juvenile detention.

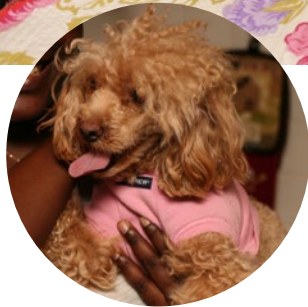
The lad who said he was 17 and wanted

to be Shaquana's boyfriend was

actually 29, twice her age.

He forced her to sell sex to other men.





Shaquana's best friend is her poodle Cherry!

After a few months, Shaquana gets a visit from a young woman called Hailey from the organisation GEMS. Shaquana has six months left to serve, but Hailey explains that she can be released earlier, provided she comes to GEMS and accepts help.

Shaquana gets to know Rachel, and never misses her discussion group. One evening a week, Rachel meets up with the girls, they share stories, cry, laugh and support one another. "You are victims, but you can fight and become survivors, have a good life," says Rachel. Shaquana can hardly believe that Rachel, who seems so strong and professional, has also been 'in the life'. It gives her hope.



Shaquana has given speeches in front of politicians as well as movie stars, and inspired them to campaign against the sex trade. Here she is with Rachel.

Homeless

Shaquana's mum lets her move back home and she starts school again. But soon mum is getting angry with her again.

"Slut! You'll end up back on the streets!"

Shaquana feels broken inside. Maybe she can't be fixed? One evening she comes home late and her mum throws her out.

"Don't ever come back," she yells, slamming the door.

Shaquana only knows one way to survive – find a pimp. Her new pimp has lots of girls living with him. He forces them to sell drugs and sex, locks them in and only lets them out to work.

One rainy evening, the pimp sends Shaquana out onto the street. A few days later, she wakes up broken and bloody in hospital. The last thing she remembers is that a car stopped and she got in. Then everything went black.

When Shaquana was giving her speech on high school graduation day, she ended by sharing ten tips for the future with her classmates:

- Always respect yourself!
- Never look down on anyone.
- When you make it in life, remember the journey you have traveled.
- Know the people around you.
- Never be afraid to admit when you are wrong.
- Live each day as if it were your last.
- Honor the greats before you.
- Never be afraid to ask for help.
- When you fall down know how to get back up.
- Remember that you are the best!



Graduation

Shaquana goes back to GEMS, who help her with housing and school. Three years later and she's standing on stage in a white gown and cap. The principal says:

"And now ... graduating senior and class valedictorian: Shaquana!"

In her speech, Shaquana compares herself with a lotus flower.

"Lotus flowers grow in muddy water and rise above the surface to bloom with remarkable beauty."

Now Shaquana is at university and working at GEMS. She visits shelters, schools, foster homes and juvenile detention centres and tells the girls there about her life, about the commercial sexual exploitation of children and GEMS.

"I want to help others because I don't know where I would be today if it hadn't been for Rachel and GEMS," says Shaquana. "Now it's my turn. I'm living proof to other girls that we can take control of our own lives." 🌍



Safe harbour for young people

When Rachel takes up the fight against New York's unfair laws, she asks the girls who have been affected by them to help her.



Girls from GEMS fighting for child-friendly laws together with Rachel.

Nikki, who is writing her speech, has a large, ragged scar that runs almost the length of her right thigh, from when a pimp stabbed her with a knife. She's been in prison alongside adults several times since the age of 13.

Tomorrow, Rachel, Nikki and a few other girls will travel to Albany, which is the political capital of the state of New York. That's where laws are written and approved. It's the first time ever that young survivors of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) will get their voices heard by those with power, decision-makers.

GEMS and the girls are demanding that American children be granted the same protection as children who have been brought to the USA from other countries and sexually exploited. They want them to be entitled to help and support instead of being convicted and given tough punishments.

Once the girls have finished their speeches, there is absolute silence. Lots of people are crying. Shaquana ends by

asking them to change the law, for the sake of the children. An older man dries his tears and says:

"You are all to be commended. I promise you that I will do whatever I have to do to ensure this bill passes." It took four and half years to get the new law finally approved in New York in 2010. It's called

'The Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act', and was the first of its kind in the whole of the USA.



Grateful for the men in my life

"It's essential that boys and men are involved in the campaign to tackle the commercial sexual exploitation of children and for girls' rights," says Rachel. "We've launched the 'Male Allies' campaign, which invites everyone to stand by our side."

"When I was growing up I was always hanging with boys. I didn't really trust girls. Then I started developing and boys turned into men, who were interested in me just for sex. Then came the life, where I was sold by a man and bought by men... When I got out of the life, I felt like I could never trust another man ... I expected them all to be the same, but over time I began to meet men who

were more like brothers and friends to me... I began to see men as humans, all different, with different experiences, instead of just these nasty, emotionless, sex-driven robots. It took time though, but I'm grateful for some of the men in my life, and I'm grateful for my friendships with women too."

Farah

WHY HAS ASHOK BEEN NOMINATED?

Ashok Dyalchand has been nominated for his campaigning against child marriage and fight for girls' rights in India.

THE CHALLENGE

Every day, 15,600 girls are subjected to child marriage in India. Girls are forced to quit school and they become slaves in their husband's home. They risk death if they fall pregnant, as their bodies are not ready to give birth to children.

THE WORK

To raise the status of girls and save their lives and to put an end to child marriage, Ashok and his organisation IHMP started Girls Clubs to give girls knowledge and self-confidence and enable them to support one another in convincing their parents not to force them into marriage, but instead allow them to finish school. In Ashok's Boys Clubs, 5,000 boys and young men have learned about child marriage, girls' rights and gender equality.

RESULTS & VISION

Since 1975, some 50,000 girls in 500 villages have learned about their rights and received Life Skills Education. The average age of a girl being married off in the area has risen from 14 to 17. Their age at the birth of their first child has risen to 18 on average, which means fewer young mums and babies are dying during birth. The goal is freedom for all girls and a society free from sex discrimination and inequality.



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CHILD RIGHTS HERO 8

Ashok Dyalchand

"A girl is discriminated against and oppressed from the moment she is in her mother's womb because many parents in India want an abortion if the baby is a girl, even though it's illegal. The worst violation is being forced into child marriage. My job is to put a stop to it," says Ashok, who has been fighting for girls' rights for 45 years.

I grew up in a lovely house and went to the best school in the city. I decided to follow in my mother's footsteps and was accepted onto India's top medicine course. I wanted to be a successful eye specialist, to work at a nice hospital in a big city and earn good money," says Ashok.

While he was doing practical experience, Ashok trav-

elled around with a health-care team to the mountain villages. They carried out eye operations on people who were poor and who would not otherwise have been able to access help.

"I had grown up in luxury and I'd never even been to an Indian village before. I didn't do it because I was a good person. I was planning to

return to the city and my privileged life as soon as possible. But I knew that I'd get plenty of experience in a short space of time, as we were doing 200 operations a week."

Encountering poverty
Ashok was now surrounded by people living in extreme poverty who were hungry,



ASHOK CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS FULFILLING THE GLOBAL GOALS, INCLUDING:

Goal 4: Quality education, for girls too. Goal 5: Gender equality. A stop to child marriage and all forms of harmful traditions, which also contributes towards achieving several goals, including: Goal 1: No poverty, Goal 2: Zero hunger, and Goal 10: Reduced inequalities.

This is the motorbike Ashok used to travel around 45 years ago to talk to people in the villages and find out what they really needed. He was the only doctor in an area with 78 villages.



sick, and who hadn't had any kind of education.

One day, Ashok examined a poor little Tibetan refugee girl. He saw that she had an eye disease that could be cured if she got the right treatment quickly. Otherwise she would go blind. Ashok placed her in one of the hospital beds. But his boss got angry and threw the girl out because the beds were only for patients who were to be operated on.

"When I saw the girl later at the market; she was being supported by her mother. I was devastated when I realised that she had already gone blind. I went and found my manager and shouted: 'You've made a little girl blind! I'm not staying at your bloody hospital for another minute.'

"I never returned. I knew that I wouldn't be able to fulfil

my plan to become a well-paid eye doctor at a nice hospital. That little girl had changed me forever."

Women dying

Ashok decided to offer medical treatment to people living in poverty.

"I travelled around on a motorbike to talk to people and find out what they really needed. I was out every day because I was the only doctor in an area with 78 villages."

Dangerous life for girls in India

- 240,000 girls under the age of five die every year because of discrimination, due to getting less food, medical treatment and care than boys.
- More than 3.7 million girls don't go to school. 200 million women are illiterate.
- 11–16 million female fetuses may have been aborted between 1990 and 2018.



Ashok soon realised that the villagers considered the biggest problem to be the number of pregnant women dying in childbirth.

"The roads to the hospital were bad and transportation was by oxcart. During my first week, two young girls and their unborn babies died because they hadn't got to the hospital in time.

"We realised that many of the problems that young pregnant women had were down to the very fact that they were young. More than 8 in 10 girls in the villages married before they reached the age of 18, with most of them being just 14. The girls were getting pregnant before their bodies were ready to give birth because they were still children themselves. I was forced to put an end to child marriage in order to save lives, but also because the girls lost their own childhoods and had their rights violated."

Girls treated worse

Ashok realised that girls were being treated worse long before the marriage itself.

"From very early on in life,

boys were taken better care of than girls. Sons got more breast milk, food, vaccinations and other health care than daughters. Girls were often undernourished and if they fell ill, they were taken later, or not at all, to see the doctor."

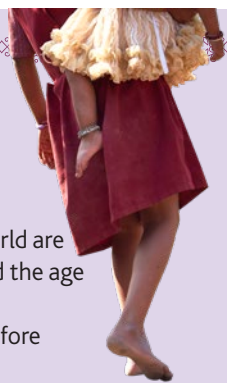
While the boys went to school and spent time with their friends, Ashok saw that the girls in the villages were at home, doing all the household chores.

In 1985, Ashok and his seven colleagues started the organisation IHMP (Institute of Health Management Pachod), a centre that would work on preventive maternity care and health care, and fight against child marriage and in defence of girls' rights.

"Nothing violates a girl's rights more than subjecting her to child marriage. She is forced to quit school to instead become a slave to her husband, give birth to his children and do all the household chores. She is robbed of her family, her friends, her freedom and her dreams. I wondered whether this was what families really wanted for

12 million child brides

- Every year, 12 million girls around the world are forced to marry before they have reached the age of 18. That's 23 every minute.
- 1 in 5 girls in the world are married off before the age of 18.
- Every day, 15,600 girls are married off in India, despite the fact that child marriage is illegal.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibits child marriage, but 93 countries allow girls to be married off before they reach the age of 18.
- One of the UN's Global Goals for 2030 is to put an end to all child marriages.



We are members of Ashok's clubs!



Ajay, 17



Anjali, 14



Akosh, 17



Anjali, 14



Akosh, 16



Anyum, 14



Akosh, 17



Anand, 17



Girls who have completed the Life Skills Education Class and continued to attend the Girls Clubs have managed to stop child marriage after child marriage and finish school. They have succeeded in convincing their parents to stop planned child marriages.

their daughters. And besides, child marriage is actually against the law in India,” explains Ashok.

Following discussions with thousands of villagers, Ashok realised that most of the families didn’t want to marry off

their daughters as children, but old traditions, group pressure and poverty left them feeling they had no choice.

Life Skills Education for girls
The villagers and Ashok set up clubs just for girls, where they

could empower one another and learn important things. Together they produced a textbook on Life Skills Education that would help the girls cope better with life. The subjects were chosen based on what the villagers themselves

thought was important for their daughters to learn. It covered everything from girls’ rights, menstruation and health and how to report an assault, to how banks work.

“We had to think carefully about how to go about things in a way that would have the approval of the villagers because girls hardly ever spent time away from the home or school. It was important to find a safe way and a safe place for the girls to meet and learn. The villagers themselves suggested places like the village hall, a temple or a classroom after school. Since the villagers placed great trust in the female state health workers, who are in every Indian village, I felt they would be the perfect teachers for the girls. So we trained them in how to teach Life Skills Education.”

Each club was made up of 25 unmarried girls aged 11–19, who met twice a week.

“The girls’ self-confidence grew as they gained more knowledge and the opportunity to talk to one another in a place that was just for them.

On our way to the Girls Club

50,000 girls have been reached by Ashok and the work of his organisation. Half of them are unmarried girls in 500 villages who have completed the Life Skills Education Class and who now belong to a Girls Club.



Ashawini, 14



Bhimrau, 17



Ashawini, 13



Chetan, 16



Bhagyshree, 14



Koran, 15



Gangasagar, 12



Ramday, 16



Kaveri, 13



Ravi, 16



Baisheli and Arati's big brother is in one of Ashok's Boys Clubs. It's meant he has started helping out at home, so his sisters have time to play and do their homework.

And where their opinions mattered. They shared what they learned about girls' rights with parents and neighbours."

Brave girls

Ashok and IHMP started Girls Clubs in village after village, and before long, things started to change with the custom of child marriage in the villages.

"Girls who had completed the Life Skills Education Class and who continued to attend the Girls Clubs managed to stop marriage after marriage and finish school. The girls had gained knowledge and courage. They had learned to speak up and use good arguments, which helped them convince their parents to stop

planned child marriages," says Ashok.

Although the work was going well, Ashok was still concerned that things weren't moving fast enough. Many girls were still being forced to marry, and many were dying in childbirth. "We started working with newly married couples where the girl was a child, so under the age of 18. We explained to her, her husband and the whole village about all the dangers involved in the girl getting pregnant, and tried to encourage them to delay the first pregnancy for as long as possible."

So what about the boys?

Sometimes teenage boys in the villages threw stones and shouted: "You're teaching the

girls to stand on our heads! Next time you come, we'll stone you!"

Ashok realised that the boys felt left out and that it was a big mistake.

"Obviously the boys had to understand and be involved if we were to stop child marriage. It is after all men who are marrying girls who are too young, and who beat girls and women."

Ashok and IHMP started setting up Boys Clubs. The boys get together once a month and learn about girls' rights, child marriage and gender equality.

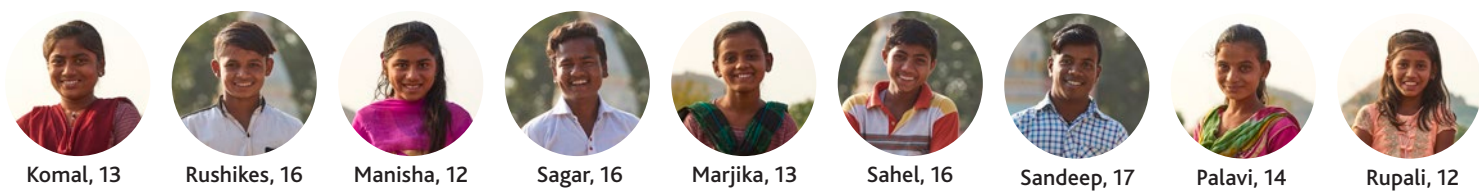
Major progress

Some 50,000 girls have been reached by Ashok's work. Half of them are unmarried girls in

500 villages who have completed the Life Skills Education Class and who now belong to a Girls Club. 5,000 unmarried boys and young men have so far been reached via the Boys Clubs.

The average age of a girl giving birth to her first child has risen to 18 in the villages where IHMP works. Fewer mums and babies are dying in childbirth.

"When we started our work, the average age of a girl when she got married here was 14. Now it's 17. It's better than it was, but we won't be satisfied until everyone who marries is at least 18 years old," says Ashok . 🌐



Komal, 13

Rushikes, 16

Manisha, 12

Sagar, 16

Marjika, 13

Sahel, 16

Sandeep, 17

Palavi, 14

Rupali, 12

How Ashok and IHMP work

- Starting Girls Clubs for unmarried girls, who learn about their rights and receive Life Skills Education.
- Starting Boys Clubs for unmarried boys, who learn about child marriage, girls' rights and gender equality.
- Educating newly married couples, where the bride is under 18, about girls' rights and the importance of delaying the first pregnancy for as long as possible.
- Educating parents, police, village councils and social workers about girls' rights and gender equality.



Sagar helps with fetching water and washing clothes, which means his sisters Baisheli, 13, and Arati, 12, also have time to do their homework, meet up with friends and play.

Boys must respect girls!

Sagar, 15, is one of the many boys reached by Ashok's message that girls and boys have the same value.

"The Boys Club meets once a month. It's important that we talk about these things because girls have it much harder than boys here.

"At the club, we learn that it's illegal to force a girl who is under 18 to marry, but that some families do it anyway. If a girl is married off as a child, she has to quit school and look after her husband instead. It shouldn't be like that. If you want to achieve your dreams, you have to go to school first. And also, a

young girl isn't ready to have children. Both the girl and the newborn baby can die during the birth."

A real man

"It used to be that a 'real man' was a big, strong guy who beat his wife. He was the woman's 'boss' and she had to obey him and do whatever he commanded. In Ashok's Boys Club, we learn that a real man respects girls and women, treats them well and sees women as equals.

"A good man gives his sons and daughters the same amount of attention and chances in life. Basically, he's a good person.

"I want to be such a man when I'm an adult, but I'm trying to be like that already. At home I fetch water and wash clothes. I want to help, so my mum and sisters don't have to do everything." 🌍

Sagar's list of how boys abuse girls' rights

- Men force girls and women to do all the work in the home.
- Boys harass girls on their way to school, say stupid things and force them to look at porn on mobile phones.
- Men force their daughters and sisters into child marriages, which means they have to quit school.
- Girls are harassed and abused by their dads and then by their husbands.
- Boys subject girls to rape and other sexual violence.



Boys Club meeting

The boys get together once a month and learn about girls' rights, child marriage and gender equality.



Ashok is a role model

"Ashok is a man who treats girls and women with respect, like fellow human beings. He is an important role model and I want to be like him," says Sagar.

Salia's hunger strike against

"My life would have turned out completely differently without Ashok's Girls Club. I would have been married, forced to quit school and I'd probably already be a mum. My life would have been over," says Salia, 15, gravely.

When I was 13, I was sitting by the fire with my mum, chatting and helping with the cooking when a woman who was close to our family came to visit. Suddenly I heard the woman say:

'I want you to give me your daughter Salia as a wife for my son.'

"I was shocked and started crying. I really didn't want to get married. I wanted to go to school, which I loved. I knew her son was an adult man. It felt surreal."

We put up a fight

"I was a member of one of Ashok's Girls Clubs, and I'd learned a lot about how bad child marriage is. But most of all, I knew that child marriage was illegal.

"I was worried and angry. It felt so strange that my family were sitting and discussing marrying me off. I cried, and the thoughts were buzzing around my head.

"I asked my friends Rojina and Saima for help. They were also in the Girls Club. Together we decided to put up a fight.

"Rojina came home with me after school and told my parents about a girl who had been forced into an arranged child marriage. The girl had been so distressed that she took her own life by drowning herself in the village well.

"My mum got worried when she heard this and talked to my dad."

Hunger strike

"While we taught my mum, dad and the rest of the family about child marriage and girls' rights, I began a

hunger strike. I said:

'I'm not going to eat anything until you call off this wedding. I want to go to school! I refuse to get married!'

"Finally, my whole family realised that I was serious and they cancelled the wedding. I was so happy and I felt free! But the woman and her family were very angry and are still not speaking to us.

"It's thanks to Ashok's Girls Club that I got the knowledge, support and courage to dare to talk to my family and fight against child marriage."



Three generations

Both Salia's mum Sajida and her grandma Jeitun married when they were 12 years old.

"When I was young, girls didn't go to school. I think it's really good that Salia hasn't married yet, and that she'll get to finish school and have a good future," says grandma.



On the blackboard that Salia, Rojina and Saima are holding up, it says:
Learning objectives: What is child marriage? What are the disadvantages of child marriage? What is the legal age of marriage for a boy and a girl?

child marriage

Our Girls Club

"I'm now leading a Girls Club of my own twice a week together with Rojina and Saima. There are twenty of us who meet every Wednesday and Saturday, and I love it! The meetings last two hours. We spend time together and have fun, but we mainly talk about girls' rights.

"Girls suffer many rights violations here. Girls do all the household chores. Sometimes the boys help their dads with farming, but often they don't do anything other than hang

out with their mates. It's not right!

"Now that there are a lot of us, people are starting to listen! We bring both adults and children together at village meetings and we tell them about girls' rights.

"When we last had a demonstration march through the village, there were just forty of us girls when we started, but more joined along the way and by the end of it there were loads of us! We held placards and shouted that child marriage had to stop, and that

Welcome!

"Today we're going to talk about child marriage and girls' rights," says Salia, and welcomes all the girls to the club.



Proud peer leader for girls' rights

"When my girlfriends in the village and I had completed the Life Skills Education Class that Ashok's organisation runs, the other girls chose me to be leader of our Girls Club. I was really happy and proud!"

girls' rights must be respected. We know that what we're doing is right!" 🌍



Education for a better life

"It's really important for girls to get an education! If a girl who has little or no education is forced to marry when she's 12 or 13 years old, it will be easy for an adult man to treat her like a piece of property," explains Salia.



Round the globe for the Global Goals!

The countries of the world have agreed to achieve three extraordinary things by the year 2030: end extreme poverty, reduce inequalities and injustice and stop climate change. In order to achieve this, the countries have set up 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. All the goals are important and interlinked.

The governments of each country are the main responsible for making the goals and for making changes that help achieve the goals. But if the world is to have any chance of achieving them, then everyone, including you, has to be aware of the goals and get involved and fight for change! That means both adults and children. Even small actions can make a big difference.

You can find out about the Global Goals and share your knowledge through the WCP Program. In The Globe you will meet Child Rights Heroes and many children who are fighting for a better world. They are helping to achieve many of the Global Goals, for example:

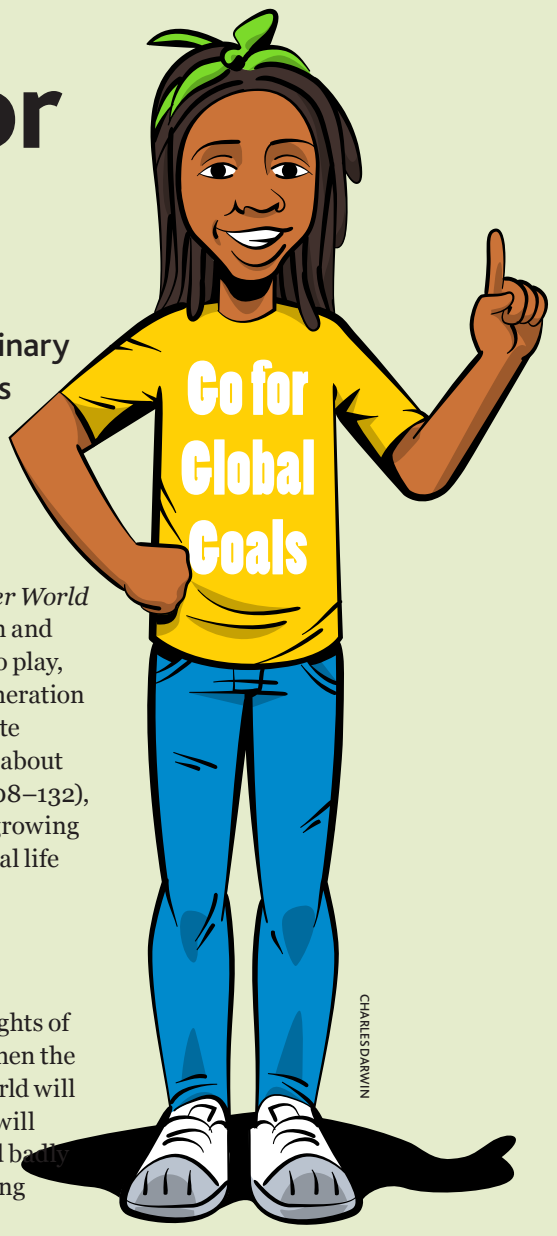
- Goal 5 – gender equality and equal rights for girls
- Goal 10 – reduced inequalities
- Goal 16 – justice and peaceful societies.

The *Round the Globe Run for a Better World* strengthens also Goal 3 (good health and well-being) and all children’s right to play, sport and leisure time. No Litter Generation is about stopping littering and climate change (Goal 13). And in the section about Limpopo in southern Africa (page 108–132), you’ll get to know children who are growing up in a place where nature and animal life are under threat (Goal 15).

The rights of the child

The Global Goals are linked to the rights of the child. If the goals are achieved, then the situation for children around the world will improve. If they are not achieved, it will mean that children are being treated badly and that children’s rights are not being respected. That must not happen!

Here are some examples of how the goals are linked to your rights and the rights of other children.



CHARLES DARWIN

1 NO POVERTY

NO POVERTY
No child should grow up in poverty. No child should be treated differently or not be allowed the same opportunities as other children because of how much money they or their family have.

2 ZERO HUNGER

ZERO HUNGER
No child should have to go hungry or be undernourished. All children should have access to nutritious and safe food.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
All children should have the chance to be healthy, receive good health care and medical treatment and be vaccinated. Abuse of alcohol/drugs must be reduced, as well as road accidents and air pollution.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

QUALITY EDUCATION
All children should receive an education and all children should have the opportunity to learn to read and write. Primary and secondary schooling should be free. No child should be discriminated against in school.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

GENDER EQUALITY
Girls and boys should have equal rights and opportunities in all respects. No girl should be discriminated against. Child marriage and violence against girls, such as female genital mutilation and sexual assault, must be stopped.



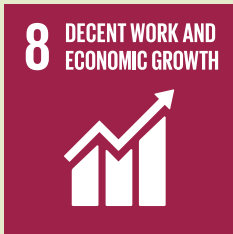
CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

All children should have access to clean water and toilets and be able to attend to their personal hygiene. Separate toilets for girls are important in many countries for their safety and security.



AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

All children should have access to safe and sustainable energy that makes their lives easier, without ruining the environment.



DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

No child should be subjected to child labour or human trafficking. This includes not using children as soldiers. Parents should have good working conditions so they can look after their children.



SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Industries, roads and other infrastructure should be built in a way that means they are not dangerous or harmful to children. All children should have access to information and communication technology that improves their lives.



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

All children should have equal opportunities regardless of background, gender, belief, sexual identity or orientation, disability or the fact that they have been forced to leave their home.



SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

All children should have good living conditions close to play areas and green spaces, with effective public transport links. Growing big cities should be built in an environmentally sustainable way while preserving culture and traditions.



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Children should be taught how to live in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way through, for example, sustainable consumption, recycling and reusing.



CLIMATE ACTION

Children should learn how to combat climate change, and be able to demand that adults, e.g. decision-makers, do the same.



LIFE BELOW WATER

Children should learn how littering, overfishing and emissions can affect seas, lakes, rivers and everything that lives there.



LIFE ON LAND

Children should have knowledge of how to protect forests and land, mountains, animals and plants, and understand why we should not waste nature's resources.



PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

No child should be subjected to violence, assault or exploitation. All children should be able to grow up in peaceful communities where everyone is treated justly, for example, by authorities, the police and courts.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Countries must work together more, support and learn from one another in order to create a better world for everyone.



The No Litter Generation

Rubbish can be found almost everywhere on Earth – on land, in lakes and in oceans. But you and other children and young people around the world can make a difference. Through the No Litter Generation, you can stand up for every child's right to a clean and healthy environment, and fight climate change.

For the majority of human history, litter has not been a big problem. Most of it was organic, food and kitchen waste, which decomposed and went back into the earth.

The problems began as cities grew in size and we gained practical new materials such as plastic. It was handy to be able to store food and other stuff in secure containers. However, this also generated much more waste that doesn't break down by itself.

Plastic doesn't go away

It can take hundreds, or even thousands, of years for plastic waste to break down into smaller pieces. It can travel long distances on the wind or in rivers and rainwater. 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in our oceans every year. Even really tiny bits of plastic (microplastics) can cause harm. Microplastics can be eaten by small organisms like animal plankton and clams. When these organisms are then eaten by larger animals, the plastic carries on up the food chain. In the end, the plastic may end up in the fish you eat for dinner.

Litter costs money

It's hard to work out how much littering costs all around the world. Many countries invest lots of resources in cleaning and picking up litter, but it's cheaper to deal with the litter properly right from the start.

Waste that can be recycled or burned should be placed in special rubbish tips, where it does as little damage to the environment as possible. But many people are careless and throw things away in the wrong place. Materials that should be recycled end up with rubbish that will be burned, and a lot ends up as litter on the ground. This is a waste of the Earth's resource because so many things could be used several times over.

When waste is thrown away thoughtlessly, it can cause harm to both animals and people. For example, diseases are spread through faecal matter and needles. A lot of waste also contains hazardous substances that should not seep out into nature.

Wealth means more waste

Rich countries create the most waste and rubbish, especially in cities. But sometimes it can look as if poor countries have more rubbish because they often lack good systems for collecting and recycling waste. As a result, many people are forced to throw rubbish on the streets or open rubbish tips. A lot of rubbish and waste can blow away and end up in lakes and oceans.

On the other hand, rich countries can afford to take care of their waste. That's why it isn't seen as much on the streets. Sometimes some of the most dangerous waste, like electronic waste and chemicals, is even sent to poor countries.



Litter is stuff that ends up on the ground or in lakes and seas, and that shouldn't be there, such as glass bottles, plastic bags, tins, cigarette butts or sweet wrappers.

Working for change
It is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that people everywhere, especially children, get to live in a safe and healthy environment. Countries must work together to solve these problems and to fight climate change. Taking care of waste, recycling and not littering will help contribute to achieving the UN Global Goals by 2030 and solve the climate crisis.



Countries must make it easy to do the right thing, for example, by putting out more rubbish bins with lids, so the waste doesn't blow away, and improving recycling systems.

In the whole world, around 4,500 billion cigarette butts are dropped on the ground every year! If you line up all these cigarette butts, the line would be 90,000,000 kilometres long. That's as far as travelling to and from the moon 117 times. It takes about three years for a cigarette butt to break down into such tiny pieces that it can't be seen. But even tiny pieces can do damage.

A number of countries have banned or increased the price of plastic bags. Rwanda in Africa was the first country in the world to ban plastic bags.

Producers – the companies that make plastic packaging must be encouraged to develop smarter packaging that doesn't end up as litter.

A stranded whale in Norway had 30 plastic bags in its stomach. 99 percent of all sea-birds will have eaten plastic by the year 2050 if this trend continues.

NO LITTER
generation

Best and worst thing about waste

The best thing would be if there wasn't any waste in the first place. Maybe we could use less packaging?

- Any waste that is still produced should ideally be reused or recycled. Then our stuff and materials could be useful again and it would help save the Earth's resources.
- If that's not possible, the waste should be incinerated or taken to a rubbish tip. But we need to do it properly, so we don't contaminate the air, ground or water.
- The worst thing is if waste ends up as litter on the ground or in rivers, lakes and seas.



On No Litter Day, 14 May 2021, kids everywhere will show that they belong to the No Litter Generation. Here's what to do:

- Pick up litter and make things look nice.
- Spread information to everyone where you live about children's right to a clean and healthy environment, and about climate change.
- Weigh the litter and report the total weight to WCP!
- Make sure that all collected rubbish is recycled or goes where it will be stored safely



India



"It's our responsibility to protect Mother Nature."
Kunsang, 14, Saraswati Vidhya Daan School, Darjeeling, India

Nepal



Children from Teresa Academy, Kathmandu

No Litter Day



Scotland

The children at Banchory-Devenick School in Scotland were surprised at how much litter they found in a small area.



Philippines

"We have to have clean water on Earth. Without water, there's no life!"
Sheena, Negros School, Dumaguete, Philippines



South Africa

Premiere Meisieskool Oranje School in Bloemfontein

Senegal



Uganda



Brazil





Burma/
Myanmar



Plaw Khee School



DR
Congo

"Today I realised that we children have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment. We have tidied up and said to our parents that they must help to keep the area as nice as we have made it today."
Mumbere, 13, Saint-Simon School in Goma, DR Congo



Burkina
Faso

Primaire Privée Silmiyiri School

around the world



Pakistan



Sierra
Leone



Weighing at Western
Hall School

Nigeria



Ghana

NOTE!
Be careful so that the rubbish does not make you sick! Wear gloves and a mask and get help from an adult if you find something sharp or dangerous in some other way.



Guinea

In Guinea, students spread information about the climate crisis during No Litter Day.



Sweden



Togo



How many Earths do you need?

All people need food and water, a roof over their heads, and sometimes, heat to survive. We all share the Earth's resources, but some people use much more than others. Globally we're eating, travelling and consuming as though we had 1.7 Earths!

Every human affects the planet through how they live. For example, this includes what we eat, what things we buy and how we travel. How much impact a country or person has is often simply called our ecological footprint. Along with countries like Kuwait and the USA, Sweden has the largest ecological footprint per person in the world.

What is the footprint?

An ecological footprint refers to the "imprint" that every person in nature makes on the surface of the Earth. The more resources we use, the more we affect the environment.

The size of your footprint is connected to the area used to produce what you use, from food to gadgets, as well as the

area required to take care of your waste. Based on how much land and resources exist on the planet, you can calculate how many globes we would need if everyone lived like you.

Bigger handprints

If you do good things for the environment, like recycle more and conserve water, your ecological handprint increases. It helps if the things you buy and the energy you use are produced in a way that affects nature as little as possible. For example, if the car you travel in runs on electricity instead of fossil fuel. Locally grown food often has a smaller footprint than eating things grown on the other side of the world that are transported to your country.

Create more waste

In wealthy countries, the amount of waste per person has multiplied many times over in the past 20 years, and this has to change. Waste includes carbon dioxide, the gas released when we use oil, petrol and carbon, or burn rubbish and wood. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that contributes strongly to climate change, which in turn causes droughts, floods, and acidification of the oceans.

Different countries face different challenges. In Sweden, carbon dioxide emissions account for more than half of the footprint. A lot depends on our consumption of food and gadgets.

Big, rich footprints

Rich countries have the biggest ecological footprint, while poor ones have much smaller footprints. Sometimes there are big differences between different people in the same country. A child in the Amazon rainforest uses almost no resources at all, while a rich rancher could have their own aeroplane,

several cars, air conditioning and a pool. That creates a gigantic footprint.

What has to happen now?

Rich places must reduce production and consumption in order to reduce their footprints. Meanwhile, on the other hand, many poor people need to increase their footprint in order to have dignified lives with electricity, heat, food and clean water. The challenge is to find a more environmentally friendly path to a better life than the environmentally hazardous alternatives that rich countries have been using for a long time.

If everyone lived like the average inhabitant of the world, we would need 1.7 Earths. And if everyone lived like they do in...



... North America = 5 Earths



... Africa = 0.8 Earths



... South America = 1.8 Earths



... Europe = 2.8 Earths



... Asia = 0.7 Earths

Small, everyday actions can make a big difference. Remember to:

- Not throw rubbish on the ground.
- Not buy unnecessary things.
- Repair, reuse and recycle.
- Use renewable energy.

What else can you do?



NAINA HELEN W. JÄMA/AFTONBLADET/TT



MINAS PANAGIOTAKIS/TT

Children of the world strike for the climate with Greta

Greta, age 18, is living proof that kids can make a big difference. In September 2018, she stood alone before the parliamentary building in Sweden every Friday, on strike from school for the climate. She demanded that adults listen to the science and start to

take serious action to stop climate change, which threatens people, animals and nature.

Greta's protest quickly spread throughout the world via social media. Children in other countries were inspired by Greta and also began to strike on Fridays. Her battle

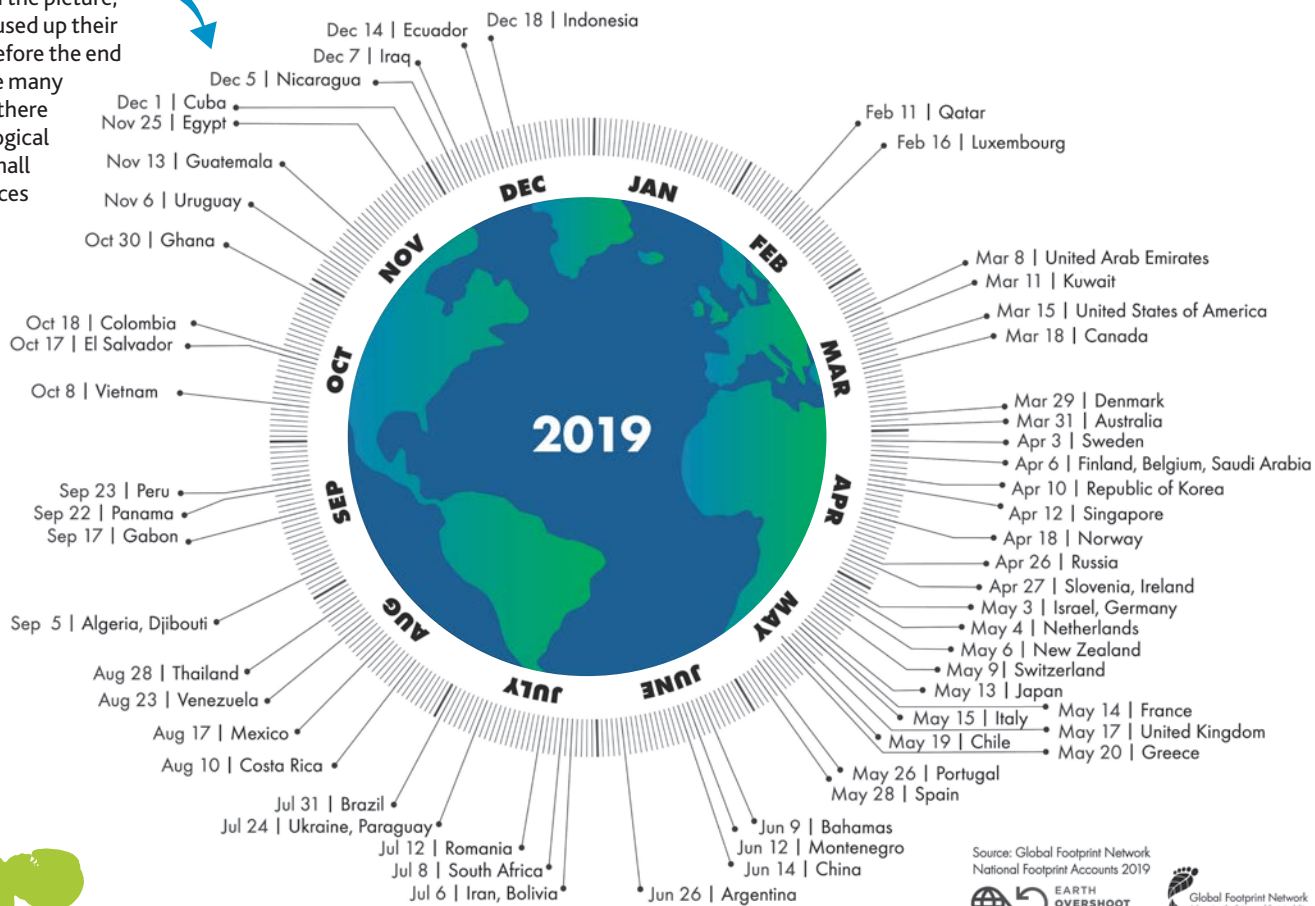
inspired a global movement called Fridays for Future.

One Friday in September 2019, four million people in over 160 countries went on strike for the climate with Greta. Were you one of them?

How long will the Earth's resources last?

Humanity uses up more water, food, energy and more than nature can regenerate in a year. Some countries use up far more resources than others. The day when all resources run out is called Overshoot Day, and in 2020 it fell on 22 August!

As you can see in the picture, some countries used up their resources well before the end of the year, while many countries aren't there at all. Their ecological footprint is so small that their resources are enough.



"You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you."
Greta, 16, in her speech to the UN in 2019



The Earth is heating up ...

The sun's rays hit the ground and turn into heat that radiates out from the Earth's surface. Greenhouse gases stop this heat radiation from disappearing out into space. When the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increases, more heat gets left behind and the Earth's temperature rises.

Some important greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane gas (CH₄). Additional carbon dioxide is released mainly by cars, coal and oil fires, factories and aircraft. Developed countries in the northern hemisphere produce the most emissions. China also generates a huge amount of carbon dioxide. As the Earth heats up, it affects all countries.

Changing climate

As the Earth heats up, our climate will change. Climate is the weather over a long period of time. For example, it's about how hot it usually is, how much and how often we get rain and perhaps how long and how hot the dry season is normally. A hotter Earth can mean dry seasons get longer, rain might not come every year, or the opposite might happen and it rains more in some places, with more torrential rain and flooding where you live. Perhaps there will also be more storms, and they might be stronger.

Rising sea levels

As the Earth heats up, sea levels rise. Mostly because warmer water expands and takes up more room, but also because glaciers (ice on land) melt and drain into the sea. Greenland and Antarctica have the most land ice. There will be big changes for coastal areas and islands when sea levels rise. People will no longer be able to live in these areas if the seawater covers fields and houses.

It is difficult to say exactly how the climate will change in different places on Earth, but we know for certain that there will be climate change as the Earth heats up. If the Earth heats up a lot, it may be impossible to live in some countries, and in the worst-case scenario the changes could be so great that almost the entire planet becomes uninhabitable! If nothing is done, the Earth will keep on heating up!

Fossil fuels

Fossil fuels are the remains of old plant material that have been stored in the ground for hundreds of millions of years. When people burn coal, oil or natural gas now, we release in just a few years the carbon dioxide that has been absorbed by plants over many millions of years! That's why burning fossil fuels is causing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to increase very quickly.

Disappearing forests

When there are major forest fires, it releases a lot of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This carbon dioxide can be absorbed again later if the forest grows back. It's a natural cycle that has been happening throughout the history of the Earth. But if forests are cut down, or worse, burned without planting any new forest, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increases because the released carbon dioxide is not absorbed and stored in new trees!



CO₂
CO₂
CO₂



Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop heat radiation (red arrows) from disappearing out into space.

The sun heats up the Earth

CO₂
CH₄



... If we don't take action

Extreme weather and higher temperatures

Drought, flooding and natural disasters affect everyone on Earth, but children's rights in poor countries are affected the most.

Disease

Malaria and dengue fever, and water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea increase and spread faster to more areas of the world. More children will become sick and die.

Hunger

The number of hungry and undernourished children is expected to rise by 20–25 million by the year 2050.

War and conflict

Inequalities and poverty increase the risk of violence and war. This affects children, particularly girls, the most.

Economic crisis

Poor children will get sicker and go hungry, and sometimes end up homeless. Children will also be forced to work instead of getting an education. Girls have to quit school first.

Refugee crisis

Many children have to leave their homes when villages and towns become uninhabitable. War and conflict also forces families with children to flee their homes. Children's schooling and health are affected, particularly their mental health.



If we act now!

Reduced hunger and poverty

Harvests will be better and not destroyed by drought or flooding. Children will have enough to eat and will be healthy.

Clean water and hygiene

Children will stay healthy, be able to go to school, play and develop. Access to

clean water will give girls in particular more time for study and play, as they won't have to walk long distances to fetch water.

Safety and security

Greater equality and gender equality reduces the risk of people and countries being drawn into violent conflict over areas of land and natural resources.



Who should act?

Live sustainably

Everyone needs to try and live sustainably. But it is the emissions from and wastage by rich countries over a long period of time that are the biggest causes of the current climate crisis. Rich countries must now support poorer countries where children are suffering the effects of climate change.

Climate-smart

The environmentally harmful way that rich people have long been using resources to live comfortable lives has had catastrophic consequences. We now need more climate-smart alternatives, so that everyone on Earth can live a decent life. Rich countries have a big responsibility here to lead and finance developments.

Children demand action

Today, children across the globe are fighting for their right and the right of future generations to inherit a world where people and the environment are healthy. Children are demanding that adults and decision-makers listen to science and do everything they can to stop climate change and build sustainable societies.





Esther, 16, from Edam School in DR Congo, holds up the sign "Reduce inequalities please", and responds to journalists: "Children need to have a good education both in school and at home."

Make your voices heard!

Would you and your friends like to get involved in sharing knowledge about children's rights and global challenges? Make your voice heard through the media. Raising awareness puts pressure on those in power, and makes them think more about children when they're making decisions.

Every year, once millions of children's votes have been counted in the Global Vote, the children organize their own World's Children's Press Conference on the same day, across the globe. They demand respect for children's rights and reveal which of the nominees has received the most votes and is the recipient of The World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, and which two will receive the World's Children's Prize Honorary Award. Only

children can speak and be interviewed by journalists during the press conferences. Interested in getting involved?

This is what you do: Tell the WCP contact in your country that you want to hold a Children's Press Conference. Are there several schools in your area? Hold a joint press conference with one representative from each school on stage (contact details page 23 of the Guide).

Good venue 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. The 2021 press conferences will be 27 April, if the Covid-19 situation allows this.

Invite the media Allow plenty of time to contact your local media. You might need to nag them a bit. Phone,

email and send text messages to newspaper offices and individual journalists. Unfortunately, not all adults realise how important the rights of the child are. So you'll need to explain it to them.

Prepare Write down and practise what you want to say about WCP, and about what life is like for the children in your area and in your country.

- Hold the press conference**
1. Begin with a performance, and explain that children all over the world are holding press conferences at the same time.
 2. State facts about the WCP and show short video clips.
 3. Explain what life is like for children and what you know about violations of children's rights where you live and in your country. Talk about the changes you'd like to see and present demands.
 4. Share information about the fantastic efforts of the Child Rights Heroes and reveal the result of the Global Vote.
 5. Hand out press releases and child rights fact sheets.

At worldschildrensprize.org/wcpc you'll find:

- The exact date of the 2021 press conference.
- Press releases, child rights fact sheets and draft scripts.
- Advice on how to invite journalists and questions for politicians.
- Films about WCP, the Global Vote and the Child Rights Heroes.
- Press images.



Queen Silvia of Sweden

Nelson Mandela



Malala Yousafzai

Desmond Tutu



Graça Machel

We are patrons of the World's Children's Prize

Malala Yousafzai and the late Nelson Mandela both chose to be patrons of the World's Children's Prize. They are also the only recipients of both the Nobel Peace Prize and what the media often refer to as the "Children's Nobel Prize", the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child.

Anyone who has done something good for children's rights or the World's Children's Prize can be an Honorary Adult Friend and patron of WCP. Queen Silvia was WCP's first patron. Malala and the late Nelson Mandela are joined by Xanana Gusmão, Graça Machel, Desmond Tutu and Sweden's prime minister, who are also WCP patrons.



Be a whistleblower when something isn't right!

All the adults who help you and other children to organize the WCP program must respect children's rights. If, while you're working on the WCP program, you witness a child being treated wrongly, or you yourself are treated wrongly, you must say something. People who report something that is wrong are called whistleblowers.

You should always try and talk to an adult you trust at your school or where you live first. If that's not possible, you can contact WCP. Some examples of things that should not happen in connection with running the WCP program are if an adult, such as a teacher, head-teacher or another person, subjects a child to:

- Violence, including sexual violence.
- Bullying, hate speech or another form of psychological violence.
- Infringement of a child's privacy (for example, if someone takes a photo of you or publishes personal information about you, even though you don't want them to or you haven't been asked).

If what you're reporting has nothing to do with the WCP program, you must always contact an adult you know and trust instead. If you or someone else needs urgent, immediate help, you should contact the police.

The Globe is free!

The Globe is a free teaching aid that can be used by the children taking part in the WCP program. If you see anyone selling The Globe, or selling something else related to the WCP program in order to earn money, that's wrong. Tell us here at WCP, or ask an adult you trust to contact us.

How to report

The safest way to report what has happened to WCP is to use our Whistleblower form at worldschildrensprize.org/whistle. Then your report will be sent to a person in a position of responsibility at WCP, who will handle your information in confidence.



Princess Sofia, the members of the Child Jury, Paxton and other musicians from South Africa, Jazz Yard Academy and African Sunshine, and Lilla Akademien on stage for the final song, 'A World of Friends'.

World's Children's Prize Ceremony

Every year, the jury children gather to lead the World's Children's Prize ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. All the Child Rights Heroes are honoured and awarded prize money for their work for children. Princess Sofia helped the members of the Child Jury to present the awards.



The millions of voting children chose **Ashok Dyalchand**, India, as the Child Rights Hero to receive the *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*. Divya, 16, is one of the many girls who were educated and empowered to refuse to accept child marriage.

Guylande Mesadieu, Haiti, received a *World's Children's Honorary Award*. She was accompanied by Guerline, 15, one of the domestic slave children she has helped.



Spès Nihangaza, Burundi, also received a *World's Children's Honorary Award*. She was accompanied by Floriane, 17, one of the many vulnerable children that Spès has helped to get an education.

Kim, 14, from Zimbabwe, is both a WCP Child Rights Ambassador and a member of the WCP Jury. She led the ceremony for the third year running.

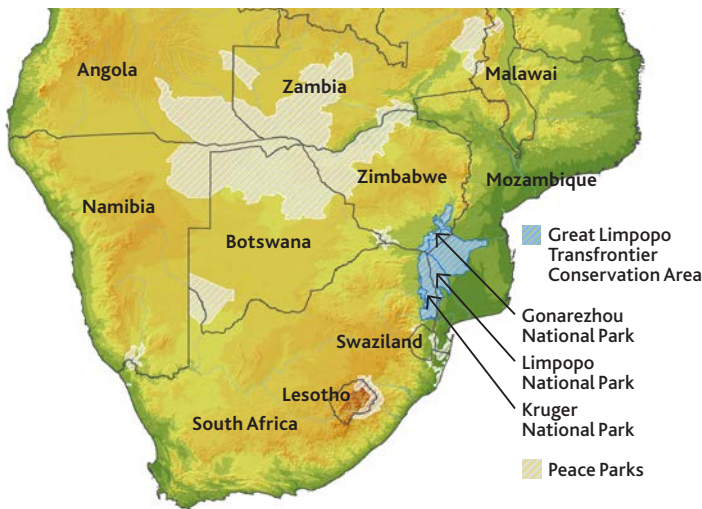




Peace & Changemaker Generation educates 100,000 children – an entire generation in a national park area in Zimbabwe and Mozambique – about the rights of the child, wild animals and environmental issues. The children become the changemakers who can take a stand against poaching and in support of girls' rights in their villages.

The children who live in and close to Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe and Limpopo National Park in Mozambique are proud of their stunning natural environment and rich animal life. But there is also wildlife crime here,

The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area is one of 18 Peace Parks established via cross-border cooperation between neighbouring countries in southern Africa.



Peace & Changemaker Generation is a partnership between

Funded by



The project is implemented in cooperation with



and the Ministry, Province and District Departments of Education of Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

www.worldschildrensprize.org www.peaceparks.org



Animals in the P

Tallest in the world

Giraffes are the tallest animals on Earth. They can grow to a height of 4–6 metres and spend most of their lives standing up. Giraffes take quick naps for a couple of minutes during the day standing up. They even give birth while standing up.

Just like human fingerprints, no two giraffes have the same coat pattern.

Other species often stick close to giraffes, using them as early warning systems. Their tall necks and excellent vision allow them to spot predators such as lions and hyenas from far away. When giraffes start running away, other animals follow suit.

Poachers hunt them for their meat, hide, bones and hair. They are killed for their bone marrow and brain, which is believed in some African societies to be successful in treating AIDS. In other countries they are slain for their tails, considered a status symbol. This, combined with overharvesting by the trophy hunting industry; disease, war and civil unrest; as well as direct, indirect or perceived competition for resources with humans and their livestock, has meant the species is in serious trouble.

Taking action

Several organisations fight to ensure the survival of wild giraffes. These aim to:

- Educate communities about the importance of giraffes to ecotourism. Giraffes are much more valuable to communities alive than dead.
- Promote conservation agriculture that increases harvests, while ensuring giraffe habitat remains healthy.
- Counter the loss of giraffe habitat and food through reforestation projects.

Under threat

An estimated 111,000 giraffes remain in the wild on the African continent. Numbers have dropped by 30% in the last 15 years, and they have already disappeared from seven African countries. In the *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park* you will only find approximately 4,500 giraffes, 446 of them in the *Gonarezhou Park* in Zimbabwe and about 25 in the *Limpopo Park* in Mozambique.



ace Park endangered



Poachers poison vultures

Of the 23 species of vultures, 14 are considered threatened or endangered. In The *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*, the critically endangered hooded vulture flying here is one of more than nine species of vultures.

Vultures are very important members of an ecosystem. They fly huge distances to pick rotting carcasses clean and thereby prevent the outbreak of disease. Vultures flocking to a carcass are the first sign that an animal has been poached. To avoid detection by rangers, poachers lace the poached carcass with agricultural pesticides, killing all animals that feed on the carcass, including vultures. This is resulting in the killing of many vultures.

One in nine lions left

A hundred years ago more than 200,000 lions roamed the African plains. Today less than 23,000, just one in nine lions, remain.

Lions can see six times better than humans at night, and hear prey from as far as 1.5 km away. As large predators who hunt small game as well as larger species such as zebras, giraffes and hippos, lions play an important role in their ecosystems. Without lions there is a risk for overpopulation of other large predators that can lead to the extinction of smaller species.

Lions are also a vital member of The Big Five, attracting thousands of tourists to Africa each year and bringing in employment opportunities to the continent.

Under threat

In the *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*, 1,600 lions roam in the *Kruger Park* in South Africa, 66 in the *Limpopo Park* in Mozambique, and in the *Gonarezhou Park* in Zimbabwe less than 33. The lions' shrinking habitat pushes them into closer quarters with

humans and depletes their food source, causing them to revert to hunting livestock. More often than not this results in the lions being killed in retaliation. Bushmeat poaching is decreasing their food source even more. In some instances, bait laced with highly toxic agricultural pesticides is used to attract and kill lions. Increasingly, lions are also being poached for body parts (bones, teeth, claws, paws and skins) largely traded in Asia, but also locally. Excessive trophy hunting adds even more pressure to the survival of the lion.

In the *Limpopo Park*, a special anti-poaching unit focuses on the protection of the 'King of the jungle'. They patrol areas that lions are known to inhabit, to deter poachers. Another focus is on reducing human-wildlife conflict, including proper predator-proof fencing, putting in place compensation for livestock losses, as well as the relocation of predators to areas where the human population density is lower.



Wild dogs under threat

African wild dogs are highly intelligent animals that live in packs. Of the large carnivores, wild dogs are the most efficient hunters, who work as a well-coordinated team flawlessly during a hunt.

Wild dogs display behaviors that support the health of the pack. This includes sharing a kill, even with members who weren't involved in the actual hunt, and non-breeding adults sacrificing their own nourishment to ensure the pups in the group get enough to eat and grow. When a dog becomes ill, injured or elderly, restricting them from hunting, the rest of the pack cares for and feeds them.

The wild dog is one of the world's most endangered mammals. Populations of African wild dogs were once estimated to be 500,000. Today they have decreased to just 3,000–5,000 adults. In the *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*, estimates place 450 wild dogs in *Kruger Park* in South Africa, 220 in *Gonarezhou* in Zimbabwe, and an unknown number in the *Limpopo Park* in Mozambique. The wild dogs' dramatic decline is largely due to human persecution, disease and shrinking hunting areas.



Fastest ...

Eats 70 million insects!

Four of the eight species of pangolins live in Africa. Pangolins mainly feast on ants and termites using an extraordinarily long, sticky tongue, which, when fully extended, is longer than the pangolin itself. Their insatiable appetite for insects gives them an important role in their eco-

system: pest control. One adult pangolin can consume more than 70 million insects annually.

The international trade in pangolins is banned, yet pangolins are the most trafficked mammal in the world. They are poached mainly for their meat and scales. Their scales are used



in traditional Asian medicine, their meat is considered a luxury food in many parts of Asia, and their skins and other parts are used for purposes such as

fashion. Much like rhino horn, the demand from Asia is increasing as their own pangolin species have declined.

Biggest of all

The African bush elephant is the largest terrestrial animal and can be more than 12 feet tall, weighing about 14,000 pounds. All African elephants, including females, have tusks. Led by a matriarch, elephants are organised into social structures of females and calves. A single calf is born to a female once every 4–5 years and after a gestation period of 22 months – the longest of any mammal.

An important role

Elephants are known as a keystone species – they have a significant impact on their environment and affect the biodiversity surrounding them. They can spend up to 12 hours a day on eating. As a result, these large mammals place great demands on the environment and often come into conflict with people.

Elephants play a vital role in balancing natural ecosystems. As they trample forests and dense grasslands, they make room for smaller species to co-exist. Elephants are also

water providers to other animals. They will use their feet, trunks and tusks to create a hole. These elephant-made watering holes are then available for all animals to drink from.

Elephants are a main attraction in the eco-tourism sector, which creates thousands of jobs. Losing elephants as one of the The Big Five will have a devastating impact on the benefits brought about by thriving nature-based industries.

Under threat

Elephant numbers have dropped by 62% over the last decade, with 350,000 remaining in Africa. Some 29,500 elephants roam through the *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*. *Gonarezhou* in Zimbabwe is home to 11,000 of them, whilst in the *Limpopo Park* in Mozambique, 1,500 elephants remain.

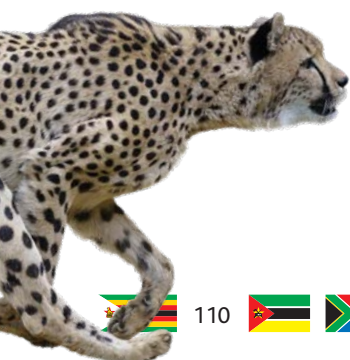
An estimated 100 African elephants are killed each day by poachers seeking ivory, meat and body parts. They are losing their lives so that the ivory can

be used to make carved ornaments and jewellery in Asia, mainly China. Elephants are also often slain for trophy hunting, or as a result of human-wildlife conflict.

Taking action

In order to protect elephants across the world, there is a ban on the international trade in elephant tusks (ivory). Despite this, the poaching of elephants continues. Interventions to safeguard elephants include:

- Facilitating the establishment of large protected zones, such as *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*, that provide enough space for the free movement of elephants.
- Assisting communities with means of protecting themselves and their crops from wildlife.
- Working with communities who live alongside parks to develop economic alternatives to poaching.
- Spreading knowledge in countries that buy illegal ivory.



Fastest in the world!

The cheetah is not only the fastest animal in *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*, it is also the fastest land mammal on Earth. The fastest ever recorded speed is 120 km an hour (75 mph).



Cycling towards my dream

"My dream is to work with nature and animal conservation, as a ranger or accountant at some organisation that fights to protect wild animals. And that dream could be a reality thanks to my bicycle," says Amukelo, 15, from Batiti near Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe.

Ever since the Chilojo Club came to our school I've dreamed of working with nature and wild animals. In the club's lessons we've learned about animal protection and about how everything in the natural environment around us is connected. We've also learned a lot about poaching. Poaching is so bad in many ways, but I think the five most important points are:

1. Poaching destroys our forests. Many poachers start fires to get to the animals more easily.
2. Poaching destroys our most important natural resource, the wild animals.

3. Without wild animals, we lose tourists and jobs in our villages and the whole country.
4. Many people die in conflicts between poachers and rangers.
5. Organised crime related to the illegal trade of ivory and animal skins means our country loses important foreign currency, and this makes Zimbabwe poorer.

School is important

My dream is to explain to the villages close to the park how we can live in peace together with the wild animals. I'd like to work as a ranger or



Waking up early

"Before I got the bike I used to get up at three in the morning so I had time to do everything at home before I went to school," says Amukelo.



Safer together

Amukelo and her cousin Abigail cycle to Alpha Mpapa High School every day.

"It feels safer if it's two of us, because it's never really safe for us girls to be outside the home alone," says Amukelo.

The Chilojo Club

The Chilojo Club is Gonarezhou Conservation Trust and partners' programme for the schools in the villages near the park. The club's tasks include:

- Teaching students about nature conservation and animal protection at schools in the villages.
- Taking students on day trips into the national park so they get to experience the wild animals for real.
- Taking students into the park on a four-day adventure with camping, where they learn even more about animals, the natural environment, poaching, tracking and animal protection work.
- Starting school libraries in the villages that are near the park.

GONAREZHOU
NATIONAL PARK
MABALAUTA



accountant at some organisation that fights to protect wild animals. Both jobs mean you have to have a good education, so school is really important to me.

I'm grateful that I'm able to go to school. Unfortunately, many girls here are forced to quit school at my age and never get the chance to join the professions I'm aiming for. Many are forced to quit because of poverty and prejudices. If a poor family has a son and a daughter, it's always the son who gets to go to school if they are forced to choose. The family thinks that if the son gets an education, he will get a good job and earn money that the family can share.



They think there's no point in letting the daughter go to school, as she will be married off and belong to another family. She will never contribute money to her own family, but to the family she marries into. It's not unusual for girls of my

age to become victims of child marriage and be forced to quit school.

Crime against girls

Many girls don't dare continue with their education when they start secondary school,

because it's dangerous to get to and from school. The schools are often far from the village, and then boys and men take the opportunity to harass and assault girls on their way to school. I think it's really terrible. Men and boys

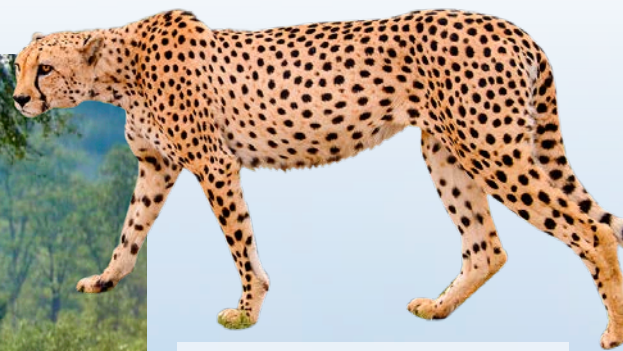


Amukelo



Abigail





The Big Five

"The Chilojo Club has taught us a lot about The Big Five that live in this region: elephants, buffalo, rhinos, lions and leopards. But my favourite animal is the waterbuck. It's fast and smart and it often gets away when predators attack," says Amukelo.

The Big Five was the name used by big game hunters long ago for these five animals. Today the name is used by both those who live in the animals' habitat and by tourists who visit Africa's national parks.

who do this should be arrested and put in prison!

It hurts me to think about these things. Girls and boys should have the same opportunity to have a good education. Stopping a girl from going to school is a violation of her rights.

I'm lucky that I'm one of the students who has been able to

borrow a bicycle from the Chilojo Club so I can get to school safely. I used to walk to school for over two hours. I had to leave home at five in the morning to get there in time. Now it takes me 45 minutes to cycle to school! I have more energy to concentrate, and my results have improved. The bicycle also means I get home

quicker and I have time to help out at home and do my homework. Getting home before it gets dark is also much safer for us girls. It's not good to walk home alone in the dark. If I finish secondary school, I get to keep the bicycle!" 🌍

Buffalo bikes

The bicycles are called Buffalo Bikes and they come from World Bicycle Relief, which works alongside the Chilojo Club and Gonarezhou Conservation Trust in Gonarezhou National Park.



You can watch the film about Amukelo at worldschildrensprize.org/video/cg



Blessing afraid of being ma

“Dad used to go poaching in Gonarezhou National Park so he could pay my school fees. But now the rangers have increased security and he’s had to stop. It means I can’t go to school anymore, because we don’t have the money. Now I’m afraid that I’ll be married off and never achieve my dream of becoming a ranger,” says Blessing, 15.

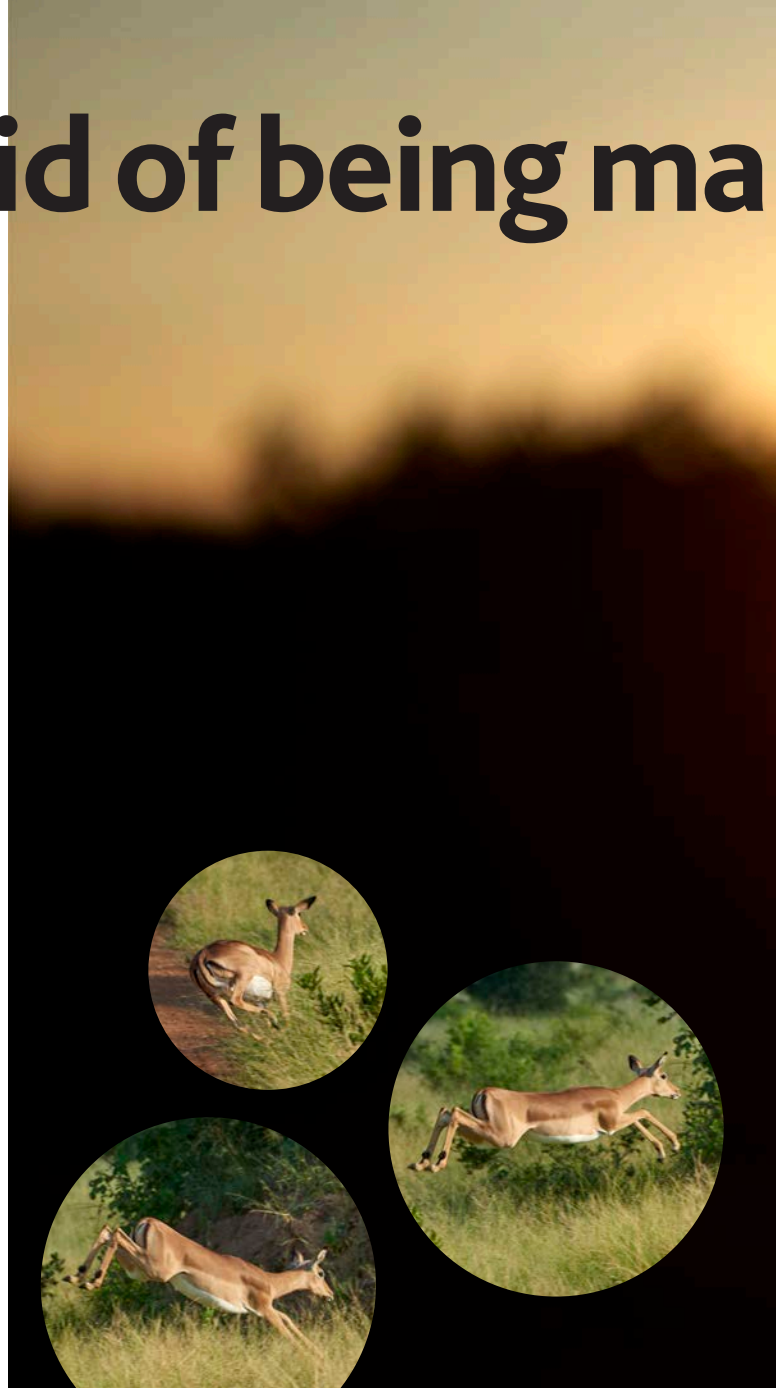
Dad hunted buffalo and impala and sold the meat. He and mum used the money to pay the school fees for me and my siblings. But now the rangers have increased their presence in the park to protect the wild animals. Many poachers are being arrested and put in prison. Last year, dad realised that it was just a matter of time before it would happen to him too, so he decided to stop. At the same time I had to quit school.

“I really miss school! My life was so different then. I met my friends and played netball during break. I learned so many important things at school. My favourite subject was Content which taught me a lot about the environment and society. I also liked languages, both English and Shangani. When I was going

to school, it was fun to be a child. I laughed a lot and felt free.”

Long working days

“Now all I do is work. I wake at four in the morning and clean the yard. Then I light the fire to heat water. While it’s heating I wash plates and saucepans from last night’s meal. I used to be putting on my school uniform at this time after getting washed, and then I would go to school. Once I’ve made breakfast for everyone I go to fetch wood and water instead, and I wash the family’s clothes. There are nine of us in the family, so I have to do the washing every day; otherwise it will be too much in one go. As evening approaches I start making dinner, which is ready at sunset, six o’clock. Sometimes we sit and talk and tell stories after dinner; other-



Blessing’s father hunted impala.

wise I go straight to bed because I’m so tired. It’s the job of the eldest daughter to look after the household here, and I do almost everything.”

Alone and isolated

“I’m not allowed to leave the home and meet my friends, because I’m a girl. I don’t really know why. Maybe because my parents are afraid I’ll get

into trouble. That I’ll be assaulted or maybe get pregnant. This is how it is for most girls my age, but not for the boys. They’re free to go anywhere and meet their friends. That’s how it used to be for me too until I reached the age of about 10. Although I understand that my parents want to protect me, I don’t think it’s fair that boys get a lot of freedom while we don’t. I’d like us to be able to be free to go anywhere without the risk of something happening. The way things are now, I feel very alone and isolated.”

Girls married off

“Many girls my age who don’t go to school are already married,” says Blessing.



ried off

Child marriage

“One of the reasons why parents are afraid that a daughter will be assaulted, get a boyfriend or fall pregnant is that it would ruin the family’s reputation. If a family gets a bad reputation, it will be hard to arrange a good marriage for the daughter. As it’s often such a long way to our secondary schools and we run the risk of being assaulted on the way there, many girls are forced to quit once they finish primary school. Very few end up going right through secondary school. Many girls get married

off at the age of around 14. The husband pays lobola to the girl’s family, such as cows or money, when they get married. That’s why some families choose to marry off their daughters at a young age. Sometimes the money is used to pay for the sons’ schooling. That’s so wrong. It’s oppression against us girls! Why don’t we get the education we are entitled to? We should get to learn and understand the same things that boys do. So we can live a good life together.”

Afraid of being married off

“It’s adult men who are marrying young girls. I think it’s strange. It’s wrong to marry a child. Children aren’t ready for marriage. My mum and dad have talked about marrying me off and it makes me frightened. I’ve told them I want to finish school first. But because we can’t afford the school fees anymore, they say it would be best if I got married now. It makes me scared about the future.

“When I went to school, the Chilojo Club came to teach us. We learned about nature, the

natural cycle and about wild animals and why they need to be protected. They also told us how important it is for us to look after our animals and our natural environment, because tourists want to come and



Buffalo meat paid for Blessing’s school fees.



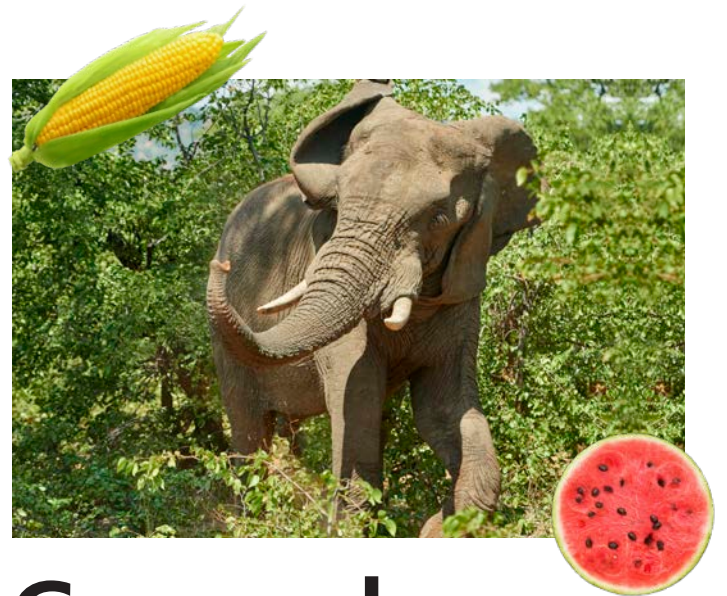
No freedom

"When I was going to school, it was fun to be a child, but not now. I felt free then. Now all I do is work," says Blessing.

ably wouldn't allow their wives to work in the national park. Here, a wife's job is to take care of the house, her husband and children, not work outside the home.

"My dad poached out of necessity. When he had to stop because of the rangers increasing security, I couldn't go to school anymore.

Meanwhile, I want to be a ranger...I know it's a contradiction! But I've learned in the Chilojo Club that our wild animals are worth more alive than dead. That they are part of our heritage and we must look after them for the future. I really believe that, even if it's caused me major problems." 🌍



Gonarezhou – The Place of Elephants

"Elephants are my favourite animal. They are so beautiful and wise, but they can also be dangerous and create a lot of problems for those of us who live near the park. They wander into our fields and trample and eat our crops, which we need to survive. Maize, millet, sorghum, watermelon...they eat everything! When the elephants come we try to scare them away by lighting fires, clapping our hands, shouting and cracking our cattle whips. It makes a whistling noise that the elephants don't like. But we've learned to be careful, because elephants can get really angry if you irritate them. They can go on the attack, and then you have to watch out. A man got trampled to death a few years ago in one of the neighbouring villages. If we don't manage to scare the elephants off ourselves, we've learned to contact the rangers for help. The rangers can fire warning shots in the air, and then they usually go away. Many people really don't like elephants, but I love them!" says Blessing.

There are 11,000 elephants living in Gonarezhou, and the park is also quite rightly known as '*The Place of Elephants*'.

Elephant poo + chilli = no elephants!

In the area where Blessing lives, the Chilojo Club has started making chilli bricks (elephant dung and chilli), together with the villagers to reduce conflicts with elephants. If the villagers place hot coals on the chilli bricks and put them around their fields in the evening, the chilli smoke disturbs the elephants so much that they stay away. The harvest is saved without a single elephant being shot or a single person getting injured. The bricks are both cheap and simple to make, because lots of people grow chilli and there's plenty of free elephant dung around.



You can watch the film about Blessing at worlds-childrensprize.org/video/pcg

▶ experience everything in Gonarezhou. I've dreamed of being a ranger ever since. It's really important work, helping protect the animals that can give us both money and jobs, something that we really need here. And I love animals!"

Crushed dream?

"Now I'm afraid that I won't be able to be a ranger, because I've been forced to quit school. I probably won't have enough skills to cope with the training, if I even get accepted now that I haven't finished school. And if I'm married off, I can forget becoming a ranger. Then I'll be someone's wife instead. Most men here prob-





Journey to our roots

Anxious and the other children walking towards the baobab tree in the national park, where they're going to learn more about rain-making ceremonies.

Our roots are the future

Mpfhuka – Journey

Mpfhuka means *journey* in Shangani, which is the language spoken in the Limpopo region. The Mpfhuka programme is about the shared “journey” that the national park and the people of the surrounding villages are on towards a future of respect, cooperation and peace.

Mpfhuka has:

- Worked with villagers to map all places of cultural significance in the national park that were lost when they were forced to move. It will now once again be possible for the villagers to visit their forefathers’ graves and other important places.

- Given young people the opportunity to learn more about their culture, traditions and history.

- Provided jobs for villagers in the park, including being responsible for running lodges where tourists can stay overnight, built by the villagers themselves in traditional *Shangaan* style.

“When the national park was created, the village was forced out of an area that had been our home for generations, really for as long as anyone could remember. We lost our families’ graves and other places that were important to us. It was good for nature and our wild animals, but it wasn’t at all good for the people and our culture. Many lost their purpose in life,” says Anxious, 15, from Malipati, seriously.

Now they’re trying to do something about the painful history of Zimbabwe’s Gonarezhou National Park.



Biology for the future

“I go to Jichidza High School and my favourite subject is biology. I think school is the most important thing there is. You learn things at school so you can do something important with your life,” says Anxious.

“**B**efore Zimbabwe was independent, the country was called Rhodesia. The white people, who made all the decisions back then, forced people to move against their will when their government decided to create Gonarezhou National Park. The Rhodesian government didn’t care about the people who lived in the area. The fact that the people had a culture and a way of life that was deeply linked to the land and the place was not important. The white government thought that their culture was superior to ours, and they were more interested in making decisions that were good for them, not for us.

Lost freedom

When you think about protecting our wild animals and the beautiful natural environment, it was good that people moved out of the park. But when you think about people’s lives and culture, it wasn’t at all good. They were forced to leave their families’ graves and other important cultural places, like the places where the villagers prayed for rain during times of drought. Visiting places that had been important for generations was now regarded as a crime. It was even illegal to hunt, which was the traditional way of life. People lost their freedom.

The places the villagers



were moved to were unfamiliar and had no meaning for them. Many felt lost and the older people stopped teaching us children important things about our history. People lost their roots and many lost their purpose in life.

Mpfhuka

I think it's important to be aware of your roots and your history. Many older people who knew about our origins and who would have been able to prepare us for the future have died. But the park has now started up a programme

called Mpfhuka, which tries to enable people to once again visit their places of cultural significance inside the national park.

Mpfhuka is also about teaching us young people more about our culture. Tomorrow I'm going to visit the park with a group and learn more about how our forefathers prayed for rain during times of drought. I think it's really important to have a better understanding of where you come from, and to know who you really are." 🌍

Wants to be an ecologist

"When I'm older I dream of becoming an ecologist and working with environmental issues in the national park. It's been my dream ever since I was little and visited a game park with my dad and uncle. It was fantastic to get to see giraffes, zebra and elephants. It's important that we preserve and protect our wild animals and our natural environment, so this unique place is here for future generations. It's both our cultural and natural heritage," explains Anxious.

Human-wildlife conflict

"I live near the park and all the wild animals, and sometimes we are affected. Baboons can kill our goats, and sometimes pythons and civet cats take our chickens. Elephants can walk through the village and eat our harvests. It's dangerous to be outdoors then, because you can be seriously injured. Lions sometimes come close to us, so then we stay indoors. It's important for the wild animals in the park and us humans in the villages to live together in harmony. Sometimes rangers come and help us with this," says Anxious.



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BIERKE



Rhodesia – Zimbabwe

Before Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the country was called Rhodesia and was controlled by a white minority with roots in the UK, which colonised the country in the 19th century. In Rhodesia, the black population did not have the same rights as the white people. Forced displacement of people from the area that would become Gonarezhou National Park mainly took place during the years 1932–1975.



Albert was a poacher



“I quit school when I was 14 and became a poacher. Now I know that it was wrong. I killed our country’s priceless natural resources and our heritage for future generations. It makes me sad to think about it. But now I’m trying to do the right thing and make up for it by protecting our wild animals and our natural environment,” says Albert Chari, who is now a ranger in Zimbabwe’s Gonarezhou National Park.

I grew up in the little village of Pahlala, where I went to school for seven years. My dad was a ranger here in Gonarezhou and I admired him and his smart uniforms. I wanted to be a ranger too when I grew up.

“When dad was growing up, he looked after his younger brothers and made sure they had food and could go to school. As a thank-you, our uncles helped us when dad couldn’t afford to pay for secondary school for all his 14 children. But the uncle who was supposed to pay my

school fees went abroad to work, which meant that I couldn’t start school. Dad was out in the field for several months at that time, and he didn’t know about this, so he couldn’t help me. I was 14 years old then.”

Boy becomes man

“I started looking after dad’s cattle with my friend Isac. We tended the cattle in the national park, where there was plenty of grazing, but also lots of wild animals. Isac bred dogs and they were always with us. The first time his

dogs hunted and killed a bush-buck, it felt strange. We sorted out the kill and I dared to go home with the meat because I knew that dad was away.

“Mum was delighted! When a son comes home with a kill for the family, it means that he’s no longer a little boy, he’s a man. I felt proud and happy.

“When dad came home and realised I hadn’t started school, he paid my school fee straight away. But he couldn’t afford books and a school uniform, so I still couldn’t start.

The family was too big and we couldn’t have as good a life as we wished, particularly not

my mum. So although it went against my dream of becoming a ranger, I started hunting again as soon as dad had gone out into the wilderness on a new assignment.”

Hunting with dogs

“I started breeding dogs, just like Isac. We always had at least four dogs with us in the park. But because all the dogs in the neighbourhood knew me and came when I whistled, we often had 20 dogs with us on the hunt! I used a spear and bow.

“We got up early, left the cattle to graze and went further into the park to hunt. We brought home the kill, which our mums started cooking while we went back to fetch the cattle. We hunted four to five times a week, and I really enjoyed that life. It provided food for our families and everyone who let their dogs come with us.

“We became the big hunters of the village, and I felt very proud! Sometimes I sold meat and I remember buying my very first pair of shoes with the money I’d earned from hunting. Before that I’d gone barefoot my whole life.

“I knew that what we were doing was illegal and that we could get into trouble. But I was a really fast runner, so I was convinced that the rangers would never be able to catch me. Although they had weapons, we learned that they only ever fired warning shots



Up close with a lion

"I'll never forget my first encounter with a lion. We were out hunting and we suddenly came across a lion's den where a lioness was feeding her cubs. She got up on her hind legs and roared at us. We stood still and started roaring back, but the lioness didn't give up. Then we started slowly walking backwards while shouting. We walked backwards for over a kilometre with the lioness roughly two metres away from us the whole way! I had to learn a lot about animals and nature to be a successful hunter. I now use a lot of that knowledge today as a ranger," explains Albert.



in the air, never at us. We also learned to whistle in a special way, which meant the dogs ran in front of us and we followed closely behind the pack. That way the rangers never dared shoot our dogs because then they risked shooting us."

Dad furious

"I hid my hunting from dad and we never hunted when he

was home. But in the end the rumours about me and Isac reached dad.

"I'll never forget that night. Dad was furious and hauled me out of bed. He hit me harder than I thought possible. Then he dragged me round to Isac's house, where he locked us in and carried on hitting us until we finally admitted that

the rumours he'd heard were true. We were poachers.

"Dad was incredibly disappointed and gave us our first lesson in wildlife and conservation. He said that animals were our natural heritage and that they belonged to everyone. And that if we didn't protect the animals, future generations would only be able to

experience them by looking at pictures in books. He also explained that it was the salary from his job protecting animals that provided the family with money for food and everything else that we needed. If the animals disappeared, he would lose his job and our lives would be harder."



"When I'm home in the village, I always talk about the importance of protecting animals and the natural environment, and that poaching is against the law. In the future I'd like to visit schools and talk to them about my work and about wildlife conservation," says Albert.



Ranger training includes:

- Knowledge of animals and the natural environment.
- Weapons training.
- Tracking and reconnaissance.
- Ambushing and other military techniques.



Elephants killed

"We've lost one elephant in the park so far in 2019, but the number of elephants that are being killed is steadily falling. In 2016, around 40 elephants were killed. The figure for 2017 was roughly 20, and for 2018 it was 10. The poachers know that we have much better security in the park now, with over 150 rangers working here," explains Albert.

Carried on hunting

"I felt put out at having been so knocked about by dad. I thought, why should I listen to him after that? We defied dad and carried on hunting. We were able to because dad was moved to Hwange National Park.

"When my uncle came home and I got the chance to start

school again, I still chose hunting. I felt like I didn't need school anymore.

"I got married, and after a few years, my wife thought that I really should stop poaching. She said that hunting would never be able to build a future for our family; that we could no longer live off something that was illegal and

should instead be doing something that was right. It went so far that she threw the meat down the latrine, she was that angry."

A ranger at last

"My wife got me thinking about what dad had told us about wildlife conservation. When Gonarezhou was



Poachers in Gonarezhou

"Poachers can be divided into two groups. One group consists of villagers from this area who hunt for the food and to sell the meat. They hunt buffalo, zebra, impala and waterbucks, and mainly use dogs and snares for hunting, just like I did. Poachers in the other group mostly come here over the border from Mozambique with heavy weapons and hunt

elephants for their tusks. We get this kind of hunters here at least once a month. We track and pursue the poachers and put them in prison. We never shoot to kill, but sometimes we do unfortunately have to shoot to wound these criminals to defend ourselves and to be able to arrest them. It happened just last month," says Albert.



looking for new rangers, I decided to apply. There were 379 of us who applied for the training. I won the initial ten-kilometre run. But it wasn't until after the big interview, with questions about animals and nature that I was accepted onto the course. I knew it all. When they asked how I knew so much, I was honest and told them that I had been a poacher and been among wild animals for over ten years. I thought they would refuse to let me start the course, but they wanted to have someone who understood how poachers think and where they go. They wanted me, and I was so proud and happy! After all, this had been my dream since I was a boy and saw dad's smart uniform."

Back to school!

"It feels great to be able to tell my two daughters that I'm a

ranger protecting wild animals and the natural environment, not a criminal killing and destroying things. I feel really great now, but just imagine if I'd stayed at school, what a difference it would have made! I would have been able to understand English better and it would have made it easier to get through the training to be a ranger. Both for understanding the course books and the instructions. I really regret quitting school. To all boys who have quit school and are now poaching, I've just got one thing to say: You have to go back to school! Get an education so that you can look after yourselves and your families in a way to be proud of when you're older." 🌍



New heroes

"My old hunting friend Isac and four of my younger brothers are also rangers now. They were probably inspired by me, and that makes me really happy and proud. Boys in the village aged 10–12 also want to be like us. They see how respected we are. Actually I think it's us who are the heroes today, not the poachers. Young boys even report wildlife crimes to us, so they are already involved in this important work!" says Albert.

This is Albert with his brothers, who have also chosen to be rangers. From left to right: Shepard, 25, Albert, 33, Tapiwa, 24 and Mike, 31.



Ana's rights violated

"I fell pregnant at the age of 14 and was forced to quit school and get married. Now my life is like a prison. But luckily, my husband picks oranges on a farm in South Africa instead of poaching. Many girls here have lost their husbands who were rhino poachers, and their lives are even harder than mine," says Ana, 16, from a village near Limpopo National Park in Mozambique."

I loved school! My favourite subjects were maths, English and Portuguese. Of course I helped out at home, but I also had time to be with my friends. We often did our homework together.

"My life changed completely when I was 14. I got pregnant and had to quit school.

According to our tradition, I was regarded as the wife of the man who got me pregnant. I belonged to his family and they didn't want me to continue with school. I cried, but there was nothing I could say. My role became looking after the baby, my husband and the household.

"My husband is only 20, and no-one forced me into the relationship at the start. But I was disappointed that he

turned out to be the type of husband who makes all the decisions about me. He forced me to quit school and he refuses to let me start again. I know, because I asked recently. I was sad and angry, but the husband decides here, and I have to obey."

Like a prison

"I clean the yard, fetch wood, work in the field, grind maize and take care of my daughter. My husband buys clothes for her, otherwise I'm the one who looks after our daughter. I wash my husband's clothes, make sure there's always water so he can wash, and I cook his food. He forbids me from seeing my friends and it leaves me feeling lonely and excluded. I watch them going to school and it makes me sad. I live where I cannot do what I

Girls don't count

"Boys and girls here don't have equal rights. Life is harder for girls, who clean, cook and do all the household chores. Boys do nothing. But their voices and opinions count more than girls', in the family, at school and in the village. I really don't like that. It's not right, things need to change.



Lonely and excluded

"When I watch my friends going to school while I'm stuck here, it makes me sad," says Ana.

want or meet who I want. It's like a prison."

Husbands disappear

"There are no jobs here, so my husband picks oranges on a farm in South Africa. He's only at home a couple of times a year. It's not easy, but at least it's better than if he had been a rhino poacher.

"One of my relatives was shot and killed in South Africa while poaching, and many poachers from this village are in prison. It's really hard for the families to cope when the

husbands disappear. When there's no money, it's hard to buy food and pay for the children's schooling. At least I don't have that worry. But I think about school every day. It feels like I lost the chance of a good life the day I had to leave school." 🌐



Paulo the poacher has had

"I quit school at the age of 13 and started hunting full-time. It felt pointless carrying on at school, because there aren't any jobs here anyway. But I've had enough now. Lots of poachers and rangers are getting killed. Poaching has to stop," says Paulo, 16, who lives in a village near Limpopo National Park in Mozambique.



People have always hunted here to survive. It's a way of life, we are hunters. I think that's why many continue to hunt even though it's a crime. That's how it is for me. Both my dad and my grandfather are hunters. I'm just doing what they do.

"I started hunting with my dogs in Limpopo National Park at the age of 10. Hunting with dogs is the traditional way to hunt here. I get up early, get my eleven dogs together – seven large and four small ones – and head out hunting with three of my friends. We hunt impala and other small animals. We have to keep an eye out all the time, so the rangers don't discover us.

"I'll never forget one early morning when I was 14. We'd been tracking an impala and I sent the dogs after it. I was

lying hidden in a thicket when I suddenly saw that the dogs were surrounded by rangers. They shot and killed three of my dogs to protect the impala. I ran as fast as I could and managed to get away. Several of my other dogs were injured and had rubber bullets in their bodies. But it's far from the only time the rangers' rubber bullets have scared us out of the park. And one of my friends, who is also 16, was arrested and ended up in prison for ten months."

Rhino hunting

"Hunting isn't just about tradition. Many poach for the money, because there aren't any jobs here. Dad and his friends go poaching in the park, but also for rhino. They cross the border into South Africa, because the rhinos

"We usually hunt early in the morning, but sometimes in the evening using strong torches. The animals are drawn to the light, they get blinded and paralysed, and then we send in the dogs for the kill. If it's a small animal, the dogs kill it straight away, but if it's bigger like an impala, we kill what the dogs have caught using a machete and panga," says Paulo.

here have been hunted almost to extinction. It's the rhino horn they're after, which is very valuable. They either sell the horn in the nearest big town, or in the capital Maputo.

"A team of hunters is often made up of four people, and each hunter in the team can get 800,000 meticaais (USD 13,000) for a single horn! Everyone here who has a nice house and car has it because of poaching rhino. Everyone. That's how it is for my family too. Our two houses, TVs, sat-

elite dishes, mobile phones, CD players and pickup truck were all bought with money from rhino poaching. People start companies, such as taxi businesses and fishing, using money from poaching.

"Poaching has become a way of life for almost everyone here. Parents tell their children that it's the only way if they want to avoid living in poverty. And we do what our parents tell us."

Loves his dogs

"When my dogs were shot by rangers, I was angry and sad. I had to try and get the rubber bullets out of the bodies of the ones that survived, and it was terrible. But now I understand that the rangers were just doing their job, and they were doing it well too. They wanted to protect the impala and get me to stop poaching," says Paulo.



enough



"A team of hunters is often made up of four people, and each hunter in the team can get 800,000 meticais (USD 13,000) for a single horn!"



Paulo has hunted for both impala and waterbuck.



TEXT: ANDREAS LÖNN PHOTOS: JOHAN BJERKE

Like a war

"The plan was that I would practice hunting small animals here in the park, and then start hunting rhino in South Africa with my dad. But I've changed my mind now. Dad has too, because he's afraid I'll be killed or end up in prison. Because it's really dangerous.

"The rangers in both Mozambique and South Africa have increased security and many people from this village have been killed. One of my neighbours was shot dead recently. But it's not just poachers who are getting killed. Many rangers are also being shot dead. It's like a war. It doesn't feel good; poaching is a crime and it's wrong. It needs to end.

"At school I learned that we must protect our wild animals, because otherwise they will become extinct. Like the rhinos here. The rangers have an important job protecting animals and the natural environment, and they are paid to do it. People who do the right thing are cool. I want to be like that, not a criminal who poaches.

"But I probably can't get a job as a ranger as I left school so early. My greatest wish is to get to continue my education and do something sensible with my life."

You can watch the film about Paulo at worldschildrensprize.org/video/pcg



Villages with new houses are built outside of Limpopo National Park.



“Many of the boys my age in our village don’t go to school. They poach instead. By killing animals, they are committing crimes that will make Mozambique poorer. But these boys’ rights are also being violated when their parents encourage them to poach instead of going to school. It is every child’s right to be able to go to school,” says Luis, who lives near Limpopo National Park in Mozambique.



Loves animals, hates po

My siblings and I go to school, both my brothers and sisters. We’re not rich by any means, but mum and dad work hard so we can go to school and



Girls married off

It’s the weekend, and Luis is helping his little sister Rijay with her homework.

“Not all girls get to go to school here, but in my family, both the girls and the boys go to school. My favourite subject is Portuguese, and when I’m older I want to be a teacher,” says Rijay, 10.

“It’s hardest for girls to stay on at school, because many girls my age are married off. It’s wrong that someone who is just a child themselves has to be a parent and know how to look after a child. All children should go to school,” says Luis.

have a good life. They do it because they love us. Mum and dad grow maize, sweet potato and cassava. Both of them work in the fields, and on the weekends my siblings and I help out.

“Boys my age who don’t go to school almost always start poaching in the park, and they are often encouraged by their own parents. It’s crazy, because they can get shot or end up in prison. There are many here in the village who are poachers, and I think it’s mainly because they haven’t had enough schooling. They don’t understand how important it is to protect animals and the natural environment. That everything in nature is priceless and connected as part of a natural cycle. They don’t understand that these animals are endangered; that one day there won’t be any rhinos anymore, and then they won’t be able to earn any more money.”

You have to work hard

“Some say that they poach because there are no jobs here. But I don’t think there’s a single good reason that makes poaching ok. If you want a job and to survive, you can always find something. You can be a fisherman or a farmer like my dad. Then you get both food to eat and crops, or a catch to sell and you can earn money. They are not easy jobs, you have to work hard to survive. And dad says it’s getting harder to grow maize and sweet potato; that

the rains don’t come when they should and that it’s because of climate change. But those of us who live here can actually also work as rangers and protect animals instead of killing them. Then we’re looking after the natural environment and helping the climate too.

“I’ve learned about nature, the environment and wild animals at school, but my love for animals and desire to protect them instead of killing them comes from my parents.”



School most important

“If I have to sell the tin roof of our house to afford to give my children a good education, then so be it! Nothing is more important than education. Then you can get a good job and not start poaching and be tricked into believing it’s a good life. Because it isn’t,” says Luis’ dad Isaac.

Helping out

"On the weekends, my siblings and I help mum and dad in the fields," says Luis.



aching

Knowledge is vital

"Knowledge is our only chance if we're going to put an end to poaching. We need to learn a lot about animals, nature, the

environment and children's rights at a young age. That way we'll be better than parents today, and we won't send our children out to poach but ins-



Family against poaching

"At the moment, eight men from the village are in prison in South Africa, with long sentences of up to eight years. And eleven villagers have been shot and killed by rangers: ten in South Africa and one in Mozambique," says Luis' dad Isaac.

"My cousin was killed in South Africa for poaching rhinos. His two-year-old son was left without a dad. It's terrible. At the same time I understand why it happened. Poaching is a crime, everyone knows that, but he still went off," says Luis.

Mozambique is affected

Luis says the boys who quit school and start poaching are making Mozambique poorer in three ways:

1. If you don't go to school and learn important things, it will be hard to be part of helping to develop Mozambique.
2. If elephants, rhinos, impalas and other amazing animals die out, Mozambique will lose both its natural and cultural wealth. The country will be poorer and everyone will lose out.
3. If poaching continues, the country and the villages will lose money and jobs that are created when tourists want to come and experience the wild animals. Villagers can start working at hotels and restaurants, and as guides and rangers, but if there are no wild animals, then no tourists will come and there will be no jobs left.

You can watch the film about Luis at worlds-childrensprize.org/video pcg

tead give our girls and boys the right to go to school as they should.

"We must also stop thinking that poachers are cool and successful. They are nothing more than criminals. We need role models who have been successful because they have gone to school and worked hard, not

because they have stolen and killed. I want to be such a person. I want to be an engineer and earn money, have a lovely house and a nice car. But I also want to shine by doing something important in life, for society. For building and helping, instead of tearing down and destroying." 🌍

Football best

"Playing football with my friends is the best!" says Luis.



Dad killed for poaching

“My dad was shot dead by rangers in South Africa when he was poaching rhinos last year. I miss him every day,” says Ronaldo, 13, in one of the villages at Limpopo National Park in Mozambique with many poachers.

“Dad and I were best friends and it feels very empty without him. At the same time I’m really angry with him for going to South Africa as a poacher and getting killed. I hate poaching. It’s wrong to kill animals because they’re innocent and can’t speak up for themselves. And it’s against the law to kill animals. I wish my dad had done some-

thing different, but he did it because we’re poor.

“Mum and I live alone now, and nothing is like it used to be anymore. My two younger sisters have moved to my aunt’s in another part of the country, because mum couldn’t take care of all her children herself. Mum goes fishing and sells the catch at the market in town.

Sometimes we have enough

money, sometimes not, and I often go to bed hungry.

“I’m in year 6 now and my uncles help pay my school fees, but we can’t afford a school uniform. Sometimes I get teased because of it. The others say that I’m poor and that makes me sad. But there are lots of other children in school just like me. They don’t have a dad at home anymore either, because they’ve been

caught poaching and been shot or put in prison. Men usually earn more than women here, so when the dad disappears it’s really hard for the mum to take care of her family alone.

“I’ll never be a poacher. On the weekends I help grandad with the cattle, but my dream is to be an engineer. And I love playing football, it’s the best thing ever!”



Mira is a ranger

“When I was 13, I got the opportunity to start a preparatory teacher training course. It was my dream, and mum was really proud, but dad said no. He said that higher education wasn’t for girls. And because men have the say here, not women, I had to quit school,” says Mira. She is now one of three female rangers in Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, with the dangerous job of tracking, arresting and imprisoning poachers.



My parents divorced when I was three years old. Dad forbade me and mum from meeting and forced me to move in with him and his second wife. I didn’t get any food until all their children had eaten their fill and there were just scraps left, which were never enough. I was constantly hungry, and used to go to the market to pick up breadcrumbs and anything else that I could eat from the ground.

“When dad forced me to quit school, I was meant to stay in

his house all day. I was devastated. But what dad didn’t know was that for a few years I’d been managing to meet my mum in secret at the market on my way home from school. I decided to run away to her to continue my education.”

Beaten

“After three days I took off, but dad caught up with me and dragged me home. He tied me to a chair and hit me with a rubber hose. He said he would beat the evil spirit out of me that mum had infected

me with. Then he left me with his sister in a village far from home, where I had to work in her fields. When I explained that I’d rather go to school, she said that the only thing I needed to learn now was how to use a hoe.

“Nine months later, I found out one day that mum had

suddenly died. I cried so much. I hadn’t even had time to say goodbye to mum when I was taken away, and now it felt like I had nothing left to live for. But in the end I gathered my strength and decided to honour my mum’s memory by running away, finishing school and making a good life



“I love animals!”
Mira hugging Cruiser the tracker dog.



Peace with dad

“My grandma, who lived nearby, eventually discovered that I was being badly treated. When dad and his wife went to the fields, grandma hid food for me in a hole in a Mafureira tree that grew right outside our house. I think she saved my life.

I gave my first salary as a ranger to my dad. He also got a nice suit, a hat and shoes. That made him cry. I think he was ashamed at how he had treated me. But I’ve made peace. I’ve forgiven him,” says Mira.





Mira not like other girls

"Mira manages over 23 men in the camp. It's unusual for women to manage men here in Mozambique. But Mira is a manager because she's the best, not because she's a woman," says a proud José Zavala, who is one of the camp leaders.



Radio contact

"We report everything that happens to base via radio. For example, if they need to send the helicopter to pick up poachers that we've captured."

for myself. I knew it would have made her happy."

Home help

"I managed to escape to the capital Maputo, where I started working as a domestic help. I was 14 by that time. After a while I'd managed to save up enough money to move to a relative and start school again. While attending school, I cooked food which people bought for their parties, and it helped me pay for and finish secondary school.

"One day I saw on TV that a national park was to start up a training course in ecotourism. I had always loved animals and nature, so I applied imme-

diately and was accepted. When I'd finished the course, I applied for ranger training here in Limpopo. It is known as the best and toughest training in the whole country. After some really hard tests in terrain running, hiking, cycling and lots of other things, there were 40 of 140 applicants left. And just three girls, including me. I was delighted!"

Ranger

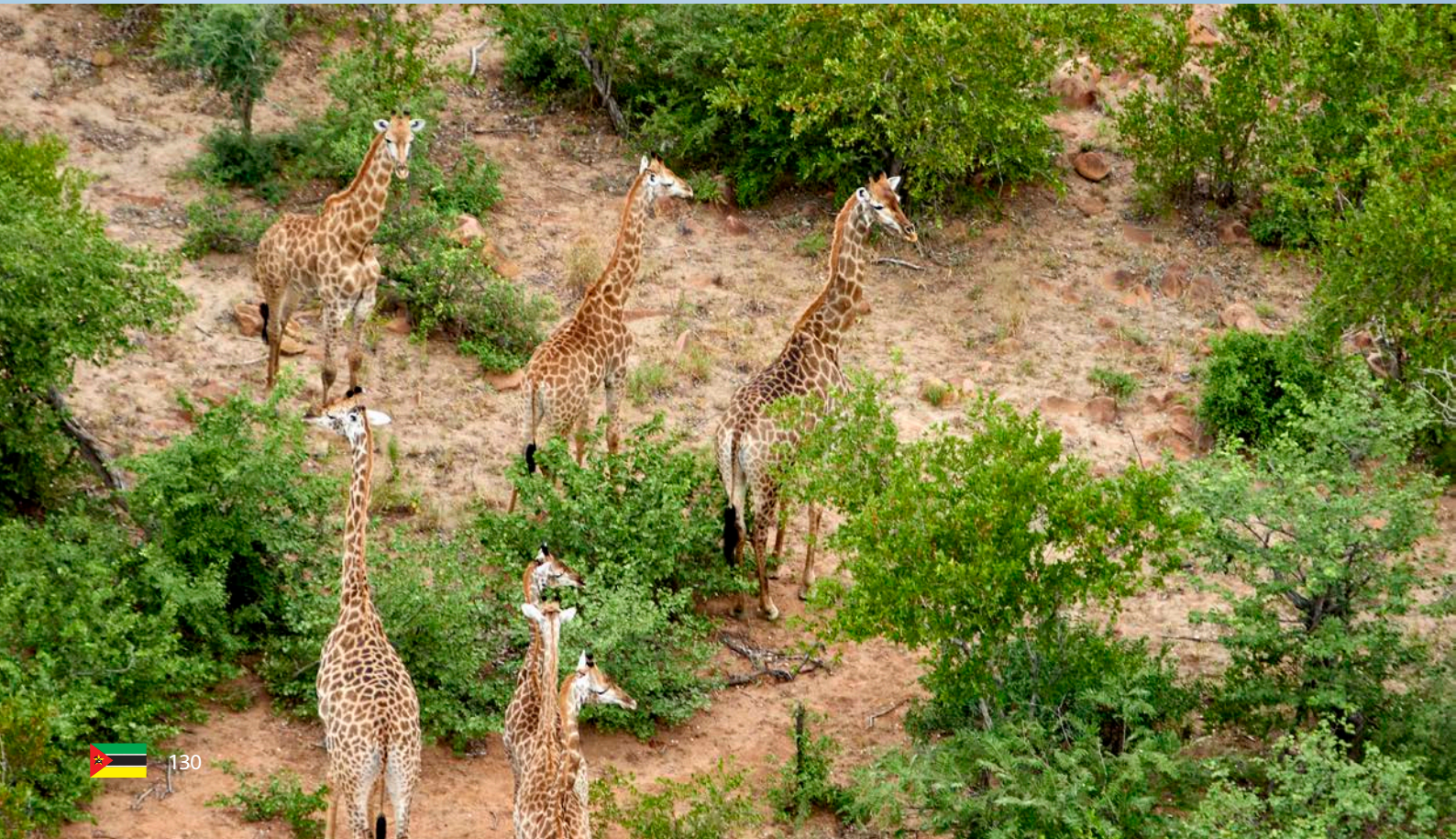
"I've been a ranger and group leader here now for ten months, and I love it! My job is to protect the biodiversity of animals and plants here in Limpopo. For me, this mainly involves tracking, capturing

and arresting poachers. We also collect snares and educate villagers about the importance of preserving animals and the natural environment. Financially, because wild animal tourism creates jobs and generates money – for example ten of my workmates are from poor villages just outside the park – but also socially and culturally. The wild animals are part of our heritage and our identity.

"When we visit the villages, it is very clear that boys and girls do not have the same rights here. Girls do not have the same opportunity to go to school, and many parents marry off their 14-year-old

daughters in exchange for cows and money. I hate that. Other girls are forced to sell their bodies to survive.

"I want to visit villages and schools and tell them about wildlife conservation and girls' rights. To show that it is possible to succeed and do important things in life, despite having it tough and being poor. Despite being a girl." 🌍





Dangerous job

"I'm actually called Lucrecencia Macuacua, but everyone calls me Mira! Naturally I'm worried that I or one of my workmates will get injured or killed. But if I die on the job, I can die happy, because then I will have died defending and fighting for what is right," says Mira.

Long hikes

"We hike for at least 20 km a day when we're doing patrols on foot. We have food, water and everything we need to stay as long as we have to in the bush to track poachers. The longest I've been out is five days. We sleep on boulders, never on the ground, because there's a risk of being trampled by buffalo! We work three weeks on and one week off," says Mira.



Footprint book



Water bottle



Compass



Handcuffs



Valuable rhino horn

"Not long ago, I was part of a team that tracked and captured poachers on the South African border who had killed rhino. I've just given evidence in court, and now the poachers can expect a 20-year prison sentence. One kilo of rhino horn is worth 500,000 meticaais (USD 8,500). The minimum wage here is 3,500 meticaais (USD 60) a month, but there are a lot of people here who aren't even on that much. But even if you're poor, you have the chance to say no when organised criminals from Asia tell you to shoot our animals. You always have the opportunity to do the right thing," says Mira.





Save the Rhino

The rhinoceros has been around for 60 million years. The name means 'nose horn' and is often shortened to rhino. There used to be 30 different species of rhino, but now there are just five species left and all of them are endangered. In the peace park, *Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park*, there are now no rhinos left in the areas that fall within *Gonarezhou National Park* in Zimbabwe and *Limpopo National Park* in Mozambique. An average of two rhinos are killed every day by poachers for the sake of their horns.

A rhino calf weighs 60 kilos when it is born, and the white rhino, the second largest land mammal, can grow to a height of 1.8 m and weigh 2,500 kilos!

Rhinos have a reputation for being dangerous and grumpy. This is mostly because their eyesight isn't very good, so they cannot see any further than about 15 metres, making them vulnerable and liable to feel threatened.

An important role

As mega-herbivores, rhinos play a crucial role in ecosystems. They are considered an "umbrella species", which means that other species, from plants and birds to insects and mammals, depend on them. They consume large amounts of vegetation, which helps to keep a healthy balance within the ecosystem. Removing rhinos changes the landscape and makes it unsuitable for species such as antelopes, which in turn leave the area.

As one of *The big five*, rhinos contribute to economic growth through tourism, which creates job opportunities and provides benefits to local communities.



A threatened species

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were more than 500,000 rhinos. Today, only 23,500 rhinos survive in the wild. An average of two rhinos are poached for their horns every day. There is a ban on the international trade of rhino horn. However, criminal syndicates organize the illegal poaching and trafficking of rhino horn from Africa to Asia. While poachers risk severe punishment and their families are often severely affected, the syndicate leaders make vast amounts of money.

Buyers are mainly based in China and Vietnam, where rhino horn, which is made of clumped hair or keratin, the same type of protein that your hair and fingernails are made of, is believed to have healing powers and is used in traditional medicine. The horns have also become a status symbol and are sold as a high-value gift item.

Taking action

Several organizations are fighting to save the rhino. Peace Parks Foundation is:

- Training anti-poaching units to be better at detecting, tracking and arresting poachers.
- Providing anti-poaching units with helicopters, tracker dogs, thermal cameras and radar systems.
- Improving wildlife crime investigations through strengthened cooperation between security and law-enforcement agencies in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.
- Working with communities in and around parks to develop economic alternatives to poaching.
- Saving rhino calves that have been orphaned due to poaching.
- Educating young people in Vietnam and China about the consequences of poaching and the illegal trade in rhino horn.