

# THE Globe

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WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE MAGAZINE #60/61 2015

VOTE! RÖSTA!  
¡VOTA! मत  
वाक्कनिप्पीं رای دهید  
ဆန္ဒမဲထည့်ခြင်း!  
တီထာန့်တီဖး!  
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صوَّت! !: ووت  
HÃY BẦU!



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

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

PREMIO DE LOS NIÑOS  
DEL MUNDO POR LOS  
DERECHOS DEL NIÑO

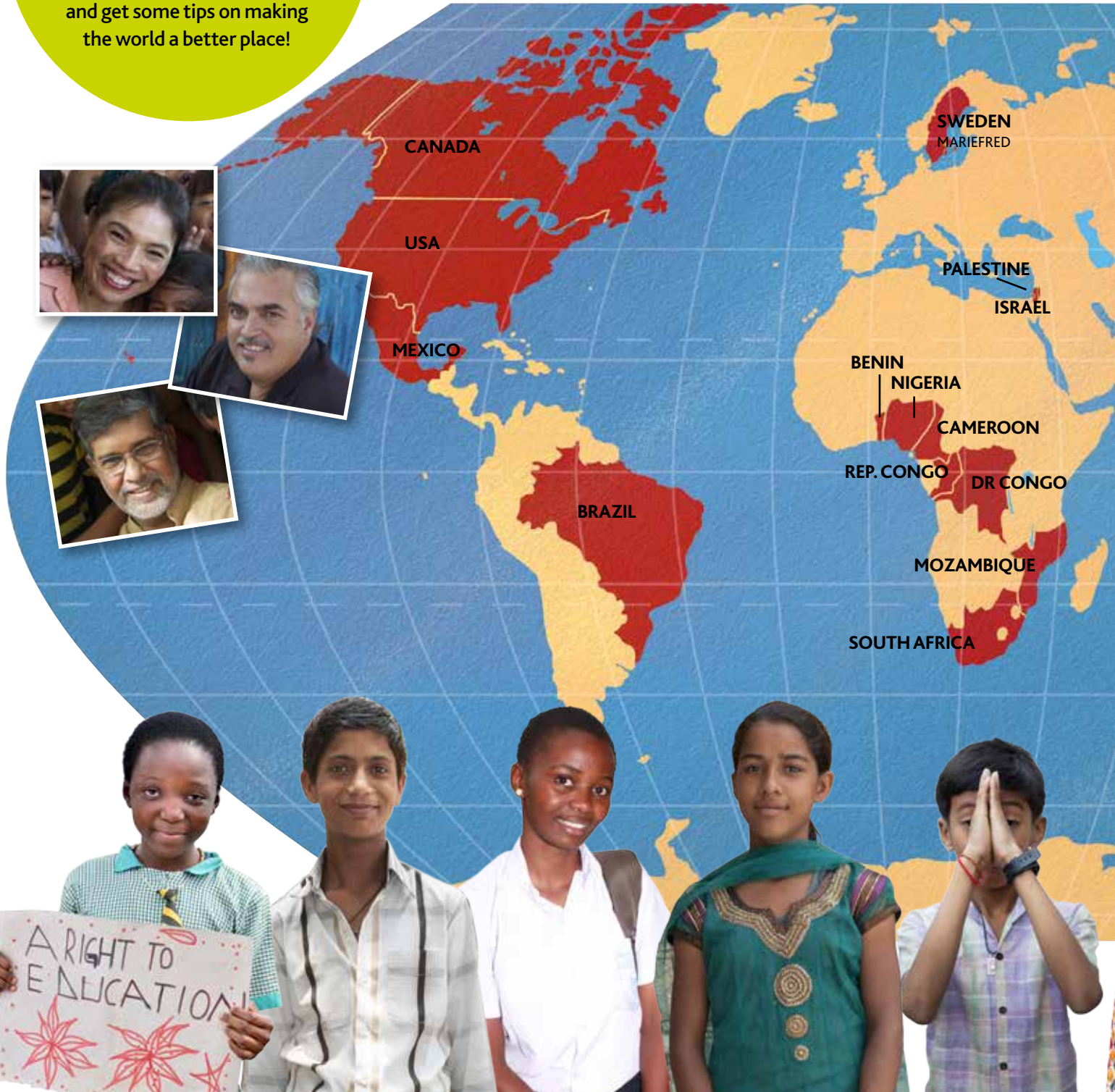
PRÊMIO DAS CRIANÇAS DO  
MUNDO PELOS DIREITOS  
DA CRIANÇA

बाल अधिकारों हेतु  
विश्व बाल पुरस्कार



# World's Child for the Rights of the

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



The girl on the front cover of The Globe, Noémia, 12, has been trained and empowered as a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador. She is holding the WCP globe that she and other Child Rights Ambassadors in Mozambique have been awarded.

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# ren's Prize Child



INDIA  
PAKISTAN  
NEPAL  
BANGLADESH  
BURMA/MYANMAR  
PHILIPPINES  
CAMBODIA

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# Meet the Child Jury

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

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

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

At [www.worldschildrensprize.org](http://www.worldschildrensprize.org) you can find longer stories about several of the jury members.



A jury selfie together with singer and WCP patron Loreen.





Payal



Jhonn Nara



Ndale



Emma

### ♥ PAYAL JANGID, 13

India

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

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

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

### ♥ JHONN NARA, 14

Brazil

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ♥ NDALE NYENGELA, 17

D.R. Congo

**Represents child soldiers and children in armed conflict.**

When Ndale was 11 years old and on his way to school he was kidnapped by an armed group and forced to become a child soldier.

"We walked for three days without eating or sleeping. When we walked too slowly they kicked us and shouted at us. Once we knew how to handle our weapons, they said now it was time to learn to kill people. One day we hid in the forest, near a road. Someone began to shoot. People were falling down dead beside me. I was totally overwhelmed by terror. When I tried to hide, the other soldiers shoved me forward and said: 'If your friend dies, it doesn't matter. Just step over him! It's your duty!'"

After three years Ndale managed to flee. BVES helped him to process his experiences and start going to school.

"I was so happy, I had a new start in life. After my studies I want to make music about life in the army and about the rights of the child. I want to make sure that children are not made into soldiers. All adults have to remember that they were children once too."

### ♥ EMMA MOGUS, 16

Canada

**Represents children who fight for equal rights for all children, especially children from indigenous groups.**

When Emma was nine, she found out that children from Canada's indigenous population, the First Peoples or First Nations, were being treated unjustly. Many lived in poverty without access to good schools or books. Emma and her older sister Julia launched a campaign. They wrote letters and called politicians and the media, and made speeches on how children from indigenous groups should have the same rights as other Canadian children. They also started collecting books, which were sent to children who didn't have any. Today, Emma and her sister run their own organisation that fights for children's right to education and books, and they have sent over 60,000 books to vulnerable children.



The Child Jury with Queen Silvia and Sweden's Prime Minister, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Minister for Children.







Brianna



Mae



Liv



Nuzhat



Netta

## ♥ BRIANNA AUDINETT, 17

USA

**Represents children who are homeless and children who fight for homeless children.**

When Brianna was eleven, her mother left her violent father. Brianna and her three brothers became homeless in Los Angeles. Eventually they found a place in a shelter. They lived here for many months, sleeping with other homeless people in bunk beds in a dormitory. They always had to be quiet, and could hardly ever play. But opposite the shelter there was an organisation that gave Brianna and her brothers somewhere to play, school materials and help with their homework.

“When I grow up I want to be a doctor, and help homeless people in particular. They don’t have any money, but I’ll help them anyway,” says Brianna. At long last she and her family now have a home of their own and have started their own organisation to fight for homeless children.

## ♥ MAE SEGOVIA, 16

Philippines

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

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

house for vulnerable girls. She goes to school and fights for the rights of other girls who have suffered abuse.

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

## ♥ LIV KJELLBERG, 16

Sweden

**Represents children who are bullied and children who fight against bullying.**

“It starts with being teased for something, like wearing the wrong clothes, being shy or looking different,” says Liv. “Then it continues with pushing and shoving, and it just gets worse and worse.”

Liv found herself excluded by the other girls right from the first year of school. She had to sit on her own in the school canteen, and she was subjected to shoving and taunting.

“The teachers aren’t always aware of what happens between pupils, and when children are bullied they might not say anything. They think that tomorrow will be better, that they might be able to hang out with the others.”

Liv took matters into her own hands and raised money to start an anti-bullying initiative in her school.

“Now things are better in class and no-one bullies other people. And I have lots of close friends at school.”

## ♥ NUZHAT TABASSUM PROMI, 17

Bangladesh

**Represents children who have their rights violated through natural disasters and environmental degradation.**

“If the sea level rises by one metre, the southern part of Bangladesh, where I live, will be underwater. I think about that

often. Global warming is causing the ice at the North and South Poles and in the Himalayas to melt. As a result we are hit harder by cyclones and flooding. When I was on my way to school the day after the mega-cyclone, there were dead and injured people all over the place,” says Nuzhat. She lives in a small town in southern Bangladesh that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

“Cyclones, very severe storms, hit Bangladesh every year. But the country is well-prepared, and has a good cyclone warning system. The absolute worst thing that has happened to me in my life was when I thought my school had been destroyed by the mega-cyclone.”

## ♥ NETTA ALEXANDRI, 15

Israel

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

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

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

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





Hamoodi



Emelda



Kewal



Manchala

## ♥ HAMOODI ELSALAMEEN, 17

**Palestine**

**Represents children in conflict areas, children living under occupation and children participating in dialogue for peace.**

Hamoodi lives in a poor village south of Hebron on the West Bank, an area that is occupied by Israel.

“One night, Israeli soldiers came to our village in tanks. They gave orders through a loudspeaker, telling everyone to switch their lights on. They shot in all directions, and three people were killed.”

When he was five and heard that a little boy had been killed, Hamoodi said, “I want a gun!” But now he takes part in negotiations for peace. He has Jewish friends, and plays football with them several times a month in Israel.

“I like playing football, but we don’t have a pitch in our village. We usually play on a field further away, but when the Israeli soldiers come to arrest someone, they drive us away. They take away all the fun things,” says Hamoodi.

## ♥ EMELDA ZAMAMBO, 16

**Mozambique**

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

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

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

Emelda’s grandmother and her uncle’s family welcomed her with open arms.

She got a place to live, food, clothes and the chance to go to school.

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

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

## ♥ KEWAL RAM, 17

**Pakistan**

**Represents child labourers, debt slave children and children who ‘don’t exist’ because nobody has registered their births.**

When Kewal was eight, his mother fell seriously ill. Kewal’s father borrowed money for medicine from a man who owned some carpet looms.

“The condition was that someone in my family had to work to repay the debt, and because I was the oldest I had to go and work in the carpet factory. It was a terrible time. They hardly gave us any food and the debt never decreased, however much I worked. After three years I managed to run away. My family persuaded the factory owner to let me work in the village instead, so that I could go to school in the mornings.”

Still every day after school, Kewal would sit at the carpet loom until it was so dark he couldn’t see, and all day on Sundays. He worked at least 40 hours a week, but he never received any money for his work. Half of his pay went to the factory owner, and the other half to pay off other debts with a trader in the next village. But when Kewal was 14 his uncle took over the responsibility for weaving carpets and paying off the debt, and he was able to study full time.

“My dream is to become a doctor one day,” he says.

## ♥ MANCHALA, 16

**Nepal**

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

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

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

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

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

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





# What is the World's Ch

Through the World's Children's Prize program, you and other children all over the world can learn about your rights and democracy, and demand respect for the rights of the child. Every year, three fantastic Child Rights Heroes are nominated for the World's Children's Prize, the only prize for children's rights that is awarded by children themselves.

You and millions of other children can read about the prize candidates and the children they fight for in *The Globe* magazine. The WCP program ends with you children voting for your Child Rights Hero in the Global Vote. Up to 7.1 million children have voted in previous years.

The 2015 World's Children's Prize program runs from 25 February to 5 October.



1

## The 2015 World's Children's Prize is launched

The program kicks off when this year's three candidates, Child Rights Heroes who have made unique contributions to helping vulnerable children, are revealed. You can decide for yourself when to begin studying this year's program. Many schools launch it by organising an opening ceremony.



5

## Global Vote Day

Vote first and then celebrate with a party and some performances! Don't forget to report the result of your school's vote to the WCP contact person in your country (if you have one, otherwise via the ballot box on the website).

6

## The big announcement!

On the same day all over the world, children hold their own press conferences. They reveal which of the three nominees has been chosen by millions of voting children to receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, and which two will receive the World's Children's Honorary Award. Invite the media in your area to a World's Children's Press Conference, or gather your whole school to announce the results. You can also talk about improvements in respect for the rights of the child that you would like to see.

(Page 112)



## Check it out and share your stories!

[youtube.com/worldschildrensprize](https://www.youtube.com/worldschildrensprize)  
[facebook.com/worldschildrensprize](https://www.facebook.com/worldschildrensprize)  
[twitter.com/wcpfoundation](https://twitter.com/wcpfoundation)  
[Instagram.com/worldschildrensprize](https://www.instagram.com/worldschildrensprize)  
[www.worldschildrensprize.org](http://www.worldschildrensprize.org)



# Children's Prize?

2



## Rights and democracy in your life

Find out whether the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is followed where you live, in your family, at school and in your country. Read the factsheet about the rights of the child in your country (comes with The Globe magazine, or can be downloaded from the website) and the history of democracy in The Globe. Discuss how things could be better for children in your country. For example, are you listened to regarding issues that affect you and your friends? Tell other students, parents, teachers, politicians and the media. You can also start a WCP Child Rights Club at your school. (Pages 12–13, 28–30)

3

## The rights of the child in the world

The rights of the child apply to all children, everywhere. Learn more through meeting the Child Jury, the Child Rights Heroes, the Child Rights Ambassadors for girls' rights, and the children they fight for. Find out what life is really like for the world's children today. (Pages 6–11, 14–15, 32–92, 93–111)

So far 36.4 million children all over the world have learned about the rights of the child and democracy through the World's Children's Prize program. Around 60,000 schools with 30 million students in 112 countries have registered as Global Friend schools and support the World's Children's Prize.

I demand respect for children's rights!

4



## Prepare your Global Vote

Set a date for your Global Vote in plenty of time and prepare everything you need for a democratic election. Appoint presiding officers, vote counters and election supervisors and make ballot boxes, ballot papers and voting booths. Invite the media, parents and politicians to experience your Global Vote Day. (Pages 16–27)

## The grand finale!

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



## Age limit for the World's Children's Prize

The World's Children's Prize exists for anyone from age 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. The lower age limit is there for several reasons: in order to be able to participate in the Global Vote, you must learn all about the work of the nominees. The children they fight for have often experienced severe violations of their rights, and their stories can be frightening for younger children. Even older children may find it hard to read about such difficult experiences. That's why it is important to have an adult to talk to afterwards.

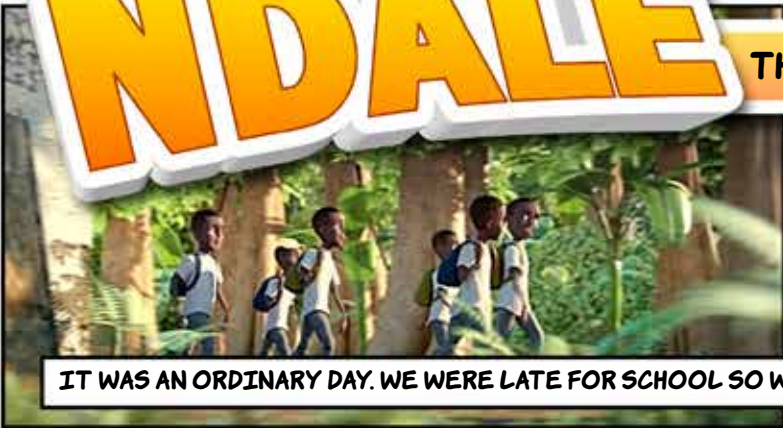
7





# INDALE

## THE STORY OF A CHILD SOLDIER



IT WAS AN ORDINARY DAY. WE WERE LATE FOR SCHOOL SO WE TOOK A SHORTCUT THROUGH THE FOREST.

SUDDENLY, TWO SOLDIERS STOPPED US.



WE NEED MORE SOLDIERS, SO YOU'RE COMING WITH US!



BUT WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO SCHOOL...



IF YOU SAY NO WE'LL SHOOT YOU!



WE WALKED FOR THREE DAYS WITH NOTHING TO EAT OR DRINK.





THEY BURNED OUR SCHOOL UNIFORMS...



AND GAVE US SOLDIERS' UNIFORMS INSTEAD.



THEY TAUGHT US TO KILL PEOPLE.

ONE NIGHT THEY SAID WE HAD TO GO INTO BATTLE. THEY FORCED US CHILDREN TO GO FIRST.



WE HEARD GUNFIRE AND I TRIED TO HIDE.



TWO OF MY SCHOOL FRIENDS WERE KILLED THAT NIGHT.



I WAS A SOLDIER FOR THREE YEARS OF MY LIFE.



FINALLY, ONE NIGHT, WE MANAGED TO ESCAPE.



WE GOT TO A CENTRE FOR LIBERATED CHILD SOLDIERS.

THE WORLD'S CHILDREN'S PRIZE PROGRAM TAUGHT ME ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. NOW I CAN DEMAND RESPECT FOR MY RIGHTS AND TEACH OTHERS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS.



SEE A SHORT FILM OF NDALE'S STORY AT [WORLDSCHILDRENSPRIZE.ORG/NDALENYENGELA](http://WORLDSCHILDRENSPRIZE.ORG/NDALENYENGELA)







# Celebrate the child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child brings together a long series of rights that apply to all the children in the world. We have summarised a few of them here. Read the full text of the Convention at: [www.worldschildrensprize.org](http://www.worldschildrensprize.org)

## Basic principles of the Convention:

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

## What is a convention?

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

## The right to complain!

A brand new protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children whose rights have been violated can submit complaints directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, if they have not received help and rehabilitation in their own country. This increases the pressure on the countries of the world to take the rights of the child seriously. Children in countries that have ratified (approved) the protocol therefore have better chances of making their voices heard regarding their rights. So far around 30 countries have ratified the protocol. Go to [www.worldschildrensprize.org/op3](http://www.worldschildrensprize.org/op3) to find out whether your country has given children the right to complain directly to the UN. If not, you can contact your politicians and demand that they do so. You can also tell everyone you know about OP3, so that you can work together to influence your government.



The 20th of November is a day of celebration for all the children in the world. It was on that day in 1989 that the UN adopted the CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. It applies to you and all other children under 18.

All the countries in the world except the USA and South Sudan have ratified (pledged to follow) the Convention. This means they are obliged to take children's rights into consideration and to listen to what children have to say.

# the rights of

## Article 1

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

## Article 2

All children are equal.

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

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

## Article 3

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

## Article 6

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

## Article 7

You have the right to a name and a nationality.

## Article 9

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

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

## Articles 12–15

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

## Article 18

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

## Article 19

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

## Articles 20–21

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

## Article 22

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

## Article 23

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

## Article 24

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

## Articles 28–29

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

## Article 30

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

## Article 31

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

## Article 32

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

## Article 34

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

## Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

## Article 37

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

## Article 38

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

## Article 42

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







# How are the world's

## 2.2 BILLION CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN THE WORLD

Over 80 million of those children live in the USA and South Sudan, the only countries that have not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. All other countries have promised to respect the rights of the child, but violations of those rights are common in all countries.

## NAME AND NATIONALITY

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

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

## A HOME, CLOTHING, FOOD AND SECURITY

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

*More than half of the world's children live in poverty. Around 440 million children have less than US\$1.25 (£0.80) a day to live on.*

## SURVIVE AND GROW

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

*1 in 18 children (1 in 11 in the poorest countries) dies before reaching the age of five, usually due to causes that could have been prevented.*

## HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

You have the right to food, clean water and medical care.

*Every day 18,000 children under the age of 5 die (6.6 million a year) of diseases caused by lack of food, clean water, hygiene and health care. Vaccinations against the most common childhood illnesses help save 2–3 million lives a year. But 1 in 6 children is never vaccinated. Every year, 2 million children die of diseases that can be prevented by vaccination. 35 out of 100 children in the 50 poorest countries do not have access to clean water. 1,500 children under five die from malaria every day (approx 500,000 per year). Only 3 in 10 children with malaria receive treatment, and only 4 in 10 children in the poorest malarial countries sleep under a mosquito net.*

## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability you have the same rights as everyone else. You have the right to receive support so that you can play an active role in society.

*Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in the world. In many countries they are not allowed to go to school. Many are treated like inferior beings and are kept hidden away. There are approximately 200 million children with disabilities in the world.*





# children?

## CHILDREN WHO LIVE ON THE STREET

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

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

## HAZARDOUS CHILD LABOUR

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

*Around 264 million children work, and for most of them, the work they do is directly harmful to their safety, health, morale and education. Some 5,5 million children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, as debt slaves, child soldiers or victims of the child sex trade. Every year, 1.2 million children are 'trafficked' in the modern day slave trade.*

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

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

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

## MINORITY CHILDREN

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

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

## PROTECTION IN WAR AND FLIGHT

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.

*Over the last 10 years at least 2 million children have been killed in war. 6 million have suffered serious physical injuries. 10 million have suffered serious psychological harm. 1 million have lost or become separated from their parents. Around 250,000 children have been used as soldiers, carriers or mine clearers (over 1000 children are killed or injured by mines every year). 25 million children have had to flee their homes or countries.*

## SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

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

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

## PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE

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

*6 out of 10 children in the world (almost 1 billion) between the ages of 2 and 14 are regularly subjected to physical punishment and violence from their parents or other guardians. Many countries allow corporal punishment in schools. 43 countries have banned all forms of physical punishment of children.*

## 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!





Students from several schools in Beni in eastern DR Congo have gathered for their Global Vote day. This area has been attacked by armed groups a number of times in the last year. Many have been killed. Other children have been kidnapped and forced to become child soldiers or sex slaves for the soldiers.

# Time for the Global Vote

You have the right to vote in the Global Vote until the year you turn 18. Through the Global Vote, you help decide who will receive the 2015 *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child*.

**A**s soon as you start this year's World's Children's Prize program, it's important to set a date for your Global Vote Day. In some places, several schools or even entire cities or school districts hold their Global Vote on the same day. It's important that you have plenty of time before your Global Vote Day, weeks or months, to learn about and discuss the rights of the child where you live and around the world. And to read all of *The Globe* magazine!

## Secret ballot

A lot of preparation is needed to ensure your Global Vote is a democratic election, where you can be sure your vote will be kept secret. Nobody else should be able to influence your decision – not your friends, nor your teachers, nor parents. Nobody should be able to find out who you voted for, unless you tell them yourself.

You will need:

## To appoint presiding officers, election supervisors and vote counters

The presiding officers mark off the names on the electoral register and give out ballot papers. The election supervisors make sure that the voting, ink marking and vote counting is done correctly. The vote counters count the votes.

## Electoral register

Everyone who has the right to vote should be included in a list of names. The names should be carefully marked off when each person receives their ballot paper, or when they cast their vote in the ballot box.

## Ballot papers

You can use the ones you receive from the World's Children's Prize, photocopy some more, or make your own.

## Voting booths

Make your own voting booths, or borrow some from adult elections. Enter the booth one at a time, so that nobody can see who you're voting for.

## Ballot box

Use a large tin, box or plant pot as a ballot box, or make your own out of cardboard or woven palm leaves.

## Ink to prevent cheating

Make sure that nobody can vote twice by marking everybody who has voted, for example, with ink on their thumb, a painted nail, or a line on the hand or face. Use ink that does not easily wash off!

Don't forget to send in your results for all three candidates!

## Invite the media

Remember to invite the local media to your Global Vote Day well in advance. You children should invite them, telling them all about your work for the rights of the child. You can also invite parents and local politicians.

On pages 17–31 you can visit Global Vote Days in lots of different countries.



## Voting storm in Cambodia

There are high winds when the children at Popel School in Siem Reap, Cambodia, go to vote. But the students don't mind, and one girl says:

"This morning it looked like a storm was coming, and my mother said I shouldn't go to the Global Vote day. But I came anyway, and now I'm glad I did."



## Voting power in Ghana

It's voting time at Tessark School in Ghana: "Vote here! Your vote is your power!"



## Global Vote in India

The students at Dav Centenary Public School in Phillaur in India have organised the school's Global Vote.



Ink to prevent cheating.



## Digital ballot box in Mexico

The long queue to vote in Jalisco in Mexico snakes back and forth. Here they don't have voting booths or even ballot papers – everyone uses the digital ballot boxes to vote.

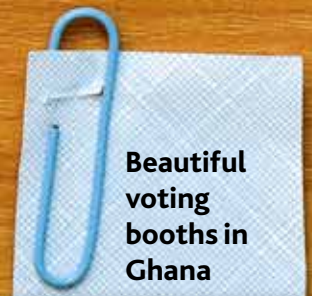


## Voting queue in Benin

The voting officials give the go ahead to the voting queue as soon as the large ballot box is in place.



PHOTO: PETER COSTUND



Beautiful voting booths in Ghana

## Volcano voting in Sweden

Daniel, 11, at Vänge School in Sweden casts his vote in a ballot box shaped like a volcano. The reason for this is that one of the students at the school, Angelina, said:

"I see the World's Children's Prize program as a volcano that erupts and sprays out good news and knowledge of our rights. The WCP has brought us together, the world's children. We understand one another by reading The Globe, and it feels like having another family by my side."



PHOTO: REBECCA GOTHE





The Child Rights Ambassadors cut out ballot papers...

...made voting posters, newspaper garlands, voting booths...



## Glue in a helmet for the Global Vote

“We’re preparing the voting area for our Global Vote. I’m making glue so that we can put up posters and other decorations. I use flour and water, mixed by hand, to make the glue. I tried to find a bowl to mix it in but I couldn’t find one. Luckily I found this construction helmet in the playground so I’m using it instead! There are construction workers here, rebuilding more or less the whole school. When the school building is nice and new, you feel proud and understand how important it is to go to school. If it’s old and rundown, you don’t feel like that at all. We have chosen to hold our Global

Vote in one of the finest buildings in our school. The Global Vote is a special event because we are celebrating our rights. So that celebration should be held in a beautiful place!”  
*Stefemi, 11, WCP Child Rights Ambassador, Unidade 10 Primary School, Maputo, Mozambique*

## Ambassadors who

“We Child Rights Ambassadors brought all the girls from every class together and taught them about girls’ rights. We used The Globe magazine. It worked really well,” says Umbellina.



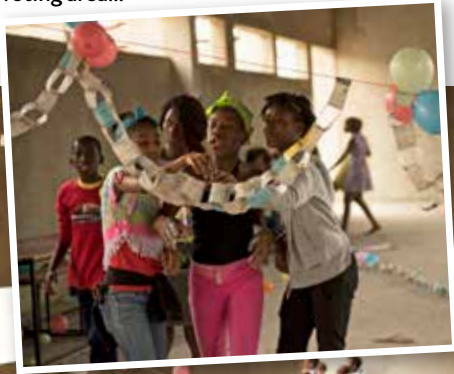
“We Child Rights Ambassadors organised and hosted today’s Global Vote. Almost everything went to plan, so I am really pleased. The World’s Children’s Prize is important to me. The candidates are child rights heroes who do so many good things for children. When I vote for one of the candidates I show that their work is important to me.

Before the Global Vote I read The Globe thoroughly and learned a lot that I didn’t know before. For example, that all

children are equal and should be treated equally. Both boys and girls. Here, lots of people treat boys well and girls badly. In northern Mozambique it is very common for parents to marry off their daughters when they are only 13 or 14 years old. The parents tell their daughters to quit school and get married instead. I think that is so wrong. Girls should be allowed to finish their education and then start working first. Once the girls are adults, they should be able to decide



...decorated the voting area...



...gave out ballot papers...



...helped and informed their friends...



...ticked off names on the voting register...



... and marked the fingers of everyone who voted so that they couldn't vote again.



"I even helped in the kitchen, making tasty sandwiches that all the students shared after the vote. I buttered them and filled them with sausage and mayonnaise. Everyone got soda or mineral water too. It was a real party!" says Umbellina.

# help others

for themselves if they want to get married or not. They shouldn't be forced by their parents when they are still children. I have learned that there are places in the world where girls are not allowed to go to school at all. That is terrible!"

## Girls' rights

"I am a WCP Ambassador, and it's really important that there are Child Rights Ambassadors fighting for girls' rights here in

Mozambique. Before we received our ambassador training, we could see things that seemed wrong – for example, that some of our friends didn't go to school because of poverty, or were suffering in other ways – but we didn't know what to do about it. Now, as ambassadors, we get involved straight away. First we speak to the child and find out what is wrong. Then we speak to the parents and try to help.

One day I met a poor

13-year-old girl from our area, who didn't go to school and couldn't read or write. I said that we Child Rights Ambassadors would visit her mother and see whether there was anything we could do. Before going there, we raised money and collected school-books and food. So when we went we took money for the girl's school fees, which students and teachers had helped raise.

The girl's mother told us that the family was too poor

to allow their daughter to go to school, and that they often went to bed hungry at night. When we explained that we had spoken to the headteacher and persuaded him to allow the girl to start school for free, both the mother and her daughter were over the moon."

*Umbellina, 11, WCP Child Rights Ambassador, Unidade 10 Primary School, Maputo, Mozambique*





# Looking good for Global Vote



Phulmaya has painted her hands beautifully for the Global Vote day in Kavrepalanchowk in Nepal. It's an important day in the village. Lots of the children here didn't know the rights of the child existed until they read *The Globe*. Many have now also learned that girls have the same rights as boys, and that they need to watch out for traffickers.

Orderly voting queue.



The ground in front of the reed polling booth is swept clean for the Global Vote.

First they have read and discussed *The Globe*, both in English and in Nepali.



## Children in the Republic of the Congo on World's Children's



### Member of WCP Child Rights Club

"This is the second year I have participated in the World's Children's Prize and now I'm a member of a Child Rights Club to raise awareness of girls' rights. I want to be a voice for disadvantaged children and open homes for orphaned children where they can get a good education."  
*Cherif, 16*



### Must teach the adults

"Here in Congo, not all children know their rights. So many are orphaned and abandoned. Here we can vote for our rights. And it's up to us to make it clear to all Congolese people, including our parents, that the rights of the child must be respected!"  
*Atipo, 15*

### Advise girls to read *The Globe*

"I didn't know my rights until I read *The Globe*. I advise all girls to go to school and read the magazine to learn about their rights."  
*Edoresias, 14*







Is my name on the voting register?



Here's your ballot paper!



Marks to prevent cheating.



My vote for a child rights hero.



Global Vote day is a party for the rights of the child, and everyone gets juice and sweets.

## Prize and rights of the child:



### The Globe changed my life

"We started a club after learning about our rights in The Globe magazine. The Globe changed my life because I learned about my rights, and that my parents have to respect them."

*Sarah, 14*

### Learning about equal rights

"We want to make sure there is no longer any difference between boys' and girls' rights. All children should know they have the same rights. Thanks to The Globe, I know that, and I know my rights. The Globe has also taught me about empathy."

*Emmanuelle, 13*







Kaka, on the right, with the WCP Clubs' demand for the release of the kidnapped girls, along with students at Igarra Comprehensive High School.

## Kaka and WCP fight for kidnapped girls

In April 2014, terrorist group Boko Haram kidnapped 234 schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria. The chairperson of Nigeria's World's Children's Prize Clubs, Kaka, 18, has spoken out for the girls, demanding their release.

**K**aka knows a lot about violations of the rights of the child.

"When I was just two years old, I had to start selling water and kulikuli (peanut balls) on the street with my grandmother. When my father died when I was nine, I had to move in with a family as their domestic slave. The mother in that family beat me and bullied me every day."

Despite all this, Kaka managed to start school, and at the age of 13 she started her own organisation – the Kaka Girls Child Foundation.

Soon girls from 122 different schools were involved. "Then we started a WCP Child Rights Club at my school and I was the spokesperson. Since then I have helped to start up WCP Clubs at many schools, as well as educating students and teachers about the WCP program. In 2013 I was elected as the chairperson of all the WCP Clubs by 1207 children from 137 schools.

The Globe magazine is like water for me, and who can

live without water? For me, The Globe is a must-read-daily book! The World's Children's Prize is like my second religion, and it has taught me about justice, equality, love, togetherness, democracy and peace. When the girls from Chibok were kidnapped, it was clear that I, the Kaka Girls Child Foundation, and the WCP Clubs should protest and demand that the government of Nigeria do everything possible to get the girls released.

This year, my successor as WCP Club chairperson will be elected. I am trying to get financial support so that I can go to university, but all the people I ask want me to have sex with them in return for the university fees."



Kaka



## We children are the world needs

Aldrin, 14, from Ocampo in the Philippines, holds on tight to the WCP ballot box made from a large glass bottle. He has never experienced love, not even in his own family. He has been beaten and bullied and every year he has to work in the sugar cane fields. But when he read The Globe he realised that he has rights.

**M**y dream is for my separated family to be reunited so that we can have a home where we share laughter and love. I don't even know the meaning of the word love, because nobody has ever shown me its meaning. I have always been beaten by the people I live with if I don't do exactly what they want straight away. I live with my grandparents and uncles. They bully me all the time, so I have no confidence. I also have to work cutting down sugar canes at harvest time

and weeding at planting time. I'm not happy about that, but I always think of my younger siblings. If I don't work, they won't get food or milk. I have also been responsible for household chores like fetching wood and cooking since the age of seven.

After reading The Globe I told my teacher that I had realised that we children have an important role to play in the world. The Globe helped me understand that we children are the hope of our country, of the world.





It's Aldrin's job to gather wood.



Aldrin loves maths and often helps teach his classmates. He wants to be a computer engineer.

# what

As I sat alone under a tree reading, I said to myself that children have the power to make our voices heard for our rights. And that we are what the world needs, because we have uncorrupted thoughts. With the conscience that we have, we can't go wrong, and as children we know the difference between right and wrong.

I realised that I have experienced so many violations of my rights. I was also inspired by the WCP jury, because several of them share my experience of child labour. The WCP program helps me in many ways. I have learned about all my rights and I want to share that knowledge with others."



Many of the children in the voting queue have walked for hours or even a whole day to be able to join in the Global Vote.



The presiding officers tick off names in the voting register and hand out ballot papers in a voting station built by the children.



The children's democratic vote, in a country that has been a dictatorship for many years.

## Voting for democracy and rights in Burma

It is a joint Global Vote day for seven village schools in Karen State in Burma, the country also known as Myanmar, which has lived under a strict dictatorship for many years. There are no roads to the children's villages, and many of them have walked for a whole day to get to Saw Bwe Dern.

For many years, The Globe magazine has been smuggled into the village schools. Porters have brought both the English version of The Globe, with all its colourful pictures, and a booklet with all the text from the magazine in the children's own language, Karen. Even under the dictatorship, children here have been able to learn about the rights of the child and vote in their own democratic election. The situation in Burma is now slightly better, and when democratic elections are once again held in the country, the children gathered in Saw Bwe Dern will know exactly how democracy works.

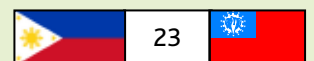
"I have participated in the World's Children's Prize for four years and learned about other children and the difficulties they face, but also about my rights and that they should be respected. Every day at home, I look after my younger brothers, pound the rice and cook food. I want to become a teacher and help the poor children in my village, so that Karen girls can go to school too," says Naw Ro, 14.

"My favourite subject is Karen and I love reading The Globe texts in Karen, while looking at the pictures in the English version. Many children in my country have to work, although children are not supposed to work. I want to become a doctor and help people in my village," says Saw Eh, 11.



Naw Ro

Saw Eh





# “World’s Children’s Prize impo

“In Uganda, many children have a hard life. Often because of poverty, but also because of lack of education. That’s why the World’s Children’s Prize is so important here. If we read *The Globe* magazine in school and learn about our rights, then we can tell our parents, relatives and neighbours. As they learn, their hearts will gradually change, and eventually they will even treat us girls well. The World’s Children’s Prize makes the future brighter for the children of Uganda!” says Adela, 13. She is one of the people responsible for today’s Global Vote at AMKA Classic School in the capital city of Kampala.

## Vital for girls!

“I am one of the students at our school who have had extra lessons on the World’s Children’s Prize and the rights of the child. Now I tell other children, and adults too, about the rights of the child. Today I helped organise our school’s Global Vote, and I am so proud of that. It feels great to be able to participate in something so vital. For me, the most important thing is that the WCP helps us to talk about the fact that girls have a right to go to school too.

Here in Uganda, especially in rural areas, there are a great many parents who don’t send their daughters to school. Daughters are just to be married off. The girl’s role is to stay at home and cook food, gather wood and prepare for marriage in other ways. Girls who demand to go to school are often treated badly by their fathers. These daughters are forced to work even harder at home, and some are beaten. In the end they are so tired and afraid that they have neither the

strength nor the determination to go to school.

Mothers who give birth to girls are not appreciated either. When I was born, my father was so disappointed that he threw my mother and I out of the house. We had to escape to my mother’s sisters. Since then, I have never lived with my father. And he has never helped me with my school fees or anything else that I need. However, he does help the sons he has had with his new wife. That seems strange and unfair.”

### Beaten by my father

“Once when my mother took me to my father’s house to ask for help so that I could continue attending school, he just said, ‘Why have you dragged this piece of garbage here?’ Another time when I asked him for help he said he was no longer my father. Then he beat me.

Before getting involved with the World’s Children’s Prize I didn’t know that we children had rights at all. When I read *The Globe* I



“I want to be a pilot. I would let poor children come on a trip for free, so that they could experience a real adventure. Imagine children who have never had the chance to board a plane, suddenly being able to see the world from above. What an experience!” says Adela, laughing.

realised that even we girls have a right to education and a good life. That has given me so much hope!

My favourite thing to read about in *The Globe* was

Malala, who was shot because she fights for girls’ right to go to school. Even though she almost died she didn’t give up. That inspires me so much! I want to have the same courage and fight for girls’ rights in Uganda!”

*Adela, 13, AMKA Classic School, Uganda*



# rtant in Uganda”



6. Counting of votes!

5. Time to cast your vote in the ballot box!



**Global Vote from above**  
All stations for the Global Vote at Amka School in Uganda are manned and the global voting has just begun.



4. Voting booth in a bowl! In order to respect the secrecy of the vote, it is important that you are able to mark who you are voting for without anyone seeing.



1. Orderly voting queue



2. On the voting register?



3. Here's your voting paper!



# Hip-hop dreams

“Some people in Uganda respect the rights of the child, but not everyone. I come from a poor family. For a while I lived with my aunt, because my father was struggling to care for me properly. I was treated really badly in her home. Her children never had to work, but I was forced to cook, do laundry, wash dishes, bathe the little ones and iron clothes. My cousins rested, played, or watched me working. They often laughed at me. They also got to sleep on comfortable mattresses, while I had to sleep on the floor. My aunt would beat me, and sometimes I had to go without food for a whole week.

My rights were violated, and the same happens to many children in Uganda. There is a lot of child abuse here, and many children are forced to work instead of going to school. That’s why the World’s Children’s Prize is so important here. We young people learn about the rights of the child at school, and then we teach our parents. We also learn about how democracy works. Reading the stories of the prize candidates in *The Globe* inspires us to do something big and important with our lives. My dream is to become a hip-hop artist. Hip-hop is a great way to communicate important messages to people, like how important it is for children to go to school.”

*Oboth, 14, AMKA Classic School, Uganda*

## I choose education too!

“If you want a good future, school is your only chance, so the right to education is the most important. We have to learn languages. Without English, it is not possible to communicate with anyone beyond your own local area,” says Oboth.



We celebrate Global Vote Day.

# No to corporal punishment and street children!

“Today we had our Global Vote at school. We voted for people who fight for the rights of the child. It felt great, because we need respect for the rights of the child! When we were reading *The Globe* magazine, I read about Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have the same rights. Things aren’t like that here. Just look at all the street children in Kampala. Many of their rights are violated all the time – they have nothing to eat, nowhere to live, and don’t go to school. It’s just not right!

I try to give to those children from the small amount I have, so that someone else might be able to have something to eat. I am fortunate. My parents take care of me and I feel that I have enough to share. The *Globe* magazine taught me that corporal punishment and child abuse are violations of our rights, but they are common here. Parents punish their children for small things by beating them. Sometimes children get tied up and beaten with canes. This makes children afraid. Some of them run away and end up on the street.

The World’s Children’s Prize is important in Uganda. Before, I didn’t know much about our rights, but now I know loads. If we learn about our rights, things will get better here in the future. Then there will be no more corporal punishment and no more street children either, because they will get help.

I want to become a doctor and earn lots of money. Then I’ll build children’s hospitals, homes for street children and schools for poor people.”  
*Guti, 12, AMKA Classic School, Uganda*

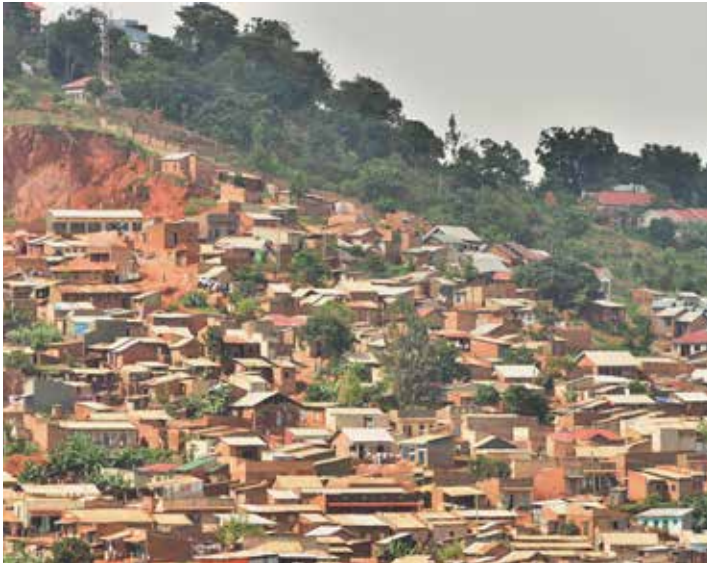


## Child rights signs

In preparation for their Global Vote, the children at AMKA Classic School have made signs all about the different rights children have. But which sign is the most important for Adela, Guti, Imelda and Oboth?







Amka School is in Uganda's capital Kampala, where tower blocks and small houses are crowded side by side.

# Democracy is important!

“Participating in the World’s Children’s Prize has been fantastic. I have learnt so much about my rights through the different candidates’ stories. Everyone at school has been involved. We read lots and discussed everything at breaktime, lunchtime and even after school. It’s only once you have that knowledge that you can really make a difference. That’s why the World’s

Children’s Prize is so important here.

There are a lot of issues we need to speak up about here, because many children in Uganda have their rights violated. Many don’t have enough food, can’t go to school and are abused and mistreated. Things are worst for us girls. Boys and girls are still treated differently here. It’s harder for girls to go to school, and many are forced

into child marriage. It’s just like the apartheid regime in South Africa, when black people were treated worse than white people. Just because of the colour of their skin. Why should girls be treated worse than boys? Just because of their gender? We are all equal!

The Global Vote has taught me how fair, democratic elections work. First, you gain knowledge through careful

preparation, then you are free to vote for whichever candidate you prefer. Democracy is important. Only through democracy can we defend everyone’s right to free speech. I learned this through the World’s Children’s Prize. In the future I want to become a lawyer who fights for children’s rights.”

*Imelda, 12, AMKA Classic School, Uganda*

## Love is the most important!

“The right to be loved is the most important one for me. Here, daughters are not as well-loved as sons. That is the most common violation of the rights of the child in Uganda,” says Adela.

## Love for me too!

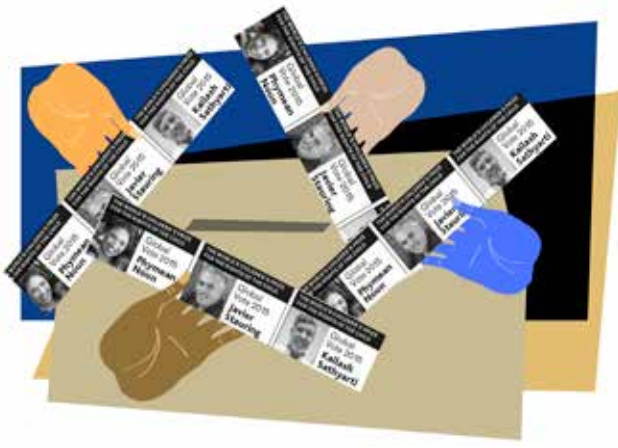
“The most important thing for me is the right to be loved, because that encompasses everything. It is because of love that someone makes sure that you can go to school, express your opinions, receive care if you are sick... everything!” says Guti.

## Education is the most important!

“The right to education is the most important. Without education, it is extremely hard to have a good life. If you have education and knowledge, it’s easier for you to defend your rights, because you know how to do it,” says Imelda.







# The road to

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

## What is democracy?

Maybe you and your friends have similar opinions on some issues. On other issues you might have completely different views. Perhaps you are able to listen to one another and discuss the issue until you reach a solution that everyone accepts. In this case, you are in agreement and have reached a *consensus*.

Sometimes you have to agree to disagree. In those cases, the majority – the biggest group – get to decide. This is called *democracy*.

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

In a democracy, everyone should be able to make their voices heard. People have to compromise, and decide things by voting. There is *direct democracy* and *representative democracy*. Direct democracy is when everyone is allowed to vote on a particular question, for example, your Global Vote, where you decide who should receive the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. Another example is when a country holds a referendum. Most democratic countries are governed by *representative democracy*. This is when the citizens choose people to be their *representatives* – politicians – to govern the country according to what the people want.



## THROUGHOUT THE AGES

### Joint decisions

Throughout the ages people have gathered to make decisions together. Decisions are made in groups, tribes or villages, perhaps about hunting or agriculture. Some groups have rituals to help them discuss what is best for the group and make shared decisions. Sometimes an object, such as a feather, is passed round, and whoever is holding the feather is allowed to speak. *Why not try it out in your classroom?*

### The birth of the word democracy

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

508 BCE



## IN THE 1700S

### Autocratic rulers

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



# democracy

1789



## No women or slaves

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

## First secret ballot

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



1856

1947



## World's biggest democracy

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

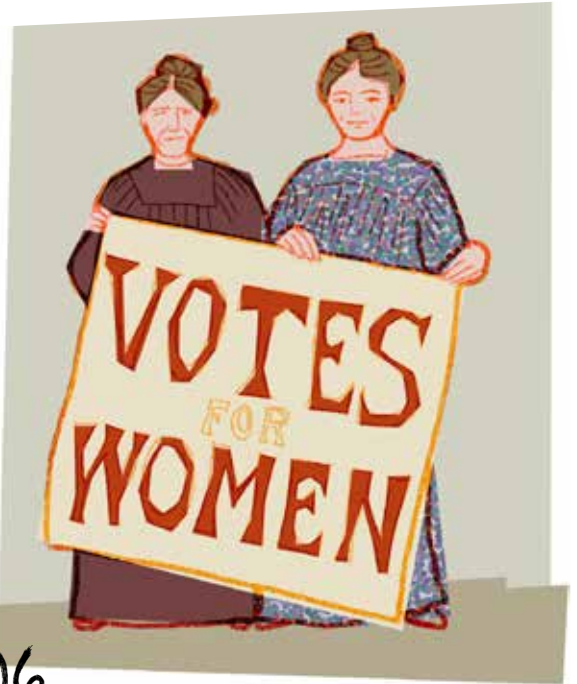
1906  
1921  
1945

## Women demand voting rights

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

## Voice of the rich

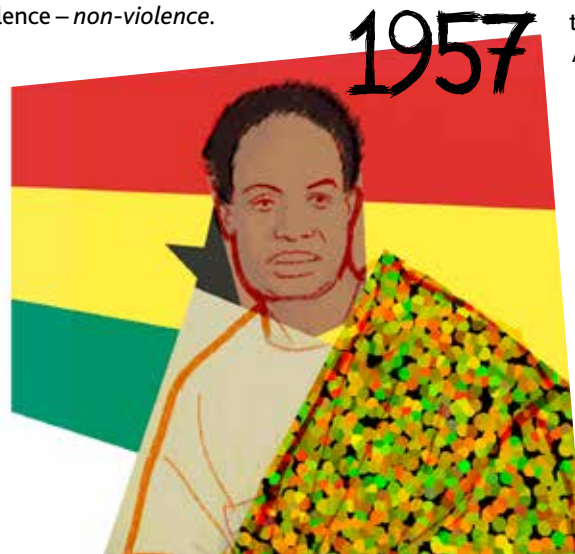
1789 is also the year the French Revolution begins. The ideas and demands behind it spread across Europe and influence the development of society. Still, only men are considered citizens. What's more, often the only men who are allowed to vote and become politicians are rich ones who own land and buildings.



1957

## First democracy in Africa

In 1957 Ghana in West Africa becomes independent from its colonial ruler, Great Britain. Kwame Nkrumah becomes the first leader of the country. The colonisation of Africa, Asia and Latin America began hundreds of years previously. The great powers of Europe sent out soldiers and explorers, to occupy land, steal natural resources, and turn people into slaves.







1955

### Equal rights in the USA

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



2010

### The Arab spring

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

### Dictatorships remain

In 2014 some countries in the world are still ruled by dictators, but even in many democracies human rights continue to be violated. The rights of the child are violated in all countries. In dictatorships people are denied the right to vote and the right to express their views – freedom of opinion. The rulers decide everything, and often seize money and property for themselves and their families.



1994

### Voting rights for everyone in South Africa

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

### Towards democracy in Burma

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

2010



2015

### The children's democratic Global Vote

In 2015 the World's Children's Prize Program will take place for the fifteenth time. So far, over 36 million children have learned about their rights and democracy through the program. It's important that every new generation gains that knowledge. It helps you and your friends to go through life making your country a better place, where democracy is strengthened and children's rights and human rights are respected.

When you have learned all about the rights of the child, and about the prize candidates' work, you are ready to prepare your democratic Global Vote. Your vote is your decision. No-one, neither friends nor teachers, should tell you who to vote for. The person who receives the votes of the majority – the biggest group of people – will receive the 2015 World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child!





# Radio reporters

## for children's rights



### Talking about things that affect our lives

"There is great inequality in Brazil. Many children are treated badly, but don't get a chance to talk about the violence and abuse they are subjected to. Through the World's Children's Prize, we get a chance to talk about the things that affect our lives.

I participated in a course for students who wanted to become Child Rights Ambassadors here in Amazonas. The judge for the Children and Youth Court came too. We asked her questions, and she explained how the police and the judges work to defend the rights of the child, and how people who rape children are punished.

All the knowledge we gain through the World's Children's Prize program helps us to become better reporters for Radio pela Educação. I have interviewed people in schools that participate in the WCP program every year. I was also a presiding officer in the Global Vote at our school. I supervised the voting queue and ticked off names on the voting register".

*Nicolle, 10,  
Ecila Nobre dos Santos School*



In Amazonas in Brazil, there are girls who are trained World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassadors. Working as radio reporters, they teach other children – and adults too – that the rights of the child exist and must be respected!



### They make us think about who we are

"The World's Children's Prize candidates teach us that without perseverance, we won't get very far. I read out the candidates' stories from The Globe on the radio. These are true stories that really move us, make us think about who we are, and about people who are different from us. And about respect and equality.

At my school, many of the girls are treated badly because of their body shapes or because they are black. That has to change. I became a Child Rights Ambassador to fight that sort of thing, and to fight for girls' rights. I want to make sure that all girls are allowed to go to school, and fight for children to make their voices heard in the media. Children are not given enough space on radio, TV and in newspapers.

I am a reporter on Radio pela Educação (Radio for Education) to raise awareness of the rights of the child. I interview students, teachers and headteachers who use the WCP program".

*Larissa, 10, Ecila Nobre dos Santos School, Santarém*

### WCP mission: Fight for girls' rights!

"The World's Children's Prize gives us hope for a better life for girls all over the world. The WCP program gives us a good overview of how life is for girls in different countries. It also gives us a mission – to fight for respect for every girl's right to education.

I have also learned about the situation for girls here in Santarém, where I live. Everything that I have learned, I have taught others through the programs on Radio pela Educação. It feels great to share what I have learned with others. It helps more girls to know how to defend their rights.

I have also taught children how to organise and participate in a democratic election. I was an election supervisor at the Global Vote at my school. Our votes really were our own!

Hardly anyone in my area knows that children have rights. We need to make more people aware of the rights of the child. My mother, father, brother and teachers encourage me and others to be Child Rights Ambassadors here in Amazonas".  
*Vitória, 11, Ecila Nobre dos Santos School, Santarém*





## Why has Phymean been nominated?

Child Rights Hero Nominee • Pages 32–51

# Phymean Noun

Phymean Noun has been nominated for the 2015 World's Children's Prize for her thirteen-year struggle for the children who scavenge garbage dumps in Cambodia, and their right to education.

When Phymean was little, all education was banned in Cambodia, and her whole family was at risk of being killed. She dreamed of being able to go to school one day, and in the end she did manage to get an education. When Phymean realised that there are still children in Cambodia who have to fight for their lives, she quit her well-paid job to help them. The children that she helps live in the garbage dumps and slums of the capital city, Phnom Penh. They risk their lives by working as waste pickers, and many children have lost their lives through being run over by garbage trucks or being buried alive in the mountains of trash. Phymean fights for children to be able to go to school, and for their basic rights to be fulfilled. With her organization, People Improvement Organization (PIO), she has built three schools and children's homes next to the garbage dumps and slums. Over a thousand children go to school there, and get food, water and healthcare. PIO also provides vocational training and support to families.



The stench of garbage makes Phymean feel sick the first time she visits the children on the garbage dump in Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh. They don't have shoes or clean water, and they live under canvas among the mud and trash. But although the children have nothing, the thing they want most of all is education.

**P**hymean knows exactly how the children on the garbage dump feel. When her mother Malis died, Phymean promised her that she would keep up the fight. She was 15 years old, and she was fighting to get herself an education and to feed herself and her little niece Malyda. Phymean remembers every day of hard work and fear. So the first time she meets the children on the garbage dump, she goes straight back into town and quits her office job.

"As long as children live among trash, I cannot sit

back and do nothing. Nobody ever helped me, but now I want to help them."

### Out of the city

Phymean's story begins in April 1975, when she is four years old. Soldiers in black uniforms appear in town. They wave their weapons and say that everyone has to leave the town.

"Only for three days," they say, "and then you can all come home again." Phymean's mother and father don't pack anything, just some food and a motorized bike.

The roads are so full that

it's hard to get anywhere. The soldiers drive them out, further and further away. Something isn't right.

They hear gunshots in the distance. Anyone who tries to turn back is being shot.

The soldiers have tricked them. They are not going to be allowed to return home.

### Mother has to lie

Phymean's story begins in April 1975, when she is four years old. Soldiers in black uniforms appear in town. They wave their weapons and say that everyone has to leave the town.





Phymean, who is standing nearest to her mother, is only two years old here in 1973 and the family has not yet been forced to leave their home.

The roads are so full that it's hard to get anywhere. The soldiers drive them out, further and further away. Something isn't right.

They hear gunshots in the distance. Anyone who tries to turn back is being shot.

Once they have walked for many days, they are allowed to stop at a large farm. They are given black clothes and shoes made from car tyres. That is the uniform that the Khmer Rouge want everyone to wear. The Khmer Rouge is

the name of the armed group that has taken over in Cambodia. Phymean's mother is very watchful. She has heard that they don't like people who have an education. Phymean's mother is not just well educated, she has been to university in France. Nobody must find out.

That's why Phymean's mother lies. She says that she can't read, and that she grew

up on a farm. She jokes with the soldiers, saying that she can fix their clothes.

So the soldiers believe her. Many of the black-clothed soldiers with huge weapons are only ten or twelve years old. They like Phymean's mother and when she pleads with them not to send Phymean and her big sister Hengleap to the camp where children live without their

parents, they allow them to stay.

### All relatives killed

Phymean is almost always hungry. The only time she feels full for a short time is when her mother catches a fish in the river and cooks it on a secret fire under one of the beds in the middle of the

## Cambodia's terrible history

Cambodia is one of the world's poorest countries and it has a terrible history. 40 years ago, the country was taken over by the violent Khmer Rouge and their leader Pol Pot. In the 3 years, 8 months and 20 days that the Khmer Rouge were in charge of the country, over 1.8 million people died from torture, execution, illness, famine and exhaustion. When the regime fell, there were hardly any teachers, doctors, writers or other educated people left. That's why it is taking a long time for Cambodia to rebuild itself and overcome poverty.







## Phymean and PIO want to

- Help children find their dreams: Many of the children on the garbage dump don't have faith in the future. At school, Phymean and the teachers encourage the children to have dreams and to develop their interests.
- Give children hope: By seeing the children's progress and creating opportunities for them to display their talents, Phymean and the teachers show that the children's situations can change.
- Give children love they can depend upon: Phymean and PIO stay in touch with the children for many years. "They are like my own children," says Phymean. "I want to see them be successful and happy."

## People Improvement Organization's work for children

- Three schools at the old garbage dump and in the Phnom Penh slums.
- Education in Khmer and English, focusing on languages and IT.
- A children's home, where orphaned and abandoned children can grow up in a safe environment.
- Support for families so that they can send their children, especially their daughters, to school.
- Clean water for all the children in the school, and the children and adults in the area.
- Vocational training for teenagers, for example, in hairdressing or tailoring.
- Access to nurses, doctors and dentists.



All the children who Phymean meets on the garbage dump long to be able to go to school.

night. There is so much that is dangerous. Asking questions, making mistakes, going to the wrong place, being hungry or being tired.

One day, her mother looks grey and her eyes look blank. She has just found out that all of her eleven siblings, who were doctors, lawyers, police officers and teachers, are dead. Their whole families have been killed by the Khmer Rouge.

### Death penalty

Phymean turns six, but she can't start school. The Khmer

Rouge have banned all schools and all books.

Phymean's job is pumping water, and her father is worried that the work exhausts her. He takes the motor from the motorized bicycle that they brought from their town, and converts it into a pump. It provides water for the whole farm, and everyone admires Phymean's father for being such a skilled mechanic.

But one of the village leaders is jealous. He doesn't like the admiration that Phymean's father is getting, or the fact that his family hasn't been

split up. He goes to the highest leader and tells him that Phymean's father has killed and eaten a chicken. This is a serious crime when there is such a shortage of food.

The soldiers drag Phymean's father from the house. One glance at her mother's wild-eyed look tells Phymean that this is really big trouble. The soldiers torture her father until he confesses to eating the chicken, even though this is a lie.

The punishment for this crime is death. Not only for Phymean's father, but for her mother, her big sister, and Phymean herself.

The soldiers do not kill them. But the fear remains, and it is stronger than ever.

### Arrival of the Vietnamese

One day, when Phymean is eight years old, she hears bombs in the distance. The Vietnamese are coming.

"Hurry!" says her mother, pushing them towards a corner of the garden.





There is an underground room there, with food and blankets. Phymean has never seen it before. Her mother dug it in secret and wove a bamboo door to make it invisible among the greenery of the garden. They sleep in the underground room for a week.

When the Vietnamese soldiers come, Phymean's father emerges. He speaks Vietnamese. He becomes the Vietnamese army's translator, and the whole family get a ticket in a tank back to their hometown.

As they depart, Phymean throws her head back and shouts, "We have a car! We're going home!"

### School, finally

At the age of nine, Phymean finally gets to start school. She wants to read every book in the whole world, and she quickly moves up from Year 2 to Year 4 to Year 7.

The Vietnamese leaders appoint Phymean's father as Mayor of the province, but her mother doesn't think he should be following their

orders. The killing continues – but now he's the one in charge.

"You have to put a stop to this. I can't live with a man who sends his fellow humans to their deaths," her mother says.

But her father doesn't want to leave his job. Instead, he leaves the family.

### Mother falls ill

They manage fine. They have a motorbike, a sewing machine, two bikes, a house and furniture. But when Phymean turns thirteen, everything changes again. Her sister Hengleap runs away to Thailand leaving a newborn daughter, Malyda, who wouldn't have survived the dangerous journey through the jungle.

Soon after that, Phymean's mother falls seriously ill. Although many years have passed, there are still no doctors in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge killed all the doctors, as well as the teachers who could have trained new doctors.

Phymean has to work hard to take care of her mother and her baby niece. One by one, she sells their belongings.

"You have to go to school," says her mother in a weak voice.

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

"Yes," says her mother, "you have to get an education. Knowledge is the key to a better life. Money and things – people can take those away from you. But nobody can steal your knowledge."

Every evening, Phymean holds her mother tight. One evening, her mother whispers:

"Hold on tight to your dreams, Phymean. You are capable of achieving whatever you set out to do."

Then her mother dies.

### Alone with a niece

Now Phymean is alone in the world. She has been through many terrible experiences, but never in her life has she



Finds from the garbage dump are sorted for selling.

## School became torture chamber

The Khmer Rouge wanted to create a new society and wipe out everything they thought was bad. That's why they closed all the schools in the country, so that nobody could learn anything that the Khmer Rouge didn't agree with. Almost all educated adults were killed.

One school with a terrible history is the Chao Ponhea Yat High School in the capital city of Phnom Penh, which was made into a prison for torture. The classrooms became prison cells. People accused of treason were taken there.

Often whole families were imprisoned, even the children. The prisoners usually didn't know why they were there, but were tortured until they confessed to the crime of which they were accused. Once they had confessed they were sentenced to death. Almost all of the 17,000 children and adults who were held captive in the school were killed.

Now the school is a museum in memory of all the terrible things that happened there. One of the rooms is now a classroom again. Visitors from Cambodia and all over the world come here to learn, so that these horrific things cannot be allowed to happen again.





# Education

# IS important!



**Wants to build a big yellow school**

5x8

"I think maths is important, especially multiplication. When I am an engineer I'm going to build a big yellow school for children."

*Sokhgim, 13*



**Wants to talk to people from all over the world**

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

*Somaly, 14*



Children at PIO's school.

Phymean together with children in the school's dining room, where everyone gets lunch.



been so afraid. All Phymean has left is the four walls of her house, and a bike. Every morning before dawn she gathers water from the garden and fills a tank. When it's full, she sells the water as drinking water.

Phymean gets a job as a secretary. She doesn't earn much, but she is allowed to bring her two-year-old niece to work, where she sits under the desk all day.

After work Phymean cycles to an evening school and when school is finished she cycles home in darkness. When they get home, Phymean cooks rice and puts her niece to bed. Then she begins her third job – copying story books by hand, word for word. There are no photocopiers, and there is a publisher that really likes Phymean's neat handwriting. She works until late at night.

Phymean struggles for many years. She manages to get an education and she finds her sister again, so her niece gets her mother back.

Phymean gets a job working for the UN, and helps with the first free elections in Cambodia. She moves to the capital city Phnom Penh, works in an office, buys a car and has money in the bank. Suddenly, life is straightforward.

The children love being able to go to Phymean's school every morning.







### Wants to paint PIO's history

"I like painting landscapes and animals, especially rabbits. When I grow up I want to be an artist. I am going to paint the history of PIO."

*Pich, 13*



### Khmer and computers important

"Khmer is important for me, because I want to work in industry. So I need to be able to read and work on a computer."

*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 one huge computer. Or I'd like to be an astronaut and fly to another planet."

*Kim, 12*

### Fighting for chicken legs

One day Phymean is eating a grilled chicken for lunch on the banks of the Mekong River. She throws her chicken legs on a trash pile, and suddenly five children appear. They fight and claw at one another to get to the remains of the chicken. Phymean is appalled.

"Stop, stop!" she shouts. "Stop it! I'll buy a new chicken for you, come and sit down."

As they eat, the children tell her that they have come from a rural area, because their parents were looking for work. But the only jobs are as waste pickers on the garbage dump, where they live too. They explain how they fight for survival every single day.

"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 get peace of mind. She thinks about the children on the garbage dump. They are fighting, with no help, just like she did.

The next day Phymean goes to Phnom Penh's largest gar-

bage dump, which is as high as a mountain. She meets the children and parents, sees the canvas roofs they live under, sees the garbage trucks that plough on regardless of children in their way. She sees



### Vocational training

As the children get older, some want to carry on studying and others would rather learn a trade. PIO offers students the chance to learn to be hairdressers and make-up artists. Sita, 14 and Srechpich, 15, want to open their own salon in the future, and Srechpich wants to be a fashion designer.



Phymean's green school building is beside the former garbage dump, where the children now play and goats graze.





It's 2002 and Phymean visits girls on the garbage dump for the first time.

→ open wounds that never heal. The stench is everywhere. It's like coming into hell itself, thinks Phymean.

She quits her job, takes out all her money from the bank, and sets up her work at the garbage dump. Most of the children are desperate to go to school, but the parents are unsure. The children have to help provide for their families, otherwise the families will starve.

On the first day, 25 children come to Phymean's school. Then more and more. Phymean connects the first tap bringing clean water to the garbage dump. They need food and teachers too.

Phymean is at the garbage dump every day. She is their teacher, leader, janitor, counsellor – she is everything to the children. Slowly, the school becomes established. More children and more teachers come, and after a



couple of years, Phymean opens another school.

### Never give up!

Thirteen years have passed since Phymean started her organisation. There are now three schools and a children's home for orphaned or aban-

doned children. The organisation also helps families and communities around the garbage dump.

"Never give up! That's how I think, and that's what I say to the children at school. The children here have a tough life. There are gangs, drugs,

and much danger. But we help the children to visualise their dreams and fight to achieve them. If I managed it, then so can they. And we are capable of achieving everything we set out to do!"



Hor talks about dreams with Phymean.

## What's your dream?

"I have worked at the garbage dump since I was nine years old," says Hor, 16, who works at the new garbage dump. I have seen a lot of children buried alive under trash. It happened to two of my friends when we worked together. I managed to get out of the way in the nick of time, but they both ended up buried under the trash. When we found them, only one of them was still alive."

"What would you like to do instead of working here?" asks Phymean.

"I have to work here," replies Hor. "I can't write, and I haven't learnt any other trade, so I can't dream. I don't have a dream."

"What?! You have to have a dream!" exclaims Phymean.

They talk about dreams for the future and finally Hor laughs:

"Okay, okay! I want to learn to fix motorbikes. I can earn a good living doing that. I actually do want to learn something!"

## Fighting for their dreams

Phymean had lots of dreams when she was young. She dreamt of speaking English, flying in an aeroplane, and helping children who had hard lives. Now she can speak English and she has flown in aeroplanes and helicopters. And she has helped thousands of children towards a better life.

Now her dream is to build another school and get some buses so that she can transport children from other areas to her schools. After that, her next dream is to study for a doctorate at university.

"But university is going to have to wait until I retire!" she says.



# School dreams come true



## Little sisters

Kean and Phally at their uncle's wedding in their home village.

## Big sisters

Little sister Phally and Kean both worked on the garbage dump and dreamed of being able to go to school.



Kean fills her sack, piece of plastic by piece of plastic. She stands at the bottom of one of the deep holes on the garbage dump. Suddenly she hears a roaring motor and the rustling noise that can only mean one thing: falling trash! Kean pulls herself up and narrowly manages to escape the avalanche of trash started by the tractor, that fills the hole where she was standing.

A few years earlier, when Kean is eight, she and her younger sister Phally leave their home village in southern Cambodia. They say goodbye to their parents and squeeze into a minibus with their grandmother. After three hours they have reached their destination: the Stung Mean Chey garbage dump in the capital city of Phnom Penh, where they will work from morning



## Girls standing on their own two feet!

"In Cambodia it's still common for girls not to be able to go to school, because families think it's unnecessary. After all, girls are expected to marry and have a husband who will take responsibility for them. The husband is automatically in charge. But I think that's wrong! Through education more people can come to understand that women can also be leaders of their area or their family. If a woman relies on a man, she cannot stand on her own if he disappears. Therefore I want to teach girls to stand on their own two feet. And to go after their dreams!" says Phymean.

## Focus on girls

Phymean's organisation PIO helps both boys and girls. But Phymean Noun knows that girls are extra vulnerable, to risks from both outside and within the family. They are often forced to leave school early and start working with their parents. They often need to help more at home and so have less time for homework and resting. Consequently, it is primarily girls who receive extra support from the school, for example, rice for their family every month. The parents must sign a contract, in which they promise to support their daughter in her studies and that she will not need to work in the evenings or at night.



→ till night, every day of the week.

A garbage dump is a dangerous workplace. Kean and Phally soon learn what happens to the children who don't manage to escape the avalanches of falling trash. The first time Kean sees it,



### Kean, 14

**Best moment:** When my grandmother said we could start school.

**Worst moment:** When she said we had to stop school.

**Feels proud:** When I can teach somebody something.

**Likes:** Embroidery and dancing.  
**Afraid of:** The part of the dump where the most people have died - there could be ghosts there.

she is a few metres from a boy who is standing further down the side of the garbage dump. The tractor driver on top of the heap doesn't see them, and shovels garbage right over the boy.

Kean and everyone else who can see the boy disappearing under the trash shout to one another. Adults and children are soon working together to dig him out.

When the boy emerges, Kean sees how he looks terrified. But the next day he's back on the garbage dump working away as if nothing

ever happened. Kean knows that if he wants to be able to eat, he doesn't have a choice.

Another time, a boy disappears under the trash and only the children notice. They shout for help, and although an adult comes to help eventually, it takes too long to dig the boy out. Later, Kean hears that by the time they found the boy he was dead.

### The child in the sack

Kean tries to stay away from the tractors and goes to the burning garbage heap to find

Kean and Phally eat lunch at school. When they worked at the dump they were often hungry, and Phally in particular hates being hungry.



### Favourite

Lily the kangaroo is named after a volunteer who works at PIO.

### Phally's first friend

Phally's first friend when they arrived at the children's home was Leak. "She took my hand and asked my name when we were about to play a game called Cat chase mouse. Everybody stands in a circle and there are two teams. Two people are chosen to do Scissors, paper, stone. The loser becomes the mouse and the winner is the cat. The mouse runs out of the circle and the cat chases. The people on the mouse's team try to stop the cat from getting out of the circle."



### Phally, 13

**Curious about:** Snow.

**Misses:** My grandmother, who is dead now.

**Happy about:** Being able to go to school.

**Likes:** Talking to new people.

**Favourite colour:** Yellow.





iron and other valuable things. But there are other dangers there. Bottles can explode in the fire, sending shards of glass flying. Just walking across the garbage heap is taking your life in your hands. Kean often falls waist-deep into puddles that gather among the trash. It's impossible to spot them, because the surface is covered in floating plastic bags and other trash, so they blend in. Anyone who falls in a hole like that and goes under will never be found again.

Kean and her sister spend every day looking for trash they can sell. Sometimes they are so hungry that they eat food that others have thrown out. The clothes they wear come from the dump too. Sometimes they find undamaged clothes, that have been thrown out just because they have small stains on them. It makes the sisters angry to think that there are rich people who throw away good clothes and food that is still edible. One day Kean spots something that looks like a

good find. Something that she'll never forget. She has just begun her days' work when she sees a large black sack. Her first thought is that maybe it's something she could sell. When she gets closer and grabs the sack she gets a feeling it could be full of meat. She takes her hook and opens the sack. The sight that meets her eyes will stay with her for a long time. There is dead child in the sack. Kean runs away as fast as she can.

**The woman with the school**  
One day, Kean and Phally see a woman walking around the garbage dump, giving out protective masks and talking to the people who work there.

Kean and Phally each take a mask and listen carefully as the woman talks to them about a school. The children are invited to go with the woman to see the school. Phally has never seen such a big school before. There are new people everywhere, and Phally feels scared. But when Phymean, the woman who



### Cosy bed

Phally has made colourful origami flowers and put them up on the ceiling above the bed, which she shares with her friend. The children can make flowers from almost anything. Phally's things are on a shelf behind the bed - craft materials, books, photos and toys. When she and Kean lived on the garbage dump they had nothing. Phally saves money in a red piggy bank. She uses it to buy extra food from time to time.





## Hand dance

Traditional Cambodian dances are full of hand movements, that the sisters practice.



Dancing is the sisters' main hobby. They do traditional dancing and hip hop. PIO has a dance troupe that has performed at major festivals and on TV. This is a way to earn money that goes straight to the school and children's home.

brought them there, explains that the school is free for all children, Phally dares to hope that the sisters might be able to go to school.

The sisters tell their grandmother about the school visit.

"Please can we go to school?"

"No," replies their grandmother. "Unless you keep gathering trash we'll all starve."

Phally cries and keeps on pleading with her grandmother:

"I don't want to spend my whole life working on a garbage dump!"

Finally, their grandmother gives in. The girls are allowed to start school.

Every day after school, Kean and Phally go back to gather trash. When they get home to their little shack late

at night, they do the housework while their grandmother sorts out the trash. Then they sit down to study. They are afraid of not being able to keep up with the lessons, so they try to learn as much as they can at home.

The sisters' days are long, and they are exhausted every day. But it's worth it. Going to school is the best thing that's ever happened to them.

### The hunger strike

One day, when Kean gets home from school, her grandmother is coughing worse than usual. She has TB and

she is very weak. What's more, the garbage dump is closing down, and everyone who made their living there is going to have to walk the streets of Phnom Penh. Their grandmother won't manage that. They have to go home to their village.

Kean and Phally cry the whole way in the minibus. All they want is to stay at school, but their grandmother doesn't want to leave them there alone.

Back in their home village, they plant rice every waking hour. Kean often cries. She thinks about school, and how

many lessons she is missing as the days pass.

Kean and Phally's family don't listen to the girls as they argue and plead. So they make a plan: They won't eat a single thing until they are allowed to go back to Phnom Penh - and school. The sisters' hunger strike goes on for several days and finally, they get their way. They hold one another's hand and jump for joy. They are so happy. And so hungry!

### Wonderful shampoo

They travel back on the long road to the capital city. Their grandmother travels with



The girls at the children's home have a large bag of make-up to share. They learn to do one another's make-up before dance performances. Somaly has taught the others how to do it.

## Kean and Phally's wardrobe

The sisters are the same size, and they share a small wardrobe in a narrow corridor of the children's home. When they worked on the garbage dump all they had was the clothes they stood up in. Now they have several changes of clothing and they can swap too!

### Dance clothes

Kean and Phally love dancing, both hip hop and traditional dancing. One of the most popular dances is called Robam Nesat and tells a whole story about fishing and life by the river.







Phally and Kean like hopscotch. There is a hopscotch game painted on the asphalt outside the children's home.

Phally and her friend Pich read books from the library during the last hour of the school day. Phally loves going to school. When her grandmother took her and Kean back to their home village, the sisters started a hunger strike to be able to come back to the capital city and return to school.



them to check that they are able to move into the PIO children's home.

For the first time, the girls are able to wash their hair with shampoo.

"It's so wonderful. I have worked on the garbage dump so long, and I'm used to always thinking I smell bad and worrying that people will think I'm disgusting. Now I am finally able to feel completely clean," says Phally.

Kean and Phally's parents still live in their home village. At Cambodian New Year, in April, the sisters go home for a visit. They help their parents to cook and clean the house for the celebrations. In

the middle of the festivities, a group of children approach Kean.

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

Kean feels so proud. She is delighted to be able to teach something, and pleased that the children think learning is fun. Her parents watch as she shows the children how to write the letters. They glow with pride.

"I really am a happy girl now that I have the chance to go to school. If I hadn't come to PIO I don't know what my future would have held," says Kean, concluding her story. 🌐

### PIO uniform

At school, everyone wears the uniform they get from PIO. Phally wears this every morning.



### Garbage dump clothes

Sreynoch's garbage dump clothes. The children who work at the garbage dump always try to have clothes that are as protective as possible. Ideally long-sleeved tops and boots, but that's not always possible. Kean often got hurt when she worked at the garbage dump, wearing short-sleeved tops and no shoes.



### Casual clothes

Usually trousers and t-shirts.



### Special occasions

Kean's favourite top and jeans.



### School uniform

In the afternoon, Kean goes to the local state school, so she changes into that uniform so that she has the right crest on her school top.



Kean and Phally each have a basket of hygiene products. The toothbrushes are gifts from a dentist who comes once a year to check all the children's teeth. The children at the PIO home shower several times a day. Because they have lived without clean water for so long, they love washing!





# Last day at the



## Srey Nich, 14

**Dream:** To become a singer.

**Likes:** Styling my friends' hair.

**Feels safe:** With my grandmother.

**Secret talent:** Can change clothes fast as lightning.

**Afraid of:** The machines on the dump.

**Angry that:** My mother doesn't take care of me.

The temperature is 40 degrees and there is no shade at the dump. Sharp fragments of glass stick up between the plastic bags, and scraps of food attract swarms of flies. Srey nich uses her hook to search through the trash. She doesn't know yet that today is her last day at the dump...

**S**rey nich lives with her grandmother in a simple shack on stilts beside the dump.

"I am so angry with my mother for abandoning me. I see her every day, but she lives with her new husband and she doesn't take care of me."

Srey nich is wearing boots and a long-sleeved top to pro-

tect her from the shards of glass, syringes, nails and sharp metals, but she still gets hurt sometimes. She wears a hat to protect her head from the burning sun.

The dump is shaped in a steep slope. As the trash gets pushed down by the tractors, it gathers speed and pulls everything else with it like an avalanche. Anyone standing at the foot of the mountain of garbage when this happens

only has a few seconds to escape being buried alive under the trash.

Srey nich started gathering trash when she was ten, and now she is fourteen. She has seen people get injured, and she has seen people die.

"Once I saw a boy get buried under a mountain of trash. By the time they managed to reach him he was dead."

When the garbage trucks come to dump their waste, the risk-takers (often boys) run right up to them. They hurry to grab the most valuable waste, and sometimes violent fights break out. The youngest children stay at a safe distance. They can't defend themselves against the older ones, and they can't get



## Wants to teach the poor

"It is really hard to walk barefoot on the dump. I sometimes cut myself on the hook I use to gather garbage. I am afraid all the time. I have seen tractors cover children with trash several times. I want to go to school instead. Learn to read and write in both English and Khmer, and become a teacher. I have seen so many poor people who need an education."

*Doeun Viyuth, 13*





# dump



away when the tractors come to move the trash. Many children and adults are seriously injured or die in accidents on the dump.

## Dreams come true

When her family lived in their home village, Sreynich was allowed to go to school. She dreams of continuing learning to read, write, and speak English. Most of all she dreams of becoming a singer. On this particular day, one of her dreams is going to come true.

The sun is almost at its peak when Phymean Noun arrives at the garbage dump. Sreynich is curious about this woman who talks to the children at the garbage dump about school. Sreynich's grandmother is curious too.

She has heard of PIO and seen children's lives get better through starting school there. She knows that children have much better prospects in life if they go to school. Sreynich wants to go there too.

"I want to get an education, and I really love learning things," she says.

Phymean has a bed available at the children's home, and agrees to accept Sreynich. But the other family members feel worried. Sreynich's aunt, Kao Eak, is 20 years old, has Down's Syndrome, and can't speak. A year and a half ago, she was sexually assaulted and became pregnant. She has no breast milk for her nine-month-old baby and has to buy milk instead. She uses the money Sreynich earns



Once she is sitting at her desk, Sreynich starts to believe that she really is going to be able to go to school, and she begins to smile.

from the garbage dump to buy the baby's milk. What's going to happen?

Sreynich's grandfather doesn't want her to go either. He doesn't want to lose his domestic help, who does all the housework for him.

But her grandmother is determined. She tells Sreynich's grandfather and aunt that there will be no more discussion on the matter. Sreynich is going to school!

## Safe and happy

To get to the PIO school, Sreynich is going to travel by car for the first time. She sings and smiles, but soon gets travel sick.

Her grandmother smiles. The chance to go to school is



"I think styling my friends' hair is fun, and I've come up with a way to cut old chopsticks to make them into hair clips."

something she has dreamt of for her beloved granddaughter. She will stay for the first night to help Sreynich settle in and feel safe.

They sit down on the floor, and Phymean introduces the other people who live at the children's home. Somaly, who takes care of the girls' dormitory, welcomes her. Sreynich is exhausted after the car journey, and her head is spinning with thoughts.

"I feel safe here, and I am so happy," she says.

The next day, as she sits at her desk with her books open, listening to the teacher's voice, Sreynich smiles. 🌐

Sreynich has arrived at the PIO children's home. It's the first time she's going to live anywhere without her grandmother.



## Just wants to go to school

"I don't want to be here. I never get to play because I always just wait for my mother. I would like to have a barbie doll, but I don't have anything. Except my jewellery. But I don't want to sell that. I found it on the dump. I just want to go to school. That's why I'm crying. I just want to go back to my village and go to school."

*Cheat Nary, 5*





# Long day of sc

Langeng, 15, lives with his sister Pich, 13, his mother and seventeen relatives in a shack beside the old garbage dump. His mother is seriously ill, but she has to work hard to make sure the family can afford food. In the evenings, Langeng goes with her.

Things were worse when Langeng was little. He didn't go to school then, he just worked as a waste picker all day long.

"I was always hungry. I picked up mouldy fruit that people had thrown away and drank the last drops out of any bottles I could find."

Langeng and his sister saw other children with school uniforms and schoolbags. They begged and pleaded, and finally they were allowed to start attending PIO.

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



## 06:00 Wake up

Langeng and Pich sleep side by side in the family bed. The mosquito net protects them from the mosquitoes that thrive in the humid heat.

## 06:30 Clean and tidy

Every Wednesday Langeng sweeps the classroom floor before class, to make sure it's clean when his classmates come in from assembly.



## 09:30 TV break

At break time, Langeng and his friends go to the kiosk beside school and watch the news.



## 11:00 Fried food, yum!

All the children eat lunch on the roof of the school. Without this meal, many of the children would go hungry. Langeng's favourite lunches involve fried vegetables and lots of laughter around the table!





# school and garbage



## 14:15 So tired, so tired...

Langeng has a nap during almost every lunch break, but sometimes he is so tired that he drops off during the English lesson in the afternoon. He only got five hours' sleep last night, since he was working until the early hours.



## 15:00 Start up the computers

The last lesson of the day is held at the computers, or in the library.

## 17:00 Ten minutes of volleyball

After school, Langeng eats some rice and takes the chance to play volleyball for a few minutes, before starting work.



Plastic and rubber shoes  
US\$0.10/kg



Plastic bottles  
US\$0.20/kg



Straws  
US\$0.15/kg



## 17:15 The evening shift starts

Langeng changes into his waste picker clothes. Then he heads for the city centre, through the dangerous traffic, to gather trash.



## 19:00 Valuable garbage

At first, Langeng and his mother each choose their own spot to work, but when darkness falls it's safer to stick together. Soon they'll switch on their head torches, so that they can see where they are searching. They gather cardboard, different kinds of plastic, cans and other metal objects, which they then sell to a dealer. Every dealer specialises in one particular kind of trash, which they then gather for recycling.



Cardboard  
US\$0.10/kg





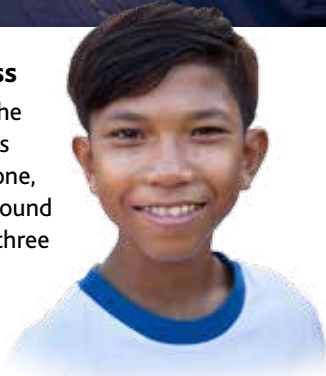


### 21:00 Walking in darkness

There is still heavy traffic on the roads in the evening. Accidents often happen. This evening alone, Langeng has heard the harsh sound of glass and metal shattering three times.

### 00:30 Shower before bed

When they finally get home, they park the cart full of garbage beside their shack. Despite his tiredness, Langeng has a shower. Otherwise he wouldn't be able to sleep as he would be itching all over. After eating some leftover rice from the others dinner, he goes to bed.



### Langeng, 15

- Likes:** Football and volleyball – I play as often as I can.
- Best thing:** Being the first to reach the trash on a street full of restaurants.
- Worst thing:** When adults gamble money away.
- Gets angry:** When someone says unkind things about my mother.
- Wants to be:** A doctor.



# Kong paints

Srey Kong has painted her family's life at the garbage dump in Stung Meanchey on the wall of the school. The family's surname, Sok, means happy, but the ten siblings have not always had happiness on their side.

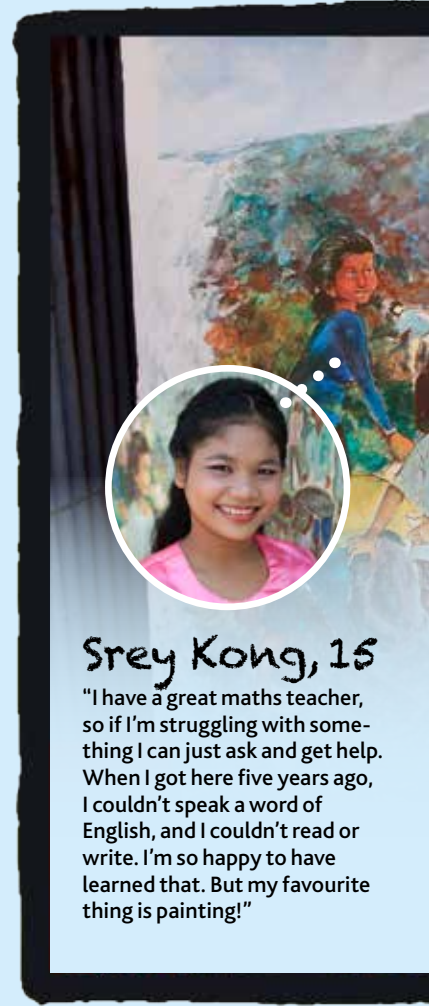
The Sok family travelled to the capital city, Phnom Penh, because they couldn't get enough food to get by in their home village. They hoped for a better life in the capital, but instead they ended up on the garbage dump. Today, four of the children go to the PIO school. There, they fight to achieve their dreams. But the family has shrunk, and there is much sorrow.

The children's mother fell ill with hepatitis. It became gradually harder for her to eat, and one day when the children got home from school their mother was gone. She had returned to their home village without saying goodbye, and not long after that she died.

"Our father couldn't take care of us after our mother passed away, so he took us four youngest children to the children's home and left us there," says Srey Kong.

### Sorrow and joy

Working at the garbage dump was tough, dangerous and badly paid, so when the eldest sister, Phally, got a job at a textile factory, they were delighted. But one morning, as she left the family's little house beside the garbage dump to go to work, she was knocked over by a garbage truck and was killed. Another sister met a man. They travelled together to Thailand.



### Srey Kong, 15

"I have a great maths teacher, so if I'm struggling with something I can just ask and get help. When I got here five years ago, I couldn't speak a word of English, and I couldn't read or write. I'm so happy to have learned that. But my favourite thing is painting!"

But it soon turned out that the man had tricked her, and didn't want to be with her at all. Instead, he sold her to a brothel.

So many sad things have happened to the family, and sometimes it's painful to think about it. It helps to draw those thoughts and memories. Sisters Srey Kong and Somaly love drawing and painting. At PIO, all talents are nurtured, and the children get to learn the skills that interest them. Every Sunday, an artist comes to help the sisters develop their skills with different materials and techniques. They have painted murals, huge paintings on the walls of the school. ☺



# her story



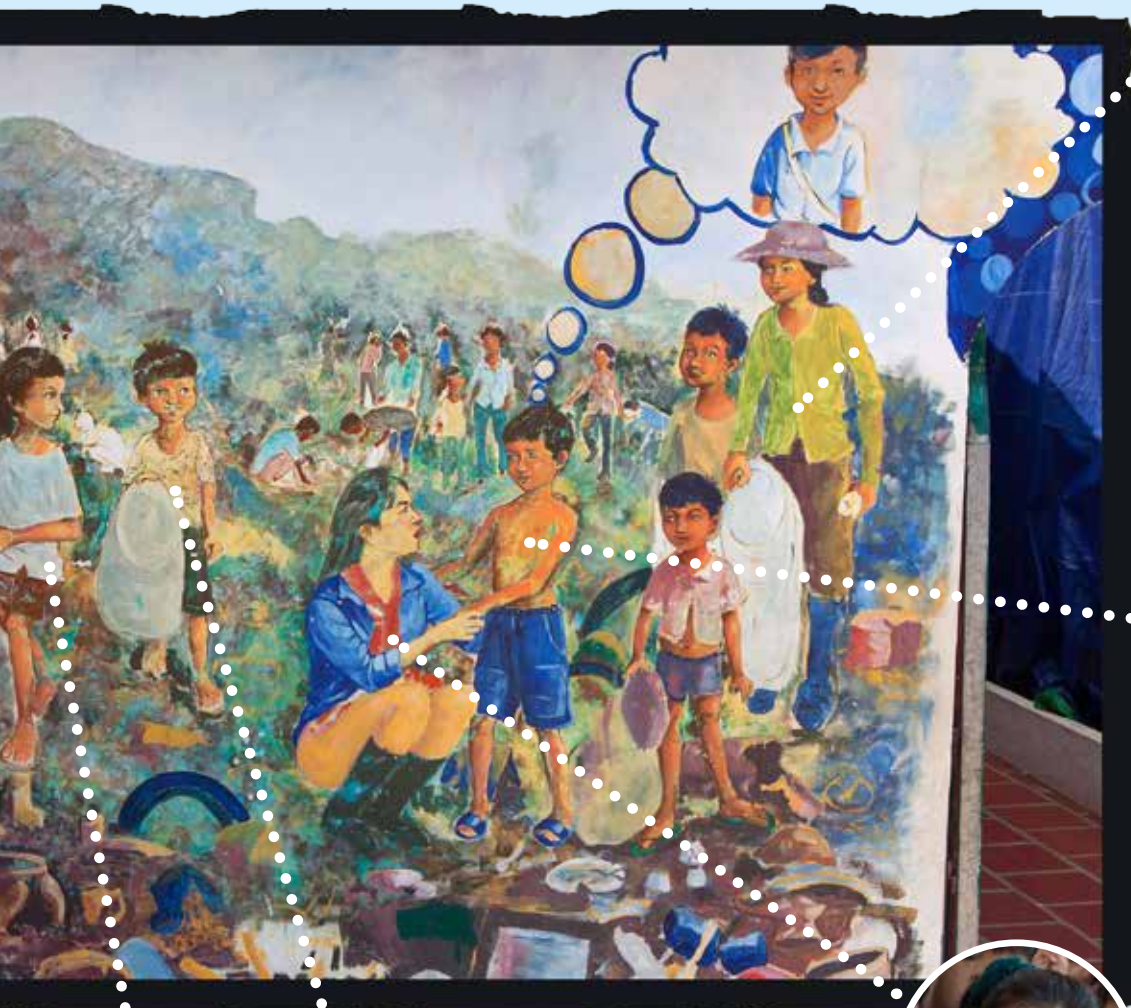
**Somaly, 16**

"I went to school until Year 5, so I got to learn the basics of reading, writing and English. Since then I have worked here at the children's home, supporting the younger girls and learning vocational skills. My favourite thing is painting. But I have learned lots of different things, like cutting hair and putting on make-up."



**Bros Pov, 10**

His name means 'youngest brother'  
 "If I was in charge of Cambodia, I would help the poor, because there are so many and life is so hard for them. I love playing and ball sports, and I have lots of friends. But I don't like fights. I've seen far too many. And I don't want to play in places where we could get hurt."



Srey Kong has painted a mural on the oldest school building. In the centre is Phymean and all around on the garbage dump Srey Kong has painted the children and their friends.

## "Our life on the garbage dump"

*Phymean*



**Lyta, 14**

"I remember when we came to the garbage dump. It was hard to live there, and I cut myself on things all the time. Some days I didn't earn enough for food. I often think about our sister who got sold in Thailand. I feel so sorry for her, and I don't think there's any chance that she'll come back to us."

**Pin**

"Pin is my friend from when we worked on the dump. He is two years younger than me. Now he works at the new garbage dump," explains Srey Kong.

### Talents should be encouraged

Every Sunday, an artist comes to teach Srey Kong, Somaly, and the other children who have a special interest in painting.





Pha and Sinet go to the PIO school. Their mother Sina buys plastic which she washes in a bathtub outside their home. For eight hours a day, she washes 15kg of plastic bags and hangs them up to dry. She buys the plastic from a couple who gather them from the streets.

# Plastic becomes plastic

I don't know what happened to my family. Suddenly our father wanted to leave us," explains Pha. "He had met another woman. I had to cycle a long way on an old bicycle to go to his wedding. I cried the whole way there."

Before they split up, the children had seen their father beat their mother many times.

"I cried and tried to pull my mother out of his grasp. But I was a child and there was nothing I could do to stop it," says Sinet.

Pha remembers life on the garbage dump.

"People looked down at me because I worked there, and other people at the dump would chase me and beat me," he says.

When the dump closed, the family started to walk the streets with a cart, from four in the afternoon until midnight. There was a lot of trash to gather around the market. But people often shouted at them.

Pha cycles home with the 25kg of rice that the family get from PIO every month. That means he doesn't need to help his mother with the plastic and can concentrate on his education.



Sinet helps his mum to hang up the plastic to dry.

Sinet loves life at the PIO school.



"Men asked for my number and asked me to come and sleep with them. I got scared and ran away," says Sinet.

Every month, the family get 25kg of rice from PIO. It makes a big difference. But the most important thing they get from PIO is education.

"I love my life here. We get rice, a bicycle, and school fees.

In the future I'd like to be a leader, or even better, create an organisation that helps women like my mother. Or I might like to be a journalist, because I love reading the papers and talking to people. Or maybe a photographer," says Sinet. 🌐

TEXT: JOHANNA HALLIN & EVELINA FREDRIKSSON PHOTOS: ALEXANDRA ELLIS



## How recycling works





# Ratana likes things neat and tidy

There is a date written on the green walls of Ratana's room – 10 December 2012. That was the day she said goodbye to her mother. Since then she has lived with her little brother, big sister and a cousin her age, in one small room.

**W**e have to cook our own food. There are no adults to do it for us," says Ratana.

The floor is well swept and all their things are carefully stacked on a shelf. The children eat sitting on the floor and sleep on mattresses that they put away every morning before they go to school.

"It's important to me to

keep things neat and tidy."

Ratana came to Phnom Penh when she was nine years old. She worked as a waste picker with her mother and siblings. When the garbage dump closed, her parents decided to move to Thailand to work. They planned to save their children from having to gather trash by sending them money every month. But the

money their parents earn washing cars in Thailand is not enough. PIO gives Ratana a sack of rice every month. She and her siblings also get free education.

"I had to start in the pre-school class with the little ones, even though I was much older. But I studied hard and the teacher moved me up. I like English and Maths."

## Miss my mother

The children miss their mother terribly. Ratana keeps a picture of her in her school book, and there are several pictures of her on the walls.

"Thinking of her makes me want to cry. She is not well – she has a tumour in her throat. If I phone her and she doesn't answer, I get worried in case something has happened."

"There is a bolt on the door, but every evening I feel scared. I'm afraid someone is going to steal my bike from outside. And I get frightened when it's dark and quiet. I sit up late studying, and fall asleep late every night." ☹



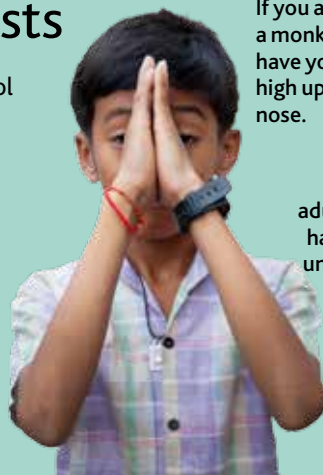
Ratana misses her mother, who is in the photo. She is in Thailand working. Every evening, before she falls asleep, Ratana thinks of her.

10 December 2012 is carved on the wall of the children's room. That's the date they were separated from their mother.



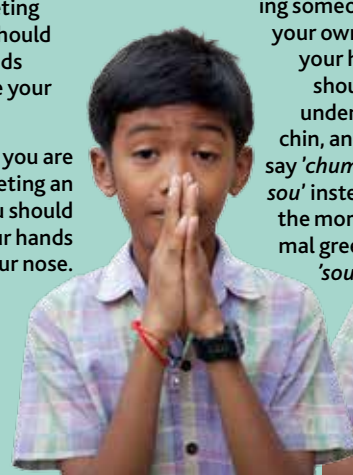
## Wants to teach the tourists

Hin is 13 years old and has attended the PIO school for three years. He lives right behind the school with his mother, father and younger brothers. For several years, the family worked on the garbage dump, but these days only the parents work. "I want to become a tour guide and teach tourists about Cambodian culture and traditions. They are usually interested in these things. For example, I can show you how to perform a traditional greeting."

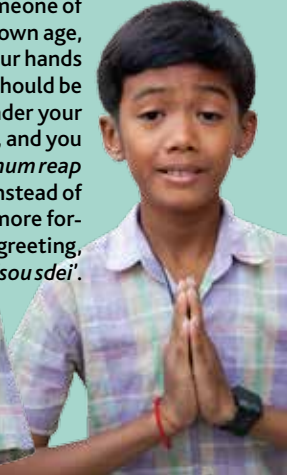


If you are greeting a monk, you should have your hands high up, above your nose.

If you are greeting an adult, you should have your hands under your nose.



If you are greeting someone of your own age, your hands should be under your chin, and you say 'chum reap sou' instead of the more formal greeting, 'soudai'.





## Why has Javier been nominated?

Child Rights Hero Nominee • Pages 52–71

# Javier Stauring

**Javier Stauring has been nominated for the 2015 World's Children's Prize for his 20-year struggle for children who have been imprisoned, survivors of violence, and their families.**

Javier wants to bring justice through reconciliation and dialogue, instead of through punishment and revenge. Javier does everything from visiting children in prison to supporting victims of crime and influencing politicians and other decision makers to make the criminal justice system more child-friendly. Javier's work has helped change laws and regulations, helping imprisoned children and victims of crime in the process. He helps leaders from all different faiths, from Christians and Muslims to Buddhists, to work together for the rights of the child alongside children themselves. Javier's work has had an impact in lots of ways, from making it possible for grandparents to visit their imprisoned grandchildren to the creation of new, child-friendly laws that give children who have been sentenced to die in prison the chance of one day being set free.

*The names of some of the people in the stories about Javier have been changed.*



**Javier Stauring was shocked the first time he visited a children's unit at Los Angeles Central Jail. He found 14-year-olds in isolation in dark cells, almost 24 hours a day, for months at a time. Javier protested, but it wasn't until two of the children tried to take their own lives that he was able to get the world around him to react.**

It all started with politicians in California deciding that children who were suspected of serious crimes, such as armed robbery or attempted murder, had lost their right to be treated as children. Instead, they should be sent to an adult court and given sentences as tough as adults. The politicians introduced laws that meant that more children could be sentenced to life in prison, even if they were as young as 14.

Many adults said, "If the kids are old enough to do the crime, they're old enough to do the time."

Javier also believed that children who committed serious crimes should be in the care of society until they were no longer a threat to other people or themselves. But at the same time, he was sure that with the right help, children could change. He had worked for many years as a visiting chaplain, a kind of

counsellor. Javier listened to the children who were incarcerated in prison or youth detention centers, and talked about taking responsibility for their actions, and choosing a life without violence and crime. Almost all those he met had been subjected to violence and abuse throughout their childhoods. Javier's belief was that they needed support, not punishment.

But the politicians had the opposite view. They said, 'Lock 'em up and throw away the key' and blamed their attitudes on their voters' fears of violent children. Newspapers and TV news had long been aware that they gained more readers and viewers when they reported on children and terrible crimes. People found it exciting but also



Many adults say, "If the kids are old enough to do the crime, they're old enough to do the time".



frightening. They felt safer when the politicians promised to lock the children up for ever.

### Prison instead of school

In the early 2000s, there were tens of thousands of children locked up in youth detention centers ('prisons' for chil-

dren) in California, and hundreds of children had been sentenced to life in prison with no chance of release. For 20 years, all new laws regarding children and crime had moved towards tougher sentences. Millions of dollars were invested in building more and larger prisons –

much more than what went to schools and crime prevention programs. At the same time, schools started to call in the police for behaviour that used to be dealt with through detention. Instead of contacting the parents, schools started calling the police when students skipped school or

tagged the walls. Poor families were handed large fines, and youth detention centers became overcrowded. A high-ranking judge told Javier, "I have to go by the law, but what is happening is wrong. We punish kids for being kids, and give them no chance to grow out of it."



## Colour matters

In the USA, the risk of being arrested and imprisoned is much higher if you are black (African American) or Latino (with roots in Central or South America), or if you are American Indian/Native/Indigenous American. It's much easier for white children to avoid arrest and conviction than children of other ethnic backgrounds, even if they have committed the same crimes. This is the case for everything from skipping school and graffiti, to violent crime. The risk is the highest for black children, who are nine times more likely to be sent to prison than white children who commit the same crimes, while Latino children are four times more likely to be imprisoned.





## → Solitary confinement

One day Javier went to visit Maria, a teenage girl he had got to know at a youth detention center. She had gone with her adult sister, who used a screwdriver to threaten a woman for money. Maria had now been moved to an adult prison. Javier was curious, because neither he nor other advocates knew how children were treated there.

A guard took Javier through the long corridors and down lots of stairs to the solitary confinement unit. This unit, or ‘the hole’, was known to be the worst place in the whole prison. Only the most dangerous prisoners were brought here, as punishment if they had done something like attacking another prisoner or a guard. Javier was confused. What had Maria done to be brought here?

The guard stopped beside a long row of metal doors, and pointed to one of them. Javier peered through a small hole in the door and saw Maria, curled up on a bunk, right next to the stainless steel sink and toilet. Javier called to her. She got up slowly and stumbled over to the door, stick-thin and pale as a sheet, with her long hair hanging unkempt.

“Why am I here?” she asked in a hoarse voice. “I’m cold.”

## Nightmare in the dark

Maria had no blanket in the cell, just a thin plastic mattress. The prisoners in ‘the hole’ were often so lonely and desperate they wanted to die. That’s why they were not allowed bedclothes – in case they used them to hang themselves. Maria spoke to Javier through the food slot in the door. She had been brought straight from the youth detention center to the dark, windowless cell, early one morning. The only light came from the corridor, through the hole in the door.

“I asked the guards why they didn’t turn on the lights during the day. They said, ‘This is the hole. We never turn the lights on here.’”

Maria wasn’t allowed to leave the cell for over a month, not even to take a shower or call her mother.

“I feel like I’m losing my mind,” said Maria. It scared her when the adults in the other cells screamed and fought. One prisoner had stuck an arm through the hole in the door to try to touch her. Another often told her about how she had killed her own children.

“We’ll do whatever it takes to get you out of here,” said Javier.



While Maria was in juvenile hall, she was able to go to school and, like these girls, allowed to attend Sunday services.

## Demands for change

Javier protested to the prison management, but they said they had to keep Maria in isolation. In an adult unit she could be abused, even raped. Javier got hold of a lawyer who promised to try to help Maria. Then he also demanded to visit the boys, who were being held in a different part of the prison. There were so many of them that the prison had created a special child unit with around 40 windowless isolation cells. The boys were kept locked up for at least 23 hours a day, and were only allowed to come out to

shower and call home from time to time. For a total of three hours a week they were permitted to walk around in a small cage on the roof, one at a time, to get some daylight and exercise. Now and again a teacher appeared and stuck some worksheets through the bars.

Javier and many others – prison chaplains, youth organisations, judges and lawyers – protested against this inhumane treatment. The lawyer who helped Maria eventually managed to get her moved back to the youth detention center. But the boys



“Hands behind your back”, the staff tell the children.



Adam, 12, misses his family.





## What happened to Maria?

Maria wasn't used to daylight when she was moved back to the youth detention center. When the bus drove out the prison and the sun shone through the windows, she got a nosebleed. Maria felt dizzy, and her eyes ached. For a long time she had to stay in the detention center care unit. Seven months later, she was released and her mother picked her up. "I rode on the floor of the van and told my mom to check her rear view mirror. I said: 'Mom, look back, they're gonna come and get me.' It was very hard getting used to people. And still, years later, I have a problem with cramped spaces."

Maria graduated from high school and Javier helped her get her gang tattoos removed. Today she works at a restaurant and she is involved in the 'Baby Elmo' project, which helps incarcerated teenage parents learn to take responsibility for their children.

"I go and talk to the mothers and tell them that we have to break the cycle. Nothing is more important than education. I have two children and my biggest fear is that they make a mistake like I did. My kids are not going to be in the street life, they are going to school."

It was through a food slot in a cell door like this one that Javier talked with Maria in jail.

PHOTO/PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/AP

remained in the prison, and Javier watched as they became thinner, paler, and quieter. He tried to get the biggest newspaper in LA to write about it, but they didn't think their readers were interested in children who had committed crimes. Months turned to years. And one day, the unthinkable hap-

pened. Two 14-year-old boys tried to hang themselves in their cells, but were rescued just in time.

Javier had had enough. He called a press conference right outside the prison, and now, at last, the journalists came.

"What is being done to children in this jail is sinful," said Javier. The next day the

prison staff called him and said, "You're not welcome here any more". They were angry because Javier had promised not to tell anyone what went on in the prison. But Javier had got permission from the children and their parents. He sued the prison for violating his right to free speech.



Javier is energized by talking with children.



Javier had to fight hard to be allowed to visit children in jail again. Photo: Genaro Molina.







# How Javier works

Javier works with many others – advocates, organisations and authorities – and has done things like:

- Developing programs that give incarcerated children access to education, support, culture and sport, which can help them create a better life.
- Developing programs where relatives of victims of crime can meet with incarcerated young people and support one another, allowing them to move on with their lives through healing dialogue instead of punishment and revenge.
- Giving incarcerated children the chance to get visits from their grandparents (not just from their parents, as used to be the case) and increasing the number of visiting days.
- Getting new laws passed that help young people serving life sentences, and that protect children and young people from violence and abuse when they are incarcerated along with adults.
- Protesting to stop solitary confinement and inhumane treatment of incarcerated children.
- Giving faith leaders the opportunity to work together for change alongside incarcerated children, victims of crime, schools, universities and organisations.

➔ After two years, Javier’s case was upheld in court. The prison changed their rules and allowed him to visit the children again. Shortly thereafter the boys unit was closed down, and a decision was made that nobody should be moved to an adult prison until they are adults.

## Always the outsider

Javier was born in Los Angeles, but moved to Mexico when he was nine. Soon after that his father died, and Javier felt like an outsider in his new country. He was the American, the ‘gringo’, who didn’t speak good Spanish. Everyone else at school had a dad at home. During his teenage years, Javier started hanging out with older boys who started fights in town to prove how tough they were. When he was 19, his family moved back to Los Angeles.

“Suddenly I was a Mexican immigrant in the US,” says

Javier today. “I always felt like an outsider. I think that’s why I could understand the children in jail. When they told me about feeling alone and vulnerable, I realised they weren’t so different from how I was as a child.”

Javier’s mother was the one who thought he should visit kids in prison. She was a volunteer at her church and thought some voluntary work would do Javier good. At the time he was working as a salesman in the jewelry business.

“It didn’t make much sense to me,” says Javier. “Giving up my weekends to go to jail when I could be at the beach or watching football on TV. And I was scared. I had seen those kids on the news, gang members killing innocent folks.”

## Eye-opener

Javier was nervous before his first visit, but soon he was vis-

iting the kids several times a week.

“The real eye-opener was accompanying kids to court. I had gotten to know them and their stories of loss and pain. To sit next to them when they got 75 years in prison was shocking. I felt I owed it to them to fight for their rights.”

A few years later, Javier quit his well-paid job.

“It didn’t work, first meeting with other jewelry dealers who would complain about not making enough million dollars in sales. Later in the evening I would try to comfort a 14-year-old who had just found out he would spend the rest of his life in prison. I felt I had to use my time and energy on what felt meaningful.”

These days, Javier is the Co-Director of the Office of Restorative Justice, a part of the Catholic Archdiocese in Los Angeles. *Restorative justice* means trying to create



A sign outside a youth prison warns that the area is patrolled by guards with dogs.





justice by ‘repairing’ the damage done using methods other than punishment, such as dialogue, education, and community service. “It is important to reach out to everybody who is impacted by crime,” explains Javier.

“One of our most important activities is to organize healing dialogues with family members of victims of violent crime and of incarcerated youth. We have groups where mothers whose children have been locked up for life sit with mothers who’ve had children murdered. They have all lost their children, and when they share their stories and pain they can understand and console each other. It is very powerful and healing.”

Since Javier became a director, he has to attend a lot of meetings, meet with politicians and academics, and do lots of paperwork. But he will never stop visiting incarcerated children. He is grateful for

Javier and a child in jail greet each other with "fist bumps".

his wife and three children, who support him even though their father often spends his evenings and weekends in jail.

“It is the the relationships with the incarcerated children and their families that keep me going, it fuels everything I do. They need to know that I and many others fight for them and a better future. That they are not forgotten.” 🌐



## Arguments that work

In order to sway politicians and their voters, Javier and his colleagues use both economic and scientific arguments. For example, the latest neurological research shows that our brains are not fully grown until we are around 25. Teenagers behave in a different way from adults, because their brains work differently. This is particularly true of the parts of the brain that govern feelings, impulses, and the capacity to plan and think forward. But the thing that have really convinced politicians is that they can save hundreds of millions of dollars by not locking up so many children. Since 1990, California has spent between 66 and 83 million dollars on imprisoning people who have been sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole, for crimes committed as children. For them to remain in jail until they die will cost around half a billion dollars.

Learn more on next page!







# Give kids the chance

# of a second chance

**In California, over 300 young people have been imprisoned on life sentences with no chance of release, for crimes committed when they were children. Around one million children are in prison all over the world, but the USA is the only country that sentences children to stay in prison until they die.**

It is a sentence made for the worst of the worst, those that do not seem as if they could ever change," says Javier. "But children are different from adults, they grow up and mature. The law must take this into account."

Javier and human rights lawyer Elizabeth Calvin started a campaign with other advocates, to give kids the chance of a second chance.

"We didn't say that anyone who had been sentenced for a serious crime should simply be let out. All we wanted was for them to have a chance to show that they had changed after, say, a number of years. If they were no longer a

threat to society, they would be released."

### Everyone got involved

Lots of people got involved in the campaign. Children who had been in prison, victims of crime and their families got to go on courses to learn how to talk to legislators and the media. Then they held press conferences, wrote letters, and called and visited anyone who could influence the situation. One father said, "I want my son's murderer to be punished, but I also want that person to have the chance to change."

Former police officers, prison governors and prose-

cutors also got behind the campaign. Usually these people would support tougher sentences. But many of them had seen with their own eyes how young people could change as they grew older. That's why they believed children deserved another chance.

### Long struggle

Javier invited leaders from churches, temples and mosques to visit the children. Many were unsure, but they soon changed their minds. A presiding elder of a church said, "I marched with Martin Luther King, I've been around the world, I've shaken

Children from organisations in Javier's network, like these members of the Youth Justice Coalition, campaign against life sentences for children.

Photo: Youth Justice Coalition

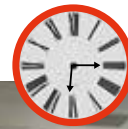
hands with many presidents. I've never been as touched as I was sitting down with these kids." A Jesuit priest said, "Jesus wouldn't throw away these kids. He wouldn't say that they're worthless."

It took years, but today, after many setbacks, there are several new laws in California that help these children. One of these, from 2014, gives those who were sentenced to life in prison the chance to apply for release (on parole) after 25 years in prison, and the chance of a better life. 🌐



# 24 hours in a children's 'jail'

In a special unit at a youth detention center in California, around 40 boys are housed in one-man cells. Security is at a maximum, with bullet-proof glass, heavy gates and sensor fences with barbed wire. A few of the boys await trial, others have already been given long sentences.



## 06.15 Wake up

Peter, 16, rushes to the bathroom.

"Our cells are always locked. If we need to go to the bathroom we have to get the staff's attention. It makes you feel like a dog. Sometimes I just don't want to ask for help, so I pee on my towel."



## 10.00 Surveillance

The staff in the control room keep an eye on everyone and everything.



## 07.30 Grooming

The bathroom has clear glass windows and low walls between the toilets. The prisoners get three minutes each in the shower.

"Once a week they give us a package with clean clothes and a towel. The worst thing is not having your own underwear," says Tomas, 16. He puts his trousers under his mattress to keep them creased.



## 04.00 Transportation

Marcus, 15, is going to court. He wears a special transportation jumpsuit and his hands and feet are shackled. Soon he will be placed in a small cage inside the bus that will take him to the court-house.



## 08.00 Perfect order

Eric, 17, makes his bed.

"It has to be perfect or we have to do it over."







### 08.30. School or Service

When they go to school or a church service, the young people keep their hands behind their backs, to reduce the risk of contact or fights. Girls and boys are kept in different sections of the detention center.

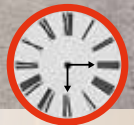
### 12.00 Lunch

There is a large room that gets used as a dining hall and a room for other activities. The chairs and tables are fixed to the floor. Sometimes people break down, for example people who have just been given life sentences, and try to throw furniture around. That isn't possible here.



### 13.00 Class or visiting

There are visiting times at the weekend. It used to be that only the parents were allowed to visit their kids, one day a week. Javier and his team have managed to get grandparents in too, and increase the visiting times to two days a week.



### 15.30 Recreation

"We have one hour of 'rec' per day. It's nice to get out in the sun," says James, 15.

Many of the kids train hard in their cells. "We better build our strength before we are moved to state prison (with adults). Anything can happen in there, I need to be able to protect myself," says one boy. The cells are 3.5 x 3 metres. Prisoners are only allowed a handful of personal belongings, like books and letters, and a maximum of five photos.



Some of the kids hardly ever get visitors.

"My son is too little to visit", says Daniel, 17, who is sentenced to life in prison, plus 30 years. "When he gets older I will tell him not to follow in my footsteps. To be on his own and think before he does something stupid. I did everything to fit in: I only cared about showing 'chismo' for the neighborhood. The drugs, crystal meth, turned me into a disgusting, pathetic person. Looking back at how I was, I'm so disappointed in myself. I finally got the strength to take off my mask, but it is too late now."



### 18.00 Javier visits

After dinner, Javier and Father Mike, the prison chaplain, come to support the boys and talk with them about life and the future. Eric, 17, is going to court tomorrow and is scared. His friends try to comfort him.





## 20.00 Calling home

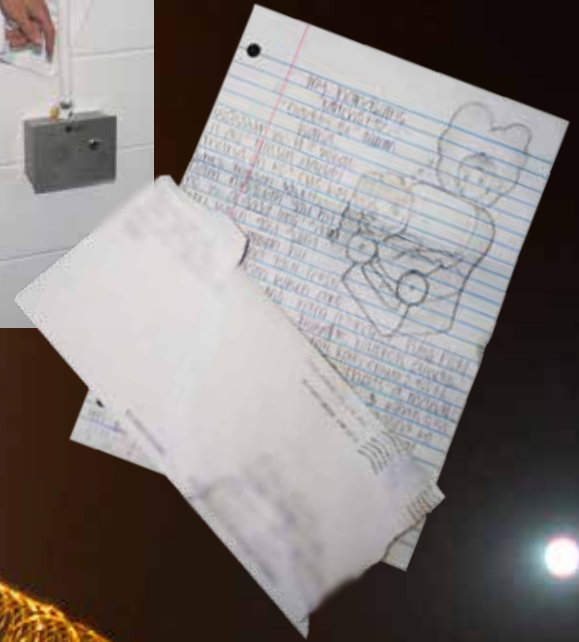
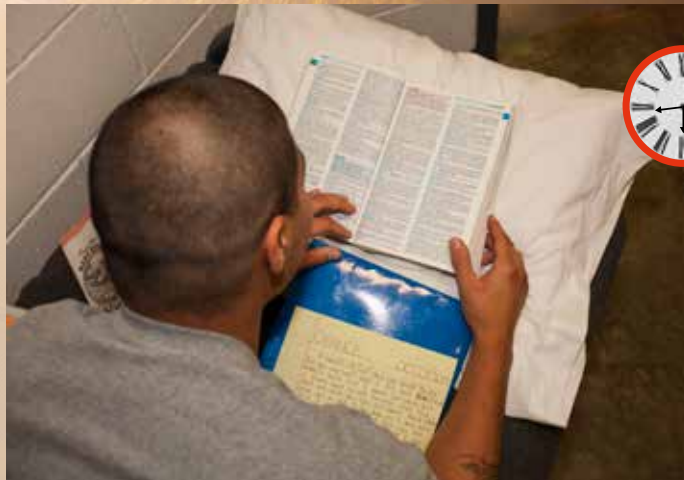
The boys cannot receive calls. They have to use a payphone and call collect. This can be expensive for their families. A lot of kids want to use the phone, so everyone's time to talk is limited. There is no access to computers or email. Letters to and from family and friends are opened and checked by the staff.



## 20.30 Locked up

Michael is one of the few who have been given a second chance. Instead of life in prison, he will soon be released and go to boarding school, far from the gangs and drugs.

"It gives the other guys hope," he says.



Joseph, 17 has received flowers from his parents, and he uses his last half hour of light creating a work of art in his cell.



## 21.00 Lights out

Now the doors are locked until tomorrow. Eric is afraid. He prays about tomorrow's trial, that he won't receive a life sentence. Then he lies awake in the dark for a long time.





# More than three



David has a young daughter who he has hardly ever seen. "Her mother doesn't want us to have any contact, but I draw her stuff and send it anyway."

David was 16 when one of his gang friends shot at two guys on the street. Nobody was badly injured, and David wasn't the one holding the weapon. Still, he was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to life in jail, with no chance of freedom, ever.

**D**avid and his three younger siblings were raised by their aunt. Their father was in and out of prison, but their mother came to visit sometimes. One day she took David's younger siblings and disappeared. David was left behind, alone. At night he often lay awake thinking, 'Why doesn't she want me?' He tried to make up all kinds of reasons, but nothing felt right. David's cousins teased him because he didn't have any parents. When he was seven, he asked his aunt why he couldn't live with his mother.

"Times are tough," she replied.

A few years later, when David was eleven, his mother came back and took him to Mexico. But she abandoned him again there. His father was hardly ever out of prison long enough for them to meet. David got used to the fact that his parents couldn't take care of him.

## A new family

David lived in the middle of a poor, dangerous area. His uncle was a gang member and David looked up to him. He

also admired the gang's style and their strong sense of unity. When he was thirteen, David asked if he could join the gang.

"No, school is more important," said his uncle. The other gang members thought he was too young as well. But David dropped out of school, and was finally allowed to be



# life sentences

‘jumped’ into the gang. That meant that he had to let two gang members beat him up badly for a few minutes. Then they gave him a gun and told him to be ‘ready for whatever’.

David’s uncle was upset.

“If you stay on this path you will end up in prison or dead.”

That same year, one of David’s old classmates was shot to death in a gang fight. But by then he had started taking so many drugs that he couldn’t feel fear or sadness.

## The beginning of the end

The gang became the family that David had never had. When he wasn’t working with his uncle, who was a construction worker, he would hang out with his new

friends day and night. One morning, they got into a fight with some boys from another area. One of the older gang members decided they should go back to David’s and get his gun.

“This feels like a bad idea. Let’s not do this,” said David as he handed over the weapon. He was right. Not long after, his friend shot at the two boys and hit one of them. David was standing beside him and saw the boy fall. Later that day, he was arrested by the police.

## Trial begins

The boy who got shot only sustained a minor injury, and he was able to leave hospital the same day. But the shooting was still considered an

attempted murder, and it was decided that David should be tried in an adult court, although he was only sixteen. The prosecutor offered him a deal:

“If you agree to a life sentence you don’t have to go to trial, and have the chance of getting out on parole after 25 years.”

But David said no. He didn’t know much about the law, but he hadn’t shot anyone, so why should he go to jail for 25 years?

David was held at the youth detention center for seven months, until the first day of his trial. At four in the morning, the youth detention center bus took him to court, shackled hand and foot. The defence lawyer gave him a



## David, 22

**Lives:** In Calipatria Prison.

**Likes:** Drawing, writing poetry, playing football.

**Sad:** When I think about my family, and how my life could have been.

**Misses:** My daughter.

**Dreams of:** Being free.





→ suit to wear and told him to hide his gang tattoo. When David entered the court, he looked so young and thin that the jury, twelve men and women of different ages, seemed to feel sorry for him. But the prosecutor said:

“This little kid is not as innocent as he looks.”

Then he showed old police pictures of David and his tattoos. A gang expert testified and described David as one of the worst of the worst.

### The jury's decision

The trial lasted for a week and a half. Then the jury retired to deliberate. David waited alone in a small, cold, dirty cell. He shut his eyes tightly and said to himself:

“Be ready. This will be bad.”

After an hour the jury came back. David was brought back into the courtroom and saw his aunt, his mother and his girlfriend sitting there.

“I love you guys,” he said, before a guard handcuffed him to the chair.

One of the members of the jury stood up and read from a piece of paper: ‘Guilty’. David felt his insides turn to ice, even though he had been expecting it. The judge looked at him and asked if she should feel bad for giving him a harsh sentence.

“You are so charming, and look so young and innocent. . . You look like a little angel.”

Her nice words confused David. She paused and continued:

“But that’s what scares me.”

### Tough sentence

The judge said that David would never get the chance to commit another crime. He was sentenced to three life sentences plus 20 years, with no chance of release. The sentence was automatically tougher because he was a member of a gang.

David started to cry as he was led back to his cell. One of the guards, a big man with spiky hair, gave him two bits of chewing gum and said:

“Don’t pay attention to her. You know who you are. And maybe you’ll get it overturned.”

There were only two buses a day between the youth detention center and the court, so David had to wait for hours in the cell. He tried to sleep on the concrete bunk, but it was too cold. His defence lawyer came by briefly. He was annoyed.

“I told you to take the prosecutor’s deal,” he said.

When David got back to the youth detention center around midnight, everyone knew what had happened. The staff had put a note on

his cell door to check on him every half hour, to make sure he didn’t take his own life.

### No visitors

When David turned eighteen the youth detention center organised a farewell party. Then he was moved to one of California’s infamous adult prisons.

“I was really scared,” he says now. “But I shared a cell with an older guy who tried to calm me down. He said, ‘You’re a youngster, your gang will look out for you. Just stay away from drugs, gambling and fights.’”

Just a few weeks later, the prison was rocked by violent rioting between different gangs. Many were stabbed and beaten with weapons that had been smuggled in or made in prison. Both prisoners and guards were injured. Although most of the prisoners were not involved, all the inmates were punished by having visits and phone calls withdrawn for a year. David and the other prisoners were hardly ever allowed to leave their cells.







"If I ever get out of here I want to work with kids, and help them make better decisions than I did."

"The guards called us 'ghosts' because we all turned so white in there, without any sunlight."

#### **Farewell to the gang**

David has been sentenced to stay in prison until he dies. He hopes that the new laws that Javier has told him about might give him a chance to get out in 20 or 30 years. But for that to happen, he has to stay out of trouble. That's why he has just moved to another part of the prison,

for people who want to break free of the gang world. It was a really tough decision.

"My gang was my family for a very long time, and they looked out for me inside. But I was so tired of wearing a mask all the time. There was at least one stabbing every week. I didn't like to see people hurt, and I didn't want to hurt anyone. I want to live and maybe have a chance to meet my daughter one day. Even if it means breaking that bond with the gang." 🌐



David hardly ever gets any visitors. All his relatives have moved back to Mexico. But Javier comes to visit, and that means a lot.

"I never had a father, so Javier filled that spot. At first I was suspicious, but he didn't give up on me. He kept in contact. He tells me things I never heard before. He gives me hope and has expectations of me that I don't even have for myself. Javier makes me feel that I have not been forgotten."





Michael was 15 when he was arrested by the police for five attempted murders. He was sentenced to life in prison and will remain locked up behind high walls and electric fences for the rest of his life.

# Sentenced to die in prison

I was raised in poverty like many kids in my circumstances. My mom was an alcoholic and my father was an abusive drug addict. But my dad went away and eventually me and my siblings were taken away by CPSI (Child Protective Services) and placed in foster care. My grandmother took us in before they separated us in to different homes. My mom wanted to take us all back but my grandma only let her take me and my little brother.

## Stole to eat

We went with my mother to live in absolute poverty in a ghetto, a gang and drug infested neighborhood. We lived in a trailer that had no windows, just clear bags to make it look like windows. The roof and floor were cav-

ing in, and the doors had no handles because they'd get kicked in by the cops anyway.

My mother would leave me and my little brother by ourselves for weeks at a time.

Our main source of food was going to school to get the free breakfast and lunch. On the weekends I'd take my brother to the park where they gave meals to the homeless every Sunday. Eventually I had to start stealing to take care of us, to get clothes and food.

My mom started staying home more often when I was about 10 years old. She didn't like that I was stealing to put food on the table. So she would kick me out. From then on I lived mainly on the streets.

## Learnt to survive

I got jumped into the gang at the age of eleven. The gang taught me how to make money by robbery and selling drugs. We had enemies who wanted to kill me or someone I loved. I learned to hate them so much I lost sight of who I was. I didn't care about money anymore. I just wanted to hurt them as much as I could for every time they jumped me or shot at me or killed people who were close to me.

I started using heavy drugs like crack and meth. I became what people called a crack-head at the age of eleven. My mom wouldn't take me in, so I slept in bushes, under bridg-

Michael was twelve when he was arrested for the first time. When he was taken from Juvenile Hall to court he had to put on an orange overall. Handcuffs and ankle shackles were attached to a chain around his waist. "It's hard to walk, you have to shuffle forward," he explains.



Michael, 20, has been in prison for five years.





es and in park restrooms. My homies wouldn't take me in either but they'd give me a gun and tell me to take care of myself.

**Arrested for the first time**

I lived on the streets till the age of twelve. Then, someone tried to shoot me from a car but I fired first and saved my own life. I was caught but only charged with discharg-

ing a firearm at a moving vehicle.

After a short time inside, I was let out. My mom didn't want me staying at her house so I was soon back in the hood, with my gang. I went out 10 times worse, because I had seen jail and was no longer scared of it. I had a new outlook on life. I thought that if I can hurt as many enemies as I can, I could prevent

them from hurting me or one of mine the next day. So I continued to inflict as much damage as I could. I lost contact with who I really was. Just a twelve-year-old kid.

**War on the streets**

My parole officer was meant to keep an eye on me after I was released. He sent me to a group home because I was running the streets. I was in



**Did you know?**

- That out of all those serving life for murders committed when they were children, almost half were not physically involved – for example, by firing a weapon. Some were standing alongside the person responsible. Others were look-outs, for example, outside a shop, while their friends carried out an armed robbery.
- That in cases where the child had an adult crime partner, the adult received a *shorter* sentence than the child in more than half of cases.
- That 85 percent of people in California who have been sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes committed when they were children, are black (African American) or Latino (with roots in South America).

**What are the gangs like?**

Michael joined a gang in Los Angeles (LA) when he was eleven. Gangs have existed in LA since the 1940s. It all started with groups of white racists who went to Mexican American areas and attacked young people there. The police didn't do anything about it, so lots of young Latinos joined with their friends to defend one another and their neighbourhood. Gradually, some of the gangs of friends started to fight with one another, about which neighbourhood was best and who was the strongest. Some developed into criminal gangs, who fought over who


was allowed to sell drugs in particular areas. In the 1980s many gangs started using more weapons and selling more dangerous drugs. In recent years crime has decreased, but there are still hundreds of gangs all over LA, from all different ethnic groups. Many children who grow up in gang neighbourhoods often feel forced to join, to gain friends and protection. Once you have joined, it's hard to leave without being punished. Many high-ranking gang leaders have been sentenced to life in prison, but continue to run their gangs from inside.





## Children locked up with adults

In the USA, around 250,000 children are tried as adults every year, instead of having their cases heard in a child and youth court. Every night, 10,000 children spend the night in an adult jail. Many of them have not even been tried, but are just *suspected* of a crime. Still, they are put in great danger and run a much higher risk of being subjected to abuse and sexual violence than adults in the same prisons. There is also a higher risk that these children will be affected by depression and attempt suicide than the adults.



→ the group home system for two years before I ran away and started selling a lot of drugs.

The streets were at war at the time, absolutely vicious. Innocent people are shot or killed at times. The nights are the worst, but violence can happen at any time of day. It makes you feel paranoid, like someone is always following you around. I didn't even feel safe walking to the store without a gun.

I was arrested by the police for selling drugs and carrying a gun. I went to Juvenile Camp for six months, where I ran into guys from other gangs who had shot at me and who I had shot at. We fought

every time we saw each other – like animals tearing at each other's throats, never realising that we were basically each other's mirror images. We'd grown up in the same circumstances, but hated each other because he lived three blocks from me.

They released me at the age of 14. I had nothing, so I started selling drugs again within two weeks and my mom kicked me out again. I had sunk so low, I was in a deep dark place where I didn't care about life, not mine or anybody else's. I found release for my anger and frustration through hurting others. So many nights I slept under that bridge. I cried to myself



When Michael was accused of attempted murder he stopped caring about anything. Every evening after court he fought with other children and with the staff of the Juvenile Hall. He was often sent to 'the box', solitary confinement, to calm down.

– not understanding life. Confused, cold and heartless. I unleashed all those feelings on people I felt were the enemy.

### Caught again

Three months after I turned 15 I was arrested on five attempted murders. My crime partner, who was older than me, blamed everything on me because he thought I'd get less time. It was decided

that I should be sentenced in adult court. I had everything stacked against me: Two women, who were among the victims testifying against us; my crime partner telling on me; 'gang experts' pointing at me; my public defender who didn't want to defend me because of the severity of the crime. Every night after trial I would get into fights in juvenile hall, because I didn't care anymore.







Michael is now locked up along with around 3,800 other prisoners in Calipatria State Prison. Almost half of them are serving life sentences. The prison is in the Mojave desert, near the border with Mexico. In the summer time the temperature can reach 47 degrees Celcius (117 degrees Fahrenheit) in the prison yard.

But I remember one time after they had thrown me in the 'box', the isolation cell, for fighting with staff. I suddenly thought to myself; "Nobody is doing this to me. I'm doing this to myself. If this is going to be my home for the rest of my life, why make it worse than it already is."

I started to read books, and found ways to keep busy, like watching movies. I love to

read about all the different places where I've never been. Things I've never seen. Learning about how people struggle in other countries that are way worse than mine. Education is the key, I think.

**Sentenced to life**

I wasn't surprised when I got a life sentence. I told my mom when she visited me a week

before I was convicted: 'Don't let them see you cry in there'. That day I walked into the court room, hoping the jury had not been able to agree, knowing that it wouldn't happen. When they said 'Guilty' for the first attempted murder, I put my head down, knowing my fate had been sealed in stone. But then I picked my head up, refusing to let them see me lost. I smiled to show them that they could not break me. But I cried after, when they took me back to my cell, because I knew my future.

Now I feel stronger than I've ever been. New laws are coming to help kids like me. Some of us never knew we had any other choice but to live the life we lived. Maybe it took the worst for us to realise that we can make the best out of this worst. When you no longer have anything to lose, you have everything to gain. As long as you don't sit there feeling sorry for yourself. We all have something that makes us happy. We can help ourselves." 🌐



Michael has not seen his mother for two years, but they write letters to one another. 'When Javier comes here it feels just like getting a visitor,' says Michael.





# We forgive

Itzel was twelve when her big sister Zuri was killed by her boyfriend. Her family chose to forgive him instead of demanding revenge. Today, they fight with Javier against demands for revenge and long sentences.

**E**ddie, the boyfriend, was extremely jealous. “He had been getting counselling to control his anger better, but they had been fighting that day. They loved each other but Eddie was upset and said he was going to kill himself,” recalls Itzel.

Late that evening, the family were all in their shared bedroom. Itzel, her parents and siblings, and Zuri’s three-year-old son and newborn daughter. Nobody could sleep. Itzel prayed with her mother that Eddie would calm down. But around midnight, there was a loud bang. All the lights went out and furniture and plaster fell all around them. Eddie had driven his car right into the house.

## Shouts for revenge

Zuri and her 14-day-old daughter died in the crash. Eddie was arrested and charged with two murders and six attempted murders. Friends and family members tried to comfort Itzel’s family. Many said, “He should die for what he did!” But Itzel didn’t want Eddie to die. Eddie’s little sister Ruby was her best friend and they were both sure that Eddie didn’t mean to hurt anyone other than himself.

“He snapped, went chaotic and wanted to die,” said Itzel. Her parents felt the same. When Eddie’s family came to ask for forgiveness, they all cried together.



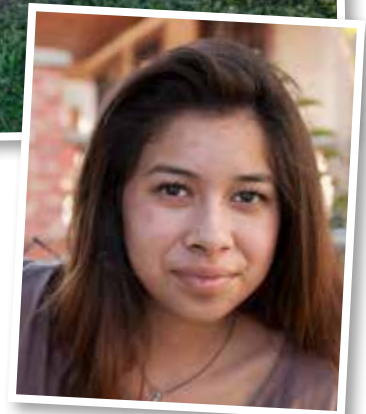
“You suffer from this tragedy, just like us,” said her father, Tomás. “Hatred and revenge doesn’t bring back our loved ones. It just poisons the souls of the people.”

## Testifying for Eddie

The prosecutor in the trial thought Zuri’s family should fight for as tough a sentence as possible for Eddie, maybe even the death penalty. But instead, Itzel’s parents wanted Eddie to get help in prison. Her mother said,

“I feel pain every day, but it won’t help me to know that another mother will suffer, waiting for her son’s execution.”

Neither her words nor Eddie’s deep remorse helped. Javier accompanied them on the last day of the trial, and he became angry when he heard the prosecutor saying terrible things about Eddie, and criticising the victims’ family for not wanting revenge. Both the families began to cry when they realised that nobody cared how they felt. Before the trial was over, they stood up and walked out of the courtroom. They knew already that Eddie would be sentenced to die in prison. 🌐



“Before my sister died I didn’t know what do in life, but now I have a passion for justice. I want to be a lawyer and make a difference,” says Itzel.



Itzel (furthest to the right) with Eddie’s mum, her mum and Eddie’s sister, her best friend Ruby. They support one another and other families affected by loss and sorrow. They want forgiveness and hope instead of bitterness and revenge.

Four years have passed, but Itzel’s family still think about Zuri and Naomi every day.



# Big brother is gone

Sometimes it feels like Ismael doesn't have a big brother any more. His brother Omar was arrested and sentenced to life in prison at the age of 14. Now they only see each other a few times a year.

Ismael, 11, doesn't know why Omar is in prison. "My parents don't want to tell me yet. They think I'm too little to understand, but I think I'm old enough. It stresses me out. Sometimes I feel like an adult in a child's body. I wish I had a big brother at home, someone who could help me with homework, play games and be there on my birthday. He will miss my graduation, and when I get married one day. It's sad."

"It's like we grew up and he got left behind," says his big sister Yenci, 18. "It really hurts. No one can understand unless they've gone through it."

## Always worried

It all started when Omar made friends with some kids from a violent gang. He started staying out late and he changed – became sad and angry. One evening the police brought him home. They told him to lift his shirt and show his new gang tattoo to his shocked mother. Eventually the family moved to another

neighbourhood to save Omar. So he packed a bag and disappeared. His mother and father often drove around looking for him, but they never found him. Not long after, he was arrested.

## Moved far away

In the beginning Omar was imprisoned close to his family and they saw each other often. But when he was moved to California's infamous supermax prison, Pelican Bay, the visits decreased because of the 15-hour drive to get there.

"Sometimes we sit on opposite sides of a glass pane, and talk on a phone, one at a time," says Ismael. "But my mom wants the phone all the time! It's better in the visiting room, where we can give him a hug and talk together."

## Constant worry

"Don't worry about me," Omar always writes in his letters, but his family are always worried.

"It's bad in there, they fight. Omar got his nose and fingers broken," says Ismael. "But he's changed, he's gotten smarter and started going to school. My dream is that he will be free one day." 🌐



Ismael misses his brother, who was sentenced to life in prison.



## Ismael, 11

**Loves:** My family.

**Plays:** Saxophone. Recorder.

**Makes me angry:** Bullying and racism.

**Wants to be:** A lawyer.

**Misses:** My big brother.

Omar writes in a letter: "I'm not in the place I want to be in, but it is a punishment and a lesson I have to go through for my actions... Be careful about who you hang around with and behave good. I love u and miss you a lot."



Ismael is preparing to visit his brother Omar, who was sentenced to life in prison for a crime he committed when he was 14.





## Why is Kailash nominated?

Child Rights Hero Nominee • Pages 72–92

# Kailash Satyarthi

**Kailash Satyarthi has been nominated for the 2015 World's Children's Prize for his dangerous struggle against child labour and slavery, and for all children's right to education.**

As a young man, Kailash began risking his own life to free children being held as slaves at brickworks and factories. He founded Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA, Save Childhood Movement) and began building homes for liberated slave children. At that time, over 30 years ago, hardly anyone else in India was speaking up for these children's rights. Kailash received death threats and was attacked, and two of his colleagues were killed, but he didn't give up. These days, Kailash and BBA have freed over 80,000 children, and his 'Global March Against Child Labour' campaign has grown into a movement involving millions of people. His work has contributed to new laws and regulations being passed to protect children's rights all over the world. Kailash's label for child labour-free rugs, GoodWeave, has reduced the number of children in the carpet industry from one million to 250,000, and thousands of poor villages have received his help to become 'child friendly'. In February 2014, the WCP Child Jury selected Kailash as a candidate for the 2015 World's Children's Prize. In November of the same year, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with Malala Yousafzai.



**At a brick kiln in Northern India, 27 families are being held as slaves. Young children make thousands of bricks every day, for 16 hours a day, under the burning sun. But today, the sky is dark and the rain is pouring. Kailash drives through the gates and screeches to a halt. He and his activists have come to free the child slaves.**

**A**s Kailash jumps out of the car, he is prepared for violent resistance. The kiln is usually protected by armed guards. But nothing happens. The place is deserted. Somebody has told the owner, and the slave workers have been taken away.

Finally, Kailash finds the children, abandoned at the roadside not far from the kiln. They are dressed in rags and covered in dirt, soot and brick dust. They are afraid when Kailash approaches, but too exhausted to run away.

"We are here to help you.

You are free now," explains Kailash. The children stare at him – they don't understand. They don't know what freedom is. But they agree to get into the cars on the promise of food and water. All except one girl who is lying on the ground. Weak and burning with fever, she weeps and cries out, "Mummy, help me!"

The girl's name is Gulabo and she is 14. She was born at the brick kiln and has worked here all her life. Years of breathing in brick dust have destroyed her lungs, and she dies just a few hours later.

Kailash takes a selfie with his mobile at Bal Ashram in Rajasthan, where his organisation takes in freed child slaves.

### **No education**

When Gulabo's father comes to collect his daughter's body to bury her, he says:

"If only I had been able to learn to read and write, we would never have become slaves and I wouldn't have lost my daughter." He explains to Kailash that a slave owner tricked him into signing a contract he couldn't read with his thumb print. That's how his family became slaves for 17 years. This father's words help Kailash to realise that education is the key to ending slavery and poverty. But he has always believed that child labour is wrong.



### Kailash starts school

Kailash was both happy and nervous when he started school, proud of his new uniform and bag. He saw a boy of about his age sitting on the steps outside the school. Beside him sat a man, perhaps his father, with a shoe polishing box. Both were barefoot and dressed in dusty, dirty clothes.

Later that day, Kailash asked his teacher:

“How come we are sitting in this classroom, but that boy is sitting outside working?”

Surprised, the teacher said:

“They are poor, and it’s normal for boys like that to work.”

For the first time, Kailash discovered that different children could have totally different lives. His own family was neither rich nor poor. They had enough, and lived a good life.

Every day on the way to

school, Kailash saw the boy sitting outside. One day, he summoned the courage to speak to the father.

“Why can’t your son go to school?”

The father looked just as surprised as the teacher.

“Nobody has ever asked me that before. I’ve never thought about it. My father worked when he was a boy, and so did I, and now my son does. We were born to work.”

This seemed unfair, but what could Kailash do about it? He was only six years old.

### Friends disappeared

When Kailash was twelve, several of his schoolmates were forced to quit school. They couldn’t afford school fees and school books. So Kailash walked all over town asking for people’s old books. In one day, he gathered 2000 school books. He started a book bank for poor children, and raised money by selling

Gulabo, the girl who died in Kailash’s arms, worked every day at a brickworks, just like this debt slave girl.



JAVED DAR/XINHUA PRESS/CORBIS

tea, polishing shoes and organising events with some friends.

Seeing injustice made Kailash angry. Most of all, he hated India’s ancient ‘caste system’. According to this system, everyone is automatically born into the same ‘caste’ as their family – a group that has a set value in society, either high or low.

People’s lives are governed by rules on what jobs your ‘caste’ is allowed to do, and who you’re allowed to marry. The caste system was banned in India long ago, but it still exists.

There are also people who don’t have a caste. They are ‘casteless’ or ‘outcastes’, and they are usually very poor, have the dirtiest jobs, and are



PHILLIP LISAK/CORBIS/CORBIS



## How Kailash combats slavery and child labour

- Kailash and his organisation, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), or ‘Save Childhood’, works to protect children and their right to education. One hundred employees, from social workers and youth workers to teachers and researchers, all work together, along with a network of over 80,000 volunteers in India and throughout the world. They also lobby politicians and fight for fairer laws. Since 1980, over 83,000 children have been set free and supported to build better lives.
- Two homes, Mukti Ashram in Delhi and Bal Ashram in Rajasthan, provide shelter for liberated children, giving them support, love and education.
- Thousands of poor Indian villages have pledged to become ‘child friendly’, meaning that no children have to work and all children can go to school.

TEXT: CARMILLA FLOYD PHOTOS: KIM NAYLOR







Kailash and his organisation have freed over 80,000 children from hazardous forced labour and slavery.

→ treated worse than everyone else. People with old-fashioned ideas say that the casteless people are ‘untouchable’. Kailash’s own mother only hit him once, when he was five years old and accepted a piece of bread from a ‘casteless’ child. He wasn’t allowed to eat something that an ‘untouchable’ had touched!

### Party for Gandhi

When he was 15 years old, Kailash wanted to organise a party to celebrate one hundred years since the birth of freedom champion Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi hated the caste system too, and dreamed of an India where everyone was treated equally. Kailash invited a group of important leaders to a dinner where the food was to be prepared by ‘untouchables’. Everyone was to sit and eat together, as a symbol of friendship and justice. Some said they would come, but on the day nobody turned up. And what’s more, the leaders decided that Kailash’s family

should be excluded because they had eaten food prepared by ‘untouchables’. Kailash was angry.

“You cannot punish my family for something that I did on my own,” he said, and decided to give up his surname. Kailash’s family were sad, but from that day on he has called himself Kailash Satyarthi, which means ‘seeker of truth’.

### Quit his job

Kailash’s mother thought it was obvious that since Kailash did well at school, he should become either an engineer or a doctor, and take care of the family. Kailash got a degree in engineering, but quit his well-paid job after just one year. He wanted to put all his time into helping poor children get a better life.

“My mother cried for years,” said Kailash later. “But I had to follow my heart.”

In those days, over 30 years ago, hardly anyone in India cared about the rights of the child. Child labour was

against the law, but everyone ignored that. Some people thought Kailash was wrong and said:

“How will poor families survive if their children can’t work? Is it better that they starve to death?”

But Kailash knew that most child labourers only earned a couple of dollars a week, and that neither they nor their families could survive on that. And millions of adults were unemployed, just

because employers would rather exploit children, who provided cheap labour without complaining.

### Starting to free children

When Kailash began to travel around India he got a shock. The situation for children was worse than he had thought. Children were bought and sold like commodities and were held captive as slaves in factories and quarries, often hundreds of miles from their



Former child slaves put on a performance about human trafficking.



families. Some had been sold by their own parents. Others were kidnapped, or tricked into thinking they would get to go to school. One little slave girl asked Kailash:

“What does a dairy cow cost?”

“Between one thousand and fifteen hundred dollars,” replied Kailash.

“I was sold for just one hundred dollars,” said the girl.

Kailash wrote down the children’s stories and published his own magazine. He gave speeches and participated in debates in order to influence ordinary people and those in power. At the same time, he carried out his first rescue missions to set working children free.

Sometimes it seemed hopeless to rescue ten or one hundred children, when millions were still held captive.

“But even if we just save the life of one child, it’s worth it,” said Kailash, who started off by going into factories and quarries without any help from the police or support from ordinary people. It was extremely dangerous, but he quickly gained lots of helpers, who were inspired by his struggle.

### Dangerous mission

On one of his first raids, Kailash and his activists were beaten bloody by security guards, but they still man-

Kailash is happiest when he gets to visit Bal Ashram, the centre for freed slave children in Rajasthan.



aged to rescue 153 people.

Kailash and his helpers continued to rescue children while being shot at and attacked. Kailash was beaten about the head and body with fists and wooden sticks. One day, on a raid at a quarry, a security guard beat one of his closest colleagues to death.

Kailash went to court and demanded help from the police and a permit to rescue children. Without this permit, the guards could continue to beat the activists with the law on their side, because Kailash was trespassing on private land. Many police officers and even judges were bribed by the slave owners not to

help Kailash. But finally, he managed to get his demands approved in court. Now he could carry out even more raids, and he received a lot of attention in newspapers and on TV. The mafia and those politicians who earned money from child labour got scared and started to threaten Kailash in letters and on the street. Someone tried to burn his house down, and one morning when the telephone rang his little daughter answered.

“Tell your father that we’re planning to kill him,” said a voice in the receiver.

Kailash was afraid, especially for his family.

“But the fact that the slave owners are attacking us just proves that we’re on the right track. It would be worse if nobody cared,” he said to his wife, Sumeda, who agreed.

### March against child labour

After almost 20 years’ work, Kailash and his colleagues had liberated tens of thousands of children and brought about major changes. But still, things were moving too slowly for Kailash.

“Let’s follow in Gandhi’s footsteps,” he said. “Let’s bring about a non-violent

revolution and march all over India demanding justice!”

Kailash led the first march against child labour in 1992, along with activists and former child labourers. They walked 2000 km from the poor state of Bihar, where tens of thousands of children worked in the carpet industry, to the corridors of power in capital city Delhi. Along the way, they stopped in towns and villages to make speeches, sing and play music. Hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people walked with them some of the way from their home village. At night they slept in poor families’ homes.

After several marches through India, Kailash managed to get the whole world to join him on his journey. Their final destination was Geneva in Switzerland and the headquarters of the International Labour Organisation, ILO. Hundreds of thousands of children, parents and activists joined in this Global March Against Child Labour, each walking in their home countries, but between them covering a total of 80,000 km through 103 countries. Kailash and a group of liberated slave children arrived in



An Indian minister (to the left of Kailash) donated a month’s salary to the fight against child labour.







Geneva just as a major ILO conference was starting. They were invited to speak, and for the first time, hundreds of global leaders listened to the slave children's stories. Just a few years later, a new international agreement was signed to prevent and outlaw the worst forms of child labour.



### With the children

After over 30 years, Kailash has freed more than 83,000 children and brought about new laws and regulations in India and all over the world to protect children and give them more of a chance of accessing education. Today, Kailash travels the world speaking to presidents, the UN and heads of major corporations. But his favourite place to go is Bal Ashram, the home for liberated slave children that he built along



BBA

In 1998, Kailash went on a protest march with liberated child labourers and activists from all over the world, against child labour and slavery. This historic march has grown into a global movement that encompasses tens of thousands of volunteers and hundreds of organisations around the world. This movement campaigns through protests, films, music, meetings with global leaders, and social media.

with his wife Sumeda and other activists.

"I feel energised when I meet the children and listen to their thoughts and dreams for the future," he says. "They are honest and open minded and their friendship means a lot to me. Lack of respect for

children and childhood is the worst thing I know, and the main reason why at least 215 million of the world's children are still in work. I won't rest until the world is free of child labour and slavery." 🌐



## What is modern-day slavery?

Millions of children work from the age of six under slave-like conditions in the world today. They work up to 18 hours a day, seven days a week. They do not get enough food. They are threatened, beaten, and sometimes burned with cigarettes or hot iron pokers. Some are tied up or chained. Some of these children are what is known as debt slaves. Their families have borrowed a small amount of money, for example, in order to buy medicine. The interest on the loan is extremely high, and it is impossible for poor people to repay it. Instead they have to work to repay the debt. Sometimes the whole family have to work together, but often one of the children is sent away to work. The high interest rate means that the debt keeps growing all the time, however much they work. The debt slave children are never set free again.

## Everyone can make a difference!

Fifteen years ago, at least one million children worked in the carpet industry in India, Pakistan, Nepal and Southeast Asian countries. Kailash started a global campaign to raise awareness that the handwoven rugs in people's best rooms were often made by child slaves. He set up the world's first label for child-labour-free rugs, Goodweave, and encouraged everyone only to buy rugs that were guaranteed to have been made without child labour. Kailash got people all over the world to demand guarantees from companies that they would not exploit children – not just rug and carpet makers, but also manufacturers of other things like footballs, sneakers and clothes. Largely thanks to Kailash's campaign and Goodweave, the number of children working in the carpet industry has decreased from one million to 250,000 children.



# Dan

Kailash and his colleagues gather at the office early in the morning. They have been planning today's rescue mission for weeks. Kailash has had a tip-off that there are children working in factories and basement workshops in a particular area of Delhi. Today, they are going to set as many as possible free.



▲ The buildings huddle close together and there are narrow alleyways leading in all directions. It's easy to get lost and become trapped. Kailash points to the map.

"This is where the factories are! So we have to get in and out of here as fast as possible, before they attack us."

Around 30 police officers are going to help. Everyone gathers outside the municipal building. ▶

Kailash's cars lead the way, and the police follow, but they are not told exactly where they are going. Some police officers accept bribes for warning factory owners so that they have time to hide the child workers.



# generous mission



▲ When Kailash comes down the stairs, the children are afraid and begin to cry. Who is he? They find one little boy under a bed. The slave owner has told him to hide, otherwise the police will arrest him.



## ◀ What happens now?

The freed child slaves look through the car window, en route to safety.



## They have to hurry

People are beginning to gather on street corners, staring suspiciously. A fight could break out at any moment. The children's faces are concealed to protect them during the time Kailash and BBA pursue their case against the slave drivers in court.

## Slave incense

The children are making and packaging incense which is sold in India and abroad.



◀ The children are taken to a safe house to be questioned. Where are you from? How did you end up here? What was your working day like? Many of the children were sold from poor states like Bihar to factories in Delhi.

Almost 30 children have been rescued today, and will be able to sleep in real beds tonight. Several employers have been arrested and will face prison sentences of 20 years or life.



# Imtyaz was sold as

When Imtyaz is nine, his father is forced to travel away from home in search of work. A storm has destroyed almost the whole village. Imtyaz's family is extremely poor and needed all their savings to rebuild their house, from clay, straw and bamboo. Imtyaz and his siblings wear ragged, worn clothing and are always hungry.

One day a neighbour comes to visit. Imtyaz's mother is surprised and a little afraid. The man is from the richest family in the village, and they don't usually talk to poor villagers. But now he is talking in a kind voice and smiling.

"Your son is wasting his time here," he says. "Let me take him to the capital city,

New Delhi. I will pay for his education if he works a few hours a week to cover food and accommodation. I know things are hard for you at the moment."

Imtyaz really wants to go to the capital city. It has wide streets and buildings as tall as the sky. All the big movies are shot there. He might even meet one of his movie star idols there!

Imtyaz's mother has never been to school, but she wants her children to get an education. She agrees to the neighbour's proposal.

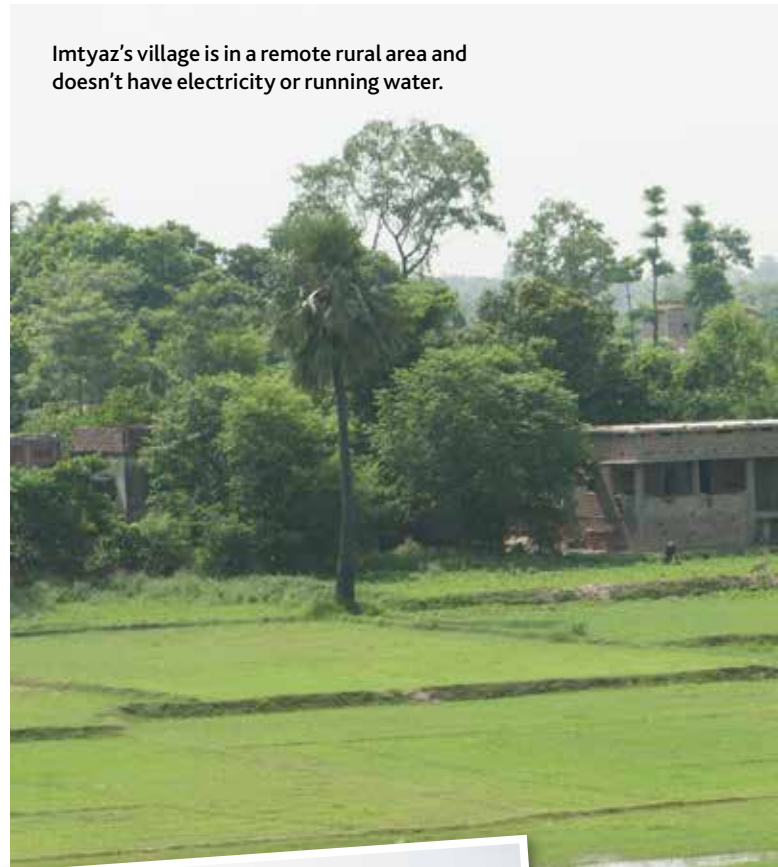
When Imtyaz is nine years old, he stops attending the village school because the teacher is hardly ever there. Instead Imtyaz helps his mother at home and in the fields. In his spare time he plays with his friends. They go on adventures, play cricket, and climb trees.

## On the way

The very next morning, Imtyaz and six of his friends meet at the roadside, where their neighbour is waiting with a truck. The boys climb in the back and they head off towards the nearest town along bumpy dirt roads. The boys have to

hold on tight so that they don't fall off, while they talk about the new life that awaits them. But on the train to Delhi, they all get travel sick. None of them have travelled by train before and Imtyaz is sick again and again as the train lurches round the bends.

Imtyaz's village is in a remote rural area and doesn't have electricity or running water.



## Imtyaz, 14

**Comes from:** Bihar

**Favourite things:** School. Singing. Cricket and swimming.

**Wants to be:** An engineer.

**Idol:** Cricket star Sachin 'Master Blaster' Tendulkar.

**Favourite foods:** Mango, and my mum's cooking.

**Favourite school subject:** Maths.

**Looks up to:** My parents and Kailash.

**Dreams of:** When no children have to work.





# a slave

On the way from the train station Imtyaz sees high buildings, statues and beautiful parks full of roses outside the car window. He is amazed by how smooth the car journey is, as he has never travelled on asphalt before. Soon they enter a maze of narrow

alleyways, finally stopping outside a house that has been turned grey by soot and dirt. The neighbour leaves them in a small room where they eat and watch TV before falling asleep.

## The nightmare begins

Imtyaz is woken by a kick. A stranger tells him and one of his friends, Amit, to come with him. They go down the stairs and into a dark, windowless room. There are a few men sitting on the floor with their legs crossed, bent over a large length of fabric which they are embroidering. Their bodies are shiny with sweat because it is so hot.

“This is where you’re going to work,” says the man. He gives them a needle each and

shows them how to roll it back and forward between thumb and index finger. They carry on doing this, hour after hour, until three o’clock in the morning.

“Doing that hardens your skin,” explains one of the adult workers. “Tomorrow you will start embroidering.”

## Sold as a slave

The man from the village lied. He has sold them as slaves. Imtyaz and Amit work a sixteen-hour day, every day, without breaks. If they open their mouths one of the adults silences them immediately with punches and kicks. They sleep huddled together on the hard stone floor. Sometimes Imtyaz whispers to Amit at night.

“We have to run away!”



During his time at the factory in Delhi, Imtyaz did the same kind of work as these children.







➔ “But where would we go? The city is so big,” says Amit. “We don’t know anyone here. And we have no money.”

After a few days, Imtyaz’s back and shoulders are aching. His eyes smart and his fingers are full of pinpricks. The air in the room is thick with dust and lint, and makes Imtyaz cough. His face breaks out in festering boils. He tries to protest:

“It’s too hot here, we need

fans and more water. My neighbour promised that I would be able to go to school!”

The factory owner flies into a rage. He drags Imtyaz into a small room and starts to beat him all over his body. Imtyaz curls up in a ball and tries to protect his head with his arms. “I’m going to die,” he thinks, before everything goes black.

When he wakes up it is night. He is back in the room and everyone else is fast asleep. “I’m never going to get out of here. I’m never going to see my family again,” he thinks, weeping silently. A few weeks later, Imtyaz wakes in the morning with a fever. He can hardly hold a needle, let alone sew in a straight line. He leans his forehead on his arm for a second, although this is against the rules, and falls asleep. Seconds later he is woken by

This boy was tricked into becoming a slave, just like Imtyaz.

the feeling that his eye is on fire. Blood streams down his face and he can’t see. One of the supervisors has tried to cut off his eyelid with a pair of scissors.

“What are you doing?!” shouts Imtyaz, terrified.

“You must be punished. You fell asleep on the job,” yells the man.

### Scared of the police

In the summer the heat reaches almost 50 degrees centigrade, and Imtyaz is allowed a couple of hours off on Sundays. He and Amit get a few rupees to buy water and food, but they don’t dare go far.

“Don’t talk to anyone,” the factory owner warns them. “If people find out that you work, the police will come and put you in jail.”

One day the factory owner rushes in and grabs Imtyaz and Amit, taking them out to the garden where his son is doing homework. He throws them a book each and says: “Pretend to read”. A few

Imtyaz with his mother, father, younger brother and sister, and older sister, who is married and has a child.

“My little sister goes to school, she’s really clever,” says Imtyaz proudly.

moments later two police officers come round the corner and go down into the basement. They are here to check that the factory doesn’t use child labour. As soon as the police have left, Imtyaz and Amit have to get back to work.

After almost a year, Imtyaz hears a sudden commotion outside. The door flies open and several police officers enter. Imtyaz’s friend starts to cry and stands up.

“Run, they’re going to put us in jail,” he says. But Imtyaz calmly sits still.

“I don’t care where they take us or what they do to me. Nothing could be worse than this.”

### Back home

The rescue mission was carried out by Kailash’s organisation, BBA, along with the



BBA



police. On that day, they freed almost 90 children. They find Imtyaz's friends from the village in another factory in the same area. All the children are given medical care and help to recover at a special children's home. Then Imtyaz gets to go home. He and his family weep together. First there are tears of joy, then of sadness as he tells them about life at the factory. But they are poor, and the neighbour who sold Imtyaz is rich and powerful. They don't dare argue with him.

There is always a risk that the children who are rescued end up back in the same situation because of poverty. A year later, a BBA activist comes to visit. Imtyaz still isn't attending school.

"Without education, Imtyaz has no future," says the activist. "He can come and live at Bal Ashram, our home for liberated child workers, and go to school there."

### What happened next?

It was a tough decision for Imtyaz to move to Bal Ashram, hundreds of miles from his home. But now he has lived here for four years.

"I'm not sad, because I



"I have missed my goat! We are best friends."

know I will return as an educated man and I'll be able to help my family and my village. The teachers and children here are like a second family for me. Now I believe in myself and I have faith in the future."

Along with Kailash and other children, he fights against child labour and child slavery.

"I will never give up this fight, even if I have a good job as an engineer!" he says. "One of my favourite memories is when we visited important politicians at home and told them about our lives. Their houses were like palaces! Some of them got angry and threw us out,

but others offered us tea and listened to us. Kailash had asked us to urge the politicians to vote for improvements to the law on child labour. Later, that law was passed, and I think that was a great credit to us." 🌐

A lunghi is a length of fabric that is tied round the waist – easy and comfortable.

## Imtyaz's wardrobe

Smartly dressed in a kurta, a long Indian tunic with matching trousers.



His school uniform has to be kept clean and ironed.



When he goes to the village mosque, Imtyaz wears a hat.



"Kailash means so much to me," says Imtyaz. "If I need a friend, Kailash is my friend. When I miss my father, Kailash is a father figure. Whatever I lack, Kailash tries to help me. He is my role model."







Imtyaz is nervous on the way back to the village. What if nobody comes to the meeting to hear his speech?



When Imtyaz gets back to his village, his old friends come out to meet him. They hang garlands of flowers around his neck.



At the beginning of his speech, Imtyaz is nervous, but when he sees that people are listening and some are even crying, he feels calm.



The whole village is waiting for Imtyaz.

# Going home to the village

Imtyaz visits his family in Bihar at least once a year, but this time he is travelling there with Kailash for the first time. The whole village has been invited to a big meeting about trafficking and children's right to education. Imtyaz is nervous. What if nobody turns up?

**T**he journey from Delhi takes almost 24 hours, and on the way Imtyaz talks about his village.

“There’s no electricity or running water. The houses are close together and most of them are made of mud. There is a mosque and a temple, because half the village are

Muslims, like me, and the other half are Hindus. The best thing about my village is that everyone gets on well, even though we have different religions.”

For the last leg of the journey, the road is so bad that they have to abandon the car and walk. As they approach

the village they hear a shout.

“He’s here!” Imtyaz’s friends come running towards him with flower garlands that they throw round his neck. Behind them are his family, and just outside the village a crowd has gathered. Everyone is here to see Imtyaz and meet Kailash.



## Poverty is a good deal for traffickers

Bihar is one of the poorest states in India. This makes the children here easy targets for traffickers. Every year, thousands of children disappear from their homes and are forced to work just like Imtyaz, all over India. Many girls are also sold as sex slaves. In order to change this situation, Kailash has held several meetings with politicians and religious leaders in Bihar.

“When they become aware of child slavery, they want to help. With their support, we can protect many more children, and give them the education that is their right.”





At the beginning of his speech, Imtyaz is nervous, but when he sees that many of the audience are listening and some are even crying, he feels calm.

Imtyaz loves eating mango from his family's mango trees.



### Listening to Imtyaz

"I don't have a mother or father and I live with my big brother. But I still go to school. I have heard Imtyaz talk about how important it is."  
*Nuvshaba, 8*

### Parents should understand

"You shouldn't just think about getting nice things and lots of cows. It's better to go to school first and learn something. I want to be a doctor and help people in my village. There are so many who need help. If it was up to me I'd make sure there were better laws and structures in India, so that everyone can go to school. If all parents understood the importance of education and the dangers of child labour, the problem would be solved."  
*Nugarne, 13*



### Imtyaz makes a speech

Everyone crowds around a small stage with a thatched roof, which the village elders usually use for meetings. The village elders have taken seats at the front, but Kailash respectfully asks them to swap places with the children.

"After all, we're here to talk about their lives and their future," he says.

The leaders are taken aback. They have never experienced anything like this before. But they give their seats to the children.

When Imtyaz takes the microphone, his heart is in his mouth. He has given

speeches to large groups before, but never in his home village. Suddenly, he spots the man who sold him to the factory, in the middle of the crowd. Imtyaz takes a deep breath and decides, "I am not afraid of you any more." Then he begins:

"I was sold as a slave, and that is wrong. Children should not be made to work. They should go to school, play, and have a future," he says.

The crowd listen in silence as Imtyaz talks about how he was abused and then set free and allowed to start school. Then he raises his fist and shouts:

"Stop child labour. Education for all children!"

The children in the crowd repeat Imtyaz's words, and soon the adults are joining in.

"End slavery!" everyone shouts together, with raised fists.

Afterwards, walking home with his family and Kailash, Imtyaz is happy.

"I felt like a teacher, as though the villagers were my students. Lots of people cried, so I think they understood what I was trying to say." 🌐

### Home for liberated children

Kailash has built two homes for children who have been set free from child labour and debt slavery: Mukti Ashram and Bal Ashram. Ashram is Hindi, and it means a calm, secluded place in which to rest. At Mukti Ashram in New Delhi, the children receive medical care and protection as soon as they have been liberated. Then they are reunited with their families as soon as possible. But some children

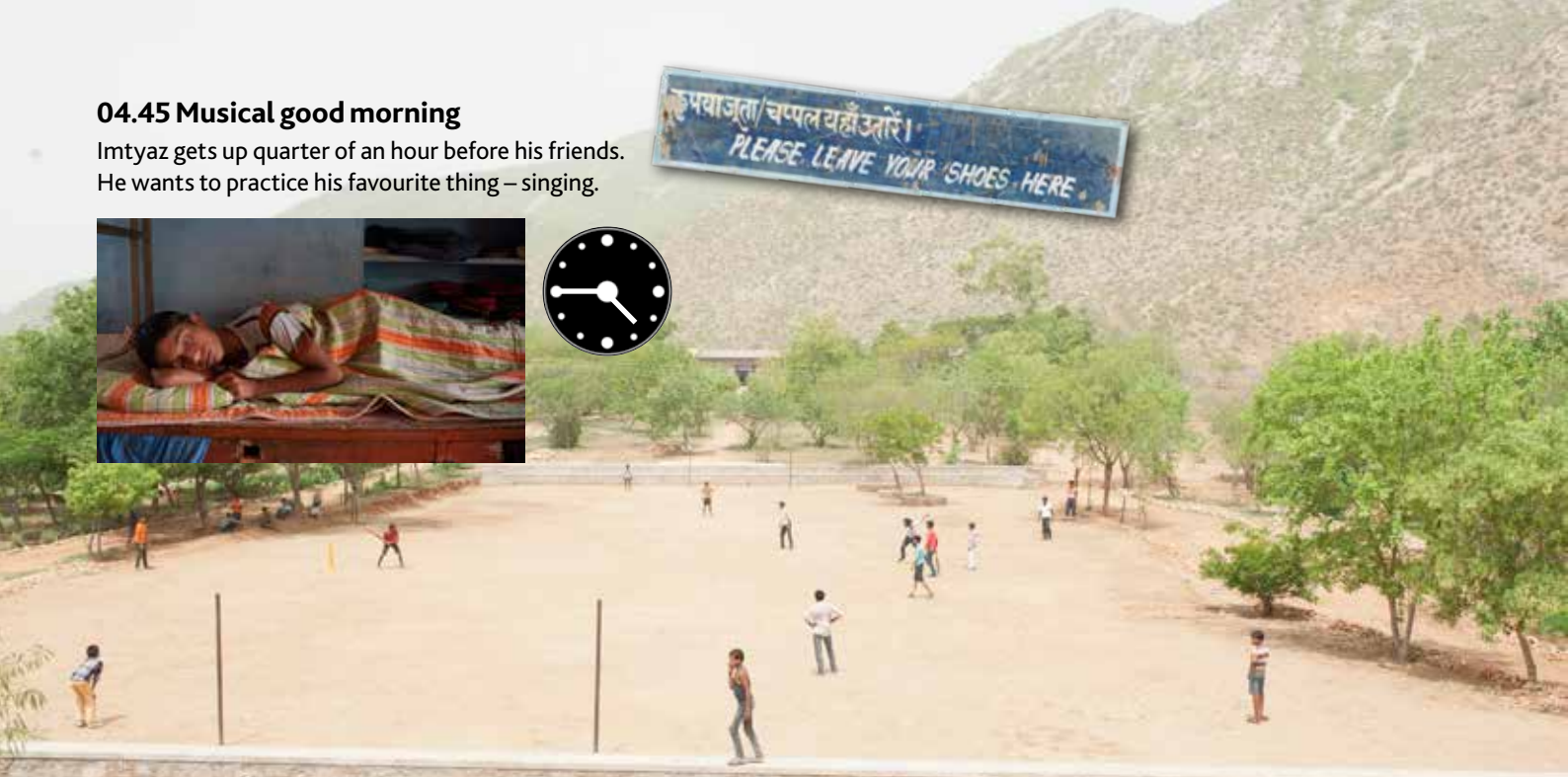
can't go back home, because of poverty or because their parents can't take care of them. These children get a new home at Bal Ashram, which has space for 100 children. The children who come here have been through terrible experiences. They are helped by teachers, social workers and one another to build their confidence and faith in the future. Some only need to live here for a few months, while others stay until they are adults and able to care for themselves.





#### 04.45 Musical good morning

Imtyaz gets up quarter of an hour before his friends. He wants to practice his favourite thing – singing.



# A day at Bal Ashram



Imtyaz lives at Bal Ashram, Kailash's home for children who have been liberated from slavery. It is built like a village, with dormitories, a school, a library, a dining hall and play areas among beautiful trees and hills in rural Rajasthan. Some of the children attend school in the nearest town, while others get vocational training at Bal Ashram.



#### 05.00 Enough sun for everyone

After making the beds and a quick tidy, the children gather on the sports pitch. Since they have different religions, they hold a shared morning prayer addressed to the sun instead of different gods. "After all, the sun gives heat and energy to everyone," says Imtyaz.



#### 7.30 Brrrr

The water in the shower is cold, but Imtyaz tells himself that it is refreshing.



#### 09.00 What's going on?

Time to gather in the classroom to read the paper together. What has happened in India and around the world?



#### 07.00 Working together

Everyone shares the responsibility for the school area, and for one another. Imtyaz and his best friend are in the same work group. They help to tidy, pick up litter, and care for the plants and trees. "If anyone is sad, ill, or has a problem, we try to solve it together," explains Imtyaz.



#### 08.00 The mirror doesn't lie

Final touches to the hairstyle before breakfast...



#### 10.00 Music lesson

Imtyaz gets good advice from his teacher, who was also liberated from child labour by Kailash.







**13.00 Lunchtime**  
Everyone washes their own plate.



**13.30 Cooling off**  
The sun is high and it's dangerously hot outside. Today, a pool has been filled with water, and everyone takes the chance to bathe before the water is used to water plants and vegetable patches.



**16.00 Life skills**  
Imtyaz and his friends practice making presentations, conversational skills, and problem solving.



**17.30 In or out?**  
After a snack, cricket is a favourite pastime.



**20.00 Party time!**  
Kailash has organised a party for the children, with performances, dancing and music. Lots of funny stories are told too!



**19.00 A quiet moment**  
Imtyaz has learned to meditate at Bal Ashram. He believes that it helps him to clear his thoughts and concentrate better on his schoolwork.



**21.00 Good night!**  
Imtyaz shares a room with seven friends and quickly falls asleep in his bunk bed.





# Akilesh celebrates in freedom

Akilesh wakes up full of expectations. Just a week or so ago, he was freed from slavery. He is still sore after having spent many months polishing gemstones 18 hours a day. But now he is free and plans to celebrate his birthday for the first time ever.



## Akilesh, 13

**Comes from:** Bihar

**Misses:** His family.

**Doesn't like:** That children have to work.

**Favourite music:** Bhojpuri music. The lyrics are all about how life should be fair.

**Likes:** Going to school. Dancing.

**Looks up to:** Kailash.



▲ Akilesh's job was polishing gemstones, just like the boy in this picture. The gemstones were then sold to jewellery makers. Perhaps some of the stones ended up in jewellery that you or one of your friends is wearing?

Akilesh and the other birthday boys and girls have been given new clothes, a t-shirt, trousers and shoes.



Akilesh doesn't know the day or year he was born.

"But my mother thinks I'm about 13 years old," he says.

Hardly any of the children at Bal Ashram know exactly how old they are, or what day they were born. So that each child gets their own day to celebrate, Kailash organises special parties for the new children a few times a year. The date of the party becomes their new birthday.

## School was unthinkable

Growing up, Akilesh sometimes saw children on their way to school.

"But for me and my siblings, school wasn't even a dream. We were poor and always hungry. The roof of our house leaked and during the rainy season it always flooded. My father worked at a factory, but he would buy alcohol and drink all his wages away, every month."

When Akilesh was 11 his father signed a contract with a stranger who was visiting the village. Akilesh would be able to go to school in exchange for working a couple of hours a day for nine months. The factory was hundreds of miles from his home. The wages, US\$4 a day, would be sent home to his family.

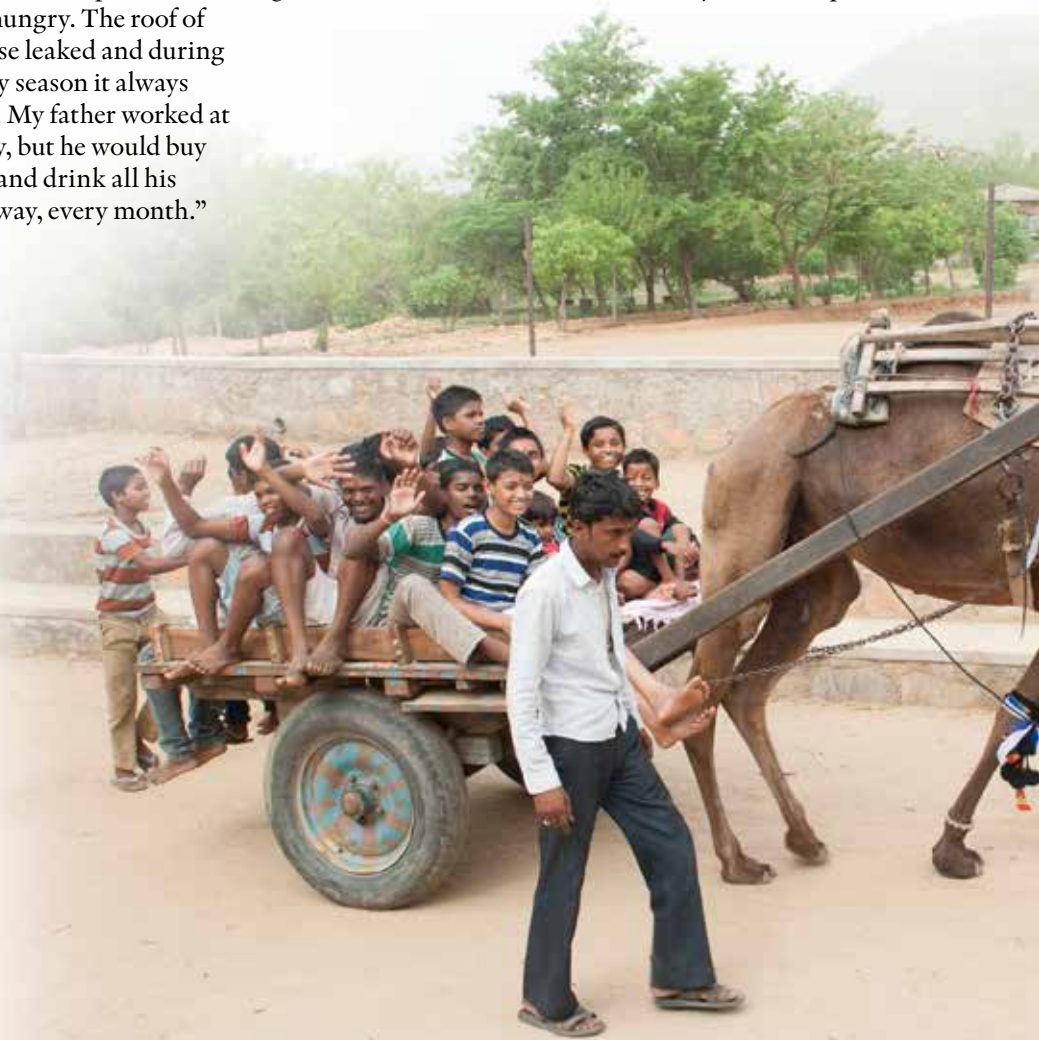
"I was scared, as I had never been out of my home village," Akilesh recalls. "But I really wanted to go to school and help my family."

## Tricked into slavery

It soon became clear that everything in the contract was a lie. Akilesh didn't get to go to school. Instead he was

locked into a cramped, dark room with five other children and forced to polish gemstones for jewellery, from seven in the morning until midnight, every day of the week.

"My whole body ached. My fingertips were torn to bits and my eyes were constantly stinging and watering," says Akilesh. "If I made a mistake they would beat me. It made me angry and I wanted to fight back, but I couldn't. I thought about running away, but where would I go? The owner told us that the police would arrest us if we told anyone that we worked in the factory. Now I know that that wasn't true, but at the time I was terrified and didn't dare ask anyone for help."





### Finally home

Nine months later, Akilesh was allowed to go home. But his joy at returning home disappeared when his mother told him that his father had drunk all Akilesh's wages as well.

"He did fix the roof," said his mother apologetically. "But the rest went on alcohol."

Akilesh cried as he told his family about the heavy workload, and that the promise of school was a lie. He showed them the wounds on his hands and his mother cried too. But after just a few weeks, Akilesh's father told him that he had to go back to the factory. And soon he was back there, in the dark room.

### Akilesh saved

After another eight months in the factory, Akilesh had given up hope completely. But one day, the door was broken down and the police stormed the building with raised batons.

"I was terrified," says Akilesh. "But then one of

Kailash's activists came in and told us they had come to set us free."

The activist helped Akilesh out of the factory and into a waiting car. His eyes smarted in the bright sunlight after months in the dark. Since there was a high risk that his father would force him back to work if he went home to his village, he was taken to live at Bal Ashram instead.

"And this morning I found out that I and the other newcomers are going to have a birthday! Nobody has ever celebrated my birthday before." 🌍

The fire is lit and the smoke rises to the roof. Akilesh sprinkles seeds to the fire to make it crackle.

"The sun gives just as much energy to everyone on earth," says Kailash. "Fire does the same, it warms us all."

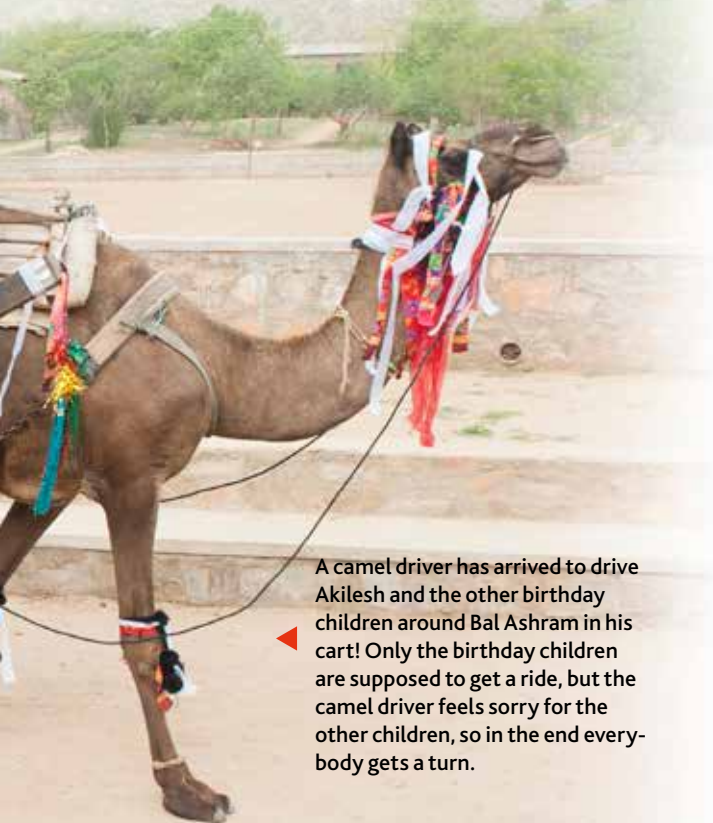


◀ Kailash and his wife Sumeda lead the birthday celebrations, starting with a formal ceremony.

Everyone sings happy birthday and the celebrations continue with music and dancing. "I have never been this happy in all my life," says Akilesh. "This is a totally new feeling. Nobody has ever celebrated me before."

Kailash asks the children to compare their hands. Do they see any differences? They shake their heads.

"Do you think that there is different blood flowing in your veins, just because you are Muslim or Hindu?" asks Kailash. Akilesh replies with a firm 'no'.



◀ A camel driver has arrived to drive Akilesh and the other birthday children around Bal Ashram in his cart! Only the birthday children are supposed to get a ride, but the camel driver feels sorry for the other children, so in the end everybody gets a turn.



◀ In India, adults often disagree because they have different religions. Sometimes they even kill one another. But at Bal Ashram everyone gets on well, even if they believe in different gods.

"Today we are not praying to any God. We pray to society," explains Kailash. "We pray for everyone's equal rights to food, water, play and education." The children chorus:

"I pray for all of society, not just for me but for everyone in the world. Take care of us, bless us, and help us to be brave and set all slave children free."



◀ The children hold water in their cupped hands. Kailash has tied a bracelet around Akilesh's wrist. This is a way of welcoming someone in India.





# Meena was a domestic slave:

Meena was just twelve when she was sold as a domestic slave. She was forced to work but she never stopped hoping for a better life.

**W**hen Meena is small, her mother's new husband demands that she call him father.

"I have a father, and you are not him," says Meena. Her stepfather flies into a rage and hits her. Sometimes he grabs her arm and hits it with a stick until her arm is dirty and bleeding. Then Meena's mother dies and she moves in with her aunt. But the deep scars on her arms ensure that she will never forget her stepfather.

## Sold for US\$300

When Meena is twelve, a man called Steven tells her that he can get her a good job in the capital city, Delhi. The money she earns will help her family. Her aunt is poor, so she lets Steven take Meena. In Delhi, he sells her for US\$300 to a domestic worker agency.

**"If you get sold, get out!"**

AP/JACQUELYN MARTIN

Meena has to sit in a room with 40 other girls. Nobody knows what's going to happen, and they are all scared. Meena just wants to go home, but an adult comes and starts asking her questions:

"Are you good at cooking? Do you know how to clean?"

"I don't know how to do any of that," says Meena, almost screaming. She asks again to be allowed to go home but nobody listens. Instead, a few days later, she is collected by the family who have bought her.

## Tries to escape

Meena runs away and hides in a house in the area, but she



MITCHELL KANASHKEVICH/CORBIS



Meena was set free from slave labour by Kailash and his organisation, BBA. She dreams of starting school soon, and she loves to dance!

In order to protect Meena, her face is not shown in the pictures.





DAVID H. WELLS/ALL OVER PRESS

When Meena was twelve she was sold to a family as a domestic slave and had to cook, clean and do laundry like the girl in this picture. Meena worked up to 19 hours a day, seven days a week.

is soon found and taken back to the agency. The adults there beat her and tell her she has to forget where she came from.

“You’ll never see your home village again. You will work, that is your life now.”

The very next day, Meena is sold again, to a new family. Every morning she gets up at five to clean, water the flowers, do laundry and cook. She is only allowed to eat bread. She sleeps in a small cupboard behind the kitchen, but she rarely goes to bed before two in the morning. She is always tired and hungry. She complains and is given a little rice, but not the same rice as the family. They buy a cheaper kind for her.

**Meena is attacked**

Every day, a greengrocer comes to deliver food to the kitchen. The family have bought vegetables from him for years. He notices Meena and always tries to talk to her. One day, when nobody else is home, the man follows Meena into a room and closes the door. The man puts his hand over her mouth. He presses so hard that she can’t make a sound. With his other hand he holds Meena’s arms behind her back. She kicks and struggles, but the man is too strong.

When the family come home, Meena tells the lady of the house what happened. She is furious and blames Meena.

“You seduced him,” she says. Meena knows that this is not true, and tells other people. The lady’s sister-in-law listens, and reprimands the greengrocer. She tells him to leave Meena alone. But they let him continue to deliver vegetables, and nobody protects Meena when the man continues to pursue her. She manages to avoid him and gets a padlock so that she can lock herself in when nobody else is home.

A couple of months later, Meena starts bleeding heavily. It turns out she had become pregnant when she was raped, and now she has had a miscarriage. She cries in despair and longs to go home, but no-one can help her.

**Set free by Kailash**

When Meena is 17, Kailash and BBA find out that she is being held captive. They carry out a rescue mission and they manage to set her free and take her to a safe house. To begin with, Meena is quiet and shy. She is used to being beaten if she tries to talk to adults.

“But after a few months

with Kailash, I realised that people kept asking me what I wanted: what I wanted to eat, whether I wanted a glass of water. They wanted to know what I needed, and I realised that everything had changed. If they hadn’t rescued me I would have died. Kailash is my role model, because just like him I believe that children should be free. This is only possible if I get a good education. Kailash says that I should be brave and fight, and that challenges are part of life. That motivates me.

“I feel better now, because I can be with the people I want to be with. I have never experienced that before. My whole life I have been forced to live

with people that I haven’t chosen to be with.”

**Get out!**

After many years of fighting, Kailash and BBA have managed to get the government of India to change the laws to provide better protection for children, and tougher penalties for traffickers. Now both Steven, who sold Meena, and the rapist have been put in jail for their crimes, thanks to these new laws. The law gives slave workers a right to financial compensation, so Meena has now received a sum equivalent to the wages she should have been paid during the time she worked. She is planning to put the money towards her education.

“Only education can change your life. My advice to other children who are forced to work as slaves is to do everything you can to get out, straight away! Most children don’t know their rights. If you live with your family and someone offers you money to go somewhere, remember that whatever they promise about leaving your family for a better life in a big city is not true! Stay at home and fight for your right to go to school,” says Meena. ☺

**In memory of Nirbhaya**

In 2012, a young woman called Nirbhaya was raped and murdered by a group of men on a bus in New Delhi. The case attracted attention all over the world. In India, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated, both women and men, demanding respect for the rights of women and girls. In 2013 the Indian government started the Nirbhaya Foundation in her memory. The foundation will give money to victims of crime and to projects that prevent sexual violence against girls and women. Meena is the first girl ever to receive money from the foundation to compensate for her suffering.



# Everyone listens to Payal

When 13-year-old Payal talks, adults and children alike listen. Her village, a child friendly village, have elected her as the leader of their child parliament.

"I was proud when I found out that so many people had voted for me," says Payal. "I want to



"A good leader is honest and solves problems instead of moaning," says Payal. Here she is making a speech to the whole village.

fight for all children, especially girls. Here in Rajasthan, lots of girls are forced to work hard and get married when they are only twelve. I don't like child marriage. We visit children at home and explain to their parents why school is important. I want to be a teacher. We also tell fathers not to hit their children or wives. If they are loving instead, things are better for everyone."



## Toilet helps girls

Thanks to Payal and the child parliament, the village school now has a toilet.

"Before, lots of girls weren't allowed to go to school. Their parents were afraid that they would be attacked if they went to relieve themselves outside, the way boys do. But now all the girls can go to school," explains Payal.

## Important meeting at the child parliament

The child parliament is discussing how the village school can offer more years of schooling, so that girls can continue their education longer. They also want a new kitchen.

"If we don't get it, we'll march to the politicians in town and stop all the traffic," suggests Payal.







### Payal defends herself

Girls in Indian villages who walk alone to the water pump or to school are often harassed by older boys and men, who say rude things and pull at their clothes.

"But if anyone tries that with me I just yell at them to stop it right now," says Payal.



### A proud mother

Meena, one of Kailash's activists, visits Payal and her mother, who never went to school. She is proud of her clever daughter.

"Meena and Kailash are my role models," says Payal.



### Between the leaders

The leader of the adult parliament in the village often asks Payal and her friends for advice.

"The adults listen to us and help us," she says.

# Play is better than work



Children who don't need to work can go to school and have time to play. Bhawana, 14, knows this. She is a member of the child parliament in a poor area of the capital, Delhi.

"If we see children working, we try to persuade their parents to let them go to school instead. So far we have helped 32 children!"

Bhawana believes that it is hard for the people in power to understand how it feels to be poor.

"It's like when you want something really badly, but you can't have it. If you want to explain to a rich person, it might be like how they feel if they want a really amazing car, but they can't have it," says Bhawana.

### Kho Kho

The children split into two teams – one chasing team and one defending team. The chasers sit in a row, facing in different directions. The defenders run onto the pitch three at a time. Anyone who is caught by a chaser is out.



Akash, 13 and Nitin, 12, are playing *Gatta*. They throw stones and try to catch them on the back of their hands. The first to drop a stone is the loser!



Gayatri, 12, and Bhawana, 14, are playing *Gomoku*. "We fight for children to be allowed to play and go to school."



### Kit-Kit

Gunun, 11, is playing hopscotch, which is called Kit-Kit in India!



## Child friendly villages

Kailash has helped hundreds of villages to become 'child friendly villages', where no children are beaten or have to work or get married. It can take up to three years for a village to become child friendly. This involves everyone being trained, and a child parliament helping to oversee the village.



Only child friendly villages get a sign like this from Kailash!





# Ramesh escaped to freedom

Ramesh often takes the geese at Bal Ashram for a walk. He really likes caring for the goslings.

“Because when I was little and I was set free from slave labour, there was always someone to take care of me,” he explains.

**R**amesh was set free by BBA when he was seven years old and had been working at a brickworks for a year. His job was to turn brick after brick in the burning sun, and stack them once they were dry. Every brick weighed 2.5kg.

## Forced to work again

After a few months at Bal Ashram, Ramesh returned home. He began to hang out with older boys who were into smoking and fighting. His father grew angry and sent him to Nepal. Ramesh had to work in a restaurant, cleaning and washing dishes for twelve hours a day.

“The owner used to beat me for the slightest mistake,” says Ramesh. “The nights were terrible. I used to place two benches side by side to sleep on, but sometimes I fell off. Then the owner would come flying in and beat me.”



“I want to be a lawyer and fight against corruption.”



Ramesh likes taking care of the goslings at Bal Ashram. He likes to think deep thoughts while walking. “I never want to be rich. It’s better to be honest and poor. I don’t like rich people’s lifestyle and wastage,” says Ramesh, who used to be a child slave.

## Blood everywhere

One day, Ramesh was painting a wall when a drop of paint landed in the restaurant owner’s food.

“I can’t remember how many times he punched me before I fell. I landed on my hands and a nail went right into my finger. There was blood and paint everywhere.”

There and then, Ramesh, who by then was nine, decided to escape. But Bal Ashram was several days’ journey away.

Ramesh told the other boy

at the restaurant about the food, the games and the school there, but his friend was too afraid to join him. Finally Ramesh got desperate and lied: “Do you know what else there is at Bal Ashram? Planes! Sometimes they land there and you can have a look at them!”

## Long journey

The very next day, the boys ran away.

“We slipped onto a train and hid from the conductor.

If anyone found us we were

going to jump off while the train was in motion.”

Once in New Delhi, they finally managed to find the right bus. After travelling for 24 hours, a bumpy bus ride took them the last few miles. Ramesh knew exactly where he was – this was where he had been on a march against child slavery!

“My heart started beating faster. When we arrived at the gates of Bal Ashram, I saw one of my old teachers. I was over the moon, but my friend broke down in tears when he realised there were no planes here!”

## Dreams of justice

Ramesh’s big sister was killed by her own husband.

“She was very beautiful. The richest man in our village married her and they had a daughter. When the girl was six years old she asked for some sugar and the man flew into a rage. He beat her to death. One year later, when my sister was cooking she spilled some water on the floor. Her husband’s nephew slipped on it, and her husband became so angry that he broke her neck. When nobody had seen her in five days, they went to the house. My sister was lying on the floor with a broken neck. She couldn’t move and she hadn’t eaten anything. Within two weeks, she was dead. None of us went to the police because the man is rich and we are poor. My dream is for him to be punished.”



# Fight for equal rights!

The rights of the child apply to all children. But still girls are often treated differently from boys. Half of the world's children are girls, but many more boys than girls are able to go to school, have enough to eat, play, and go to the doctor when they are ill. On pages 94–113 you can meet girls – and boys too – who are Child Rights Ambassadors and fight for equal rights for all children.

In a fairer world, it's not only the girls who thrive. Their fathers, brothers, future husbands and sons are better off too. In today's world, girls do more housework and have less time to play. They are victims of violence more often than boys, and they are sometimes forced to get married when they are still children. It is also harder for girls to make their voices heard and make decisions about their own lives. Do you think that's unfair too? Why not become a Child Rights Ambassador, start a WCP Child Rights Club, and change the world with us!

## Important and fun

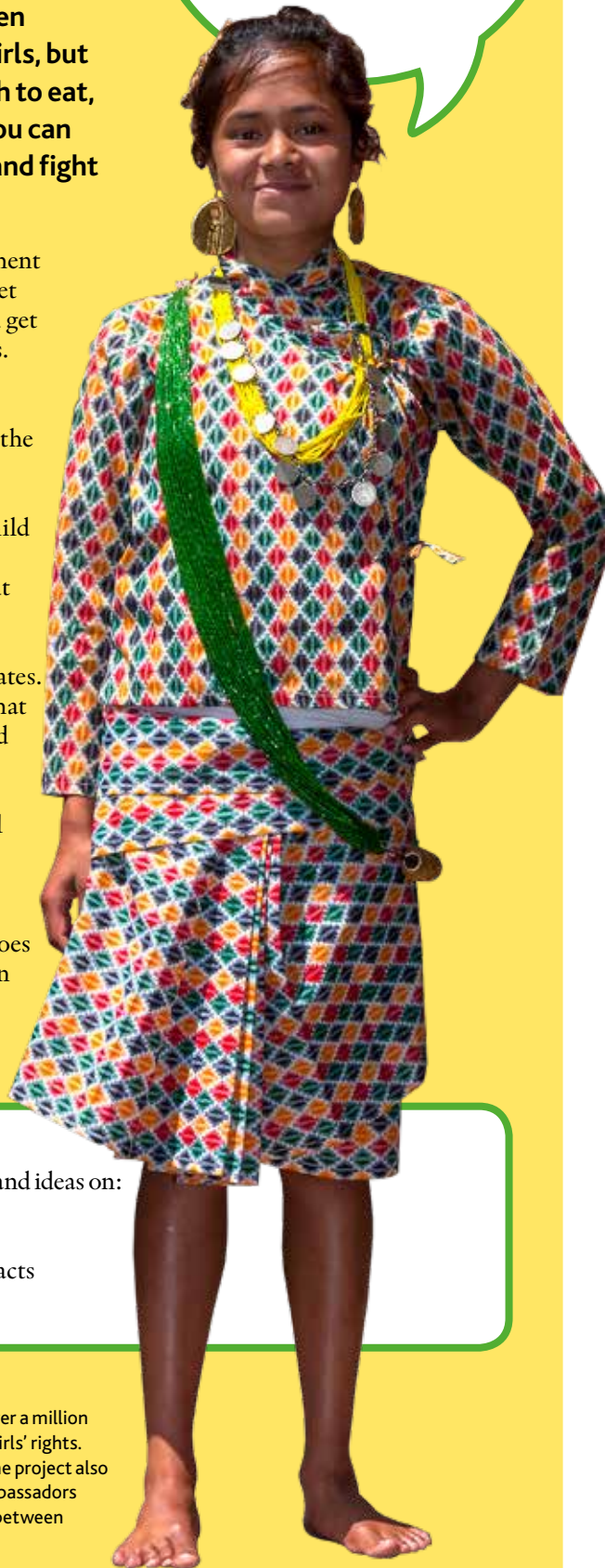
You can become a Child Rights Ambassador by spending time studying *The Globe* and child rights facts about your country and the wider world. Once you know lots about the rights of the child, you can join with a few friends to start a Child Rights Club. In the club you can combine having fun with doing something

vitaly important. You can implement the WCP program together and get more students involved. Once you get going, you can invite more friends.

## In a Child Rights Club you can:

- Raise awareness of the rights of the child and equal rights for girls.
- Make their voices heard and demand that the rights of the child are respected.
- Make posters and flyers all about the rights of the child and use social media.
- Organise competitions and debates.
- Write a play, a poem or a song that helps more people to understand children's lives.
- Invite local politicians, media, and your families to your school and your Global Vote days.
- Hold a World's Children's Press Conference.
- Celebrate the Child Rights Heroes and your rights in your very own WCP ceremony.

I demand respects for girls' rights!



## Get started!

On the WCP website you can get advice from other children and more tips and ideas on:

- How to become a Child Rights Ambassador
- How to start and run a WCP Child Rights Club
- The rights of the child, girls' rights and the child sex trade, with useful facts and figures.

## ONE MILLION GIRLS HAVE BEEN EMPOWERED!

Through a special project called *Rights and democracy for a million girls*, the WCP has educated over a million girls in seven countries about equal rights for girls, and empowered them to demand respect for girls' rights. At the same time, over two million boys learned about equal rights for girls through *The Globe*. The project also raised awareness of the child sex trade. Hundreds of girls have been trained to be Child Rights Ambassadors and helped girls to start tens of thousands of Child Rights Clubs. This project was a collaboration between WCP and ECPAT Sweden, with support from the Swedish Postcode Lottery.





# Soldiers' slave now Child Rights Ambassador



**A year ago, Mireille was kidnapped by an armed group in DR Congo and exploited as a sex slave. Today, she's a World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassador who fights for girls' rights.**

**"No girl should have to experience what I went through. I will fight for that until I die!" says Mireille, 16.**

**T**he horror began on the evening of market day. As usual, we were sitting outside our house eating dinner, chatting and laughing. It was the same all over the village. People were eating and children were laughing and playing. It was a lovely evening.

But suddenly everything stopped. From the edge of the forest, by the village cassava fields, we heard machine gun fire. At first it was distant, then it got louder. I knew there was a war going on in Congo. I knew that soldiers attacked villages and kidnapped and killed people. But

I always thought that those sorts of things happened to other people – not to me. In far away places, and not in my village. I had never really been afraid of the war.

### **Like slaves**

In panic, people tried to gather up their children and their pots and plates. We put out our fires and lanterns, and we all rushed into our houses to hide. We thought that if only we could stay quiet and pretend to sleep, maybe they would leave us in peace. We crept under the covers, but my younger siblings couldn't stop crying. We tried to calm

them down. I cuddled, patted and comforted them and eventually it worked. We could hear people moving between the houses. I was terrified, but I tried not to show it so that the little ones wouldn't worry.

Suddenly someone kicked our door down. Two soldiers with machine guns and big machete knives rushed into the bedroom. They shined their torches right in our faces. When the soldiers saw me

they told me to get up. But I was so afraid, I couldn't move. Then they pulled me away from my mother roughly, saying:

'If you cry or shout, we'll kill you!'

Then they took my two sisters, who were eleven and seven. The soldiers bound our hands behind our backs and tied us together in a line with a rope. Like people used to do to slaves a long time ago.

### **Kidnapped**

Our mother cried and begged the soldiers to let us go. They said that if she paid them they would untie the rope and set us free. But our mother explained that we were poor and didn't have any money. So the soldiers shoved us out the door. We fell over straight away because we were tied up. When we got out the door we saw lots of girls who were tied up in the same way. There were sixteen of us, and many of the



**"We sat as usual outside our house eating dinner, chatting and laughing. But suddenly we heard machine gun fire."**





### Slave rope

The soldiers used a rope like this to tie up Mireille, her sisters and the other girls. "Just like people did with slaves in the past," says Mireille.

other girls were my friends. There were lots of soldiers, maybe a hundred. Someone yelled at us to start walking.

It was late evening by the time our long line entered the rainforest, heading up towards the mountains. It was dark, and hard to see where we were putting our feet. We kept falling and hurting ourselves. But the soldiers just shouted at us to keep going.

#### Exploited

Once we had been walking for several hours the soldiers ordered us to stop. They untied our hands, tore our clothes off and threw us on the ground. When we cried and shouted for help, the soldiers beat us violently with the butts of their rifles. At the same time they shouted that they would kill us if we didn't shut up, or if we tried to run away. Then they raped us. My younger sisters were right

beside me but I couldn't help them. The soldiers took turns. When one was finished, another one would come along. It went on for ever.

We were not allowed to wash and or drink water. But they gave us soldier uniforms that were much too big. Almost all of us had to roll up our sleeves and trousers. They didn't give us shoes, so we had to walk through the rainforest barefoot. As we walked, lots of the girls were crying, but when the soldiers threatened us they stopped. All except one.

#### Friend was shot

One of my friends, who I used to fetch water with from the well in our village, couldn't stop crying. Although she was only a child herself, she was also a new mother. She screamed and cried in grief because she had been taken from her new baby. The sol-



### Mireille, 16

**Loves:** Going to school and teaching others

**Hates:** War and kidnapping

**Best thing that's happened:** Being able to eat until we are full

**Worst thing that's happened:** When I was kidnapped and abused by the soldiers

**Wants to be:** A doctor

**Dream:** To visit England, which I think is a beautiful, rich and peaceful country

diers got more and more annoyed. They warned her to be quiet or her shouts would reveal our location to our enemies. Finally they shot her and left her lying on the path. She was right in front of me, so I saw the whole thing. It didn't seem real.

The next morning we hid among the trees. We were hungry and thirsty, but the soldiers didn't give us anything. That evening we started walking again. That night the soldiers used us in the same way again.

#### Escape

Early the next morning, I discovered that the soldiers behind us were quite a distance away. Everyone was tired and walking very slowly. I realised we had a chance to escape. It was now or never. Along with one of my sisters who was walking right beside me, I turned and started to run into the forest, as fast as







### Ran for our lives

"When the soldiers saw us disappear in among the trees, they started shooting. The bullets flew around me."

→ I could. Our youngest sister was somewhere else in the line and she didn't come with us.

The soldiers started to shoot, and the bullets flew around me. There was gunfire everywhere. I was terrified, and threw myself on the ground. My heart was in my throat. I was sure my sister had been shot. The soldiers must have thought we were dead too, because nobody came after us. I could hear them walking on towards the mountains. I stayed on the ground for a long time. After what felt like hours, I cautiously stood up. My sister got up too. She had been lying just a couple of metres away the whole time. I was so happy!

### Favourite thing

"A neighbour gave me this skirt, and it's the most beautiful thing I own. It's the only skirt I have. I love clothes, and I'd like to have lots more!"

### Rescued

To begin with we ran as fast as we could, but soon we were just stumbling along. We were terrified that we would bump into some soldiers. I tried to comfort my sister, but I was so sad myself. All I could think about was our youngest sister, who was still



with the soldiers. I thought they might have killed her as a punishment for us running away. At first we had no idea where we were, but gradually we started to recognise our

surroundings. We walked towards the sunset, and late that evening we reached the village. When I saw my mother I started to cry and ran to her. We held each other

## This has to change!

In Congo, girls' rights are violated all the time. Many girls don't even know that what's happening is wrong. As a Child Rights Ambassador, it's my job to help girls know their rights so that we can defend ourselves! Here are some of the most common violations of girls' rights in Congo," says Mireille.

- Girls are kidnapped by armed groups and used as sex slaves. Some become pregnant, although they are only children themselves. Many girls who have been taken away by the soldiers contract AIDS and die. I was lucky to stay healthy and not become pregnant.
- Girls do almost all the housework, like cooking, fetching water, washing clothes, cleaning and working in the fields. The boys get to relax and play football.
- It's harder for girls to go to school. Poor families invest in their sons' education. The parents think that their daughters are just going to be married off anyway, so paying their school fees is a waste of money.





### Afraid of the forest

"After what happened, I'm afraid of the forest and I never go there," says Mireille.

for a long time. Our mother cooked food for us over the fire. Cornmeal porridge called ugali, and cassava. It was the best meal I had ever had.

I felt terrible and I couldn't sleep. I had nightmares and kept waking up because I was so sad that I hadn't been able to protect my youngest sister.

### World's Children's Prize

There were soldiers near our cassava field, so our parents didn't dare go and work in the field. They were afraid of being kidnapped or killed. Since we couldn't earn any money, I had to quit school and so did my siblings. It's so sad. I loved school.

We were afraid that the soldiers would come looking for us, so we moved in with our grandparents, who live somewhere else. Being in my old house made me feel sad because it reminded me of all the terrible things that had

happened. After moving, I felt a bit safer, but I still didn't feel well or happy. One day an organisation came along that works to support girls who are having a hard time. They wanted to know how they could help me. They told me about girls' rights, and gave

me a copy of The Globe magazine. I also heard all about the World's Children's Prize, and I really liked what I heard!

### Child Rights Ambassador

Before reading The Globe I had no idea that we girls have

rights. Suddenly, I realised that what the soldiers did to me and the other girls wasn't just horrific, it was also a violation of our rights. A while later, they asked if I wanted to join a group of Child Rights Ambassadors for girls' rights. I said yes straight away, from the bottom of my heart!

Now we ambassadors meet once a month. We read The Globe together and learn more about the rights of the child. Then we share what we have learned with others. I have started a WCP child rights club in my area, and we meet at my house every Tuesday and Saturday. At the start I told the group a lot about what happened to me when the soldiers kidnapped me. By doing that I hope to help the other girls to protect themselves. I don't want anyone to go through that again, ever. Now I use The Globe a lot and try to teach people all I know about the rights of the







**Where is my little sister?**  
 "I still don't know where my little sister is, or what has happened to her. It's horrendous. Not a day passes when I don't think of her. I often have nightmares and struggle to sleep," says Mireille.

→ child, especially girls' rights. We read together and talk. And we support one another. We need that support, because it's hard to be a girl in Congo.

**Girls' rights**

Girls' rights are violated in times of war. Because there is a war on in Congo, a lot of girls are suffering. Many are kidnapped by soldiers and abused in the same way I was. That's why it's so important to be a Child Rights Ambassador here, and tell people that we have a right to be treated well.

Many girls who have suffered violence at the hands of the soldiers don't talk about it. Although none of it is their fault, they feel ashamed of what has happened. If word gets out that a girl has been abused in that way, it can make it more difficult for her

to get married. Nobody wants her. That might be hard for me too, but I still talk about it. It's so important that I can't stay silent. Reading about brave girls in The Globe magazine, who teach and help others, has given me the courage to talk about it. That inspires me. I will keep fighting for girls' rights until I die!"

*Mireille, 16, DR Congo*



**Brave girls inspire**

"Everyone in our child rights club is inspired by reading about all the brave girls in The Globe magazine," says Mireille.



**Proud Child Rights Ambassador**

– As a Child Rights Ambassador, it's my duty to inform girls about their rights, says Mireille.



# Bambuti girl doubly disadvantaged



– Before I became a Child Rights Ambassador and read *The Globe* magazine, I didn't know that girls or Bambuti people had any rights, says Fatuma.



## We are friends!

I see the Bambuti ambassador girls in the same way I see any of my friends. For me, they are no different at all," says Mireille. From left to right, the picture shows friends Lyliane, 16, Mireille, 16, Aline, 16, Fatuma, 14 and Jeanine, 17.

I am Bambuti and we are often discriminated against. Many Bambuti people have never gone to school and can't read or write, so it's harder for us to get jobs. Sometimes when we leave our villages in the rainforest and move to the city, Congolese people laugh at us. I think it's because we are shorter than them. The people who laugh at us say we are worthless and useless. It feels awful to hear things like that. It hurts my heart and makes me really sad. It's terrible that they don't think we are equals, or that we have the same rights as everyone else.

But not everyone treats us badly. I am a Child Rights Ambassador, and in my group there is a girl called Mireille who is not a Bambuti. We are friends, and she doesn't treat me any differently. We are just the same!

It's all thanks to the World's Children's Prize that we can meet like this. We really want to have friends who are not Bambuti people but it's not that easy, because we don't mix with other groups very often. Through the WCP, we can meet in a natural way. I really like the fact that the ambassadors' group is made up of Bambuti and other Congolese girls.

When others see that we are friends, maybe they will change the way they treat us. In the future, people might think we really are equals, and that we have the same rights as everyone else.

## Hard being a girl

As a Bambuti person and a girl, life is extra tough. Girls' rights are not respected at all in Congo. This is even true here in my village, among my own people. It's the same everywhere. We are abused by armed groups and we are forced to do all the physical household chores, like chopping wood in the forest, fetching water and cooking food. If the boys are not hunting, they are able to play and relax. We girls never get the chance to relax and just have fun. It's not right.

As an ambassador, I tell other children about girls' rights. If we want the future to be better for girls in Congo, this is really important!

Before I became a Child Rights Ambassador and read *The Globe* magazine, I didn't know that girls or Bambuti people had any rights. Now I know, and I will keep fighting for a better life for us!"

*Fatuma, 14*



## Discrimination against Bambuti

The Bambuti people are hunter-gatherers in the rainforest, and they have always been very disadvantaged. Some people think they are hardly even human, so it's fine to treat them badly. Because the Bambuti know the forests better than anyone else, they are often kidnapped by armed groups and used as trackers. Many have been killed. If Bambuti people work for other Congolese people, they often get paid less, or get paid in alcohol instead of money. As with many indigenous people around the world, alcoholism and poverty are common among the Bambuti.





# Respectful club

I've been a member of Mireille's child rights club for two months now. We meet twice a week to learn more about girls' rights. This is important because our rights are violated all the time here. Just look at how Mireille was kidnapped and abused by soldiers. Things like that happen a lot here. I think she's so brave to stand up and talk about what happened to her. Many girls don't, because people here reject girls who have been abused. That's so wrong! We have to take care of these girls.

I learn a lot at the club that I can teach others, like my family, neighbours, friends, classmates and even boys. Once enough people know that we girls have rights, life will be better for us.

At the club, we talk about important things but we also have a lot of fun. We are friends who respect and listen to one another. Everyone gets a chance to voice their opinion. When we are with the



boys in school, we are never taken seriously. Nobody listens to our views. If we say that we do actually have rights, the boys say 'What? You don't have any rights!' Then they just laugh and walk away. Here at the child rights club things are different. Here we are all treated with respect. It feels good to

have a place like this. We are also stronger as a group than as individuals when we demand to be treated well. That's true in our families, schools, villages, or in wider society. In the future I want to be a doctor."

*Dorcas, 16*



## Mireille is like Malala

"After Mireille managed to escape from the soldiers, she told people about everything that had happened to her, even though she knew it could harm her. And she does it to help others. I think she's incredibly brave. In that way she is like Malala, who fights for girls' rights to go to school in Pakistan. We read in *The Globe* that she was threatened and shot, but still kept fighting. Both Mireille and Malala are really brave."

## Voices for Rights of the Child and The Globe

All the children in Bakavu in eastern DR Congo know well what violence and violations of children's rights are.

### The Globe is my child rights textbook

"Where I live, lots of girls don't go to school and some suffer sexual violence and abuse. I am asking the government to combat rape and to support every girl's right to go to school. Through the WCP I have learned about my rights and met people who defend children's rights. The *Globe* is my first textbook on the rights of the child."

*Nshobole, 12*



### The real magazine for girls' rights

"Children are living on the streets because of poverty caused by the war in eastern DR Congo. Their rights to education and protection are being violated. In the future, I'm going to fight to build schools and find homes for these children. I want our country's government to build schools and homes for the street children. The *Globe* is the real magazine for girls' rights!"

*Katchunga, 14*



### I denounce adults and I love The Globe

"I see children sleeping on the street. I denounce adults who kill children in the villages with a rope called 'Kabanga' and who go unpunished. I see poorly built schools with no toilets or space to play. I urge the Congolese government to punish all those who violate the rights of the child. Long live the World's Children's Prize program! I love *The Globe* magazine and I read it with my friends!"

*Assuza, 12*





An important part of Mireille and the other Child Rights Ambassadors' work is teaching both children and adults about the rights of the child, especially girls' rights. Today, some of them have held a training day for people from different professions, like politicians, teachers, police and customs officers.

"I wasn't actually nervous, just happy!" says Noella, 15.

# Children teaching adults

**I**t felt fantastic to tell everyone that girls have rights, and that we should be treated with the same respect as boys. By telling people what life is like for girls in Congo today, I really think we can start to build a better future for us. And it's important to tell the politicians. We have a saying here, that it's best to 'start with the head and end with the tail'. The politicians are 'the head'

because they're the ones who actually have power to make decisions and change things. For example, if the politicians said seriously that all girls must go to school, then our parents, teachers and everyone else would follow their lead.

Today, we children were teaching the adults about our rights, and it really felt like they listened and took us seriously. Things are not always like that here. People don't really listen to children.

Maybe one in ten adults here listens to children and takes us seriously. It's hardest of all

for us girls to make our voices heard. Nobody is interested in hearing our opinions. Not in our families, not in school, not among boys, not anywhere. We usually just keep our thoughts to ourselves. But since we started reading *The Globe*, we have realised that we girls have a right to speak our minds. The stories in *The Globe* have encouraged us and empowered us to voice our opinions.

As Child Rights Ambassadors for girls' rights, we have a really important task. Here in Congo, people think that only boys can become presidents and leaders. But of course we girls can too! It's actually our right! As ambassadors, it's our duty to tell people this."

*Noella, 15, WCP Child Rights Ambassador, Beni Institute, DR Congo*



## Welcome to girls' rights day!

World's Children's Prize Child Rights Ambassadors, Prisca, 12 (left) and Katongu, 14, welcome the politicians and others to their girls' rights day



## We fight against the child sex trade!

"Today I also talked about the child sex trade, which is common here. Poor girls are bought and sold and exploited by adult men. It makes me so angry! Girls here are also exploited as sex slaves by soldiers. That's part of the child sex trade too. As an ambassador, it's important to take a stand against this," says Noella.

## World's Children's Prize is our advocate

"I do not accept violence against girls. Children are abused by adults in DR Congo. I am going to fight against the war which is at the root of widespread violations of girls' rights. I love the World's Children's Prize program – it is our advocate! The *Globe* is the book we need for our rights!"

*Esta, 11*



## My textbook for children's voices

"In some schools around here, girls still suffer because of the 'sexually transmitted grades' system. I demand that the Congolese government support the World's Children's Prize program and the organisations that fight for girls' rights. I think the WCP program is interesting, and makes it possible to defend the rights of the child in our country. The *Globe* is the first textbook I've seen with pictures of children making their voices heard."

*Soki, 18*



## Protesting against torture

"I protest against the torture I was subjected to, and against rape and all forms of violence against young girls. And against the way that armed groups abuse girls as part of the child sex trade. Also against children sleeping on the streets, young pregnancies caused by adults, and stepmothers abusing their stepchildren. I urge the Congolese government to punish all those who violate children's rights, and to raise awareness of the rights of the child. I love the pictures of the children in *The Globe*!"

*Grace, 14*





# Big brother for gi



Checking off registered voters.



Alone in the voting booth.



My vote in the ballot box.



Ink marking to prevent voter fraud, so that no one can vote twice.

**W**e had our Global Vote at our school today, and I was one of the organisers. I was also in a play that we performed for the other students after we voted. It was all about how girls have a right to go to school too.

I play the part of a big brother who is allowed to go to school, while his two sisters have to stay home and do all the housework. He's a pretty ordinary boy. The first thing he does when he gets home from school every day is order his sisters to make him tea. And the parents don't have a problem with that, far from it. They tell the sisters: 'After the tea, make sure you cook dinner for your brother, he's tired after his day at school.' Then, when the sisters bring the food, the brother doesn't let them stay and eat with him. Instead, he sends them back to the kitchen where he thinks girls and women belong. After all, that's where they'll end up once they're married. The big brother never helps his sisters with anything. He is free and can do whatever he wants.



## Second thoughts

One day, one of the girls' friends comes to visit and wonders why they are not in school. She wonders what's wrong. The friend has read *The Globe* in school and learned about girls' rights. She shows the magazine to

the whole family, especially the pages about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 2, which states that all children have equal rights. She explains that girls have the same right as boys to go to school and to be treated equally.

When the father in the family reads *The Globe* he



## Girls silenced

"As soon as girls try to say something here, they are silenced. In families, at school ... actually in every part of society," says Schadrack.





# Girls' rights



realises he is wrong. He apologises and promises the girls that he will let them go to school. He explains that he didn't know about girls' rights, but now he knows better. My character, the brother in the family, says sorry to the sisters for not treating them well. Then the brother starts to help his sisters instead.

My situation in real life was actually exactly the same as the play. Before reading *The Globe*, I didn't know that girls had the same rights as us boys. Now I realise that we have allowed our mothers,

sisters and other girls to suffer. Now I treat my two sisters, who also go to school here, totally differently. Now I help out. If one of them is sweeping the floor at home, then I fetch water. If they are washing clothes, then I cook dinner. It feels fairer and better.

### World's Children's Prize

The World's Children's Prize and the Global Vote is vitally important because we support people who invest everything and risk their lives for us children. But it's just as

Schadrack and the other students sometimes read aloud from *The Globe* for the audience during the play about how the brother and father in a family become aware of girls' equal rights.

important that we learn as much as we can about our rights as we read *The Globe* and prepare to vote. The program is most important for girls here in Congo, helping them build a better future. The more people who read *The Globe* and learn about the rights of the child, the better life will get for all girls. When you read *The Globe* as a boy, the penny drops. Suddenly you realise that you have to change your behaviour."

*Schadrack, 16, Beni Institute, DR Congo*



## One of the worst wars in history

- The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the largest and most brutal wars in world history. It has been going since 1998. There was a peace agreement in 2003, but the conflict continues to this day in the eastern parts of the country, where Mireille lives.
- Almost 6 million people have been killed or died of famine and disease as a direct consequence of the war.
- At its peak, there were over 30,000 child soldiers in the country. Many child soldiers still have not been reunited with their families and remain in various armed groups.
- Many girls, just like Mireille, are kidnapped by soldiers and exploited as sex slaves. Around 2 million girls and women have been raped since the war began.
- By 2013, at least 2.6 million people had been forced to flee their homes in DR Congo, and 450,000 Congolese people had fled to neighbouring countries.
- Over 5 million children in DR Congo do not attend school.

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# Ambassadors for girls at school of horror

“There is a war on girls going on at our school. Some teachers, and the headteacher, exploit girls in exchange for exam passes and good grades. If we refuse, we don’t get moved up a grade. It’s part of the child sex trade,” said Maria Rosa, 17, in last year’s issue of *The Globe*. She is a WCP Child Rights Ambassador from a boarding school in Namaacha, Mozambique.

## War on girls

–One day I was called to the headteacher’s office. He told me to close the door and started playing pornographic films on his computer. When I asked him why he was showing me these things, he replied that I already knew all about what people do in films like these.”

Before the headteacher let Maria Rosa go, he warned her not to tell anyone about their conversation.

“If you do, I’ll kick you out of this school and make sure you can never go to another school in Mozambique as long as you live!”

That day, the headteacher called all the girls in the school to his office and said the same thing.

### Fear disappeared

“But being interrogated in the headteacher’s office isn’t the worst thing that happens at this school. Teachers threaten us and say that we won’t pass our exams or graduate unless we sleep with

them. The headteacher says the same thing. I am not doing well at school because I refuse to do what the headteacher asks of me.

For a long time I have wanted to fight against all the bad things that happen at school, but I just didn’t know how. But one day I was selected to go on Child Rights Ambassador training from the World’s Children’s Prize. I realised that we could no longer tolerate the abuse we faced at school. That we had to become like the girls in *The Globe*, who fight for their own and others’ rights. We used to be afraid of voicing our opinions. But the World’s Children’s Prize took away our fear.”

### Hate the ambassadors

“Since the day we Child

Rights Ambassadors returned from our training to set up the WCP program at school, the teachers and headteacher began to hate the World’s Children’s Prize. They don’t want us to teach other girls and boys about our rights, because they want to continue exploiting us. They want us girls to remain ignorant.

Today we had our Global Vote at school, but the headteacher and many of the other teachers have opposed our vote right from the start. It’s quite clear that the school are totally against the idea of us learning about the most important thing we have – our rights.

The adults opposed us in every way, but for us it was incredibly important to hold our Global Vote and celebrate

the rights of the child at school. Because we know that what the headteacher and other teachers are doing is part of the child sex trade. They use their power against us to get what they want.

We are not going to stop telling people about girls’ rights until we have put a stop to all the abuse at our school and all other schools!”

*Maria Rosa, 17, WCP Child Rights Ambassador at Namaacha Secondary School*

**NB! Not all the teachers at Namaacha Secondary School abuse girls.**







"I was so happy and proud to represent all Mozambique's World's Children's Prize Ambassadors at the award ceremony in Sweden. It was such a different situation, compared to our school, where we girls have our rights violated constantly. There I was on a stage in Sweden, representing all these girls and being honoured for our struggle. It was unreal and hard to comprehend, but totally fantastic!" says Mila, who also goes to Namaacha School. During the 2013 WCP ceremony she received the WCP Globe from Crown Princess Victoria."



"In honour of you work for girls' equal rights, the World's Children's Prize, child rights ambassadors in Mozambique".

## Abused by headteacher

"I was washing my clothes when the headteacher parked his car beside me. He told me to fetch him a plateful of food from the kitchen. When I passed him the plate he told me to get in the car. I didn't understand why, but he said that if I didn't obey him he would kick me out of school. When I sat down next to him he started touching my legs and he pulled off my capulana, my sarong skirt. I was naked from the waist down. The headteacher took out his mobile phone and took pictures of me naked. At the same time he touched me and himself. I was terrified. When he was finished he gave me a packet of biscuits and a soft

drink and told me I could never tell anyone about what had happened. If I did, I would get a beating and then be thrown out of school."  
*Sara, 17, member of WCP Child Rights Club at Namaacha Secondary School*

## Dormitory danger

"When I came to this school four years ago, the teachers showed us respect for one month. Then everything changed. The teachers started to grope me, saying, 'If you don't come to my bedroom, you won't be able to sit your first important exam.' I was only fourteen then. Girls who sleep with teachers get good grades and pass their

exams no problem. The girls who don't get bad grades, often fail their exams, and have to repeat the year. The teachers do this to those of us who live at the school because we are poor. In exchange for sex, the teachers offer good grades, good food and money. Teachers can come into our dormitories whenever they like and take girls to their bedrooms. We never feel safe here."  
*Fatima, 17, WCP Child Rights Ambassador at Namaacha Secondary School*



**Ambassadors on the march against the teachers' treatment of girls**





"When I got back to Mozambique, I presented the crystal globe I was given in Sweden to all the other ambassadors. Everyone was so happy and proud and wanted to hold the crystal globe! We danced, sang and celebrated. It was a wonderful afternoon on the beach outside Maputo!" says Mila, laughing.

they were not permitted to graduate, despite excellent grades, unless they had sex with the teachers. And how their grades were marked down if they refused. Many of the ambassador girls cried and begged for help. We named the guilty teachers and now we hope that they will be suspended from the schools and stripped of their qualifications so they can no longer teach children.

### Brave ambassadors

I don't know what will happen now. But I know that the Ministry are taking this seriously. They showed that by dismissing our headteacher. The Provincial Director wrote down all the girls' statements, the crimes committed against them, and the names of the teachers. He promised that he would work with the Minister of Education to deal with it. And I trust him. Hopefully the headteachers and teachers who have abused girls will be fired and prosecuted, just like our headteacher.

It was painful to tell our stories. It wasn't easy to stand up and describe our experiences in front of important and powerful people. We were nervous and ashamed. It's such a private thing. But it was necessary. This abuse of girls must be stopped, now! This is urgent, as more and more girls are quitting school because of the abuse.

Even though it was difficult to talk to the Ministry of Education, the World's Children's Prize has given us ambassadors the knowledge, strength and courage to stand up for our rights. And together we are strong. Although sometimes our fight for girls' rights is met with hatred and opposition, we will never give up! Now even the Deputy Minister has come to the school to thank us for what we did!"

the school have been suspended. This is not right! That's why I joined with over 50 other Child Rights Ambassadors from many different schools to talk to the Director of Education for our province face to face. We wanted to ask him to help us solve the problems girls face in Mozambique's schools. And we wanted to tell him in our own words, so that he would realise that everything we say is true.

The Provincial Director welcomed us. Many of the ambassadors talked about how they had been sexually assaulted and subjected to physical and emotional abuse. Several girls explained how



The Provincial Director carefully records what the child's rights ambassadors say about the teachers' demands for sex to be moved up a grade.

# Headteacher at School of horror dismissed

When officials at the Ministry of Education in Mozambique read about the WCP Child Rights Ambassadors at the 'school of horror' in last year's Globe magazine, they were gravely concerned.

"Inspectors came to our school and after that everything happened really fast," explains Maria Rosa.

First of all, the Ministry of Education wanted to meet with us ambassadors to find out whether all the things we had said were really true. For our own safety, we met at a secret location. After that meeting, the Ministry sent inspectors to the school to double check our story. The inspectors interviewed the headteacher,

other teachers and the students. The interviews with students revealed which teachers were exploiting girls at the school. A list of names was drawn up. Then some experts searched the headteacher's computer. They found pornographic films and naked pictures of female students from the school, just as we had reported.

They found proof that our report was true, and the headteacher was dismissed. The Ministry of Education is now pressing charges against him for his crimes.

### Meeting at the Ministry

However, so far none of the teachers who exploit girls at

Satisfied ambassadors! They are pleased that the Provincial Director listened and took them seriously.







# Phulmaya

## is not for sale

Phulmaya, 11, listens carefully to what Dipa, 14, has to say about girls' rights and the child sex trade. They live in the same village and go to the same school in Kavrepalanchowk in Nepal. Poor girls here are at risk of being trafficked. Dipa has just trained as a Child Rights Ambassador, so that she can train and empower girls in the village to know their rights.

**P**hulmaya does several hours' work both before and after school. She gets up at dawn and feeds the animals – a cow, a calf and a goat. Then she lights a fire to cook on.

"I don't have any time to play. But the boys here can run around and play football. It's not fair," says Phulmaya. Every day she has to wash clothes, clean the house, wash dishes, cook food, fetch water and care for the animals. The worst bit is gathering up the day's cow dung.

### Learning from Dipa

Phulmaya has talked about Dipa a lot recently. As a newly-trained Child Rights Ambassador, she doesn't only tell other children about the rights of the child and about trafficking – she tells parents and teachers too. She walks from village to village on steep mountain trails with other Child Rights Ambassadors to raise awareness. All this to put a stop to trafficking and help people understand that girls have the same rights as boys.

"Dipa has taught me that we are worth the same as boys. We girls have a right to a good education too. It's also wrong to force girls to get married early, just because

One of Phulmaya's many chores is to cut grass to feed the animals several times a day.





Once Phulmaya has fed the cows, fetched water, washed dishes and cooked rice, she puts on her school uniform and hurries to school.



their parents think they can't afford to provide for them," says Phulmaya.

### Girls disappear

In Nepal, it's very common for girls from poor families to be promised well-paid jobs in other countries, often in neighbouring India. But these girls and their families are being deceived. The girls end up becoming domestic slaves in family homes or at hotels and restaurants. Or, worse still, they could end up as sex slaves at brothels. Around twelve thousand girls, many of them under sixteen and some as young as eight, disappear from Nepal every year. Most of these girls never come home again. This is what Dipa wants to put a stop to.

"Girls like Phulmaya are at risk," says Dipa. "Her family are very poor and are unaware of how common trafficking is. They could

easily be persuaded to hand over their daughter for money."

What's more, Phulmaya belongs to the Tamang tribal group, whose daughters are regarded as beautiful and are particularly attractive to traffickers.

### Proud mother

Dipa's mother has never been to school herself.

"Education is the most important thing there is," she says. "I am so proud that Dipa has become a Child Rights Ambassador."

Dipa is doing well at school. Her favourite subjects are sciences and writing. She wants to become a doctor.

"That's because I want to be able to help people," she says. "I heard about trafficking and child labour on the radio and in newspapers, and I feel so sad about how children are treated. I wanted to do something so I got in touch with an organisation called Maiti, that works with the World's Children's Prize to train Child Rights Ambassadors."

Alisha, 17, who is a Child

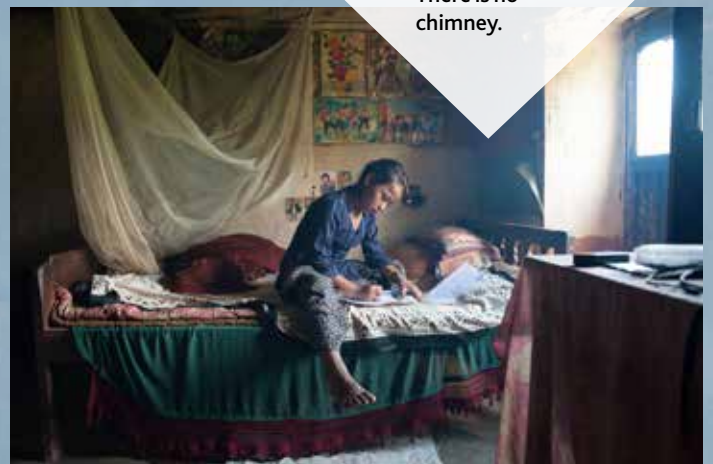
Rights Ambassador herself, was one of Dipa's teachers on the course. She was just five years old when she was sold as a domestic slave to another family. She wasn't allowed to go to school and she was abused and exploited, but she managed to run away when she was nine.

"Taking on the role of a

When Phulmaya lights a fire, the kitchen fills with acrid smoke. There is no chimney.



Only when Phulmaya has finished all the housework can she do her homework. Her favourite subject is Nepali.







"Girls have the same rights as boys to go to good schools! But many parents don't want to pay for girls, because they'll only marry young and move in with their husband's family," says Phulmaya.

Child Rights Ambassador has changed me so much, and built my confidence," explains Alisha, who is visiting Dipa and Phulmaya's village to present Dipa with her Child Rights Ambassador certificate.

**Don't hit children!**

Dipa is about to hold her first child rights training session. She is going to tell her school-mates about the rights of the child. And later on, she is going to hold a talk for the teachers.

"I'm a bit nervous, but not too bad," she says.

Alisha and the other ambassadors who are visiting the village help Dipa and make sure she is well-prepared.

In the classroom, Dipa explains that hitting children in school is wrong. Alisha talks about trafficking and how girls are exploited sexually, often ending up in

brothels. Phulmaya and the other students listen seriously and attentively.

When it's the teachers' turn in the afternoon, they find themselves in an unusual, reversed situation. They have never before sat in rows to be taught by children. Some are surprised to hear that trafficking exists in many other countries and not just in Nepal. Others comment on spelling mistakes on the chalkboard! 🌐

Dipa, who is a newly-trained Child Rights Ambassador, is going to make sure that neither Phulmaya nor any other girl from the village is taken by traffickers. Twelve thousand poor girls disappear every year from Nepal. Dipa proudly displays her certificate.

The two Child Rights Ambassadors, Dipa and Alisha, tell Phulmaya about the rights of the child and the risks of trafficking. Alisha has been a domestic slave herself.







Child Rights Ambassador Alisha talks to the teachers about children's rights, and in particular girls' rights and the fact that many girls in Nepal are vulnerable to human-trafficking.



## "Women toil, men drink tea"

"Here in our village, the women work hard while the men sit and drink tea. There is a lot of discrimination against women here. It has been interesting to hear about the rights of the child. That both sexes are equal. Our government should do more to influence parents. Things would be different if there were more Child Rights Ambassadors. My sister, who is twelve, does a lot of the work in our house, but I help as well. If a girl can wash dishes then surely a boy can too!"

*Santosh 17*

# From the ambassadors to the prime minister



## Education for a better world

"As a Child Rights Ambassador, I focus on every child's right to education, because that leads to a better life. It also creates a better world. If I met the prime minister today, I would ask him to make school compulsory and free in rural areas, so that everyone could get an education."

*Laxmi, 20*



## Fighting against trafficking

"I fight for the rights of the child and especially for children who have been exploited by traffickers. This is a serious problem that keeps growing, both in Nepal and in other parts of the world. I want to ask the prime minister to provide education and vocational training to at least one member of each family, so that they can provide for their family."

*Poonam 18*



## Why doesn't the government invest?

"As a Child Rights Ambassador, I would like to work in rural areas to make all children aware of the rights of the child. I would like to ask the prime minister why our government doesn't invest in the rights of the child."

*Alisha 17*

## Poor children are citizens too

"I want to raise my voice for the right to education. All children must get a free education, because with education we can contribute to making our country a better place. We need free education, food and shelter, and exploitation of children must end. I want the prime minister to make sure that even poor children are always registered as citizens."

*Manchala, 15*

## "Boys play, girls do housework"

"There should be no discrimination between boys and girls! And no children should have their rights violated. For example, you should not beat children, you should talk to them instead. At home, my two sisters do most of the housework, but I wash dishes and fetch water. Often the boys here run around and play, while the girls wash clothes and dishes. And boys get more clothes than girls. It's not fair."

*Biraj, 12*



## Stop male dominance

"As a World's Children's Prize ambassador, I want to put a stop to male dominance and discrimination against women. We can achieve this through education."

*Sharmila 15*





# We all have equal value!



My parents love my brother more

"I'm always tired, and sometimes I fall asleep in the middle of a lesson," says Anita. "Usually I only manage to sleep five hours a night."

"If I was a boy, my parents would love me as much as they love my brother," says Anita, 15. "I would have the same opportunities as him, but I don't. We girls just have to get married and move in with our husbands' families as quickly as possible."

At five every morning, the alarm clock rings. Anita makes the beds and makes tea for the family. Then she helps her brother with his homework and cooks rice, lentil stew and vegetables. Once the others have eaten, she helps her brother put his clothes on and makes sure he has all he needs before walking him to school.

Anita's brother goes to extra lessons in the afternoon, and Anita has to pick him up after his last lesson. Then she cooks, serves her brother and helps him with his homework. She washes the dishes, tidies up, and puts her little brother to bed. When her mother gets home around nine, they eat together, before Anita washes the dishes

and tidies up again. It is ten o'clock at night before Anita has a chance to do her own homework, and she doesn't put the light out until midnight.

"Sometimes I try to get my brother to help out at home, but he refuses. If I shout at him, he tells mum and she gets me into trouble."

Anita dreams of becoming a doctor and being able to help poor children. And she would also like to build clinics in poor villages.

"Only if my husband lets me, of course," she says. "And if he doesn't, then I will have to persuade him."

## "The same rights as boys!"

"If I was a boy, I'd be able to go wherever I wanted. I'd go to a better school and I wouldn't be teased and harassed by rude boys who don't have any respect for girls. My father has a new wife and he doesn't care about my sister and me any more. It often makes me cry. It wouldn't have been like this if I'd been a boy. We girls must be given the same rights as boys!"

Sushila, 14



## "Insulting to wash dishes, say boys"

"My brother goes to a boarding school in Kathmandu, but I have to go to the village school. That is typical. Another difference between girls and boys here is that we girls have to do all the housework and study at the same time. Boys don't have to do that. Many of them actually think it is insulting for a man to have to wash the dishes."

Pabrita, 15

## "We must respect girls"

"Men are brought up to think they are superior to women, but they should try to make things fairer. We must respect girls and not say terrible things about them. Many girls are not even allowed to go to school. In my family, we are all treated the same, and my sister and I take turns with the housework."

Sabin, 16



## "My gran doesn't want me to help my sister"

"My little sister does almost all the housework at home. She is only ten, and I feel so sorry for her. She does the cleaning and fetches water and cooks for six people every day. My mother isn't at home because she is working in Kuwait. I try to help my sister as much as I can, but my grandmother tells me not to. She says my sister should do it all."

Suresh, 12



# Band for the rights of

“Two years ago, we started a child rights band at our school. The band is called Siyangoba and all its members have trained as WCP Child Rights Ambassadors. We fight for equal rights for girls and against the child sex trade,” says Amanda, 17, from South Africa.

**A**manda and most of the band members live in Khayelitsha, a poor township on the outskirts of Cape Town.

“I am a ‘born free’. That’s what people call my generation because we are children born after 1994 when apartheid ended and Nelson Mandela became president,” explains Amanda.

## Tough for girls

“Khayelitsha was built during apartheid, when black people were forced to live in terrible places. These days, Khayelitsha is full of unemployed people and extremely poor people who live in shacks and have to walk a long way just to get water. Children are affected the worst by poverty, and by the



crimes that adults commit against us, not least the assaults on us girls.

During apartheid, the inhabitants of Khayelitsha protested against all the laws that forced them to be white people’s slaves. One way of protesting was to burn car tyres on the streets. The other day when we were on our way home from rehearsing with the band, the streets were filled with burning tyres in protest against the lack of working toilets and the electricity that we can’t afford to

pay for. Most of us don’t have any light after the sun goes down.”

## Training ambassadors

Amanda participated in a course at her school to become a WCP Child Rights Ambassador.

“Since then I have used my voice to tell others at my school about the rights of the child, and about the child sex trade around the world and here where we live. I like using my voice to sing and tell stories, and I dream of one

day becoming a TV journalist.

At first when we started our child rights band, not many people at our school knew about us, but now everyone looks forward to our performances and wants to join the band.

My mother died when I was very young and I don’t have any contact with my father, so I know how hard it is for girls to protect themselves. But becoming a Child Rights Ambassador has given me the confidence to stand up in



“One day on our way home from rehearsing, there were people protesting in the same way they did during apartheid, when there was racial segregation in South Africa, by burning car tyres. Now people do the same because we don’t have toilets, running water or electricity.”



# the child



It's finally time for Amanda and her friends in Siyangoba to perform at the WCP ceremony at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. Here they are singing 'Weeping' along with new World's Children's Prize patrons, Vusi Mahlasela and Loreen.



"The band members and Child Rights Ambassadors held our Global Vote at Chris Hani Secondary School."

front of an audience and talk about my views.

Now I'm a Child Rights Trainer, and I recently held a course at my school for others who wanted to become Child Rights Ambassadors. Lots more people than I expected came, and our Child Rights Club is growing."

## Global Vote on TV

"We Child Rights Ambassadors organised the Global Vote Day at our school. We invited a TV journalist, who came with a team.

That evening we were on TV and millions of people in South Africa, throughout Africa and in London saw how we, the Child Rights Ambassadors in Khayelitsha, did our Global Vote!

The chance to travel to Sweden, meet the jury children and Malala, and perform at the WCP ceremony was an incredible experience for us all." 🌍



Loreen and Vusi Mahlasela with WCP Laureate Malala.

## Loreen and Vusi new patrons

At the WCP ceremony, singers Loreen from Sweden and Vusi Mahlasela from South Africa became new patrons of the World's Children's Prize.

The WCP patrons, who are also Honorary Adult Friends, include five Nobel Prize Laureates and three global legends, Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi from Burma, and Xanana Gusmão from East Timor. Other patrons include H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden and global leaders and members of 'The Elders', Graça Machel and Desmond Tutu.

Loreen is a human rights activist and Vusi, who is also known as The Voice, has a foundation to give disadvantaged children the opportunity to train as musicians.



H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden



Desmond Tutu



Aung San Suu Kyi

## Amanda's song for Mandela

At the WCP ceremony, Amanda sang her song to the WCP Child Rights Hero and patron, Nelson Mandela.

"I wrote it for our Child Rights Hero, Mandela, to say that we still remember him and what he stood for. I wrote the song because so many people have already forgotten what he said, and continue to treat children badly. In our culture, there is a story about how people who die end up on the moon. This is how my song goes:

*He stands in the moon  
Always knew what to do  
Fulfilled his plans  
He's gone for good  
Now they let him down  
We honour him with pleasure  
Our hearts will still remember  
We still remember you!"*





# Organise a World's Children's Press Conference



"Welcome to this Children's Press Conference here in Maputo," said Elisa, 16, as she chaired the press conference in Mozambique along with Larissa and Yara, continuing, "It's common here for teachers to exploit their students in return for good grades and being moved up a year. This has to stop!"

You and your friends can organise a World's Children's Press Conference too.

Only children should speak and be interviewed by journalists at the press conferences, which are held by children all over the world at the same time. They are held at the end of the WCP program period, when you have voted to decide who should receive the awards for the rights of the child.

*How to do it:*

## 1. Time and place

If possible choose the most important building in your area for your press conference, to show that the rights of the child are important! Holding it at your school is fine too. You can find out the date for 2015 on the WCP website.

## 2. Invite the media

Invite all newspapers, magazines and TV and radio stations in advance. Write the time and place clearly. Using

"Every year, 10,000-20,000 Nepali girls are trafficked. This has to stop!" says Poonam at the World's Children's Press Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal.

email is good, but make sure you also call the journalists you think may be interested in coming! Remind them by telephone or by visiting them the day before the press conference.

## 3. Prepare

Write down what you plan to say. Give yourself plenty time to prepare what you want to say about the rights of the child in your country. Shortly before the press conference you will receive secret information about the Child Rights Heroes from the World's Children's Prize, which should be revealed at the press conference.

## 4. Hold the press conference

If possible, begin with music and dancing, and explain that other children all over the world are holding press conferences at the same time.

Then proceed with the press conference roughly as follows:

- State facts about the World's Children's Prize and if possible show a short WCP information film.

## At [worldschildrensprize.org](http://worldschildrensprize.org) you'll find:

Child rights fact sheets for your country, advice on how to invite journalists, questions for politicians and other tips. The website also has press images which journalists can download. If there are several schools contacting the same media, why not hold a joint press conference? One representative from each school could be on stage.

- Explain how children's rights are violated in your country.
- Talk about your demands for politicians and other adults to respect the rights of the child in your country.
- Reveal the 'big news' of the day, about the Child Rights Heroes.
- Conclude by giving the journalists the press release and the WCP fact sheet on your country, both of which you will receive from the World's Children's Prize.





The annual award ceremony was held at Gripsholm Castle in Mariefred, Sweden. Emma Mogus from Canada was Master of Ceremonies and the other jury children from 15 countries helped lead. H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden helped them present the awards.



Jury children Hamoodi Elsalameen from Palestine and Netta Alexandri from Israel presented the awards to the prize laureates.



## We're celebrating children's rights!



◀ Malala from Pakistan received the 2014 *World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child* for her fight for girls' right to education. "This prize shows that children stand up for their rights. They will not continue in silence, they will make their voices heard... We cannot tolerate violations of the rights of the child," said Malala.



◀ "To the millions of school children who participated in the World's Children's Prize program, I promise: We will always stand by you in our shared fight for a world where the rights of the child are universally recognised and respected," said Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden.

Everyone joined in the final song: the jury children, new patrons Loreen and Vusi, South African band Siyangoba, Simon Boerenbeker Klang and Sixten and the Cupcakes.

*The World's Children's Honorary Award* was presented to both John Wood, Room to Read, from the USA for his fight for children's right to books and education, and...



...Indira Ranamagar from Nepal for her fight for prisoners' children. Roshani is one of the children who Indira has rescued.





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