

Child Rights Heroes 2023



MOHAMMED REZWAN

Mohammed Rezwan has fought 25 years for children's rights, especially girls, to go to school, despite flooding and increased poverty that have been made worse by the climate crisis.

The Challenge

Every year thousands of schools and routes to school are destroyed by flooding in Bangladesh. It affects schooling for millions of children –many of them never return to school. Instead they work, and girls are often married off.

The work

Rezwan and his organization Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha (SSS) run 26 floating schools on the rivers,



fetching children where they live, so they can go to school even if the roads are under water. Mohammed and SSS also runs floating libraries and health clinics, and offers vocational training on boat schools for young women. Every village with a boat school has a Young Women's Rights Association that fights for girls' rights and campaigns against child marriage.

Results and vision

Mohammed and his organisation have provided an education to 22,000 children to date, and vocational training for 15,000 young women. Mohammeds idea for floating schools has spread throughout Bangladesh and to eight other countries.

CINDY BLACKSTOCK

Cindy has fought for 30 years for Indigenous children's equal rights to good schools and health, to be with their families and feel pride in their language and culture.

The Challenge

Hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children in Canada are treated worse than other children due to their background. Indigenous peoples lived here long before European settlers arrived but for over 100 years, children were taken from their families to schools where they would be forced to forget their culture. Many became ill, thousands of children died. To this day, Indigenous families are



split up. Indigenous children are poorer, have worse schools and health care. Cindy and the organization Caring Society combats discrimination, raises awareness and pursues legal cases together with Elders, leaders and young people – Indigenous children and other Canadian children.

Results and vision

Cindy has advocated and won legal cases helping 165,000 First Nations children to get better schools and resources needed for a safe childhood. Other Indigenous children have also seen their rights strengthened. The government has apologised and must give Indigenous children everything they need to thrive. fight for children's rights.

THÍCH NU MINH TÚ

Minh Tú has worked for 40 years to support orphaned children and children who cannot grow up with their families.

The Challenge

People in Vietnam today are suffering from the aftereffects of several decades of war. Many lost everything they owned and were injured or fell ill because of bombs and chemical weapons. Minh Tú grew up during the war and saw how the violence resulted in widespread poverty, hunger and millions of orphaned children. Today, children become orphaned or are abandoned due to poverty, flooding, accidents, and parents being unable to take care of them.



Minh Tú supports children at Duc Son Pagoda by offering a place of safety, love, play, and be healthy. Many get help obtaining their birth certificate, so they can start school. They are provided with school materials, uniforms, and help to go on to higher education. Differently abled children also get support. When possible, children are reunited with their families.

Resultat och vision

For 40 years Duc Son Pagoda has looked after between 150 and 250 children every year. Everyone is allowed to stay until they become adults and can manage by themselves. They are seen as saplings that, if given sun and water every day, can grow into trees that off er shade and nourishment to others.